

or 1s. 6d. a day.<sup>11</sup> As on our hypothesis he must work on the average 6 hours daily, in order to produce a day's wage corresponding merely to the value of his labour power, as according to the same hypothesis he works only half of every hour for himself, and half for the capitalist, it is clear that he cannot obtain for himself the value of the product of 6 hours if he is employed less than 12 hours. In previous chapters we saw the destructive consequences of overwork; here we find the sources of the sufferings that result to the labourer from his insufficient employment.

If the hour's wage is fixed so that the capitalist does not bind himself to pay a day's or a week's wage, but only to pay wages for the hours during which he chooses to employ the labourer, he can employ him for a shorter time than that which is originally the basis of the calculation of the hour wage, or the unit-measure of the price of labour. Since this unit is determined by the ratio  $\frac{\text{daily value of labour power}}{\text{working day of a given number of hours}}$ , it, of course, loses all meaning as soon as the working day ceases to contain a definite number of hours. The connexion between the paid and the unpaid labour is destroyed. The capitalist can now wring from the labour a certain quantity of surplus labour without allowing him the labour time necessary for his own subsistence. He can annihilate all regularity of employment, and according to his own convenience, caprice, and the interest of the moment, make the most enormous overwork alternate with relative or absolute cessation of work. He can, under the pretence of paying "the normal price of labour", abnormally lengthen the working day without any corresponding compensation to the labourer. Hence the perfectly rational revolt in 1860 of the London labourers,<sup>456</sup> employed in the building trades, against the attempt of the capitalists to impose on them this sort of wage by the hour. The legal limitation of the working day put an end to such mischief, although not, of course, to the diminution of employment caused by the competition of machinery, by changes in the quality of the labourers employed, and by crises partial or general.

<sup>11</sup> The effect of such an abnormal lessening of employment is quite different from that of a general reduction of the working day, enforced by law. The former has nothing to do with the absolute length of the working day, and may occur just as well in a working day of 15, as of 6 hours. The normal price of labour is in the first case calculated on the labourer working 15 hours, in the second case on his working 6 hours a day on the average. The result is therefore the same if he in the one case is employed only for  $7\frac{1}{2}$ , in the other only for 3 hours.

With an increasing daily or weekly wage the price of labour may remain nominally constant, and yet may fall below its normal level. This occurs every time that, the price of labour (reckoned per working hour) remaining constant, the working day is prolonged beyond its customary length. If in the fraction:  $\frac{\text{daily value of labour power}}{\text{working day}}$  the de-

nominator increases, the numerator increases yet more rapidly. The value of labour power, as dependent on its wear and tear, increases with the duration of its functioning, and in more rapid proportion than the increase of that duration. In many branches of industry where time wage is the general rule without legal limits to the working time, the habit has, therefore, spontaneously grown up of regarding the working day as normal only up to a certain point, e. g., up to the expiration of the tenth hour ("normal working day", "the day's work", "the regular hours of work"). Beyond this limit the working time is overtime, and is, taking the hour as unit-measure, paid better ("extra pay"), although often in a proportion ridiculously small.<sup>1)</sup> The normal working day exists here as a fraction of the actual working day, and the latter, often during the whole year, lasts longer than the former.<sup>2)</sup> The increase in the price of labour with the extension of the working day beyond a certain normal limit, takes such a shape in various British industries that the low price of labour during the so-called normal time compels the labourer to work during the better paid overtime, if he wishes to obtain a sufficient wage at all.<sup>3)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> "The rate of payment for overtime" (in lace-making) "is so small, from  $\frac{1}{2}$  d. and  $\frac{3}{4}$  d. to 2d. per hour, that it stands in painful contrast to the amount of injury produced to the health and stamina of the workpeople.... The small amount thus earned is also often obliged to be spent in extra nourishment" ("Child. Empl. Com., II. Rep.", p. xvi, n. 117).

<sup>2)</sup> E. g., in paper-staining before the recent introduction into this trade of the Factory Act.<sup>457</sup> "We work on with no stoppage for meals, so that the day's work of  $10\frac{1}{2}$  hours is finished by 4.30 p. m., and all after that is overtime, and we seldom leave off working before 6 p. m., so that we are really working overtime the whole year round" (Mr. Smith's "Evidence in Child. Empl. Com., I. Rep.", p. 125).

<sup>3)</sup> E. g., in the Scotch bleaching-works. "In some parts of Scotland this trade //before the introduction of the Factory Act in 1862.<sup>458</sup> — F. E.// was carried on by a system of overtime, i. e., ten hours a day were the regular hours of work, for which a nominal wage of 1s. 2d. per day was paid to a man, there being every day overtime for three or four hours, paid at the rate of 3d. per hour. The effect of this system ... a man could not earn more than 8s. per week when working the ordinary hours ... without overtime they could not earn a fair day's wages" ("Rep. of Insp. of Factories", April 30th, 1863, p. 10). "The higher wages, for getting adult males to work longer hours, are

Legal limitation of the working day puts an end to these amenities.<sup>1)</sup>

It is a fact generally known that, the longer the working days, in any branch of industry, the lower are the wages.<sup>2)</sup> A. Redgrave, factory inspector, illustrates this by a comparative review of the 20 years from 1839-1859, according to which wages rose in the factories under the 10 hours' law, whilst they fell in the factories in which the work lasted 14 to 15 hours daily.<sup>3)</sup>

From the law: "the price of labour being given, the daily or weekly wage depends on the quantity of labour expended," it follows, first of all, that, the lower the price of labour, the greater must be the quantity of labour, or the longer must be the working day for the labourer to secure even a miserable average wage. The lowness of the price of labour acts here as a stimulus to the extension of the labour time.<sup>4)</sup>

On the other hand, the extension of the working time produces, in

a temptation too strong to be resisted" ("Rept. of Insp. of Fact.", April 30th, 1848, p. 5). The book-binding trade in the city of London employs very many young girls from 14 to 15 years old, and that under indentures which prescribe certain definite hours of labour. Nevertheless, they work in the last week of each month until 10, 11, 12, or 1 o'clock at night, along with the older labourers, in a very mixed company. "The masters tempt them by extra pay and supper", which they eat in neighbouring public houses. The great debauchery thus produced among these "young immortals" ("Children's Employment Comm., V. Rept.", p. 44, n. 191) is compensated by the fact that among the rest many Bibles and religious books are bound by them.

<sup>1)</sup> See "Reports of Insp. of Fact.", 30th April, 1863, i. c. With very accurate appreciation of the state of things, the London labourers employed in the building trades declared, during the great strike and lock-out of 1860, that they would only accept wages by the hour under two conditions (1), that, with the price of the working hour, a normal working day of 9 and 10 hours respectively should be fixed, and that the price of the hour for the 10 hours' working day should be higher than that for the hour of the 9 hours' working day; (2), that every hour beyond the normal working day should be reckoned as overtime and proportionally more highly paid.<sup>459</sup>

<sup>2)</sup> "It is a very notable thing, too, that where long hours are the rule, small wages are also so" ("Report of Insp. of Fact.", 31st Oct., 1863, p. 9). "The work which obtains the scanty pittance of food, is, for the most part, excessively prolonged" ("Public Health, Sixth Report", 1864, p. 15).

<sup>3)</sup> "Report of Inspectors of Fact.", 30th April, 1860, pp. 31, 32.

<sup>4)</sup> The hand nail-makers in England, e. g., have, on account of the low price of labour, to work 15 hours a day in order to hammer out their miserable weekly wage. "It's a great many hours in a day (6 a. m. to 8 p. m.), and he has to work hard all the time to get 11d. or 1s., and there is the wear of the tools, the cost of firing, and something for waste iron to go out of this, which takes off altogether  $2\frac{1}{2}$  d. or 3d." ("Children's Employment Com., III. Report", p. 136, n. 671). The women earn by the same working time a week's wage of only 5 shillings (i. c., p. 137, n. 674).

its turn, a fall in the price of labour, and with this a fall in the day's or week's wages.

The determination of the price of labour by:

$$\frac{\text{daily value of labour power}}{\text{working day of a given number of hours}},$$

shows that a mere prolongation of the working day lowers the price of labour, if no compensation steps in. But the same circumstances which allow the capitalist in the long run to prolong the working day, also allow him first, and compel him finally, to nominally lower the price of labour, until the total price of the increased number of hours is lowered, and, therefore, the daily or weekly wage. Reference to two circumstances is sufficient here. If one man does the work of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  or 2 men, the supply of labour increases, although the supply of labour power on the market remains constant. The competition thus created between the labourers allows the capitalist to beat down the price of labour, whilst the falling price of labour allows him, on the other hand, to screw up still further the working time.<sup>1)</sup> Soon, however, this command over abnormal quantities of unpaid labour, i. e., quantities in excess of the average social amount, becomes a source of competition amongst the capitalists themselves. A part of the price of the commodity consists of the price of labour. The unpaid part of the labour price need not be reckoned in the price of the commodity. It may be presented to the buyer. This is the first step to which competition leads. The second step to which it drives, is to exclude also from the selling price of the commodity, at least a part of the abnormal surplus value created by the extension of the working day. In this way an abnormally low selling price of the commodity arises, at first sporadically, and becomes fixed by degrees; a lower selling price which henceforward becomes the constant basis of a miserable wage for an excessive working time, as originally it was the product of these very circumstances. This movement is simply indicated here, as the analysis of competition does not belong to this part of our subject.<sup>460</sup> Nevertheless, the capitalist may, for a moment, speak for himself.

<sup>1)</sup> If a factory hand, e. g., refused to work the customary long hours, "he would very shortly be replaced by somebody who would work any length of time, and thus be thrown out of employment" ("Reports of Inspectors of Fact.", 30th April, 1848, Evidence, p. 39, n. 58). "If one man performs the work of two ... the rate of profits will generally be raised ... in consequence of the additional supply of labour having diminished its price" (Senior, l. c., p. 15).

"In Birmingham there is so much competition of masters one against another, that many are obliged to do things as employers that they would otherwise be ashamed of; and yet no more money is made, but only the public gets the benefit."<sup>1)</sup>

The reader will remember the two sorts of London bakers, of whom one sold the bread at its full price (the "full-priced" bakers), the other below its normal price ("the underpriced", "the undersellers").<sup>a</sup> The "full-priced" denounced their rivals before the Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry:

"They only exist now by first defrauding the public, and next getting 18 hours' work out of their men for 12 hours' wages.... The unpaid labour of the men was made ... the source whereby the competition was carried on, and continues so to this day.... The competition among the master bakers is the cause of the difficulty in getting rid of night-work. An underseller, who sells his bread below the cost price according to the price of flour, must make it up by getting more out of the labour of the men.... If I got only 12 hours' work out of my men, and my neighbour got 18 or 20, he must beat me in the selling price. If the men could insist on payment for overwork, this would be set right.... A large number of those employed by the undersellers are foreigners and youths, who are obliged to accept almost any wages they can obtain."<sup>2)</sup>

This jeremiad is also interesting because it shows, how the appearance only of the relations of production mirrors itself in the brain of the capitalist. The capitalist does not know that the normal price of labour also includes a definite quantity of unpaid labour, and that this very unpaid labour is the normal source of his gain. The category, surplus labour time, does not exist at all for him, since it is included in the normal working day, which he thinks he has paid for in the day's wages. But overtime does exist for him, the prolongation of the working day beyond the limits corresponding with the usual price of labour. Face to face with his underselling competitor, he even insists upon extra pay for this overtime. He again does not know that this extra pay includes unpaid labour, just as well as does the price of the customary hour of labour. For example, the price of one hour of the 12 hours' working day is 3d., say the value product of half a working hour, whilst the price of the overtime working hour is 4d., or the

<sup>1)</sup> "Children's Employment Com., III. Rep.", Evidence, p. 66, n. 22.

<sup>2)</sup> "Report, &c., Relative to the Grievances Complained of by the Journeyman Bakers". Lond., 1862, p. VII, and ib. Evidence, notes 479, 359, 27. Anyhow the full-priced also, as was mentioned above, and as their spokesman, Bennett, himself admits, make their men "generally begin work at 11 p. m. ... up to 8 o'clock the next morning ... they are then engaged all day long ... as late as 7 o'clock in the evening" (l. c., p. 22).

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<sup>a</sup> See this volume, p. 186, footnote 3.

value product of  $\frac{2}{3}$  of a working hour. In the first case the capitalist appropriates to himself one-half, in the second, one-third of the working hour without paying for it.

## Chapter XXI

### PIECE WAGES

Wages by the piece are nothing else than a converted form of wages by time, just as wages by time are a converted form of the value or price of labour power.

In piece wages it seems at first sight as if the use value bought from the labourer was, not the function of his labour power, living labour, but labour already realised in the product, and as if the price of this labour was determined, not as with time wages, by the fraction:

$$\frac{\text{daily value of labour power}}{\text{working day of a given number of hours}}$$
 but by the capacity for work of the producer.<sup>1)</sup>

The confidence that trusts in this appearance ought to receive a first severe shock from the fact that both forms of wages exist side by side, simultaneously, in the same branches of industry; e. g.,

“the compositors of London, as a general rule, work by the piece, time work being the exception, while those in the country work by the day, the exception being work by the piece. The shipwrights of the port of London work by the job or piece, while those of all other parts work by the day”.<sup>2)</sup>

In the same saddlery shops of London, often for the same work, piece wages are paid to the French, time wages to the English. In the regular factories in which throughout piece wages predominate, par-

<sup>1)</sup> “The system of piece work illustrates an epoch in the history of the working man; it is halfway between the position of the mere day labourer depending upon the will of the capitalist and the co-operative artisan, who in the not distant future promises to combine the artisan and the capitalist in his own person. Piece workers are in fact their own masters, even whilst working upon the capital of the employer” (John Watts, *Trade Societies and Strikes, Machinery and Co-operative Societies*, Manchester, 1865, pp. 52, 53). I quote this little work because it is a very sink of all long-ago-rotten, apologetic commonplaces. This same Mr. Watts earlier traded in Owenism<sup>461</sup> and published in 1842 another pamphlet: *Facts and Fictions of Political Economists*, in which among other things he declares that “property is robbery” [p. 5]. That is long ago.

<sup>2)</sup> T. J. Dunning, *Trades' Unions and Strikes*, Lond., 1860, p. 22.

ticular kinds of work are unsuitable to this form of wage, and are therefore paid by time.<sup>1)</sup> But it is moreover self-evident that the difference of form in the payment of wages alters in no way their essential nature, although the one form may be more favourable to the development of capitalist production than the other.

Let the ordinary working day contain 12 hours of which 6 are paid, 6 unpaid. Let its value product be 6 shillings, that of one hour's labour therefore 6d. Let us suppose that, as the result of experience, a labourer who works with the average amount of intensity and skill, who, therefore, gives in fact only the time socially necessary to the production of an article, supplies in 12 hours 24 pieces, either distinct products or measurable parts of a continuous whole. Then the value of these 24 pieces, after subtraction of the portion of constant capital contained in them, is 6 shillings, and the value of a single piece 3d. The labourer receives  $1\frac{1}{2}$  d. per piece, and thus earns in 12 hours 3 shillings. Just as, with time wages, it does not matter whether we assume that the labourer works 6 hours for himself and 6 hours for the capitalist, or half of every hour for himself, and the other half for the capitalist, so here it does not matter whether we say that each individual piece is half paid, and half unpaid for, or that the price of 12 pieces is the equivalent only of the value of the labour power, whilst in the other 12 pieces surplus value is incorporated.

The form of piece wages is just as irrational as that of time wages. Whilst in our example two pieces of a commodity, after subtraction of the value of the means of production consumed in them, are worth 6d. as being the product of one hour, the labourer receives for them a price of 3d. Piece wages do not, in fact, distinctly express any relation of value. It is not, therefore, a question of measuring the value of the piece by the working time incorporated in it, but on the contrary

<sup>1)</sup> How the existence, side by side and simultaneously, of these two forms of wage favours the masters' cheating: "A factory employs 400 people, the half of which work by the piece, and have a direct interest in working longer hours. The other 200 are paid by the day, work equally long with the others, and get no more money for their overtime.... The work of these 200 people for half an hour a day is equal to one person's work for 50 hours, or  $\frac{2}{6}$  of one person's labour in a week, and is a positive gain to the employer" ("Reports of Insp. of Fact., 31st Oct., 1860", p. 9). "Overworking to a very considerable extent still prevails; and, in most instances, with that security against detection and punishment which the law itself affords. I have in many former reports shown ... the injury to workpeople who are not employed on piece work, but receive weekly wages" (Leonard Horner in "Reports of Insp. of Fact.", 30th April, 1859, pp. 8, 9).

of measuring the working time the labourer has expended, by the number of pieces he has produced. In time wages the labour is measured by its immediate duration, in piece wages by the quantity of products in which the labour has embodied itself during a given time.<sup>1)</sup> The price of labour time itself is finally determined by the equation; value of a day's labour = daily value of labour power. Piece wage is, therefore, only a modified form of time wage.

Let us now consider a little more closely the characteristic peculiarities of piece wages.

The quality of the labour is here controlled by the work itself, which must be of average perfection if the piece price is to be paid in full. Piece wages become, from this point of view, the most fruitful source of reductions of wages and capitalistic cheating.

They furnish to the capitalist an exact measure for the intensity of labour. Only the working time which is embodied in a quantum of commodities determined beforehand and experimentally fixed, counts as socially necessary working time, and is paid as such. In the larger workshops of the London tailors, therefore, a certain piece of work, a waistcoat, e. g., is called an hour, or half an hour, the hour at 6d. By practice it is known how much is the average product of one hour. With new fashions, repairs, etc., a contest arises between master and labourer, whether a particular piece of work is one hour, and so on, until here also experience decides. Similarly in the London furniture workshops, etc. If the labourer does not possess the average capacity, if he cannot in consequence supply a certain minimum of work per day, he is dismissed.<sup>2)</sup>

Since the quality and intensity of the work are here controlled by the form of wage itself, superintendence of labour becomes in great part superfluous. Piece wages therefore lay the foundation of the modern "domestic labour", described above, as well as of a hierarchically organised system of exploitation and oppression. The latter has two fundamental forms. On the one hand piece wages facilitate the

<sup>1)</sup> "Wages can be measured in two ways: either by the duration of the labour, or by its product" ( *Abrégé élémentaire des principes de l'Économie Politique*, Paris, 1796, p. 32). The author of this anonymous work: G. Garnier.

<sup>2)</sup> "So much weight of cotton is delivered to him" (the spinner), "and he has to return by a certain time, in lieu of it, a given weight of twist or yarn, of a certain degree of fineness, and he is paid so much per pound for all that he so returns. If his work is defective in quality, the penalty falls on him, if less in quantity than the minimum fixed for a given time, he is dismissed and an abler operative procured" (Ure, I. c., [The Philosophy of Manufactures...], p. [316-]317).

interposition of parasites between the capitalist and the wage labourer, the "subletting of labour". The gain of these middlemen comes entirely from the difference between the labour price which the capitalist pays, and the part of that price which they actually allow to reach the labourer.<sup>1)</sup> In England this system is characteristically called the "Sweating system". On the other hand piece wage allows the capitalist to make a contract for so much per piece with the head labourer—in manufactures with the chief of some group, in mines with the extractor of the coal, in the factory with the actual machine-worker—at a price for which the head labourer himself undertakes the enlisting and payment of his assistant workpeople. The exploitation of the labourer by capital is here effected through the exploitation of the labourer by the labourer.<sup>2)</sup>

Given piece wage, it is naturally the personal interest of the labourer to strain his labour power as intensely as possible; this enables the capitalist to raise more easily the normal degree of intensity of labour.<sup>3)</sup> It is moreover now the personal interest of the labourer to lengthen the working day, since with it his daily or weekly wages rise.<sup>4)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> "It is when work passes through several hands, each of which is to take its share of profits, while only the last does the work, that the pay which reaches the work-woman is miserably disproportioned" ("Child. Emp. Com. II. Report", p. lxx, n. 424).

<sup>2)</sup> Even Watts, the apologetic, remarks: "It would be a great improvement to the system of piece work, if all the men employed on a job were partners in the contract, each according to his abilities, instead of one man being interested in overworking his fellows for his own benefit" (l. c. [*Trade Societies and Strikes...*], p. 53). On the vileness of this system, cf. "Child. Emp. Com. Rep. III", p. 66, n. 22, p. 11, n. 124, pp. v, vi, n. 13; p. x, n. 53, p. xi, n. 59.

<sup>3)</sup> This spontaneous result is often artificially helped along, e. g., in the Engineering Trade of London, a customary trick is "the selecting of a man who possesses superior physical strength and quickness, as the principal of several workmen, and paying him an additional rate, by the quarter or otherwise, with the understanding that he is to exert himself to the utmost to induce the others, who are only paid the ordinary wages, to keep up to him ... without any comment this will go far to explain many of the complaints of stinting the action, superior skill, and working power, made by the employers against the men" (in *Trades-Unions*. Dunning, l. c., pp. 22, 23). As the author is himself a labourer and secretary of a Trades' Union, this might be taken for exaggeration. But the reader may compare the "highly respectable" Cyclopaedia of Agriculture of J. Ch. Morton, Art., "Labourer",<sup>4,62</sup> where this method is recommended to the farmers as an approved one.

<sup>4)</sup> "All those who are paid by piece work ... profit by the transgression of the legal limits of work. This observation as to the willingness to work overtime is especially applicable to the women employed as weavers and reelers" ("Rept. of Insp. of Fact., 30th April, 1858," p. 9). "This system" (piece work), "so advantageous to the employer ...

This gradually brings on a reaction like that already described in time wages, without reckoning that the prolongation of the working day, even if the piece wage remains constant, includes of necessity a fall in the price of the labour.

In time wages, with few exceptions, the same wage holds for the same kind of work, whilst in piece wages, though the price of the working time is measured by a certain quantity of product, the day's or week's wage will vary with the individual differences of the labourers, of whom one supplies in a given time the minimum of product only, another the average, a third more than the average. With regard to actual receipts there is, therefore, great variety according to the different skill, strength, energy, staying power, etc., of the individual labourers.<sup>1)</sup> Of course this does not alter the general relations between capital and wage labour. First, the individual differences balance one another in the workshop as a whole, which thus supplies in a given working time the average product, and the total wages paid will be the average wages of that particular branch of industry. Second, the proportion between wages and surplus value remains unaltered, since the mass of surplus labour supplied by each particular labourer corresponds with the wage received by him. But the wider scope that piece wage gives to individuality, tends to develop on the one hand that individuality, and with it the sense of liberty, independence, and self-control of the labourers, on the other, their competition one with another. Piece work has, therefore, a tendency, while raising individual wages above the average, to lower this average itself. But where a particular rate of piece wage has for a long time been fixed by tradition, and its lowering, therefore, presented especial difficulties, the masters, in such exceptional cases, sometimes had recourse to its compulsory transformation into time wages. Hence, e. g., in 1860 a great strike among the ribbon-weavers of Coventry.<sup>2)</sup> Piece wage is finally one

tends directly to encourage the young potter greatly to overwork himself during the four or five years during which he is employed in the piece work system, but at low wages.... This is ... another great cause to which the bad constitutions of the potters are to be attributed" ("Child. Empl. Com. I. Rept.", p. xiii).

<sup>1)</sup> "Where the work in any trade is paid for by the piece at so much per job ... wages may very materially differ in amount.... But in work by the day there is generally an uniform rate ... recognised by both employer and employed as the standard of wages for the general run of workmen in the trade" (Dunning, l. c., p. 17).

<sup>2)</sup> "The work of the journeymen is regulated by the day or by the piece.... These master craftsmen know approximately how much work a journeyman can do per day

of the chief supports of the hour system described in the preceding chapter.<sup>1)</sup>

From what has been shown so far, it follows that piece wage is the form of wages most in harmony with the capitalist mode of production. Although by no means new—it figures side by side with time wages officially in the French and English labour statutes of the 14th century—it only conquers a larger field for action during the period of manufacture, properly so called. In the stormy youth<sup>177</sup> of modern industry, especially from 1797 to 1815, it served as a lever for the lengthening of the working day, and the lowering of wages. Very important materials for the fluctuation of wages during that period are to be found in the Blue books: “Report and Evidence from the Select Committee on Petitions respecting the Corn Laws” (Parliamentary Session of 1813-14), and “Report from the Lords’ Committee, on the state of the Growth, Commerce, and Consumption of Grain, and all Laws relating thereto” (Session of 1814-15).<sup>463</sup> Here we find documentary evidence of the constant lowering of the price of labour from the beginning of the Anti-Jacobin War.<sup>464</sup> In the weaving industry, e. g., piece wages had fallen so low that in spite of the very great lengthening of the working day, the daily wages were then lower than before.

in each trade, and they often pay in proportion to the work that they do; thus these journeymen work as much as they can, in their own interests, without any other supervision” ([R.] Cantillon, *Essai sur la Nature du Commerce en général*, Amst. Ed., 1756, pp. 185 and 202. The first edition appeared in 1755). Cantillon, from whom Quesnay, Sir James Steuart & A. Smith have largely drawn, already here represents piece wage as simply a modified form of time wage. The French edition of Cantillon professes in its title to be a translation from the English, but the English edition, *The Analysis of Trade, Commerce, etc. by Philip Cantillon, late of the city of London, Merchant*, is not only of later date (1759), but proves by its contents that it is a later and revised edition; e. g., in the French edition, Hume is not yet mentioned, whilst in the English, on the other hand, Petty hardly figures any longer. The English edition is theoretically less important, but it contains numerous details referring specifically to English commerce, bullion trade, etc., that are wanting in the French text. The words on the title-page of the English edition, according to which the work is “Taken chiefly from the manuscript of a very ingenious gentleman, deceased, and adapted, etc.”, seem, therefore, a pure fiction, very customary at that time.

<sup>1)</sup> “How often have we not seen many more workers taken on, in some workshops, than were needed actually to do the work? Workers are often set on in the expectation of work which is uncertain, or even completely imaginary; as they are paid piece wages, the employers say to themselves that they run no risk, because any loss of working time will be at the expense of the workers who are unoccupied” (H. Grégoir, *Les Typographes devant le Tribunal correctionnel de Bruxelles*, Bruxelles, 1865, p. 9).

The real earnings of the cotton weaver are now far less than they were; his superiority over the common labourer, which at first was very great, has now almost entirely ceased. Indeed ... the difference in the wages, of skilful and common labour is far less now than at any former period.”<sup>1)</sup>

How little the increased intensity and extension of labour through piece wages benefited the agricultural proletariat, the following passage borrowed from a work on the side of the landlords and farmers shows:

“By far the greater part of agricultural operations is done by people, who are hired for the day or on piece work. Their weekly wages are about 12s., and although it may be assumed that a man earns on piece work under the greater stimulus to labour, 1s. or perhaps 2s. more than on weekly wages, yet it is found, on calculating his total income, that his loss of employment, during the year, outweighs this gain.... Further, it will generally be found that the wages of these men bear a certain proportion to the price of the necessary means of subsistence, so that a man with two children is able to bring up his family without recourse to parish relief.”<sup>2)</sup>

Malthus at that time remarked with reference to the facts published by Parliament:

“I confess that I see, with misgiving, the great extension of the practice of piece wage. Really hard work during 12 or 14 hours of the day, or for any longer time, is too much for any human being.”<sup>3)</sup>

In the workshops under the Factory Acts, piece wage becomes the general rule, because capital can there only increase the efficacy of the working day by intensifying labour.<sup>4)</sup>

With the changing productiveness of labour the same quantum of product represents a varying working time. Therefore, piece wage also varies, for it is the money expression of a determined working time. In our example above, 24 pieces were produced in 12 hours, whilst the value of the product of the 12 hours was 6s., the daily value of the labour power 3s., the price of the labour hour 3d., and the wage for one piece  $1\frac{1}{2}$  d. In one piece half an hour's labour was absorbed. If the same working day now supplies, in consequence of the doubled productiveness of labour, 48 pieces instead of 24, and all other circumstances remain unchanged, then the piece wage falls from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  d. to  $\frac{3}{4}$  d., as every piece now only represents  $\frac{1}{4}$  instead

<sup>1)</sup> *Remarks on the Commercial Policy of Great Britain*, London, 1815 [p. 48].

<sup>2)</sup> *Consideration upon Corn Bill...*, London, 1815, p. 34.

<sup>3)</sup> Malthus, *Inquiry into the Nature and Progress of Rent*, Lond., 1815 [p. 49, note].

<sup>4)</sup> “Those who are paid by piece work ... constitute probably four-fifths of the workers in the factories”, “Report of Insp. of Fact., 30th April, 1858” [, p. 9].

of  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a working hour. 24 by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  d. = 3s., and in like manner 48 by  $\frac{3}{4}$  d. = 3s. In other words, piece wage is lowered in the same proportion as the number of the pieces produced in the same time rises,<sup>1)</sup> and therefore as the working time spent on the same piece falls. This change in piece wage, so far purely nominal, leads to constant battles between capitalist and labour. Either because the capitalist uses it as a pretext for actually lowering the price of labour, or because increased productive power of labour is accompanied by an increased intensity of the same. Or because the labourer takes seriously the appearance of piece wages, viz., that his product is paid for, and not his labour power, and therefore revolts against a lowering of wages, unaccompanied by a lowering in the selling price of the commodity.

"The operatives ... carefully watch the price of the raw material and the price of manufactured goods, and are thus enabled to form an accurate estimate of their master's profits."<sup>2)</sup>

The capitalist rightly knocks on the head such pretensions as gross errors as to the nature of wage labour.<sup>3)</sup> He cries out against this usurping attempt to lay taxes on the advance of industry, and de-

<sup>1)</sup> "The productive power of his spinning-machine is accurately measured, and the rate of pay for work done with it decreases with, though not as, the increase of its productive power" (Ure, I. c., p. 317). This last apologetic phrase Ure himself again cancels. The lengthening of the mule causes some increase of labour, he admits. The labour does therefore not diminish in the same ratio as its productivity increases. Further: "By this increase the productive power of the machine will be augmented one-fifth. When this event happens the spinner will not be paid at the same rate for work done as he was before, but as that rate will not be diminished in the ratio of one-fifth, the improvement will augment his money earnings for any given number of hours' work", but "the foregoing statement requires a certain modification.... The spinner has to pay something additional for juvenile aid out of his additional sixpence, accompanied by displacing a portion of adults" (I. c., [p]p. [320]-321), which has in no way a tendency to raise wages.

<sup>2)</sup> H. Fawcett, *The Economic Position of the British Labourer*, Cambridge and London, 1865, pp. 178-79.

<sup>3)</sup> In the London *Standard* of October 26, 1861,<sup>465</sup> there is a report of proceedings of the firm of John Bright & Co., before the Rochdale magistrates "to prosecute for intimidation the agents of the Carpet Weavers Trades' Union. Bright's partners had introduced new machinery which would turn out 240 yards of carpet in the time and with the labour (!) previously required to produce 160 yards. The workmen had no claim whatever to share in the profits made by the investment of their employer's capital in mechanical improvements. Accordingly, Messrs. Bright proposed to lower the rate of pay from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  d. per yard to 1d., leaving the earnings of the men exactly the same as before for the same labour. But there was a nominal reduction, of which the operatives, it is asserted, had not fair warning beforehand."

clares roundly that the productiveness of labour does not concern the labourer at all.<sup>1)</sup>

## Chapter XXII

### NATIONAL DIFFERENCES OF WAGES

In the 17th chapter we were occupied with the manifold combinations which may bring about a change in magnitude of the value of labour power — this magnitude being considered either absolutely or relatively, i. e., as compared with surplus value; whilst on the other hand, the quantum of the means of subsistence in which the price of labour is realised might again undergo fluctuations independent of, or different from, the changes of this price.<sup>2)</sup> As has been already said, the simple translation of the value, or respectively of the price, of labour power into the exoteric form of wages transforms all these laws into laws of the fluctuations of wages. That which appears in these fluctuations of wages within a single country as a series of varying combinations, may appear in different countries as contemporaneous difference of national wages. In the comparison of the wages in different nations, we must therefore take into account all the factors that determine changes in the amount of the value of labour power; the price and the extent of the prime necessities of life as naturally and historically developed, the cost of training the labourers, the part played by the labour of women and children, the productiveness of labour, its extensive and intensive magnitude. Even the most superficial comparison requires the reduction first of the average day wage for the same trades, in different countries, to a uniform working day. After this reduction to the same terms of the day wages, time wage must again be translated into piece wage, as the latter only can be a measure both of the productivity and the intensity of labour.

In every country there is a certain average intensity of labour, be-

<sup>1)</sup> "Trades' Unions, in their desire to maintain wages, endeavour to share in the benefits of improved machinery." (*Quelle horreur!*) ... "the demanding higher wages, because labour is abbreviated, is in other words the endeavour to establish a duty on mechanical improvements" (*On Combination of Trades*, new ed., London, 1834, p. 42).

<sup>2)</sup> "It is not accurate to say that wages" (he deals here with their money expression) "are increased, because they purchase more of a cheaper article" (David Buchanan in his edition of Adam Smith's *Wealth, &c.*, 1814, Vol. I, p. 417, Note).

low which the labour for the production of a commodity requires more than the socially necessary time, and therefore does not reckon as labour of normal quality. Only a degree of intensity above the national average affects, in a given country, the measure of value by the mere duration of the working time. This is not the case on the universal market, whose integral parts are the individual countries. The average intensity of labour changes from country to country; here it is greater, there less. These national averages form a scale, whose unit of measure is the average unit of universal labour. The more intense national labour, therefore, as compared with the less intense, produces in the same time more value, which expresses itself in more money.

But the law of value in its international application is yet more modified by this, that on the world market the more productive national labour reckons also as the more intense, so long as the more productive nation is not compelled by competition to lower the selling price of its commodities to the level of their value.

In proportion as capitalist production is developed in a country, in the same proportion do the national intensity and productivity of labour there rise above the international level.<sup>1)</sup> The different quantities of commodities of the same kind, produced in different countries in the same working time, have, therefore, unequal international values, which are expressed in different prices, i. e., in sums of money varying according to international values. The relative value of money will, therefore, be less in the nation with more developed capitalist mode of production than in the nation with less developed. It follows, then, that the nominal wages, the equivalent of labour power expressed in money, will also be higher in the first nation than in the second; which does not at all prove that this holds also for the real wages, i. e., for the means of subsistence placed at the disposal of the labourer.

But even apart from these relative differences of the value of money in different countries, it will be found, frequently, that the daily or weekly, &c., wage in the first nation is higher than in the second, whilst the relative price of labour, i. e., the price of labour as compared both with surplus value and with the value of the product, stands higher in the second than in the first.<sup>2)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> We shall inquire, in another place, what circumstances in relation to productivity may modify this law for individual branches of industry.

<sup>2)</sup> James Anderson remarks in his polemic against Adam Smith: "It deserves, likewise, to be remarked, that although the apparent price of labour is usually lower in

J. W. Cowell, member of the Factory Commission of 1833, after careful investigation of the spinning trade, came to the conclusion that,

"in England wages are virtually lower to the capitalist, though higher to the operative than on the Continent of Europe" (Ure, p. 314).

The English Factory Inspector, Alexander Redgrave, in his Report of Oct. 31st, 1866, proves by comparative statistics with Continental states, that in spite of lower wages and much longer working time, Continental labour is, in proportion to the product, dearer than English.<sup>466</sup> An English manager of a cotton factory in Oldenburg, declares that the working time there lasted from 5.30 a. m. to 8 p. m., Saturdays included, and that the workpeople there, when under English overlookers, did not supply during this time quite so much product as the English in 10 hours, but under German overlookers much less. Wages are much lower than in England, in many cases 50%, but the number of hands in proportion to the machinery was much greater, in certain departments in the proportion of 5:3 [p. 33].—Mr. Redgrave gives very full details as to the Russian cotton factories. The data were given him by an English manager until recently employed there [pp. 33-34]. On this Russian soil, so fruitful of all infamies, the old horrors of the early days of English factories are in full swing. The managers are, of course, English, as the native Russian capitalist is of no use in factory business. Despite all overwork, continued day and night, despite the most shameful underpayment of the workpeople, Russian manufacture manages to vegetate only by prohibition of foreign competition. I give, in conclusion, a comparative table of Mr. Redgrave's, on the average number of spindles per factory and per spinner in the different countries of Europe. He, himself,

poor countries, where the produce of the soil, and grain in general, is cheap; yet it is in fact for the most part really higher than in other countries. For it is not the wages that is given to the labourer per day that constitutes the real price of labour, although it is its apparent price. The real price is that which a certain quantity of work performed actually costs the employer; and considered in this light, labour is in almost all cases cheaper in rich countries than in those that are poorer, although the price of grain, and other provisions, is usually much lower in the last than in the first.... Labour estimated by the day, is much lower in Scotland than in England.... Labour by the piece is generally cheaper in England" (James Anderson, *Observations on the Means of Exciting a Spirit of National Industry, &c.*, Edin., 1777, pp. 350, 351). On the contrary, lowness of wages produces, in its turn, dearness of labour. "Labour being dearer in Ireland than it is in England ... because the wages are so much lower" (N. 2074 in "Royal Commission on Railways, Minutes", 1867, [p. 97]).

remarks that he had collected these figures a few years ago, and that since that time the size of the factories and the number of spindles per labourer in England has increased. He supposes, however, an approximately equal progress in the Continental countries mentioned, so that the numbers given would still have their value for purposes of comparison.

AVERAGE NUMBER OF SPINDLES PER FACTORY [p. 32]

England, average of spindles per factory . . . . .	12,600
France, " " " " " . . . . .	1,500
Prussia, " " " " " . . . . .	1,500
Belgium, " " " " " . . . . .	4,000
Saxony, " " " " " . . . . .	4,500
Austria, " " " " " . . . . .	7,000
Switzerland, " " " " " . . . . .	8,000

AVERAGE NUMBER OF PERSONS EMPLOYED TO SPINDLES [p. 32]

France, one person to . . . . .	14	spindles
Russia, " " " " " . . . . .	28	"
Prussia, " " " " " . . . . .	37	"
Bavaria, " " " " " . . . . .	46	"
Austria, " " " " " . . . . .	49	"
Belgium, " " " " " . . . . .	50	"
Saxony, " " " " " . . . . .	50	"
Switzerland, " " " " " . . . . .	55	"
Smaller States of Germany, " " " " " . . . . .	55	"
Great Britain, " " " " " . . . . .	74	"

"This comparison", says Mr. Redgrave, "is yet more unfavourable to Great Britain, inasmuch as there is so large a number of factories in which weaving by power is carried on in conjunction with spinning" (whilst in the table the weavers are not deducted), "and the factories abroad are chiefly spinning factories; if it were possible to compare like with like, strictly, I could find many cotton spinning factories in my district in which mules containing 2,200 spindles are minded by one man (the "minder") and two assistants only, turning off daily 220 lbs. of yarn, measuring 400 miles in length" (Reports of Insp. of Fact., 31st Oct., 1866, pp. 32-33, *passim*).

It is well known that in Eastern Europe as well as in Asia, English companies have undertaken the construction of railways, and have, in making them, employed side by side with the native labourers, a certain number of English working men. Compelled by practical necessity, they thus have had to take into account the national differ-

ence in the intensity of labour, but this has brought them no loss. Their experience shows that even if the height of wages corresponds more or less with the average intensity of labour, the relative price of labour varies generally in the inverse direction.

In an "Essay on the Rate of Wages",<sup>1)</sup> one of his first economic writings, H. Carey tries to prove that the wages of the different nations are directly proportional to the degree of productiveness of the national working days, in order to draw from this international relation, the conclusion that wages everywhere rise and fall in proportion to the productiveness of labour. The whole of our analysis of the production of surplus value shows the absurdity of this conclusion, even if Carey himself had proved his premises, instead of, after his usual uncritical and superficial fashion, shuffling to and fro a confused mass of statistical materials. The best of it is that he does not assert that things actually are as they ought to be according to his theory. For State intervention has falsified the natural economic relations. The different national wages must be reckoned, therefore, as if that part of each that goes to the State in the form of taxes, came to the labourer himself. Ought not Mr. Carey to consider further whether those "State expenses" are not the "natural" fruits of capitalistic development? The reasoning is quite worthy of the man who first declared the relations of capitalist production to be eternal laws of Nature and reason, whose free, harmonious working is only disturbed by the intervention of the State, in order afterwards to discover that the diabolical influence of England on the world market (an influence, which, it appears, does not spring from the natural laws of capitalist production) necessitates State intervention, i. e., the protection of those laws of Nature and reason by the State, *alias* the System of Protection. He discovered further, that the theorems of Ricardo and others, in which existing social antagonisms and contradictions are formulated, are not the ideal product of the real economic movement, but on the contrary, that the real antagonisms of capitalist production in England and elsewhere are the result of the theories of Ricardo and others! Finally he discovered that it is, in the last resort, commerce that destroys the inborn beauties and harmonies of the capitalist mode of production. A step further, and he will, perhaps, discover that the

<sup>1)</sup> "Essay on the Rate of Wages: with an Examination of the Causes of the Differences in the Condition of the Labouring Population throughout the World", Philadelphia, 1835.

one evil in capitalist production is capital itself. Only a man with such atrocious want of the critical faculty and such spurious erudition deserved, in spite of his Protectionist heresy, to become the secret source of the harmonious wisdom of a Bastiat, and of all the other Free-trade optimists of today.

## Part VII

### THE ACCUMULATION OF CAPITAL

The conversion of a sum of money into means of production and labour power, is the first step taken by the quantum of value that is going to function as capital. This conversion takes place in the market, within the sphere of circulation. The second step, the process of production, is complete so soon as the means of production have been converted into commodities whose value exceeds that of their component parts, and, therefore, contains the capital originally advanced, plus a surplus value. These commodities must then be thrown into circulation. They must be sold, their value realised in money, this money afresh converted into capital, and so over and over again. This circular movement, in which the same phases are continually gone through in succession, forms the circulation of capital.

The first condition of accumulation is that the capitalist must have contrived to sell his commodities, and to reconvert into capital the greater part of the money so received. In the following pages we shall assume that capital circulates in its normal way. The detailed analysis of the process will be found in Book II.

The capitalist who produces surplus value—i. e., who extracts unpaid labour directly from the labourers, and fixes it in commodities, is, indeed, the first appropriator, but by no means the ultimate owner, of this surplus value. He has to share it with capitalists, with land-owners, &c., who fulfil other functions in the complex of social production. Surplus value, therefore, splits up into various parts. Its fragments fall to various categories of persons, and take various forms, independent the one of the other, such as profit, interest, merchants'

profit, rent, &c. It is only in Book III that we can take in hand these modified forms of surplus value.<sup>11</sup>

On the one hand, then, we assume that the capitalist sells at their value the commodities he has produced, without concerning ourselves either about the new forms that capital assumes while in the sphere of circulation, or about the concrete conditions of reproduction hidden under these forms. On the other hand, we treat the capitalist producer as owner of the entire surplus value, or, better perhaps, as the representative of all the sharers with him in the booty. We, therefore, first of all consider accumulation from an abstract point of view — i. e., as a mere phase in the actual process of production.

So far as accumulation takes place, the capitalist must have succeeded in selling his commodities, and in reconverting the sale-money into capital. Moreover, the breaking-up of surplus value into fragments neither alters its nature nor the conditions under which it becomes an element of accumulation. Whatever be the proportion of surplus value which the industrial capitalist retains for himself, or yields up to others, he is the one who, in the first instance, appropriates it. We, therefore, assume no more than what actually takes place. On the other hand, the simple fundamental form of the process of accumulation is obscured by the incident of the circulation which brings it about, and by the splitting up of surplus value. An exact analysis of the process, therefore, demands that we should, for a time, disregard all phenomena that hide the play of its inner mechanism.

## Chapter XXIII

### SIMPLE REPRODUCTION

Whatever the form of the process of production in a society, it must be a continuous process, must continue to go periodically through the same phases. A society can no more cease to produce than it can cease to consume. When viewed, therefore, as a connected whole, and as flowing on with incessant renewal, every social process of production is, at the same time, a process of reproduction.

The conditions of production are also those of reproduction. No society can go on producing, in other words, no society can reproduce, unless it constantly reconverts a part of its products into means of production, or elements of fresh products. All other circumstances

remaining the same, the only mode by which it can reproduce its wealth, and maintain it at one level, is by replacing the means of production — i. e., the instruments of labour, the raw material, and the auxiliary substances consumed in the course of the year — by an equal quantity of the same kind of articles; these must be separated from the mass of the yearly products, and thrown afresh into the process of production. Hence, a definite portion of each year's product belongs to the domain of production. Destined for productive consumption from the very first, this portion exists, for the most part, in the shape of articles totally unfitted for individual consumption.

If production be capitalistic in form, so, too, will be reproduction. Just as in the former the labour process figures but as a means towards the self-expansion of capital, so in the latter it figures but as a means of reproducing as capital — i. e., as self-expanding value,— the value advanced. It is only because his money constantly functions as capital that the economic guise of a capitalist attaches to a man. If, for instance, a sum of £100 has this year been converted into capital, and produced a surplus value of £20, it must continue during next year, and subsequent years, to repeat the same operation. As a periodic increment of the capital advanced, or periodic fruit of capital in process, surplus value acquires the form of a revenue flowing out of capital.<sup>1</sup>

If this revenue<sup>a</sup> serve the capitalist only as a fund to provide for his consumption, and be spent as periodically as it is gained, then, *ceteris paribus*, simple reproduction will take place. And although this reproduction is a mere repetition of the process of production on the old

<sup>1</sup> “The rich, who consume the labour of others, can only obtain them by making exchanges” //purchases of commodities//. “By giving away their acquired and accumulated wealth in exchange for the new products which are the object of their capricious wishes, they seem to be exposed to an early exhaustion of their reserve fund; we have already said that they do not work and are unable to work; therefore it could be assumed with full justification that their former wealth would be diminishing with every day and that, finally, a day would come when they would have nothing, and they would have nothing to offer to the workers, who work exclusively for them. ...But, in the social order, wealth has acquired the power of reproducing itself through the labour of others, without the help of its owners. Wealth, like labour, and by means of labour, bears fruit every year, but this fruit can be destroyed every year without making the rich man any poorer thereby. This fruit is the *revenue* which arises out of *capital*” (Sismondi, *Nouv. Princ. d'Écon. Pol.*, Paris, 1819, t. 1, pp. 81-82).

