tries, the highly developed Roman civil law was immediately adopted again and raised to authority. When later the bourgeoisie had acquired so much power that the princes took up its interests in order to overthrow the feudal nobility by means of the bourgeoisie, there began in all countries—in France in the sixteenth century—the real development of law, which in all countries except England proceeded on the basis of the Roman Codex. In England, too, Roman legal principles had to be introduced to further the development of civil law (especially in the case of movables). It must not be forgotten that law has just as little an independent history as religion.

In civil law the existing property relationships are declared to be the result of the general will. The *jus utendi et abutendi* itself asserts on the one hand the fact that private property has become entirely independent of the community, and on the other the illusion that private property itself is based solely on the private will, the arbitrary disposal of the thing. In practice, the *abuti*6 has very definite economic limitations for the owner of private property, if he does not wish to see his property and hence his *jus abutendi* pass into other hands, since actually the thing, considered merely with reference to his will, is not a thing at all, but only becomes a thing, true property in intercourse, and independently of the law (a relationship, which the philosophers call an idea4). This juridical illusion, which reduces law to the mere will, necessarily leads, in the further development of property relationships, to the position that a man may have a legal title to a thing without really having the thing. If, for instance, the income from a piece of land is lost owing to competition, then the proprietor has certainly his legal title to it along with the *jus utendi et abutendi*. But he can do nothing with it: he owns nothing as a landed proprietor if in addition he has not enough capital to cultivate his ground. This illusion of the jurists also explains the fact that for them, as for every code, it is altogether fortuitous that individuals enter into relationships among themselves (e.g., contracts); it explains why they consider that these relationships [can] be entered into or not at will, and that their content rests purely on the individual [free] will of the contracting parties.

Whenever, through the development of industry and commerce, new forms of intercourse have been evolved (e.g., insurance companies, etc.), the law has always been compelled to admit them among the modes of acquiring property.

4. The right of using and consuming (also: abusing), i.e., of disposing of a thing at will.
5. Consuming or abusing.
6. Marginal note by Marx: "For the philosophers relationship = idea. They only know the relation of 'Man' to himself and hence for them all real relations become ideas."

7. Four pages of the manuscript are missing here.
And thus only with big industry does the abolition of private property become possible.

In big industry and competition the whole mass of conditions of existence, limitations, biases of individuals, are fused together into the two simplest forms: private property and labour. With money every form of intercourse, and intercourse itself, is considered fortuitous for the individuals. Thus money implies that all previous intercourse was only intercourse of individuals under particular conditions, not of individuals as individuals. These conditions are reduced to two: accumulated labour or private property, and actual labour. If both or one of these cases, then intercourse comes to a standstill. The modern economists themselves, e.g., Sismondi, Cherbuliez, etc., oppose “association of individuals” to “association of capital.” On the other hand, the individuals themselves are entirely subordinated to the division of labour and hence are brought into the most complete dependence on one another. Private property, insofar as within itself it is opposed to labour, evolves out of the necessity of accumulation, and has still, to begin with, rather the form of the communality; but in its further development it approaches more and more the modern form of private property. The division of labour implies from the outset the division of the conditions of labour, of tools and materials, and thus the splitting-up of accumulated capital among different owners, and thus also, the division between capital and labour, and the different forms of property itself. The more the division of labour develops and accumulation grows, the sharper are the forms that this process of differentiation assumes. Labour itself can only exist on the premise of this fragmentation.

Thus two facts are here revealed. First the productive forces appear as a world for themselves, quite independent of and divorced from the individuals, alongside the individuals: the reason for this is that the individuals, whose forces they are, exist split up and in opposition to one another, whilst, on the other hand, these forces are only real forces in the intercourse and association of these individuals. Thus, on the one hand, we have a totality of productive forces, which have, as it were, taken on a material form and are for the individuals no longer the forces of the individuals but of private property, and hence of the individuals only insofar as they are owners of private property themselves. Never, in any earlier period, have the productive forces taken on a form so indifferent to the intercourse of individuals as individuals, because their intercourse itself was formerly a restricted one. On the other hand, standing over against these productive forces, we have the majority of the individuals from whom these forces have been wrested away.

This appropriation is further determined by the manner in which it must be effected. It can only be effected through a union, which
by the character of the proletariat itself can again only be a univer-
sal one, and through a revolution, in which, on the one hand, the
power of the earlier mode of production and intercourse and social
organisation is overthrown, and, on the other hand, there develops
the universal character and the energy of the proletariat, without
which the revolution cannot be accomplished; and in which, fur-
ther, the proletariat rids itself of everything that still clings to it
from its previous position in society.

Only at this stage does self-activity coincide with material life,
which corresponds to the development of individuals into complete
individuals and the casting-off of all natural limitations. The trans-
formation of labour into self-activity corresponds to the transform-
ation of the earlier limited intercourse into the intercourse of indi-
viduals as such. With the appropriation of the total productive
forces through united individuals, private property comes to an
end. Whilst previously in history a particular condition always
appeared as accidental, now the isolation of individuals and the
particular private gain of each man have themselves become acci-
dental.

The individuals, who are no longer subject to the division of
labour, have been conceived by the philosophers as an ideal, under
the name “Man.” They have conceived the whole process which
we have outlined as the evolutionary process of “Man,” so that at
every historical stage “Man” was substituted for the individuals and
shown as the motive force of history. The whole process was thus
conceived as a process of the self-estrangement of “Man,” and this
was essentially due to the fact that the average individual of the
later stage was always foisted on to the earlier stage, and the con-
sciousness of a later age on to the individuals of an earlier. Through
this inversion, which from the first is an abstract image of the
actual conditions, it was possible to transform the whole of history
into an evolutionary process of consciousness.

