

**2016-07-18 From the preparatory notes for Class 13 of the introductory course on political economy: ‘The evolution of property and how it rules the world’.**

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**By way of recap:**

❖ Discussed reasons why the **Islamic empire** did not provide the historical basis for the rise of capitalism.

❖ Discussed the connection between the rise of the Atlantic **slave trade** and **ideological racism** – recommend the reading of Part five, Chapter 5 in Chris Harman, *A People’s History of the World*.

**1999 Harman, pp 249-256 of People's History (Slavery and racism).pdf**

**Class broke into two groups to continue reading and discussing the extracts from *The German Ideology*, paras 43-54.**

Returned to plenary session after the break to discuss **themes and concepts from the paragraphs read**, beginning with:

**Vagabondage and ‘surplus population’ in the towns** (paras 50-51)

72,000 hanged in reign of Henry VIII of England (= 2.5% of pop 2.8 million: comparable to about 1.25 million in a population the size of SA today).

**Thomas More** and his communist *Utopia* (1516).

**‘Natural capital’** (paras 45, 48). The concept was explained with reference to more modern sources. It raises the broader question of ‘what is capital?’ We’ll return to this later in the course, when more groundwork for answering the question has been laid.

*Those who wish to read ahead in the extracts from *The German Ideology* were advised to read paras 55-74. However, there are a number of topics arising from paras 43-54 that we need to examine first in more depth...*