Reading Guide Three – Feudalism


1. What are the two means by which Marx claimed that society could transition from feudalism to capitalism? (cf. p. 836)
2. Where did capitalist society develop first? (p. 837)
3. What was the common theme that Sweezy and Wallerstein used in their Marxist analysis to explain the transition from feudalism to capitalism? (p. 840) What famous 18th century economist shared some elements of this view? (pp. 840-841)
4. In their Marxist approach, Dobb, Hilton and Brenner attributed the transition from feudalism and capitalism to what key factor? (pp. 842-843)
5. According to Dobb, what was the key reason for conflict developing between the lords and peasants in feudal society? (pp. 843-844)
6. Does Hilton seem to believe that European towns during the feudal period were already becoming capitalist ahead of the much larger rural areas? (pp. 844-845)
7. According to Brenner, the reason that capitalism developed in western Europe before eastern Europe was due to what? (cf. chart on p. 847 & p. 848)
8. Where in Europe does Brenner claim capitalism developed first and why? (pp. 849-850)
9. What term does the author use to define Anderson’s form of Marxism? (p. 854)
10. According to Anderson, the use of the term “economic” only makes sense in which mode of production? (p. 854)
11. What Weberian idea has influenced Anderson’s Marxist analysis of feudalism? (p. 855)
12. Based on this article, is it reasonable to claim that Marxist theorists all agree on how feudalism was replaced by capitalism?


1. Although Marx tended to focus on the economic aspects of feudalism, which aspects did Weber focus on? (p. 212)
2. According to Weber, in traditional forms of domination (feudalism) what is the source of authority? (p. 213)
3. What three forms might traditional domination (feudalism) take according to Weber? How are they different? (p. 215)
4. According to Weber, in order to increase their authority or domination, what sort of arrangement (or Kontrakt) were feudal rulers willing to create? (p. 218)
5. What is a fief? (p. 219)
6. After the giving of a fief, what sort of a relationship existed between a lord and vassal? (pp. 219 – 221)
7. What sort of rights did a vassal have? (pp. 222-223)
8. What does Poggi mean at the end of the article when he states “there is more than one way of skinning a cat; second, that there aren't *that many* ways of doing so?”