Finally, from the conception of history we have sketched we
obtain these further conclusions: (1) In the development of pro-
ductive forces there comes a stage when productive forces and
means of intercourse are brought into being, which, under the exist-
ing relationships, only cause mischief, and are no longer productive
but destructive forces (machinery and money); and connected
with this a class is called forth, which has to bear all the burdens
of society without enjoying its advantages, which, ousted from society,
is forced into the most decided antagonism to all other classes; a
class which forms the majority of all members of society, and from
which emanates the consciousness of the necessity of a fundamen-
tal revolution, the communist consciousness, which may, of course,
arise among the other classes too through the contemplation of the
situation of this class. (2) The conditions under which definite
productive forces can be applied, are the conditions of the rule of a
definite class of society, whose social power, deriving from its prop-
erty, has its practical-idealistic expression in each case in the form
of the State; and, therefore, every revolutionary struggle is directed
against a class, which till then has been in power. (3) In all revo-
lutions until now the mode of activity always remained unscathed
and it was only a question of a different distribution of this activity,
a new distribution of labour to other persons, whilst the communist
revolution is directed against the preceding mode of activity, does
away with labour, and abolishes the rule of all classes with the
classes themselves, because it is carried through by the class which
no longer counts as a class in society, is not recognised as a class,
and is in itself the expression of the dissolution of all classes, nation-
alities, etc., within present society; and (4) Both for the produc-
tion on a mass scale of this communist consciousness, and for the
success of the cause itself, the alteration of men on a mass scale is
necessary, an alteration which can only take place in a practical
movement, a revolution; this revolution is necessary, therefore, not
only because the ruling class cannot be overthrown in any other
way, but also because the class overthrowing it can only in a revolu-
tion succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become
fitted to found society anew.

C. COMMUNISM. THE PRODUCTION OF THE FORM
OF INTERCOURSE ITSELF

Communism differs from all previous movements in that it over-
turns the basis of all earlier relations of production and intercourse,
and for the first time consciously treats all natural premises as the
creatures of hitherto existing men, strips them of their natural char-
acter and subjugates them to the power of the united individuals.
Its organisation is, therefore, essentially economic, the material
production of the conditions of this unity; it turns existing condi-
tions into conditions of unity. The reality, which communism is
creating, is precisely the true basis for rendering it impossible that
anything should exist independently of individuals, insofar as reality
is only a product of the preceding intercourse of individuals
themselves. Thus the communists in practice treat the conditions
created up to now by production and intercourse as inorganic con-

9. Marginal note by Marx: "The people are interested in maintaining the present
state of production."
ditions, without, however, imagining that it was the plan or the destiny of previous generations to give them material, and without believing that these conditions were inorganic for the individuals creating them. The difference between the individual as a person and what is accidental to him is not a conceptual difference but a historical fact. This distinction has a different significance at different times—e.g., the estate as something accidental to the individual in the eighteenth century, the family more or less too. It is not a distinction that we have to make for each age, but one which each age makes itself from among the different elements which it finds in existence, and indeed not according to any theory, but compelled by material collisions in life. What appears accidental to the later age as opposed to the earlier—and this applies also to the elements handed down by an earlier age—is a form of intercourse which corresponded to a definite stage of development of the productive forces. The relation of the productive forces to the form of intercourse is the relation of the form of intercourse to the occupation or activity of the individuals. (The fundamental form of this activity is, of course, material, on which depend all other forms—mental, political, religious, etc. The various shaping of material life is, of course, in every case dependent on the needs which are already developed, and the production, as well as the satisfaction, of these needs is an historical process, which is not found in the case of a sheep or a dog. (Stirner’s refractory principal argument adversus hominem), although sheep and dogs in their present form certainly, but malgré eux, are products of an historical process.) The conditions under which individuals have intercourse with each other, so long as the above-mentioned contradiction is absent, are conditions appertaining to their individuality, in no way external to them; conditions under which these definite individuals, living under definite relations, can alone produce their material life and what is connected with it, are thus the conditions of their self-activity and are produced by this self-activity.¹ The definite condition under which they produce, thus corresponds, as long as the contradiction has not yet appeared, to the reality of their conditioned nature, their one-sided existence, the one-sidedness of which only becomes evident when the contradiction enters on the scene and thus exists for the later individuals. Then this condition appears as an accidental fetter, and the consciousness that it is a fetter is imputed to the earlier age as well.

These various conditions, which appear first as conditions of self-activity, later as fetters upon it, form in the whole evolution of history a coherent series of forms of intercourse, the coherence of which consists in this: in the place of an earlier form of inter-

¹. Marginal note by Marx: “Production of the form of intercourse itself.”

course, which has become a fetter, a new one is put, corresponding to the more developed productive forces and, hence, to the advanced mode of the self-activity of individuals—a form which in its turn becomes a fetter and is then replaced by another. Since these conditions correspond at every stage to the simultaneous development of the productive forces, their history is at the same time the history of the evolving productive forces taken over by each new generation, and is, therefore, the history of the development of the forces of the individuals themselves.

Since this evolution takes place naturally, i.e., is not subordinated to a general plan of freely combined individuals, it proceeds from various localities, tribes, nations, branches of labour, etc., each of which to start with develops independently of the others and only gradually enters into relation with the others. Furthermore, it takes place only very slowly; the various stages and interests are never completely overcome, but only subordinated to the prevailing interest and trail along beside the latter for centuries afterwards. It follows from this that within a nation itself the individuals, even apart from their pecuniary circumstances, have quite different developments, and that an earlier interest, the peculiar form of intercourse of which has already been ousted by that belonging to a later interest, remains for a long time afterwards in possession of a traditional power in the illusory community (State, law), which has won an existence independent of the individuals; a power which in the last resort can only be broken by a revolution. This explains why, with reference to individual points which allow of a more general summing-up, consciousness can sometimes appear further advanced than the contemporary empirical relationships, so that in the struggles of a latter epoch one can refer to earlier theoreticians as authorities.