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<sup>a</sup> See this volume, p. 587, footnote 1.

scale, yet this mere repetition, or continuity, gives a new character to the process, or, rather, causes the disappearance of some apparent characteristics which it possessed as an isolated discontinuous process.

The purchase of labour power for a fixed period is the prelude to the process of production; and this prelude is constantly repeated when the stipulated term comes to an end, when a definite period of production, such as a week or a month, has elapsed. But the labourer is not paid until after he has expended his labour power, and realised in commodities not only its value, but surplus value. He has, therefore, produced not only surplus value, which we for the present regard as a fund to meet the private consumption of the capitalist, but he has also produced, before it flows back to him in the shape of wages, the fund out of which he himself is paid, the variable capital; and his employment lasts only so long as he continues to reproduce this fund. Hence, that formula of the economists,<sup>76</sup> referred to in Chapter XVIII, which represents wages as a share in the product itself.<sup>1)</sup> What flows back to the labourer in the shape of wages is a portion of the product that is continuously reproduced by him. The capitalist, it is true, pays him in money, but this money is merely the transmuted form of the product of his labour. While he is converting a portion of the means of production into products, a portion of his former product is being turned into money. It is his labour of last week, or of last year, that pays for his labour power this week or this year. The illusion begotten by the intervention of money vanishes immediately, if, instead of taking a single capitalist and a single labourer, we take the class of capitalists and the class of labourers as a whole. The capitalist class is constantly giving to the labouring class order-notes, in the form of money, on a portion of the commodities produced by the latter and appropriated by the former. The labourers give these order-notes back just as constantly to the capitalist class, and in this way get their share of their own product. The transaction is veiled by the commodity form of the product and the money form of the commodity.

Variable capital is therefore only a particular historical form of appearance of the fund for providing the necessities of life, or the la-

<sup>1)</sup> "Wages as well as profits are to be considered, each of them, as really a portion of the finished product" (Ramsay, l. c., p. 142). "The share of the product which comes to the labourer in the form of wages" (J. Mill, *Éléments, &c.*<sup>467</sup>) Translated by Parisot. Paris, 1823, p. 34).

bour fund which the labourer requires for the maintenance of himself and family, and which, whatever be the system of social production, he must himself produce and reproduce. If the labour fund constantly flows to him in the form of money that pays for his labour, it is because the product he has created moves constantly away from him in the form of capital. But all this does not alter the fact, that it is the labourer's own labour, realised in a product, which is advanced to him by the capitalist.<sup>1)</sup> Let us take a peasant liable to do compulsory service for his lord. He works on his own land, with his own means of production, for, say, 3 days a week. The 3 other days he does forced work on the lord's domain. He constantly reproduces his own labour fund, which never, in his case, takes the form of a money payment for his labour, advanced by another person. But in return, his unpaid forced labour for the lord, on its side, never acquires the character of voluntary paid labour. If one fine morning the lord appropriates to himself the land, the cattle, the seed, in a word, the means of production of this peasant the latter will thenceforth be obliged to sell his labour power to the lord. He will, *ceteris paribus*, labour 6 days a week as before, 3 for himself, 3 for his lord, who thenceforth becomes a wages-paying capitalist. As before, he will use up the means of production as means of production, and transfer their value to the product. As before, a definite portion of the product will be devoted to reproduction. But from the moment that the forced labour is changed into wage labour, from that moment the labour fund, which the peasant himself continues as before to produce and reproduce, takes the form of a capital advanced in the form of wages by the lord. The bourgeois economist whose narrow mind is unable to separate the form of appearance from the thing that appears, shuts his eyes to the fact, that it is but here and there on the face of the earth, that even nowadays the labour fund crops up in the form of capital.<sup>2)</sup>

Variable capital, it is true, only then loses its character of a value advanced out of the capitalist's funds,<sup>3)</sup> when we view the process of

<sup>1)</sup> "When capital is employed in advancing to the workman his wages, it adds nothing to the funds for the maintenance of labour" (Cazenove in note to his edition of Malthus' *Definitions in Pol. Econ.*, London, 1853, p. 22).

<sup>2)</sup> "The wages of labour are advanced by capitalists in the case of less than one-fourth of the labourers of the earth" (Rich. Jones, *Textbook of Lectures on the Pol. Econ. of Nations*, Hertford, 1852, p. 36).

<sup>3)</sup> "Though the manufacturer" (i. e. the labourer) "has his wages advanced to him by his master, he in reality costs him no expense, the value of these wages being gene-

capitalist production in the flow of its constant renewal. But that process must have had a beginning of some kind. From our present standpoint it therefore seems likely that the capitalist, once upon a time, became possessed of money, by some accumulation that took place independently of the unpaid labour of others, and that this was, therefore, how he was enabled to frequent the market as a buyer of labour power. However this may be, the mere continuity of the process, the simple reproduction, brings about some other wonderful changes, which affect not only the variable, but the total capital.

If a capital of £1,000 beget yearly a surplus value of £200, and if this surplus value be consumed every year, it is clear that at the end of 5 years the surplus value consumed will amount to  $5 \times £200$  or the £1,000 originally advanced. If only a part, say one half, were consumed, the same result would follow at the end of 10 years, since  $10 \times £100 = £1,000$ . General Rule: The value of the capital advanced divided by the surplus value annually consumed, gives the number of years, or reproduction periods, at the expiration of which the capital originally advanced has been consumed by the capitalist and has disappeared. The capitalist thinks, that he is consuming the produce of the unpaid labour of others, i. e., the surplus value, and is keeping intact his original capital; but what he thinks cannot alter facts. After the lapse of a certain number of years, the capital value he then possesses is equal to the sum total of the surplus value appropriated by him during those years, and the total value he has consumed is equal to that of his original capital. It is true, he has in hand a capital whose amount has not changed, and of which a part, viz., the buildings, machinery, &c., were already there when the work of his business began. But what we have to do with here, is not the material elements, but the value, of that capital. When a person gets through all his property, by taking upon himself debts equal to the value of that property, it is clear that his property represents nothing but the sum total of his debts. And so it is with the capitalist; when he has consumed the equivalent of his original capital, the value of his present capital represents nothing but the total amount of the surplus value appropriated by him without payment. Not a single atom of the value of his old capital continues to exist.

rally restored, together with a profit, in the improved value of the subject upon which his labour is bestowed" (A. Smith, i. e., [*An Inquiry into the Nature...*, London, 1835,] Book II, ch. III, p. 355).

Apart then from all accumulation, the mere continuity of the process of production, in other words simple reproduction, sooner or later, and of necessity, converts every capital into accumulated capital, or capitalised surplus value. Even if that capital was originally acquired by the personal labour of its employer, it sooner or later becomes value appropriated without an equivalent, the unpaid labour of others materialised either in money or in some other object. We saw in Chapt. IV<sup>468</sup> that in order to convert money into capital something more is required than the production and circulation of commodities. We saw that on the one side the possessor of value or money, on the other, the possessor of the value-creating substance; on the one side, the possessor of the means of production and subsistence, on the other, the possessor of nothing but labour power, must confront one another as buyer and seller. The separation of labour from its product, of subjective labour power from the objective conditions of labour, was therefore the real foundation in fact, and the starting-point of capitalist production.

But that which at first was but a starting-point, becomes, by the mere continuity of the process, by simple reproduction, the peculiar result, constantly renewed and perpetuated, of capitalist production. On the one hand, the process of production incessantly converts material wealth into capital, into means of creating more wealth and means of enjoyment for the capitalist. On the other hand, the labourer, on quitting the process, is what he was on entering it, a source of wealth, but devoid of all means of making that wealth his own. Since, before entering on the process, his own labour has already been alienated from himself by the sale of his labour power, has been appropriated by the capitalist and incorporated with capital, it must, during the process, be realised in a product that does not belong to him. Since the process of production is also the process by which the capitalist consumes labour power, the product of the labourer is incessantly converted, not only into commodities, but into capital, into value that sucks up the value-creating power, into means of subsistence that buy the person of the labourer, into means of production that command the producers.<sup>1)</sup> The labourer therefore constantly

<sup>1)</sup> "This is a remarkably peculiar property of productive labour. Whatever is productively consumed is capital, and it becomes capital by consumption" (James Mill, *l. c.*, p. 242).<sup>469</sup> James Mill, however, never got on the track of this "remarkably peculiar property".

produces material, objective wealth, but in the form of capital, of an alien power that dominates and exploits him; and the capitalist as constantly produces labour power, but in the form of a subjective source of wealth, separated from the objects in and by which it can alone be realised; in short he produces the labourer, but as a wage labourer.<sup>1)</sup> This incessant reproduction, this perpetuation of the labourer, is the sine quâ non of capitalist production.

The labourer consumes in a two-fold way. While producing he consumes by his labour the means of production, and converts them into products with a higher value than that of the capital advanced. This is his productive consumption. It is at the same time consumption of his labour power by the capitalist who bought it. On the other hand, the labourer turns the money paid to him for his labour power, into means of subsistence: this is his individual consumption. The labourer's productive consumption, and his individual consumption, are therefore totally distinct. In the former, he acts as the motive power of capital, and belongs to the capitalist. In the latter, he belongs to himself, and performs his necessary vital functions outside the process of production. The result of the one is, that the capitalist lives; of the other, that the labourer lives.

When treating of the working day, we saw that the labourer is often compelled to make his individual consumption a mere incident of production. In such a case, he supplies himself with necessaries in order to maintain his labour power, just as coal and water are supplied to the steam-engine and oil to the wheel. His means of consumption, in that case, are the mere means of consumption required by a means of production; his individual consumption is directly productive consumption. This, however, appears to be an abuse not essentially appertaining to capitalist production.<sup>2)</sup>

The matter takes quite another aspect, when we contemplate, not the single capitalist, and the single labourer, but the capitalist class and the labouring class, not an isolated process of production, but

<sup>1)</sup> "It is true indeed, that the first introducing a manufacture employs many poor, but they cease not to be so, and the continuance of it makes many" (*Reasons for a Limited Exportation of Wool*, London, 1677, p. 19). "The farmer now absurdly asserts, that he keeps the poor. They are indeed kept in misery" (*Reasons for the Late Increase of the Poor Rates: or a Comparative View of the Prices of Labour and Provisions*, London, 1777, p. 31).

<sup>2)</sup> Rossi would not declaim so emphatically against this, had he really penetrated the secret of "productive consumption".<sup>470</sup>

capitalist production in full swing, and on its actual social scale. By converting part of his capital into labour power, the capitalist augments the value of his entire capital. He kills two birds with one stone. He profits, not only by what he receives from but by what he gives to, the labourer. The capital given in exchange for labour power is converted into necessities, by the consumption of which the muscles, nerves, bones, and brains of existing labourers are reproduced, and new labourers are begotten. Within the limits of what is strictly necessary, the individual consumption of the working class is, therefore, the reconversion of the means of subsistence given by capital in exchange for labour power, into fresh labour power at the disposal of capital for exploitation. It is the production and reproduction of that means of production so indispensable to the capitalist: the labourer himself. The individual consumption of the labourer, whether it proceed within the workshop or outside it, whether it be part of the process of production or not, forms therefore a factor of the production and reproduction of capital; just as cleaning machinery does, whether it be done while the machinery is working or while it is standing. The fact that the labourer consumes his means of subsistence for his own purposes, and not to please the capitalist, has no bearing on the matter. The consumption of food by a beast of burden is none the less a necessary factor in the process of production, because the beast enjoys what it eats. The maintenance and reproduction of the working class is, and must ever be, a necessary condition to the reproduction of capital. But the capitalist may safely leave its fulfilment to the labourer's instincts of self-preservation and of propagation. All the capitalist cares for, is to reduce the labourer's individual consumption as far as possible to what is strictly necessary, and he is far away from imitating those brutal South Americans, who force their labourers to take the more substantial, rather than the less substantial, kind of food.<sup>1)</sup>

Hence both the capitalist and his ideological representative, the political economist, consider that part alone of the labourer's indivi-

<sup>1)</sup> "The labourers in the mines of S. America, whose daily task (the heaviest perhaps in the world) consists in bringing to the surface on their shoulders a load of metal weighing from 180 to 200 pounds, from a depth of 450 feet, live on bread and beans only; they themselves would prefer the bread alone for food, but their masters, who have found out that the men cannot work so hard on bread, treat them like horses, and compel them to eat beans; beans, however, are relatively much richer in bone-earth (phosphate of lime) than is bread" (Liebig, *i. c.*, vol. 1, p. 194, note).

dual consumption to be productive, which is requisite for the perpetuation of the class, and which therefore must take place in order that the capitalist may have labour power to consume; what the labourer consumes for his own pleasure beyond that part, is unproductive consumption.<sup>1)</sup> If the accumulation of capital were to cause a rise of wages and an increase in the labourer's consumption, unaccompanied by increase in the consumption of labour power by capital, the additional capital would be consumed unproductively.<sup>2)</sup> In reality, the individual consumption of the labourer is unproductive as regards himself, for it reproduces nothing but the needy individual; it is productive to the capitalist and to the State, since it is the production of the power that creates their wealth.<sup>3)</sup>

From a social point of view, therefore, the working class, even when not directly engaged in the labour process, is just as much an appendage of capital as the ordinary instruments of labour. Even its individual consumption is, within certain limits, a mere factor in the process of production. That process, however, takes good care to prevent these self-conscious instruments from leaving it in the lurch, for it removes their product, as fast as it is made, from their pole to the opposite pole of capital. Individual consumption provides, on the one hand, the means for their maintenance and reproduction: on the other hand, it secures by the annihilation of the necessities of life, the continued reappearance of the workman in the labour market. The Roman slave was held by fetters: the wage labourer is bound to his owner by invisible threads. The appearance of independence is kept up by means of a constant change of employers, and by the *fictio juris* of a contract.

In former times, capital resorted to legislation, whenever necessary, to enforce its proprietary rights over the free labourer. For instance, down to 1815, the emigration of mechanics employed in machine making was, in England, forbidden, under grievous pains and penalties.

<sup>1)</sup> James Mill, l.c., p. 238.

<sup>2)</sup> "If the price of labour should rise so high that, notwithstanding the increase of capital, no more could be employed, I should say that such increase of capital would be still unproductively consumed" (Ricardo, l.c., p. 163, [note]).

<sup>3)</sup> "The only productive consumption, properly so called, is the consumption or destruction of wealth" (he alludes to the means of production) "by capitalists with a view to reproduction.... The workman ... is a productive consumer to the person who employs him, and to the State, but not, strictly speaking, to himself" (Malthus' *Definitions, &c.*, p. 30).

The reproduction of the working class carries with it the accumulation of skill, that is handed down from one generation to another.<sup>1)</sup> To what extent the capitalist reckons the existence of such a skilled class among the factors of production that belong to him by right, and to what extent he actually regards it as the reality of his variable capital, is seen so soon as a crisis threatens him with its loss. In consequence of the civil war in the United States and of the accompanying cotton famine, the majority of the cotton operatives in Lancashire were, as is well known, thrown out of work.<sup>471</sup> Both from the working class itself, and from other ranks of society, there arose a cry for State aid, or for voluntary national subscriptions, in order to enable the "superfluous" hands to emigrate to the colonies or to the United States. Thereupon, *The Times* published on the 24th March, 1863 [p. 12, col. 2-4], a letter from Edmund Potter, a former president of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce. This letter was rightly called in the House of Commons, the manufacturers' manifesto.<sup>2)</sup> We cull here a few characteristic passages, in which the proprietary rights of capital over labour power are unblushingly asserted.

"He" (the man out of work) "may be told the supply of cotton workers is too large ... and ... must ... in fact be reduced by a third, perhaps, and that then there will be a healthy demand for the remaining two-thirds.... Public opinion ... urges emigration.... The master cannot willingly see his labour supply being removed; he may think, and perhaps justly, that it is both wrong and unsound.... But if the public funds are to be devoted to assist emigration, he has a right to be heard, and perhaps to protest."

Mr. Potter then shows how useful the cotton trade is, how the "trade has undoubtedly drawn the surplus population from Ireland and from the agricultural districts", how immense is its extent, how in the year 1860 it yielded <sup>5</sup>ths of the total English exports, how, after a few years, it will again expand by the extension of the market, particularly of the Indian market, and by calling forth a plentiful supply of cotton at 6d. per lb. He then continues:

"Some time ..., one, two, or three years, it may be, will produce the quantity.... The question I would put then is this— Is the trade worth retaining? Is it worth while to keep the machinery (he means the living labour machines) in order, and is it not the

<sup>1)</sup> "The only thing, of which one can say, that it is stored up and prepared beforehand, is the skill of the labourer.... The accumulation and storage of skilled labour, that most important operation, is, as regards the great mass of labourers, accomplished without any capital whatever" (Th. Hodgskin, *Labour Defended, &c.*, p. [p. 12-] 13).

<sup>2)</sup> "That letter might be looked upon as the manifesto of the manufacturers" (Ferrand, *Motion on the Cotton Famine*, H. o. C., 27th April, 1863).<sup>472</sup>

greatest folly to think of parting with that? I think it is. I allow that the workers are not a property, not the property of Lancashire and the masters; but they are the strength of both; they are the mental and trained power which cannot be replaced for a generation; the mere machinery which they work might much of it be beneficially replaced, nay improved, in a twelvemonth.<sup>10</sup> Encourage or allow (!) the working power to emigrate, and what of the capitalist?<sup>11</sup><sup>a</sup> "...Take away the cream of the workers, and fixed capital will depreciate in a great degree, and the floating will not subject itself to a struggle with the short supply of inferior labour.... We are told the workers wish it" (emigration). "Very natural it is that they should do so.... Reduce, compress the cotton trade by taking away its working power and reducing their wages expenditure, say one-fifth, or five millions, and what then would happen to the class above, the small shopkeepers; and what of the rents, the cottage rents.... Trace out the effects upwards to the small farmer, the better householder, and ... the landowner, and say if there could be any suggestion more suicidal to all classes of the country than by enfeebling a nation by exporting the best of its manufacturing population, and destroying the value of some of its most productive capital and enrichment.... I advise a loan (of five or six millions sterling), ... extending it may be over two or three years, administered by special commissioners added to the Boards of Guardians in the cotton districts, under special legislative regulations, enforcing some occupation or labour, as a means of keeping up at least the moral standard of the recipients of the loan ... can anything be worse for landowners or masters than parting with the best of the workers, and demoralising and disappointing the rest by an extended depletive emigration, a depletion of capital and value in an entire province?"<sup>12</sup>

Potter, the chosen mouthpiece of the manufacturers, distinguishes two sorts of "machinery", each of which belongs to the capitalist, and of which one stands in his factory, the other at night time and on Sundays is housed outside the factory, in cottages. The one is inanimate, the other living. The inanimate machinery not only wears out and depreciates from day to day, but a great part of it becomes so quickly superannuated, by constant technical progress, that it can be replaced with advantage by new machinery after a few months. The living

<sup>10</sup> It will not be forgotten that this same capital sings quite another song, under ordinary circumstances, when there is a question of reducing wages. Then the masters exclaim with one voice: "The factory operatives should keep in wholesome remembrance the fact that theirs is really a low species of skilled labour; and that there is none which is more easily acquired, or of its quality more amply remunerated, or which, by a short training of the least expert, can be more quickly, as well as abundantly, acquired.... The master's machinery" (which we now learn can be replaced with advantage in 12 months) "really plays a far more important part in the business of production than the labour and skill of the operative" (who cannot now be replaced under 30 years), "which six months' education can teach, and a common labourer can learn" (See ante, p. 423).<sup>353</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> In the German editions there follows one more sentence: "This cry from the heart reminds one of Lord Chamberlain Kalb."<sup>473</sup>

machinery, on the contrary, gets better the longer it lasts, and in proportion as the skill, handed from one generation to another, accumulates. *The Times*<sup>474</sup> answered the cotton lord as follows:

"Mr. Edmund Potter is so impressed with the exceptional and supreme importance of the cotton masters that, in order to preserve this class and perpetuate their profession, he would keep half a million of the labouring class confined in a great moral workhouse against their will. 'Is the trade worth retaining?' asks Mr. Potter. 'Certainly by all honest means it is,' we answer. 'Is it worth while keeping the machinery in order?' again asks Mr. Potter. Here we hesitate. By the 'machinery' Mr. Potter means the human machinery, for he goes on to protest that he does not mean to use them as an absolute property. We must confess that we do not think it 'worth while,' or even possible, to keep the human machinery in order — that is to shut it up and keep it oiled till it is wanted. Human machinery *will* rust under inaction, oil and rub it as you may. Moreover, the human machinery *will*, as we have just seen, get the steam up of its own accord, and burst or run amuck in our great towns. It might, as Mr. Potter says, require some time to reproduce the workers, but, having machinists and capitalists at hand, we could always find thrifty, hard, industrious men wherewith to improvise more master manufacturers than we can ever want. Mr. Potter talks of the trade reviving 'in one, two, or three years', and he asks us not 'to encourage or allow (!) the working power to emigrate'. He says that it is very natural the workers should wish to emigrate; but he thinks that in spite of their desire, the nation ought to keep this half million of workers with their 700,000 dependents, shut up in the cotton districts; and as a necessary consequence, he must of course think that the nation ought to keep down their discontent by force, and sustain them by alms — and upon the chance that the cotton masters may some day want them.... The time is come when the great public opinion of these islands must operate to save this 'working power' from those who would deal with it as they would deal with iron, and coal, and cotton."

*The Times'* article was only a *jeu d'esprit*. The "great public opinion" was, in fact, of Mr. Potter's opinion, that the factory operatives are part of the movable fittings of a factory. Their emigration was prevented.<sup>1)</sup> They were locked up in that "moral workhouse", the cotton districts, and they form, as before, "the strength" of the cotton manufacturers of Lancashire.

Capitalist production, therefore, of itself reproduces the separation between labour power and the means of labour. It thereby repro-

<sup>1)</sup> Parliament did not vote a single farthing in aid of emigration, but simply passed some Acts empowering the municipal corporations to keep the operatives in a half-starved state, i. e., to exploit them at less than the normal wages. On the other hand, when 3 years later, the cattle disease broke out, Parliament broke wildly through its usages and voted, straight off, millions for indemnifying the millionaire landlords, whose farmers in any event came off without loss, owing to the rise in the price of meat. The bull-like bellow of the landed proprietors at the opening of Parliament, in 1866, showed that a man can worship the cow Sabala without being a Hindu, and can change himself into an ox without being a Jupiter.

duces and perpetuates the condition for exploiting the labourer. It incessantly forces him to sell his labour power in order to live, and enables the capitalist to purchase labour power in order that he may enrich himself.<sup>1)</sup> It is no longer a mere accident, that capitalist and labourer confront each other in the market as buyer and seller. It is the process itself that incessantly hurls back the labourer on to the market as a vendor of his labour power, and that incessantly converts his own product into a means by which another man can purchase him. In reality, the labourer belongs to capital before he has sold himself to capital. His economic bondage<sup>2)</sup> is both brought about and concealed by the periodic sale of himself, by his change of masters, and by the oscillations in the market price of labour power.<sup>3)</sup>

Capitalist production, therefore, under its aspect of a continuous connected process, of a process of reproduction, produces not only commodities, not only surplus value, but it also produces and reproduces the capitalist relation; on the one side the capitalist, on the other the wage labourer.<sup>4)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> "The worker required the means of subsistence to live, the boss required labour to make a profit" (Sismondi, I. c., p. 91).

<sup>2)</sup> A boorishly clumsy form of this bondage exists in the county of Durham. This is one of the few counties, in which circumstances do not secure to the farmer undisputed proprietary rights over the agricultural labourer. The mining industry allows the latter some choice. In this county, the farmer, contrary to the custom elsewhere, rents only such farms as have on them labourers' cottages. The rent of the cottage is a part of the wages. These cottages are known as "hinds' houses". They are let to the labourers in consideration of certain feudal services, under a contract called "bondage", which, amongst other things, binds the labourer, during the time he is employed elsewhere, to leave some one, say his daughter, &c., to supply his place. The labourer himself is called a "bondsman".<sup>475</sup> The relationship here set up also shows how individual consumption by the labourer becomes consumption on behalf of capital—or productive consumption—from quite a new point of view: "It is curious to observe that the very dung of the hind and bondsman is the perquisite of the calculating lord ... and the lord will allow no privy but his own to exist in the neighbourhood, and will rather give a bit of manure here and there for a garden than bate any part of his seigneurial right" ("Public Health, Report VII, 1865", p. 188).

<sup>3)</sup> It will not be forgotten, that, with respect to the labour of children, &c., even the formality of a voluntary sale disappears.

<sup>4)</sup> "Capital presupposes wage labour, and wage labour presupposes capital. One is a necessary condition to the existence of the other; they mutually call each other into existence. Does an operative in a cotton-factory produce nothing but cotton goods? No, he produces capital. He produces values that give fresh command over his labour, and that, by means of such command, create fresh values" (Karl Marx, "Lohnarbeit und Kapital", in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*; No. 266, 7th April, 1849 [p. 1, col. 3], [present edition, Vol. 9, p. 214]). The articles published under the above title in the *Neue*

## Chapter XXIV

### CONVERSION OF SURPLUS VALUE INTO CAPITAL

SECTION I.—CAPITALIST PRODUCTION ON  
 A PROGRESSIVELY INCREASING SCALE.  
 TRANSITION OF THE LAWS OF PROPERTY  
 THAT CHARACTERISE PRODUCTION OF COMMODITIES  
 INTO LAWS OF CAPITALIST APPROPRIATION

Hitherto we have investigated how surplus value emanates from capital; we have now to see how capital arises from surplus value. Employing surplus value as capital, reconverting it into capital, is called accumulation of capital.<sup>11</sup>

First let us consider this transaction from the standpoint of the individual capitalist. Suppose a spinner to have advanced a capital of £10,000, of which four-fifths (£8,000) are laid out in cotton, machinery, &c., and one-fifth (£2,000) in wages. Let him produce 240,000 lbs. of yarn annually, having a value of £12,000. The rate of surplus value being 100%, the surplus value lies in the surplus or net product of 40,000 lbs. of yarn, one-sixth of the gross product, with a value of £2,000 which will be realised by a sale. £2,000 is £2,000. We can neither see nor smell in this sum of money a trace of surplus value. When we know that a given value is surplus value, we know how its owner came by it; but that does not alter the nature either of value or of money.

In order to convert this additional sum of £2,000 into capital, the master-spinner will, all circumstances remaining as before, advance four-fifths of it (£1,600) in the purchase of cotton, &c., and one-fifth (£400) in the purchase of additional spinners, who will find in the market the necessaries of life whose value the master has advanced to them. Then the new capital of £2,000 functions in the spinning-mill, and brings in, in its turn, a surplus value of £400.

The capital value was originally advanced in the money form. The surplus value on the contrary is, originally, the value of a definite por-

*Rheinische Zeitung* are parts of some lectures given by me on that subject, in 1847, in the German “Arbeiter-Verein” at Brussels, the publication of which was interrupted by the revolution of February.<sup>476</sup>

<sup>11</sup> “Accumulation of capital; the employment of a portion of revenue as capital” (Malthus, *Definitions, &c.*, ed. Cazenove, p. 11). “Conversion of revenue into capital” (Malthus, *Princ. of Pol. Econ.*, 2nd Ed., Lond., 1836, p. 320).

tion of the gross product. If this gross product be sold, converted into money, the capital value regains its original form. From this moment the capital value and the surplus value are both of them sums of money, and their reconversion into capital takes place in precisely the same way. The one, as well as the other, is laid out by the capitalist in the purchase of commodities that place him in a position to begin afresh the fabrication of his goods, and this time, on an extended scale. But in order to be able to buy those commodities, he must find them ready in the market.

His own yarns circulate, only because he brings his annual product to market, as all other capitalists likewise do with their commodities. But these commodities, before coming to market, were part of the general annual product, part of the total mass of objects of every kind, into which the sum of the individual capitals, i. e., the total capital of society, had been converted in the course of the year, and of which each capitalist had in hand only an aliquot part. The transactions in the market effectuate only the interchange of the individual components of this annual product, transfer them from one hand to another, but can neither augment the total annual production, nor alter the nature of the objects produced. Hence the use that can be made of the total annual product, depends entirely upon its own composition, but in no way upon circulation.

The annual production must in the first place furnish all those objects (use values) from which the material components of capital, used up in the course of the year, have to be replaced. Deducting these there remains the net or surplus product, in which the surplus value lies. And of what does this surplus product consist? Only of things destined to satisfy the wants and desires of the capitalist class, things which, consequently, enter into the consumption fund of the capitalists? Were that the case, the cup of surplus value would be drained to the very dregs, and nothing but simple reproduction would ever take place.

To accumulate it is necessary to convert a portion of the surplus product into capital. But we cannot, except by a miracle, convert into capital anything but such articles as can be employed in the labour process (i. e., means of production), and such further articles as are suitable for the sustenance of the labourer (i. e., means of subsistence). Consequently, a part of the annual surplus labour must have been applied to the production of additional means of production and subsistence, over and above the quantity of these things required to re-

place the capital advanced. In one word, surplus value is convertible into capital solely because the surplus product, whose value it is, already comprises the material elements of new capital.<sup>1)</sup>

Now in order to allow of these elements actually functioning as capital, the capitalist class requires additional labour. If the exploitation of the labourers already employed do not increase, either extensively or intensively, then additional labour power must be found. For this the mechanism of capitalist production provides beforehand, by converting the working class into a class dependent on wages, a class whose ordinary wages suffice, not only for its maintenance, but for its increase. It is only necessary for capital to incorporate this additional labour power, annually supplied by the working class in the shape of labourers of all ages, with the surplus means of production comprised in the annual produce, and the conversion of surplus value into capital is complete. From a concrete point of view, accumulation resolves itself into the reproduction of capital on a progressively increasing scale. The circle in which simple reproduction moves, alters its form, and, to use Sismondi's expression,<sup>477</sup> changes into a spiral.<sup>2)</sup>

Let us now return to our illustration. It is the old story: Abraham begat Isaac, Isaac begat Jacob, and so on.<sup>478</sup> The original capital of £10,000 brings in a surplus value of £2,000, which is capitalised. The new capital of £2,000 brings in a surplus value of £400, and this, too, is capitalised, converted into a second additional capital, which, in its turn, produces a further surplus value of £80. And so the ball rolls on.

We here leave out of consideration the portion of the surplus value consumed by the capitalist. Just as little does it concern us, for the moment, whether the additional capital is joined on to the original capital, or is separated from it to function independently; whether the same capitalist, who accumulated it, employs it, or whether he hands it over to another. This only we must not forget, that by the side of

<sup>1)</sup> We here take no account of export trade, by means of which a nation can change articles of luxury either into means of production or means of subsistence, and *vice versa*. In order to examine the object of our investigation in its integrity, free from all disturbing subsidiary circumstances, we must treat the whole world as one nation, and assume that capitalist production is everywhere established and has possessed itself of every branch of industry.

<sup>2)</sup> Sismondi's analysis of accumulation suffers from the great defect, that he contents himself, to too great an extent, with the phrase "conversion of revenue into capital", without fathoming the material conditions of this operation.<sup>a</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> See this volume, p. 587, footnote 1.

the newly-formed capital, the original capital continues to reproduce itself, and to produce surplus value, and that this is also true of all accumulated capital, and the additional capital engendered by it.

The original capital was formed by the advance of £10,000. How did the owner become possessed of it? "By his own labour and that of his forefathers", answer unanimously the spokesmen of political economy.<sup>1)</sup> And, in fact, their supposition appears the only one consonant with the laws of the production of commodities.

But it is quite otherwise with regard to the additional capital of £2,000. How that originated we know perfectly well. There is not one single atom of its value that does not owe its existence to unpaid labour. The means of production, with which the additional labour power is incorporated, as well as the necessaries with which the labourers are sustained, are nothing but component parts of the surplus product, of the tribute annually exacted from the working class by the capitalist class. Though the latter with a portion of that tribute purchases the additional labour power even at its full price, so that equivalent is exchanged for equivalent, yet the transaction is for all that only the old dodge of every conqueror who buys commodities from the conquered with the money he has robbed them of.

If the additional capital employs the person who produced it, this producer must not only continue to augment the value of the original capital, but must buy back the fruits of his previous labour with more labour than they cost. When viewed as a transaction between the capitalist class and the working class, it makes no difference that additional labourers are employed by means of the unpaid labour of the previously employed labourers. The capitalist may even convert the additional capital into a machine that throws the producers of that capital out of work, and that replaces them by a few children. In every case the working class creates by the surplus labour of one year the capital destined to employ additional labour in the following year.<sup>2)</sup> And this is what is called: creating capital out of capital.

The accumulation of the first additional capital of £2,000 presupposes a value of £10,000 belonging to the capitalist by virtue of his "primitive labour", and advanced by him. The second additional capital of £400 presupposes, on the contrary, only the previous accu-

<sup>1)</sup> "The original labour, to which his capital owed its origin." Sismondi, l. c., ed. Paris, t. 1, p. 109.

<sup>2)</sup> "Labour creates capital before capital employs labour". E. G. Wakefield, *England and America*, Lond., 1833, Vol. II, p. 110.

mulation of the £2,000, of which the £400 is the surplus value capitalised. The ownership of past unpaid labour is thenceforth the sole condition for the appropriation of living unpaid labour on a constantly increasing scale. The more the capitalist has accumulated, the more is he able to accumulate.

In so far as the surplus value, of which the additional capital, No. 1, consists, is the result of the purchase of labour power with part of the original capital, a purchase that conformed to the laws of the exchange of commodities, and that, from a legal standpoint, presupposes nothing beyond the free disposal, on the part of the labourer, of his own capacities, and on the part of the owner of money or commodities, of the values that belong to him; in so far as the additional capital, No. 2, &c., is the mere result of No. 1, and, therefore, a consequence of the above conditions; in so far as each single transaction invariably conforms to the laws of the exchange of commodities, the capitalist buying labour power, the labourer selling it, and we will assume at its real value; in so far as all this is true, it is evident that the laws of appropriation or of private property, laws that are based on the production and circulation of commodities, become by their own inner and inexorable dialectic changed into their very opposite.<sup>11</sup> The exchange of equivalents, the original operation with which we started, has now become turned round in such a way that there is only an apparent exchange. This is owing to the fact, first, that the capital which is exchanged for labour power is itself but a portion of the product of others' labour appropriated without an equivalent; and, secondly, that this capital must not only be replaced by its producer, but replaced together with an added surplus. The relation of exchange subsisting between capitalist and labourer becomes a mere semblance appertaining to the process of circulation, a mere form, foreign to the real nature of the transaction, and only mystifying it. The ever repeated purchase and sale of labour power is now the mere form; what really takes place is this—the capitalist again and again appropriates, without equivalent, a portion of the

<sup>11</sup> Just as at a given stage in its development, commodity production necessarily passes into capitalistic commodity production (in fact, it is only on the basis of capitalistic production that products take the general and predominant form of commodities), so the laws of property that are based on commodity production, necessarily turn into the laws of capitalist appropriation. We may well, therefore, feel astonished at the cleverness of Proudhon, who would abolish capitalistic property by enforcing the eternal laws of property that are based on commodity production!<sup>479</sup>

previously materialised labour of others, and exchanges it for a greater quantity of living labour. At first the rights of property seemed to us to be based on a man's own labour. At least, some such assumption was necessary since only commodity owners with equal rights confronted each other, and the sole means by which a man could become possessed of the commodities of others, was by alienating his own commodities; and these could be replaced by labour alone. Now, however, property turns out to be the right, on the part of the capitalist, to appropriate the unpaid labour of others or its product, and to be the impossibility, on the part of the labourer, of appropriating his own product. The separation of property from labour has become the necessary consequence of a law that apparently originated in their identity.<sup>1)</sup> 480

We have seen that even in the case of simple reproduction, all capital, whatever its original source, becomes converted into accumulated capital, capitalised surplus value. But in the flood of production all the capital originally advanced becomes a vanishing quantity (*magnitudo evanescens*, in the mathematical sense), compared with the directly accumulated capital, i. e., with the surplus value or surplus product that is reconverted into capital, whether it functions in the hands of its accumulator, or in those of others. Hence, political economy describes capital in general as "accumulated wealth" (converted surplus value or revenue), "that is employed over again in the production of surplus value"<sup>2)</sup> and the capitalist as "the owner of surplus value".<sup>3)</sup> It is merely another way of expressing the same thing to say that all existing capital is accumulated or capitalised interest, for interest is a mere fragment of surplus value.<sup>4)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> The property of the capitalist in the product of the labour of others "is a strict consequence of the law of appropriation, the fundamental principle of which was, on the contrary, the exclusive title of every labourer to the product of his own labour" (Cherbuliez, *Richesse ou Pauvreté*, Paris, 1841, p. 58, where, however, the dialectical reversal is not properly developed).

<sup>2)</sup> "Capital, viz., accumulated wealth employed with a view to profit" (Malthus, l. c.). "Capital ... consists of wealth saved from revenue, and used with a view to profit" (R. Jones, *An Introductory Lecture on Polit. Econ.*, Lond., 1833, p. 16).

<sup>3)</sup> "The possessors of surplus produce or capital" ([Ch. W. Dilke,] "The Source and Remedy of the National Difficulties. A Letter to Lord John Russell," Lond., 1821).

<sup>4)</sup> "Capital, with compound interest on every portion of capital saved, is so all engrossing that all the wealth in the world from which income is derived, has long ago become the interest on capital" (London, *Economist*, 19th July, 1851).

**SECTION 2.—ERRONEOUS CONCEPTION,  
BY POLITICAL ECONOMY, OF REPRODUCTION  
ON A PROGRESSIVELY INCREASING SCALE**

Before we further investigate accumulation or the reconversion of surplus value into capital, we must brush on one side an ambiguity introduced by the classical economists.

Just as little as the commodities that the capitalist buys with a part of the surplus value for his own consumption, serve the purpose of production and of creation of value, so little is the labour that he buys for the satisfaction of his natural and social requirements, productive labour. Instead of converting surplus value into capital, he, on the contrary, by the purchase of those commodities and that labour, consumes or expends it as revenue.<sup>a</sup> In the face of the habitual mode of life of the old feudal nobility, which, as Hegel rightly says, “consists in consuming what is in hand”,<sup>481</sup> and more especially displays itself in the luxury of personal retainers, it was extremely important for bourgeois economy to promulgate the doctrine that accumulation of capital is the first duty of every citizen, and to preach without ceasing, that a man cannot accumulate, if he eats up all his revenue, instead of spending a good part of it in the acquisition of additional productive labourers, who bring in more than they cost. On the other hand the economists had to contend against the popular prejudice, that confuses capitalist production with hoarding,<sup>b</sup> and fancies that accumulated wealth is either wealth that is rescued from being destroyed in its existing form, i. e., from being consumed, or wealth that is withdrawn from circulation. Exclusion of money from circulation would also exclude absolutely its self-expansion as capital, while accumulation of a hoard in the shape of commodities would be sheer tomfoolery.<sup>2)</sup> The accumulation of commodities in great masses is the result either of overproduction or

<sup>1)</sup> “No political economist of the present day can by saving mean mere hoarding: and beyond this contracted and insufficient proceeding, no use of the term in reference to the national wealth can well be imagined, but that which must arise from a different application of what is saved, founded upon a real distinction between the different kinds of labour maintained by it” (Malthus, l. c., pp. 38, 39).

<sup>2)</sup> Thus for instance, Balzac, who so thoroughly studied every shade of avarice, represents the old usurer Gobseck as in his second childhood when he begins to heap up a hoard of commodities.

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<sup>a</sup> See this volume, p. 587, footnote 1.

of a stoppage of circulation.<sup>1)</sup> It is true that the popular mind is impressed by the sight, on the one hand, of the mass of goods that are stored up for gradual consumption by the rich,<sup>2)</sup> and on the other hand, by the formation of reserve stocks; the latter, a phenomenon that is common to all modes of production, and on which we shall dwell for a moment, when we come to analyse circulation. Classical economy is therefore quite right, when it maintains that the consumption of surplus products by productive, instead of by unproductive labourers, is a characteristic feature of the process of accumulation. But at this point the mistakes also begin. Adam Smith has made it the fashion, to represent accumulation as nothing more than consumption of surplus products by productive labourers, which amounts to saying, that the capitalising of surplus value consists in merely turning surplus value into labour power.<sup>482</sup>

Let us see what Ricardo, e. g., says:

"It must be understood that all the productions of a country are consumed; but it makes the greatest difference imaginable whether they are consumed by those who reproduce, or by those who do not reproduce another value. When we say that revenue is saved, and added to capital, what we mean is, that the portion of revenue, so said to be added to capital, is consumed by productive instead of unproductive labourers. There can be no greater error than in supposing that capital is increased by non-consumption."<sup>3)</sup>

There can be no greater error than that which Ricardo and all subsequent economists repeat after A. Smith, viz., that

"the part of revenue, of which it is said, it has been added to capital, is consumed by productive labourers."

According to this, all surplus value that is changed into capital becomes variable capital. So far from this being the case, the surplus value, like the original capital, divides itself into constant capital and variable capital, into means of production and labour power. Labour power is the form under which variable capital exists during the process of production. In this process the labour power is itself consumed by the capitalist while the means of production are consumed

<sup>1)</sup> "Accumulation of stocks ... non-exchange ... overproduction" (Th. Corbet, l. c., [*An Inquiry into the Causes...*, London, 1841,] p. 104).

<sup>2)</sup> In this sense Necker speaks of the "things of pomp and luxury", of which "accumulation has grown with time", and which "the laws of property have brought into the hands of one class of society alone" (*Oeuvres de M. Necker*, Paris and Lausanne, 1789, t. ii, p. 291).

<sup>3)</sup> Ricardo, l. c., p. 163, note.

by the labour power in the exercise of its function, labour. At the same time, the money paid for the purchase of the labour power, is converted into necessaries, that are consumed, not by "productive labour", but by the "productive labourer". Adam Smith, by a fundamentally perverted analysis, arrives at the absurd conclusion, that even though each individual capital is divided into a constant and a variable part, the capital of society resolves itself only into variable capital, i. e., is laid out exclusively in payment of wages. For instance, suppose a cloth manufacturer converts £2,000 into capital. One portion he lays out in buying weavers, the other in woollen yarn, machinery, &c. But the people, from whom he buys the yarn and the machinery, pay for labour with a part of the purchase money, and so on until the whole £2,000 are spent in the payment of wages, i. e., until the entire product represented by the £2,000 has been consumed by productive labourers. It is evident that the whole gist of this argument lies in the words "and so on", which send us from pillar to post. In truth, Adam Smith breaks his investigation off, just where its difficulties begin.<sup>1)</sup>

The annual process of reproduction is easily understood, so long as we keep in view merely the sum total of the year's production. But every single component of this product must be brought into the market as a commodity, and there the difficulty begins. The movements of the individual capitals, and of the personal revenues, cross and intermingle and are lost in the general change of places, in the circulation of the wealth of society; this dazes the sight, and propounds very complicated problems for solution. In the third part of Book II<sup>483</sup> I shall give the analysis of the real bearings of the facts. It is one of the great merits of the Physiocrats, that in their *Tableau économique*<sup>484</sup> they were the first to attempt to depict the annual production in the shape in which it is presented to us after passing through the process of circulation.<sup>2)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> In spite of his *Logic*, John St. Mill never detects even such faulty analysis as this when made by his predecessors, an analysis which, even from the bourgeois standpoint of the science, cries out for rectification. In every case he registers with the dogmatism of a disciple, the confusion of his master's thoughts. So here: "The capital itself in the long run becomes entirely wages, and when replaced by the sale of produce becomes wages again."<sup>485</sup>

<sup>2)</sup> In his description of the process of reproduction, and of accumulation, Adam Smith, in many ways, not only made no advance, but even lost considerable ground, compared with his predecessors, especially by the Physiocrats. Connected with the illusion mentioned in the text, is the really wonderful dogma, left by him as an inheritance

For the rest, it is a matter of course, that political economy, acting in the interests of the capitalist class, has not failed to exploit the doctrine of Adam Smith, viz., that the whole of that part of the surplus product which is converted into capital, is consumed by the working class.

SECTION 3.—SEPARATION  
OF SURPLUS VALUE INTO CAPITAL AND REVENUE.  
THE ABSTINENCE THEORY

In the last preceding chapter, we treated surplus value (or the surplus product) solely as a fund for supplying the individual consumption of the capitalist. In this chapter we have, so far, treated it solely as a fund for accumulation. It is, however, neither the one nor the other, but is both together. One portion is consumed by the capitalist as revenue,<sup>11)</sup> the other is employed as capital, is accumulated.

Given the mass of surplus value, then, the larger the one of these parts, the smaller is the other. *Cæteris paribus*, the ratio of these parts determines the magnitude of the accumulation. But it is by the owner of the surplus value, by the capitalist alone, that the division is made. It is his deliberate act. That part of the tribute exacted by him which he accumulates, is said to be saved by him, because he does not eat it, i. e., because he performs the function of a capitalist, and enriches himself.

Except as personified capital, the capitalist has no historical value, and no right to that historical existence, which, to use an expression of the witty Lichnowsky, “hasn’t got no date”.<sup>488</sup> And so far only is the necessity for his own transitory existence implied in the transitory necessity for the capitalist mode of production. But, so far as he is per-

to political economy, the dogma, that the price of commodities is made up of wages, profit (interest) and rent, i. e., of wages and surplus value.<sup>486</sup> Starting from this basis, Storch naively confesses, “...it is impossible to resolve the necessary price into its simplest elements” (Storch, I. c. [*Cours d'économie politique...*], Petersb. Edit., 1815, t. ii, p. 141, note). A fine science of economy this, which declares it impossible to resolve the price of a commodity into its simplest elements! This point will be further investigated in the seventh part of Book iii.<sup>487</sup>

<sup>11)</sup> The reader will notice that the word revenue is used in a double sense: first, to designate surplus value so far as it is the fruit periodically yielded by capital; secondly, to designate the part of that fruit which is periodically consumed by the capitalist, or added to the fund that supplies his private consumption. I have retained this double meaning because it harmonises with the language of the English and French economists.

sonified capital, it is not values in use and the enjoyment of them, but exchange value and its augmentation, that spur him into action. Fanatically bent on making value expand itself, he ruthlessly forces the human race to produce for production's sake; he thus forces the development of the productive powers of society, and creates those material conditions, which alone can form the real basis of a higher form of society, a society in which the full and free development of every individual forms the ruling principle. Only as personified capital is the capitalist respectable. As such, he shares with the miser the passion for wealth as wealth. But that which in the miser is a mere idiosyncrasy, is, in the capitalist, the effect of the social mechanism, of which he is but one of the wheels. Moreover, the development of capitalist production makes it constantly necessary to keep increasing the amount of the capital laid out in a given industrial undertaking, and competition makes the immanent laws of capitalist production to be felt by each individual capitalist, as external coercive laws. It compels him to keep constantly extending his capital, in order to preserve it, but extend it he cannot, except by means of progressive accumulation.

