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THE
MARX-ENGELS
READER

SECOND EDITION

Edited by

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ever-extending scale, the co-operative form of the labour-process, the conscious technical application of science, the methodical cultivation of the soil, the transformation of the instruments of labour into instruments of labour only usable in common, the economising of all means of production by their use as the means of production of combined, socialised labour, the entanglement of all peoples in the net of the world-market, and with this, the international character of the capitalistic régime. Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolise all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working-class, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organised by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under it. Centralisation of the means of production and socialisation of labour at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated.

The capitalist mode of appropriation, the result of the capitalist mode of production, produces capitalist private property. This is the first negation of individual private property, as founded on the labour of the proprietor. But capitalist production begets, with the inexorability of a law of Nature, its own negation. It is the negation of negation. This does not re-establish private property for the producer, but gives him individual property based on the acquisitions of the capitalist era: *i.e.*, on co-operation and the possession in common of the land and of the means of production.

The transformation of scattered private property, arising from individual labour, into capitalist private property is, naturally, a process, incomparably more protracted, violent, and difficult, than the transformation of capitalistic private property, already practically resting on socialised production, into socialised property. In the former case, we had the expropriation of the mass of the people by a few usurpers; in the latter, we have the expropriation of a few usurpers by the mass of the people.

Capital, Volume Three

KARL MARX

Volumes Two and Three of *Capital*, left in incomplete manuscript by Marx, were later edited and brought out by Engels. Two excerpts from Volume Three are presented here.

The first (whose title has been given by the editor of this reader) gives Marx's vision of man in a future condition of freedom—creative leisure—made possible by machine industry and the worldwide proletarian revolution that, as he saw it, was destined to liberate man's productive activity from the fetters of capitalist acquisitiveness. But there would remain, in this realm of freedom, a residual realm of necessity: the labour time required to produce needed goods under even the most advanced technology.

The second selection is the famous last chapter of Volume Three, entitled "Classes," in which the manuscript breaks off after Marx has asked: "What constitutes a class?" In fact, there is no mystery about his answer. A class, in Marx's view, is a special form of the division of labor in society.*

On the Realm of Necessity and the Realm of Freedom

We have seen that the capitalist process of production is a historically determined form of the social process of production in general. The latter is as much a production process of material conditions of human life as a process taking place under specific historical and economic production relations, producing and reproducing these production relations themselves, and thereby also the bearers of this process, their material conditions of existence and their mutual relations, *i.e.*, their particular socio-economic form. For the aggregate of these relations, in which the agents of this production stand with respect to Nature and to one another, and in which they produce, is precisely society, considered from the standpoint of its economic structure. Like all its predecessors, the capitalist process of production proceeds under definite material conditions, which are, however, simultaneously the bearers of definite social relations entered into by individuals in the process of reproducing

* See, for example, his statement in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (p. 608, below): "In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that

divide their mode of life, their interests and their culture from those of the other classes, and put them in hostile contrast to the latter, they form a class."

their life. Those conditions, like these relations, are on the one hand prerequisites, on the other hand results and creations of the capitalist process of production; they are produced and reproduced by it. We saw also that capital—and the capitalist is merely capital personified and functions in the process of production solely as the agent of capital—in its corresponding social process of production, pumps a definite quantity of surplus labour out of the direct producers, or labourers; capital obtains this surplus labour without an equivalent, and in essence it always remains forced labour—no matter how much it may seem to result from free contractual agreement. This surplus labour appears as surplus value, and this surplus value exists as a surplus product. Surplus labour in general, as labour performed over and above the given requirements, must always remain. In the capitalist as well as in the slave system, etc., it merely assumes an antagonistic form and is supplemented by complete idleness of a stratum of society. A definite quantity of surplus labour is required as insurance against accidents, and by the necessary and progressive expansion of the process of reproduction in keeping with the development of the needs and the growth of population, which is called accumulation from the viewpoint of the capitalist. It is one of the civilizing aspects of capital that it enforces this surplus labour in a manner and under conditions which are more advantageous to the development of the productive forces, social relations, and the creation of the elements for a new and higher form than under the preceding forms of slavery, serfdom, etc. Thus it gives rise to a stage, on the one hand, in which coercion and monopolization of social development (including its material and intellectual advantages) by one portion of society at the expense of the other are eliminated; on the other hand, it creates the material means and embryonic conditions, making it possible in a higher form of society to combine this surplus labour with a greater reduction of time devoted to material labour in general. For, depending on the development of labour productivity, surplus labour may be large in a small total working day, and relatively small in a large total working day. If the necessary labour time = 3 and the surplus labour = 3, then the total working day = 6 and the rate of surplus labour = 100%. If the necessary labour = 9 and the surplus labour = 3, then the total working day = 12 and the rate of surplus labour only 33⅓%. In that case, it depends upon the labour productivity how much use value shall be produced in a definite time, hence also in a definite surplus labour time. The actual wealth of society, and the possibility of constantly expanding its reproduction process, therefore, do not depend upon the duration of surplus labour, but upon its productivity and the more or less copious conditions of production under which it is