On the other hand, in countries which, like North America, begin in an already advanced historical epoch, the development proceeds very rapidly. Such countries have no other natural premises than the individuals, who settled there and were led to do so because the forms of intercourse of the old countries did not correspond to their wants. Thus they begin with the most advanced individuals of the old countries, and, therefore, with the correspondingly most advanced form of intercourse, before this form of intercourse has been able to establish itself in the old countries.² This is the case with all colonies, insofar as they are not mere military or trading stations. Carthage, the Greek colonies, and Iceland in the

². Personal energy of the individuals of various nations—Germans and Americans—energy even through cross-breeding—hence the criticism of the Germans; in France and England, etc., foreign peoples transplanted to an already developed soil, in America to an entirely new soil; in Germany the natural population quietly stayed where it was. [Marx]
eleventh and twelfth centuries, provide examples of this. A similar
relationship issues from conquest, when a form of intercourse
which has evolved on another soil is brought over complete to the
conquered country: whereas in its home it was still encumbered
with interests and relationships left over from earlier periods, here
it can and must be established completely and without hindrance,
if only to assure the conquerors' lasting power. (England and
Naples after the Norman conquest, when they received the most
perfect form of feudal organisation.)

Nothing is more common than the notion that in history up till now it has only been a question of taking. The barbarians take the
Roman Empire, and this fact of taking is made to explain the transi-
tion from the old world to the feudal system. In this taking by
barbarians, however, the question is, whether the nation which is
conquered has evolved industrial productive forces, as is the case
with modern peoples, or whether their productive forces are based
for the most part merely on their association and on the commu-
nity. Taking is further determined by the object taken. A banker's
fortune, consisting of paper, cannot be taken at all, without the
taker's submitting to the conditions of production and intercourse
of the country taken. Similarly the total industrial capital of a
modern industrial country. And finally, everywhere there is very
soon an end to taking, and when there is nothing more to take, you
have to set about producing. From this necessity of producing,
which very soon asserts itself, it follows that the form of commu-
nity adopted by the settling conquerors must correspond to the
stage of development of the productive forces they find in exist-
ence; or, if this is not the case from the start, it must change
according to the productive forces. By this, too, is explained the
fact, which people profess to have noticed everywhere in the period
following the migration of the peoples, namely, that the servant
was master, and that the conquerors very soon took over language,
culture and manners from the conquered. The feudal system was
by no means brought complete from Germany, but had its origin,
as far as the conquerors were concerned, in the martial organisa-
tion of the army during the actual conquest, and this only evolved
after the conquest into the feudal system proper through the action
of the productive forces found in the conquered countries. To what
extent this form was determined by the productive forces is
shown by the abortive attempts to realise other forms derived from
reminiscences of ancient Rome (Charlemagne, etc.).

Thus all collisions in history have their origin, according to our
view, in the contradiction between the productive forces and the
form of intercourse. Incidentally, to lead to collisions in a country,
this contradiction need not necessarily have reached its extreme

limit in this particular country. The competition with industrially
more advanced countries, brought about by the expansion of inter-
national intercourse, is sufficient to produce a similar contradic-
tion in countries with a backward industry (e.g., the latent proletariat
in Germany brought into view by the competition of English indus-
try).

This contradiction between the productive forces and the form
of intercourse, which, as we saw, has occurred several times in past
history, without, however, endangering the basis, necessarily on
each occasion burst out in a revolution, taking on at the same time
various subsidiary forms, such as all-embracing collisions, collisions
of various classes, contradiction of consciousness, battle of ideas,
etc., political conflict, etc. From a narrow point of view one may
isolate one of these subsidiary forms and consider it as the basis of
these revolutions; and this is all the more easy as the individuals
who started the revolutions had illusions about their own activity
according to their degree of culture and the stage of historical
development.

The transformation, through the division of labour, of personal
powers (relationships) into material powers, cannot be dispelled by
dismissing the general idea of it from one's mind, but can only be
abolished by the individuals again subjecting these material powers
to themselves and abolishing the division of labour. This is not
possible without the community. Only in community [with others
has each] individual the means of cultivating his gifts in all direc-
tions; only in the community, therefore, is personal freedom possi-
bile. In the previous substitutes for the community, in the State,
etc., personal freedom has existed only for the individuals who
developed within the relationships of the ruling class, and only
insofar as they were individuals of this class. The illusory commu-
nity, in which individuals have up till now combined, always took
on an independent existence in relation to them, and was at
the same time, since it was the combination of one class over against
another, not only a completely illusory community, but a new
fetters as well. In the real community the individuals obtain their
freedom in and through their association.

It follows from all we have been saying up till now that the com-
munal relationship into which the individuals of a class entered,
and which was determined by their common interests over against
a third party, was always a community to which these individuals
belonged only as average individuals, only insofar as they lived
within the conditions of existence of their class—a relationship in
which they participated not as individuals but as members of a
class. With the community of revolutionary proletarians, on the

3. Marginal note by Engels: 'Feuerbach: being and essence.)'
other hand, who take their conditions of existence and those of all members of society under their control, it is just the reverse; it is as individuals that the individuals participate in it. It is just this combination of individuals (assuming the advanced stage of modern productive forces, of course) which puts the conditions of the free development and movement of individuals under their control—conditions which were previously abandoned to chance and had won an independent existence over against the separate individuals just because of their separation as individuals, and because of the necessity of their combination which had been determined by the division of labour, and through their separation had become a bond alien to them. Combination up till now (by no means an arbitrary one, such as is expounded for example in the Contrat social, but a necessary one) was an agreement upon these conditions, within which the individuals were free to enjoy the freaks of fortune (compare e.g., the formation of the North American State and the South American republics). This right to the undisturbed enjoyment, within certain conditions, of fortune and chance has up till now been called personal freedom. These conditions of existence are, of course, only the productive forces and forms of intercourse at any particular time.