So far, therefore, as his actions are a mere function of capital—endowed as capital is, in his person, with consciousness and a will—his own private consumption is a robbery perpetrated on accumulation, just as in bookkeeping by double entry, the private expenditure of the capitalist is placed on the debtor side of his account against his capital. To accumulate, is to conquer the world of social wealth, to increase the mass of human beings exploited by him, and thus to extend both the direct and the indirect sway of the capitalist.<sup>11)</sup>

<sup>11)</sup> Taking the usurer, that old-fashioned but ever renewed specimen of the capitalist for his text, Luther shows very aptly that the love of power is an element in the desire to get rich. "The heathen were able, by the light of reason, to conclude that a usurer is a double-dyed thief and murderer. We Christians, however, hold them in such honour, that we fairly worship them for the sake of their money.... Whoever eats up, robs, and steals the nourishment of another, that man commits as great a murder (so far as in him lies) as he who starves a man or utterly undoes him. Such does a usurer, and sits the while safe on his stool, when he ought rather to be hanging on the gallows, and be eaten by as many ravens as he has stolen guilders, if only there were so much flesh on him, that so many ravens could stick their beaks in and share it. Meanwhile, we hang the small thieves.... Little thieves are put in the stocks, great thieves go flaunting in gold and silk.... Therefore is there, on this earth, no greater enemy of man (after the devil) than a gripe-money, and usurer, for he wants to be God over all men. Turks, soldiers, and tyrants are also bad men, yet must they let the people live, and confess that they are bad, and enemies, and do, nay, must, now and then show pity to some. But a usurer and money-glutton, such a one would have the whole world perish

But original sin is at work everywhere. As capitalist production, accumulation, and wealth, become developed, the capitalist ceases to be the mere incarnation of capital. He has a fellow-feeling for his own Adam, and his education gradually enables him to smile at the rage for asceticism, as a mere prejudice of the old-fashioned miser. While the capitalist of the classical type brands individual consumption as a sin against his function, and as “abstinence” from accumulating, the modernised capitalist is capable of looking upon accumulation as “abstinence” from pleasure.

“Two souls, alas, do dwell within his breast;  
The one is ever parting from the other.”<sup>1)</sup>

At the historical dawn of capitalist production,—and every capitalist upstart has personally to go through this historical stage—avarice, and desire to get rich, are the ruling passions. But the progress of capitalist production not only creates a world of delights; it lays open, in speculation and the credit system, a thousand sources of sudden enrichment. When a certain stage of development has been reached, a conventional degree of prodigality, which is also an exhibition of wealth, and consequently a source of credit, becomes a business necessity to the “unfortunate” capitalist. Luxury enters into capital’s expenses of representation. Moreover, the capitalist gets rich, not like the miser, in proportion to his personal labour and restricted consumption, but at the same rate as he squeezes out the labour pow-

of hunger and thirst, misery and want, so far as in him lies, so that he may have all to himself, and every one may receive from him as from a God, and be his serf for ever. To wear fine cloaks, golden chains, rings, to wipe his mouth, to be deemed and taken for a worthy, pious man.... Usury is a great huge monster, like a werewolf, who lays waste all, more than any Cacus, Gerion or Antus. And yet decks himself out, and would be thought pious, so that people may not see where the oxen have gone, that he drags backwards into his den. But Hercules shall hear the cry of the oxen and of his prisoners, and shall seek Cacus even in cliffs and among rocks, and shall set the oxen loose again from the villain. For Cacus means the villain that is a pious usurer, and steals, robs, eats everything. And will not own that he has done it, and thinks no one will find him out, because the oxen, drawn backwards into his den, make it seem, from their footprints, that they have been let out. So the usurer would deceive the world, as though he were of use and gave the world oxen, which he, however, rends, and eats all alone.... And since we break on the wheel, and behead highwaymen, murderers and housebreakers, how much more ought we to break on the wheel and kill ... hunt down, curse and behead all usurers” (Martin Luther, l.c. [*An die Pfarrherrn...*, Wittemberg, 1540]).

<sup>1)</sup> See Goethe’s *Faust* [Part I].

er of others, and enforces on the labourer abstinence from all life's enjoyments. Although, therefore, the prodigality of the capitalist never possesses the bona fide character of the open-handed feudal lord's prodigality, but, on the contrary, has always lurking behind it the most sordid avarice and the most anxious calculation, yet his expenditure grows with his accumulation, without the one necessarily restricting the other. But along with this growth, there is at the same time developed in his breast, a Faustian conflict between the passion for accumulation, and the desire for enjoyment.

Dr. Aikin says in a work published in 1795:

"The trade of Manchester may be divided into four periods. First, when manufacturers were obliged to work hard for their livelihood."

They enriched themselves chiefly by robbing the parents, whose children were bound as apprentices to them; the parents paid a high premium, while the apprentices were starved. On the other hand, the average profits were low, and to accumulate, extreme parsimony was requisite. They lived like misers, and were far from consuming even the interest on their capital.

"The second period, when they had begun to acquire little fortunes, but worked as hard as before,"—for direct exploitation of labour costs labour, as every slave-driver knows—"and lived in as plain a manner as before.... The third, when luxury began, and the trade was pushed by sending out riders for orders into every market town in the Kingdom.... It is probable that few or no capitals of £3,000 to £4,000 acquired by trade existed here before 1690. However, about that time, or a little later, the traders had got money beforehand, and began to build modern brick houses, instead of those of wood and plaster."

Even in the early part of the 18th century, a Manchester manufacturer, who placed a pint of foreign wine before his guests, exposed himself to the remarks and headshakings of all his neighbours. Before the rise of machinery, a manufacturer's evening expenditure at the public house where they all met, never exceeded sixpence for a glass of punch, and a penny for a screw of tobacco. It was not till 1758, and this marks an epoch, that a person actually engaged in business was seen with an equipage of his own.

"The fourth period," the last 30 years of the 18th century, "is that in which expense and luxury have made great progress, and was supported by a trade extended by means of riders and factors through every part of Europe."<sup>1)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> Dr. Aikin, *Description of the Country from 30 to 40 miles round Manchester*, Lond., 1795, p. 181, sq.

What would the good Dr. Aikin say if he could rise from his grave and see the Manchester of to-day?

Accumulate, accumulate! That is Moses and the prophets!<sup>1489</sup> "Industry furnishes the material which saving accumulates."<sup>150</sup> Therefore, save, save, i. e., reconvert the greatest possible portion of surplus value, or surplus product into capital! Accumulation for accumulation's sake, production for production's sake: by this formula classical economy expressed the historical mission of the bourgeoisie, and did not for a single instant deceive itself over the birth-throes of wealth.<sup>2)</sup> But what avails lamentation in the face of historical necessity? If to classical economy, the proletarian is but a machine for the production of surplus value; on the other hand, the capitalist is in its eyes only a machine for the conversion of this surplus value into additional capital. Political economy takes the historical function of the capitalist in bitter earnest. In order to charm out of his bosom the awful conflict between the desire for enjoyment and the chase after riches, Malthus, about the year 1820, advocated a division of labour, which assigns to the capitalist actually engaged in production, the business of accumulating, and to the other sharers in surplus value, to the landlords, the place-men, the beneficed clergy, &c., the business of spending. It is of the highest importance, he says,

"to keep separate the passion for expenditure and the passion for accumulation."<sup>3)</sup>

The capitalists having long been good livers and men of the world, uttered loud cries. What, exclaimed one of their spokesmen, a disciple of Ricardo, Mr. Malthus preaches high rents, heavy taxes, &c., so that the pressure of the spur may constantly be kept on the industrious by unproductive consumers!<sup>1491</sup> By all means, production, production on a constantly increasing scale, runs the shibboleth; but

"production will, by such a process, be far more curbed in than spurred on. Nor is it quite fair thus to maintain in idleness a number of persons, only to pinch others, who are likely, from their characters, if you can force them to work, to work with success."<sup>4)</sup>

Unfair as he finds it to spur on the industrial capitalist, by depriving his bread of its butter, yet he thinks it necessary to reduce the la-

<sup>1)</sup> A. Smith, I. c., bk. II [t. II], ch. iii [p. 367].

<sup>2)</sup> Even J. B. Say says: "The savings of the rich are made at the expense of the poor."<sup>1490</sup> "The Roman proletarian lived almost entirely at the expense of society.... It can almost be said that modern society lives at the expense of the proletarians, on what it keeps out of the remuneration of labour" (Sismondi, *Etudes*, &c., t. i, p. 24).

<sup>3)</sup> Malthus, I. c., pp. 325-26.

<sup>4)</sup> *An Inquiry into those Principles Respecting the Nature of Demand*, &c., p. 67.

bourer's wages to a minimum "to keep him industrious". Nor does he for a moment conceal the fact, that the appropriation of unpaid labour is the secret of surplus value.

"Increased demand on the part of the labourers means nothing more than their willingness to take less of their own product for themselves, and leave a greater part of it to their employers; and if it be said, that this begets glut, by lessening consumption" (on the part of the labourers), "I can only reply that glut is synonymous with large profits."<sup>1)</sup>

The learned disputation, how the booty pumped out of the labourer may be divided, with most advantage to accumulation, between the industrial capitalist and the rich idler, was hushed in face of the revolution of July.<sup>492</sup> Shortly afterwards, the town proletariat at Lyons sounded the tocsin of revolution, and the country proletariat in England began to set fire to farm-yards and corn-stacks.<sup>493</sup> On this side of the Channel Owenism began to spread; on the other side, St. Simonism and Fourierism. The hour of vulgar economy had struck. Exactly a year before Nassau W. Senior discovered at Manchester, that the profit (including interest) of capital is the product of the last hour of the twelve, he had announced to the world another discovery.

"I substitute," he proudly says, "for the word capital, considered as an instrument of production, the word abstinence."<sup>2)</sup>

An unparalleled sample this, of the discoveries of vulgar economy! It substitutes for an economic category, a sycophantic phrase — *voilà tout*.<sup>a</sup>

"When the savage," says Senior, "makes bows, he exercises an industry, but he does not practise abstinence."

<sup>1)</sup> l. c., p. 59.

<sup>2)</sup> (Senior, *Principes fondamentaux de l'Écon. Pol.*, trad. Arrivabene. Paris, 1836, p. 309). This was rather too much for the adherents of the old classical school. "Mr. Senior has substituted for it" (the expression, labour and profit) "the expression labour and abstinence. He who converts his revenue abstains from the enjoyment which its expenditure would afford him. It is not the capital, but the use of the capital productively, which is the cause of profits" (John Cazenove, l. c.,<sup>494</sup> p. 130, note). John St. Mill, on the contrary, accepts on the one hand Ricardo's theory of profit, and annexes on the other hand Senior's "remuneration of abstinence". He is as much at home in absurd contradictions, as he feels at sea in the Hegelian contradiction, the source of all dialectic. It has never occurred to the vulgar economist to make the simple reflexion, that every human action may be viewed, as "abstinence" from its opposite. Eating is abstinence from fasting; walking, abstinence from standing still, working, abstinence from idling, idling, abstinence from working, &c. These gentlemen would do well, to ponder, once in a way, over Spinoza's: "Determinatio est Negatio."<sup>495</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> that's all

This explains how and why, in the earlier states of society, the implements of labour were fabricated without abstinence on the part of the capitalist.

"The more society progresses, the more abstinence is demanded,"<sup>1)</sup>

namely, from those who ply the industry of appropriating the fruits of others' industry. All the conditions for carrying on the labour process are suddenly converted into so many acts of abstinence on the part of the capitalist. If the corn is not all eaten, but part of it also sown—abstinence of the capitalist. If the wine gets time to mature—abstinence of the capitalist.<sup>2)</sup> The capitalist robs his own self, whenever he "lends (!) the instruments of production to the labourer", that is, whenever by incorporating labour power with them, he uses them to extract surplus value out of that labour power, instead of eating them up, steam-engines, cotton, railways, manure, horses, and all; or as the vulgar economist childishly puts it, instead of dissipating "their value" in luxuries and other articles of consumption.<sup>3)</sup> How the capitalists as a class are to perform that feat, is a secret that vulgar economy has hitherto obstinately refused to divulge. Enough, that the world still jogs on, solely through the self-chastisement of this modern penitent of Vishnu,<sup>223</sup> the capitalist. Not only accumulation, but the simple "conservation of a capital requires a constant effort to resist the temptation of consuming it".<sup>4)</sup> The simple dictates of humanity therefore plainly enjoin the release of the capitalist from this martyrdom and temptation, in the same way that the Georgian slave-owner was lately delivered, by the abolition of slavery, from the painful dilemma, whether to squander the surplus product, lashed out of his niggers, entirely in champagne, or whether to reconvert a part of it into more niggers and more land.<sup>497</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> Senior, *l. c.*, pp. 342-43.

<sup>2)</sup> "No one ... will sow his wheat, for instance, and allow it to remain a twelve-month in the ground, or leave his wine in a cellar for years, instead of consuming these things or their equivalent at once ... unless he expects to acquire additional value, &c." (*Scrope, Polit. Econ.*, edit. by A. Potter, New York, 1841, p. 133).<sup>496</sup>

<sup>3)</sup> "The deprivation the capitalist imposes on himself by lending" (this euphemism used, for the purpose of identifying, according to the approved method of vulgar economy, the labourer who is exploited, with the industrial capitalist who exploits, and to whom other capitalists lend money) "his instruments of production to the worker, instead of devoting their value to his own consumption, by transforming them into objects of utility or pleasure" (G. de Molinari, *l. c.*, p. 36).

<sup>4)</sup> "La conservation d'un capital exige ... un effort constant pour résister à la tentation de le consommer" (Courcelle-Seneuil, *l. c.*, p. 20).

In economic forms of society of the most different kinds, there occurs, not only simple reproduction, but, in varying degrees, reproduction on a progressively increasing scale. By degrees more is produced and more consumed, and consequently more products have to be converted into means of production. This process, however, does not present itself as accumulation of capital, nor as the function of a capitalist, so long as the labourer's means of production, and with them, his product and means of subsistence, do not confront him in the shape of capital.<sup>1)</sup> Richard Jones, who died a few years ago, and was the successor of Malthus in the chair of political economy at Haileybury College, discusses this point well in the light of two important facts. Since the great mass of the Hindu population are peasants cultivating their land themselves, their products, their instruments of labour and means of subsistence never take "the shape of a fund saved from revenue, which fund has, therefore, gone through a previous process of accumulation".<sup>2)</sup> On the other hand, the non-agricultural labourers in those provinces where the English rule has least disturbed the old system, are directly employed by the magnates, to whom a portion of the agricultural surplus product is rendered in the shape of tribute or rent. One portion of this product is consumed by the magnates in kind, another is converted, for their use, by the labourers, into articles of luxury and such like things; while the rest forms the wages of the labourers, who own their implements of labour. Here, production and reproduction on a progressively increasing scale, go on their way without any intervention from that queer saint, that knight of the woeful countenance, the capitalist "abstainer".

<sup>1)</sup> "The particular classes of income which yield the most abundantly to the progress of national capital, change at different stages of their progress, and are, therefore, entirely different in nations occupying different positions in that progress.... Profits ... unimportant source of accumulation, compared with wages and rents, in the earlier stages of society.... When a considerable advance in the powers of national industry has actually taken place, profits rise into comparative importance as a source of accumulation" (Richard Jones, *Textbook, &c.*, pp. 16, 20, 21).

<sup>2)</sup> I. c., p. 36, sq.

SECTION 4.—CIRCUMSTANCES THAT,  
INDEPENDENTLY OF THE PROPORTIONAL DIVISION  
OF SURPLUS VALUE INTO CAPITAL AND REVENUE,  
DETERMINE THE AMOUNT OF ACCUMULATION.  
DEGREE OF EXPLOITATION OF LABOUR POWER.  
PRODUCTIVITY OF LABOUR.

GROWING DIFFERENCE IN AMOUNT BETWEEN CAPITAL EMPLOYED  
AND CAPITAL CONSUMED. MAGNITUDE OF CAPITAL ADVANCED

The proportion in which surplus value breaks up into capital and revenue being given, the magnitude of the capital accumulated clearly depends on the absolute magnitude of the surplus value. Suppose that 80 per cent were capitalised and 20 per cent eaten up, the accumulated capital will be £2,400 or £1,200, according as the total surplus value has amounted to £3,000 or £1,500. Hence all the circumstances that determine the mass of surplus value, operate to determine the magnitude of the accumulation. We sum them up once again, but only in so far as they afford new points of view in regard to accumulation.

It will be remembered that the rate of surplus value depends, in the first place, on the degree of exploitation of labour power. Political economy values this fact so highly, that it occasionally identifies the acceleration of accumulation due to increased productiveness of labour, with its acceleration due to increased exploitation of the labourer.<sup>11</sup> In the chapters on the production of surplus value it was constantly presupposed that wages are at least equal to the value of labour power. Forceful reduction of wages below this value plays, however, in practice too important a part, for us not to pause upon it for a moment. It, in fact, transforms, within certain limits, the labourer's necessary consumption fund into a fund for the accumulation of capital.

"Wages," says John Stuart Mill, "have no productive power; they are the price of a productive power. Wages do not contribute, along with labour, to the production of

<sup>11</sup> "Ricardo says: 'In different stages of society the accumulation of capital or of the means of employing' (i. e., exploiting) 'labour is more or less rapid, and must in all cases depend on the productive powers of labour. The productive powers of labour are generally greatest where there is an abundance of fertile land.' If, in the first sentence, the productive powers of labour mean the smallness of that aliquot part of any produce that goes to those whose manual labour produced it, the sentence is nearly identical, because the remaining aliquot part is the fund whence capital can, if the *owner pleases*, be accumulated. But then this does not generally happen, where there is most fertile land" (*Observations on Certain Verbal Disputes, &c.*, p. 74).

commodities, no more than the price of tools contributes along with the tools themselves. If labour could be had without purchase, wages might be dispensed with.”<sup>1)</sup>

But if the labourers could live on air they could not be bought at any price. The zero of their cost is therefore a limit in a mathematical sense, always beyond reach, although we can always approximate more and more nearly to it. The constant tendency of capital is to force the cost of labour back towards this zero. A writer of the 18th century, often quoted already, the author of the *Essay on Trade and Commerce*, only betrays the innermost secret soul of English capitalism, when he declares the historic mission of England to be the forcing down of English wages to the level of the French and the Dutch.<sup>2)</sup> With other things he says naïvely:

“But if our poor” (technical term for labourers) “will live luxuriously ... then labour must, of course, be dear.... When it is considered what luxuries the manufacturing populace consume, such as brandy, gin, tea, sugar, foreign fruit, strong beer, printed linens, snuff, tobacco, &c.”<sup>3)</sup>

He quotes the work of a Northamptonshire manufacturer, who, with eyes squinting heavenward moans:

“Labour is one-third cheaper in France than in England, for their poor work hard, and fare hard, as to their food and clothing. Their chief diet is bread, fruit, herbs, roots, and dried fish; for they very seldom eat flesh; and when wheat is dear, they eat very little bread.”<sup>4)</sup> “To which may be added,” our essayist goes on, “that their drink is either water or other small liquors, so that they spend very little money.... These things are very difficult to be brought about; but they are not impracticable, since they have been effected both in France and in Holland.”<sup>5)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> J. Stuart Mill, *Essays on Some Unsettled Questions of Political Economy*, Lond., 1844, pp. 90-91.

<sup>2)</sup> [Cunningham, J.] *An Essay on Trade and Commerce*, Lond., 1770, pp. 43-44. *The Times* of December, 1866, and January, 1867, in like manner published certain outpourings of the heart of the English mine-owner, in which the happy lot of the Belgian miners was pictured, who asked and received no more than was strictly necessary for them to live for their “masters”. The Belgian labourers have to suffer much, but to figure in *The Times* as model labourers! In the beginning of February, 1867, came the answer: strike of the Belgian miners at Marchienne, put down by powder and lead.

<sup>3)</sup> l. c., pp. 44, 46.

<sup>4)</sup> The Northamptonshire manufacturer commits a pious fraud, pardonable in one whose heart is so full. He nominally compares the life of the English and French manufacturing labourer, but in the words just quoted he is painting, as he himself confesses in his confused way, the French agricultural labourers.

<sup>5)</sup> l. c., pp. 70, 71. *Note in the 3rd German edition*: To-day, thanks to the competition on the world market, established since then, we have advanced much further. “If China,” says Mr. Stapleton, M. P., to his constituents, “should become a great manufacturing country, I do not see how the manufacturing population of Europe could sus-

Twenty years later, an American humbug, the baronised Yankee, Benjamin Thompson (*alias* Count Rumford) followed the same line of philanthropy to the great satisfaction of God and man. His *Essays* are a cookery book with receipts of all kinds for replacing by some succedaneum the ordinary dear food of the labourer. The following is a particularly successful receipt of this wonderful philosopher:

"5 lbs of barleymeal,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  d.; 5 lbs of Indian corn,  $6\frac{1}{4}$  d.; 3d. worth of red herring, 1 d. salt, 1 d. vinegar, 2d. pepper and sweet herbs, in all  $20\frac{3}{4}$  d.; make a soup for 64 men, and at the medium price of barley and of Indian corn ... this soup may be provided at  $\frac{1}{4}$  d.; the portion of 20 ounces."<sup>1)</sup>

With the advance of capitalistic production, the adulteration of food rendered Thompson's ideal superfluous.<sup>2)</sup> At the end of the 18th and during the first ten years of the 19th century, the English farmers and landlords enforced the absolute minimum of wage, by paying the agricultural labourers less than the minimum in the form of wages, and the remainder in the shape of parochial relief. An example of the waggish way in which the English Dogberries acted in their "legal" fixing of a wages tariff:

"The squires of Norfolk had dined, says Mr. Burke, when they fixed the rate of wages; the squires of Berks evidently thought the labourers ought not to do so, when they fixed the rate of wages at Speenhamland, 1795.... There they decide that 'income (weekly) should be 3s. for a man,' when the gallon or halfspeck loaf of 8 lbs 11 oz. is at

tain the contest without descending to the level of their competitors" (*The Times*, Sept. 9, 1873, p. 8). The wished-for goal of English capital is no longer continental wages but Chinese.

<sup>1)</sup> Benjamin Thompson: *Essays, Political, Economical, and Philosophical, &c.*, 3 vols., Lond., 1796-1802, vol. i, p. 294. In his *The State of the Poor, or an History of the Labouring Classes in England, &c.*, Sir F. M. Eden strongly recommends the Rumfordian beggar-soup to workhouse overseers, and reproachfully warns the English labourers that "many poor people, particularly in Scotland, live, and that very comfortably, for months together, upon oat-meal and barley-meal, mixed with only water and salt" (l. c., vol. i, book II, ch. 2, p. 503). The same sort of hints in the 19th century. "The most wholesome mixtures of flour having been refused (by the English agricultural labourer)... in Scotland, where education is better, the prejudice is, probably, unknown" (Charles H. Parry, M.D., *The Question of the Necessity of the Existing Corn Laws Considered*, London, 1816, pp. 68, 69). This same Parry, however, complains that the English labourer is now (1815) in a much worse condition than in Eden's time (1797).<sup>498</sup>

<sup>2)</sup> From the reports of the last Parliamentary Commission on adulteration of means of subsistence,<sup>499</sup> it will be seen that the adulteration even of medicines is the rule, not the exception in England. E. g., the examination of 34 specimens of opium, purchased of as many different chemists in London, showed that 31 were adulterated with poppy heads, wheat-flour, gum, clay, sand, &c. Several did not contain an atom of morphia.

1s., and increase regularly till bread is 1s. 5d.; when it is above that sum, decrease regularly till it be at 2s., and then his food *should be*  $\frac{1}{5}$ th less.”<sup>11</sup>

Before the Committee of Inquiry of the House of Lords, 1814, a certain J. Bennett, a large farmer, magistrate, poor-law guardian, and wage regulator, was asked:

“Has any proportion of the value of daily labour been made up to the labourers out of the poors’ rate?” Answer: “Yes, it has; the weekly income of every family is made up to the gallon loaf (8 lbs 11 oz.), and 3d. per head!... The gallon loaf per week is what we suppose sufficient for the maintenance of every person in the family for the week; and the 3d. is for clothes, and if the parish think proper to find clothes, the 3d. is deducted. This practice goes through all the western part of Wiltshire, and, I believe, throughout the country.”<sup>12</sup> “For years,” exclaims a bourgeois author of that time, “they (the farmers) have degraded a respectable class of their countrymen, by forcing them to have recourse to the workhouse ... the farmer, while increasing his own gains, has prevented any accumulation on the part of his labouring dependants.”<sup>13</sup>

The part played in our days by the direct robbery from the labourer’s necessary consumption fund in the formation of surplus value, and, therefore, of the accumulation fund of capital, the so-called domestic industry has served to show (Ch. xv, sect. 8, d). Further facts on this subject will be given later.

Although in all branches of industry that part of the constant capital consisting of instruments of labour must be sufficient for a certain number of labourers (determined by the magnitude of the undertaking), it by no means always necessarily increases in the same proportion as the quantity of labour employed. In a factory, suppose that 100 labourers working 8 hours a day yield 800 working hours. If the capitalist wishes to raise this sum by one half, he can employ 50 more workers; but then he must also advance more capital, not merely for wages, but for instruments of labour. But he might also let the 100 labourers work 12 hours instead of 8, and then the instruments of labour already to hand would be enough. These would then simply be more rapidly consumed. Thus additional labour, begotten of the greater tension of labour power, can augment surplus product and surplus value (i. e., the subject-matter of accumulation), without corresponding augmentation in the constant part of capital.

<sup>11</sup> G. L. Newnham (barrister-at-law), *A Review of the Evidence before the Committee of the two Houses of Parliament on the Corn Laws*, Lond., 1815, p. 20, *note*.

<sup>12</sup> *I. c.*, pp. 19, 20.

<sup>13</sup> C. H. Parry, *I. c.*, pp. 77, 69. The landlords, on their side, not only “indemnified” themselves for the Anti-Jacobin War,<sup>14</sup> which they waged in the name of England, but enriched themselves enormously. Their rents doubled, trebled, quadrupled, “and in one instance, increased sixfold in eighteen years” (*I. c.*, pp. 100, 101).

In the extractive industries, mines, &c., the raw materials form no part of the capital advanced. The subject of labour is in this case not a product of previous labour, but is furnished by Nature gratis, as in the case of metals, minerals, coal, stone, &c. In these cases the constant capital consists almost exclusively of instruments of labour, which can very well absorb an increased quantity of labour (day and night shifts of labourers, e. g.). All other things being equal, the mass and value of the product will rise in direct proportion to the labour expended. As on the first day of production, the original produce formers, now turned into the creators of the material elements of capital—man and Nature—still work together. Thanks to the elasticity of labour power, the domain of accumulation has extended without any previous enlargement of constant capital.

In agriculture the land under cultivation cannot be increased without the advance of more seed and manure. But this advance once made, the purely mechanical working of the soil itself produces a marvellous effect on the amount of the product. A greater quantity of labour, done by the same number of labourers as before, thus increases the fertility, without requiring any new advance in the instruments of labour. It is once again the direct action of man on Nature which becomes an immediate source of greater accumulation, without the intervention of any new capital.

Finally, in what is called manufacturing industry, every additional expenditure of labour presupposes a corresponding additional expenditure of raw materials, but not necessarily of instruments of labour. And as extractive industry and agriculture supply manufacturing industry with its raw materials and those of its instruments of labour, the additional product the former have created without additional advance of capital, tells also in favour of the latter.

General result: by incorporating with itself the two primary creators of wealth, labour power and the land, capital acquires a power of expansion that permits it to augment the elements of its accumulation beyond the limits apparently fixed by its own magnitude, or by the value and the mass of the means of production, already produced, in which it has its being.

Another important factor in the accumulation of capital is the degree of productivity of social labour.

With the productive power of labour increases the mass of the products, in which a certain value, and, therefore, a surplus value of a given magnitude, is embodied. The rate of surplus value remaining

the same or even falling, so long as it only falls more slowly, that the productive power of labour rises, the mass of the surplus product increases. The division of this product into revenue and additional capital remaining the same, the consumption of the capitalist may, therefore, increase without any decrease in the fund of accumulation. The relative magnitude of the accumulation fund may even increase at the expense of the consumption fund, whilst the cheapening of commodities places at the disposal of the capitalist as many means of enjoyment as formerly, or even more than formerly. But hand-in-hand with the increasing productivity of labour, goes, as we have seen, the cheapening of the labourer, therefore a higher rate of surplus value, even when the real wages are rising. The latter never rise proportionally to the productive power of labour. The same value in variable capital therefore sets in movement more labour power, and, therefore, more labour. The same value in constant capital is embodied in more means of production, i. e., in more instruments of labour, materials of labour and auxiliary materials; it therefore also supplies more elements for the production both of use value and of value, and with these more absorbers of labour. The value of the additional capital, therefore, remaining the same or even diminishing, accelerated accumulation still takes place. Not only does the scale of reproduction materially extend, but the production of surplus value increases more rapidly than the value of the additional capital.

The development of the productive power of labour reacts also on the original capital already engaged in the process of production. A part of the functioning constant capital consists of instruments of labour, such as machinery, &c., which are not consumed, and therefore not reproduced, or replaced by new ones of the same kind, until after long periods of time. But every year a part of these instruments of labour perishes or reaches the limit of its productive function. It reaches, therefore, in that year, the time for its periodical reproduction, for its replacement by new ones of the same kind. If the productiveness of labour has, during the using up of these instruments of labour, increased (and it develops continually with the uninterrupted advance of science and technology), more efficient and (considering their increased efficiency), cheaper machines, tools, apparatus, &c., replace the old. The old capital is reproduced in a more productive form, apart from the constant detail improvements in the instruments of labour already in use. The other part of the constant capital, raw material and auxiliary substances, is constantly reproduced in less

than a year; those produced by agriculture, for the most part annually. Every introduction of improved methods, therefore, works almost simultaneously on the new capital and on that already in action. Every advance in chemistry not only multiplies the number of useful materials and the useful applications of those already known, thus extending with the growth of capital its sphere of investment. It teaches at the same time how to throw the excrements of the processes of production and consumption back again into the circle of the process of reproduction, and thus, without any previous outlay of capital, creates new matter for capital. Like the increased exploitation of natural wealth by the mere increase in the tension of labour power, science and technology give capital a power of expansion independent of the given magnitude of the capital actually functioning. They react at the same time on that part of the original capital which has entered upon its stage of renewal. This, in passing into its new shape, incorporates gratis the social advance made while its old shape was being used up. Of course, this development of productive power is accompanied by a partial depreciation of functioning capital. So far as this depreciation makes itself acutely felt in competition, the burden falls on the labourer, in the increased exploitation of whom the capitalist looks for his indemnification.

Labour transmits to its product the value of the means of production consumed by it. On the other hand, the value and mass of the means of production set in motion by a given quantity of labour increase as the labour becomes more productive. Though the same quantity of labour adds always to its products only the same sum of new value, still the old capital value, transmitted by the labour to the products, increases with the growing productivity of labour.

An English and a Chinese spinner, e.g., may work the same number of hours with the same intensity; then they will both in a week create equal values. But in spite of this equality, an immense difference will obtain between the value of the week's product of the Englishman, who works with a mighty automaton, and that of the Chinaman, who has but a spinning-wheel. In the same time as the Chinaman spins one pound of cotton, the Englishman spins several hundreds of pounds. A sum, many hundred times as great, of old values swells the value of his product, in which those re-appear in a new, useful form, and can thus function anew as capital.

"In 1782", as Frederick Engels teaches us, "all the wool crop in England of the three preceding years, lay untouched for want of labourers, and so it must have lain, if newly invented machinery had not come to its aid and spun it."<sup>1)</sup>

Labour embodied in the form of machinery of course did not directly force into life a single man, but it made it possible for a smaller number of labourers, with the addition of relatively less living labour, not only to consume the wool productively, and put into it new value, but to preserve in the form of yarn, &c., its old value. At the same time, it caused and stimulated increased reproduction of wool. It is the natural property of living labour, to transmit old value, whilst it creates new. Hence, with the increase in efficacy, extent and value of its means of production, consequently with the accumulation that accompanies the development of its productive power, labour keeps up and eternises an always increasing capital value in a form ever new.<sup>2)</sup> This natural power of labour takes the appearance of an intrin-

<sup>1)</sup> Friedrich Engels, *Lage der arbeitenden Klasse in England*, p. 20 [see present edition, Vol. 4, p. 314].

<sup>2)</sup> Classic economy has, on account of a deficient analysis of the labour process, and of the process of creating value, never properly grasped this weighty element of reproduction, as may be seen in Ricardo; he says, e. g., whatever the change in productive power, "a million men always produce in manufactures the same value."<sup>3)</sup> This is accurate, if the extension and degree of intensity of their labour are given. But it does not prevent (this Ricardo overlooks in certain conclusions he draws) a million men with different powers of productivity in their labour, turning into products very different masses of the means of production, and therefore preserving in their products very different masses of value; in consequence of which the values of the products yielded may vary considerably. Ricardo has, it may be noted in passing, tried in vain to make clear to J. B. Say, by that very example, the difference between use value (which he here calls wealth or material riches) and exchange value. Say answers: "As for the difficulty raised by Ricardo when he says that, by using better methods of production, a million people can produce two or three times as much wealth, without producing any more value, this difficulty disappears when one bears in mind, as one should, that production is like an exchange in which a man contributes the productive services of his labour, his land, and his capital, in order to obtain products. It is by means of these productive services that we acquire all the products existing in the world. Therefore ... we are the richer, our productive services have the more value, the greater the quantity of useful things they bring in through the exchange which is called production" (J. B. Say, *Lettres à M. Malthus*, Paris, 1820, pp. 168, 169). The "difficulté"—it exists for him, not for Ricardo—that Say means to clear up is this: Why does not the exchange value of the use values increase, when their quantity increases in consequence of increased productive power of labour? Answer: the difficulty is met by calling use value, exchange value, if you please. Exchange value is a thing that is connected one way or another with exchange. If therefore production is called an exchange of labour and means of production against the product, it is clear as day that you obtain

sic property of capital, in which it is incorporated, just as the productive forces of social labour take the appearance of inherent properties of capital, and as the constant appropriation of surplus labour by the capitalists, takes that of a constant self-expansion of capital.

With the increase of capital, the difference between the capital employed and the capital consumed increases. In other words, there is increase in the value and the material mass of the instruments of labour, such as buildings, machinery, drain-pipes, working cattle, apparatus of every kind that function for a longer or shorter time in processes of production constantly repeated, or that serve for the attainment of particular useful effects, whilst they themselves only gradually wear out, therefore only lose their value piecemeal, therefore transfer that value to the product only bit by bit. In the same proportion as these instruments of labour serve as product formers without adding value to the product, i. e., in the same proportion as they are wholly employed but only partly consumed, they perform, as we saw earlier, the same gratuitous service as the natural forces, water, steam, air, electricity, etc. This gratuitous service of past labour, when seized and filled with a soul by living labour, increases with the advancing stages of accumulation.

Since past labour always disguises itself as capital, i. e., since the

more exchange value in proportion as the production yields more use value. In other words, the more use values, e. g., stockings, a working day yields to the stocking manufacturer, the richer is he in stockings. Suddenly, however, Say recollects that "with a greater quantity" of stockings their "price" (which of course has nothing to do with their exchange value!) falls "because competition obliges them (the producers) to sell their products for what they cost to make" [l. c., p. 169]. But whence does the profit come, if the capitalist sells the commodities at cost price? Never mind! Say declares that, in consequence of increased productivity, every one now receives in return for a given equivalent two pairs of stockings instead of one as before. The result he arrives at, is precisely that proposition of Ricardo that he aimed at disproving. After this mighty effort of thought, he triumphantly apostrophises Malthus in the words: "This, Sir, is the well-founded doctrine without which it is impossible, I say, to explain the greatest difficulties in political economy, and, in particular, to explain why it is that a nation can be richer when its products fall in value, even though wealth is value" (l. c., p. 170). An English economist remarks upon the conjuring tricks of the same nature that appear in Say's *Lettres*: "Those affected ways of talking make up in general that which M. Say is pleased to call his doctrine and which he earnestly urges Malthus to teach at Hertford, as it is already taught 'in numerous parts of Europe'. He says, 'If all those propositions appear paradoxical to you, look at the things they express, and I venture to believe that they will then appear very simple and very rational' [p. 169]. Doubtless, and in consequence of the same process, they will appear everything else, except original" (*An Inquiry into those Principles Respecting the Nature of Demand, &c.*, p. 110).

passive of the labour of A, B, C, etc., takes the form of the active of the non-labourer X, bourgeois and political economists are full of praises of the services of dead and gone labour, which, according to the Scotch genius MacCulloch, ought to receive a special remuneration in the shape of interest, profit, etc.<sup>10</sup> The powerful and ever-increasing assistance given by past labour to the living labour process under the form of means of production is therefore, attributed to that form of past labour in which it is alienated, as unpaid labour, from the worker himself, i. e., to its capitalistic form. The practical agents of capitalistic production and their pettifogging ideologists are as unable to think of the means of production as separate from the antagonistic social mask they wear to-day, as a slave-owner to think of the worker himself as distinct from his character as a slave.

With a given degree of exploitation of labour power, the mass of the surplus value produced is determined by the number of workers simultaneously exploited; and this corresponds, although in varying proportions, with the magnitude of the capital. The more, therefore, capital increases by means of successive accumulations, the more does the sum of the value increase that is divided into consumption fund and accumulation fund. The capitalist can, therefore, live a more jolly life, and at the same time show more "abstinence". And, finally, all the springs of production act with greater elasticity, the more its scale extends with the mass of the capital advanced.

#### SECTION 5.—THE SO-CALLED LABOUR FUND

It has been shown in the course of this inquiry that capital is not a fixed magnitude, but is a part of social wealth, elastic and constantly fluctuating with the division of fresh surplus value into revenue and additional capital. It has been seen further that, even with a given magnitude of functioning capital, the labour power, the science, and the land (by which are to be understood, economically, all conditions of labour furnished by Nature independently of man), embodied in it, form elastic powers of capital, allowing it, within certain limits, a field of action independent of its own magnitude. In this inquiry we have neglected all effects of the process of circulation, effects

<sup>10</sup> MacCulloch took out a patent for "wages of past labour",<sup>501</sup> long before Senior did for "wages of abstinence".

which may produce very different degrees of efficiency in the same mass of capital. And as we presupposed the limits set by capitalist production, that is to say, presupposed the process of social production in a form developed by purely spontaneous growth, we neglected any more rational combination, directly and systematically practicable with the means of production, and the mass of labour power at present disposable. Classical economy always loved to conceive social capital as a fixed magnitude of a fixed degree of efficiency. But this prejudice was first established as a dogma by the arch-Philistine, Jeremy Bentham, that insipid, pedantic, leather-tongued oracle of the ordinary bourgeois intelligence of the 19th century.<sup>1)</sup> Bentham is among philosophers what Martin Tupper is among poets. Both could only have been manufactured in England.<sup>2)</sup> In the light of his dogma the commonest phenomena of the process of production, as, e. g., its sudden expansions and contractions, nay, even accumulation itself, become perfectly inconceivable.<sup>3)</sup> The dogma was used by Bentham himself, as well as by Malthus, James Mill, MacCulloch, etc., for an

<sup>1)</sup> Compare among others, Jeremy Bentham, *Théorie des Peines et des Récompenses*, traduct. d'Et. Dumont, 3ème édit. Paris, 1826, t. II, L. IV, ch. II.

<sup>2)</sup> Bentham is a purely English phenomenon. Not even excepting our philosopher, Christian Wolff, in no time and in no country has the most homespun commonplace ever strutted about in so self-satisfied a way. The principle of utility was no discovery of Bentham. He simply reproduced in his dull way what Helvétius and other Frenchmen had said with esprit in the 18th century. To know what is useful for a dog, one must study dog-nature. This nature itself is not to be deduced from the principle of utility. Applying this to man, he that would criticise all human acts, movements, relations, etc., by the principle of utility, must first deal with human nature in general, and then with human nature as modified in each historical epoch. Bentham makes short work of it. With the driest naïveté he takes the modern shopkeeper, especially the English shopkeeper, as the normal man. Whatever is useful to this queer normal man, and to his world, is absolutely useful. This yard-measure, then, he applies to past, present, and future. The Christian religion, e. g., is "useful", "because it forbids in the name of religion the same faults that the penal code condemns in the name of the law". Artistic criticism is "harmful", because it disturbs worthy people in their enjoyment of Martin Tupper, etc. With such rubbish has the brave fellow, with his motto, "nulla dies sine lîneâ",<sup>502</sup> piled up mountains of books. Had I the courage of my friend, Heinrich Heine,<sup>503</sup> I should call Mr. Jeremy a genius in the way of bourgeois stupidity.

<sup>3)</sup> "Political economists are too apt to consider a certain quantity of capital and a certain number of labourers as productive instruments of uniform power, or operating with a certain uniform intensity.... Those ... who maintain ... that commodities are the sole agents of production ... prove that production could never be enlarged, for it requires as an indispensable condition to such an enlargement that food, raw materials, and tools should be previously augmented; which is in fact maintaining that no increase of production can take place without a previous increase, or, in other words,

apologetic purpose, and especially in order to represent one part of capital, namely, variable capital, or that part convertible into labour power, as a fixed magnitude. The material of variable capital, i. e., the mass of the means of subsistence it represents for the labourer, or the so-called labour fund, was fabled as a separate part of social wealth, fixed by natural laws and unchangeable. To set in motion the part of social wealth which is to function as constant capital, or, to express it in a material form, as means of production, a definite mass of living labour is required. This mass is given technologically. But neither is the number of labourers required to render fluid this mass of labour power given (it changes with the degree of exploitation of the individual labour power), nor is the price of this labour power given, but only its minimum limit, which is moreover very variable. The facts that lie at the bottom of this dogma are these: on the one hand, the labourer has no right to interfere in the division of social wealth into means of enjoyment for the non-labourer and means of production.<sup>1)</sup> On the other hand, only in favourable and exceptional cases, has he the power to enlarge the so-called labour fund at the expense of the “revenue” of the wealthy.

What silly tautology results from the attempt to represent the capitalistic limits of the labour fund as its natural and social limits may be seen, e. g., in Professor Fawcett.<sup>2)</sup>

“The circulating capital of a country,” he says, “is its wage fund. Hence, if we desire to calculate the average money wages received by each labourer, we have simply to divide the amount of this capital by the number of the labouring population.”<sup>3)</sup>

that an increase is impossible” (S. Bailey, *Money and its Vicissitudes*, pp. 58 and 70). Bailey criticises the dogma mainly from the point of view of the process of circulation.

<sup>1)</sup> John Stuart Mill, in his *Principles of Political Economy*, says: “The really exhausting and the really repulsive labours instead of being better paid than others, are almost invariably paid the worst of all.... The more revolting the occupation, the more certain it is to receive the minimum of remuneration.... The hardships and the earnings, instead of being directly proportional, as in any just arrangements of society they would be, are generally in an inverse ratio to one another.”<sup>504</sup> To avoid misunderstanding, let me say that although men like John Stuart Mill are to blame for the contradiction between their traditional economic dogmas and their modern tendencies, it would be very wrong to class them with the herd of vulgar economic apologists.

<sup>2)</sup> H. Fawcett, professor of political economy at Cambridge, *The Economic Position of the British Labourer*, London, 1865, p. 120.

<sup>3)</sup> I must here remind the reader that the categories, “variable and constant capital”, were first used by me. Political economy since the time of Adam Smith has confusedly mixed up the essential distinctions involved in these categories, with the mere formal differences, arising out of the process of circulation, of fixed and circulating cap-

That is to say, we first add together the individual wages actually paid, and then we affirm that the sum thus obtained, forms the total value of the “labour fund” determined and vouchsafed to us by God and Nature. Lastly, we divide the sum thus obtained by the number of labourers to find out again how much may come to each on the average. An uncommonly knowing dodge this. It did not prevent Mr. Fawcett saying in the same breath:

“The aggregate wealth which is annually saved in England, is divided into two portions; one portion is employed as capital to maintain our industry, and the other portion is exported to foreign countries... Only a portion, and perhaps, not a large portion of the wealth which is annually saved in this country, is invested in our own industry.”<sup>1)</sup>

The greater part of the yearly accruing surplus product, embezzled, because abstracted without return of an equivalent, from the English labourer, is thus used as capital, not in England, but in foreign countries. But with the additional capital thus exported, a part of the “labour fund” invented by God and Bentham is also exported.<sup>2)</sup>

## Chapter XXV

### THE GENERAL LAW OF CAPITALIST ACCUMULATION

#### SECTION I.—THE INCREASED DEMAND FOR LABOUR POWER THAT ACCOMPANIES ACCUMULATION, THE COMPOSITION OF CAPITAL REMAINING THE SAME

In this chapter we consider the influence of the growth of capital on the lot of the labouring class. The most important factor in this inquiry is the composition of capital and the changes it undergoes in the course of the process of accumulation.

The composition of capital is to be understood in a twofold sense.

ital. For further details on this point, see Book II, Part II<sup>483</sup> [H. Fawcett, *The Economic Position of the British Labourer*, London, 1865, p. 120].

<sup>1)</sup> Fawcett, l. c., pp. 122, 123.

<sup>2)</sup> It might be said that not only capital, but also labourers, in the shape of emigrants, are annually exported from England. In the text, however, there is no question of the peculiarity<sup>505</sup> of the emigrants, who are in great part not labourers. The sons of farmers make up a great part of them. The additional capital annually transported abroad to be put out at interest is in much greater proportion to the annual accumulation than the yearly emigration is to the yearly increase of population.