performed. In fact, the realm of freedom actually begins only where labour which is determined by necessity and mundane considerations ceases; thus in the very nature of things it lies beyond the sphere of actual material production. Just as the savage must wrestle with Nature to satisfy his wants, to maintain and reproduce life, so must civilized man, and he must do so in all social formations and under all possible modes of production. With his development this realm of physical necessity expands as a result of his wants; but, at the same time, the forces of production which satisfy these wants also increase. Freedom in this field can only consist in socialized man, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by the blind forces of Nature; and achieving this with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most favourable to, and worthy of, their human nature. But it nonetheless still remains a realm of necessity. Beyond it begins that development of human energy which is an end in itself, the true realm of freedom, which, however, can blossom forth only with the realm of necessity as its basis. The shortening of the working day is its basic prerequisite.

Classes

The owners merely of labour-power, owners of capital, and land-owners, whose respective sources of income are wages, profit and ground-rent, in other words, wage-labourers, capitalists and land-owners, constitute then three big classes of modern society based upon the capitalist mode of production.

In England, modern society is indisputably most highly and classically developed in economic structure. Nevertheless, even here the stratification of classes does not appear in its pure form. Middle and intermediate strata even here obliterate lines of demarcation everywhere (although incomparably less in rural districts than in the cities). However, this is immaterial for our analysis. We have seen that the continual tendency and law of development of the capitalist mode of production is more and more to divorce the means of production from labour and more and more to concentrate the scattered means of production into large groups, thereby transforming labour into wage-labour and the means of production into capital. And to this tendency, on the other hand, corresponds the independent separation of landed property from capital and labour, or the transformation of all landed property into the form of landed property corresponding to the capitalist mode of production.

The first question to be answered is this: What constitutes a class?—and the reply to this follows naturally from the reply to

another question, namely: What makes wage-labourers, capitalists and landlords constitute the three great social classes?

At first glance—the identity of revenues and sources of revenue. There are three great social groups whose members, the individuals forming them, live on wages, profit and ground-rent respectively, on the realisation of their labour-power, their capital, and their landed property.

However, from this standpoint, physicians and officials, e.g., would also constitute two classes, for they belong to two distinct social groups, the members of each of these groups receiving their revenue from one and the same source. The same would also be true of the infinite fragmentation of interest and rank into which the division of social labour splits labourers as well as capitalists and landlords—the latter, e.g., into owners of vineyards, farm owners, owners of forests, mine owners and owners of fisheries.¹

1. Here the manuscript breaks off.

Crisis Theory

KARL MARX

Business cycles and the related though not identical topic of economic crises fascinated Marx. He invested much time in their study and often indicated how important he considered their impact on society and political systems. Yet he left no developed account of his views on crises. The selection presented here comes from one of Marx's most underappreciated works, *Theories of Surplus Value*, a three-volume work which has sometimes been described as Volume Four of *Capital*.

It is Chapter XVII of this work, and not *Capital* proper, that contains the best and most systematic discussion by Marx of economic crises. The discussion takes the form of an attack on Say's Law of Markets. This was an argument, put forward by Jean-Baptiste Say (1767–1832) and James Mill (1773–1836) and accepted by David Ricardo (1772–1823), for the impossibility of a sustained general glut (of "overproduced" commodities). It is interesting that Marx's attack, like modern criticism of Say, centers on the potentially grave consequences for economic equilibrium of the generalization of the money economy.*

Ricardo's Denial of General Over-Production. Possibility of a Crisis Inherent in the Inner Contradictions of Commodity and Money

* * *

So far as crises are concerned, all those writers who describe the real movement of prices, or all experts, who write in the actual situation of a crisis, have been right in ignoring the allegedly theoretical twaddle and in contenting themselves with the idea that what may be true in abstract theory—namely, that no gluts of the market and so forth are possible—is, nevertheless, wrong in practice. The constant recurrence of crises has in fact reduced the rigmarole of Say and others to a phraseology which is now only used in times of prosperity but is cast aside in times of crises.

In the crises of the world market, the contradictions and antagonisms of bourgeois production are strikingly revealed. Instead of investigating the nature of the conflicting elements which erupt in the catastrophe, the apologists content themselves with denying the catastrophe itself and insisting, in the face of their regular and periodic recurrence, that if production were carried on according to the

* The above headnote was prepared by Thomas Ferguson. [R. T.]

Against this background, Tucker presents *Das Kapital* as a work belonging to the post-Hegelian mythical development of Germany philosophy. Considering in turn the genesis of Marxism and the underlying continuity of his thought from the early writings to *Das Kapital*, Tucker shows the theme of alienation is central throughout. In the years since the book was first written, comments and criticism have encouraged Tucker to change his position somewhat. This is explained in a new introduction that goes beyond the interpretative enterprise of the rest of the book to assess Marx in relation to contempo