If from a philosophical point of view one considers this evolution of individuals in the common conditions of existence of estates and classes, which followed on one another, and in the accompanying general conceptions forced upon them, it is certainly very easy to imagine that in these individuals the species, or “Man,” has evolved, or that they evolved “Man”—and in this way one can give history some hard clouts on the ear. One can conceive these various estates and classes to be specific terms of the general expression, subordinate varieties of the species, or evolutionary phases of “Man.”

This subsuming of individuals under definite classes cannot be abolished until a class has taken shape, which has no longer any particular class interest to assert against the ruling class.

Individuals have always built on themselves, but naturally on themselves within their given historical conditions and relationships, not on the “pure” individual in the sense of the ideologists. But in the course of historical evolution, and precisely through the inevitable fact that within the division of labour social relationships take on an independent existence, there appears a division within the life of each individual, insofar as it is personal and insofar as it

4. The statement which frequently occurs with Saint Max that each is all that he is through the State is fundamentally the same as the statement that bourgeois is only a specimen of the bourgeois species; a statement which presupposes that the class of bourgeois existed before the individuals constituting it. Marx

Marginal note by Marx to this sentence: “With the philosophers pre-existence of the class.”

is determined by some branch of labour and the conditions pertaining to it. (We do not mean it to be understood from this that, for example, the rentier, the capitalist, etc., cease to be persons; but their personality is conditioned and determined by quite definite class relations, and the division appears only in their opposition to another class and, for themselves, only when they go bankrupt.) In the estate (and even more in the tribe) this is as yet concealed: for instance, a nobleman always remains a nobleman, a commoner always a commoner, apart from his other relationships, a quality inseparable from his individuality. The division between the personal and the class individual, the accidental nature of the conditions of life for the individual, appears only with the emergence of the class, which is itself a product of the bourgeoisie. This accidental character is only engendered and developed by competition and the struggle of individuals among themselves. Thus, in imagination, individuals seem freer under the dominance of the bourgeoisie than before, because their conditions of life seem accidental; in reality, of course, they are less free, because they are more subjected to the violence of things. The difference from the estate comes out particularly in the antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. When the estate of the urban burghers, the corporations, etc., emerged in opposition to the landed nobility, their condition of existence—movable property and craft labour, which had already existed latently before their separation from the feudal ties—appeared as something positive, which was asserted against feudal landed property, and, therefore, in its own way at first took on a feudal form. Certainly the refugee serfs treated their previous servitude as something accidental to their personality. But here they only were doing what every class that is freeing itself from a fetter does; and they did not free themselves as a class but separately. Moreover, they did not rise above the system of estates, but only formed a new estate, retaining their previous mode of labour even in their new situation, and developing it further by freeing it from its earlier fetters, which no longer corresponded to the development already attained.

For the proletarians, on the other hand, the condition of their existence, labour, and with it all the conditions of existence governing modern society, have become something accidental, something

5. N.B. It must not be forgotten that the serfs’ very need of existing and the impossibility of a large-scale economy, which involved the distribution of the allotments among the serfs, very soon reduced the services of the serfs to their lord to an average of payments in kind and statute-labour. This made it possible for the serf to accumulate movable property and hence facilitated his escape out of possession of his lord and gave him the prospect of making his way as an urban citizen; it also created gradations among the serfs, so that the runaway serfs were already halfburgers. It is likewise obvious that the serfs who were masters of a craft had the best chance of acquiring movable property. [Marx]
over which they, as separate individuals, have no control, and over which no social organisation can give them control. The contradiction between the individuality of each separate proletarian and labour, the condition of life forced upon him, becomes evident to him himself, for he is sacrificed from youth upwards and, within his own class, has no chance of arriving at the conditions which would place him in the other class.

Thus, while the refugee serfs only wished to be free to develop and assert those conditions of existence which were already there, and hence, in the end, only arrived at free labour, the proletarians, if they are to assert themselves as individuals, will have to abolish the very condition of their existence hitherto (which has, moreover, been that of all society up to the present), namely, labour. Thus they find themselves directly opposed to the form in which, hitherto, the individuals, of which society consists, have given themselves collective expression, that is, the State. In order, therefore, to assert themselves as individuals, they must overthrow the State.

PART II

The Critique of Capitalism
Wage Labour and Capital

KARL MARX

Shortly after adumbrating the materialist conception of history in the 1844 manuscripts and formulating it comprehensively in Part I of *The German Ideology*, Marx turned to the economic studies that were going to preoccupy him in the ensuing years. This did not signify any change of interests or outlook but was the logical outgrowth of the position taken in his earlier writings. If the thesis on “alienated labor” was to be made scientifically cogent and if the expectation of coming proletarian revolution was to be based upon it, he needed to show the capital-labor relationship, which he took to be the core of the bourgeois socio-economic system, to be dialectically self-destructive, i.e., transitory by virtue of its inner dynamics of development. The first work in which he attempted this analysis was *Wage Labour and Capital*.

Having first presented it in lectures to a German workers’ society in Brussels in December, 1847, Marx printed the work in April, 1849, in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, of which he was editor-in-chief. Several pamphlet editions appeared in later years. In editing it for the German edition of 1891 (the version that appears here), Engels made some changes in the text, mainly centering in the substitution of the phrase “labor power” for the term “labor” in contexts in which Marx had originally spoken of the worker’s sale of his labor to the capitalist. This, as Engels explained in his preface to the 1891 edition, brought the reasoning of the pamphlet into line with the analysis of the capital-labor relationship as Marx had refined it by 1859, when he published *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*.