On the side of value, it is determined by the proportion in which it is divided into constant capital or value of the means of production, and variable capital or value of labour power, the sum total of wages. On the side of material, as it functions in the process of production, all capital is divided into means of production and living labour power. This latter composition is determined by the relation between the mass of the means of production employed, on the one hand, and the mass of labour necessary for their employment on the other. I call the former the *value composition*, the latter the *technical composition* of capital. Between the two there is a strict correlation. To express this, I call the value composition of capital, in so far as it is determined by its technical composition and mirrors the changes of the latter, the *organic composition* of capital. Wherever I refer to the composition of capital, without further qualification, its organic composition is always understood.

The many individual capitals invested in a particular branch of production have, one with another, more or less different compositions. The average of their individual compositions gives us the composition of the total capital in this branch of production. Lastly, the average of these averages, in all branches of production, gives us the composition of the total social capital of a country, and with this alone are we, in the last resort, concerned in the following investigation.

Growth of capital involves growth of its variable constituent or of the part invested in labour power. A part of the surplus value turned into additional capital must always be re-transformed into variable capital, or additional labour fund. If we suppose that, all other circumstances remaining the same, the composition of capital also remains constant (i.e., that a definite mass of means of production constantly needs the same mass of labour power to set it in motion), then the demand for labour and the subsistence fund of the labourers clearly increase in the same proportion as the capital, and the more rapidly, the more rapidly the capital increases. Since the capital produces yearly a surplus value, of which one part is yearly added to the original capital; since this increment itself grows yearly along with the augmentation of the capital already functioning; since lastly, under special stimulus to enrichment, such as the opening of new markets, or of new spheres for the outlay of capital in consequence of newly developed social wants, &c., the scale of accumulation may be suddenly extended, merely by a change in the division of the surplus

value or surplus product into capital and revenue, the requirements of accumulating capital may exceed the increase of labour power or of the number of labourers; the demand for labourers may exceed the supply, and, therefore, wages may rise. This must, indeed, ultimately be the case if the conditions supposed above continue. For since in each year more labourers are employed than in its predecessor, sooner or later a point must be reached, at which the requirements of accumulation begin to surpass the customary supply of labour, and, therefore, a rise of wages takes place. A lamentation on this score was heard in England during the whole of the fifteenth, and the first half of the eighteenth centuries. The more or less favourable circumstances in which the wage-working class supports and multiplies itself, in no way alter the fundamental character of capitalist production. As simple reproduction constantly reproduces the capital relation itself, i.e., the relation of capitalists on the one hand, and wage workers on the other, so reproduction on a progressive scale, i. e., accumulation, reproduces the capital relation on a progressive scale, more capitalists or larger capitalists at this pole, more wage workers at that. The reproduction of a mass of labour power, which must incessantly re-incorporate itself with capital for that capital's self-expansion; which cannot get free from capital, and whose enslavement to capital is only concealed by the variety of individual capitalists to whom it sells itself, this reproduction of labour power forms, in fact, an essential of the reproduction of capital itself. Accumulation of capital is, therefore, increase of the proletariat.<sup>1)</sup>

Classical economy grasped this fact so thoroughly that Adam Smith, Ricardo, &c., as mentioned earlier, inaccurately identified ac-

<sup>1)</sup> Karl Marx, l. c., [*Wage Labour and Capital*, present edition, Vol. 9]. "Assuming the masses are equally oppressed, ... the more proletarians a country has the richer it is" (Colins, *L'économie politique. Sources des révoltes et des utopies prétendues socialistes*, Paris, 1857, t. III, p. 331). Our "proletarian" is economically none other than the wage labourer, who produces and increases capital, and is thrown out on the streets, as soon as he is superfluous for the needs of aggrandisement of "Monsieur capital", as Pecqueur calls this person.<sup>506</sup> "The sickly proletarian of the primitive forest," is a pretty Roscherian fancy.<sup>507</sup> The primitive forester is owner of the primitive forest, and uses the primitive forest as his property with the freedom of an orangoutang. He is not, therefore, a proletarian. This would only be the case, if the primitive forest exploited him, instead of being exploited by him. As far as his health is concerned, such a man would well bear comparison, not only with the modern proletarian, but also with the syphilitic and scrofulous upper classes. But, no doubt, Herr Wilhelm Roscher, by "primitive forest" means his native heath of Lüneburg.

cumulation with the consumption, by the productive labourers, of all the capitalised part of the surplus product, or with its transformation into additional wage labourers. As early as 1696 John Bellers says:

“For if one had a hundred thousand acres of land and as many pounds in money, and as many cattle, without a labourer, what would the rich man be, but a labourer? And as the labourers make men rich, so the more labourers there will be, the more rich men ... the labour of the poor being the mines of the rich.”<sup>1)</sup>

So also Bernard de Mandeville at the beginning of the eighteenth century:

“It would be easier, where property is well secured, to live without money than without poor; for who would do the work?... As they” (the poor) “ought to be kept from starving, so they should receive nothing worth saving. If here and there one of the lowest class by uncommon industry, and pinching his belly, lifts himself above the condition he was brought up in, nobody ought to hinder him; nay, it is undeniably the wisest course for every person in the society, and for every private family to be frugal; but it is the interest of all rich nations, that the greatest part of the poor should almost never be idle, and yet continually spend what they get. ... Those that get their living by their daily labour ... have nothing to stir them up to be serviceable but their wants which it is prudence to relieve, but folly to cure. The only thing then that can render the labouring man industrious, is a moderate quantity of money, for as too little will, according as his temper is, either dispirit or make him desperate, so too much will make him insolent and lazy. ... From what has been said, it is manifest, that, in a free nation, where slaves are not allowed of, the surest wealth consists in a multitude of laborious poor; for besides, that they are the never-failing nursery of fleets and armies, without them there could be no enjoyment, and no product of any country could be valuable. To make the society” //which of course consists of non-workers// “happy and people easier under the meanest circumstances, it is requisite that great numbers of them should be ignorant as well as poor; knowledge both enlarges and multiplies our desires, and the fewer things a man wishes for, the more easily his necessities may be supplied.”<sup>2)</sup>

What Mandeville, an honest, clear-headed man, had not yet seen, is that the mechanism of the process of accumulation itself increases, along with the capital, the mass of “labouring poor”, i. e., the wage labourers, who turn their labour power into an increasing power of self-expansion of the growing capital, and even by doing so must eter-

<sup>1)</sup> John Bellers, l. c. [*Proposals for Raising a College of Industry*, London, 1696], p. 2.

<sup>2)</sup> Bernard de Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*, 5th edition, London, 1728. Remarks, pp. 212, 213, 328. “Temperate living and constant employment is the direct road, for the poor, to rational happiness” //by which he most probably means long working days and little means of subsistence//, “and to riches and strength for the state” (viz., for the landlords, capitalists, and their political dignitaries and agents). ([J. Cunningham,] *An Essay on Trade and Commerce*, London, 1770, p. 54.)

nise their dependent relation on their own product, as personified in the capitalists. In reference to this relation of dependence, Sir F. M. Eden in his *The State of the Poor, an History of the Labouring Classes in England*, says,

“the natural produce of our soil is certainly not fully adequate to our subsistence; we can neither be clothed, lodged nor fed but in consequence of some previous labour. A portion at least of the society must be indefatigably employed.... There are others who, though they ‘neither toil nor spin’, can yet command the produce of industry, but who owe their exemption from labour solely to civilisation and order.... They are peculiarly the creatures of civil institutions,<sup>1)</sup> which have recognised that individuals may acquire property by various other means besides the exertion of labour.... Persons of independent fortune ... owe their superior advantages by no means to any superior abilities of their own, but almost entirely ... to the industry of others. It is not the possession of land, or of money, but the command of labour which distinguishes the opulent from the labouring part of the community.... This” //scheme approved by Eden// “would give the people of property sufficient (but by no means too much) influence and authority over those who ... work for them; and it would place such labourers, not in an abject or servile condition, but in such a state of easy and liberal dependence as all who know human nature, and its history, will allow to be necessary for their own comfort.”<sup>2)</sup>

Sir F. M. Eden, it may be remarked in passing, is the only disciple of Adam Smith during the eighteenth century that produced any work of importance.<sup>3)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> Eden should have asked, whose creatures then are “the civil institutions”? From his standpoint of juridical illusion, he does not regard the law as a product of the material relations of production, but conversely the relations of production as products of the law. Linguet overthrew Montesquieu’s illusory “Spirit of the laws” with one word: “The spirit of the laws is property.”<sup>308</sup>

<sup>2)</sup> Eden, I. c., Vol. I, book I, chapter 1, pp. 1, 2, and preface, p. xx.

<sup>3)</sup> If the reader reminds me of Malthus, whose *Essay on Population* appeared in 1798, I remind him that this work in its first form is nothing more than a schoolboyish, superficial plagiary of De Foe, Sir James Steuart, Townsend, Franklin, Wallace, &c., and does not contain a single sentence thought out by himself. The great sensation this pamphlet caused, was due solely to party interest. The French Revolution had found passionate defenders in the United Kingdom; the “principle of population”, slowly worked out in the eighteenth century, and then, in the midst of a great social crisis, proclaimed with drums and trumpets as the infallible antidote to the teachings of Condorcet, &c., was greeted with jubilance by the English oligarchy as the great destroyer of all hankerings after human development. Malthus, hugely astonished at his success, gave himself to stuffing into his book materials superficially compiled, and adding to it new matter, not discovered but annexed by him. Note further: Although Malthus was a parson of the English State Church, he had taken the monastic vow of celibacy — one of the conditions of holding a Fellowship in Protestant Cambridge University: “We do not permit the Fellows of the Colleges to be married, but rather, as soon as anyone takes a wife, he ceases to be a Fellow of his College” (“Reports of Cambridge University

Commission”, p. 172). This circumstance favourably distinguishes Malthus from the other Protestant parsons, who have shuffled off the command enjoining celibacy of the priesthood and have taken, “Be fruitful and multiply”,<sup>509</sup> as their special Biblical mission in such a degree that they generally contribute to the increase of population to a really unbecoming extent, whilst they preach at the same time to the labourers the “principle of population”. It is characteristic that the economic fall of man, the Adam’s apple, the urgent appetite, “the checks which tend to blunt the shafts of Cupid”, as Parson Townsend<sup>510</sup> waggishly puts it, that this delicate question was and is monopolised by the Reverends of Protestant Theology, or rather of the Protestant Church. With the exception of the Venetian monk, Ortes,<sup>511</sup> an original and clever writer, most of the population-theory teachers are Protestant parsons. For instance, Bruckner, *Théorie du Système animal*, Leyden, 1767, in which the whole subject of the modern population theory is exhausted, and to which the passing quarrel between Quesnay and his pupil, the elder Mirabeau,<sup>512</sup> furnished ideas on the same topic; then Parson Wallace, Parson Townsend, Parson Malthus and his pupil, the arch-Parson Thomas Chalmers, to say nothing of lesser reverend scribblers in this line. Originally, political economy was studied by philosophers like Hobbes, Locke, Hume; by businessmen and statesmen, like Thomas More, Temple, Sully, De Witt, North, Law, Vanderlint, Cantillon, Franklin; and especially, and with the greatest success, by medical men like Petty, Barbon, Mandeville, Quesnay. Even in the middle of the eighteenth century, the Rev. Mr. Tucker, a notable economist of his time, excused himself for meddling with the things of Mammon. Later on, and in truth with this very “Principle of population”, struck the hour of the protestant parsons. Petty, who regarded the population as the basis of wealth, and was, like Adam Smith, an outspoken foe to parsons, says, as if he had a presentiment of their bungling interference, “that Religion best flourishes when the Priests are most mortified, as was before said of the Law, which best flourisheth when lawyers have least to do”.<sup>513</sup> He advises the Protestant priests, therefore, if they, once for all, will not follow the Apostle Paul and “mortify” themselves by celibacy, “not to breed more Churchmen than the Benefices, as they now stand shared out, will receive, that is to say, if there be places for about twelve thousand in England and Wales, it will not be safe to breed up 24,000 ministers, for then the twelve thousand which are unprovided for, will seek ways how to get themselves a livelihood, which they cannot do more easily than by persuading the people that the twelve thousand incumbents do poison or starve their souls, and misguide them in their way to Heaven” (*Petty, A Treatise of Taxes and Contributions*, London, 1667, p. 57). Adam Smith’s position with the Protestant priesthood of his time is shown by the following. In [G. Horne,] “A Letter to A. Smith, L. L. D. On the Life, Death, and Philosophy of his Friend, David Hume. By one of the People called Christians,” 4th Edition, Oxford, 1784, Dr. Horne, Bishop of Norwich, reproves Adam Smith, because in a published letter to Mr. Strahan, he “embalmed his friend David” (sc. Hume); because he told the world how “Hume amused himself on his deathbed with Lucian and Whist”, and because he even had the impudence to write of Hume: “I have always considered him, both in his lifetime and since his death, as approaching as nearly to the idea of a perfectly wise and virtuous man, as, perhaps, the nature of human frailty will permit” [G. Horne, l. c., pp. 1, 7, 8, 34]. The bishop cries out, in a passion: “Is it right in you, Sir, to hold up to our view as ‘perfectly wise and virtuous’, the *character* and *conduct* of one, who seems to have been possessed with an incurable antipathy to all that is called *Religion*; and who strained every nerve to explode, suppress and extirpate the spirit of it among men, that its very name, if he could effect it, might no more be had in remembrance?” (l. c.,

Under the conditions of accumulation supposed thus far, which conditions are those most favourable to the labourers, their relation of dependence upon capital takes on a form durable or, as Eden says: "easy and liberal." Instead of becoming more intensive with the growth of capital, this relation of dependence only becomes more extensive, i.e., the sphere of capital's exploitation and rule merely extends with its own dimensions and the number of its subjects. A larger part of their own surplus product, always increasing and continually transformed into additional capital, comes back to them in the shape of means of payment, so that they can extend the circle of their enjoyments; can make some additions to their consumption fund of clothes, furniture, &c., and can lay by small reserve funds of money. But just as little as better clothing, food, and treatment, and a larger peculium,<sup>505</sup> do away with the exploitation of the slave, so little do they set aside that of the wage worker. A rise in the price of labour, as a consequence of accumulation of capital, only means, in fact, that the length and weight of the golden chain the wage worker has already forged for himself, allow of a relaxation of the tension of it. In the controversies on this subject the chief fact has generally been overlooked, viz., the *differentia specifica* of capitalistic production. Labour power is sold to-day, not with a view of satisfying, by its service or by its product, the personal needs of the buyer. His aim is augmentation of his capital, production of commodities containing more labour than he pays for, containing therefore a portion of value that costs him nothing, and that is nevertheless realised when the commod-

p. 8). "But let not the lovers of truth be discouraged. Atheism cannot be of long continuance" (p. 17). Adam Smith, "had the atrocious wickedness to propagate atheism through the land (viz., by his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*). Upon the whole, Doctor, your meaning is good; but I think you will not succeed this time. You would persuade us, by the example of *David Hume, Esq.*, that atheism is the only cordial for low spirits, and the proper antidote against the fear of death.... You may smile over *Babylon* in ruins and congratulate the hardened *Pharaoh* on his overthrow in the Red Sea" (i. c., pp. 21, 22). One orthodox individual, amongst Adam Smith's college friends, writes after his death: "Smith's well-placed affection for Hume ... hindered him from being a Christian.... When he met with honest men whom he liked ... he would believe almost anything they said. Had he been a friend of the worthy ingenious Horrox he would have believed that the moon some times disappeared in a clear sky without the interposition of a cloud... He approached to republicanism in his political principles" (*The Bee*, by James Anderson, 18 Vols., Vol. 3, pp. 166, 165, Edinburgh, 1791-93). Parson Thomas Chalmers<sup>514</sup> has his suspicions as to Adam Smith having invented the category of "unproductive labourers", solely for the Protestant parsons, in spite of their blessed work in the vineyard of the Lord.<sup>515</sup>

ties are sold. Production of surplus value is the absolute law of this mode of production. Labour power is only saleable so far as it preserves the means of production in their capacity of capital, reproduces its own value as capital, and yields in unpaid labour a source of additional capital.<sup>1)</sup> The conditions of its sale, whether more or less favourable to the labourer, include therefore the necessity of its constant re-selling, and the constantly extended reproduction of all wealth in the shape of capital. Wages, as we have seen, by their very nature, always imply the performance of a certain quantity of unpaid labour on the part of the labourer. Altogether, irrespective of the case of a rise of wages with a falling price of labour, &c., such an increase only means at best a quantitative diminution of the unpaid labour that the worker has to supply. This diminution can never reach the point at which it would threaten the system itself. Apart from violent conflicts as to the rate of wages (and Adam Smith has already shown that in such a conflict, taken on the whole, the master is always master),<sup>516</sup> a rise in the price of labour resulting from accumulation of capital implies the following alternative:

Either the price of labour keeps on rising, because its rise does not interfere with the progress of accumulation. In this there is nothing wonderful, for, says Adam Smith, “after these (profits) are diminished, stock may not only continue to increase, but to increase much faster than before.... A great stock, though with small profits, generally increases faster than a small stock with great profits” (l. c. [*Recherches...*], I, p. 189). In this case it is evident that a diminution in the unpaid labour in no way interferes with the extension of the domain of capital.—Or, on the other hand, accumulation slackens in consequence of the rise in the price of labour, because the stimulus of gain is blunted. The rate of accumulation lessens; but with its lessening, the primary cause of that lessening vanishes, i.e., the disproportion between capital and exploitable labour power. The mechanism of the process of capitalist production removes the very obstacles that it temporarily creates. The price of labour falls again to a level corresponding with the needs of the self-expansion of capital, whether the

1) “The limit, however, to the employment of both the operative and the labourer is the same; namely, the possibility of the employer realising a *profit* on the produce of their industry. If the rate of wages is such as to reduce the master’s gains below the average profit of capital, he will cease to employ them, or he will only employ them on condition of submission to a reduction of wages” (John Wade, l. c. [*History of the Middle and Working Classes...*, Ld., 1835], p. 240).

level be below, the same as, or above the one which was normal before the rise of wages took place. We see thus: In the first case, it is not the diminished rate either of the absolute, or of the proportional, increase in labour power, or labouring population, which causes capital to be in excess, but conversely the excess of capital that makes exploitable labour power insufficient. In the second case, it is not the increased rate either of the absolute, or of the proportional, increase in labour power, or labouring population, that makes capital insufficient; but, conversely, the relative diminution of capital that causes the exploitable labour power, or rather its price, to be in excess. It is these absolute movements of the accumulation of capital which are reflected as relative movements of the mass of exploitable labour power, and therefore seem produced by the latter's own independent movement. To put it mathematically: the rate of accumulation is the independent, not the dependent, variable; the rate of wages, the dependent, not the independent, variable. Thus, when the industrial cycle is in the phase of crisis, a general fall in the price of commodities is expressed as a rise in the value of money, and, in the phase of prosperity, a general rise in the price of commodities, as a fall in the value of money. The so-called currency school<sup>134</sup> concludes from this that with high prices too little with low prices too much money<sup>a</sup> is in circulation. Their ignorance and complete misunderstanding of facts<sup>135</sup> are worthily paralleled by the economists, who interpret the above phenomena of accumulation by saying that there are now too few, now too many wage labourers.

The law of capitalist production, that is at the bottom of the pretended "natural law of population", reduces itself simply to this: The correlation between accumulation of capital and rate of wages is nothing else than the correlation between the unpaid labour transformed into capital, and the additional paid labour necessary for the setting in motion of this additional capital. It is therefore in no way a relation between two magnitudes, independent one of the other: on the one hand, the magnitude of the capital; on the other, the number of the labouring population; it is rather, at bottom, only the relation between the unpaid and the paid labour of the same labouring popula-

<sup>134</sup> Cf. Karl Marx, *Zur Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie*, pp. 165, seq. [present edition, Vol. 29, pp. 412, seq.].

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<sup>a</sup> The authorised French translation has "with high prices too much, with low prices too little money".

tion. If the quantity of unpaid labour supplied by the working class, and accumulated by the capitalist class, increases so rapidly that its conversion into capital requires an extraordinary addition of paid labour, then wages rise, and, all other circumstances remaining equal, the unpaid labour diminishes in proportion. But as soon as this diminution touches the point at which the surplus labour that nourishes capital is no longer supplied in normal quantity, a reaction sets in: a smaller part of revenue is capitalised, accumulation lags, and the movement of rise in wages receives a check. The rise of wages therefore is confined within limits that not only leave intact the foundations of the capitalistic system, but also secure its reproduction on a progressive scale. The law of capitalistic accumulation, metamorphosed by economists into pretended law of Nature, in reality merely states that the very nature of accumulation excludes every diminution in the degree of exploitation of labour, and every rise in the price of labour, which could seriously imperil the continual reproduction, on an ever-enlarging scale, of the capitalistic relation. It cannot be otherwise in a mode of production in which the labourer exists to satisfy the needs of self-expansion of existing values, instead of, on the contrary, material wealth existing to satisfy the needs of development on the part of the labourer. As, in religion, man is governed by the products of his own brain, so in capitalistic production, he is governed by the products of his own hand.<sup>1)</sup>

SECTION 2.—RELATIVE DIMINUTION OF THE VARIABLE  
PART OF CAPITAL SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH THE PROGRESS  
OF ACCUMULATION AND OF THE CONCENTRATION  
THAT ACCOMPANIES IT

According to the economists themselves, it is neither the actual extent of social wealth, nor the magnitude of the capital already functioning, that lead to a rise of wages, but only the constant growth of accumulation and the degree of rapidity of that growth. (Adam

<sup>1)</sup> "If we now return to our first inquiry, wherein it was shown that capital itself is only the result of human labour ... it seems quite incomprehensible that man can have fallen under the domination of capital, his own product; can be subordinated to it; and as in reality this is beyond dispute the case, involuntarily the question arises: How has the labourer been able to pass from being master of capital—as its creator—to being its slave?" (Von Thünen, *Der isolierte Staat*, Part ii, Section ii, Rostock, 1863, pp. 5, 6). It is Thünen's merit to have asked this question. His answer is simply childish.

Smith, Book I, chapter 8.) So far, we have only considered one special phase of this process, that in which the increase of capital occurs along with a constant technical composition of capital. But the process goes beyond this phase.

Once given the general basis of the capitalist system, then, in the course of accumulation, a point is reached at which the development of the productivity of social labour becomes the most powerful lever of accumulation.

"The same cause," says Adam Smith, "which raises the wages of labour, the increase of stock, tends to increase its productive powers, and to make a smaller quantity of labour produce a greater quantity of work."<sup>517</sup>

Apart from natural conditions, such as fertility of the soil, &c., and from the skill of independent and isolated producers (shown rather qualitatively in the goodness than quantitatively in the mass of their products), the degree of productivity of labour, in a given society, is expressed in the relative extent of the means of production that one labourer, during a given time, with the same tension of labour power, turns into products. The mass of the means of production which he thus transforms, increases with the productiveness of his labour. But those means of production play a double part. The increase of some is a consequence, that of the others a condition of the increasing productivity of labour. E. g., with the division of labour in manufacture, and with the use of machinery, more raw material is worked up in the same time, and, therefore, a greater mass of raw material and auxiliary substances enter into the labour process. That is the consequence of the increasing productivity of labour. On the other hand, the mass of machinery, beasts of burden, mineral manures, drain-pipes, &c., is a condition of the increasing productivity of labour. So also is it with the means of production concentrated in buildings, furnaces, means of transport, &c. But whether condition or consequence, the growing extent of the means of production, as compared with the labour power incorporated with them, is an expression of the growing productiveness of labour. The increase of the latter appears, therefore, in the diminution of the mass of labour in proportion to the mass of means of production moved by it, or in the diminution of the subjective factor of the labour process as compared with the objective factor.

This change in the technical composition of capital, this growth in the mass of means of production, as compared with the mass of the labour power that vivifies them, is reflected again in its value composi-

tion, by the increase of the constant constituent of capital at the expense of its variable constituent. There may be, e. g., originally 50 per cent. of a capital laid out in means of production, and 50 per cent. in labour power; later on, with the development of the productivity of labour, 80 per cent. in means of production, 20 per cent. in labour power, and so on. This law of the progressive increase in constant capital, in proportion to the variable, is confirmed at every step (as already shown) by the comparative analysis of the prices of commodities, whether we compare different economic epochs or different nations in the same epoch. The relative magnitude of the element of price, which represents the value of the means of production only, or the constant part of capital consumed, is in direct, the relative magnitude of the other element of price that pays labour (the variable part of capital) is in inverse proportion to the advance of accumulation.

This diminution in the variable part of capital as compared with the constant, or the altered value composition of the capital, however, only shows approximately the change in the composition of its material constituents. If, e. g., the capital value employed to-day in spinning is  $\frac{7}{8}$  constant and  $\frac{1}{8}$  variable, whilst at the beginning of the 18th century it was  $\frac{1}{2}$  constant and  $\frac{1}{2}$  variable, on the other hand, the mass of raw material, instruments, of labour, &c., that a certain quantity of spinning labour consumes productively to-day, is many hundred times greater than at the beginning of the 18th century.<sup>a</sup> The reason is simply that, with the increasing productivity of labour, not only does the mass of the means of production consumed by it increase, but their value compared with their mass diminishes. Their value therefore rises absolutely, but not in proportion to their mass. The increase of the difference between constant and variable capital, is, therefore, much less than that of the difference between the mass of the means of production into which the constant, and the mass of the labour power into which the variable, capital is converted. The former difference increases with the latter, but in a smaller degree.

But, if the progress of accumulation lessens the relative magnitude of the variable part of capital, it by no means, in doing this, excludes the possibility of a rise in its absolute magnitude. Suppose that a capital value at first is divided into 50 per cent. of constant and 50 per cent. of variable capital; later into 80 per cent. of constant and 20 per

<sup>a</sup> See this volume, p. 228.

cent. of variable. If in the meantime the original capital, say £6,000, has increased to £18,000, its variable constituent has also increased. It was £3,000, it is now £3,600. But whereas formerly an increase of capital by 20 per cent. would have sufficed to raise the demand for labour 20 per cent., now this latter rise requires a tripling of the original capital.

In Part IV it was shown, how the development of the productivity of social labour presupposes co-operation on a large scale; how it is only upon this supposition that division and combination of labour can be organised, and the means of production economised by concentration on a vast scale; how instruments of labour which, from their very nature, are only fit for use in common, such as a system of machinery, can be called into being; how huge natural forces can be pressed into the service of production; and how the transformation can be effected of the process of production into a technological application of science. On the basis of the production of commodities, where the means of production are the property of private persons, and where the artisan therefore either produces commodities, isolated from and independent of others, or sells his labour power as a commodity, because he lacks the means for independent industry, co-operation on a large scale can realise itself only in the increase of individual capitals, only in proportion as the means of social production and the means of subsistence are transformed into the private property of capitalists. The basis of the production of commodities can admit of production on a large scale in the capitalistic form alone. A certain accumulation of capital, in the hands of individual producers of commodities, forms therefore the necessary preliminary of the specifically capitalistic mode of production. We had, therefore, to assume that this occurs during the transition from handicraft to capitalistic industry. It may be called primitive accumulation, because it is the historic basis, instead of the historic result of specifically capitalist production. How it itself originates, we need not here inquire as yet. It is enough that it forms the starting-point. But all methods for raising the social productive power of labour that are developed on this basis, are at the same time methods for the increased production of surplus value or surplus product, which in its turn is the formative element of accumulation. They are, therefore, at the same time methods of the production of capital by capital, or methods of its accelerated accumulation. The continual re-transformation of surplus value into capital now appears in the shape of the increasing magnitude

of the capital that enters into the process of production. This in turn is the basis of an extended scale of production, of the methods for raising the productive power of labour that accompany it, and of accelerated production of surplus value. If, therefore, a certain degree of accumulation of capital appears as a condition of the specifically capitalist mode of production, the latter causes conversely an accelerated accumulation of capital. With the accumulation of capital, therefore, the specifically capitalistic mode of production develops, and with the capitalist mode of production the accumulation of capital. Both these economic factors bring about, in the compound ratio of the impulses they reciprocally give one another, that change in the technical composition of capital by which the variable constituent becomes always smaller and smaller as compared with the constant.

Every individual capital is a larger or smaller concentration of means of production, with a corresponding command over a larger or smaller labour army. Every accumulation becomes the means of new accumulation. With the increasing mass of wealth which functions as capital, accumulation increases the concentration of that wealth in the hands of individual capitalists, and thereby widens the basis of production on a large scale and of the specific methods of capitalist production. The growth of social capital is effected by the growth of many individual capitals. All other circumstances remaining the same, individual capitals, and with them the concentration of the means of production, increase in such proportion as they form aliquot parts of the total social capital. At the same time portions of the original capitals disengage themselves and function as new independent capitals. Besides other causes, the division of property, within capitalist families, plays a great part in this. With the accumulation of capital, therefore, the number of capitalists grows to a greater or less extent. Two points characterise this kind of concentration which grows directly out of, or rather is identical with, accumulation. First: The increasing concentration of the social means of production in the hands of individual capitalists is, other things remaining equal, limited by the degree of increase of social wealth. Second: The part of social capital domiciled in each particular sphere of production is divided among many capitalists who face one another as independent commodity producers competing with each other. Accumulation and the concentration accompanying it are, therefore, not only scattered over many points, but the increase of each functioning capital is thwarted by the formation of new and the sub-division of old capi-

tals. Accumulation, therefore, presents itself on the one hand as increasing concentration of the means of production, and of the command over labour; on the other, as repulsion of many individual capitals one from another.

This splitting-up of the total social capital into many individual capitals or the repulsion of its fractions one from another, is counteracted by their attraction. This last does not mean that simple concentration of the means of production and of the command over labour, which is identical with accumulation. It is concentration of capitals already formed, destruction of their individual independence, expropriation of capitalist by capitalist, transformation of many small into few large capitals. This process differs from the former in this, that it only presupposes a change in the distribution of capital already to hand, and functioning; its field of action is therefore not limited by the absolute growth of social wealth, by the absolute limits of accumulation. Capital grows in one place to a huge mass in a single hand, because it has in another place been lost by many. This is centralisation proper, as distinct from accumulation and concentration.

The laws of this centralisation of capitals, or of the attraction of capital by capital, cannot be developed here. A brief hint at a few facts must suffice. The battle of competition is fought by cheapening of commodities. The cheapness of commodities depends, *ceteris paribus*,<sup>a</sup> on the productiveness of labour, and this again on the scale of production. Therefore, the larger capitals beat the smaller. It will further be remembered that, with the development of the capitalist mode of production, there is an increase in the minimum amount of individual capital necessary to carry on a business under its normal conditions. The smaller capitals, therefore, crowd into spheres of production which modern industry has only sporadically or incompletely got hold of. Here competition rages in direct proportion to the number, and in inverse proportion to the magnitudes, of the antagonistic capitals. It always ends in the ruin of many small capitalists, whose capitals partly pass into the hands of their conquerors, partly vanish. Apart from this, with capitalist production an altogether new force comes into play—the credit system.<sup>b</sup> Not only is this itself a new and mighty weapon in the battle of competition. By unseen threads it, moreover, draws the disposable money, scattered in larger or smaller

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<sup>a</sup> other things remaining equal - <sup>b</sup> See K. Marx, *Das Kapital. Kritik der politischen Oekonomie*. 4. Aufl. Bd. 1, Hamburg, 1890, pp. 655-57.

masses over the surface of society, into the hands of individual or associated capitalists. It is the specific machine for the centralisation of capitals.

The centralisation of capitals or the process of their attraction becomes more intense, in proportion as the specifically capitalist mode of production develops along with accumulation. In its turn, centralisation becomes one of the greatest levers of this development. It shortens and quickens the transformation of separate processes of production into processes socially combined and carried out on a large scale.

The increasing bulk of individual masses of capital becomes the material basis of an uninterrupted revolution in the mode of production itself. Continually the capitalist mode of production conquers branches of industry not yet wholly, or only sporadically, or only formally, subjugated by it. At the same time there grow up on its soil new branches of industry, such as could not exist without it. Finally, in the branches of industry already carried on upon the capitalist basis, the productiveness of labour is made to ripen, as if in a hot-house. In all these cases, the number of labourers falls in proportion to the mass of the means of production worked up by them. An ever increasing part of the capital is turned into means of production, an ever decreasing one into labour power. With the extent, the concentration and the technical efficiency of the means of production, the degree lessens progressively, in which the latter are means of employment for labourers. A steam plough is an incomparably more efficient means of production than an ordinary plough, but the capital value laid out in it is an incomparably smaller means for employing men than if it were laid out in ordinary ploughs. At first, it is the mere adding of new capital to old, which allows of the expansion and technical revolution of the material conditions of the process of production. But soon the change of composition and the technical transformation get more or less completely hold of all old capital that has reached the term of its reproduction, and therefore has to be replaced. This metamorphosis of old capital is independent, to a certain extent, of the absolute growth of social capital, in the same way as its centralisation. But this centralisation which only redistributes the social capital already to hand, and melts into one a number of old capitals, works in its turn as a powerful agent in this metamorphosis of old capital.

On the one hand, therefore, the additional capital formed in the course of accumulation attracts fewer and fewer labourers in propor-

tion to its magnitude. On the other hand, the old capital periodically reproduced with change of composition, repels more and more of the labourers formerly employed by it.

**SECTION 3.—PROGRESSIVE PRODUCTION  
OF A RELATIVE SURPLUS POPULATION  
OR INDUSTRIAL RESERVE ARMY**

The accumulation of capital, though originally appearing as its quantitative extension only, is effected, as we have seen, under a progressive qualitative change in its composition, under a constant increase of its constant, at the expense of its variable constituent.<sup>1)</sup>

The specifically capitalist mode of production, the development of the productive power of labour corresponding to it, and the change thence resulting in the organic composition of capital, do not merely keep pace with the advance of accumulation, or with the growth of social wealth. They develop at a much quicker rate, because mere accumulation, the absolute increase of the total social capital, is accompanied by the centralisation of the individual capitals of which that total is made up; and because the change in the technological composition of the additional capital goes hand in hand with a similar change in the technological composition of the original capital. With the advance of accumulation, therefore, the proportion of constant to variable capital changes. If it was originally say 1:1, it now becomes successively 2:1, 3:1, 4:1, 5:1, 7:1, &c., so that, as the capital increases, instead of  $\frac{1}{2}$  of its total value, only  $\frac{1}{3}$ ,  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{5}$ ,  $\frac{1}{6}$ ,  $\frac{1}{8}$ , &c., is transformed into labour power, and, on the other hand,  $\frac{2}{3}$ ,  $\frac{3}{4}$ ,  $\frac{4}{5}$ ,  $\frac{5}{6}$ ,  $\frac{7}{8}$ , into means of production. Since the demand for labour is determined not by the amount of capital as a whole, but by its variable constituent alone, that demand falls progressively with the increase of the total capital, instead of, as previously assumed, rising in proportion to it. It falls relatively to the magnitude of the total capital, and at an accelerated rate, as this magnitude increases. With the growth of the total capital, its variable constituent or the labour incorporated in it, also does increase, but in a constantly dimin-

<sup>1)</sup> *Note in the 3rd German edition.*—In Marx's copy there is here the marginal note: "Here note for working out later; if the extension is only quantitative, then for a greater and a smaller capital in the same branch of business the profits are as the magnitudes of the capitals advanced. If the quantitative extension induces qualitative change, then the rate of profit on the larger capital rises simultaneously."

ishing proportion. The intermediate pauses are shortened, in which accumulation works as simple extension of production, on a given technical basis. It is not merely that an accelerated accumulation of total capital, accelerated in a constantly growing progression, is needed to absorb an additional number of labourers, or even, on account of the constant metamorphosis of old capital, to keep employed those already functioning. In its turn, this increasing accumulation and centralisation becomes a source of new changes in the composition of capital, of a more accelerated diminution of its variable, as compared with its constant constituent. This accelerated relative diminution of the variable constituent, that goes along with the accelerated increase of the total capital, and moves more rapidly than this increase, takes the inverse form, at the other pole, of an apparently absolute increase of the labouring population, an increase always moving more rapidly than that of the variable capital or the means of employment. But in fact, it is capitalistic accumulation itself that constantly produces, and produces in the direct ratio of its own energy and extent, a relatively redundant population of labourers, i. e., a population of greater extent than suffices for the average needs of the self-expansion of capital, and therefore a surplus population.

Considering the social capital in its totality, the movement of its accumulation now causes periodical changes, affecting it more or less as a whole, now distributes its various phases simultaneously over the different spheres of production. In some spheres a change in the composition of capital occurs without increase of its absolute magnitude, as a consequence of simple centralisation<sup>a</sup>; in others the absolute growth of capital is connected with absolute diminution of its variable constituent, or of the labour power absorbed by it; in others again, capital continues growing for a time on its given technical basis, and attracts additional labour power in proportion to its increase, while at other times it undergoes organic change, and lessens its variable constituent; in all spheres, the increase of the variable part of capital, and therefore of the number of labourers employed by it, is always connected with violent fluctuations and transitory production of surplus population, whether this takes the more striking form of the repulsion of labourers already employed or the less evident but not less real form of the more difficult absorption of the additional labour-

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<sup>a</sup> In the German editions “concentration”.

ing population through the usual channels.<sup>1)</sup> With the magnitude of social capital already functioning, and the degree of its increase, with the extension of the scale of production, and the mass of the labourers set in motion, with the development of the productiveness of their labour, with the greater breadth and fulness of all sources of wealth, there is also an extension of the scale on which greater attraction of labourers by capital is accompanied by their greater repulsion; the rapidity of the change in the organic composition of capital, and in its technical form increases, and an increasing number of spheres of production becomes involved in this change, now simultaneously, now alternately. The labouring population therefore produces, along with the accumulation of capital produced by it, the means by which it itself is made relatively superfluous, is turned into a relative surplus population; and it does this to an always increasing extent.<sup>2)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> The census of England and Wales shows: all persons employed in agriculture (landlords, farmers, gardeners, shepherds, &c., included): 1851, 2,011,447; 1861, 1,924,110. Fall, 87,337. Worsted manufacture: 1851, 102,714 persons; 1861, 79,242. Silk weaving: 1851, 111,940; 1861, 101,678. Calico-printing: 1851, 12,098; 1861, 12,556. A small rise that, in the face of the enormous extension of this industry and implying a great fall proportionally in the number of labourers employed. Hat-making: 1851, 15,957; 1861, 13,814. Straw-hat and bonnet-making: 1851, 20,393; 1861, 18,176. Malting: 1851, 10,566; 1861, 10,677. Chandlery, 1851, 4,949; 1861, 4,686. This fall is due, besides other causes, to the increase in lighting by gas. Comb-making: 1851, 2,038; 1861, 1,478. Sawyers: 1851, 30,552; 1861, 31,647—a small rise in consequence of the increase of sawing-machines. Nail-making: 1851, 26,940; 1861, 26,130—fall in consequence of the competition of machinery. Tin and copper-mining: 1851, 31,360; 1861, 32,041. On the other hand: Cotton-spinning and weaving: 1851, 371,777; 1861, 456,646. Coal-mining: 1851, 183,389; 1861, 246,613 [*Census...*, pp. 35, 37, 39]. “The increase of labourers is generally greatest, since 1851, in such branches of industry in which machinery has not up to the present been employed with success” (*Census of England and Wales for 1861*, Vol. III, London, 1863, p. 36).

<sup>2)</sup> //Added in the 4th German edition.—The law of progressive diminution of the relative magnitude of variable capital and its effect on the condition of the class of wage workers is conjectured rather than understood by some of the prominent economists of the classical school. The greatest service was rendered here by John Barton, although he, like all the rest, lumps together constant and fixed capital, variable and circulating capital. He says: // “The demand for labour depends on the increase of circulating, and not of fixed capital. Were it true that the proportion between these two sorts of capital is the same at all times, and in all circumstances, then, indeed, it follows that the number of labourers employed is in proportion to the wealth of the state. But such a proposition has not the semblance of probability. As arts are cultivated, and civilisation is extended, fixed capital bears a larger and larger proportion to circulating capital. The amount of fixed capital employed in the production of a piece of British muslin is at least a hundred, probably a thousand times greater than that employed in a similar piece of Indian muslin. And the proportion of circulating capital is a hundred or thou-

This is a law of population peculiar to the capitalist mode of production; and in fact every special historic mode of production has its own special laws of population, historically valid within its limits alone. An abstract law of population exists for plants and animals only, and only in so far as man has not interfered with them.

But if a surplus labouring population is a necessary product of accumulation or of the development of wealth on a capitalist basis, this surplus population becomes, conversely, the lever of capitalistic accumulation, nay, a condition of existence of the capitalist mode of production. It forms a disposable industrial reserve army, that belongs to capital quite as absolutely as if the latter had bred it at its own cost. Independently of the limits of the actual increase of population, it creates, for the changing needs of the self-expansion of capital, a mass of human material always ready for exploitation. With accumulation, and the development of the productiveness of labour that accompanies it, the power of sudden expansion of capital grows also; it grows, not merely because the elasticity of the capital already functioning increases, not merely because the absolute wealth of society expands, of which capital only forms an elastic part, not merely because credit, under every special stimulus, at once places an unusual part of this wealth at the disposal of production in the form of additional capital; it grows, also, because the technical conditions of the process of production themselves—machinery, means of transport, &c.—now admit of the rapidest transformation of masses of surplus product into additional means of production. The mass of social wealth, overflowing with the advance of accumulation, and transformable into additional capital, thrusts itself frantically into old

sand times less ... the whole of the annual savings, added to the fixed capital, would have no effect in increasing the demand for labour" (John Barton, *Observations on the Circumstances which Influence the Condition of the Labouring Classes of Society*, London, 1817, pp. 16, 17). "The same cause which may increase the net revenue of the country may at the same time render the population redundant, and deteriorate the condition of the labourer" (Ricardo, l. c., p. 469). With increase of capital, "the demand //for labour// will be in a diminishing ratio" (*ibid.*, p. 480, note). "The amount of capital devoted to the maintenance of labour may vary, independently of any changes in the whole amount of capital.... Great fluctuations in the amount of employment, and great suffering may become more frequent as capital itself becomes more plentiful" (Richard Jones, *An Introductory Lecture on Pol. Econ.*, Lond., 1833, p. 52). "Demand //for labour// will rise ... not in proportion to the accumulation of the general capital.... Every augmentation, therefore, in the national stock destined for reproduction, comes, in the progress of society, to have less and less influence upon the condition of the labourer" (Ramsay, l. c., pp. 90, 91).

branches of production, whose market suddenly expands, or into newly formed branches, such as railways, &c., the need for which grows out of the development of the old ones. In all such cases, there must be the possibility of throwing great masses of men suddenly on the decisive points without injury to the scale of production in other spheres. Overpopulation supplies these masses. The course characteristic of modern industry, viz., a decennial cycle (interrupted by smaller oscillations), of periods of average activity, production at high pressure, crisis and stagnation, depends on the constant formation, the greater or less absorption, and the re-formation of the industrial reserve army or surplus population. In their turn, the varying phases of the industrial cycle recruit the surplus population, and become one of the most energetic agents of its reproduction. This peculiar course of modern industry, which occurs in no earlier period of human history, was also impossible in the childhood of capitalist production. The composition of capital changed but very slowly. With its accumulation, therefore, there kept pace, on the whole, a corresponding growth in the demand for labour. Slow as was the advance of accumulation compared with that of more modern times, it found a check in the natural limits of the exploitable labouring population, limits which could only be got rid of by forcible means to be mentioned later. The expansion by fits and starts of the scale of production is the preliminary to its equally sudden contraction; the latter again evokes the former, but the former is impossible without disposable human material, without an increase in the number of labourers independently of the absolute growth of the population. This increase is effected by the simple process that constantly "sets free" a part of the labourers; by methods which lessen the number of labourers employed in proportion to the increased production. The whole form of the movement of modern industry depends, therefore, upon the constant transformation of a part of the labouring population into unemployed or half-employed hands. The superficiality of political economy shows itself in the fact that it looks upon the expansion and contraction of credit, which is a mere symptom of the periodic changes of the industrial cycle, as their cause. As the heavenly bodies, once thrown into a certain definite motion, always repeat this, so is it with social production as soon as it is once thrown into this movement of alternate expansion and contraction. Effects, in their turn, become causes, and the varying accidents of the whole process, which always reproduces its own conditions, take on the form of periodicity. When

this periodicity is once consolidated, even political economy then sees that the production of a relative surplus population—i. e., surplus with regard to the average needs of the self-expansion of capital—is a necessary condition of modern industry.

“Suppose,” says H. Merivale, formerly professor of political economy at Oxford, subsequently employed in the English Colonial Office, “suppose that, on the occasion of some of these crises, the nation were to rouse itself to the effort of getting rid by emigration of some hundreds of thousands of superfluous arms, what would be the consequence? That, at the first returning demand for labour, there would be a deficiency. However rapid reproduction may be, it takes, at all events, the space of a generation to replace the loss of adult labour. Now, the profits of our manufacturers depend mainly on the power of making use of the prosperous moment when demand is brisk, and thus compensating themselves for the interval during which it is slack. This power is secured to them only by the command of machinery and of manual labour. They must have hands ready by them, they must be able to increase the activity of their operations when required, and to slacken it again, according to the state of the market, or they cannot possibly maintain that pre-eminence in the race of competition on which the wealth of the country is founded.”<sup>1)</sup>

Even Malthus recognises overpopulation as a necessity of modern industry, though, after his narrow fashion, he explains it by the absolute overgrowth of the labouring population, not by their becoming relatively supernumerary. He says:

“Prudential habits with regard to marriage, carried to a considerable extent among the labouring class of a country mainly depending upon manufactures and commerce, might injure it.... From the nature of a population, an increase of labourers cannot be brought into market in consequence of a particular demand till after the lapse of 16 or 18 years, and the conversion of revenue into capital, by saving, may take place much more rapidly; a country is always liable to an increase in the quantity of the funds for the maintenance of labour faster than the increase of population.”<sup>2)</sup>

After political economy has thus demonstrated the constant production of a relative surplus population of labourers to be a necessity of capitalistic accumulation, she very aptly, in the guise of an old maid, puts in the mouth of her “beau ideal” of a capitalist the following words addressed to those supernumeraries thrown on the streets by their own creation of additional capital: —

<sup>1)</sup> H. Merivale, *Lectures on Colonisation and Colonies*, 1841, Vol. I, p. 146.

