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Constructing debt: discursive and material strategies of labour coercion in the US South, 1903–1964

Nico Pizzolato

In this chapter based on archival sources and contemporary accounts drawn from government files, political and civil rights association archives, newspaper articles and memoirs, I discuss how labour coercion was imbricated with conceptual notions and social practices of debt during the twentieth century. I will explore how planters and growers in the US South used debt to attempt to immobilise workers for the length of time that their labour was needed in the fields and to pay them cheaply, or not at all. As we will see, employers used monetary remuneration itself, often assumed to be one of the hallmarks of free labour, to entangle workers in coercive labour practices. The way this happened evolved along the chronology covered by this study, which spans from the first court cases of ‘peonage’ (being compelled to work to pay a debt) in 1903 to the end, in 1964, of the Programa Bracero, which brought to the US heavily indebted workers from Mexico.

The architecture of my inquiry into this nexus between debt, coercion and labour stands on the shoulders of at least two strands of historiography of labour of the southern United States. First, there is the work on the labour regimes in the South after Emancipation, from the classic studies of Eric Foner, Jonathan Wiener, Gavin Wright, and Ira Berlin’s ‘Freedmen and Southern Society Project’ to the more recent work of Steve Hahn, Bruce Baker, Brian Kelly, Susan O’Donovan and John C. Rodrigue. In different ways, these scholars have contributed to my understanding of the transition from slavery to regimes of labour in the post-Reconstruction period, when sharecropping and tenancy transformed African-Americans into a class of wage workers and heads of household, but also kept them cash-strapped and dependent on the whims of landowners.¹ Secondly, I build on the studies that focus on the

unfree aspects of those regimes, such as the classic *Shadow of Slavery* by Pete Daniel, Nan Woodruff's *American Congo*, Douglas A. Blackmon's *Slavery by Another Name* and the work of Risa Goluboff.² I also draw on a close analysis of the few contemporary sociological studies of landlord-tenant relations in the American South, mostly published in the 1930s, to examine the critique of racial and class relations that, in those texts, is often hidden between the lines. I accompany the historiographical account with a reflexive positioning of my work as historian who (re) constructs a narrative of the past within the limits of my world view and in dialogue not only with current debate about debt in contemporary capitalism, but also with the interpretative artwork created by illustrator Monika Lang through the collaboration with Anamarija Batista, Viola Müller and Corinna Peres, who all together established the dramaturgy of the illustration. I conclude my reflections by pointing to the constant change over time of that nexus between debt, labour and coercion that characterised the political economy of the rural South.

Questioning the production of archival documents has always been a fundamental aspect of historical research. This was of particular relevance as I gained interest in what lies behind the social practice defined as 'peonage' in documents that I found first at the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs in Detroit, then in the Department of Special Collections in Stanford and eventually in numerous other libraries and archives in the US and Europe. I was haunted by one of the first such documents that I encountered, an exposé by the Workers Defense League (WDL) – a socialist organisation that between the 1930s and the 1940s put the improvement of farm workers' conditions high on its agenda. 'DO YOU KNOW that SLAVERY still exists on American soil in this year of 1940?' shouted the document to its contemporary readers.³ I did not know, and it was 2008. The 58-page pamphlet went on to describe an excruciating case of what the organisation described as 'slavery for debt', producing excerpts of first-person testimonies, which were actually oral accounts from 'debt slaves' turned into searing prose by the WDL activists. The document raised questions about where the 'voice' of the social actors lay about the agenda of the political campaign that denounced peonage and labelled it as 'slavery', about the origin of the term 'peonage', about the way in which protagonists actually made sense of what happened to them, and about the other institutions and actors involved in the 'production' of this social practice named 'peonage'.

This led me to inquire further. The WDL archive was in dialogue with another archive no less involved in the 'conceptualisation' of such practice,

the one of the Department of Justice (DOJ), which had been organised by historian Pete Daniel in the course of the research later published in his book *The Shadow of Slavery* (1972). In the DOJ archive, the testimonies of sharecroppers of African descent were usually reported through the eyes of FBI investigators who reluctantly travelled to remote country plantations in the 'Black Belt', the region of cotton-producing counties across the American South, to check on the claims of activists, reporters and philanthropists who called attention to the plight of plantation workers. But the DOJ archives also contained original letters from the family members of the workers themselves, often women, who pleaded for the liberation of husbands, brothers or sons; or from sharecroppers who denounced the unfair deals that kept them tied to the land year after year. It was a stirring moment to come across those hand-written, barely decipherable stories; it also provided a fresh perspective on what I was accustomed to understand when I read the text of the Thirteenth Amendment to the US Constitution. Those letters provided a counterpoint to the narrow interpretation that the juridical and political institutions made of the amendment by evoking 'slavery' in its symbolic and metaphorical significance, which did not align with what the jurisprudence mandated.

A new slavery?

Indeed, many of those letters and testimonies talk about 'slavery' or being 'enslaved'. Was it the case? The Thirteenth Amendment (1865) had carried a 'dangerous' potential by stipulating that 'Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude ... shall exist within the United States'.⁴ The catch was in the phrase incidentally placed in the middle of the amendment's text, 'except as a punishment for a crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted'.⁵ The definition of crime varies from society to society. For African-Americans in the twentieth-century US South, loitering, vagrancy, being a *disorderly person*, a drunkard or a *tramp*, or simply leaving a job, could carry criminal consequences. Within a racialised system of law enforcement, common behaviours could also be socially constructed as crimes. In other cases, misdemeanours, such as stealing a farm animal (which in other states would carry a short sentence), were treated as felonies and carried harsher penalties than elsewhere. White Americans usually escaped punishment for these crimes, because these laws, in their actual application, were meant to control the labour and the bodies of African-Americans, not of White people. In reality,

being charged for vagrancy meant only to be unemployed or just 'out of place', that is, out of the White man's labour control.⁶

With different nuances, these first-hand testimonies were all telling a similar story, and, when they were placed side by side, a common pattern emerged, even if it was one that evolved over time. At times landlords and authorities were inflating or just making up farmhands' debts and forcing Black people to work to repay them. While usually ignored by the law enforcement institutions, this was obvious to the contemporary observer. 'At the end of the season the sharecropper [is shown] that he is really in debt for seed, supplies and keep advanced during the year and he is forced ... to remain for another year.'⁷ At other times Black people were simply 'taken'. This was the case of African-American Floyd Thompson, arrested on his way to his sister's wedding, charged with a petty crime and forced to pay off the legal fee on a cotton field. The trial for such an offence was very swift. 'I was not allowed to have an attorney to represent me nor was I allowed to call witnesses to testify on my behalf. I was charged with interfering with labour,' said Thompson.⁸ He *interfered with labour* because he did not want to pick cotton. The political economic regime treated such insubordination like a crime, but the coercion was interlinked with the mechanisms of production of a debt through the system of law.

