

## **Local forms of production as resistance against global domination: anti-commodities**

An international workshop  
June 17-19 2010

**Venue: The International Institute of Social History**  
Cruquiusweg 31, Amsterdam  
(Further details and direction at <http://www.iisg.nl/address.php>)

Colonial commodity production for the world market has created and reshaped peripheral economies, a process that continued after formal decolonisation. There is a rich historiography on colonial and post-colonial commodity production, most of which is related to agricultural production. These studies almost invariably start from the assumption that colonial (and post-colonial) commodity production subordinates non-commercial local forms of production, exploiting local people's labour. The peasantry is expelled from its land and local creativity and indigenous knowledge are suppressed. More recently, historians have argued that studies of the technological transfers and coercive regimes of colonizing nations too often result in asymmetrical accounts that portray colonized peoples merely as victims and underrate their creative potential and social resilience. They argue that the social-technical arrangements of colonial production systems were a result of dynamic local and regional interactions, as well as social conflicts. This would imply that there is an immense variation in the ways in which local production systems and colonial commodity production coexist.

The aim of this workshop is to focus on responses to global commodity production both in terms of resisting or adapting to changing social (labour) relations as well as resisting or adapting to worsening ecological conditions. These processes, termed 'anti-commodity', resulted in local and regional reconfigurations of people and their activities. These reconfigurations are considered as local forms of resistance and/or adaptation against the extraction of surplus value by colonial (plantation) agriculture or mining.

The Friday and Saturday are **open for interested PhD students**. A fee of €15, - is charged for lunches. Please register by sending an e-mail to Astrid Verburg ([ave@iisg.nl](mailto:ave@iisg.nl)).

### **Programme**

#### **Thursday June 17**

- 15:30-16:30 welcome/registration
- 16:30-17:00 opening session (welcome by Marcel van der Linden, director of the International Institute of Social History and Jean Stubbs, co-director of the Commodities of Empire British Academy Research Project).
- 17:00-19:00 drinks

#### **Friday June 18**

- 9:30-11:30 Key-note address: Paul Richards, *Anti-Commodities; An Africanist perspective*.

- 10:30-11:00 coffee break
- 11:00-12:15 Session 1 (Discussant: Ulbe Bosma)
- Nitin Varma, *Natives, Coolies and the introduction of Plantation Production of Tea in Assam, 1830-1860*
  - David Hyde, *Undercurrents to Independence: Plantation Struggles in Kenya's Central Province 1959-60*
- 12:15-14:00 lunch
- 14:00-15:15 Session 2 (Discussant: David Edgerton)
- Sandip Hazareesingh, *Cotton imperialism, peasant resistance, and climate change in Dharwar, western India, 1840s-1880s*
  - Hanan Hammad, *Handloom weavers in Egypt in the first half of the 20th century*
- 15:15-15:45 tea break
- 15:45-17:15 Session 3 (Discussant: Michael Zeuske)
- Jonathan Curry-Machado, *In cane's shadow: the impact of commodity plantations on local subsistence agriculture on Cuba's mid-nineteenth century sugar frontier*
  - Hernan Venegas, *Central Cuba (Las Villas) Between the plantation and patterns of socio-economic diversity: counterpoint or coexistence?*
  - Virgen Maure, *Mercancía y antimercancía agropecuaria guantanamera en la segunda mitad del siglo XIX*
- 18:00- dinner

### **Saturday June 19**

- 9:30-11:00 Session 4 (Discussant: Jean Stubbs)
- Teresa Levy, *Tobacco Growers and Resistance to American Domination in Puerto Rico, 1899-1940*
  - Ratna Saptari, *Tobacco, Markets and the Peasantry In 19th Century Colonial Java*
  - Kathinka Sinha-Kerkhoff, *Chewing Tobacco: A Bihari Anti-Commodity?*
- 11:00-11:30 coffee break
- 11:30-12:45 Session 5 (Discussant: Paul Richards)
- Simon Heap, *A Booming Business in the Bush: How the Anti-Commodity of Local Ogogoro destroyed the Imported Liquor Trade in Nigeria in the 1930s*
  - Hanne Cottyn, *Andean trajectories at the crossroad of mining and rural livelihoods*
- 12:45-14:00 lunch
- 14:00-15:30 closing session

The workshop, hosted and organised by the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam (IISH, NL) in collaboration with the Technology and Agrarian Development Group of Wageningen University (NL), is the 4<sup>th</sup> international workshop of the Commodities of Empire collaborative project<sup>1</sup> run by the Ferguson Centre for

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/ferguson-centre/commodities-of-empire/index.html>

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