<sup>2)</sup> Malthus, *Principles of Political Economy*, pp. 215, 319, 320. In this work, Malthus finally discovers, with the help of Sismondi, the beautiful Trinity of capitalistic production: overproduction, overpopulation, overconsumption—three very delicate monsters, indeed. Cf. F. Engels, *Umrisse zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*, l. c., p. 107, et seq. [present edition, Vol. 3, pp. 435-40].

"We manufacturers do what we can for you, whilst we are increasing that capital on which you must subsist, and you must do the rest by accommodating your numbers to the means of subsistence."<sup>11</sup>

Capitalist production can by no means content itself with the quantity of disposable labour power which the natural increase of population yields. It requires for its free play an industrial reserve army independent of these natural limits.

Up to this point it has been assumed that the increase or diminution of the variable capital corresponds rigidly with the increase or diminution of the number of labourers employed.

The number of labourers commanded by capital may remain the same, or even fall, while the variable capital increases. This is the case if the individual labourer yields more labour, and therefore his wages increase, and this although the price of labour remains the same or even falls, only more slowly than the mass of labour rises. Increase of variable capital, in this case, becomes an index of more labour, but not of more labourers employed. It is the absolute interest of every capitalist to press a given quantity of labour out of a smaller, rather than a greater number of labourers, if the cost is about the same. In the latter case, the outlay of constant capital increases in proportion to the mass of labour set in action; in the former that increase is much smaller. The more extended the scale of production, the stronger this motive. Its force increases with the accumulation of capital.

We have seen that the development of the capitalist mode of production and of the productive power of labour—at once the cause and effect of accumulation—enables the capitalist, with the same outlay of variable capital, to set in action more labour by greater exploitation (extensive or intensive) of each individual labour power. We have further seen that the capitalist buys with the same capital a greater mass of labour power, as he progressively replaces skilled labourers by less skilled, mature labour power by immature, male by female, that of adults by that of young persons or children.

On the one hand, therefore, with the progress of accumulation, a larger variable capital sets more labour in action without enlisting more labourers; on the other, a variable capital of the same magnitude sets in action more labour with the same mass of labour power; and, finally, a greater number of inferior labour powers by displacement of higher.

<sup>11</sup> Harriet Martineau, *A Manchester Strike*, 1832, p. 101.

The production of a relative surplus population, or the setting free of labourers, goes on therefore yet more rapidly than the technical revolution of the process of production that accompanies, and is accelerated by, the advance of accumulation, and more rapidly than the corresponding diminution of the variable part of capital as compared with the constant. If the means of production, as they increase in extent and effective power, become to a less extent means of employment of labourers, this state of things is again modified by the fact that in proportion as the productiveness of labour increases, capital increases its supply of labour more quickly than its demand for labourers. The overwork of the employed part of the working class swells the ranks of the reserve, whilst conversely the greater pressure that the latter by its competition exerts on the former, forces these to submit to overwork and to subjugation under the dictates of capital. The condemnation of one part of the working class to enforced idleness by the overwork of the other part, and the converse, becomes a means of enriching the individual capitalists,<sup>1)</sup> and accelerates at the same time the production of the industrial reserve army on a scale corresponding with the advance of social accumulation. How important is this element in the formation of the relative surplus population, is shown

<sup>1)</sup> Even in the cotton famine of 1863 we find, in a pamphlet of the operative cotton-spinners of Blackburn, fierce denunciations of overwork, which, in consequence of the Factory Acts, of course only affected adult male labourers. "The adult operatives at this mill have been asked to work from 12 to 13 hours per day, while there are hundreds who are compelled to be idle who would willingly work partial time, in order to maintain their families and save their brethren from a premature grave through being overworked... We," it goes on to say, "would ask if the practice of working overtime by a number of hands, is likely to create a good feeling between masters and servants. Those who are worked overtime feel the injustice equally with those who are condemned to forced idleness. There is in the district almost sufficient work to give to all partial employment if fairly distributed. We are only asking what is right in requesting the masters generally to pursue a system of short hours, particularly until a better state of things begins to dawn upon us, rather than to work a portion of the hands overtime, while others, for want of work, are compelled to exist upon charity" ("Reports of Insp. of Fact., Oct. 31, 1863", p. 8). The author [Cunningham, J.] of the *Essay on Trade and Commerce* grasps the effect of a relative surplus population on the employed labourers with his usual unerring bourgeois instinct. "Another cause of idleness in this kingdom is the want of a sufficient number of labouring hands... Whenever from an extraordinary demand for manufactures, labour grows scarce, the labourers feel their own consequence, and will make their masters feel it likewise—it is amazing; but so depraved are the dispositions of these people, that in such cases a set of workmen have combined to distress the employer by idling a whole day together" (*Essay, &c.*, pp. 27, 28). The fellows in fact were hankering after a rise in wages.

by the example of England. Her technical means for saving labour are colossal. Nevertheless, if tomorrow morning labour generally were reduced to a rational amount, and proportioned to the different sections of the working class according to age and sex, the working population to hand would be absolutely insufficient for the carrying on of national production on its present scale. The great majority of the labourers now "unproductive" would have to be turned into "productive" ones.

Taking them as a whole, the general movements of wages are exclusively regulated by the expansion and contraction of the industrial reserve army, and these again correspond to the periodic changes of the industrial cycle. They are, therefore, not determined by the variations of the absolute number of the working population, but by the varying proportions in which the working class is divided into active and reserve army, by the increase or diminution in the relative amount of the surplus population, by the extent to which it is now absorbed, now set free. For modern industry with its decennial cycles and periodic phases, which, moreover, as accumulation advances, are complicated by irregular oscillations following each other more and more quickly, that would indeed be a beautiful law, which pretends to make the action of capital dependent on the absolute variation of the population, instead of regulating the demand and supply of labour by the alternate expansion and contraction of capital, the labour market now appearing relatively underfull, because capital is expanding, now again overfull, because it is contracting. Yet this is the dogma of the economists. According to them, wages rise in consequence of accumulation of capital. The higher wages stimulate the working population to more rapid multiplication, and this goes on until the labour market becomes too full, and therefore capital, relatively to the supply of labour, becomes insufficient. Wages fall, and now we have the reverse of the medal. The working population is little by little decimated as the result of the fall in wages, so that capital is again in excess relatively to them, or, as others explain it, falling wages and the corresponding increase in the exploitation of the labourer again accelerates accumulation, whilst, at the same time, the lower wages hold the increase of the working class in check. Then comes again the time, when the supply of labour is less than the demand, wages rise, and so on. A beautiful mode of motion this for developed capitalist production! Before, in consequence of the rise of wages, any positive increase of the population really fit for work could

occur, the time would have been passed again and again, during which the industrial campaign must have been carried through, the battle fought and won.

Between 1849 and 1859, a rise of wages practically insignificant, though accompanied by falling prices of corn, took place in the English agricultural districts. In Wiltshire, e. g., the weekly wages rose from 7s. to 8s.; in Dorsetshire from 7s. or 8s., to 9s., &c. This was the result of an unusual exodus of the agricultural surplus population caused by the demands of war,<sup>518</sup> the vast extension of railroads, factories, mines, &c. The lower the wages, the higher is the proportion in which ever so insignificant a rise of them expresses itself. If the weekly wage, e. g., is 20s. and it rises to 22s., that is a rise of 10 per cent., but if it is only 7s. and it rises to 9s., that is a rise of  $28\frac{4}{7}$  per cent., which sounds very fine. Everywhere the farmers were howling, and the London *Economist*, with reference to these starvation wages, prattled quite seriously of "a general and substantial advance".<sup>1)</sup> What did the farmers do now? Did they wait until, in consequence of this brilliant remuneration, the agricultural labourers had so increased and multiplied that their wages must fall again, as prescribed by the dogmatic economic brain? They introduced more machinery, and in a moment the labourers were redundant again in a proportion satisfactory even to the farmers. There was now "more capital" laid out in agriculture than before, and in a more productive form. With this the demand for labour fell, not only relatively, but absolutely.

The above economic fiction confuses the laws that regulate the general movement of wages, or the ratio between the working class—i. e., the total labour power—and the total social capital, with the laws that distribute the working population over the different spheres of production. If, e. g., in consequence of favourable circumstances, accumulation in a particular sphere of production becomes especially active, and profits in it, being greater than the average profits, attract additional capital, of course the demand for labour rises and wages also rise. The higher wages draw a larger part of the working population into the more favoured sphere, until it is glutted with labour power, and wages at length fall again to their average level or below it, if the pressure is too great. Then, not only does the immigration of labourers into the branch of industry in question cease; it gives place to their emigration. Here the political economist thinks he sees the why

<sup>1)</sup> *Economist*, Jan. 21, 1860 [No. 856, p. 64].

and wherefore of an absolute increase of workers accompanying an increase of wages, and of a diminution of wages accompanying an absolute increase of labourers. But he sees really only the local oscillation of the labour market in a particular sphere of production—he sees only the phenomena accompanying the distribution of the working population into the different spheres of outlay of capital, according to its varying needs.

The industrial reserve army, during the periods of stagnation and average prosperity, weighs down the active labour army; during the periods of overproduction and paroxysm, it holds its pretensions in check. Relative surplus population is therefore the pivot upon which the law of demand and supply of labour works. It confines the field of action of this law within the limits absolutely convenient to the activity of exploitation and to the domination of capital.

This is the place to return to one of the grand exploits of economic apologetics. It will be remembered that if through the introduction of new, or the extension of old, machinery, a portion of variable capital is transformed into constant, the economic apologist interprets this operation which “fixes” capital and by that very act sets labourers “free”, in exactly the opposite way, pretending that it sets free capital for the labourers. Only now can one fully understand the effrontery of these apologists. What are set free are not only the labourers immediately turned out by the machines, but also their future substitutes in the rising generation, and the additional contingent, that with the usual extension of trade on the old basis would be regularly absorbed. They are now all “set free”, and every new bit of capital looking out for employment can dispose of them. Whether it attracts them or others, the effect on the general labour demand will be nil, if this capital is just sufficient to take out of the market as many labourers as the machines threw upon it. If it employs a smaller number, that of the supernumeraries increases; if it employs a greater, the general demand for labour only increases to the extent of the excess of the employed over those “set free”. The impulse that additional capital seeking an outlet, would otherwise have given to the general demand for labour, is therefore in every case neutralised to the extent of the labourers thrown out of employment by the machine. That is to say, the mechanism of capitalistic production so manages matters that the absolute increase of capital is accompanied by no corresponding rise in the general demand for labour. And this the apologist calls a compensation for the misery, the sufferings, the possible death of the dis-

placed labourers during the transition period that banishes them into the industrial reserve army! The demand for labour is not identical with increase of capital, nor supply of labour with increase of the working class. It is not a case of two independent forces working on one another. *Les dés sont pipés.*<sup>a</sup> Capital works on both sides at the same time. If its accumulation, on the one hand, increases the demand for labour, it increases on the other the supply of labourers by the “setting free” of them whilst at the same time the pressure of the unemployed compels those that are employed to furnish more labour, and therefore makes the supply of labour, to a certain extent, independent of the supply of labourers. The action of the law of supply and demand of labour on this basis completes the despotism of capital. As soon, therefore, as the labourers learn the secret, how it comes to pass that in the same measure as they work more, as they produce more wealth for others, and as the productive power of their labour increases, so in the same measure even their function as a means of the self-expansion of capital becomes more and more precarious for them, as soon as they discover that the degree of intensity of the competition among themselves depends wholly on the pressure of the relative surplus population; as soon as, by Trades’ Unions, &c., they try to organise a regular co-operation between employed and unemployed in order to destroy or to weaken the ruinous effects of this natural law of capitalist production on their class, so soon capital and its sycophant, political economy, cry out at the infringement of the “eternal” and so to say “sacred” law of supply and demand. Every combination of employed and unemployed disturbs the “harmonious” action of this law. But, on the other hand, as soon as (in the colonies, e. g.) adverse circumstances prevent the creation of an industrial reserve army and, with it, the absolute dependence of the working class upon the capitalist class, capital, along with its commonplace Sancho Panza, rebels against the “sacred” law of supply and demand, and tries to check its inconvenient action by forcible means and State interference.

SECTION 4.—DIFFERENT FORMS  
OF THE RELATIVE SURPLUS POPULATION.  
THE GENERAL LAW OF CAPITALISTIC ACCUMULATION

The relative surplus population exists in every possible form. Every labourer belongs to it during the time when he is only partially

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<sup>a</sup> The dice are loaded.

employed or wholly unemployed. Not taking into account the great periodically recurring forms that the changing phases of the industrial cycle impress on it, now an acute form during the crisis, then again a chronic form during dull times—it has always three forms, the floating, the latent, the stagnant.

In the centres of modern industry—factories, manufactures, iron-works, mines, &c.—the labourers are sometimes repelled, sometimes attracted again in greater masses, the number of those employed increasing on the whole, although in a constantly decreasing proportion to the scale of production. Here the surplus population exists in the floating form.

In the automatic factories, as in all the great workshops, where machinery enters as a factor, or where only the modern division of labour is carried out, large numbers of boys are employed up to the age of maturity. When this term is once reached, only a very small number continue to find employment in the same branches of industry, whilst the majority are regularly discharged. This majority forms an element of the floating surplus population, growing with the extension of those branches of industry. Part of them emigrates, following in fact capital that has emigrated. One consequence is that the female population grows more rapidly than the male, *teste* England. That the natural increase of the number of labourers does not satisfy the requirements of the accumulation of capital, and yet all the time is in excess of them, is a contradiction inherent to the movement of capital itself. It wants larger numbers of youthful labourers, a smaller number of adults. The contradiction is not more glaring than that other one that there is a complaint of the want of hands, while at the same time many thousands are out of work, because the division of labour chains them to a particular branch of industry.<sup>1)</sup>

The consumption of labour power by capital is, besides, so rapid that the labourer, half-way through his life, has already more or less completely lived himself out. He falls into the ranks of the supernumeraries, or is thrust down from a higher to a lower step in the scale. It is precisely among the workpeople of modern industry that we

<sup>1)</sup> Whilst during the last six months of 1866, 80-90,000 working people in London were thrown out of work, the Factory Report for that same half year says: "It does not appear absolutely true to say that demand will always produce supply just at the moment when it is needed. It has not done so with labour, for much machinery has been idle last year for want of hands" ("Rep. of Insp. of Fact., 31st Oct., 1866", p. 81).

meet with the shortest duration of life. Dr. Leigh, Medical Officer of Health for Manchester, stated

"that the average age at death of the Manchester ... upper middle class was 38 years, while the average age at death of the labouring class was 17; while at Liverpool those figures were represented as 35 against 15. It thus appeared that the well-to-do classes had a lease of life which was more than double the value of that which fell to the lot of the less favoured citizens."<sup>1)</sup>

In order to conform to these circumstances, the absolute increase of this section of the proletariat must take place under conditions that shall swell their numbers, although the individual elements are used up rapidly. Hence, rapid renewal of the generations of labourers (this law does not hold for the other classes of the population). This social need is met by early marriages, a necessary consequence of the conditions in which the labourers of modern industry live, and by the premium that the exploitation of children sets on their production.

As soon as capitalist production takes possession of agriculture, and in proportion to the extent to which it does so, the demand for an agricultural labouring population falls absolutely, while the accumulation of the capital employed in agriculture advances, without this repulsion being, as in non-agricultural industries, compensated by a greater attraction. Part of the agricultural population is therefore constantly on the point of passing over into an urban or manufacturing proletariat, and on the look-out for circumstances favourable to this transformation. (Manufacture is used here in the sense of all non-agricultural industries.)<sup>2)</sup> This source of relative surplus population is thus constantly flowing. But the constant flow towards the towns presupposes, in the country itself, a constant latent surplus population, the extent of which becomes evident only when its channels of outlet open to exceptional width. The agricultural labourer is

<sup>1)</sup> Opening address to the Sanitary Conference, Birmingham, January 15th, 1875, by J. Chamberlain, Mayor of the town, now (1883) President of the Board of Trade.

<sup>2)</sup> 781 towns given in the census for 1861 for England and Wales "contained 10,960,998 inhabitants, while the villages and country parishes contained 9,105,226. In 1851, 580 towns were distinguished, and the population in them and in the surrounding country was nearly equal. But while in the subsequent ten years the population in the villages and the country increased half a million, the population in the 580 towns increased by a million and a half (1,554,067). The increase of the population of the country parishes is 6.5 per cent., and of the towns 17.3 per cent. The difference in the rates of increase is due to the migration from country to town. Three-fourths of the total increase of population has taken place in the towns" (*Census, &c.*, [Vol. III,] pp. 11 and 12).

therefore reduced to the minimum of wages, and always stands with one foot already in the swamp of pauperism.

The third category of the relative surplus population, the stagnant, forms a part of the active labour army, but with extremely irregular employment. Hence it furnishes to capital an inexhaustible reservoir of disposable labour power. Its conditions of life sink below the average normal level of the working class; this makes it at once the broad basis of special branches of capitalist exploitation. It is characterised by maximum of working time, and minimum of wages. We have learnt to know its chief form under the rubric of "domestic industry". It recruits itself constantly from the supernumerary forces of modern industry and agriculture, and specially from those decaying branches of industry where handicraft is yielding to manufacture, manufacture to machinery. Its extent grows, as with the extent and energy of accumulation, the creation of a surplus population advances. But it forms at the same time a self-reproducing and self-perpetuating element of the working class, taking a proportionally greater part in the general increase of that class than the other elements. In fact, not only the number of births and deaths, but the absolute size of the families stand in inverse proportion to the height of wages, and therefore to the amount of means of subsistence of which the different categories of labourers dispose. This law of capitalistic society would sound absurd to savages, or even civilised colonists. It calls to mind the boundless reproduction of animals individually weak and constantly hunted down.<sup>1)</sup>

The lowest sediment of the relative surplus population finally dwells in the sphere of pauperism. Exclusive of vagabonds, criminals, prostitutes, in a word, the "dangerous" classes, this layer of society consists of three categories. First, those able to work. One need only glance superficially at the statistics of English pauperism to find that the quantity of paupers increases with every crisis, and diminishes with every revival of trade. Second, orphans and pauper children.

<sup>1)</sup> "Poverty seems favourable to generation" (A. Smith, [An Inquiry into the Nature..., Vol. I, Ld., 1835, p. 195]). This is even a specially wise arrangement of God, according to the gallant and witty Abbé Galiani. "God ordains that men who carry on trades of primary utility are born in abundance" (Galiani, l. c. [De la moneta], p. 78). "Misery up to the extreme point of famine and pestilence, instead of checking, tends to increase population" (S. Laing, National Distress, 1844, p. 69). After Laing has illustrated this by statistics, he continues: "If the people were all in easy circumstances, the world would soon be depopulated."

These are candidates for the industrial reserve army, and are, in times of great prosperity, as 1860, e. g., speedily and in large numbers enrolled in the active army of labourers. Third, the demoralised and ragged, and those unable to work, chiefly people who succumb to their incapacity for adaptation, due to the division of labour; people who have passed the normal age of the labourer; the victims of industry, whose number increases with the increase of dangerous machinery, of mines, chemical works, &c., the mutilated, the sickly, the widows, &c. Pauperism is the hospital of the active labour army and the dead weight of the industrial reserve army. Its production is included in that of the relative surplus population, its necessity in theirs; along with the surplus population, pauperism forms a condition of capitalist production, and of the capitalist development of wealth. It enters into the *faux frais*<sup>a</sup> of capitalist production; but capital knows how to throw these, for the most part, from its own shoulders on to those of the working class and the lower middle class.

The greater the social wealth, the functioning capital, the extent and energy of its growth, and, therefore, also the absolute mass of the proletariat and the productiveness of its labour, the greater is the industrial reserve army. The same causes which develop the expansive power of capital, develop also the labour power at its disposal. The relative mass of the industrial reserve army increases therefore with the potential energy of wealth. But the greater this reserve army in proportion to the active labour army, the greater is the mass of a consolidated surplus population, whose misery is in inverse ratio to its torment of labour.<sup>b</sup> The more extensive, finally, the lazarus-layers<sup>519</sup> of the working class, and the industrial reserve army, the greater is official pauperism. *This is the absolute general law of capitalist accumulation.* Like all other laws it is modified in its working by many circumstances, the analysis of which does not concern us here.

The folly is now patent of the economic wisdom that preaches to the labourers the accommodation of their number to the requirements of capital. The mechanism of capitalist production and accumulation constantly effects this adjustment. The first word of this adaptation is the creation of a relative surplus population, or industrial reserve army. Its last word is the misery of constantly extending

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<sup>a</sup> overhead costs - <sup>b</sup> The authorised French translation has "in direct ratio to its torment of labour".

strata of the active army of labour, and the dead weight of pauperism.

The law by which a constantly increasing quantity of means of production, thanks to the advance in the productiveness of social labour, may be set in movement by a progressively diminishing expenditure of human power, this law, in a capitalist society — where the labourer does not employ the means of production, but the means of production employ the labourer — undergoes a complete inversion and is expressed thus: the higher the productiveness of labour, the greater is the pressure of the labourers on the means of employment, the more precarious, therefore, becomes their condition of existence, viz., the sale of their own labour power for the increasing of another's wealth, or for the self-expansion of capital. The fact that the means of production, and the productiveness of labour, increase more rapidly than the productive population, expresses itself, therefore, capitalistically in the inverse form that the labouring population always increases more rapidly than the conditions under which capital can employ this increase for its own self-expansion.

We saw in Part IV, when analysing the production of relative surplus value: within the capitalist system all methods for raising the social productiveness of labour are brought about at the cost of the individual labourer; all means for the development of production transform themselves into means of domination over, and exploitation of, the producers; they mutilate the labourer into a fragment of a man, degrade him to the level of an appendage of a machine, destroy every remnant of charm in his work and turn it into a hated toil; they estrange from him the intellectual potentialities of the labour process in the same proportion as science is incorporated in it as an independent power; they distort the conditions under which he works, subject him during the labour process to a despotism the more hateful for its meanness; they transform his lifetime into working time, and drag his wife and child beneath the wheels of the Juggernaut<sup>182</sup> of capital. But all methods for the production of surplus value are at the same time methods of accumulation; and every extension of accumulation becomes again a means for the development of those methods. It follows therefore that in proportion as capital accumulates, the lot of the labourer, be his payment high or low, must grow worse. The law, finally, that always equilibrates the relative surplus population, or industrial reserve army, to the extent and energy of accumulation, this law rivets the labourer to capital more firmly than the wedges of Vul-

can did Prometheus to the rock. It establishes an accumulation of misery, corresponding with accumulation of capital. Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole, i. e., on the side of the class that produces its own product in the form of capital.

This antagonistic character of capitalistic accumulation<sup>1)</sup> is enunciated in various forms by political economists, although by them it is confounded with phenomena, certainly to some extent analogous, but nevertheless essentially distinct, and belonging to precapitalistic modes of production.

The Venetian monk Ortes, one of the great economic writers of the 18th century, regards the antagonism of capitalist production as a general natural law of social wealth.

"In the economy of a nation, advantages and evils always balance one another (il bene ed il male economico in una nazione sempre all, istessa misura): the abundance of wealth with some people, is always equal to the want of it with others (la copia dei beni in alcuni sempre eguale alla mancanza di essi in altri): the great riches of a small number are always accompanied by the absolute privation of the first necessities of life for many others. The wealth of a nation corresponds with its population, and its misery corresponds with its wealth. Diligence in some compels idleness in others. The poor and idle are a necessary consequence of the rich and active," &c.<sup>2)</sup>

In a thoroughly brutal way about 10 years after Ortes, the Church of England parson, Townsend, glorified misery as a necessary condition of wealth.

"Legal constraint" (to labour) "is attended with too much trouble, violence, and noise,... whereas hunger is not only a peaceable, silent, unremitting pressure, but as the most natural motive to industry and labour, it calls forth the most powerful exertions."

Everything therefore depends upon making hunger permanent

<sup>1)</sup> "From day to day it thus becomes clearer that the production relations in which the bourgeoisie moves have not a simple, uniform character, but a dual character; that in the selfsame relations in which wealth is produced, poverty is produced also; that in the selfsame relations in which there is a development of productive forces, there is also a force producing repression; that these relations produce bourgeois wealth, i. e., the wealth of the bourgeois class, only by continually annihilating the wealth of the individual members of this class and by producing an evergrowing proletariat" (Karl Marx, *Misère de la Philosophie*, p. 116 [present edition, Vol. 6, p. 176]).

<sup>2)</sup> G. Ortes, *Della Economia Nazionale libri sei*, 1774, in Custodi, *Parte Moderna*, t. XXI, pp. 6, [8-]9, 24[-25], etc. Ortes says, i. e., p. 32: "Instead of projecting useless systems for achieving the happiness of people, I shall limit myself to investigating the reasons for their unhappiness."

among the working class, and for this, according to Townsend, the principle of population, especially active among the poor, provides.

“It seems to be a law of Nature that the poor should be to a certain degree improvident” //i. e., so improvident as to be born *without* a silver spoon in the mouth//, “that there may always be some to fulfil the most servile, the most sordid, and the most ignoble offices in the community. The stock of human happiness is thereby much increased, whilst the more delicate are not only relieved from drudgery ... but are left at liberty without interruption to pursue those callings which are suited to their various dispositions ... it” //the Poor Law// “tends to destroy the harmony and beauty, the symmetry and order of that system which God and Nature have established in the world.”<sup>1)</sup> If the Venetian monk found in the fatal destiny that makes misery eternal, the *raison d'être* of Christian charity, celibacy, monasteries and holy houses, the Protestant prebendary finds in it a pretext for condemning the laws in virtue of which the poor possessed a right to a miserable public relief.

“The progress of social wealth,” says Storch, “begets this useful class of society ... which performs the most wearisome, the vilest, the most disgusting functions, which takes, in a word, on its shoulders all that is disagreeable and servile in life, and procures thus for other classes leisure, serenity of mind and conventional” (*c'est bon!*) “dignity of character”.<sup>2)</sup>

Storch asks himself in what then really consists the progress of this capitalistic civilisation with its misery and its degradation of the masses, as compared with barbarism. He finds but one answer: security!

“Thanks to the advance of industry and science,” says Sismondi, “every labourer can produce every day much more than his consumption requires. But at the same time, whilst his labour produces wealth, that wealth would, were he called on to consume it himself, make him less fit for labour.” According to him, “men” (i. e., non-workers) “would probably prefer to do without all artistic perfection, and all the enjoyments that manufacturers procure for us, if it were necessary that all should buy them by constant toil like that of the labourer.... Exertion to-day is separated from its recompence; it is not the same man that first works, and then reposes; but it is because the one

<sup>1)</sup> *A Dissertation on the Poor Laws. By a Well-wisher to Mankind.* (The Rev. J. Townsend,) 1786, republished, Lond., 1817, pp. 15, 39, 41. This “delicate” parson, from whose work just quoted, as well as from his *Journey through Spain*, [Ld., 1791,] Malthus often copies whole pages, himself borrowed the greater part of his doctrine from Sir James Steuart, whom he however alters in the borrowing. E. g., when Steuart says: “Here, in slavery, was a forcible method of making mankind diligent,” //for the non-workers//... “Men were then forced to work” //i. e., to work gratis for others//, “because they were slaves of others; men are now forced to work” //i. e., to work gratis for non-workers// “because they are the slaves of their necessities”,<sup>520</sup> he does not thence conclude, like the fat holder of benefices, that the wage labourer must always go fasting. He wishes, on the contrary, to increase their wants and to make the increasing number of their wants a stimulus to their labour for the “more delicate”.

<sup>2)</sup> Storch, l. c., t. iii, p. 223.

works that the other rests.... The indefinite multiplication of the productive powers of labour can then only have for result the increase of luxury and enjoyment of the idle rich.”<sup>1)</sup>

Finally Destutt de Tracy, the fish-blooded bourgeois doctrinaire, blurts out brutally:

“In poor nations the people are comfortable, in rich nations they are generally poor.”<sup>2)</sup>

#### SECTION 5.—ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE GENERAL LAW OF CAPITALIST ACCUMULATION

##### (a.) *England from 1846-1866*

No period of modern society is so favourable for the study of capitalist accumulation as the period of the last 20 years. It is as if this period had found Fortunatus’ purse. But of all countries England again furnishes the classical example, because it holds the foremost place in the world market, because capitalist production is here alone completely developed, and lastly, because the introduction of the Free-trade millennium since 1846<sup>521</sup> has cut off the last retreat of vulgar economy. The titanic advance of production—the latter half of the 20 years’ period again far surpassing the former—has been already pointed out sufficiently in Part IV.

Although the absolute increase of the English population in the last half century was very great, the relative increase or rate of growth fell constantly, as the following table borrowed from the census shows.

Annual increase per cent. of the population of England and Wales in decimal numbers:<sup>522</sup>

1811-1821	1.533	per cent.
1821-1831	1.446	” ”
1831-1841	1.326	” ”
1841-1851	1.216	” ”
1851-1861	1.141	” ”

<sup>1)</sup> Sismondi, l. c., [*Nouveaux Principes d’Économie Politique*, t. I,] pp. 79, 80, 85.

<sup>2)</sup> Destutt de Tracy, l. c. [*Éléments d’idéologie*, Paris, 1826], p. 231: “The poor nations are those where the people are comfortably off; and the rich nations, those where the people are generally poor.”

Let us now, on the other hand, consider the increase of wealth. Here the movement of profit, rent of land, &c., that come under the income tax, furnishes the surest basis. The increase of profits liable to income tax (farmers and some other categories not included) in Great Britain from 1853 to 1864 amounted to 50.47% or 4.58% as the annual average,<sup>1)</sup> that of the population during the same period to about 12%.<sup>523</sup> The augmentation of the rent of land subject to taxation (including houses, railways, mines, fisheries, &c.), amounted for 1853 to 1864 to 38% or  $3\frac{5}{12}\%$  annually. Under this head the following categories show the greatest increase:

	Excess of annual income of 1864 over that of 1853	Increase per year
Houses	38.60%	3.50%
Quarries	84.76%	7.70%
Mines	68.85%	6.26%
Ironworks	39.92%	3.63%
Fisheries	57.37%	5.21%
Gasworks	126.02%	11.45%
Railways	83.29%	7.57% <sup>2)</sup>

If we compare the years from 1853 to 1864 in three sets of four consecutive years each, the rate of augmentation of the income increases constantly. It is, e. g., for that arising from profits between 1853 to 1857, 1.73% yearly; 1857-1861, 2.74%, and for 1861-64, 9.30% yearly. The sum of the incomes of the United Kingdom that come under the income tax was in 1856, £307,068,898; in 1859, £328,127,416; in 1862, £351,745,241; in 1863, £359,142,897; in 1864, £362,462,279; in 1865, £385,530,020.<sup>3) 524</sup>

The accumulation of capital was attended at the same time by its

<sup>1)</sup> "Tenth Report of the Commissioners of H. M. Inland Revenue," Lond., 1866, p. 38.

<sup>2)</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>3)</sup> These figures are sufficient for comparison, but, taken absolutely, are false, since, perhaps, £100,000,000 of income are annually not declared. The complaints of the Inland Revenue Commissioners of systematic fraud, especially on the part of the commercial and industrial classes, are repeated in each of their reports. So e. g., "A Joint-stock company returns £6,000 as assessable profits, the surveyor raises the amount to £88,000, and upon that sum duty is ultimately paid. Another company which returns £190,000 is finally compelled to admit that the true return should be £250,000" (*ibid.*, p. 42).

concentration and centralisation. Although no official statistics of agriculture existed for England (they did for Ireland), they were voluntarily given in 10 counties. These statistics gave the result that from 1851 to 1861 the number of farms of less than 100 acres had fallen from 31,583 to 26,567, so that 5,016 had been thrown together into larger farms.<sup>1)</sup> From 1815 to 1825 no personal estate of more than £1,000,000 came under the succession duty; from 1825 to 1855, however, 8 did; and 4 from 1855 to June, 1859, i. e., in 4  $\frac{1}{2}$  years.<sup>2)</sup> The centralisation will, however, be best seen from a short analysis of the Income Tax Schedule D (profits, exclusive of farms, &c.), in the years 1864 and 1865. I note beforehand that incomes from this source pay income tax on everything over £60. These incomes liable to taxation in England, Wales and Scotland, amounted in 1864 to £95,844,222, in 1865 to £105,435,787.<sup>3)</sup> The number of persons taxed were in 1864, 308,416, out of a population of 23,891,009; in 1865, 332,431 out of a population of 24,127,003.<sup>525</sup> The following table shows the distribution of these incomes in the two years<sup>526</sup>:

	Year ending April 5th, 1864		Year ending April 5th, 1865	
	Income from profits	Persons	Income from profits	Persons
Total Income . . . . .	£95,844,222	308,416	105,435,787	332,431
of these . . . . .	57,028,290	22,334	64,554,197	24,075
" " . . . . .	36,415,225	3,619	42,535,576	4,021
" " . . . . .	22,809,781	832	27,555,313	973
" " . . . . .	8,744,762	91	11,077,238	107

In 1855 there were produced in the United Kingdom 61,453,079 tons of coal, of value £16,113,267; in 1864, 92,787,873 tons, of value £23,197,968; in 1855, 3,218,154 tons of pig-iron, of value £8,045,385; 1864, 4,767,951 tons, of value £11,919,877. In 1854 the length of the railroads worked in the United Kingdom was 8,054 miles, with a paid-up capital of £286,068,794; in 1864 the length was 12,789 miles, with capital paid up of £425,719,613. In 1854 the total sum of the exports and imports, of the United Kingdom was

<sup>1)</sup> *Census, &c.*, l. c., p. 29. John Bright's assertion that 150 landlords own half of England, and 12 half the Scotch soil, has never been refuted.

<sup>2)</sup> "Fourth Report, &c., of Inland Revenue," Lond., 1860, p. 17.

<sup>3)</sup> These are the net incomes after certain legally authorised abatements.

£268,210,145; in 1865, £489,993,285. The following table shows the movement of the exports:

1847	£58,842,377
1849	63,596,025
1856	115,826,948
1860	135,842,817
1865	165,862,402
1866	118,917,536 <sup>1) 527</sup>

After these few examples one understands the cry of triumph of the Registrar-General<sup>404</sup> of the British people:

"Rapidly as the population has increased, it has not kept pace with the progress of industry and wealth."<sup>2)</sup>

Let us turn now to the direct agents of this industry, or the producers of this wealth, to the working class.

"It is one of the most melancholy features in the social state of this country," says Gladstone, "that while there was a decrease in the consuming powers of the people, and while there was an increase in the privations and distress of the labouring class and operatives, there was at the same time a constant accumulation of wealth in the upper classes, and a constant increase of capital."<sup>3)</sup>

Thus spake this unctuous minister in the House of Commons on February 13th, 1843. On April 16th, 1863, 20 years later, in the speech in which he introduced his Budget:

"From 1842 to 1852 the taxable income of the country increased by 6 per cent.... In the 8 years from 1853 to 1861 it had increased from the basis taken in 1853 by 20 per cent! The fact is so astonishing as to be almost incredible ... this intoxicating augmen-

<sup>1)</sup> At this moment, March, 1867, the Indian and Chinese market is again overstocked by the consignments of the British cotton manufacturers. In 1866 a reduction in wages of 5 per cent. took place amongst the cotton operatives. In 1867, as consequence of a similar operation, there was a strike of 20,000 men at Preston. //Added in the 4th German edition.—That was the prelude to the crisis which broke out immediately afterwards.—F. E.//<sup>528</sup>

<sup>2)</sup> *Census, &c.*, l.c., p. 11.

<sup>3)</sup> Gladstone in the House of Commons, Feb. 13th, 1843. *Times*, Feb. 14th, 1843 [p.4, col. 1].—"It is one of the most melancholy features in the social state of this country that we see, beyond the possibility of denial, that while there is at this moment a decrease in the consuming powers of the people, an increase of the pressure of privations and distress; there is at the same time a constant accumulation of wealth in the upper classes, an increase of the luxuriousness of their habits, and of their means of enjoyment" (Hansard, 13th Feb.).

tation of wealth and power ... entirely confined to classes of property ... must be of indirect benefit to the labouring population, because it cheapens the commodities of general consumption. While the rich have been growing richer, the poor have been growing less poor. At any rate, whether the extremes of poverty are less, I do not presume to say.”<sup>1) a</sup>

How lame an anti-climax! If the working class has remained “poor”, only “less poor” in proportion as it produces for the wealthy class “an intoxicating augmentation of wealth and power”, then it has remained relatively just as poor. If the extremes of poverty have not lessened, they have increased, because the extremes of wealth have. As to the cheapening of the means of subsistence, the official statistics, e. g., the accounts of the London Orphan Asylum, show an increase in price of 20% for the average of the three years 1860-1862, compared with 1851-1853.<sup>529</sup> In the following three years, 1863-1865, there was a progressive rise in the price of meat, butter, milk, sugar, salt, coals, and a number of other necessary means of subsistence.<sup>2)</sup> Gladstone’s next Budget speech of April 7th, 1864, is a Pindaric dithyrambus on the advance of surplus-value-making and the happiness of the people “tempered by poverty”. He speaks of masses “on the border” of pauperism, of branches of trade in which “wages have not increased”, and finally sums up the happiness of the working class in the words:

“human life is but, in nine cases out of ten, a struggle for existence.”<sup>3)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> Gladstone in the House of Commons, April 16th, 1863. *Morning Star*, April 17th [p. 6, col. 2].

<sup>2)</sup> See the official accounts in the Blue Book: *Miscellaneous Statistics of the United Kingdom*, Part vi, London, 1866, pp. 260-73, *passim*. Instead of the statistics of orphan asylums, &c., the declamations of the ministerial journals in recommending dowries for the Royal children might also serve. The greater dearth of the means of subsistence is never forgotten there.

<sup>3)</sup> Gladstone, House of Commons, 7th April, 1864.—“The Hansard version runs: ‘Again, and yet more at large—what is human life, but, in the majority of cases, a struggle for existence’.”<sup>530</sup> The continual crying contradictions in Gladstone’s Budget speeches of 1863 and 1864 were characterised by an English writer by the following quotation from N. Boileau-Despréaux [Satire 8]:

“Such is the man: he goes from black to white.  
He condemns in the morning what he felt in the evening.  
A nuisance to everyone else, and an inconvenience to himself,  
he changes his way of thinking as easily as he changes his way of dressing.”  
([H. Roy,] *The Theory of Exchanges, &c.*, London, 1864, p. 135.)

<sup>a</sup> See this volume, pp. 38-42.

Professor Fawcett, not bound like Gladstone by official considerations, declares roundly:

"I do not, of course, deny that money wages have been augmented by this increase of capital (in the last ten years), but this apparent advantage is to a great extent lost, because many of the necessaries of life are becoming dearer" (he believes because of the fall in value of the precious metals)... "the rich grow rapidly richer, whilst there is no perceptible advance in the comfort enjoyed by the industrial classes.... They" (the labourers) "become almost the slaves of the tradesman, to whom they owe money."<sup>1)</sup>

In the chapters on the "working day" and "machinery", the reader has seen under what circumstances the British working class created an "intoxicating augmentation of wealth and power" for the propertied classes. There we were chiefly concerned with the social functioning of the labourer. But for a full elucidation of the law of accumulation, his condition outside the workshop must also be looked at, his condition as to food and dwelling. The limits of this book compel us to concern ourselves chiefly with the worst paid part of the industrial proletariat, and with the agricultural labourers, who together form the majority of the working class.

But first, one word on official pauperism, or on that part of the working class which has forfeited its condition of existence (the sale of labour power), and vegetates upon public alms. The official list of paupers numbered in England<sup>2)</sup> 851,369 persons; in 1856, 877,767; in 1865, 971,433. In consequence of the cotton famine, it grew in the years 1863 and 1864 to 1,142,624 and 1,009,289.<sup>531</sup> The crisis of 1866, which fell most heavily on London, created in this centre of the world market, more populous than the kingdom of Scotland, an increase of pauperism for the year 1866 of 19.5% compared with 1865, and of 24.4% compared with 1864, and a still greater increase for the first months of 1867 as compared with 1866. From the analysis of the statistics of pauperism, two points are to be taken. On the one hand, the fluctuation up and down of the number of paupers, reflects the periodic changes of the industrial cycle. On the other, the official statistics become more and more misleading as to the actual extent of pauperism in proportion as, with the accumulation of capital, the class struggle, and, therefore, the class consciousness of the working men, develop. E. g., the barbarity in the treatment of the paupers, at

<sup>1)</sup> H. Fawcett, l. c., pp. 67, 82. As to the increasing dependence of labourers on the retail shopkeepers, this is the consequence of the frequent oscillations and interruptions of their employment.

<sup>2)</sup> Wales here is always included in England.

which the English Press (*The Times*, *Pall Mall Gazette*, etc.) have cried out so loudly during the last two years, is of ancient date. F. Engels showed in 1844 exactly the same horrors, exactly the same transient canting outcries of "sensational literature".<sup>532</sup> But frightful increase of "deaths by starvation"<sup>a</sup> in London during the last ten years proves beyond doubt the growing horror in which the working people hold the slavery of the workhouse,<sup>193</sup> that place of punishment for misery.<sup>11</sup>

(b.) *The Badly Paid Strata of the British Industrial Class*

During the cotton famine of 1862, Dr. Smith was charged by the Privy Council<sup>183</sup> with an inquiry into the conditions of nourishment of the distressed operatives in Lancashire and Cheshire. His observations during many preceding years had led him to the conclusion that "to avert starvation diseases", the daily food of an average woman ought to contain at least 3,900 grains of carbon with 180 grains of nitrogen; the daily food of an average man, at least 4,300 grains of carbon with 200 grains of nitrogen; for women, about the same quantity of nutritive elements as are contained in 2 lbs of good wheaten bread, for men  $\frac{1}{9}$  more; for the weekly average of adult men and women, at least 28,600 grains of carbon and 1,330 grains of nitrogen. His calculation was practically confirmed in a surprising manner by its agreement with the miserable quantity of nourishment to which want had forced down the consumption of the cotton operatives. This was, in December, 1862, 29,211 grains of carbon, and 1,295 grains of nitrogen weekly.<sup>534</sup>

In the year 1863, the Privy Council ordered an inquiry into the state of distress of the worst-nourished part of the English working class. Dr. Simon, medical officer to the Privy Council, chose for this work the above-mentioned Dr. Smith. His inquiry ranges on the one hand over the agricultural labourers, on the other, over silk-weavers, needle-women, kid-glovers, stocking-weavers, glove-weavers, and

<sup>11</sup> A peculiar light is thrown on the advance made since the time of Adam Smith, by the fact that by him the word "workhouse" is still occasionally used as synonymous with "manufactory"; e. g., the opening of his chapter on the division of labour: "those employed in every different branch of the work can often be collected into the same workhouse."<sup>533</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> See this volume, p. 475.

shoemakers. The latter categories are, with the exception of the stocking-weavers, exclusively town-dwellers. It was made a rule in the inquiry to select in each category the most healthy families, and those comparatively in the best circumstances.

As a general result it was found that

"in only one of the examined classes of in-door operatives did the average nitrogen-supply just exceed, while in another it nearly reached, the estimated standard of bare sufficiency //i. e., sufficient to avert starvation diseases//, and that in two classes there was defect—in one, a very large defect—of both nitrogen and carbon. Moreover, as regards the examined families of the agricultural population, it appeared that more than a fifth were with less than the estimated sufficiency of carbonaceous food, that more than one-third were with less than the estimated sufficiency of nitrogenous food, and that in three counties (Berkshire, Oxfordshire, and Somersetshire), insufficiency of nitrogenous food was the average local diet."<sup>1)</sup>

Among the agricultural labourers, those of England, the wealthiest part of the United Kingdom, were the worst fed.<sup>2)</sup> The insufficiency of food among the agricultural labourers, fell, as a rule, chiefly on the women and children, for "the man must eat to do his work".<sup>535</sup> Still greater penury ravaged the town workers examined.

"They are so ill fed that assuredly among them there must be many cases of severe and injurious privation."<sup>3)</sup>

("Privation" of the capitalist all this! i. e., "abstinence" from paying for the means of subsistence absolutely necessary for the mere vegetation of his "hands".)

The following table shows the conditions of nourishment of the above-named categories of purely town-dwelling workpeople, as compared with the minimum assumed by Dr. Smith, and with the food allowance of the cotton operatives during the time of their greatest distress:

Both sexes	Average weekly carbon	Average weekly nitrogen
Five in-door occupations . . . . .	28,876 grains	1,192 grains
Unemployed Lancashire Operatives . .	28,211     "	1,295     "
Minimum quantity to be allowed to the Lancashire Operatives, equal number of males and females . . . . .	28,600     "	1,330     " <sup>4)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> "Public Health. Sixth Report, 1864," p. 13.

<sup>2)</sup> I. c., p. 17.

<sup>3)</sup> I. c., p. 13.

<sup>4)</sup> I. c., Appendix, p. 232.