The evolving mechanisms of coercion

At the turn of the twentieth century, the social organisation of labour in the rural South was still very much in the grips of the aftershocks of the emancipation of slaves. Its political economy, rooted in coercive labour practice and disrupted by emancipation, had evolved towards a new system. For instance, in the cotton plantations, this meant the change from work gangs supervised by an overseer, to single family plots under a share or tenancy cropping arrangement. As an ample historiography has discussed, this was the result of the political struggle over the configuration of rural work after 1865.⁹

In different ways, two strong undercurrents traversed the post-bellum plantation with consequences that had an impact well into the turn of the century. One current was the way African-Americans used their newly found freedom to seek autonomy and force concessions from the planter class who used to own them. The rise, during Reconstruction (the period that followed the Civil War), of decentralised sharecropping (working the land for a share of the crop) and tenancy contracts (renting the land by

paying in goods or cash)¹⁰ in the Cotton Belt testifies to that agency, and so do the cash wages and shorter working hours that African-Americans won where work remained organised in work gangs.¹¹ It is to be noted that in a sharecropping agreement, the landlord owns the crop, with which the debt will be repaid; in tenancy, the crop technically belongs to the tenant, but the landlord has a lien on it, because it will be used to repay the debt owed to them. (A third, even more precarious, category of plantation workers comprised workers paid in (low) wages and hired for a given period of time. Their precarity made them more susceptible to coerced labour conditions.) The other undercurrent swayed African-Americans towards forms of debt peonage, of convict labour, of domestic servitude, which testified to the enduring presence of coercion in shaping labour relations.¹² However, the mechanics of coercion that we can observe in the first half of the twentieth century were not only a legacy of the ante-bellum political economy and race relations; they were made anew, through the ways in which employers and workers renegotiated labour relations by contracting, manipulating, escaping debt, remuneration and punishment.

Social scientists and the 'plight of the sharecropper'

We could hardly interpret the testimonies in the archives without the context provided by the first social scientists who became interested in the social, cultural and economic organisation of the rural South, in counter-tendency to the rest of their profession. These researchers penetrated into a world that previously had been hidden from the view of any outsider. In fact, in the first half of the twentieth century, organised professional sociology was scarcely aware of rural African-Americans, or for that matter of African-Americans *tout court*, unless research corroborated predominant racist theorems about Black immorality and inferiority.¹³ In the 1930s, however, as liberals gained more voice in Washington DC and as the Left – represented by organisations like the Workers Defense League or the International Labor Defense – agitated the newly found cause of the 'plight of the sharecropper',¹⁴ there were some notable exceptions, which followed in the footsteps of the pioneering ethnographic and lyrical description of the Black Belt by W. E. B. Du Bois in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903). In particular, Charles B. Johnson's *The Shadow of the Plantation* (1934) and Arthur F. Raper's *Preface to Peasantry* (1936) (respectively by an African-American and a White Southern liberal) considered how economics and culture interlinked in the rural South,

where the decline in productivity of the plantation had not yet, in the eyes of these observers, ushered in a modern society. Their investigation reveals a society where debt percolates through the whole economic fabric, but they left understated the deeper significance of this debt.

Raper's *Preface to Peasantry* opens with an image of a cart carrying bales of cotton, and a question: 'To whom does this cotton belong: to the tenant farmer who grew it, to the landlord who furnished the tenant, or to the banker who financed the landlord?'¹⁵ This 'Black Belt's riddle' refers to the consideration well known to contemporaries that the whole cotton economy was based on a chain of financial dependencies through which planters financed their operations – a system that had been established in the ante-bellum period where it inextricably linked cotton, slavery and finance. However, in the post-bellum South, when cotton fetched tendentially lower prices (within frequent fluctuations), this system jeopardised the ability of planters to repay the money they had borrowed from creditors.¹⁶ Tenants and sharecroppers, in turn unable to recoup what the landlords had loaned them for seeds, implements and all the essentials of life, fell ever more into debt, entering what Charles Otken, a vehement early critic of the system, called 'debt peonage'.¹⁷ Charles Johnson summarised the 'system' of debt formation in the cotton economy as follows:

To the Negro tenant, the white landlord is the system; to the white landlord, the capital of the banks is the system. The landlord needs credit by which to advance credit to the tenants ... Because cotton lends itself best to this arrangement, cotton is overproduced and debts descend to obscure still another year of labor ... The demands of the system determine the social and economic relations, the weight of which falls heaviest upon those lowest down.¹⁸

This general criticism of the system of financing cotton obscured, however, fundamental differences in the way in which debt worked to constrain choices across class and racial divides. For instance, the debt between the planter and the bank put at risk the planter's property (which the planter used as collateral to borrow and therefore was at risk of losing), but the debt between the worker and the planter provided the latter with a nearly indisputable position of power that dominated the entire labour and social relation between the two. While the relationship of the planter with the creditor was a financial transaction that informed the planter's choices but remained distant from daily life in the fields, the debt contracted by the farm worker with the landlord allowed

the latter to exercise extensive, unchecked power within the labour relation and, in sum, over the daily life of the labourer. This power was underpinned by the fact that, due to lack of literacy and the unfavourable relations of power, Black workers could not challenge the accounts and the figures established by the planter at the end of the crop lifecycle. Debt underpinned practices of labour coercion beyond being a financial transaction to characterise how landlords, usually White Americans, maintained and exercised their power over Black people.