Despite this, it may be said that what Marx produced in the lectures of late 1847 was the future argument of *Capital* in embryo. The work appears here in condensed form.

I

From various quarters we have been reproached with not having presented the economic relations which constitute the material foundation of the present class struggles and national struggles. We have shrewdly touched upon these relations only where they directly forced themselves to the front in political conflicts.
Now, after our readers have seen the class struggle develop in colossal political forms in 1848, the time has come to deal more closely with the economic relations themselves on which the existence of the bourgeoisie and its class rule, as well as the slavery of the workers, are founded.

Now, therefore, for the first question: What are wages? How are they determined?

If workers were asked: "How much are your wages?" one would reply: "I get a mark a day from my employer"; another, "I get two marks," and so on. According to the different trades to which they belong, they would mention different sums of money which they receive from their respective employers for the performance of a particular piece of work, for example, weaving a yard of linen or typesetting a printed sheet. In spite of the variety of their statements, they would all agree on one point: wages are the sum of money paid by the capitalist for a particular labour time or for a particular output of labour.

The capitalist, it seems, therefore, buys their labour with money. They sell him their labour for money. But this is merely the appearance. In reality what they sell to the capitalist for money is their labour power. The capitalist buys this labour power for a day, a week, a month, etc. And after he has bought it, he uses it by having the workers work for the stipulated time. For the same sum with which the capitalist has bought their labour power, for example, two marks, he could have bought two pounds of sugar or a definite amount of any other commodity. The two marks, with which he bought two pounds of sugar, are the price of the two pounds of sugar. The two marks, with which he bought twelve hours' use of labour power, are the price of twelve hours' labour. Labour power, therefore, is a commodity, neither more nor less than sugar. The former is measured by the clock, the latter by the scales.

Labour power is, therefore, a commodity which its possessor, the wage-worker, sells to capital. Why does he sell it? In order to live.

But the exercise of labour power, labour, is the worker's own life-activity, the manifestation of his own life. And this life-activity he sells to another person in order to secure the necessary means of subsistence. Thus his life-activity is for him only a means to enable him to exist. He works in order to live. He does not even reckon his labour as part of his life, it is rather a sacrifice of his life. It is a commodity which he has made over to another. Hence, also, the product of his activity is not the object of his activity. What he produces for himself is not the silk that he weaves, not the gold that he draws from the mine, not the palace that he builds. What he produces for himself is wages, and silk, gold, palace resolve themselves for him into a definite quantity of the means of subsistence, perhaps into a cotton jacket, some copper coins and a lodging in a cellar. And the worker, who for twelve hours weaves, spins, drills, turns, builds, shovels, breaks stones, carries loads, etc.—does he consider this twelve hours' weaving, spinning, drilling, turning, building, shovelling, stone breaking as a manifestation of his life, as life? On the contrary, life begins for him where this activity ceases, at table, in the public house, in bed. The twelve hours' labour, on the other hand, has no meaning for him as weaving, spinning, drilling, etc., but as earnings, which bring him to the table, to the public house, into bed. If the silk worm were to spin in order to continue its existence as a caterpillar, it would be a complete wage-worker. Labour power was not always a commodity. Labour was not always wage labour, that is, free labour. The slave did not sell his labour power to the slave owner, any more than the ox sells its services to the peasant. The slave, together with his labour power, is sold once and for all to his owner. He is a commodity which can pass from the hand of one owner to that of another. He is himself a commodity, but the labour power is not his commodity. The serf sells only a part of his labour power. He does not receive a wage from the owner of the land; rather the owner of the land receives a tribute from him.

The serf belongs to the land and turns over to the owner of the land the fruits thereof. The free labourer, on the other hand, sells himself and, indeed, sells himself piecemeal. He sells at auction eight, ten, twelve, fifteen hours of his life, day after day, to the highest bidder, to the owner of the raw materials, instruments of labour and means of subsistence, that is, to the capitalist. The worker belongs neither to an owner nor to the land, but eight, ten, twelve, fifteen hours of his daily life belong to him who buys them. The worker leaves the capitalist to whom he hires himself whenever he likes, and the capitalist discharges him whenever he thinks fit, as soon as he no longer gets any profit out of him, or not the anticipated profit. But the worker, whose sole source of livelihood is the sale of his labour power, cannot leave the whole class of purchasers, that is, the capitalist class, without renouncing his existence. He belongs not to this or that capitalist but to the capitalist class, and, moreover, it is his business to dispose of himself, that is, to find a purchaser within this capitalist class.
Wages will rise and fall according to the relation of supply and demand, according to the turn taken by the competition between the buyers of labour power, the capitalists, and the sellers of labour power, the workers. The fluctuations in wages correspond in general to the fluctuations in prices of commodities. Within these fluctuations, however, the price of labour will be determined by the cost of production, by the labour time necessary to produce this commodity—labour power.

What, then, is the cost of production of labour power?

It is the cost required for maintaining the worker as a worker and of developing him into a worker.

The less the period of training, therefore, that any work requires the smaller is the cost of production of the worker and the lower is the price of his labour, his wages. In those branches of industry in which hardly any period of apprenticeship is required and where the mere bodily existence of the worker suffices, the cost necessary for his production is almost confined to the commodities necessary for keeping him alive and capable of working. The price of his labour will, therefore, be determined by the price of the necessary means of subsistence.

Another consideration, however, also comes in. The manufacturer in calculating his cost of production and, accordingly, the price of the products takes into account the wear and tear of the instruments of labour. If, for example, a machine costs him 1,000 marks and wears out in ten years, he adds 100 marks annually to the price of the commodities so as to be able to replace the worn-out machine by a new one at the end of ten years. In the same way, in calculating the cost of production of simple labour power, there must be included the cost of reproduction, whereby the race of workers is enabled to multiply and to replace worn-out workers by new ones. Thus the depreciation of the worker is taken into account in the same way as the depreciation of the machine.