One half, or  $\frac{60}{125}$  of the industrial labour categories investigated, had absolutely no beer, 28% no milk. The weekly average of the liquid means of nourishment in the families varied from seven ounces in the needle-women to  $24 \frac{3}{4}$  ounces in the stocking-makers. The majority of those who did not obtain milk were needle-women in London. The quantity of bread-stuffs consumed weekly varied from  $7 \frac{3}{4}$  lbs for the needle-women to  $11 \frac{1}{4}$  lbs for the shoemakers, and gave a total average of 9.9 lbs per adult weekly. Sugar (treacle, etc.) varied from 4 ounces weekly for the kid-glovers to 11 ounces for the stocking-makers; and the total average per week for all categories was 8 ounces per adult weekly. Total weekly average of butter (fat, etc.) 5 ounces per adult. The weekly average of meat (bacon, etc.) varied from  $7 \frac{1}{4}$  ounces for the silk-weavers, to  $18 \frac{1}{4}$  ounces for the kid-glovers; total average for the different categories 13.6 ounces. The weekly cost of food per adult, gave the following average figures; silk-weavers 2s.  $2 \frac{1}{2}$  d., needle-women 2s. 7d., kid-glovers 2s.  $9 \frac{1}{2}$  d., shoemakers 2s.  $7 \frac{3}{4}$  d., stocking-weavers 2s.  $6 \frac{1}{4}$  d. For the silk-weavers of Macclesfield the average was only ls.  $8 \frac{1}{2}$  d. The worst categories were the needle-women, silk-weavers and kid-glovers.<sup>1)</sup> Of these facts, Dr. Simon in his General Health Report says:

"That cases are innumerable in which defective diet is the cause or the aggravator of disease, can be affirmed by any one who is conversant with poor law medical practice, or with the wards and out-patient rooms of hospitals.... Yet in this point of view, there is, in my opinion, a very important sanitary context to be added. It must be remembered that privation of food is very reluctantly borne, and that as a rule great poorness of diet will only come when other privations have preceded it. Long before insufficiency of diet is a matter of hygienic concern, long before the physiologist would think of counting the grains of nitrogen and carbon which intervene between life and starvation, the household will have been utterly destitute of material comfort; clothing and fuel will have been even scantier than food — against inclemencies of weather there will have been no adequate protection — dwelling space will have been stinted to the degree in which overcrowding produces or increases disease; of household utensils and furniture there will have been scarcely any — even cleanliness will have been found costly or difficult, and if there still be self-respectful endeavours to maintain it, every such endeavour will represent additional pangs of hunger. The home, too, will be where shelter can be cheapest bought; in quarters where commonly there is least fruit of sanitary supervision, least drainage, least scavenging, least suppression of public nuisances, least or worst water supply, and, if in town, least light and air. Such are the sanitary dangers to which poverty is almost certainly exposed, when it is poverty enough to imply scantiness of food. And while the sum of them is of terrible magnitude against

<sup>1)</sup> l. c., pp. 232, 233.

life, the mere scantiness of food is in itself of very serious moment.... These are painful reflections, especially when it is remembered that the poverty to which they advert is not the deserved poverty of idleness. In all cases it is the poverty of working populations. Indeed, as regards the in-door operatives, the work which obtains the scanty pittance of food, is for the most part excessively prolonged. Yet evidently it is only in a qualified sense that the work can be deemed self-supporting.... And on a very large scale the nominal self-support can be only a circuit, longer or shorter, to pauperism.”<sup>1)</sup>

The intimate connexion between the pangs of hunger of the most industrious layers of the working class, and the extravagant consumption, coarse or refined, of the rich, for which capitalist accumulation is the basis, reveals itself only when the economic laws are known. It is otherwise with the “housing of the poor”. Every unprejudiced observer sees that the greater the centralisation of the means of production, the greater is the corresponding heaping together of the labourers, within a given space; that therefore the swifter capitalistic accumulation, the more miserable are the dwellings of the working people. “Improvements” of towns, accompanying the increase of wealth, by the demolition of badly built quarters, the erection of palaces for banks, warehouses, &c., the widening of streets for business traffic, for the carriages of luxury, and for the introduction of tramways, &c., drive away the poor into even worse and more crowded hiding places. On the other hand, every one knows that the dearness of dwellings is in inverse ratio to their excellence, and that the mines of misery are exploited by house speculators with more profit or less cost than ever were the mines of Potosí<sup>536</sup> The antagonistic character of capitalist accumulation, and therefore of the capitalistic relations of property generally,<sup>2)</sup> is here so evident, that even the official English reports on this subject teem with heterodox onslaughts on “property and its rights”. With the development of industry, with the accumulation of capital, with the growth and “improvement” of towns, the evil makes such progress that the mere fear of contagious diseases which do not spare even “respectability”, brought into existence from

<sup>1)</sup> l. c., pp. 14, 15.

<sup>2)</sup> “In no particular have the rights of *persons* been so avowedly and shamefully sacrificed to the rights of *property* as in regard to the lodging of the labouring class. Every large town may be looked upon as a place of human sacrifice, a shrine where thousands pass yearly through the fire as offerings to the moloch of avarice,” S. Laing, l. c., p. 150.

1847 to 1864 no less than 10 Acts of Parliament on sanitation,<sup>537</sup> and that the frightened bourgeois in some towns, as Liverpool, Glasgow, &c., took strenuous measures through their municipalities. Nevertheless Dr. Simon, in his report of 1865, says:

“Speaking generally, it may be said that the evils are uncontrolled in England.”<sup>538</sup>

By order of the Privy Council, in 1864, an inquiry was made into the conditions of the housing of the agricultural labourers, in 1865 of the poorer classes in the towns. The results of the admirable work of Dr. Julian Hunter are to be found in the seventh (1865) and eighth (1866) reports on “Public Health”. To the agricultural labourers, I shall come later. On the condition of town dwellings, I quote, as preliminary, a general remark of Dr. Simon.

“Although my official point of view,” he says, “is one exclusively physical, common humanity requires that the other aspect of this evil should not be ignored.... In its higher degrees it //i. e., overcrowding// almost necessarily involves such negation of all delicacy, such unclean confusion of bodies and bodily functions, such exposure of animal and sexual nakedness, as is rather bestial than human. To be subject to these influences is a degradation which must become deeper and deeper for those on whom it continues to work. To children who are born under its curse, it must often be a very baptism into infamy. And beyond all measure hopeless is the wish that persons thus circumstanced should ever in other respects aspire to that atmosphere of civilisation which has its essence in physical and moral cleanliness.”<sup>539</sup>

London takes the first place in overcrowded habitations, absolutely unfit for human beings.

“He feels clear,” says Dr. Hunter, “on two points; first, that there are about 20 large colonies in London, of about 10,000 persons each, whose miserable condition exceeds almost anything he has seen elsewhere in England, and is almost entirely the result of their bad house accommodation; and second, that the crowded and dilapidated condition of the houses of these colonies is much worse than was the case 20 years ago.”<sup>540</sup> “It is not too much to say that life in parts of London and Newcastle is infernal.”<sup>541</sup>

<sup>537</sup> “Public Health. Eighth Report, 1866,” p. 14, note.

<sup>538</sup> l. c., p. 89. With reference to the children in these colonies, Dr. Hunter says: “People are not now alive to tell us how children were brought up before this age of dense agglomerations of poor began, and he would be a rash prophet who should tell us what future behaviour is to be expected from the present growth of children, who, under circumstances probably never before paralleled in this country, are now completing their education for future practice, as ‘dangerous classes’ by sitting up half the night with persons of every age, half naked, drunken, obscene, and quarrelsome” (l. c., p. 56).

<sup>539</sup> l. c., p. 62.

Further, the better-off part of the working class, together with the small shopkeepers and other elements of the lower middle class, falls in London more and more under the curse of these vile conditions of dwelling, in proportion as “improvements”, and with them the demolition of old streets and houses, advance, as factories and the afflux of human beings grow in the metropolis, and finally as house rents rise with the ground rents.

“Rents have become so heavy that few labouring men can afford more than one room.”<sup>1)</sup>

There is almost no house property in London that is not overburdened with a number of middlemen. For the price of land in London is always very high in comparison with its yearly revenue, and therefore every buyer speculates on getting rid of it again at a jury price (the expropriation valuation fixed by jurymen), or on pocketing an extraordinary increase of value arising from the neighbourhood of some large establishment. As a consequence of this there is a regular trade in the purchase of “fag-ends of leases”.

“Gentlemen in this business may be fairly expected to do as they do — get all they can from the tenants while they have them, and leave as little as they can for their successors.”<sup>2)</sup>

The rents are weekly, and these gentlemen run no risk. In consequence of the making of railroads in the City,

“the spectacle has lately been seen in the East of London of a number of families wandering about some Saturday night with their scanty worldly goods on their backs, without any resting place but the workhouse.”<sup>3)</sup>

The workhouses are already overcrowded, and the “improvements” already sanctioned by Parliament are only just begun. If labourers are driven away by the demolition of their old houses, they do not leave their old parish, or at most they settle down on its borders, as near as they can get to it.

“They try, of course, to remain as near as possible to their workshops. The inhabitants do not go beyond the same or the next parish, parting their two-room tenements into single rooms, and crowding even those. ... Even at an advanced rent, the people who are displaced will hardly be able to get an accommodation so good as the meagre one they have left. ... Half the workmen ... of the Strand ... walked two miles to their work.”<sup>4)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> “Report of the Officer of Health of St. Martins-in-the-Fields, 1865.”<sup>5,39</sup>

<sup>2)</sup> “Public Health. Eighth Report, 1865,” p. 91.

<sup>3)</sup> I. c., p. 88.

<sup>4)</sup> I. c., p. 88.

This same Strand, a main thoroughfare which gives strangers an imposing idea of the wealth of London, may serve as an example of the packing together of human beings in that town. In one of its parishes, the Officer of Health reckoned 581 persons per acre, although half the width of the Thames was reckoned in. It will be self-understood that every sanitary measure, which, as has been the case hitherto in London, hunts the labourers from one quarter, by demolishing uninhabitable houses, serves only to crowd them together yet more closely in another.

"Either," says Dr. Hunter, "the whole proceeding will of necessity stop as an absurdity, or the public compassion (!) be effectually aroused to the obligation which may now be without exaggeration called national, of supplying cover to those who by reason of their having no capital, cannot provide it for themselves, though they can by periodical payments reward those who will provide it for them."<sup>1)</sup>

Admire this capitalistic justice! The owner of land, of houses, the businessman, when expropriated by "improvements" such as railroads, the building of new streets, &c., not only receives full indemnity. He must, according to law, human and divine, be comforted for his enforced "abstinence" over and above this by a thumping profit. The labourer, with his wife and child and chattels, is thrown out into the street, and—if he crowds in too large numbers towards quarters of the town where the vestries insist on decency, he is prosecuted in the name of sanitation!

Except London, there was at the beginning of the 19th century no single town in England of 100,000 inhabitants. Only five had more than 50,000. Now there are 28 towns with more than 50,000 inhabitants.

"The result of this change is not only that the class of town people is enormously increased, but the old close-packed little towns are now centres, built round on every side, open nowhere to air, and being no longer agreeable to the rich are abandoned by them for the pleasanter outskirts. The successors of these rich are occupying the larger houses at the rate of a family to each room //... and find accommodation for two or three lodgers ...// and a population, for which the houses were not intended and quite unfit, has been created, whose surroundings are truly degrading to the adults and ruinous to the children."<sup>2)</sup>

The more rapidly capital accumulates in an industrial or commercial town, the more rapidly flows the stream of exploitable human

<sup>1)</sup> l. c., p. 89.

<sup>2)</sup> l. c., p. 56.

material, the more miserable are the improvised dwellings of the labourers.

Newcastle-on-Tyne, as the centre of a coal and iron district of growing productiveness, takes the next place after London in the housing inferno. Not less than 34,000 persons live there in single rooms. Because of their absolute danger to the community, houses in great numbers have lately been destroyed by the authorities in Newcastle and Gateshead. The building of new houses progresses very slowly, business very quickly. The town was, therefore, in 1865, more full than ever. Scarcely a room was to let. Dr. Embleton, of the Newcastle Fever Hospital, says:

"There can be little doubt that the great cause of the continuance and spread of the typhus has been the overcrowding of human beings, and the uncleanliness of their dwellings. The rooms, in which labourers in many cases live, are situated in confined and unwholesome yards or courts, and for space, light, air, and cleanliness, are models of insufficiency and insalubrity, and a disgrace to any civilised community; in them men, women, and children lie at night huddled together; and as regards the men, the night-shift succeeds the day-shift, and the day-shift the night-shift in unbroken series for some time together, the beds having scarcely time to cool; the whole house badly supplied with water and worse with privies; dirty, unventilated, and pestiferous."<sup>1)</sup>

The price per week of such lodgings ranges from 8d. to 3s.

"The town of Newcastle-on-Tyne," says Dr. Hunter, "contains a sample of the finest tribe of our countrymen, often sunk by external circumstances of house and street into an almost savage degradation."<sup>2)</sup>

As a result of the ebbing and flowing of capital and labour, the state of the dwellings of an industrial town may today be bearable, tomorrow hideous. Or the ædileship of the town may have pulled itself together for the removal of the most shocking abuses. Tomorrow, like a swarm of locusts, come crowding in masses of ragged Irishmen or decayed English agricultural labourers. They are stowed away in cellars and lofts, or the hitherto respectable labourer's dwelling is transformed into a lodging-house whose *personnel* changes as quickly as the billets in the 30 years' war.<sup>540</sup> Example: Bradford (Yorkshire). There the municipal philistine was just busied with urban improvements. Besides, there were still in Bradford, in 1861, 1,751 uninhabited houses. But now comes that revival of trade which the mildly liberal Mr. Forster, the negro's friend, recently crowded over with so much grace.<sup>541</sup> With the revival of trade came of course an overflow from

<sup>1)</sup> I. c., p. 149 [note].

<sup>2)</sup> I. c., p. 50.

the waves of the ever fluctuating “reserve army” or “relative surplus population”. The frightful cellar habitations and rooms registered in the list,<sup>1)</sup> which Dr. Hunter obtained from the agent of an Insurance Company, were for the most part inhabited by well-paid labourers. They declared that they would willingly pay for better dwellings if they were to be had. Meanwhile, they become degraded, they fall ill, one and all, whilst the mildly liberal Forster, M. P., sheds tears over the blessings of Free-trade, and the profits of the eminent men of Bradford who deal in worsted. In the Report of September, 1865, Dr. Bell, one of the poor law doctors of Bradford, ascribes the frightful mortality of fever-patients in his district to the nature of their dwellings.

“In one small cellar measuring 1,500 cubic feet ... there are ten persons.... Vincent Street, Green Aire Place, and the Leys include 223 houses having 1,450 inhabitants, 435 beds, and 36 privies.... The beds—and in that term I include any roll of dirty old

#### <sup>1)</sup> COLLECTING AGENTS' LIST (BRADFORD)

	<i>Houses</i>	
Vulcan Street, No. 122 . . . . .	1 room	16 persons
Lumley Street, No. 13 . . . . .	1 "	11 "
Bower Street, No. 41 . . . . .	1 "	11 "
Portland Street, No. 112 . . . . .	1 "	10 "
Hardy Street, No. 17 . . . . .	1 "	10 "
North Street, No. 18 . . . . .	1 "	16 "
North Street, No. 17 . . . . .	1 "	13 "
Wymer Street, No. 19 . . . . .	1 "	8 adults
Jowett Street, No. 56 . . . . .	1 "	12 persons
George Street, No. 150 . . . . .	1 "	3 families
Rifle Court Marygate, No. 11 . . . . .	1 "	11 persons
Marshall Street, No. 28 . . . . .	1 "	10 "
Marshall Street, No. 49 . . . . .	3 "	3 families
George Street, No. 128 . . . . .	1 "	18 persons
George Street, No. 130 . . . . .	1 "	16 "
Edward Street, No. 4 . . . . .	1 "	17 "
George Street, No. 49 . . . . .	1 "	2 families
York Street, No. 34 . . . . .	1 "	2 "
Salt Pie Street (bottom) . . . . .	2 "	26 persons
	<i>Cellars</i>	
Regent Square . . . . .	1 cellar	8 persons
Acre Street . . . . .	1 "	7 "
33 Roberts Court . . . . .	1 "	7 "
Back Pratt Street, used as a brazier's shop . . . . .	1 "	7 "
27 Ebenezer Street . . . . .	1 "	6 "
	l.c., p. iii.	(no male above 18).

rags, or an armful of shavings—have an average of 3.3 persons to each, many have 5 and 6 persons to each, and some people, I am told, are absolutely without beds; they sleep in their ordinary clothes, on the bare boards—young men and women, married and unmarried, all together. I need scarcely add that many of these dwellings are dark, damp, dirty, stinking holes, utterly unfit for human habitations; they are the centres from which disease and death are distributed amongst those in better circumstances, who have allowed them thus to fester in our midst.”<sup>1)</sup>

Bristol takes the third place after London in the misery of its dwellings.

“Bristol, where the blankest poverty and domestic misery abound in the wealthiest town of Europe.”<sup>2)</sup>

#### *(c.) The Nomad Population*

We turn now to a class of people whose origin is agricultural, but whose occupation is in great part industrial. They are the light infantry of capital, thrown by it, according to its needs, now to this point, now to that. When they are not on the march, they “camp”. Nomad labour is used for various operations of building and draining, brick-making, lime-burning, railway-making, &c.<sup>3) 4) 2</sup> A flying column of pestilence, it carries into the places in whose neighbourhood it pitches its camp, small-pox, typhus, cholera, scarlet fever, &c.<sup>3)</sup> In undertakings that involve much capital outlay, such as railways, &c., the contractor himself generally provides his army with wooden huts and the like, thus improvising villages without any sanitary provisions, outside the control of the local boards, very profitable to the contractor, who exploits the labourers in two-fold fashion—as soldiers of industry and as tenants. According as the wooden hut contains 1, 2, or 3 holes, its inhabitant, navvy, or whatever he may be, has to pay 2, 3, or 4 shillings weekly.<sup>4)</sup> One example will suffice. In September, 1864, Dr. Simon reports that the Chairman of the Nuisances Removal Committee of the parish of Sevenoaks sent the following denunciation to Sir George Grey, Home Secretary:—

“Small-pox cases were rarely heard of in this parish until about twelve months ago. Shortly before that time, the works for a railway from Lewisham to Tunbridge were

<sup>1)</sup> l. c., p. 114.

<sup>2)</sup> l. c., p. 50.

<sup>3)</sup> “Public Health. Seventh Report, 1864,” p. 18.

<sup>4)</sup> l. c., p. 165.

commenced here, and, in addition to the principal works being in the immediate neighbourhood of this town, here was also established the dépôt for the whole of the works, so that a large number of persons was of necessity employed here. As cottage accommodation could not be obtained for them all, huts were built in several places along the line of the works by the contractor, Mr. Jay, for their especial occupation. These huts possessed no ventilation nor drainage, and, besides, were necessarily overcrowded, because each occupant had to accommodate lodgers, whatever the number in his own family might be, although there were only two rooms to each tenement. The consequences were, according to the medical report we received, that in the night-time these poor people were compelled to endure all the horror of suffocation to avoid the pestiferous smells arising from the filthy, stagnant water, and the privies close under their windows. Complaints were at length made to the Nuisances Removal Committee by a medical gentleman who had occasion to visit these huts, and he spoke of their condition as dwellings in the most severe terms, and he expressed his fears that some very serious consequences might ensue, unless some sanitary measures were adopted. About a year ago, Mr. Jay promised to appropriate a hut, to which persons in his employ, who were suffering from contagious diseases, might at once be removed. He repeated that promise on the 23rd July last, but although since the date of the last promise there have been several cases of small-pox in his huts, and two deaths from the same disease, yet he has taken no steps whatever to carry out his promise. On the 9th September instant, Mr. Kelson, surgeon, reported to me further cases of small-pox in the same huts, and he described their condition as most disgraceful. I should add, for your (the Home Secretary's) information that an isolated house, called the Pest-house, which is set apart for parishioners who might be suffering from infectious diseases, has been continually occupied by such patients for many months past, and is also now occupied; that in one family five children died from small-pox and fever; that from the 1st April to the 1st September this year, a period of five months, there have been no fewer than ten deaths from small-pox in the parish, four of them being in the huts already referred to; that it is impossible to ascertain the exact number of persons who have suffered from that disease although they are known to be many, from the fact of the families keeping it as private as possible.”<sup>1)</sup>

The labourers in coal and other mines belong to the best paid categories of the British proletariat. The price at which they buy their wages was shown on an earlier page.<sup>2)</sup> Here I merely cast a hurried

<sup>1)</sup> l.c., p. 18, note.—The Relieving Officer of the Chapel-en-le-Frith Union reported to the Registrar-General as follows:—“At Doveholes, a number of small excavations have been made into a large hillock of lime ashes (the refuse of lime-kilns), and which are used as dwellings, and occupied by labourers and others employed in the construction of a railway now in course of construction through that neighbourhood. The excavations are small and damp, and have no drains or privies about them, and not the slightest means of ventilation except up a hole pulled through the top, and used for a chimney. In consequence of this defect, small-pox has been raging for some time, and some deaths //amongst the troglodytes// have been caused by it” (l.c., note 2).

<sup>2)</sup> The details given at the end of Part IV [this volume, pp. 497-504] refer especially to the labourers in coal mines. On the still worse condition in metal mines, see the very conscientious Report of the Royal Commission of 1864.<sup>5+3</sup>

glance over the conditions of their dwellings. As a rule, the exploiter of a mine, whether its owner or his tenant, builds a number of cottages for his hands. They receive cottages and coal for firing "for nothing"—i. e., these form part of their wages, paid in kind. Those who are not lodged in this way receive in compensation £4 per annum. The mining districts attract with rapidity a large population, made up of the miners themselves, and the artisans, shopkeepers, &c., that group themselves around them. The ground rents are high, as they are generally where population is dense. The master tries, therefore, to run up, within the smallest space possible at the mouth of the pit, just so many cottages as are necessary to pack together his hands and their families. If new mines are opened in the neighbourhood, or old ones are again set working, the pressure increases. In the construction of the cottages, only one point of view is of moment, the "abstinence" of the capitalist from all expenditure that is not absolutely unavoidable.

"The lodging which is obtained by the pitman and other labourers connected with the collieries of Northumberland and Durham," says Dr. Julian Hunter, "is perhaps, on the whole, the worst and the dearest of which any large specimens can be found in England, the similar parishes of Monmouthshire excepted.... The extreme badness is in the high number of men found in one room, in the smallness of the ground plot on which a great number of houses are thrust, the want of water, the absence of privies, and the frequent placing of one house on the top of another, or distribution into flats, ... the lessee acts as if the whole colony were encamped, not resident."<sup>1)</sup>

"In pursuance of my instructions," says Dr. Stevens, "I visited most of the large colliery villages in the Durham Union. ... With very few exceptions, the general statement that no means are taken to secure the health of the inhabitants would be true of all of them.... All colliers are bound // 'bound,' an expression which, like bondage,<sup>a</sup> dates from the age of serfdom// to the colliery lessee or owner for twelve months.... If the colliers express discontent, or in any way annoy the 'viewer', a mark of memorandum is made against their names, and, at the annual 'binding', such men are turned off.... It appears to me that no part of the 'truck system' could be worse than what obtains in these densely-populated districts. The collier is bound to take as part of his hiring a house surrounded with pestiferous influences; he cannot help himself, and it appears doubtful whether anyone else can help him except his proprietor (he is, to all intents and purposes, a serf), and his proprietor first consults his balance-sheet, and the result is tolerably certain. The collier is also often supplied with water by the proprietor, which, whether it be good or bad, he has to pay for, or rather he suffers a deduction for from his wages."<sup>2)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> I. c., pp. 180, 182.

<sup>2)</sup> I. c., pp. 515, 517.

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<sup>a</sup> See this volume, p. 577, footnote 2.

In conflict with “public opinion”, or even with the Officers of Health, capital makes no difficulty about “justifying” the conditions partly dangerous, partly degrading, to which it confines the working and domestic life of the labourer, on the ground that they are necessary for profit. It is the same thing when capital “abstains” from protective measures against dangerous machinery in the factory, from appliances for ventilation and for safety in mines, &c. It is the same here with the housing of the miners. Dr. Simon, medical officer of the Privy Council,<sup>183</sup> in his official report says:

“In apology for the wretched household accommodation ... it is alleged that miners are commonly worked on lease; that the duration of the lessee’s interest (which in collieries is commonly for 21 years), is not so long that he should deem it worth his while to create good accommodation for his labourers, and for the tradespeople and others whom the work attracts; that even if he were disposed to act liberally in the matter, this disposition would commonly be defeated by his landlord’s tendency to fix on him, as ground rent, an exorbitant additional charge for the privilege of having on the surface of the ground the decent and comfortable village which the labourers of the subterranean property ought to inhabit, and that prohibitory price (if not actual prohibition) equally excludes others who might desire to build. It would be foreign to the purpose of this report to enter upon any discussion of the merits of the above apology. Nor here is it even needful to consider where it would be that, if decent accommodation were provided, the cost ... would eventually fall — whether on landlord, or lessee, or labourer, or public. But in presence of such shameful facts as are vouched for in the annexed reports” (those of Dr. Hunter, Dr. Stevens, &c.) “a remedy may well be claimed. ... Claims of landlordship are being so used as to do great public wrong. The landlord in his capacity of mine-owner invites an industrial colony to labour on his estate, and then in his capacity of surface-owner makes it impossible that the labourers whom he collects, should find proper lodging where they must live. The lessee” (the capitalist exploiter) “meanwhile has no pecuniary motive for resisting that division of the bargain; well knowing that if its latter conditions be exorbitant, the consequences fall, not on him, that his labourers on whom they fall have not education enough to know the value of their sanitary rights, that neither obscenest lodging nor foulest drinking water will be appreciable inducements towards a ‘strike.’”<sup>184</sup>

(d.) *Effect of Crises on the Best Paid Part of the Working Class*

Before I turn to the regular agricultural labourers, I may be allowed to show, by one example, how industrial revulsions affect even the best-paid, the aristocracy, of the working class. It will be remembered that the year 1857 brought one of the great crises with which the industrial cycle periodically ends. The next termination of the cy-

<sup>183</sup> l. c., p. 16.

cle was due in 1866. Already discounted in the regular factory districts by the cotton famine, which threw much capital from its wonted sphere into the great centres of the money market, the crisis assumed, at this time, an especially financial character. Its outbreak in 1866 was signalled by the failure of a gigantic London Bank,<sup>544</sup> immediately followed by the collapse of countless swindling companies. One of the great London branches of industry involved in the catastrophe was iron shipbuilding. The magnates of this trade had not only over-produced beyond all measure during the overtrading time, but they had, besides, engaged in enormous contracts on the speculation that credit would be forthcoming to an equivalent extent. Now, a terrible reaction set in, that even at this hour (the end of March, 1867) continues in this and other London industries.<sup>1)</sup> To show the condition of the labourers, I quote the following from the circumstantial report of a correspondent of the *Morning Star*, who, at the end of 1866, and beginning of 1867, visited the chief centres of distress:

"In the East End districts of Poplar, Millwall, Greenwich, Deptford, Limehouse and Canning Town, at least 15,000 workmen and their families were in a state of utter destitution, and 3,000 skilled mechanics were breaking stones in the workhouse yard" (after distress of over half a year's duration).... "I had great difficulty in reaching the workhouse door, for a hungry crowd besieged it.... They were waiting for their tickets, but the time had not yet arrived for the distribution. The yard was a great square place with an open shed running all round it, and several large heaps of snow covered the paving-stones in the middle. In the middle, also, were little wicker-fenced spaces, like sheep pens, where in finer weather the men worked; but on the day of my visit the pens were so snowed up that nobody could sit in them. Men were busy, however, in the open shed breaking paving-stones into macadam. Each man had a big paving-stone for a seat, and he chipped away at the rime-covered granite with a big hammer until he had broken up, and think! five bushels of it, and then he had done his day's work, and got his day's pay—threepence and an allowance of food. In another part of the yard was a rickety little wooden house, and when we opened the door of it, we found it filled

<sup>1)</sup> "Wholesale starvation of the London Poor.... Within the last few days the walls of London have been placarded with large posters, bearing the following remarkable announcement: —'Fat oxen! Starving men! The fat oxen from their palace of glass have gone to feed the rich in their luxurious abode, while the starving men are left to rot and die in their wretched dens.' The placards bearing these ominous words are put up at certain intervals. No sooner has one set been defaced or covered over, than a fresh set is placarded in the former, or some equally public place.... This ... reminds one of the secret revolutionary associations which prepared the French people for the events of 1789<sup>545</sup>.... At this moment, while English workmen with their wives and children are dying of cold and hunger, there are millions of English gold — the produce of English labour — being invested in Russian, Spanish, Italian, and other foreign enterprises.—"

*Reynolds's Newspaper*, January 20th, 1867 [p. 1, col. 1].

with men who were huddled together shoulder to shoulder for the warmth of one another's bodies and breath. They were picking oakum and disputing the while as to which could work the longest on a given quantity of food—for endurance was the point of honour. Seven thousand ... in this one workhouse<sup>193</sup> ... were recipients of relief ... many hundreds of them ... it appeared, were, six or eight months ago, earning the highest wages paid to artisans.... Their number would be more than doubled by the count of those who, having exhausted all their savings, still refuse to apply to the parish, because they have a little left to pawn. Leaving the workhouse, I took a walk through the streets, mostly of little one-storey houses, that abound in the neighbourhood of Poplar. My guide was a member of the Committee of the Unemployed.... My first call was on an ironworker who had been seven and twenty weeks out of employment. I found the man with his family sitting in a little back room. The room was not bare of furniture, and there was a fire in it. This was necessary to keep the naked feet of the young children from getting frost bitten, for it was a bitterly cold day. On a tray in front of the fire lay a quantity of oakum, which the wife and children were picking in return for their allowance from the parish. The man worked in the stone yard of the workhouse for a certain ration of food, and threepence per day. He had now come home to dinner quite hungry, as he told us with a melancholy smile, and his dinner consisted of a couple of slices of bread and dripping, and a cup of milkless tea.... The next door at which we knocked was opened by a middle-aged woman, who, without saying a word, led us into a little back parlour, in which sat all her family, silent and fixedly staring at a rapidly dying fire. Such desolation, such hopelessness was about these people and their little room, as I should not care to witness again. 'Nothing have they done, sir,' said the woman, pointing to her boys, 'for six and twenty weeks; and all our money gone—all the twenty pounds that me and father saved when times were better, thinking it would yield a little to keep us when we got past work. Look at it,' she said, almost fiercely, bringing out a bank-book with all its well-kept entries of money paid in, and money taken out, so that we could see how the little fortune had begun with the first five shilling deposit, and had grown by little and little to be twenty pounds, and how it had melted down again till the sum in hand got from pounds to shillings, and the last entry made the book as worthless as a blank sheet. This family received relief from the workhouse, and it furnished them with just one scanty meal per day. ... Our next visit was to an iron labourer's wife, whose husband had worked in the yards. We found her ill from want of food, lying on a mattress in her clothes, and just covered with a strip of carpet, for all the bedding had been pawned. Two wretched children were tending her, themselves looking as much in need of nursing as their mother. Nineteen weeks of enforced idleness had brought them to this pass, and while the mother told the history of that bitter past, she moaned as if all her faith in a future that should atone for it were dead. ... On getting outside a young fellow came running after us, and asked us to step inside his house and see if anything could be done for him. A young wife, two pretty children, a cluster of pawn-tickets, and a bare room were all he had to show."<sup>546</sup>

On the after pains of the crisis of 1866, the following extract from a Tory newspaper. It must not be forgotten that the East-end of London, which is here dealt with, is not only the seat of the iron shipbuilding mentioned above, but also of a so-called "home industry" always underpaid.

"A frightful spectacle was to be seen yesterday in one part of the metropolis. Although the unemployed thousands of the East-end did not parade with their black flags *en masse*, the human torrent was imposing enough. Let us remember what these people suffer. They are dying of hunger. That is the simple and terrible fact. There are 40,000 of them. ... In our presence, in one quarter of this wonderful metropolis, are packed—next door to the most enormous accumulation of wealth the world ever saw—cheek by jowl with this are 40,000 helpless, starving people. These thousands are now breaking in upon the other quarters; always half-starving, they cry their misery in our ears, they cry to Heaven, they tell us from their miserable dwellings, that it is impossible for them to find work, and useless for them to beg. The local ratepayers themselves are driven by the parochial charges to the verge of pauperism."—(*Standard*, 5th April, 1867.)

As it is the fashion amongst English capitalists to quote Belgium as the Paradise of the labourer because "freedom of labour", or what is the same thing, "freedom of capital", is there limited neither by the despotism of Trades' Unions, nor by Factory Acts, a word or two on the "happiness" of the Belgian labourer. Assuredly no one was more thoroughly initiated in the mysteries of this happiness than the late M. Ducpétiaux, inspector-general of Belgian prisons and charitable institutions, and member of the central commission of Belgian statistics. Let us take his work: "*Budgets économiques des classes ouvrières de la Belgique*," Bruxelles, 1855. Here we find among other matters, a normal Belgian labourer's family, whose yearly income and expenditure he calculates on very exact data, and whose conditions of nourishment are then compared with those of the soldier, sailor, and prisoner. The family "consists of father, mother, and four children". Of these 6 persons "four may be usefully employed the whole year through". It is assumed that "there is no sick person nor one incapable of work, among them", nor are there "expenses for religious, moral, and intellectual purposes, except a very small sum for church sittings", nor "contributions to savings banks or benefit societies", nor "expenses due to luxury or the result of improvidence". The father and eldest son, however, allow themselves "the use of tobacco", and on Sundays "go to the *cabaret*", for which a whole 86 centimes a week are reckoned.

"From a general compilation of wages allowed to the labourers in different trades, it follows that the highest average of daily wage is 1 franc 56c., for men, 89 centimes for women, 56 centimes for boys, and 55 centimes for girls. Calculated at this rate, the resources of the family would amount, at the maximum, to 1,068 francs a-year. ... In the family ... taken as typical we have calculated all possible resources. But in ascribing wages to the mother of the family we *raise the question of the direction of the household*. How will its internal economy be cared for? Who will look after the young children? Who will get ready the meals, do the washing and mending? This is the dilemma incessantly presented to the labourers."

According to this the budget of the family is:

The father	300 working days at fr.	1.56...	fr. 468
" mother	" "	89...	" 267
" boy	" "	56...	" 168
" girl	" "	55...	" 165
		Total	fr. 1,068

The annual expenditure of the family would cause a deficit upon the hypothesis that the labourer has the food of:

The man of war's man	fr.	1,828	Deficit fr.	760
" soldier	"	1,473	"	405
" prisoner	"	1,112	"	44

"We see that few labouring families can reach, we will not say the average of the sailor or soldier, but even that of the prisoner. The general average (of the cost of each prisoner in the different prisons during the period 1847-1849), has been 63 centimes for all prisons. This figure, compared with that of the daily maintenance of the labourer, shows a difference of 13 centimes. It must be remarked further, that if in the prisons it is necessary to set down in the account the expenses of administration and surveillance, on the other hand, the prisoners have not to pay for their lodging; that the purchases they make at the canteens are not included in the expenses of maintenance, and that these expenses are greatly lowered in consequence of the large number of persons that make up the establishments, and of contracting for or buying wholesale, the food and other things that enter into their consumption. ... How comes it, however, that a great number, we might say, a great majority, of labourers, live in a more economical way? It is ... by adopting expedients, the secret of which only the labourer knows; by reducing his daily rations; by substituting rye-bread for wheat; by eating less meat, or even none at all, and the same with butter and condiments; by contenting themselves with one or two rooms where the family is crammed together, where boys and girls sleep side by side, often on the same pallet; by economy of clothing, washing, decency; by giving up the Sunday diversions; by, in short, resigning themselves to the most painful privations. Once arrived at this extreme limit, the least rise in the price of food, stoppage of work, illness, increases the labourer's distress and determines his complete ruin; debts accumulate, credit fails, the most necessary clothes and furniture are pawned, and finally, the family asks to be enrolled on the list of paupers" (Ducpétiaux, 1. c., pp. 151-56).

In fact, in this "Paradise of capitalists" there follows, on the smallest change in the price of the most essential means of subsistence, a change in the number of deaths and crimes! (See Manifesto of the Maatschappij: "De Vlamingen Vooruit!" Brussels, 1860, pp. 13, 14.) In all Belgium are 930,000 families, of whom, according to the official statistics, 90,000 are wealthy and on the list of voters = 450,000 persons; 390,000 families of the lower middle-class in towns and villages, the greater part of them constantly sinking into the proletar-

iat, = 1,950,000 persons. Finally, 450,000 working-class families = 2,250,000 persons, of whom the model ones enjoy the happiness depicted by Ducpétiaux. Of the 450,000 working-class families, over 200,000 are on the pauper list.<sup>547</sup>

(e.) *The British Agricultural Proletariat*

Nowhere does the antagonistic character of capitalistic production and accumulation assert itself more brutally than in the progress of English agriculture (including cattle-breeding) and the retrogression of the English agricultural labourer. Before I turn to his present situation, a rapid retrospect. Modern agriculture dates in England from the middle of the 18th century, although the revolution in landed property, from which the changed mode of production starts as a basis, has a much earlier date.

If we take the statements of Arthur Young, a careful observer, though a superficial thinker, as to the agricultural labourer of 1771,<sup>548</sup> the latter plays a very pitiable part compared with his predecessor of the end of the 14th century,

"when the labourer ... could live in plenty, and accumulate wealth,"<sup>549</sup>

not to speak of the 15th century, "the golden age of the English labourer in town and country".<sup>a</sup> We need not, however, go back so far. In a very instructive work of the year 1777 we read:

"The great farmer is nearly mounted to a level with him" (the gentleman); "while the poor labourer is depressed almost to the earth. His unfortunate situation will fully appear, by taking a comparative view of it, only forty years ago, and at present.... Landlord and tenant ... have both gone hand in hand in keeping the labourer down."<sup>550</sup>

It is then proved in detail that the real agricultural wages between 1737 and 1777 fell nearly  $\frac{1}{4}$  or 25 per cent.<sup>551</sup>

<sup>547</sup> James E. Thorold Rogers (Prof. of Polit. Econ. in the University of Oxford), *A History of Agriculture and Prices in England*, Oxford, 1866, v. I, pp. 689-90. This work, the fruit of patient and diligent labour, contains in the two volumes that have so far appeared, only the period from 1259 to 1400. The second volume contains simply statistics. It is the first authentic *History of Prices* of the time that we possess.

<sup>548</sup> *Reasons for the Late Increase of the Poor-Rates: or a comparative view of the prices of labour and provisions*, Lond., 1777, pp. 5, 11.

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<sup>a</sup> See this volume, p. 709.

"Modern policy," says Dr. Richard Price also, "is, indeed, more favourable to the higher classes of people; and the consequences may in time prove that the whole kingdom will consist of only gentry and beggars, or of grandees and slaves."<sup>1)</sup>

Nevertheless, the position of the English agricultural labourer from 1770 to 1780, with regard to his food and dwelling, as well as to his self-respect, amusements, &c., is an ideal never attained again since that time. His average wage expressed in pints of wheat was from 1770 to 1771, 90 pints, in Eden's time (1797) only 65, in 1808 but 60.<sup>2)</sup>

The state of the agricultural labourer at the end of the Anti-Jacobin War,<sup>464</sup> during which landed proprietors, farmers, manufacturers, merchants, bankers, stockbrokers, army-contractors, &c., enriched themselves so extraordinarily, has been already indicated above. The nominal wages rose in consequence partly of the bank-note depreciation, partly of a rise in the price of the primary means of subsistence independent of this depreciation. But the actual wage variation can be evidenced in a very simple way, without entering into details that are here unnecessary. The Poor Law<sup>550</sup> and its administration were in 1795 and 1814 the same. It will be remembered how this law was carried out in the country districts: in the form of alms the parish made up the nominal wage to the nominal sum required for the simple vegetation of the labourer. The ratio between the wages paid by the farmer, and the wage deficit made good by the parish, shows us two things. First, the falling of wages below their minimum; second, the degree in which the agricultural labourer was a compound of wage labourer and pauper, or the degree in which he had been turned into a serf of his parish. Let us take one county that represents the average condition of things in all counties. In Northamptonshire, in 1795, the average weekly wage was 7s. 6d.; the total yearly expenditure of a family of 6 persons, £36 12s. 5d.; their total income, £29 18s.; deficit made good by the parish, £6 14s. 5d. In 1814, in the same county, the weekly wage was 12s. 2d.; the total yearly expenditure of a family of 5 persons, £54 18s. 4d.; their total

<sup>1)</sup> Dr. Richard Price, *Observations on Reversionary Payments*, 6th Ed. By W. Morgan, Lond., 1803, v. II, p. 158. Price remarks on p. 159: "The nominal price of day labour is at present no more than about four times, or, at most, five times higher than it was in the year 1514. But the price of corn is seven times, and of flesh-meat and raiment about fifteen times higher. So far, therefore, has the price of labour been even from advancing in proportion to the increase in the expenses of living, that it does not appear that it bears now half the proportion to those expenses that it did bear."

<sup>2)</sup> Barton, l. c., p. 26. For the end of the 18th century cf. Eden, l. c.

income, £36 2s.; deficit made good by the parish, £18 6s. 4d.<sup>1)</sup> In 1795 the deficit was less than  $\frac{1}{4}$  the wage, in 1814, more than half. It is self-evident that, under these circumstances, the meagre comforts that Eden still found in the cottage of the agricultural labourer, had vanished by 1814.<sup>2)</sup> Of all the animals kept by the farmer, the labourer, the *instrumentum vocale*,<sup>a</sup> was, thenceforth, the most oppressed, the worst nourished, the most brutally treated.

The same state of things went on quietly until

"the Swing riots,<sup>194</sup> in 1830, revealed to us" (i. e., the ruling classes) "by the light of blazing corn-stacks, that misery and black mutinous discontent smouldered quite as fiercely under the surface of agricultural as of manufacturing England."<sup>3)</sup>

At this time, Sadler, in the House of Commons, christened the agricultural labourers "white slaves", and a Bishop echoed the epithet in the Upper House.<sup>551</sup> The most notable political economist of that period — E. G. Wakefield says:

"The peasant of the South of England ... is not a freeman, nor is he a slave; he is a pauper."<sup>4)</sup>

The time just before the repeal of the Corn Laws<sup>21</sup> threw new light on the condition of the agricultural labourers. On the one hand, it was to the interest of the middle-class agitators to prove how little the Corn Laws protected the actual producers of the corn. On the other hand, the industrial bourgeoisie foamed with sullen rage at the denunciations of the factory system by the landed aristocracy, at the pretended sympathy with the woes of the factory operatives, of those utterly corrupt, heartless, and genteel loafers, and at their "diplomatic zeal" for factory legislation. It is an old English proverb that "when thieves fall out, honest men come by their own", and, in fact, the noisy, passionate quarrel between the two fractions of the ruling class about the question, which of the two exploited the labourers the more shamefully, was on each hand the midwife of the truth. Earl Shaftesbury, then Lord Ashley, was commander-in-chief in the aristocratic, philanthropic, anti-factory campaign.<sup>552</sup> He was, therefore, in 1845, a favourite subject in the revelations of the *Morning Chronicle*

<sup>1)</sup> Parry, l. c., [*The Question of the Necessity...*, Ld., 1816,] p. 80.

<sup>2)</sup> id., p. 213.

<sup>3)</sup> S. Laing, l. c., p. 62.

<sup>4)</sup> *England and America*, Lond., 1833, Vol. I, p. 47.

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<sup>a</sup> See this volume, p. 207.

on the condition of the agricultural labourers. This journal, then the most important Liberal organ, sent special commissioners into the agricultural districts, who did not content themselves with mere general descriptions and statistics, but published the names both of the labouring families examined and of their landlords. The following list gives the wages paid in three villages in the neighbourhood of Blanford, Wimbourne, and Poole. The villages are the property of Mr. G. Bankes and of the Earl of Shaftesbury. It will be noted that, just like Bankes, this "low church pope",<sup>553</sup> this head of English pietists, pockets a great part of the miserable wages of the labourers under the pretext of house rent:—

#### FIRST VILLAGE

(a) Children	(b) Number of Members in Family	(c) Weekly Wage of the Men	(d) Weekly Wage of the Children	(e) Weekly Income of the whole Family	(f) Weekly Rent	(g) Total weekly wage after deduction of Rent	(h) Weekly Income per head
2	4	s. d. 8 0	—	s. d. 8 0	s. d. 2 0	s. d. 6 0	s. d. 1 6
3	5	8 0	—	8 0	1 6	6 6	1 3½
2	4	8 0	—	8 0	1 0	7 0	1 9
2	4	8 0	—	8 0	1 0	7 0	1 9
6	8	7 0	1s. 6d.	10 6	2 0	8 6	1 0¾
3	5	7 0	2s.	7 0	1 4	5 8	1 1½

#### SECOND VILLAGE

6	8	s. d. 7 0	1s. 6d.	s. d. 10 0	s. d. 1 6	s. d. 8 6	s. d. 1 0¾
6	8	7 0	1s. 6d.	7 0	1 3½	5 8½	0 8½
8	10	7 0	—	7 0	1 3½	5 8½	0 7
4	6	7 0	—	7 0	1 6½	5 5½	0 11
3	5	7 0	—	7 0	1 6½	5 5½	1 1

#### THIRD VILLAGE

4	6	s. d. 7 0	—	s. d. 7 0	s. d. 1 0	s. d. 6 0	s. d. 1 0
3	5	7 0	2s.	11 6	0 10	10 8	2 1½
0	2	5 0	2s. 6d.	5 0	1 0	4 0	2 0 <sup>1)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> London *Economist*, March 29th, 1845, p. 290.

The repeal of the Corn Laws gave a marvellous impulse to English agriculture.<sup>1)</sup> Drainage on the most extensive scale, new methods of stall-feeding, and of the artificial cultivation of green crops, introduction of mechanical manuring apparatus, new treatment of clay soils, increased use of mineral manures, employment of the steam-engine, and of all kinds of new machinery, more intensive cultivation generally, characterised this epoch. Mr. Pusey, Chairman of the Royal Agricultural Society, declares that the (relative) expenses of farming have been reduced nearly one half by the introduction of new machinery.<sup>554</sup> On the other hand, the actual return of the soil rose rapidly. Greater outlay of capital per acre, and, as a consequence, more rapid concentration of farms, were essential conditions of the new method.<sup>2)</sup> At the same time, the area under cultivation increased, from 1846 to 1856, by 464,119 acres, without reckoning the great area in the Eastern Counties which was transformed from rabbit warrens and poor pastures into magnificent corn-fields. It has already been seen that, at the same time, the total number of persons employed in agriculture fell. As far as the actual agricultural labourers of both sexes and of all ages are concerned, their number fell from 1,241,269, in 1851, to 1,163,227 in 1861.<sup>3)</sup> If the English Registrar-General, therefore, rightly remarks:

“The increase of farmers and farm-labourers, since 1801, bears no kind of proportion ... to the increase of agricultural produce,”<sup>4)</sup>

this disproportion obtains much more for the last period, when a positive decrease of the agricultural population went hand in hand with increase of the area under cultivation, with more intensive culti-

<sup>1)</sup> The landed aristocracy advanced themselves to this end, of course per Parliament, funds from the State Treasury, at a very low rate of interest, which the farmers have to make good at a much higher rate.