By and large, Black mobility represented a threat to planters in the rural South because it created a competition among employers for workers that raised the cost of labour. In every situation where the planter stood to gain from workers' immobility, debt was the most frequent instrument that made such immobility possible.¹⁹ Johnson's study of Macon County, Alabama, in a single year of the 1930s, provides a snapshot of the hold of debt on mobility (both social and geographical) of the population of African-American croppers and tenants: out of 237 families, the total population, 61.7 per cent 'broke even', meaning that they did not increase nor decrease what they owed to the landlords; 26 per cent went further into debt; and only 9.4 per cent made a profit (that is, decreased their debt or became debt-free) in comparison to the previous year.²⁰ It was widely known, as corroborated by both the literature and oral histories, that the end-of-the-year settlements between landlord and workers were tinged by irregularities and threats. Or, as Johnson put it in an understatement, 'It is, of course, impossible to determine the extent of exploitation of these Negro farmers, so long as books are kept by the landlord, the sale price of cotton known only by him, and the cost and interest on rations advanced in his hands.' Or, as a worker declared, 'We haven't paid out to Mr ----- in twelve years. Been in debt that long. See, when a fella's got a gun in your face you gonna take low or die.'²¹

In a way, therefore, being in debt was not about paying back money at all. Writing in the 1940s, Black historian Carter Woodson noted dryly, 'families of Negroes [were] bound to white landlords for debts they were never permitted to pay'.²² The debts were in principle unredeemable because to settle them meant to be able to walk away free and to establish formal equality between the employer and the worker, which would have reduced the asymmetry in their relationship. Landlords used indebtedness as a tool of legal and spatial labour coercion and therefore had a vested interest in the perpetuation of such indebtedness; the main function of debts was to keep Blacks in the inferior position of those who owe. African-Americans' debt was 'unpayable' because in the eyes of Whites they should never ascend to

the position of equality that is afforded to two economic actors who owe nothing to each other.

The collaboration with illustrator Monika Lang and the editors of the volume challenged me in making intelligible a world of social practices that the historical protagonists navigated with a tacit knowledge – a vision of the world accustomed to the everyday entanglement of remuneration, debt, labour, race and power to coerce, which did not always correspond to the figures of speech that contemporaries used to describe it. Monika Lang's illustration (p. 272) captures this contradiction between the apparent manifestation of a practice and the tacit understanding of it through the device of the 'shadow' (a metaphor used also by some scholars foundational to this essay, as in Pete Daniel's 'shadow of slavery' or Charles Johnson's 'shadow of the plantation'). Her illustration foregrounds a White man, who looks like a well-tailored planter or merchant, handing a bag of cash to a Black worker. On the wall of a farmhouse we can see that this act, apparently akin to a contractual transaction among free agents, in reality projects a shadow of bondage. This is a stark visual representation of the mechanism of what was captured by the jurisprudence about peonage – legally defined in 1903 as being 'compelled to labor in liquidation of some debt or obligation, either real or pretended, against his will'.²³

The practice with which this jurisprudence was concerned revolved around the binding consequences of workers receiving an advance in cash or, more often, in kind, for work in the fields to be performed in the future and whether the worker should be compelled to labour against her or his will to pay this off (often, in practice, for an indefinite length of time). Although there were other entry points into 'peonage', such as the convict surety system (leasing a convict to a private employer for a fee) or downright physical threats, monetary remuneration proved a sticky one – one which Supreme Court sentences like *Bailey vs Alabama* (1911) tried, unsuccessfully, to eradicate. Advances in cash or kind were crucial for sharecroppers and tenants (and their families) in enabling them to pay for the costs of production (seed, tools and implements) and reproduction (food, clothes and medicines) during the lifecycle of the crop, but this remuneration subtly translated into a binding tool.

It was an important line of inquiry for me to take seriously what the court referred to as 'pretended' debt as the source of bonded labour. The fictionality of the debt derived from the fact that it reflected a sum that did not match the actual money disbursed by the creditor. In this chapter I look at the different ways in which the 'pretension' could have

real consequences. We can therefore see debt in this specific context beyond its veneer of financial instrument to appreciate also its core as one of the discursive practices that enabled coercion in labour relations (as we will see below), that means as a disciplinary and normative tool that relied on the construction of a discourse of indebtedness that might or might not have had a financial basis. As explored by sociologist Tomáš Samec in the context of financing in the neoliberal housing market, the mechanical and structural features of the 'system' (a different one from Raper's, but enmeshed in indebtedness) alone do not explain how people's subjectivity (that of both the creditors and the debtors) is transformed by the process of fabricating indebtedness.²⁴ Thus, the discourse of indebtedness – a system of representation in which social actors engage in allegedly free and autonomous financial transactions that result in the debt of one party – was used to normalise an economic and social reality that was based on relations of power shaped outside of the market.

Debt and workers' subjectivity

As we are reminded by the case of the anonymous worker, quoted earlier, who did not receive any wages in 12 years, the horizon of time is always prominent whenever debt – a sum of money to be paid back in the future – exists. Debt shapes the subjective perception of time and the way it is categorised. Drawing on the work of the sociologist and philosopher Maurizio Lazzarato, it follows that debt allows capitalism, through the actions of the landlord in this case, to stake a claim on the future behaviour of the indebted and therefore, through notions of guilt and responsibility sustained by societal norms, has the power to shape subjectivity.²⁵

Raper describes one way in which debt shaped the subjectivity of Black workers: "There is a tacit agreement that the tenant will work for the landlord at a certain price at any time he needs him [...] the landlord always reserving the right to request the tenant to take care of his own crop."²⁶ In this case, the debt enabled the landlords to dispose of the time of the workers as they saw fit. It is remarkable that here Raper sees, correctly, a *tacit* understanding: the social practice has shaped the subjectivity so deeply that it is legitimised as an unspoken norm. The freedom of the workers to hire themselves out to another employer for casual work for wages existed only outside of this time marked by debt.

For the sharecropper, the horizon of temporality inflected towards the yearly 'settlement time', when debt could be lightened, upheld or

increased. Escaping debt's hold on the lived experience of one's own temporality might require literally planning one's own escape from a plantation to which one is held 'captive' by debt. The spatial and temporal dimensions of immobility were connected in this case. Both the de jure and de facto practices constrained the right of Black rural workers to change employers, and the alleged debt (which stakes a claim on the debtor's future) to the planter was the device most commonly used to enforce this: a former landlord could claim back the indebted person and their family from the new landlord – a practice backed by the law enforcement agencies – or ask for their arrest if found in a town. Furthermore, violence was always at hand to monitor the workings of the labour market. Raper describes this process as follows: 'Thus robbed of his normal right to move, the propertyless farm worker can escape his lot only by fleeing the community, which involves considerable risk. Threats of flogging, murder follow and sometimes overtake the "debtor" who "slips off like a thief."' ²⁷ Defiant, African-Americans tried to escape anyway, and when the escape was successful, they started afresh somewhere else. By moving across space, the individual might be able to reset the horizon of time.

