

The Bernstein & Byres Prize in Agrarian Change for 2010

The 'Bernstein & Byres Prize' is the annual prize of the *Journal of Agrarian Change* (*JAC*). It is named after the founding editors of the *Journal* and has been awarded since the 2008 volume. The aim is to celebrate the outstanding contributions received by awarding a prize of £500 donated by our publisher, Wiley-Blackwell, to the best published article in any one year. Through this, we also hope to reinforce the remit of the *Journal* in the field of agrarian political economy and to encourage scholarly work within this tradition.

The articles are judged on: (a) their quality as works of political economy; (b) their analytical power; (c) their originality; and (d) the quality of evidence presented and its deployment. The winner of the 2010 prize was selected by a jury consisting of Terence Byres, Henry Bernstein and three members of the International Advisory Board (IAB) of the *Journal*, based on a shortlist of articles selected by the *JAC* editors. The three selected members of the IAB vary from year to year. The editors greatly appreciate the evaluators' careful comments, as well as the efforts they put into the task.

We are pleased to announce that the winner of the Bernstein & Byres Prize for the best article published in *JAC* in 2010 is Jason W. Moore for 'Amsterdam is Standing on Norway', published in two parts: 'Part I: The Alchemy of Capital, Empire and Nature in the Diaspora of Silver, 1545–1648' 10(1): 33–68 and 'Part II: The Global North Atlantic in the Ecological Revolution of the Long Seventeenth Century' [*JAC*, 10(2): 188–227].

The article is an essay on the historical geography of the rise of capitalism (p. 33). However, it is more than that. The objective is to 'complete' the history of the origins of capitalism by marrying political economy with ecological history: capitalism as 'world ecology'. A key notion in this endeavour is that of shifting 'commodity frontier(s)', and their geographies (p. 34). The 'frontiers' explored are not exclusively agrarian and are often more concerned with forests/timber and fisheries rather than crop (and livestock) production, with the main exception of Polish grain. However, this in itself focuses attention on agrarian–industrial links in the early origins of capitalism, and not just the later phase of the completed 'transition'. In one way, the chronological–cum–spatial dimensions of the argument chime with Jairus Banaji's view of the origins of capitalism (*qua* world market) but, in another way, this leaves space for Brenner's emphasis on the breakthrough in the productivity of grain farming, when and where it occurred.

This is indeed a wonderful and magisterial article. As one of the jury members put it: 'It is a brilliant paper, a true tour de force. It is original and has an expansive sweep that is invigorating. It is powerfully and eloquently argued and it is full of penetrating insights. It is political economy of a high order. The author has an impressive command of the sources he uses. It most certainly adds to our understanding of the transition to capitalism and of environmental history, and of the relationship between the two. It is, I think, one of the best papers to have been published in the *JAC* since its inception. I enjoyed reading it greatly, and learned much from it.' We, the editors, congratulate Jason Moore as the praiseworthy winner of the 2010 Bernstein & Byres Prize in *Agrarian Change*.

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Cristóbal Kay
Jens Lerche
Carlos Oya