<sup>2)</sup> The decrease of the middle-class farmers can be seen especially in the census category: “Farmer’s son, grandson, brother, nephew, daughter, grand-daughter, sister, niece”; in a word, the members of his own family, employed by the farmer. This category numbered, in 1851, 216,851 persons; in 1861, only 176,151. From 1851 to 1871, the farms under 20 acres fell by more than 900 in number; those between 50 and 75 acres fell from 8,253 to 6,370; the same thing occurred with all other farms under 100 acres. On the other hand, during the same twenty years, the number of large farms increased; those of 300-500 acres rose from 7,771 to 8,410, those of more than 500 acres from 2,755 to 3,914, those of more than 1,000 acres from 492 to 582.

<sup>3)</sup> The number of shepherds increased from 12,517 to 25,559.<sup>555</sup>

<sup>4)</sup> *Census*, 1. c., p. 36.

vation, unheard-of accumulation of the capital incorporated with the soil, and devoted to its working, an augmentation in the products of the soil without parallel in the history of English agriculture, plethoric rent-rolls of landlords, and growing wealth of the capitalist farmers. If we take this, together with the swift, unbroken extension of the markets, viz., the towns, and the reign of Free-trade,<sup>38</sup> then the agricultural labourer was at last, *post tot discrimina rerum*,<sup>a</sup> placed in circumstances that ought, *secundum artem*,<sup>b</sup> to have made him drunk with happiness.

But Professor Rogers comes to the conclusion that the lot of the English agricultural labourer of to-day, not to speak of his predecessor in the last half of the 14th and in the 15th century, but only compared with his predecessor from 1770 to 1780,<sup>556</sup> has changed for the worse to an extraordinary extent, that “the peasant has again become a serf”, and a serf worse fed and worse clothed.<sup>11</sup> Dr. Julian Hunter, in his epoch-making report on the dwellings of the agricultural labourers, says:

“The cost of the hind” (a name for the agricultural labourer, inherited from the time of serfdom) “is fixed at the lowest possible amount on which he can live ... the supplies of wages and shelter are not calculated on the profit to be derived from him. He is a zero in farming calculations...<sup>2</sup> The means //of subsistence// being always supposed to be a fixed quantity.<sup>3</sup> As to any further reduction of his income, he may say, *nihil habeo nihil curo*.<sup>d</sup> He has no fears for the future, because he has now only the spare supply necessary to keep him. He has reached the zero from which are dated the calculations of the farmer. Come what will, he has no share either in prosperity or adversity.”<sup>24</sup>

In the year 1863, an official inquiry took place into the conditions of nourishment and labour of the criminals condemned to transportation and penal servitude. The results are recorded in two voluminous Blue Books.<sup>9</sup> Among other things it is said:

<sup>11</sup> Rogers, l. c., p. 693, p. 10. Mr. Rogers belongs to the Liberal School, is a personal friend of Cobden and Bright, and therefore no *laudator temporis acti*.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>2</sup> “Public Health. Seventh Report,” 1865, p. 242. It is therefore nothing unusual either for the landlord to raise a labourer’s rent as soon as he hears that he is earning a little more, or for the farmer to lower the wage of the labourer, “because his wife has found a trade”, l. c.

<sup>3</sup> l. c., p. 135.

<sup>4</sup> l. c., p. 134.

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<sup>a</sup> after so many vicissitudes - <sup>b</sup> according to the orthodox rules - <sup>c</sup> singer of praise of time gone by (*Horace, Ars poetica*, 173). - <sup>d</sup> I have nothing and I do not care about anything.

"From an elaborate comparison between the diet of convicts in the convict prisons in England, and that of paupers in workhouses and of free labourers in the same country ... it certainly appears that the former are much better fed than either of the two other classes,"<sup>1)</sup> whilst "the amount of labour required from an ordinary convict under penal servitude is about one half of what would be done by an ordinary day labourer."<sup>2)</sup>

A few characteristic depositions of witnesses: John Smith, governor of the Edinburgh prison, deposes:

No. 5056. "The diet of the English prisons //is// superior to that of ordinary labourers in England." No. 5057. "It is the fact ... that the ordinary agricultural labourers in Scotland very seldom get any meat at all." Answer No. 3047. "Is there anything that you are aware of to account for the necessity of feeding them very much better than ordinary labourers? — Certainly not." No. 3048. "Do you think that further experiments ought to be made in order to ascertain whether a dietary might not be hit upon for prisoners employed on public works nearly approaching to the dietary of free labourers?..."<sup>3)</sup> "He //the agricultural labourer// might say: 'I work hard, and have not enough to eat, and when in prison I did not work harder where I had plenty to eat, and therefore it is better for me to be in prison again than here.'"<sup>4)</sup>

From the tables appended to the first volume of the Report I have compiled the annexed comparative summary.

#### WEEKLY AMOUNT OF NUTRIMENT

	Quantity of Nitrogenous Ingredients	Quantity of Non-Nitrogenous Ingredients	Quantity of Mineral Matter	Total
	<i>Ounces</i>	<i>Ounces</i>	<i>Ounces</i>	<i>Ounces</i>
Portland (convict) . . . . .	28.95	150.06	4.68	183.69
Sailor in the Navy . . . . .	29.63	152.91	4.52	187.06
Soldier . . . . .	25.55	114.49	3.94	143.98
Working Coachmaker . . . . .	24.53	162.06	4.23	190.82
Compositor . . . . .	21.24	100.83	3.12	125.19
Agricultural labourer . . . . .	17.73	118.06	3.29	139.08 <sup>5)</sup>

The general result of the inquiry by the medical commission of 1863 on the food of the lowest fed classes, is already known to the reader. He will remember that the diet of a great part of the agricultural

<sup>1)</sup> *Report of the Commissioners ... Relating to Transportation and Penal Servitude*, Lond., 1863, p. 42, n. 50.

<sup>2)</sup> I. c., p. 77. "Memorandum by the Lord Chief Justice."

<sup>3)</sup> I. c., Vol. II, *Minutes of Evidence* [pp. 418, 239].

<sup>4)</sup> I. c., Vol. I, Appendix, p. 280.

<sup>5)</sup> I. c., pp. 274, 275.

labourers' families is below the minimum necessary "to arrest starvation diseases". This is especially the case in all the purely rural districts of Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Wilts, Stafford, Oxford, Berks, and Herts.

"The nourishment obtained by the labourer himself," says Dr. E. Smith, "is larger than the average quantity indicates, since he eats a larger share ... necessary to enable him to perform his labour ... of food than the other members of the family, including in the poorer districts nearly all the meat and bacon.... The quantity of food obtained by the wife and also by the children at the period of rapid growth, is in many cases, in almost every county, deficient, and particularly in nitrogen."<sup>1)</sup>

The male and female servants living with the farmers themselves are sufficiently nourished. Their number fell from 288,272 in 1851, to 204,962 in 1861.<sup>555</sup>

"The labour of women in the fields," says Dr. Smith, "whatever may be its disadvantages, ... is under present circumstances of great advantage to the family, since it adds that amount of income which ... provides shoes and clothing and pays the rent, and thus enables the family to be better fed."<sup>2)</sup>

One of the most remarkable results of the inquiry was that the agricultural labourer of England, as compared with other parts of the United Kingdom, "is considerably the worst fed", as the appended table shows:

Quantities of Carbon and Nitrogen weekly consumed by an average agricultural adult:

	Carbon, grains	Nitrogen, grains
England . . . . .	40,673	1,594
Wales . . . . .	48,354	2,031
Scotland . . . . .	48,980	2,348
Ireland . . . . .	43,366	2,434 <sup>3)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> "Public Health. Sixth Report," 1864, pp. 238, 249, 261, 262.

<sup>2)</sup> l. c., p. 262.

<sup>3)</sup> l. c., p. 17. The English agricultural labourer receives only  $\frac{1}{4}$  as much milk, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  as much bread as the Irish. Arthur Young in his *Tour in Ireland*, at the beginning of this century, already noticed the better nourishment of the latter. The reason is simply this, that the poor Irish farmer is incomparably more humane than the rich English. As regards Wales, that which is said in the text holds only for the south-west. All the doctors there agree that the increase of the death-rate through tuberculosis, scrofula, etc., increases in intensity with the deterioration of the physical condition of the population, and all ascribe this deterioration to poverty. "His" (the farm labourer's) "keep is reckoned at about five pence a day, but in many districts it was said to be of much less

"To the insufficient quantity and miserable quality of the house accommodation generally had," says Dr. Simon, in his official Health Report, "by our agricultural labourers, almost every page of Dr. Hunter's report bears testimony. And gradually, for many years past, the state of the labourer in these respects has been deteriorating, house-room being now greatly more difficult for him to find, and, when found, greatly less suitable to his needs than, perhaps, for centuries had been the case. Especially within the last twenty or thirty years, the evil has been in very rapid increase, and the household circumstances of the labourer are now in the highest degree deplorable. Except in so far as they whom his labour enriches, see fit to treat him with a kind of pitiful indulgence, he is quite peculiarly helpless in the matter. Whether he shall find house-

cost to the farmer" //himself very poor//.... "A morsel of the salt meat or bacon, ... salted and dried to the texture of mahogany, and hardly worth the difficult process of assimilation ... is used to flavour a large quantity of broth or gruel, of meal and leeks, and day after day this is the labourer's dinner." The advance of industry resulted for him, in this harsh and damp climate, in "the abandonment of the solid homespun clothing in favour of the cheap and so-called cotton goods", and of stronger drinks for so-called tea. "The agriculturist, after several hours' exposure to wind and rain, gains his cottage to sit by a fire of peat or of balls of clay and small coal kneaded together, from which volumes of carbonic and sulphurous acids are poured forth. His walls are of mud and stones, his floor the bare earth which was there before the hut was built, his roof a mass of loose and sodden thatch. Every crevice is stopped to maintain warmth, and in an atmosphere of diabolic odour, with a mud floor, with his only clothes drying on his back, he often sups and sleeps with his wife and children. Obstetricians who have passed parts of the night in such cabins have described how they found their feet sinking in the mud of the floor, and they were forced (easy task) to drill a hole through the wall to effect a little private respiration. It was attested by numerous witnesses in various grades of life, that to these insanitary influences, and many more, the underfed peasant was nightly exposed, and of the result, a debilitated and scrofulous people, there was no want of evidence.... The statements of the relieving officers of Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire show in a striking way the same state of things. There is besides "a plague more horrible still, the great number of idiots". Now a word on the climatic conditions. "A strong south-west wind blows over the whole country for 8 or 9 months in the year, bringing with it torrents of rain, which discharge principally upon the western slopes of the hills. Trees are rare, except in sheltered places, and where not protected, are blown out of all shape. The cottages generally crouch under some bank, or often in a ravine or quarry, and none but the smallest sheep and native cattle can live on the pastures.... The young people migrate to the eastern mining districts of Glamorgan and Monmouth. Carmarthenshire is the breeding ground of the mining population and their hospital. The population can therefore barely maintain its numbers." Thus in Cardiganshire:

	1851.	1861.
Males . . . . .	45,155	44,446
Females . . . . .	52,459	52,955
	<hr/>	
	97,614	97,401

Dr. Hunter's Report in "Public Health. Seventh Report, 1864", pp. 498-502, *passim*.

room on the land which he contributes to till, whether the house-room which he gets shall be human or swinish, whether he shall have the little space of garden that so vastly lessens the pressure of his poverty—all this does not depend on his willingness and ability to pay reasonable rent for the decent accommodation he requires, but depends on the use which others may see fit to make of their 'right to do as they will with their own'. However large may be a farm, there is no law that a certain proportion of labourers' dwellings (much less of decent dwellings) shall be upon it; nor does any law reserve for the labourer ever so little right in that soil to which his industry is as needful as sun and rain. ... An extraneous element weighs the balance heavily against him ... the influence of the Poor Law in its provisions concerning settlement and chargeability.<sup>1)</sup> Under this influence, each parish has a pecuniary interest in reducing to a minimum the number of its resident labourers:—for, unhappily, agricultural labour instead of implying a safe and permanent independence for the hardworking labourer and his family, implies for the most part only a longer or shorter circuit to eventual pauperism—a pauperism which, during the whole circuit, is so near, that any illness or temporary failure of occupation necessitates immediate recourse to parochial relief—and thus all residence of agricultural population in a parish is glaringly an addition to its poor rates.... Large proprietors<sup>2)</sup> ... have but to resolve that there shall be no labourers' dwellings on their estates, and their estates will thenceforth be virtually free from half their responsibility for the poor. How far it has been intended, in the English constitution and law, that this kind of unconditional property in land should be acquirable, and that a landlord 'doing as he wills with his own', should be able to treat the cultivators of the soil as aliens, whom he may expel from his territory, is a question which I do not pretend to discuss.... For that (power) of eviction ... does not exist only in theory. On a very large scale it prevails in practice—prevails ... as a main governing condition in the household circumstances of agricultural labour.... As regards the extent of the evil, it may suffice to refer to the evidence which Dr. Hunter has compiled from the last census, that destruction of houses, notwithstanding increased local demands for them, had, during the last ten years, been in progress in 821 separate parishes or townships of England, so that irrespectively of persons who had been forced to become non-resident (that is in the parishes in which they work), these parishes and townships were receiving in 1861, as compared with 1851, a population  $5\frac{1}{3}$  per cent. greater, into house-room  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. less. ... When the process of depopulation has completed itself, the result, says Dr. Hunter, is a show-village where the cottages have been reduced to a few, and where none but persons who are needed as shepherds, gardeners, or game-keepers, are allowed to live; regular servants who receive the good treatment usual to their class.<sup>3)</sup> But the land requires cultivation, and it will be found that the labourers

<sup>1)</sup> In 1865 this law was improved to some extent.<sup>557</sup> It will soon be learnt from experience that tinkering of this sort is of no use.

<sup>2)</sup> In order to understand that which follows, we must remember that "Close Villages" are those whose owners are one or two large landlords. "Open villages," those whose soil belongs to many smaller landlords. It is in the latter that building speculators can build cottages and lodging-houses.

<sup>3)</sup> A show-village of this kind looks very nice, but is as unreal as the villages that Catherine II saw on her journey to the Crimea.<sup>558</sup> In recent times the shepherd also has often been banished from these show-villages; e.g., near Market Harboro' is a sheep-farm of about 500 acres, which only employs the labour of one man. To reduce the long trudges over these wide plains, the beautiful pastures of Leicester and North-

employed upon it are not the tenants of the owner, but that they come from a neighbouring open village, perhaps three miles off, where a numerous small proprietary had received them when their cottages were destroyed in the close villages around. Where things are tending to the above result, often the cottages which stand, testify, in their unrepaired and wretched condition, to the extinction to which they are doomed. They are seen standing in the various stages of natural decay. While the shelter holds together, the labourer is permitted to rent it, and glad enough he will often be to do so, even at the price of decent lodging. But no repair, no improvement shall it receive, except such as its penniless occupants can supply. And when at last it becomes quite uninhabitable — uninhabitable even to the humblest standard of serfdom — it will be but one more destroyed cottage, and future poor rates will be somewhat lightened. While great owners are thus escaping from poor rates through the depopulation of lands over which they have control, the nearest town or open village receive the evicted labourers: the nearest, I say, but this “nearest” may mean three or four miles distant from the farm where the labourer has his daily toil. To that daily toil there will then have to be added, as though it were nothing, the daily need of walking six or eight miles for power of earning his bread. And whatever farmwork is done by his wife and children, is done at the same disadvantage. Nor is this nearly all the toil which the distance occasions him. In the open village, cottage speculators buy scraps of land, which they throng as densely as they can with the cheapest of all possible hovels. And into those wretched habitations (which, even if they adjoin the open country, have some of the worst features of the worst town residences) crowd the agricultural labourers of England.<sup>11</sup> ... Nor on the other hand must it be supposed that even when the labourer is housed upon the lands which he cultivates, his household circumstances are generally such as his life of

ampton, the shepherd used to get a cottage on the farm. Now they give him a thirteenth shilling a week for lodging, that he must find far away in an open village [“Public Health. Seventh Report, 1864”, p. 137].

<sup>11</sup> “The labourers’ houses” (in the open villages, which, of course, are always overcrowded) “are usually in rows, built with their backs against the extreme edge of the plot of land which the builder could call his, and on this account are not allowed light and air except from the front” (Dr. Hunter’s Report, l. c. [“Public Health. Seventh Report, 1864”, Ld., 1865], p. 135). Very often the beerseller or grocer of the village is at the same time the letter of its houses. In this case the agricultural labourer finds in him a second master, besides the farmer. He must be his customer as well as his tenant. “The hind with his 10s. a week, minus a rent of £4 a year ... is obliged to buy at the seller’s own terms, his modicum of tea, sugar, flour, soap, candles, and beer” (l. c., p. 132). These open villages form, in fact, the “penal settlements” of the English agricultural proletariat. Many of the cottages are simply lodging-houses, through which all the rabble of the neighbourhood passes. The country labourer and his family who had often, in a way truly wonderful, preserved, under the foulest conditions, a thoroughness and purity of character, go, in these, utterly to the devil. It is, of course, the fashion amongst the aristocratic usurers to shrug their shoulders pharisaically at the building speculators, the small landlords, and the open villages. They know well enough that their “close villages” and “show-villages” are the birth-places of the open villages, and could not exist without them. “The labourers ... were it not for the small owners, would, for by far the most part, have to sleep under the trees of the farms on which they work” (l. c., p. 135). The system of “open” and “closed” villages obtains in all the Midland counties and throughout the East of England.

productive industry would seem to deserve. Even on princely estates ... his cottage ... may be of the meanest description. There are landlords who deem any sty good enough for their labourer and his family, and who yet do not disdain to drive with him the hardest possible bargain for rent.<sup>21</sup> It may be but a ruinous one-bedroomed hut, having no fire-grate, no privy, no opening window, no water supply but the ditch, no garden—but the labourer is helpless against the wrong. ... And the Nuisances Removal Acts ... are ... a mere dead letter ... in great part dependent for their working on such cottage-owners as the one from whom his (the labourer's) hovel is rented.... From brighter, but exceptional scenes, it is requisite in the interests of justice, that attention should again be drawn to the overwhelming preponderance of facts which are a reproach to the civilisation of England. Lamentable indeed, must be the case, when, notwithstanding all that is evident with regard to the quality of the present accommodation, it is the common conclusion of competent observers that even the general badness of dwellings is an evil infinitely less urgent than their mere numerical insufficiency. For years the overcrowding of rural labourers' dwellings has been a matter of deep concern, not only to persons who care for sanitary good, but to persons who care for decent and moral life. For, again and again in phrases so uniform that they seem stereotyped, reporters on the spread of epidemic disease in rural districts, have insisted on the extreme importance of that overcrowding, as an influence which renders it a quite hopeless task, to attempt the limiting of any infection which is introduced. And again and again it has been pointed out that, notwithstanding the many salubrious influences which there are in country life, the crowding which so favours the extension of contagious disease, also favours the origination of disease which is not contagious. And those who have denounced the overcrowded state of our rural population have not been silent as to a further mischief. Even where their primary concern has been only with the injury to health, often almost perforce they have referred to other relations on the subject. In showing how frequently it happens that adult persons of both sexes, married and unmarried, are huddled together in single small sleeping rooms, their reports have carried the conviction that, under the circumstances they describe, decency must always be outraged, and morality almost of necessity must suffer.<sup>22</sup> Thus, for instance, in

<sup>21</sup> "The employer ... is ... directly or indirectly securing to himself the profit on a man employed at 10s. a week, and receiving from this poor hind £4 or £5 annual rent for houses not worth £20 in a really free market, but maintained at their artificial value by the power of the owner to say 'Use my house, or go seek a hiring elsewhere, without a character from me....' Does a man wish to better himself, to go as a plate-layer on the railway, or to begin quarry-work, the same power is ready with "Work for me at this low rate of wages or begone at a week's notice; take your pig with you, and get what you can for the potatoes growing in your garden." Should his interest appear to be better served by it, an enhanced rent is sometimes preferred in these cases by the owner (i. e., the farmer) as the penalty for leaving his service" (Dr. Hunter, *l. c.*, p. 132).

<sup>22</sup> "New married couples are no edifying study for grown-up brothers and sisters; and though instances must not be recorded, sufficient data are remembered to warrant the remark, that great depression and sometimes death are the lot of the female participant in the offence of incest" (Dr. Hunter, *l. c.*, p. 137). A member of the rural police who had for many years been a detective in the worst quarters of London, says of the girls of his village: "their boldness and shamelessness I never saw equalled during some years of police life and detective duty in the worst parts of London.... They live like

the appendix of my last annual report, Dr. Ord, reporting on an outbreak of fever at Wing, in Buckinghamshire, mentions how a young man who has come thither from Wingrave with fever, "in the first days of his illness slept in a room with nine other persons. Within a fortnight several of these persons were attacked, and in the course of a few weeks five out of the nine had fever, and one died...." From Dr. Harvey, of St. George's Hospital, who, on private professional business, visited Wing during the time of the epidemic, I received information exactly in the sense of the above report.... "A young woman having fever, lay at night in a room occupied by her father and mother, her bastard child, two young men (her brothers), and her two sisters, each with a bastard child—10 persons in all. A few weeks ago 13 persons slept in it."<sup>1)</sup>

Dr. Hunter investigated 5,375 cottages of agricultural labourers, not only in the purely agricultural districts, but in all counties of England. Of these, 2,195 had only one bedroom (often at the same time used as living-room), 2,930 only two, and 250, more than two.<sup>559</sup> I will give a few specimens culled from a dozen counties.

#### (1.) *Bedfordshire*

*Wrestlingworth.* Bedrooms about 12 feet long and 10 broad, although many are smaller than this. The small, one-storied cots are often divided by partitions into two bedrooms, one bed frequently in a kitchen, 5 feet 6 inches in height. Rent, £3 a year. The tenants have to make their own privies, the landlord only supplies a hole. As soon as one has made a privy, it is made use of by the whole neighbourhood. One house, belonging to a family called Richardson, was of quite unapproachable beauty. "Its plaster walls bulged very like a lady's dress in a curtsey. One gable end was convex, the other concave, and on this last, unfortunately, stood the chimney, a curved tube of clay and wood like an elephant's trunk. A long stick served as prop to prevent the chimney from falling. The doorway and window were rhomboidal." Of 17 houses visited, only 4 had more than one bedroom, and those four overcrowded. The cots with one bedroom sheltered 3 adults and 3 children, a married couple with 6 children, &c.

*Dunton.* High rents, from £4 to £5; weekly wages of the man, 10s. They hope to pay the rent by the straw-plaiting of the family. The higher the rent, the greater the number that must work together to pay it. Six adults, living with 4 children in one sleeping apartment,

pigs, great boys and girls, mothers and fathers, all sleeping in one room, in many instances" ("Child. Empl. Com. Sixth Report, 1867," p. 77 sq. [No.] 155).

<sup>1)</sup> "Public Health. Seventh Report, 1864," pp. 9-14, *passim*.

pay £3 10s. for it. The cheapest house in Dunton, 15 feet long externally, 10 broad, let for £3. Only one of the houses investigated had 2 bedrooms. A little outside the village, a house whose "tenants dunned against the house-side," the lower 9 inches of the door eaten away through sheer rottenness; the doorway, a single opening closed at night by a few bricks, ingeniously pushed up after shutting and covered with some matting. Half a window, with glass and frame, had gone the way of all flesh. Here, without furniture, huddled together were 3 adults and 5 children. Dunton is not worse than the rest of Biggleswade Union.

### (2.) *Berkshire*

*Beenham.* In June, 1864, a man, his wife and 4 children lived in a cot (one-storied cottage). A daughter came home from service with scarlet fever. She died. One child sickened and died. The mother and one child were down with typhus when Dr. Hunter was called in. The father and one child slept outside, but the difficulty of securing isolation was seen here, for in the crowded market of the miserable village lay the linen of the fever-stricken household, waiting for the wash. The rent of H.'s house, 1s. a-week; one bedroom for man, wife, and 6 children. One house let for 8d. a-week, 14 feet 6 inches long, 7 feet broad, kitchen, 6 feet high; the bedroom without window, fireplace, door, or opening, except into the lobby; no garden. A man lived here for a little while, with two grown-up daughters and one grown-up son; father and son slept on the bed, the girls in the passage. Each of the latter had a child while the family was living here, but one went to the workhouse for her confinement and then came home.

### (3.) *Buckinghamshire*

30 cottages — on 1,000 acres of land — contained here about 130-140 persons. The parish of *Bradenham* comprises 1,000 acres; it numbered, in 1851, 36 houses and a population of 84 males and 54 females. This inequality of the sexes was partly remedied in 1861, when they numbered 98 males and 87 females; increase in 10 years of 14 men and 33 women. Meanwhile, the number of houses was one less.

*Winslow.* Great part of this newly built in good style; demand

for houses appears very marked, since very miserable cots let at 1s. to 1s. 3d. per week.

*Water Eaton.* Here the landlords, in view of the increasing population, have destroyed about 20 per cent. of the existing houses. A poor labourer, who had to go about 4 miles to his work, answered the question, whether he could not find a cot nearer: "No; they know better than to take a man in with my large family."

*Tinker's End*, near Winslow. A bedroom in which were 4 adults and 5 children; 11 feet long, 9 feet broad, 6 feet 5 inches high at its highest part; another 11 feet 7 inches by 9 feet, 5 feet 10 inches high, sheltered 6 persons. Each of these families had less space than is considered necessary for a convict. No house had more than one bedroom, not one of them a back-door; water very scarce; weekly rent from 1s. 4d. to 2s. In 16 of the houses visited, only 1 man that earned 10s. a-week. The quantity of air for each person under the circumstances just described corresponds to that which he would have if he were shut up in a box of 4 feet measuring each way, the whole night. But then, the ancient dens afforded a certain amount of unintentional ventilation.

#### (4.) *Cambridgeshire*

*Gamblingay* belongs to several landlords. It contains the wretchedest cots to be found anywhere. Much straw-plaiting. "A deadly lassitude, a hopeless surrendering up to filth," reigns in Gamblingay. The neglect in its centre, becomes mortification at its extremities, north and south, where the houses are rotting to pieces. The absentee landlords bleed this poor rookery too freely. The rents are very high; 8 or 9 persons packed in one sleeping apartment, in 2 cases 6 adults, each with 1 or 2 children in one small bedroom.

#### (5.) *Essex*

In this county, diminutions in the number of persons and of cottages go, in many parishes, hand in hand. In not less than 22 parishes, however, the destruction of houses has not prevented increase of population, or has not brought about that expulsion which, under the name "migration to towns", generally occurs. In Fingringhoe, a par-

ish of 3,443 acres, were in 1851, 145 houses; in 1861, only 110. But the people did not wish to go away, and managed even to increase under these circumstances. In 1851, 252 persons inhabited 61 houses, but in 1861, 262 persons were squeezed into 49 houses. In Basildon, in 1851, 157 persons lived on 1,827 acres, in 35 houses; at the end of ten years, 180 persons in 27 houses. In the parishes of Fingringhoe, South Farnbridge, Widford, Basildon, and Ramsden Crags, in 1851, 1,392 persons were living on 8,449 acres in 316 houses; in 1861, on the same area, 1,473 persons in 249 houses.

#### *(6.) Herefordshire*

This little county has suffered more from the “eviction-spirit” than any other in England. At Madley, overcrowded cottages generally, with only 2 bedrooms, belonging for the most part to the farmers. They easily let them for £3 or £4 a-year, and paid a weekly wage of 9s.

#### *(7.) Huntingdon*

*Hartford* had, in 1851, 87 houses; shortly after this, 19 cottages were destroyed in this small parish of 1,720 acres; population in 1831, 452; in 1851, 382; and in 1861, 341. 14 cottages, each with 1 bedroom, were visited. In one, a married couple, 3 grown-up sons, 1 grown-up daughter, 4 children—in all 10; in another, 3 adults, 6 children. One of these rooms, in which 8 people slept, was 12 feet 10 inches long, 12 feet 2 inches broad, 6 feet 9 inches high: the average, without making any deduction for projections into the apartment, gave about 130 cubic feet per head. In the 14 sleeping rooms, 34 adults and 33 children. These cottages are seldom provided with gardens, but many of the inmates are able to farm small allotments at 10s. or 12s. per rood. These allotments are at a distance from the houses, which are without privies. The family “must either go to the allotment to deposit their ordure”, or, as happens in this place, saving your presence, “use a closet with a trough set like a drawer in a chest of drawers, and drawn out weekly and conveyed to the allotment to be emptied where its contents were wanted”. In Japan, the circle of life-conditions moves more decently than this.

(8.) *Lincolnshire*

*Langtoft.* A man lives here, in Wright's house, with his wife, her mother, and 5 children; the house has a front kitchen, scullery, bedroom over the front kitchen; front kitchen and bedroom, 12 feet 2 inches by 9 feet 5 inches; the whole ground floor, 21 feet 2 inches by 9 feet 5 inches. The bedroom is a garret: the walls run together into the roof like a sugar-loaf, a dormer-window opening in front. "Why did he live here? On account of the garden? No; it is very small. Rent? High, 1s. 3d. per week. Near his work? No; 6 miles away, so that he walks daily, to and fro, 12 miles. He lived there, because it was a ten-antable cot", and because he wanted to have a cot for himself alone, anywhere, at any price, and in any conditions. The following are the statistics of 12 houses in Langtoft, with 12 bedrooms; 38 adults, and 36 children.

## TWELVE HOUSES IN LANGTOFT

Houses	Bedrooms	Adults	Children	Number of Persons	Houses	Bedrooms	Adults	Children	Number of Persons
No. 1.	1	3	5	8	No. 7.	1	3	3	6
" 2.	1	4	3	7	" 8.	1	3	2	5
" 3.	1	4	4	8	" 9.	1	2	0	2
" 4.	1	5	4	9	" 10.	1	2	3	5
" 5.	1	2	2	4	" 11.	1	3	3	6
" 6.	1	5	3	8	" 12.	1	2	4	6

(9.) *Kent*

*Kennington*, very seriously overpopulated in 1859, when diphtheria appeared, and the parish doctor instituted a medical inquiry into the condition of the poorer classes. He found that in this locality, where much labour is employed, various cots had been destroyed and no new ones built. In one district stood four houses, named birdcages; each had 4 rooms of the following dimensions in feet and inches:

Kitchen: 9 ft. 5 by 8 ft. 11 by 6 ft. 6.

Scullery: 8 ft. 6 by 4 ft. 6 by 6 ft. 6.

Bedroom: 8 ft. 5 by 5 ft. 10 by 6 ft. 3.

Bedroom: 8 ft. 3 by 8 ft. 4 by 6 ft. 3.

*(10.) Northamptonshire*

*Brixworth, Pitsford and Floore:* in these villages in the winter 20-30 men were lounging about the streets from want of work. The farmers do not always till sufficiently the corn and turnip lands, and the landlord has found it best to throw all his farms together into 2 or 3. Hence want of employment. Whilst on one side of the wall, the land calls for labour, on the other side the defrauded labourers are casting at it longing glances. Feverishly overworked in summer, and half-starved in winter, it is no wonder if they say in their peculiar dialect, "the parson and gentlefolk seem frit to death at them".

At Floore, instances, in one bedroom of the smallest size, of couples with 4, 5, 6 children; 3 adults with 5 children; a couple with grandfather and 6 children down with scarlet fever, &c.; in two houses with two bedrooms, two families of 8 and 9 adults respectively.

*(11.) Wiltshire*

*Stratton.* 31 houses visited, 8 with only one bedroom. Penhill, in the same parish: a cot let as ls. 3d. weekly with 4 adults and 4 children, had nothing good about it, except the walls, from the floor of rough-hewn pieces of stones to the roof of worn-out thatch.

*(12.) Worcestershire*

House-destruction here not quite so excessive; yet from 1851 to 1861, the number of inhabitants to each house on the average, has risen from 4.2 to 4.6.

*Badsey.* Many cots and little gardens here. Some of the farmers declare that the cots are "a great nuisance here, because they bring the poor". On the statement of one gentleman:

"The poor are none the better for them; if you build 500 they will let fast enough, in fact, the more you build, the more they want"

(according to him the houses give birth to the inhabitants, who then by a law of Nature press on "the means of housing"). Dr. Hunter remarks:

"Now these poor must come from somewhere, and as there is no particular attraction, such as doles, at Badsey, it must be repulsion from some other unfit place, which

will send them here. If each could find an allotment near his work, he would not prefer Badsey, where he pays for his scrap of ground twice as much as the farmer pays for his.”<sup>1)</sup>

The continual emigration to the towns, the continual formation of surplus population in the country through the concentration of farms, conversion of arable land into pasture, machinery, &c., and the continual eviction of the agricultural population by the destruction of their cottages, go hand in hand. The more empty the district is of men, the greater is its “relative surplus population”, the greater is their pressure on the means of employment, the greater is the absolute excess of the agricultural population over the means for housing it, the greater, therefore, in the villages is the local surplus population and the most pestilential packing together of human beings. The packing together of knots of men in scattered little villages and small country towns corresponds to the forcible draining of men from the surface of the land. The continuous superseding of the agricultural labourers, in spite of their diminishing number and the increasing mass of their products, gives birth to their pauperism. Their pauperism is ultimately a motive to their eviction and the chief source of their miserable housing which breaks down their last power of resistance, and makes them mere slaves of the landed proprietors and the farmers.<sup>1)</sup> Thus the minimum of wages becomes a law of Nature to them. On the other hand, the land, in spite of its constant “relative surplus population”, is at the same time underpopulated. This is seen, not only locally at the points where the efflux of men to towns, mines, railroad-making, &c., is most marked. It is to be seen everywhere, in harvest time as well as in spring and summer, at those frequently recurring times when English agriculture, so careful and intensive, wants extra hands. There are always too many agricultural labourers for the ordi-

<sup>1)</sup> “The heaven-born employment of the hind [see this volume, pp. 672-73] gives dignity even to his position. He is not a slave, but a soldier of peace, and deserves his place in married men’s quarters to be provided by the landlord, who has claimed a power of enforced labour similar to that the country demands of the soldier. He no more receives market price for his work than does the soldier. Like the soldier he is caught young, ignorant, knowing only his own trade, and his own locality. Early marriage and the operation of the various laws of settlement affect the one as enlistment and the Mutiny Act affect the other” (Dr. Hunter, 1. c., p. 132). Sometimes an exceptionally soft-hearted landlord relents at the solitude he has created. “It is a melancholy thing to stand alone in one’s country,” said Lord Leicester, when complimented on the completion of Hookham. “I look around and not a house is to be seen but mine. I am the giant of Giant Castle, and have eat up all my neighbours” [1. c., p. 135].

nary, and always too few for the exceptional or temporary needs of the cultivation of the soil.<sup>1)</sup> Hence we find in the official documents contradictory complaints from the same places of deficiency and excess of labour simultaneously. The temporary or local want of labour brings about no rise in wages, but a forcing of the women and children into the fields, and exploitation at an age constantly lowered. As soon as the exploitation of the women and children takes place on a larger scale, it becomes in turn a new means of making a surplus population of the male agricultural labourer and of keeping down his wage. In the east of England thrives a beautiful fruit of this vicious circle—the so-called gang system, to which I must briefly return here.<sup>2)</sup>

The gang system obtains almost exclusively in the counties of Lincoln, Huntingdon, Cambridge, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Nottingham, here and there in the neighbouring counties of Northampton, Bedford, and Rutland. Lincolnshire will serve us as an example. A large part of this county is new land, marsh formerly, or even, as in others of the eastern counties just named, won lately from the sea. The steam-engine has worked wonders in the way of drainage. What were once fens and sandbanks, bear now a luxuriant sea of corn and the highest of rents. The same thing holds of the alluvial lands won by

<sup>1)</sup> A similar movement is seen during the last ten years in France; in proportion as capitalist production there takes possession of agriculture, it drives the "surplus" agricultural population into the towns. Here also we find deterioration in the housing and other conditions as the source of the surplus population. On the special "prolétariat foncier",<sup>a</sup> to which this system of parcelling out the land has given rise, see, among others, the work of Collins, already quoted, and Karl Marx, *Der Achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte*, 2nd edition, Hamburg, 1869, pp. 56, &c. [present edition, Vol. 11, pp. 187 sqq.]. In 1846, the town population in France was represented by 24.42, the agricultural by 75.58; in 1861, the town by 28.86, the agricultural by 71.14 per cent ["Public Health. Seventh Report...", p. 129]. During the last 5 years, the diminution of the agricultural percentage of the population has been yet more marked. As early as 1846, Pierre Dupont in his *Ouvriers* sang:

Mal vêtus, logés dans des trous,  
Sous les combles, dans les décombres,  
Nous vivons avec les hiboux  
Et les larbons, amis des ombres.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>2)</sup> "Sixth and last Report of the Children's Employment Commission", published at the end of March, 1867. It deals solely with the agricultural gang system.

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<sup>a</sup> landowning proletariat - <sup>b</sup> "Badly clothed, living in holes, under the eaves, in the ruins, with the owls and the thieves, companions of the shadows."

human endeavour, as in the island of Axholme and other parishes on the banks of the Trent. In proportion as the new farms arose, not only were no new cottages built: old ones were demolished, and the supply of labour had to come from open villages, miles away, by long roads that wound along the sides of the hills. There alone had the population formerly found shelter from the incessant floods of the winter time. The labourers that dwell on the farms of 400-1,000 acres (they are called "confined labourers") are solely employed on such kinds of agricultural work as is permanent, difficult, and carried on by aid of horses. For every 100 acres there is, on an average, scarcely one cottage. A fen farmer, e.g., gave evidence before the Commission of Inquiry:

"I farm 320 acres, all arable land. I have not one cottage on my farm. I have only one labourer on my farm now. I have four horsemen lodging about. We get light work done by gangs."<sup>1)</sup>

The soil requires much light field labour, such as weeding, hoeing, certain processes of manuring, removing of stones, &c. This is done by the gangs, or organised bands that dwell in the open villages.

The gang consists of 10 to 40 or 50 persons, women, young persons of both sexes (13-18 years of age, although the boys are for the most part eliminated at the age of 13), and children of both sexes (6-13 years of age). At the head is the gang master, always an ordinary agricultural labourer, generally what is called a bad lot, a scapegrace, unsteady, drunken, but with a dash of enterprise and *savoir faire*. He is the recruiting-sergeant for the gang, which works under him, not under the farmer. He generally arranges with the latter for piece work, and his income, which on the average is not very much above that of an ordinary agricultural labourer,<sup>2)</sup> depends almost entirely upon the dexterity with which he manages to extract within the shortest time the greatest possible amount of labour from his gang. The farmers have discovered that women work steadily only under the direction of men, but that women and children, once set going, impetuously spend their lifeforce—as Fourier knew—while the adult male labourer is shrewd enough to economise his as much as he can. The gang master goes from one farm to another, and thus employs his gang from 6 to 8 months in the year. Employment by him is, there-

<sup>1)</sup> "Child. Emp. Comm., VI. Report", Evidence [No.] 173, p. 37.

<sup>2)</sup> Some gang masters, however, have worked themselves up to the position of farmers of 500 acres, or proprietors of whole rows of houses.

fore, much more lucrative and more certain for the labouring families, than employment by the individual farmer, who only employs children occasionally. This circumstance so completely rivets his influence in the open villages that children are generally only to be hired through his instrumentality. The lending out of these individually, independently of the gang, is his second trade. The "draw-backs" of the system are the overwork of the children and young persons, the enormous marches that they make daily to and from the farms, 5, 6, and sometimes 7 miles distant, finally, the demoralisation of the gang. Although the gang master, who, in some districts is called "the driver", is armed with a long stick, he uses it but seldom, and complaints of brutal treatment are exceptional. He is a democratic emperor, or a kind of Pied Piper of Hamelin.<sup>560</sup> He must therefore be popular with his subjects, and he binds them to himself by the charms of the gipsy life under his direction. Coarse freedom, a noisy jollity, and obscenest impudence give attractions to the gang. Generally the gang master pays up in a public house; then he returns home at the head of the procession reeling drunk, propped up right and left by a stalwart virago, while children and young persons bring up the rear, boisterous, and singing chaffing and bawdy songs. On the return journey what Fourier calls "phanerogamie", is the order of the day. The getting with child of girls of 13 and 14 by their male companions of the same age, is common. The open villages which supply the contingent of the gang, become Sodoms and Gomorrahs,<sup>1)</sup> and have twice as high a rate of illegitimate births as the rest of the kingdom. The moral character of girls bred in these schools, when married women, was shown above. Their children, when opium does not give them the finishing stroke, are born recruits of the gang.

The gang in its classical form just described, is called the public, common, or tramping gang. For there are also private gangs. These are made up in the same way as the common gang, but count fewer members, and work, not under a gang master, but under some old farm servant, whom the farmer does not know how to employ in any better way. The gipsy fun has vanished here, but according to all witnesses, the payment and treatment of the children is worse.

<sup>1)</sup> "Half the girls of Ludford have been ruined by going out" (in gangs), 1. c., p. 6, No. 32.

The gang system, which during the last years has steadily increased,<sup>1)</sup> clearly does not exist for the sake of the gang master. It exists for the enrichment of the large farmers,<sup>2)</sup> and indirectly of the landlords.<sup>3)</sup> For the farmer there is no more ingenious method of keeping his labourers well below the normal level, and yet of always having an extra hand ready for extra work, of extracting the greatest possible amount of labour with the least possible amount of money,<sup>4)</sup> and of making adult male labour “redundant”. From the exposition already made, it will be understood why, on the one hand, a greater or less lack of employment for the agricultural labourer is admitted, while on the other, the gang system is at the same time declared “necessary” on account of the want of adult male labour and its migration to the towns.<sup>5)</sup> The cleanly weeded land, and the uncleanly human weeds, of Lincolnshire, are pole and counterpole of capitalistic production.<sup>6)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> “They (gangs) have greatly increased of late years. In some places they are said to have been introduced at comparatively late dates; in others where gangs ... have been known for many years ... more and younger children are employed in them” (1. c., p. 79, No. 174).

<sup>2)</sup> “Small farmers never employ gangs.” “It is not on poor land, but on land which affords rent of from 40 to 50 shillings, that women and children are employed in the greatest numbers” (1. c., pp. 17, 14 [Nos. 13, 120]).

<sup>3)</sup> To one of these gentlemen the taste of his rent was so grateful that he indignantly declared to the Commission of Inquiry that the whole hubbub was only due to the name of the system. If instead of “gang” it were called “the Agricultural Juvenile Industrial Self-supporting Association”, everything would be all right.

<sup>4)</sup> “Gang work is cheaper than other work; that is why they are employed,” says a former gang master (1. c., p. 17, No. 14). “The gang system is decidedly the cheapest for the farmer, and decidedly the worst for the children,” says a farmer (1. c., p. 16, No. 3).

<sup>5)</sup> “Undoubtedly much of the work now done by children in gangs used to be done by men and women. More men are out of work now where children and women are employed than formerly” (1. c., p. 43, n. 202). On the other hand, “the labour question in some agricultural districts, particularly the arable, is becoming so serious in consequence of emigration, and the facility afforded by railways for getting to large towns that I” (the “I” is the steward of a great lord) “think the services of children are most indispensable” (1. c., p. 80, n. 180). For the “labour question” in English agricultural districts, differently from the rest of the civilised world, means the landlords’ and farmers’ question, viz., how is it possible, despite an always increasing exodus of the agricultural folk, to keep up a sufficient relative surplus population in the country, and by means of it keep the wages of the agricultural labourer at a minimum?

<sup>6)</sup> The “Public Health Report”, where in dealing with the subject of children’s mortality, the gang system is treated in passing,<sup>561</sup> remains unknown to the press, and, therefore, to the English public. On the other hand, the last report of the “Child.

(f.) *Ireland*<sup>563</sup>

In concluding this section, we must travel for a moment to Ireland. First, the main facts of the case.

The population of Ireland had, in 1841, reached 8,222,664; in 1851, it had dwindled to 6,623,985; in 1861, to 5,850,309; in 1866, to  $5\frac{1}{2}$  millions, nearly to its level in 1801. The diminution began with the famine year, 1846, so that Ireland, in less than twenty years, lost more than  $\frac{5}{16}$  ths of its people.<sup>1)</sup> Its total emigration from May, 1851, to July, 1865, numbered 1,591,487: the emigration during the years 1861-1865 was more than half-a-million. The number of inhabited houses fell, from 1851-1861, by 52,990. From 1851-1861, the number of holdings of 15 to 30 acres increased 61,000, that of holdings over 30 acres, 109,000, whilst the total number of all farms fell 120,000, a fall, therefore, solely due to the suppression of farms under 15 acres—i. e., to their centralisation.

Empl. Comm.”<sup>562</sup> afforded the press sensational copy always welcome. Whilst the Liberal press asked how the fine gentlemen and ladies, and the well-paid clergy of the State Church, with whom Lincolnshire swarms, could allow such a system to arise on their estates, under their very eyes, they who send out expressly missions to the Antipodes “for the improvement of the morals of South Sea Islanders”—the more refined press confined itself to reflections on the coarse degradation of the agricultural population who are capable of selling their children into such slavery! Under the accursed conditions to which these “delicate” people condemn the agricultural labourer, it would not be surprising if he ate his own children. What is really wonderful is the healthy integrity of character, he has, in great part, retained. The official reports prove that the parents, even in the gang districts, loathe the gang system. “There is much in the evidence that shows that the parents of the children would, in many instances, be glad to be aided by the requirements of a legal obligation, to resist the pressure and the temptations to which they are often subject. They are liable to be urged, at times by the parish officers, at times by employers, under threats of being themselves discharged, to be taken to work at an age when ... school attendance ... would be manifestly to their greater advantage.... All that time and strength wasted; all the suffering from extra and unprofitable fatigue produced to the labourer and to his children; every instance in which the parent may have traced the moral ruin of his child to the undermining of delicacy by the overcrowding of cottages, or to the contaminating influences of the public gang, must have been so many incentives to feelings in the minds of the labouring poor which can be well understood, and which it would be needless to particularise. They must be conscious that much bodily and mental pain has thus been inflicted upon them from causes for which they were in no way answerable; to which, had it been in their power, they would have in no way consented; and against which they were powerless to struggle” (I. c., p. xx., No. 82, and xxiii., n. 96).