The discursive construction of indebtedness

The question of discursive construction draws on another, related, aspect of debt: its symbolic power through which the moral hierarchies of the South were shaped. In his psychological account of the origin of morality, Friedrich Nietzsche investigated the primordial connection between debt and guilt in human history. The two words have a common root in many languages and an overlapping meaning, which led him to notice how an unpaid debt could be balanced by cruel acts of the creditor that harmed the debtor, at the same time extinguishing the latter's guilt – an intriguing suggestion to consider in the context of the US South, where Black rural workers, a class of debtors, were susceptible to various forms of violence from the White planters and employers, a class of creditors. ²⁸

The scholar Saidiya Hartman has studied perceptively the propositions in relation to debt of a number of self-help manuals for African-Americans published after the passing of the Thirteenth Amendment. ²⁹ Published by White people, these manuals advised the newly emancipated slaves that the real meaning of their freedom was the responsibility to be self-disciplined and to pay their dues to society, of which they were now full members. They could do so through work

and contentedness with their place in society. Work contracts between allegedly free and equal individuals now placed on African-Americans obligations that could not be left unattended. The rationale (and, it was implied, a precondition) for freedom was the disposition to work dutifully and to be thrifty, as planters decried tenants' indebtedness on their 'foolish expenditures' and games of dice.³⁰ This type of discourse thus framed 'freedom' in terms of what the individual owed to society, and an unwillingness to attend to those duties, such as fulfilling a contract with a planter, no matter the working conditions or remuneration, as 'guilt' that justified subjugation.

The notion of debt was racially tinged. When it concerned White Americans, defaulting or escaping debt was merely an individual failure to regulate one's own behaviour. However, in the case of Black rural workers, it concerned a vast class of workers and created the presumption that any such worker was at fault. (Indeed, the 'false pretence' law, which *Baley vs Alabama* (1911) tried to eradicate, stipulated literally that when a worker had received advanced remuneration from an employer, breaking the contract would create a presumption of guilt for the worker – a provision that was uniquely applied to rural African-Americans.) Debt justified the subordinate position of rural African-Americans as a class and race of labourers, whether or not they actually owed money at any particular point. In fact, while researching the visual representation of Black Southern farm workers, I can hardly distinguish the photo of a (financially) indebted Black worker from one who was not. In the photo that Carter Woodson captions in his book as a 'peon', the individual does not bear any special mark of his condition; she or he is virtually indistinguishable from any other poor Black labourer of the Black Belt.³¹

Credit, conversely, is linked to moral worth and standing in the community. According to Karl Marx, 'Credit is the *economic* judgement on the *morality* of a man.'³² In this case the low moral status of the Black worker is confirmed by his scarce ability to gain 'real' financial credit (unless a White man would act as a guarantor of it); he is indebted for sums that have often been fabricated and discursively legitimised (through the idea that Black workers, collectively, 'owed' to the White society). The actual financial debts concerned only the advances on seed and food that the sharecropper received at the beginning of the year and that could be considered the planter's minimum investment for the productive and reproductive work necessary to grow the crops, from which he stood to gain most, if not all, of the profits. Ironically, it was the occasional ability of some Black workers to get 'actually' indebted to

different actors that improved their chances of receiving a fair settlement at harvest time. This responded to the simple logic of playing out two actors against each other:

Further than the stamp of personal worth which a loan implies, there is the fact that the tenant who is in debt to two or more influential people has secured for himself the protection against exorbitant claims ... for the merchant's interest in the tenant's crop may regulate the demands of the landlord.³³

In other words, when a Black worker did manage to get indebted to someone else in addition to the planter, the scrutiny of another White figure over the returns of the crop (something that the Black worker was not in a position to undertake) would have deterred the planter from taking all the profits of the sales and make him agree to a fairer remuneration of the work, one that would allow the worker to also pay the other creditor.

Debt, guilt and peonage

The condition of perpetual susceptibility to indebtedness chimed with the presumption of guilt that impaired African-Americans who were prosecuted of any crime against Whites. All in all, Marx, Nietzsche and Hartman encourage us to consider the place of the discourse of debt and guilt in the moral hierarchy that underpinned the political economy of the South. This link is particularly evident in the way law enforcement and courts produced guilt, and therefore debt. But how did the production of guilt generate debt, which in turn coerced people to work in the same location for an extensive period of time?

The advantage of debt as a measure of guilt was that, in its facet as a financial predicament, it was expressed in a tangible sum of money owed to a landlord or to the county (in the case of a court fee); even though it was often fabricated or fictive, it was recorded in numbers on a ledger. We could take as an illustrative point any of the cases known of using such practices. For instance, the Supreme Court case *United States vs Reynolds* (1914) established that a man called Ed Rivers had been convicted by a state court in Monroe, Alabama, of petit larceny – a crime as trivial as stealing an apple. He was fined \$15, with an added \$43.75 in court expenses, three times the original fine. Reynolds, one of the local men who ‘bought n*****’ (that is, implied in the language of

the sentence, paid Black men's fines to obtain their labour afterwards), secured the services of Rivers until the latter repayed the full expenses incurred to be released. Rivers was now in debt to Reynolds. It is to be noted that while, in theory, had Reynolds not appeared, Rivers would have languished in prison until the day the Court decided otherwise, in practice, such judgements rested on the widespread awareness that men like Reynolds would come to 'buy' Black defendants. When a month later Rivers attempted to escape, the court imposed a further \$87.05 on his debt, and another man, Broughton, took over the debt so now the sum was owed to him, as he had paid the whole amount to the State and to Reynolds. In this process, as the credit moved from employer to employer, so did the worker, even as he attempted to escape several times.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, the coercive aspects of labour came to be seen through the lens of debt when a sparse cohort of judges, reformers and activists constructed it as a form of 'peonage', by drawing a parallel with the Mexican peons indebted to hacienda landowners, the agrarian capitalists who controlled rural labour in many Latin American countries.³⁴ This practice had been banned by a federal law in 1867 after the US, in 1848, incorporated the northern part of Mexico into its territory. However, the law was only enforced at the turn of the century to address the problem of labour extracted from African-Americans in conditions of perpetual indebtedness. 'What is peonage?' asked a federal judge in *Clyatt vs United States* (1905), the first of such cases to reach the Supreme Court. 'It may be defined as a status or condition of compulsory service, based upon the indebtedness of the peon to the master. The basal fact is indebtedness.'³⁵