The cost of production of simple labour power, therefore, amounts to the cost of existence and reproduction of the worker. The price of this cost of existence and reproduction constitutes wages. Wages so determined are called the wage minimum. This wage minimum, like the determination of the price of commodities by the cost of production in general, does not hold good for the single individual but for the species. Individual workers, millions of workers, do not get enough to be able to exist and reproduce themselves; but the wages of the whole working class level down, within their fluctuations, to this minimum.

Now that we have arrived at an understanding of the most general laws which regulate wages like the price of any other commodity, we can go into our subject more specifically.
labour over direct, living labour that turns accumulated labour into capital.

**Capital does not consist in accumulated labour serving living labour as a means for new production. It consists in living labour serving accumulated labour as a means of maintaining and multiplying the exchange value of the latter.**

What takes place in the exchange between capitalist and wage-worker?

The worker receives means of subsistence in exchange for his labour power, but the capitalist receives in exchange for his means of subsistence labour, the productive activity of the worker, the creative power whereby the worker not only replaces what he consumes but gives to the accumulated labour a greater value than it previously possessed. The worker receives a part of the available means of subsistence from the capitalist. For what purpose do these means of subsistence serve him? For immediate consumption. As soon, however, as I consume the means of subsistence, they are irretrievably lost to me unless I use the time during which I am kept alive by them in order to produce new means of subsistence, in order during consumption to create by my labour new values in place of the values which perish in being consumed. But it is just this noble reproductive power that the worker surrenders to the capitalist in exchange for means of subsistence received. He has, therefore, lost it for himself.

Let us take an example: a tenant farmer gives his day labourer five silver groschen a day. For these five silver groschen the labourer works all day on the farmer’s field and thus secures him a return of ten silver groschen. The farmer not only gets the value replaced that he has to give the day labourer; he doubles it. He has therefore employed, consumed, the five silver groschen that he gave to the labourer in a fruitful, productive manner. He has bought with the five silver groschen just that labour and power of the labourer which produces agricultural products of double value and makes ten silver groschen out of five. The day labourer, on the other hand, receives in place of his productive power, the effect of which he has bargained away to the farmer, five silver groschen, which he exchanges for means of subsistence, and these he consumes with greater or less rapidity. The five silver groschen have, therefore, been consumed in a double way, productively for capital, for they have been exchanged for labour power which produced ten silver groschen, unproductively for the worker, for they have been exchanged for means of subsistence which have disappeared forever and the value of which he can only recover by repeating the same exchange with the farmer. Thus capital presupposes wage labour; wage labour presupposes capital. They reciprocally condition the existence of each.
other; they reciprocally bring forth each other.

Does a worker in a cotton factory produce merely cotton textiles? No, he produces capital. He produces values which serve afresh to command his labour and by means of it to create new values.

Capital can only increase by exchanging itself for labour power, by calling wage labour to life. The labour power of the wage-worker can only be exchanged for capital by increasing capital, by strengthening the power whose slave it is. Hence, increase of capital is increase of the proletariat, that is, of the working class.

The interests of the capitalist and those of the worker are, therefore, one and the same, assert the bourgeois and their economists. Indeed! The worker perishes if capital does not employ him. Capital perishes if it does not exploit labour power, and in order to exploit it, it must buy it. The faster capital intended for production, productive capital, increases, the more, therefore, industry prospers, the more the bourgeoisie enriches itself and the better business is, the more workers does the capitalist need, the more dearly does the worker sell himself.

The indispensable condition for a tolerable situation of the worker is, therefore, the fastest possible growth of productive capital.

But what is the growth of productive capital? Growth of the power of accumulated labour over living labour. Growth of the domination of the bourgeoisie over the working class. If wage labour produces the wealth of others that rules over it, the power that is hostile to it, capital, then the means of employment, the means of subsistence, flow back to it from this hostile power, on condition that it makes itself afresh into a part of capital, into the lever which hurls capital anew into an accelerated movement of growth.

To say that the interests of capital and those of the workers are one and the same is only to say that capital and wage labour are two sides of one and the same relation. The one conditions the other, just as usurer and squanderer condition each other.

As long as the wage-worker is a wage-worker his lot depends upon capital. That is the much-vaunted community of interests between worker and capitalist.

IV

If capital grows, the mass of wage labour grows, the number of wage-workers grows; in a word, the domination of capital extends over a greater number of individuals. * * *

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To say that the worker has an interest in the rapid growth of capital is only to say that the more rapidly the worker increases the wealth of others, the richer will be the crumbs that fall to him, the greater is the number of workers that can be employed and called into existence, the more can the mass of slaves dependent on capital be increased.

We have thus seen that:

Even the most favourable situation for the working class, the most rapid possible growth of capital, however much it may improve the material existence of the worker, does not remove the antagonism between his interests and the interests of the bourgeoisie, the interests of the capitalists. Profit and wages remain as before in inverse proportion.

If capital is growing rapidly, wages may rise; the profit of capital rises incomparably more rapidly. The material position of the worker has improved, but at the cost of his social position. The social gulf that divides him from the capitalist has widened.

Finally:

To say that the most favourable condition for wage labour is the most rapid possible growth of productive capital is only to say that the more rapidly the working class increases and enlarges the power that is hostile to it, the wealth that does not belong to it and that rules over it, the more favourable will be the conditions under which it is allowed to labour anew at increasing bourgeois wealth, at enlarging the power of capital, content with forging for itself the golden chains by which the bourgeoisie drags it in its train.

V

Are growth of productive capital and rise of wages really so inseparably connected as the bourgeois economists maintain? We must not take their word for it. We must not even believe them when they say that the fatter capital is, the better will its slave be fed. The bourgeoisie is too enlightened, it calculates too well, to share the prejudices of the feudal lord who makes a display by the brilliance of his retinue. The conditions of existence of the bourgeoisie compel it to calculate.