Reformers' indignation against peonage (which stirred the federal judiciary into action) had to do with the fraud, malice or violence with which Black women and men were induced into debts as well as the deplorable living conditions that accompanied their predicament. Denouncing some of the entry points into coercive labour that I have outlined above, Mary Church Terrell, the civil rights and suffrage advocate, decried (quoting the progressive judge Emory Speer) the plight of the hundreds

who are not even charged with a crime, but are accused of some petty offence, such as walking on the grass, expectorating upon the sidewalk, going to sleep in a depot, loitering on the streets, or other similar misdemeanours which could not by a stretch of the imagination be called a crime.³⁶

Even more outrageous was the common practice of arresting Black people at harvest time with the trumped-up charge of being indebted to a landowner: 'the captured men are worked during the cotton-planting season, are then released with empty pockets and allowed to return to their homes'.³⁷ In the way the criminal justice system at county level was deployed to provide coerced labour, the boundary between legality and illegality of such practices was blurred. Few Black workers knew their rights or could access legal counsel to contest the kind of destiny that had befallen them.

Du Bois, Johnson and Raper assumed that these abuses were the pernicious effect of how the political economy of the Black Belt had transformed in the wake of slavery and in the shadow of the plantation. However, the culture of racialised labour management was so embedded that it stretched beyond the cotton plantations of Georgia or Arkansas, and persisted beyond the decline of the tenancy and sharecropping that followed Black migration outside of the South, agricultural mechanisation and the Second World War,³⁸ and beyond the flurry of federal and judicial activity that between 1939 and 1944 made less palatable and feasible the use of 'peonage' as an instrument to immobilise African-American labour.³⁹ The practices of racialised labour management continued by adapting to the vulnerabilities of another group of farm workers.

Mexican migrants: change and continuity

In the 1940s, officers of the Department of Justice detected how a new group of farm workers were being increasingly entangled in similar entrapments to African-Americans.⁴⁰ During the 1920s and 1930s, first in Texas and then in other border states, growers found ways of drawing Mexican migrants into coercive labour practices that had long been inflicted on African-Americans. This was starkly visible in the case of sharecropping in the cotton fields of South Texan counties, where, in those years, planters attempted to coerce Mexican farmers through debt dependency. A Texan planter candidly declared, '[The Mexicans] are generally always in debt, mine are always in debt. We pay them out when we take them over from somebody else to get them free. I paid \$250 debt to get one Mexican.'⁴¹ While a perspective of 'the shadow of the plantation' suggests that social practices of coercion persisted in the same locale across time because they were a cultural legacy of plantation slavery, looking to a different population of workers suggests that

it spread across space too, adapting to new forms of rationalisation of production and different (more impersonal) contractual arrangements: the key continuity was the centrality of the construction of debt within a racialised labour management of agricultural production.⁴²

Thus, between the 1920 and the 1940s, Texan growers anchored Mexican women and men to the land (for instance through the same form of sharecropping that is described above) when it was convenient to them, while at other times they secured workers for the limited period of the harvest but without the intention to provide for them for the rest of the year. In this latter case, immobilisation of the workers had to be timed to what the market dictated was the optimal harvest moment, in relation to the price that crop would fetch at a given moment. On the other hand, harvesting was also more susceptible to any delay or disruption caused by recruitment of workers or the performance of labour. As time progressed, growers sought Mexican agricultural workers mainly for intensive seasonal work, during which growers needed to keep them tied to the fields.

In effect, by the end of the 1940s, as African-Americans moved northward in ever growing numbers to escape racial oppression, poverty and violence, the rural labour force was rapidly transforming to one of Mexican nationality or Mexican origin. Workers came also from other parts of the American continent and from further afield, such as from the Caribbean, the Philippines or Japan, but Mexicans were predominant. Between 1942 and 1964, Programa Bracero was the system that provided growers with a Mexican workforce bound by short-term contracts to a single employer and subject to deportation. The programme was governed by bilateral agreements regulating recruitment, remuneration and mobility. Undocumented migrants also reached the fields of the South-West, whenever they could not find admission to the Programa, which attracted far more applicants than it could admit.⁴³ What was appealing in the use of these workers was widely understood and candidly expressed: 'The Braceros are in a situation where docility is enforceable. Moreover, they can be had generally on schedule when needed and can be easily got rid of when the job is done,' commented a priest, sympathetic to the workers, who regularly visited the fields in California (together with Texas, the main destination for Mexican immigrants).⁴⁴ If African-Americans had been treated as second-class citizens, Mexican labourers, technically, were not citizens at all. The 'docility' of Mexican migrants was often commented upon as an inherent feature of their allegedly inferior race; however, it took on a different significance when interpreted within the relation of

power with the employers. In fact, as the quote suggests, docility was not inborn, but 'enforced', and debt played an important role in this.⁴⁵

Migrants' debt as enabler of coercion

Mexican migrants arriving in the US, whether as contract workers like the *braceros* or as undocumented workers, arrived already in debt. They often used their little property at home as collateral to secure a small loan (usually from moneylenders) or borrowed from friends and family the sum necessary to travel to recruitment centres or to the border. In the long waits before being assessed by recruitment centres, applicants incurred additional expenses for food and shelter. In the process of migration, they often encountered the need to pay *la mordida*, a bribe to officials to get ahead in the recruitment process. For instance, *bracero* aspirant José Esequiel Adame (who would go on to become a cotton picker in Big Spring, Texas) remembered how he waited many days at a recruitment centre in Chihuahua before entering the list of the selected ones thanks to a bribe of 700 pesos. (In the same years, the late 1940s, the weekly wage for mine workers was 50 pesos.⁴⁶) Others, such as Barnabé Álvarez Díaz, had to pay the bribe twice, having been cheated out of the money by a swindler the first time.⁴⁷

Growers were keenly aware of the costs, both legal and illegal, that the migration process entailed. In fact, they sometimes arranged to pay the bribes themselves, through proxy agents, and then deducted what was owed from the workers' paycheques.⁴⁸ As we have seen, in the Black Belt it was common to fabricate debts that African-Americans did not really owe or that they had already paid out; in the case of temporary contract workers from Mexico, growers concentrated their efforts on making existing workers' debts as difficult to pay as possible, so as to raise the stakes for those who wished to leave before the end of the contract or who rebelled against the pace and conditions of work imposed. In both cases, debt functioned as a means for employers to obtain labour and to secure it according to their needs. In other words, the existence of a debt underpinned the coercion within the relationship.

One way to foster workers' debt was to turn them into 'captive consumers'. In their narratives, many of which are collected in the Braceros History Archive, workers often complained about the food they were served, which they had to pay for with the maximum price allowed by the contract, with deductions from wages. While the amount, quality and variety of food for *braceros* was established by the bilateral

agreements between the US and Mexican government to which growers subscribed when requesting workers, inspections (many of which were solicited by the complaints of workers themselves) regularly reported gross deficiencies in quantity, quality and hygiene of food. 'Daily menus are fictitious in that they do not list the food actually served.'⁴⁹ 'No variety of food was being served, with chili con carne served one day and carne con chili the next; meat was being served of less than utility grade.'⁵⁰ Workers were charged full subsistence fees for inedible food and often ended up spending additional money at the commissary, owned by the landowner or an associate, to buy their own food and cook their own meals. Eleanor Martin, a store clerk interviewed for the Braceros History Archive, noted down the expenditures to be deducted from paycheques. At the end of the contract, *braceros* were asked to stay, and work unpaid, if they still owed money to the employer.⁵¹ Worker Ignacio Nájera recalled that he owed his employer \$10 a week for the daily meals. This constituted roughly a third of the earnings if one considers the account of another worker, Ismael Rodríguez Rico, who in 1952 received only \$35 after working 70 to 80 hours picking cotton for a week.⁵²

Another method to increase debt was to have contract workers purchase from the employer the tools necessary to perform their labour. For instance, carrot growers in Salinas Valley sold to farm workers the wire necessary to bundle the carrots. This amounted to a deduction of about 11 per cent from the workers' salary. The National Agricultural Workers Union complained that the arrangement was 'coercive' because *braceros* could not work without buying the wire.⁵³ The company replied that it was an effective method to cut waste and that workers would have purchased the wire at higher prices elsewhere. Yet, in effect, a production cost that was worth a sizeable fraction of the salary came out of the workers' pockets.

The simplest way for employers to steal the wages of contract workers was through the lack of transparency in the accounting. Sometimes employers tried to cow their workers into signing records that showed fewer hours than those effectively worked.⁵⁴ At other times, contrary to the mandates of the contract, employers instructed crew leaders, often of Mexican background themselves, not to record the hours worked in the field, but to reverse-calculate the hours on the basis of the pounds of cotton harvested. The book-keepers were then attributing hours to workers based on the amount of cotton, according to remuneration quotas decided unilaterally, 'without benefit of any information whatsoever as to the number of hours worked by the Mexican Nationals

in the crew in question', as one investigator frustratingly reported.⁵⁵ Other reports offer similar judgments on worker management in the cotton fields. The actual hours worked were 'ignored', 'disregarded', 'erroneous', 'not accurate'.⁵⁶ The amount of unpaid wages dwarfed what employers deducted for the *mordida*.

These practices were so ingrained that when in 1959 an inspector of the Department of Labor visited a cotton farm in Hargill, Texas, to examine their records, he heard the book-keeper nonchalantly instruct the crew leader to alter the entries to show that every Mexican worker in his crew had earned at least \$0.50.⁵⁷ After more than a decade of impunity in observing the Bracero agreement, this Texan book-keeper had simply assumed that the ultra-exploitation of the contract workers was condoned by the institutions – in fact, given the paucity of control that characterised the programme until the late 1950s, this could be considered a fairly accurate assessment of the situation. While complaints investigations were formally part of the bilateral agreement from the outset, it was only from the late 1950s onwards that activist exposés and political pressure prompted the government to activate such investigations.

In the case of the Heidrick Farms in California, the investigators spelled out in words a practice that could describe several hundred cases: 'The payrolls records ... clearly show erasures and alterations, misrepresentations ... discrepancies between employers' copies and the workers' copies.'⁵⁸ But what employers were attempting to erase here, together with the correct digits, was also the contract workers' broader ability to claim the fruits of their labour agreed on in the contract signed by both parties. As much as contracts were supposed to be rational, efficient and fair ways to regulate labour relations (compared to the plantation-style cultural legacy of labour relations between planters and freedmen), the ability of growers to dodge paying full wages undermined a key element of the 'free labour' ideology, predicated on the ability of workers to work for wages for employers of their choosing.

Conclusion

In the first half of the twentieth century, labour coercion, agricultural work and debt had become entangled in the US South. They underpinned the financial workings of the political economy, social practices, managerial practices, discourses of morality and normativity; they interlinked an official discourse (inscribed into practices of

accountancy and jurisprudence) with a tacit discourse (embodied social behaviours that made racial violence and inequality legitimate).

The transformation of agriculture in scale and mechanisation and of the rural labour market in the course of the first half of the twentieth century brought with it an evolution of the role and understanding of debt as an enabler of coercion. In the framework of 'peonage', managerial practices were central to manufacturing debt; debt was concocted by employers, often in connivance with the State. In this framework, debt had a wider social function: if physical violence was the ultimate enforcer of unequal social relations, it was debt, in its symbolic as well as material dimensions (and as a discourse as well as a social practice), that kept the 'subalterns' in their place.

As the rural labour force changed through the influx of Mexican migrants subject to deportation, the manufacturing of debt became 'externalised'; it occurred elsewhere, in a different nation, beyond the borders, and with the autonomous choice of workers who invested a part of the future in changing their present. At this point, employers only had to prolong that state of indebtedness with various, rather creative, ploys. However, debt remained the foundation upon which employers could exert increased labour discipline. In the process, any form of reciprocity and social bonding between debtors and creditors disappeared: workers did not work any more, by and large, for the people to whom they owed money.