We must, therefore, examine more closely:

How does the growth of productive capital affect wages?

If, on the whole, the productive capital of bourgeois society grows, a more manifold accumulation of labour takes place. The capitals increase in number and extent. The numerical increase of the capitals increases the competition between the capitalists. The increasing extent of the capitals provides the means for bringing more powerful labour armies with more gigantic instruments of war into the industrial battlefield.

One capitalist can drive another from the field and capture his capital only by selling more cheaply. In order to be able to sell
more cheaply without ruining himself, he must produce more cheaply, that is, raise the productive power of labour as much as possible. But the productive power of labour is raised, above all, by a greater division of labour, by a more universal introduction and continual improvement of machinery. The greater the labour army among whom labour is divided, the more gigantic the scale on which machinery is introduced, the more does the cost of production proportionately decrease, the more fruitful is labour. Hence, a general rivalry arises among the capitalists to increase the division of labour and machinery and to exploit them on the greatest possible scale.

If, now, by a greater division of labour, by the utilisation of new machines and their improvement, by more profitable and extensive exploitation of natural forces, one capitalist has found the means of producing with the same amount of labour or of accumulated labour a greater amount of products, of commodities, than his competitors, if he can, for example, produce a whole yard of linen in the same labour time in which his competitors weave half a yard, how will this capitalist operate?

He could continue to sell half a yard of linen at the old market price; this would, however, be no means of driving his opponents from the field and of enlarging his own sales. But in the same measure in which his production has expanded, his need to sell has also increased. The more powerful and costly means of production that he has called into life enable him, indeed, to sell his commodities more cheaply, they compel him, however, at the same time to sell more commodities, to conquer a much larger market for his commodities; consequently, our capitalist will sell his half yard of linen more cheaply than his competitors.

The capitalist will not, however, sell a whole yard as cheaply as his competitors sell half a yard, although the production of the whole yard does not cost him more than the half yard costs the others. Otherwise he would not gain anything extra but only get back the cost of production by the exchange. His possibly greater income would be derived from the fact of having set a larger capital into motion, but not from having made more of his capital than the others. Moreover, he attains the object he wishes to attain, if he puts the price of his goods only a small percentage lower than that of his competitors. He drives them from the field, he wrests from them at least a part of their sales, by underselling them. And, finally, it will be remembered that the current price always stands above or below the cost of production, according to whether the sale of the commodity occurs in a favourable or unfavourable industrial season. The percentage at which the capitalist who has employed new and more fruitful means of production sells above

his real cost of production will vary, depending upon whether the market price of a yard of linen stands below or above its hitherto customary cost of production.

However, the privileged position of our capitalist is not of long duration; other competing capitalists introduce the same machines, the same division of labour, introduce them on the same or on a larger scale, and this introduction will become so general that the price of linen is reduced not only below its old, but below its new cost of production.

The capitalists find themselves, therefore, in the same position relative to one another as before the introduction of the new means of production, and if they are able to supply by these means double the production at the same price, they are now forced to supply the double product below the old price. On the basis of this new cost of production, the same game begins again. More division of labour, more machinery, enlarged scale of exploitation of machinery and division of labour. And again competition brings the same counteraction against this result.

We see how in this way the mode of production and the means of production are continually transformed, revolutionised, how the division of labour is necessarily followed by greater division of labour, the application of machinery by still greater application of machinery, work on a large scale by work on a still larger scale.

That is the law which again and again throws bourgeois production out of its old course and which compels capital to intensify the productive forces of labour, because it has intensified them, it, the law which gives capital no rest and continually whispers in its ear: “Go on! Go on!”

This law is none other than that which, within the fluctuations of trade periods, necessarily levels out the price of a commodity to its cost of production.

However powerful the means of production which a capitalist brings into the field, competition will make these means of production universal and from the moment when it has made them universal, the only result of the greater fruitfulness of his capital is that he must now supply for the same price ten, twenty, a hundred times as much as before. But, as he must sell perhaps a thousand times as much as before in order to outweigh the lower selling price by the greater amount of the product sold, because a more extensive sale is now necessary, not only in order to make more profit but in order to replace the cost of production—the instrument of production itself, as we have seen, becomes more and more expensive—and because this mass sale becomes a question of life and death not only for him but also for his rivals, the old struggle begins again all the more violently the already dis-
covered means of production are. The division of labour and the application of machinery, therefore, will go on anew on an incomparably greater scale.

Whatever the power of the means of production employed maybe, competition seeks to rob capital of the golden fruits of this power by bringing the price of the commodities back to the cost of production, by thus making cheaper production—the supply of ever greater amounts of products for the same total price—an imperative law to the same extent as production can be cheapened, that is, as more can be produced with the same amount of labour. Thus the capitalist would have won nothing by his own exertions but the obligation to supply more in the same labour time, in a word, more difficult conditions for the augmentation of the value of his capital. While, therefore, competition continually pursues him with its law of the cost of production and every weapon that he forges against his rivals recoils against himself, the capitalist continually tries to get the better of competition by incessantly introducing new machines, more expensive, it is true, but producing more cheaply, and new division of labour in place of the old, and by not waiting until competition has rendered the new ones obsolete.

If now we picture to ourselves this feverish simultaneous agitation on the whole world market, it will be comprehensible how the growth, accumulation and concentration of capital results in an uninterrupted division of labour, and in the application of new and the perfecting of old machinery precipitately and on an ever more gigantic scale.

But how do these circumstances, which are inseparable from the growth of productive capital, affect the determination of wages?