As I was writing this chapter, I was reminded of several newspaper articles that I came across about the labour conditions of transnational migrants. The 2022 Qatar football World Cup has exposed to the wider public a phenomenon previously of interest mainly to the scholar: the thousands of migrants from south-east Asia who make up Qatar's exploited workforce pay exorbitant fees, between \$1,000 and \$4,000, to labour recruiters before their departure. *The Guardian* reported, 'Workers often have to take out high-interest loans or sell land to afford the fees, leaving them vulnerable to debt bondage – a form of modern slavery – as they are unable to leave their jobs until the debt has been repaid.'⁵⁹ This echoes for me David McNally's concept of 'predatory inclusion' of the poor and the marginalised into the global labour market in conditions of high insecurity, a process that is often attributed to the rise of neoliberalism and of policies like privatisation of public assets and cuts to welfare that have driven up inequality.⁶⁰ Through the externalisation of debt, employers have, over the course of the twentieth century, also externalised the violence of the predatory relationship, as workers are dispossessed before

the start of the labour relationship or even the migratory process. It is now back at home that migrants face 'imperilled livelihoods' by taking loans from moneylenders and 'coyote networks' and face the risks, not only economic, of not being able to repay their debts.⁶¹

One other example is the way scholars link wage theft to the erosion of labour standards enforcement since the 1980s, a problem strongly correlated with the conditions of immigrant workforces.⁶² This scholarship has captured the rising phenomenon of the exploitative practice of withholding or denying remuneration to immigrants susceptible to deportation, typically Latino migrants.⁶³ However, it is clear that this is a phenomenon that predates the decline of organised labour or the shift from a Fordist to a neoliberal regulatory regime, or even the more draconian anti-immigration regulatory regimes of the 2000s that make immigrants easy prey. As the historical analysis shows, vulnerable workers in the US had consistently been targets of these practices, which started as both a way for employers to save money and a way to keep workers in check by narrowing their opportunity to pay their debts. Plunging into the project (wider than this chapter) of tracing the genealogy of the nexus between debt, labour and coercion in the US throughout the twentieth century has therefore allowed me to complicate the narrative that would see the social restructuring of neoliberalism as the origin story of the growth of spurious forms of debt bondage. As this chapter shows, it has been long in the making: the mechanism of debt as enabler of coercion has been integrated in the workings of capitalism in ever-changing forms, which have included the use of advance remuneration to foster indebtedness. While nongovernmental organisations, scholars and policy-makers have increasingly paid attention to the relationship between debt and coerced labour in the contemporary US, this needs to be put into historical perspective to understand how throughout the twentieth century debt has obfuscated, to all but the staunchest labour advocates, the coercive nature of work relations under the smokescreen of contractual consent.

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Notes

- 1 Foner, *Nothing but Freedom: Emancipation and its Legacy*; Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877*; Wiener, 'Class Structure and Economic Development in the American South, 1865–1955', 1979; Wright, *Old South, New South*; Berlin et al., 'The Terrain of Freedom: The Struggle over the Meaning of Free Labor in the US South', 1986; Hahn, *A Nation under our Feet*; Baker and Kelly (eds), *After Slavery*; Rodrigue, *Reconstruction in the Cane Fields*.
- 2 Daniel, *The Shadow of Slavery: Peonage in the South*; Woodruff, *American Congo*; Blackmon, *Slavery by Another Name*; Goluboff, *The Lost Promise of Civil Rights*.
- 3 Harold Preece, 'Peonage – 1940 Style Slavery', Abolish Peonage Committee, Pamphlet, 1940. Copy in Department of Special Collection, Stanford University.
- 4 Balkin and Levinson, 'The Dangerous Thirteenth Amendment', 2012.
- 5 US Constitution, Amendment XIII, §1.
- 6 Harris, *Deep Souths*; Cohen, *At Freedom's Edge*; Cohen, 'Negro Involuntary Servitude in the South, 1865–1940: A Preliminary Analysis', 1976, 33–5, 47–53; Blackmon, *Slavery by Another Name*.
- 7 Peonage Investigation, 12 September 1947, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs Work Defense League, Box 128, Folder 01.
- 8 Affidavit attached to J. R. Butler to Workers Defense League, 7 June 1938, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Workers Defense League Collection, Box 172, Folder 3.
- 9 The transition to sharecropping in the nineteenth-century American South has been the focus of a vast debate in the last quarter of the twentieth century. The broad lines of that debate can be grasped in Mandle, *The Roots of Black Poverty*; Ransom and Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom*; Royce, *The Origins of Southern Sharecropping*; Saville, *The Work of Reconstruction*.
- 10 For a clear discussion of the meaning and differences between these forms of labour in the agricultural ladder of the South, see Woodman, 'Post-Civil War Southern Agriculture and the Law', 1979, 324–8.
- 11 Rodrigue, *Reconstruction in the Cane Fields*.
- 12 For a discussion on the transition in the late nineteenth century to a racialised and coercive notion of domestic servitude, see Branch and Wooten, 'Suited for Service: Racialized Rationalizations for the Ideal Domestic Servant from the Nineteenth to the Early Twentieth Century', 2012; for a general framework on the question of coercion and care in the US, see Glenn, *Forced to Care*.
- 13 Stanfield II, *Historical Foundations of Black Reflective Sociology*, 143–59.
- 14 Thomas, *The Plight of the Sharecropper*; Venkataramani, 'Norman Thomas, Arkansas Sharecroppers, and the Roosevelt Agricultural Policies, 1933–1937', 1965.
- 15 Raper, *Preface to Peasantry*.
- 16 On fluctuation of cotton prices and overproduction crises, see, for instance, Daniel, *Breaking the Land*, 18.
- 17 Otken, *The Ills of the South*; Ransom and Sutch, 'Debt Peonage in the Cotton South after the Civil War', 1972.
- 18 Johnson, *Shadow of the Plantation*, 128.
- 19 Black men were, with some exception, the primary target of immobilisation in a rural setting, but the phenomenon indirectly concerned women, too, when the man was employed as head of household and the work (productive or reproductive) of his wife and children considered as part of the labour that he would bring into the sharecropping arrangement.
- 20 Johnson, *Shadow of the Plantation*, 124.
- 21 Johnson, *Shadow of the Plantation*, 120, 128.
- 22 Woodson, *The Rural Negro*, 88. The reference to 'families' points to the indirect dependency of the whole household of the sharecropper or tenant who contracted the debt.
- 23 Peonage Cases, 123 F. 671 (1903).
- 24 Samec, 'Discursive Construction and Materiality of Debt in Context of Housing'.
- 25 Lazzarato, *The Making of the Indebted Man*, 45–6.
- 26 Raper, *Preface to Peasantry*, 153.
- 27 Raper, *Preface to Peasantry*, 172.
- 28 Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*.
- 29 For a full account of practical handbooks aimed at assisting freedmen in their transition from slavery to freedom, see Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, 125–63.

- 30 Raper, *Shadow of the Plantation*, 161.
- 31 Woodson, *The Rural Negro*, 68.
- 32 Marx, quoted in Thorup, 'The Promissory Self-Credit and Debt Rationalities', 95.
- 33 Raper, *Shadow of the Plantation*, 162.
- 34 For an introduction to the hacienda system in its colonial origin, see Van Young, *Hacienda and Market*. See also Lindley, *Haciendas and Economic Development*. For a comparison with Mexican peonage, see Knight, 'Mexican Peonage: What Was It and Why Was It?', 1986.
- 35 *Clyatt vs United States* (1905), <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/197/207/>.
- 36 'Peonage in the United States' (1907), <https://awpc.cattcenter.iastate.edu/2019/11/22/peonage-in-the-united-states-1907/>.
- 37 'Peonage in the United States' (1907).
- 38 Holley, *The Second Great Emancipation*. On the African-American migration, see Grossman, *Land of Hope*; Marks, *Farewell—We're Good and Gone: The Great Black Migration*; Gottlieb, *Making Their Own Way: Southern Blacks' Migration to Pittsburgh, 1916–1930*; Phillips, *Alabama North: African-American Migrants, Community, and Working-Class Activism in Cleveland, 1915–45*.
- 39 Pizzolato, 'On the Unwary and the Weak'; Goluboff, 'Race, Labor, and the Thirteenth Amendment in the 1940s Department of Justice', 2006.
- 40 See, for instance, the cases of 'peonage' involving Mexican workers described in the Federal Bureau of Investigation report, 3 November 1943, Department of Justice, Peonage Files, Reel 23, page 0901–0923; Federal Bureau of Investigation report, 22 August 1944, Department of Justice, Peonage Files, Reel 24, page 0140.
- 41 Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas*, 175.
- 42 For the broader context of this continuity, see Pizzolato, 'Harvests of Shame', 2018.
- 43 One of my favourite introductions to the complex labour issues raised by the Programa Bracero is Bernardi, 'Within the Factory of Mobility'. See also the classic Calavita, *Inside the State: The Bracero Program, Immigration, and the INS*.
- 44 'Statement of the Rev. James L. Vizzard', 11 June 1958, Stanford University libraries, Special Collections. Coll. 324, Box 31, Series VI, Fol. 9.
- 45 Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans*, 220–3.
- 46 Interview with Catalino Díaz Villa by Anais Acosta, 2008, 'Interview no. 1340', Institute of Oral History, University of Texas at El Paso for the Bracero History Archive.
- 47 Interview with Barnabé Álvarez Díaz by Alejandra Díaz, 2008, 'Interview no. 1331', Institute of Oral History, University of Texas at El Paso for the Bracero History Archive.
- 48 'Extension of Mexican Farm Labor Program', Hearings of the House of Representatives, March 22, 1960, 425.
- 49 In the matter of Yuma Producers Cooperative Association, Folder 'Joint Determinations, 1959 [1 of 2]', RG174, Department of Labor, Office of the Solicitor, Region IX, Records Relating to the Mexican Labor 'Bracero' Programme, 1950–1965, Container #4.
- 50 In the matter of Northern California Growers Association, Folder 'Joint Determinations, 1959 [1 of 2]', RG174, Department of Labor, Office of the Solicitor, Region IX, Records Relating to the Mexican Labor 'Bracero' Programme, 1950–1965, Container #4.
- 51 Richard Baquera, 'Eleanor Martin', in Bracero History Archive, Item #46, <http://braceroarchive.org/items/show/46>.
- 52 Myrna Parra-Mantilla, 'Ignacio Nájera', in Bracero History Archive, Item #17, <http://braceroarchive.org/items/show/17>; Mario Sifuentes, 'Ismael Rodríguez Rico', in Bracero History Archive, Item #409, <http://braceroarchive.org/items/show/409>.
- 53 Department of Industrial Relations, from Attorney Shore to Legal Section, January 8, 1953, Folder Special Problems, 1953–56 Interpretation Art. 21 of Agreement, RG174, Department of Labor, Office of the Solicitor, Region IX, Records Relating to the Mexican Labor 'Bracero' Programme, 1950–1965, Container #9.
- 54 In the matter of Martin Gandy, Joint Determination, 1959 [2 of 2], RG174, Department of Labor, Office of the Solicitor, Region IX, Records Relating to the Mexican Labor 'Bracero' Programme, 1950–1965, Container #4.
- 55 In the matter of A-A Harvesting Association, La Feria, Texas, Folder Joint Determinations, 1960 [1 of 2], RG174, Department of Labor, Office of the Solicitor, Region IX, Records Relating to the Mexican Labor 'Bracero' Programme, 1950–1965, Container #4.
- 56 In the matter of J-P Terrell, Navasota, Texas, Folder Joint Determinations, 1960 [1 of 2],

- RG174, Department of Labor, Office of the Solicitor, Region IX, Records Relating to the Mexican Labor 'Bracero' Programme, 1950–1965, Container #4.
- 57 In the matter of Hargill Cooperative Association, Hargill, Texas. Folder: Joint Determinations 1959 [1 of 2]. RG174, Department of Labor, Office of the Solicitor, Region IX, Records Relating to the Mexican Labor 'Bracero' Programme, 1950–1965, Container #4.
- 58 In the matter of Yolo Growers Inc., Woodland California, Folder: Joint Determinations 1959 [1 of 2]. RG174, Department of Labor, Office of the Solicitor, Region IX, Records Relating to the Mexican Labor 'Bracero' Programme, 1950–1965, Container #4.
- 59 'Revealed: Migrant Workers in Qatar Forced to Pay Billions in Recruitment Fees', *The Guardian*, 31 March 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/mar/31/migrant-workers-in-qatar-forced-to-pay-billions-in-recruitment-fees-world-cup> [accessed 16 July 2022].
- 60 McNally, *Global Slump*; see also De La Barra, 'Who owes and who pays?', 2006.
- 61 Johnson and Woodhouse, 'Securing the Return', 2018.
- 62 Fine and Bartley, 'Raising the Floor', 2019; Bobo, *Wage Theft in America*.
- 63 Fussell, 'The Deportation Threat Dynamic', 2011.

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