The greater division of labour enables one worker to do the work of five, ten or twenty; it therefore multiplies competition among the workers fivefold, tenfold and twentyfold. The workers do not only compete by one selling himself cheaper than another; they compete by one doing the work of five, ten, twenty; and the division of labour, introduced by capital and continually increased, compels the workers to compete among themselves in this way.

Further, as the division of labour increases, labour is simplified. The special skill of the worker becomes worthless. He becomes transformed into a simple, monotonous productive force that does not have to use intense bodily or intellectual faculties. His labour becomes a labour that anyone can perform. Hence, competitors crowd upon him on all sides, and besides we remind the reader that the more simple and easily learned the labour is, the lower the cost of production needed to master it, the lower do wages sink, for, like the price of every other commodity, they are determined by the cost of production.

Therefore, as labour becomes more unsatisfying, more repulsive, competition increases and wages decrease. The worker tries to keep up the amount of his wages by working more, whether by working longer hours or by producing more in one hour. Driven by want, therefore, he still further increases the evil effects of the division of labour. The result is that the more he works the less wages he receives, and for the simple reason that he competes to that extent with his fellow workers, hence makes them into so many competitors who offer themselves on just the same bad terms as he does himself, and that, therefore, in the last resort he competes with himself, with himself as a member of the working class.

Machinery brings about the same results on a much greater scale, by replacing skilled workers by unskilled, men by women, adults by children. It brings about the same results, where it is newly introduced, by throwing the hand workers on to the streets in masses, and, where it is developed, improved and replaced by more productive machinery, by discharging workers in smaller batches. We have portrayed above, in a hasty sketch, the industrial war of the capitalists among themselves; this war has the peculiarity that its battles are won less by recruiting than by discharging the army of labour. The generals, the capitalists, compete with one another as to who can discharge most soldiers of industry.

The economists tell us, it is true, that the workers rendered superfluous by machinery find new branches of employment.

They dare not assert directly that the same workers who are discharged find places in the new branches of labour. The facts cry out too loudly against this lie. They really only assert that new means of employment will open up for other component sections of the working class, for instance, for the portion of the young generation of workers that was ready to enter the branch of industry which has gone under. That is, of course, a great consolation for the dispossessed workers. The worshipful capitalists will never want for fresh exploitable flesh and blood, and will let the dead bury their dead. This is a consolation which the bourgeois give themselves rather than one which they give the workers. If the whole class of wage-workers were to be abolished owing to machinery, how dreadful that would be for capital which, without wage labour, ceases to be capital!

Let us suppose, however, that those directly driven out of their jobs by machinery, and the entire section of the new generation that was already on the watch for this employment, find a new occupation. Does anyone imagine that it will be as highly paid as that which has been lost? That would contradict all the laws of economics. We have seen how modern industry always brings with it the substitution of a more simple, subordinate occupation for the more complex and higher one.

How, then, could a mass of workers who have been thrown out
of one branch of industry owing to machinery find refuge in another, unless the latter is lower, worse paid?

The workers who work in the manufacture of machinery itself have been cited as an exception. As soon as more machinery is demanded and used in industry, it is said, there must necessarily be an increase of machines, consequently of the manufacture of machines, and consequently of the employment of workers in the manufacture of machines; and the workers engaged in this branch of industry are claimed to be skilled, even educated workers.

Since the year 1840 this assertion, which even before was only half true, has lost all semblance of truth because ever more versatile machines have been employed in the manufacture of machinery, no more and no less than in the manufacture of cotton yarn, and the workers employed in the machine factories, confronted by highly elaborate machines, can only play the part of highly unelaborate machines.

But in place of the man who has been discharged owing to the machine, the factory employs maybe three children and one woman. And did not the man’s wages have to suffice for the three children and a woman? Did not the minimum of wages have to suffice to maintain and to propagate the race? What, then, does this favourite bourgeois phrase prove? Nothing more than that now four times as many workers’ lives are used up in order to gain a livelihood for one worker’s family.

Let us sum up: The more productive capital grows, the more the division of labour and the application of machinery expands. The more the division of labour and the application of machinery expands, the more competition among the workers expands and the more their wages contract.

In addition, the working class gains recruits from the higher strata of society also; a mass of petty industrialists and small rentiers are hurled down into its ranks and have nothing better to do than urgently stretch out their arms alongside those of the workers. Thus the forest of uplifted arms demanding work becomes ever thicker, while the arms themselves become ever thinner.

That the small industrialist cannot survive in a contest one of the first conditions of which is to produce on an ever greater scale, that is, precisely to be a large and not a small industrialist, is self-evident.

That the interest on capital decreases in the same measure as the mass and number of capitals increase, as capital grows; that, therefore, the small rentier can no longer live on his interest but must throw himself into industry, and, consequently, help to swell the ranks of the small industrialists and thereby of candidates for the proletariat—all this surely requires no further explanation.

Finally, as the capitalists are compelled, by the movement described above, to exploit the already existing gigantic means of production on a larger scale and to set in motion all the mainsprings of credit to this end, there is a corresponding increase in industrial earthquakes, in which the trading world can only maintain itself by sacrificing a part of wealth, of products and even of productive forces to the gods of the nether world—in a word, crises increase. They become more frequent and more violent, if only because, as the mass of production, and consequently the need for extended markets, grows, the world market becomes more and more contracted, fewer and fewer new markets remain available for exploitation, since every preceding crisis has subjected to world trade a market hitherto unconquered or only superficially exploited. But capital does not live only on labour. A lord, at once aristocratic and barbarous, it drags with it into the grave the corpses of its slaves, whole hecatombs of workers who perish in the crises. Thus we see: if capital grows rapidly, competition among the workers grows incomparably more rapidly, that is, the means of employment, the means of subsistence, of the working class decrease proportionately so much the more, and, nevertheless, the rapid growth of capital is the most favourable condition for wage labour.