<sup>1)</sup> Population of Ireland, 1801, 5,319,867 persons; 1811, 6,084,996; 1821, 6,869,544; 1831, 7,828,347; 1841, 8,222,664.

Table A  
LIVESTOCK

Year	Horses		Cattle		
	Total Number	Decrease	Total Number	Decrease	Increase
1860	619,811		3,606,374		
1861	614,232	5,579	3,471,688	138,486	
1862	602,894	11,338	3,254,890	216,798	
1863	579,978	22,916	3,144,231	110,659	
1864	562,158	17,820	3,262,294		118,063
1865	547,867	14,291	3,493,414		231,120

Year	Sheep			Pigs		
	Total Number	Decrease	Increase	Total Number	Decrease	Increase
1860	3,542,080			1,271,072		
1861	3,556,050			1,102,042	169,030	
1862	3,456,132	99,918		1,154,324		52,282
1863	3,308,204	147,928		1,067,458	86,866	
1864	3,366,941		58,737	1,058,480	8,978	
1865	3,688,742		321,801	1,299,893		241,413

The decrease of the population was naturally accompanied by a decrease in the mass of products. For our purpose, it suffices to consider the 5 years from 1861-1865 during which over half-a-million emigrated, and the absolute number of people sank by more than  $\frac{1}{3}$  of a million.

From the above table it results:—

Horses	Cattle	Sheep	Pigs
Absolute Decrease	Absolute Decrease	Absolute Increase	Absolute Increase
71,944	112,960	146,662	28,821 <sup>1)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> The result would be found yet more unfavourable if we went further back. Thus: Sheep in 1865, 3,688,742, but in 1856, 3,694,294. Pigs in 1865, 1,299,863, but in 1858, 1,409,883.

Let us now turn to agriculture, which yields the means of subsistence for cattle and for men. In the following table is calculated the

Table B

INCREASE OR DECREASE IN THE AREA UNDER CROPS AND GRASS  
IN ACREAGE

Year	Cereal Crops		Green Crops		Grass and Clover		Flax		Total Cultivated Land	
	Decrease	Decrease	Increase	Decrease	Increase	Decrease	Increase	Decrease	Increase	
1861	Acres 15,701	Acres 36,974	Acres 47,969	Acres 6,623	Acres 7,724	Acres 47,486	Acres 63,922	Acres 87,761	Acres 28,218	Acres 81,373
1862	72,734	74,785						2,055	138,841	
1863	144,719	19,358						63,922	92,431	
1864	122,437	2,317						87,761		10,493
1865	72,450		25,421		68,970	50,159			28,218	
1861- -65	428,041	108,013			82,834			122,850	330,370	

INCREASE OR DECREASE IN THE AREA UNDER CULTIVATION, PRODUCT

Product	Acres of Cultivated Land		Increase or Decrease, 1865		Product per Acre		
	1864	1865	+	-	1864		
Wheat . . . . .	276,483	266,989		9,494	Wheat	cwt.,	13.3
Oats . . . . .	1,814,886	1,745,228		69,658	Oats	"	12.1
Barley . . . . .	172,700	177,102	4,402		Barley	"	15.9
Bere . . . . .	8,894	10,091	1,197		Bere	"	16.4
Rye . . . . .					Rye	"	8.5
Potatoes . . . . .	1,039,724	1,066,260	26,536		Potatoes,	tons	4.1
Turnips . . . . .	337,355	334,212		3,143	Turnips	"	10.3
Mangold-wurzel . . . . .	14,073	14,389	316		Mangold-wurzel		10.5
Cabbages . . . . .	31,821	33,622	1,801		Cabbages . . . . .		9.3
Flax . . . . .	301,693	251,433		50,260	Flax, st. (14 lb)		34.2
Hay . . . . .	1,609,569	1,678,493	68,924		Hay, tons		1.6

decrease or increase for each separate year, as compared with its immediate predecessor. The Cereal Crops include wheat, oats, barley, rye, beans, and peas; the Green Crops, potatoes, turnips, mangolds, beet-root, cabbages, carrots, parsnips, vetches, &c.

<sup>1)</sup> The data of the text are put together from the materials of the *Agricultural Statistics, Ireland, General Abstracts, Dublin*, for the years 1860, *et seq.*, and *Agricultural Statistics, Ireland. Tables showing the estimated average produce, &c., Dublin, 1866*.<sup>564</sup> These statistics are official, and laid before Parliament annually. (Note to 2nd edition. The official statistics for the year 1872 show, as compared with 1871, a decrease in area under cultivation of 134,915 acres. An increase occurred in the cultivation of green crops, turnips, mangold-wurzel, and the like; a decrease in the area under cultivation for wheat of 16,000 acres; oats, 14,000; barley and rye, 4,000; potatoes, 66,632; flax, 34,667; grass, clover, vetches, rape-seed, 30,000. The soil under cultivation for wheat shows for the last 5 years the following stages of decrease:—1868, 285,000 acres; 1869, 280,000; 1870, 259,000; 1871, 244,000; 1872, 228,000. For 1872 we find, in round numbers, an increase of 2,600 horses, 80,000 horned cattle, 28,682 sheep, and a decrease of 236,000 pigs.)<sup>565</sup>

Table C

## PER ACRE, AND TOTAL PRODUCT OF 1865 COMPARED WITH 1864

1865	Increase or Decrease, 1865		Total Product				Increase or Decrease, 1865
	+	-	1864	1865	Qrs.	Qrs.	
13.0	0.2	0.3	875,782	826,783	"	"	48,999 qs.
12.3	1.0		7,826,332	7,659,727	"	"	166,605 "
14.9	1.6		761,909	732,017	"	"	29,892 "
14.8	1.9		15,160	13,989	"	"	1,171 "
10.4	0.5		12,680	18,364	"	"	5,684 qs.
3.6	0.4		4,312,388	3,865,990	ts.	ts.	446,398 ts.
9.9			3,467,659	3,301,683	"	"	165,976 "
13.3	2.8		147,284	191,937	"	"	44,653 ts.
10.4	1.1		297,375	350,252	"	"	52,877 "
25.2	9.0		64,506	39,561	st.	st.	24,945 st. <sup>1)</sup>
1.8	0.2		2,607,153	3,068,707	ts.	ts.	461,554 "

## THE INCOME-TAX ON THE SUBJOINED

	1860	1861
Schedule A.		
Rent of Land . . . . .	12,893,829	13,003,554
Schedule B.		
Farmers' Profits . . . . .	2,765,387	2,773,644
Schedule D.		
Industrial, &c., Profits . . . . .	4,891,652	4,836,203
Total Schedules A. to E. . . . .	22,962,885	22,998,394

In the year 1865, 127,470 additional acres came under the heading "grass land", chiefly because the area under the heading of "bog and waste unoccupied", decreased by 101,543 acres. If we compare 1865 with 1864, there is a decrease in cereals of 246,667 qrs., of which 48,999 were wheat, 160,605 oats, 29,892 barley, &c.: the decrease in potatoes was 446,398 tons, although the area of their cultivation increased in 1865.

From the movement of population and the agricultural produce of Ireland, we pass to the movement in the purse of its landlords, larger farmers, and industrial capitalists. It is reflected in the rise and fall of the Income-tax. It may be remembered that Schedule D. (profits with the exception of those of farmers), includes also the so-called, "professional" profits—i. e., the incomes of lawyers, doctors, &c.; and the Schedules C. and E., in which no special details are given, include the incomes of employés, officers, State sinecurists, State fundholders, &c.

Under Schedule D., the average annual increase of income from 1853-1864 was only 0.93; whilst, in the same period, in Great Britain, it was 4.58.<sup>566</sup> The following table shows the distribution of the profits (with the exception of those of farmers) for the years 1864 and 1865:—

Table D

## INCOMES IN POUNDS STERLING

1862	1863	1864	1865
13,398,938	13,494,091	13,470,700	13,801,616
2,937,899	2,938,923	2,930,874	2,946,072
4,858,800	4,846,497	4,546,147	4,850,199
23,597,574	23,658,631	23,236,298	23,930,340 <sup>1)</sup>

Table E<sup>567</sup>

## SCHEDULE D. INCOME FROM PROFITS (OVER £60) IN IRELAND

	1864 £		1865 £	
Total yearly income of . . . . .	4,368,610	divided among 17,467 persons.	4,669,979	divided among 18,081 persons.
Yearly income over £60 and under £100 . . . . .	238,726	" 5,015 "	222,575	" 4,703 "
Of the yearly total income . . . . .	1,979,066	" 11,321 "	2,028,571	" 12,184 "
Remainder of the total yearly income . . . . .	2,150,818	" 1,131 "	2,418,833	" 1,194 "
Of these . . . . .	1,073,906	" 1,010 "	1,097,927	" 1,044 "
	1,076,912	" 121 "	1,320,906	" 150 "
	430,535	" 95 "	584,458	" 122 "
	646,377	" 26 "	736,448	" 28 "
	262,819	" 3 "	274,528	" 32"

<sup>1)</sup> Tenth Report of the Commissioners of Inland Revenue, Lond. 1866 [pp. lviii-lx].<sup>2)</sup> The total yearly income under Schedule D. is different in this table from that which appears in the preceding ones, because of certain deductions allowed by law.

England, a country with fully developed capitalist production, and pre-eminently industrial, would have bled to death with such a drain of population as Ireland has suffered. But Ireland is at present only an agricultural district of England, marked off by a wide channel from the country to which it yields corn, wool, cattle, industrial and military recruits.

The depopulation of Ireland has thrown much of the land out of cultivation, has greatly diminished the produce of the soil,<sup>1)</sup> and, in spite of the greater area devoted to cattle breeding, has brought about, in some of its branches, an absolute diminution, in others, an advance scarcely worthy of mention, and constantly interrupted by retrogressions. Nevertheless, with the fall in numbers of the population, rents and farmers' profits rose, although the latter not as steadily as the former. The reason of this is easily comprehensible. On the one hand, with the throwing of small holdings into large ones, and the change of arable into pasture land, a larger part of the whole produce was transformed into surplus produce. The surplus produce increased, although the total produce, of which it formed a fraction, decreased. On the other hand, the money value of this surplus produce increased yet more rapidly than its mass, in consequence of the rise in the English market price of meat, wool, &c., during the last 20, and especially during the last 10, years.

The scattered means of production that serve the producers themselves as means of employment and of subsistence, without expanding their own value by the incorporation of the labour of others, are no more capital than a product consumed by its own producer is a commodity. If, with the mass of the population, that of the means of production employed in agriculture also diminished, the mass of the capital employed in agriculture increased, because a part of the means of production that were formerly scattered, was concentrated and turned into capital.

The total capital of Ireland outside agriculture, employed in industry and trade, accumulated during the last two decades slowly, and with great and constantly recurring fluctuations; so much the more rapidly did the concentration of its individual constituents de-

<sup>1)</sup> If the product also diminishes relatively per acre, it must not be forgotten that for a century and a half England has indirectly exported the soil of Ireland, without as much as allowing its cultivators the means for making up the constituents of the soil that had been exhausted.

velop. And, however small its absolute increase, in proportion to the dwindling population it had increased largely.

Here, then, under our own eyes and on a large scale, a process is revealed, than which nothing more excellent could be wished for by orthodox economy for the support of its dogma: that misery springs from absolute surplus population, and that equilibrium is re-established by depopulation. This is a far more important experiment than was the plague in the middle of the 14th century so belauded of Malthusians.<sup>210</sup> Note further: If only the naïveté of the schoolmaster could apply to the conditions of production and population of the nineteenth century, the standard of the 14th, this naïveté, into the bargain, overlooked the fact that whilst, after the plague and the decimation that accompanied it, followed on this side of the Channel, in England, enfranchisement and enrichment of the agricultural population, on that side, in France, followed greater servitude and more misery.<sup>1)</sup>

The Irish famine of 1846 killed more than 1,000,000 people, but it killed poor devils only. To the wealth of the country it did not the slightest damage. The exodus of the next 20 years, an exodus still constantly increasing, did not, as, e. g., the Thirty Years' War,<sup>540</sup> decimate, along with the human beings, their means of production. Irish genius discovered an altogether new way of spiriting a poor people thousands of miles away from the scene of its misery. The exiles transplanted to the United States, send home sums of money every year as travelling expenses for those left behind. Every troop that emigrates one year, draws another after it the next. Thus, instead of costing Ireland anything, emigration forms one of the most lucrative branches of its export trade. Finally, it is a systematic process, which does not simply make a passing gap in the population, but sucks out of it every year more people than are replaced by the births, so that the absolute level of the population falls year by year.<sup>2)</sup>

What were the consequences for the Irish labourers left behind and freed from the surplus population? That the relative surplus popula-

<sup>1)</sup> As Ireland is regarded as the promised land of the “principle of population”, M. T. Sadler, before the publication of his work on population, issued his famous book, *Ireland, its Evils and their Remedies*. 2nd edition, London, 1829. Here, by comparison of the statistics of the individual provinces, and of the individual counties in each province, he proves that the misery there is not, as Malthus would have it, in proportion to the number of the population, but in inverse ratio to this.

<sup>2)</sup> Between 1851 and 1874 the total number of emigrants amounted to 2,325,922.

tion is today as great as before 1846; that wages are just as low, that the oppression of the labourers has increased, that misery is forcing the country towards a new crisis. The facts are simple. The revolution in agriculture has kept pace with emigration. The production of relative surplus population has more than kept pace with the absolute depopulation. A glance at table B<sup>a</sup>. shows that the change of arable to pasture land must work yet more acutely in Ireland than in England. In England the cultivation of green crops increases with the breeding of cattle; in Ireland, it decreases. Whilst a large number of acres, that were formerly tilled, lie idle or are turned permanently into grass-land, a great part of the waste land and peat bogs that were unused formerly, become of service for the extension of cattle-breeding. The smaller and medium farmers—I reckon among these all who do not cultivate more than 100 acres—still make up about  $\frac{8}{10}$ ths of the whole number.<sup>b</sup> They are, one after the other, and with a degree of force unknown before, crushed by the competition of an agriculture managed by capital, and therefore they continually furnish new recruits to the class of wage labourers. The one great industry of Ireland, linen manufacture, requires relatively few adult men and only employs altogether, in spite of its expansion since the price of cotton rose in 1861-1866, a comparatively insignificant part of the population. Like all other great modern industries, it constantly produces, by incessant fluctuations, a relative surplus population within its own sphere, even with an absolute increase in the mass of human beings absorbed by it. The misery of the agricultural population forms the pedestal for gigantic shirt factories, whose armies of labourers are, for the most part, scattered over the country. Here, we encounter again the system described above of domestic industry, which in underpayment and overwork, possesses its own systematic means for creating supernumerary labourers. Finally, although the depopulation has not such destructive consequences as would result in a country with fully developed capitalistic production, it does not go on without constant reaction upon the home market. The gap which emigration causes here, limits not only the local demand for labour, but also the incomes of small shopkeepers, artisans, tradespeo-

<sup>b</sup> According to a table in Murphy's *Ireland Industrial, Political and Social*, 1870 [p. 103], 94.6 per cent. of the holdings do not reach 100 acres, 5.4 exceed 100 acres.

<sup>a</sup> See this volume, p. 691.

ple generally. Hence the diminution in incomes between £60 and £100 in Table E.

A clear statement of the condition of the agricultural labourers in Ireland is to be found in the Reports of the Irish Poor Law Inspectors (1870).<sup>1)</sup> Officials of a government which is maintained only by bayonets and by a state of siege, now open, now disguised, they have to observe all the precautions of language that their colleagues in England disdain. In spite of this, however, they do not let their government cradle itself in illusions. According to them the rate of wages in the country, still very low, has within the last 20 years risen 50-60 per cent., and stands now, on the average, at 6s. to 9s. per week. But behind this apparent rise, is hidden an actual fall in wages, for it does not correspond at all to the rise in price of the necessary means of subsistence that has taken place in the meantime. For proof, the following extract from the official accounts of an Irish workhouse.

AVERAGE WEEKLY COST PER HEAD<sup>568</sup>

Year ended	Provisions and Necessaries	Clothing	Total
29th Sept., 1849.	1s. $3\frac{1}{4}$ d.	3d.	1s. $6\frac{1}{4}$ d.
" 1869.	2s. $7\frac{1}{4}$ d.	6d.	3s. $1\frac{1}{4}$ d.

The price of the necessary means of subsistence is therefore fully twice, and that of clothing exactly twice, as much as they were 20 years before.

Even apart from this disproportion, the mere comparison of the rate of wages expressed in gold would give a result far from accurate. Before the famine, the great mass of agricultural wages were paid in kind, only the smallest part in money; today, payment in money is the rule. From this it follows that, whatever the amount of the real wage, its money rate must rise.

"Previous to the famine, the labourer enjoyed his cabin ... with a rood, or half-acre or acre of land, and facilities for ... a crop of potatoes. He was able to rear his pig and keep fowl.... But they now have to buy bread, and they have no refuse upon which they can feed a pig or fowl, and they have consequently no benefit from the sale of a pig, fowl, or eggs."<sup>2)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> "Reports from the Poor Law Inspectors on the Wages of Agricultural Labourers in Dublin", 1870. See also "Agricultural Labourers (Ireland). Return, etc." 8 March, 1861, London, 1862.

<sup>2)</sup> I. c., pp. 29, 1.

In fact, formerly, the agricultural labourers were but the smallest of the small farmers, and formed for the most part a kind of rear-guard of the medium and large farms on which they found employment. Only since the catastrophe of 1846 have they begun to form a fraction of the class of purely wage labourers, a special class, connected with its wage masters only by monetary relations.

We know what were the conditions of their dwellings in 1846. Since then they have grown yet worse. A part of the agricultural labourers, which, however, grows less day by day, dwells still on the holdings of the farmers in overcrowded huts, whose hideousness far surpasses the worst that the English agricultural labourers offered us in this way. And this holds generally with the exception of certain tracts of Ulster; in the south, in the counties of Cork, Limerick, Kilkenny, &c.; in the east, in Wicklow, Wexford, &c.; in the centre of Ireland, in King's and Queen's County, Dublin, &c.; in the west, in Sligo, Roscommon, Mayo, Galway. &c.

"The agricultural labourers' huts", an inspector cries out, "are disgrace to the Christianity and to the civilisation of this country."<sup>1)</sup>

In order to increase the attractions of these holes for the labourers, the pieces of land belonging thereto from time immemorial, are systematically confiscated.

"The mere sense that they exist subject to this species of ban, on the part of the landlords and their agents, has ... given birth in the minds of the labourers to corresponding sentiments of antagonism and dissatisfaction towards those by whom they are thus led to regard themselves as being treated as ... a proscribed race."<sup>2)</sup>

The first act of the agricultural revolution was to sweep away the huts situated on the field of labour. This was done on the largest scale, and as if in obedience to a command from on high. Thus many labourers were compelled to seek shelter in villages and towns. There they were thrown like refuse into garrets, holes, cellars and corners, in the worst back slums. Thousands of Irish families, who according to the testimony of the English, eaten up as these are with national prejudice, are notable for their rare attachment to the domestic hearth, for their gaiety and the purity of their home-life, found themselves suddenly transplanted into hotbeds of vice. The men are now obliged to seek work of the neighbouring farmers and are only hired by the day, and therefore under the most precarious form of wage. Hence

<sup>1)</sup> l. c., p. 12.

<sup>2)</sup> l. c., p. 12.

"they sometimes have long distances to go to and from work, often get wet, and suffer much hardship, not unfrequently ending in sickness, disease and want".<sup>1)</sup>

"The towns have had to receive from year to year what was deemed to be the surplus labour of the rural division"<sup>2)</sup>; and then people still wonder "there is still a surplus of labour in the towns and villages, and either a scarcity or a threatened scarcity in some of the country divisions".<sup>3)</sup> The truth is that this want only becomes perceptible "in harvest-time, or during spring, or at such times as agricultural operations are carried on with activity; at other periods of the year many hands are idle"<sup>4)</sup>; that "from the digging out of the main crop of potatoes in October until the early spring following ... there is no employment for them",<sup>5)</sup> and further, that during the active times they "are subject to broken days and to all kinds of interruptions".<sup>6)</sup>

These results of the agricultural revolution — i. e., the change of arable into pasture land, the use of machinery, the most rigorous economy of labour, &c., are still further aggravated by the model landlords, who, instead of spending their rents in other countries, descend to live in Ireland on their demesnes. In order that the law of supply and demand may not be broken, these gentlemen draw their

"labour-supply ... chiefly from their small tenants, who are obliged to attend when required to do the landlord's work, at rates of wages, in many instances, considerably under the current rates paid to ordinary labourers, and without regard to the inconvenience or loss to the tenant of being obliged to neglect his own business at critical periods of sowing or reaping".<sup>7)</sup>

The uncertainty and irregularity of employment, the constant return and long duration of gluts of labour, all these symptoms of a relative surplus population, figure therefore in the reports of the Poor Law administration, as so many hardships of the agricultural proletariat. It will be remembered that we met, in the English agricultural proletariat, with a similar spectacle. But the difference is that in England, an industrial country, the industrial reserve recruits itself from the country districts, whilst in Ireland, an agricultural country, the agricultural reserve recruits itself from the towns, the cities of refuge of the expelled agricultural labourers. In the former, the supernumeraries of agriculture are transformed into factory operatives; in the latter, those forced into the towns, whilst at the same time they press

<sup>1)</sup> I. c., p. 25.

<sup>2)</sup> I. c., p. 27.

<sup>3)</sup> I. c., p. 26.

<sup>4)</sup> I. c., p. 1.

<sup>5)</sup> I. c., pp. 31, 32.

<sup>6)</sup> I. c., p. 25.

<sup>7)</sup> I. c., p. 30.

on the wages in towns, remain agricultural labourers, and are constantly sent back to the country districts in search of work.

The official inspectors sum up the material condition of the agricultural labourer as follows:

"Though living with the strictest frugality, his own wages are barely sufficient to provide food for an ordinary family and pay his rent, and he depends upon other sources for the means of clothing himself, his wife, and children.... The atmosphere of these cabins, combined with the other privations they are subjected to, has made this class particularly susceptible to low fever and pulmonary consumption."<sup>1)</sup>

After this, it is no wonder that, according to the unanimous testimony of the inspectors, a sombre discontent runs through the ranks of this class, that they long for the return of the past, loathe the present, despair of the future, give themselves up "to the evil influence of agitators", and have only one fixed idea, to emigrate to America. This is the land of Cockaigne, into which the great Malthusian panacea, depopulation, has transformed green Erin.

What a happy life the Irish factory operative leads one example will show:

"On my recent visit to the North of Ireland," says the English Factory Inspector, Robert Baker, "I met with the following evidence of effort in an Irish skilled workman to afford education to his children; and I give his evidence verbatim, as I took it from his mouth. That he was a skilled factory hand, may be understood when I say that he was employed on goods for the Manchester market. 'Johnson.—I am a beetler and work from 6 in the morning till 11 at night, from Monday to Friday. Saturday we leave off at 6 p. m., and get three hours of it (for meals and rest). I have five children in all. For this work I get 10s. 6d. a week; my wife works here also, and gets 5s. a week. The oldest girl who is 12, minds the house. She is also cook, and all the servant we have. She gets the young ones ready for school. A girl going past the house wakes me at half past five in the morning. My wife gets up and goes along with me. We get nothing (to eat) before we come to work. The child of 12 takes care of the little children all the day, and we get nothing till breakfast at eight. At eight we go home. We get tea once a week; at other times we get stirabout, sometimes of oat-meal, sometimes of Indian meal, as we are able to get it. In the winter we get a little sugar and water to our Indian meal. In the summer we get a few potatoes, planting a small patch ourselves; and when they are done we get back to stirabout. Sometimes we get a little milk as it may be. So we go on from day to day, Sunday and week day, always the same the year round. I am always very much tired when I have done at night. We may see a bit of flesh meat sometimes, but very seldom. Three of our children attend school, for whom we pay 1d. a week a head. Our rent is 9d. a week. Peat for firing costs 1s. 6d. a fortnight at the very lowest.'"<sup>2)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> l. c., pp. 21, 13.

<sup>2)</sup> "Rept. of Insp. of Fact., 31st Oct., 1866", p. 96.

Such are Irish wages, such is Irish life!

In fact the misery of Ireland is again the topic of the day in England. At the end of 1866 and the beginning of 1867, one of the Irish land magnates, Lord Dufferin, set about its solution in *The Times*.<sup>569</sup> "Wie menschlich von solch grossem Herrn!"<sup>570</sup>

From Table E. we saw that, during 1864, of £4,368,610 of total profits, three surplus value makers pocketed only £262,819; that in 1865, however, out of £4,669,979 total profits, the same three virtuosi of "abstinence" pocketed £274,528; in 1864, 26 surplus value makers reached to £646,377; in 1865, 28 surplus value makers reached to £736,448; in 1864, 121 surplus value makers, £1,076,912; in 1865, 150 surplus value makers, £1,320,906; in 1864, 1,131 surplus value makers £2,150,818, nearly half of the total annual profit; in 1865, 1,194 surplus value makers, £2,418,833, more than half of the total annual profit. But the lion's share, which an inconceivably small number of land magnates in England, Scotland and Ireland swallow up of the yearly national rental, is so monstrous that the wisdom of the English State does not think fit to afford the same statistical materials about the distribution of rents as about the distribution of profits. Lord Dufferin is one of those land magnates. That rent rolls and profits can ever be "excessive", or that their plethora is in any way connected with plethora of the people's misery is, of course, an idea as "disreputable" as "unsound". He keeps to facts. The fact is that, as the Irish population diminishes, the Irish rent rolls swell; that depopulation benefits the landlords, therefore also benefits the soil, and, therefore, the people, that mere accessory of the soil. He declares, therefore, that Ireland is still overpopulated, and the stream of emigration still flows too lazily. To be perfectly happy, Ireland must get rid of at least one-third of a million of labouring men. Let no man imagine that this lord, poetic into the bargain, is a physician of the school of Sangrado,<sup>571</sup> who as often as he did not find his patient better, ordered phlebotomy and again phlebotomy, until the patient lost his sickness at the same time as his blood. Lord Dufferin demands a new blood-letting of one-third of a million only, instead of about two millions; in fact, without the getting rid of these, the millennium in Erin is not to be. The proof is easily given.

## NUMBER AND EXTENT OF FARMS IN IRELAND IN 1864

(1) Farms not over 1 acre		(2) Farms over 1, not over 5 acres		(3) Farms over 5, not over 15 acres		(4) Farms over 15, not over 30 acres	
No.	Acres	No.	Acres	No.	Acres	No.	Acres
48,653	25,394	82,037	288,916	176,368	1,836,310	136,578	3,051,343
(5) Farms over 30, not over 50 acres		(6) Farms over 50, not over 100 acres		(7) Farms over 100 acres		(8) Total area	
No.	Acres	No.	Acres	No.	Acres	Acres	
71,961	2,906,274	54,247	3,983,880	31,927	8,227,807	20,319,921 <sup>1)</sup>	

Centralisation has from 1851 to 1861 destroyed principally farms of the first three categories, under 1 and not over 15 acres. These above all must disappear. This gives 307,058 "supernumerary" farmers, and reckoning the families the low average of 4 persons, 1,228,232 persons. On the extravagant supposition that, after the agricultural revolution is complete, one-fourth of these are again absorbable, there remain for emigration 921,174 persons. Categories 4, 5, 6, of over 15 and not over 100 acres, are, as was known long since in England, too small for capitalistic cultivation of corn, and for sheep-breeding are almost vanishing quantities. On the same supposition as before, therefore, there are further 788,358 persons to emigrate; total, 1,709,532. And as l'appétit vient en mangeant,<sup>572</sup> Rentroll's eyes will soon discover that Ireland, with  $3\frac{1}{2}$  millions, is still always miserable, and miserable because she is overpopulated. Therefore her depopulation must go yet further, that thus she may fulfil her true destiny, that of an English sheep-walk and cattle-pasture.<sup>2)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> The total area includes also peat, bogs, and waste land.

<sup>2)</sup> How the famine and its consequences have been deliberately made the most of, both by the individual landlords and by the English legislature, to forcibly carry out the agricultural revolution and to thin the population of Ireland down to the proportion satisfactory to the landlords, I shall show more fully in Vol. III of this work, in the section on landed property.<sup>573</sup> There also I return to the condition of the small farmers and the agricultural labourers. At present, only one quotation. Nassau W. Senior says, with other things, in his posthumous work, *Journals, Conversations and Essays relating to Ireland*. 2 vols. London, 1868; Vol. II, p. 282. "Well," said Dr. G., "we have got our Poor Law and it is a great instrument for giving the victory to the landlords. Another, and a still more powerful instrument is emigration.... No friend to Ireland can wish the war to be prolonged" (between the landlords and the small Celtic farmers) "—still less, that it should end by the victory of the tenants. The sooner it is over — the sooner Ireland becomes a grazing country, with the comparatively thin population which

Like all good things in this bad world, this profitable method has its drawbacks. With the accumulation of rents in Ireland, the accumulation of the Irish in America keeps pace. The Irishman, banished by sheep and ox, re-appears on the other side of the ocean as a Fenian,<sup>575</sup> and face to face with the old queen of the seas rises, threatening and more threatening, the young giant Republic:

*Acerba fata Romanos agunt  
Scelusque fraternalae necis.*<sup>576</sup>

a grazing country requires, the better for all classes." The English Corn Laws of 1815<sup>21</sup> secured Ireland the monopoly of the free importation of corn into Great Britain. They favoured artificially, therefore, the cultivation of corn. With the abolition of the Corn Laws in 1846, this monopoly was suddenly removed. Apart from all other circumstances, this event alone was sufficient to give a great impulse to the turning of Irish arable into pasture land, to the concentration of farms, and to the eviction of small cultivators. After the fruitfulness of the Irish soil had been praised from 1815 to 1846, and proclaimed loudly as by Nature herself destined for the cultivation of wheat, English agronomists, economists, politicians, discover suddenly that it is good for nothing but to produce forage. M. Léonce de Lavergne has hastened to repeat this on the other side of the Channel.<sup>574</sup> It takes a "serious" man, à la Lavergne, to be caught by such childishness.

## Part VIII

### THE SO-CALLED PRIMITIVE ACCUMULATION

#### Chapter XXVI

##### THE SECRET OF PRIMITIVE ACCUMULATION

We have seen how money is changed into capital; how through capital surplus value is made, and from surplus value more capital. But the accumulation of capital presupposes surplus value; surplus value presupposes capitalistic production; capitalistic production presupposes the pre-existence of considerable masses of capital and of labour power in the hands of producers of commodities. The whole movement, therefore, seems to turn in a vicious circle, out of which we can only get by supposing a primitive accumulation (previous accumulation of Adam Smith<sup>577</sup>) preceding capitalistic accumulation; an accumulation not the result of the capitalist mode of production, but its starting point.

This primitive accumulation plays in political economy about the same part as original sin in theology. Adam bit the apple, and thereupon sin fell on the human race.<sup>578</sup> Its origin is supposed to be explained when it is told as an anecdote of the past. In times long gone by there were two sorts of people; one, the diligent, intelligent, and, above all, frugal élite; the other, lazy rascals, spending their substance, and more, in riotous living. The legend of theological original sin tells us certainly how man came to be condemned to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow; but the history of economic original sin reveals to us that there are people to whom this is by no means essential. Never mind! Thus it came to pass that the former sort accumulated wealth, and the latter sort had at last nothing to sell except their own skins. And from this original sin dates the poverty of the great majority that, despite all its labour, has up to now nothing to sell but itself,

and the wealth of the few that increases constantly although they have long ceased to work. Such insipid childishness is every day preached to us in the defence of property. M. Thiers, e.g., had the assurance to repeat it with all the solemnity of a statesman, to the French people, once so *spirituel*.<sup>579</sup> But as soon as the question of property crops up, it becomes a sacred duty to proclaim the intellectual food of the infant as the one thing fit for all ages and for all stages of development. In actual history it is notorious that conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder, briefly, force, play the great part. In the tender annals of political economy, the idyllic reigns from time immemorial. Right and "labour" were from all time the sole means of enrichment, the present year of course always excepted. As a matter of fact, the methods of primitive accumulation are anything but idyllic.

In themselves money and commodities are no more capital than are the means of production and of subsistence. They want transforming into capital. But this transformation itself can only take place under certain circumstances that centre in this, viz., that two very different kinds of commodity possessors must come face to face and into contact; on the one hand, the owners of money, means of production, means of subsistence, who are eager to increase the sum of values they possess, by buying other people's labour power; on the other hand, free labourers, the sellers of their own labour power, and therefore the sellers of labour. Free labourers, in the double sense that neither they themselves form part and parcel of the means of production, as in the case of slaves, bondsmen, &c., nor do the means of production belong to them, as in the case of peasant proprietors; they are, therefore, free from, unencumbered by, any means of production of their own. With this polarisation of the market for commodities, the fundamental conditions of capitalist production are given. The capitalist system presupposes the complete separation of the labourers from all property in the means by which they can realise their labour. As soon as capitalist production is once on its own legs, it not only maintains this separation, but reproduces it on a continually extending scale. The process, therefore, that clears the way for the capitalist system, can be none other than the process which takes away from the labourer the possession of his means of production; a process that transforms, on the one hand, the social means of subsistence and of production into capital, on the other, the immediate producers into wage labourers. The so-called primitive accumulation, therefore, is nothing else than the historical process of divorcing the producer

from the means of production. It appears as primitive, because it forms the pre-historic stage of capital and of the mode of production corresponding with it.

The economic structure of capitalistic society has grown out of the economic structure of feudal society. The dissolution of the latter set free the elements of the former.

The immediate producer, the labourer, could only dispose of his own person after he had ceased to be attached to the soil and ceased to be the slave, serf, or bondman of another. To become a free seller of labour power, who carries his commodity wherever he finds a market, he must further have escaped from the regime of the guilds, their rules for apprentices and journeymen, and the impediments of their labour regulations. Hence, the historical movement which changes the producers into wage workers, appears, on the one hand, as their emancipation from serfdom and from the fetters of the guilds, and this side alone exists for our bourgeois historians. But, on the other hand, these new freedmen became sellers of themselves only after they had been robbed of all their own means of production, and of all the guarantees of existence afforded by the old feudal arrangements. And the history of this, their expropriation, is written in the annals of mankind in letters of blood and fire.

The industrial capitalists, these new potentates, had on their part not only to displace the guild masters of handicrafts, but also the feudal lords, the possessors of the sources of wealth. In this respect their conquest of social power appears as the fruit of a victorious struggle both against feudal lordship and its revolting prerogatives, and against the guilds and the fetters they laid on the free development of production and the free exploitation of man by man. The chevaliers d'industrie, however, only succeeded in supplanting the chevaliers of the sword by making use of events of which they themselves were wholly innocent. They have risen by means as vile as those by which the Roman freedman once on a time made himself the master of his *patronus*.

The starting point of the development that gave rise to the wage labourer as well as to the capitalist, was the servitude of the labourer. The advance consisted in a change of form of this servitude, in the transformation of feudal exploitation into capitalist exploitation. To understand its march, we need not go back very far. Although we come across the first beginnings of capitalist production as early as the 14th or 15th century, sporadically, in certain towns of the Medi-

terrenean, the capitalistic era dates from the 16th century. Wherever it appears, the abolition of serfdom has been long effected, and the highest development of the Middle Ages, the existence of sovereign towns, has been long on the wane.

In the history of primitive accumulation, all revolutions are epoch-making that act as levers for the capitalist class in course of formation; but, above all, those moments when great masses of men are suddenly and forcibly torn from their means of subsistence, and hurled as free and "unattached" proletarians on the labour market. The expropriation of the agricultural producer, of the peasant, from the soil, is the basis of the whole process. The history of this expropriation, in different countries, assumes different aspects, and runs through its various phases in different orders of succession, and at different periods. In England alone, which we take as our example, has it the classic form.<sup>1)</sup>

## Chapter XXVII

### EXPROPRIATION OF THE AGRICULTURAL POPULATION FROM THE LAND

In England, serfdom had practically disappeared in the last part of the 14th century. The immense majority of the population<sup>2)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> In Italy, where capitalistic production developed earliest, the dissolution of serfdom also took place earlier than elsewhere. The serf was emancipated in that country before he had acquired any prescriptive right to the soil. His emancipation at once transformed him into a free proletarian, who, moreover, found his master ready waiting for him in the towns, for the most part handed down as legacies from the Roman time. When the revolution of the world market, about the end of the 15th century, annihilated Northern Italy's commercial supremacy, a movement in the reverse direction set in.<sup>580</sup> The labourers of the towns were driven *en masse* into the country, and gave an impulse, never before seen, to the *petite culture*, carried on in the form of gardening.

<sup>2)</sup> "The petty proprietors who cultivated their own fields with their own hands, and enjoyed a modest competence ... then formed a much more important part of the nation than at present. If we may trust the best statistical writers of that age, not less than 160,000 proprietors who, with their families, must have made up more than a seventh of the whole population, derived their subsistence from little freehold estates. The average income of these small landlords ... was estimated at between £60 and £70 a year. It was computed that the number of persons who tilled their own land was greater than the number of those who farmed the land of others." Macaulay, *History of England*, 10th ed., 1854, I, pp. 333, 334. Even in the last third of the 17th century,  $\frac{4}{5}$  of the English people were agricultural (l. c., p. 413). I quote Macaulay, because as systematic falsifier of history he minimises as much as possible facts of this kind.

consisted then, and to a still larger extent, in the 15th century, of free peasant proprietors, whatever was the feudal title under which their right of property was hidden. In the larger seigniorial domains, the old bailiff, himself a serf, was displaced by the free farmer. The wage labourers of agriculture consisted partly of peasants, who utilised their leisure time by working on the large estates, partly of an independent special class of wage labourers, relatively and absolutely few in numbers. The latter also were practically at the same time peasant farmers, since, besides their wages, they had allotted to them arable land to the extent of 4 or more acres, together with their cottages. Besides they, with the rest of the peasants, enjoyed the usufruct of the common land, which gave pasture to their cattle, furnished them with timber, fire-wood, turf, &c.<sup>1)</sup> In all countries of Europe, feudal production is characterised by division of the soil amongst the greatest possible number of subfeudatories. The might of the feudal lord, like that of the sovereign, depended not on the length of his rent roll, but on the number of his subjects, and the latter depended on the number of peasant proprietors.<sup>2)</sup> Although, therefore, the English land, after the Norman conquest,<sup>581</sup> was distributed in gigantic baronies, one of which often included some 793 of the old Anglo-Saxon lordships, it was bestrewn with small peasant properties, only here and there interspersed with great seigniorial domains.<sup>582</sup> Such conditions, together with the prosperity of the towns so characteristic of the 15th century, allowed of that wealth of the people which Chancellor Fortescue so eloquently paints in his "*Laudibus legum Angliae*"; but it excluded the possibility of capitalistic wealth.

The prelude of the revolution that laid the foundation of the capitalist mode of production, was played in the last third of the 15th, and the first decade of the 16th century. A mass of free proletarians was hurled on the labour market by the breaking-up of the bands of

<sup>1)</sup> We must never forget that even the serf was not only the owner, if but a tribute-paying owner, of the piece of land attached to his house, but also a co-possessor of the common land. "The peasant" (in Silesia, under Frederick II) "is a serf." Nevertheless these serfs possess common lands. "It has not yet been possible to persuade the Silesians to partition the common lands, whereas in the Neumark there is scarcely a village where the partition has not been implemented with very great success" (Mirabeau, *De la Monarchie Prussienne*, Londres, 1788. t. ii, pp. 125, 126).

<sup>2)</sup> Japan, with its purely feudal organisation of landed property and its developed *petite culture*, gives a much truer picture of the European Middle Ages than all our history books, dictated as these are, for the most part, by bourgeois prejudices. It is very convenient to be "liberal" at the expense of the Middle Ages.

feudal retainers, who, as Sir James Steuart well says, "everywhere uselessly filled house and castle".<sup>583</sup> Although the royal power, itself a product of bourgeois development, in its strife after absolute sovereignty forcibly hastened on the dissolution of these bands of retainers, it was by no means the sole cause of it. In insolent conflict with king and parliament, the great feudal lords created an incomparably larger proletariat by the forcible driving of the peasantry from the land, to which the latter had the same feudal right as the lord himself, and by the usurpation of the common lands. The rapid rise of the Flemish wool manufactures, and the corresponding rise in the price of wool in England, gave the direct impulse to these evictions. The old nobility had been devoured by the great feudal wars.<sup>584</sup> The new nobility was the child of its time, for which money was the power of all powers. Transformation of arable land into sheepwalks was, therefore, its cry. Garrison, in his "Description of England, prefixed to Holinshed's Chronicles", describes how the expropriation of small peasants is ruining the country.

"What care our great encroachers?" The dwellings of the peasants and the cottages of the labourers were razed to the ground or doomed to decay. "If," says Garrison, "the old records of euerie manour be sought ... it will soon appear that in some manour seventeene, eighteene, or twentie houses are shrunk ... that England was neuer less furnished with people than at the present.... Of cities and townes either utterly decaied or more than a quarter or half diminished, though some one be a little increased here or there; of townes pulled downe for sheepe-walks, and no more but the lordships now standing in them.... I could saie somewhat."<sup>585</sup>

The complaints of these old chroniclers are always exaggerated, but they reflect faithfully the impression made on contemporaries by the revolution in the conditions of production. A comparison of the writings of Chancellor Fortescue and Thomas More reveals the gulf between the 15th and 16th century. As Thornton rightly has it, the English working class was precipitated without any transition from its golden into its iron age.<sup>586</sup>

Legislation was terrified at this revolution. It did not yet stand on that height of civilisation where the "wealth of the nation" (i.e., the formation of capital, and the reckless exploitation and impoverishing of the mass of the people) figure as the *ultima Thule*<sup>176</sup> of all state-craft. In his history of Henry VII, Bacon says:

"Inclosures at that time (1489) began to be more frequent, whereby arable land (which could not be manured without people and families) was turned into pasture, which was easily rid by a few herdsmen; and tenancies for years, lives, and at will (whereupon much of the yeomanry lived) were turned into demesnes. This bred a decay of

people, and (by consequence) a decay of towns, churches, tithes, and the like.... In remedying of this inconvenience the king's wisdom was admirable, and the parliament's at that time ... they took a course to take away depopulating inclosures, and depopulating pasturage.”<sup>587</sup>

An Act of Henry VII, 1488, cap. 19,<sup>588</sup> forbade the destruction of all “houses of husbandry” to which at least 20 acres of land belonged.<sup>589</sup> By an Act, 25 Henry VIII, the same law was renewed. It recites, among other things,

that many farms and large flocks of cattle, especially of sheep, are concentrated in the hands of a few men, whereby the rent of land has much risen and tillage has fallen off, churches and houses have been pulled down, and marvellous numbers of people have been deprived of the means wherewith to maintain themselves and their families. The Act, therefore, ordains the rebuilding of the decayed farmsteads, and fixes a proportion between corn land and pasture land, &c.<sup>590</sup>

An Act of 1533<sup>591</sup> recites that some owners possess 24,000 sheep, and limits the number to be owned to 2,000.<sup>1)</sup><sup>592</sup> The cry of the people and the legislation directed, for 150 years after Henry VII, against the expropriation of the small farmers and peasants, were alike fruitless. The secret of their inefficiency Bacon, without knowing it, reveals to us.

“The device of King Henry VII,” says Bacon, in his *Essays, Civil and Moral*, Essay 20, “was profound and admirable, in making farms and houses of husbandry of a standard; that is, maintained with such a proportion of land unto them as may breed a subject to live in convenient plenty, and no servile condition, and to keep the plough in the hands of the owners and not mere hirelings.”<sup>2)</sup><sup>593</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> In his *Utopia*, Thomas More says, that in England “your shepe that were wont to be so meke and tame, and so smal eaters, now, as I heare saye, become so great devourers and so wylde that they eate up, and swallow downe, the very men themselves.” *Utopia*, transl. by Robinson, ed. Arber, Lond., 1869, pp. 40-41.

<sup>2)</sup> Bacon shows the connexion between a free, well-to-do peasantry and good infantry. “This did wonderfully concern the might and mannerhood of the kingdom to have farms as it were of a standard sufficient to maintain an able body out of penury, and did in effect amortise a great part of the lands of the kingdom unto the hold and occupation of the yeomanry or middle people, of a condition between gentlemen, and cottagers and peasants.... For it hath been held by the general opinion of men of best judgment in the wars ... that the principal strength of an army consisteth in the infantry or foot. And to make good infantry it requireth men bred, not in a servile or indigent fashion, but in some free and plentiful manner. Therefore, if a state run most to noblemen and gentlemen, and that the husbandmen and ploughmen be but as their workfolk and labourers, or else mere cottagers (which are but hous'd beggars), you may have a good cavalry, but never good stable bands of foot.... And this is to be seen in France, and Italy, and some other parts abroad, where in effect all is noblesse or peasantry ... insomuch that they are inforced to employ mercenary bands of Switzers and the like, for

What the capitalist system demanded was, on the other hand, a degraded and almost servile condition of the mass of the people, the transformation of them into mercenaries, and of their means of labour into capital. During this transformation period, legislation also strove to retain the 4 acres of land by the cottage of the agricultural wage labourer, and forbade him to take lodgers into his cottage. In the reign of Charles I, 1627, Roger Crocker of Fontmill, was condemned for having built a cottage on the manor of Fontmill without 4 acres of land attached to the same in perpetuity.<sup>594</sup> As late as Charles I's reign, 1638, a royal commission was appointed to enforce the carrying out of the old laws, especially that referring to the 4 acres of land. Even in Cromwell's time, the building of a house within 10 miles of London was forbidden unless it was endowed with 4 acres of land.<sup>595</sup> As late as the first half of the 18th century complaint is made if the cottage of the agricultural labourer has not an adjunct of one or two acres of land. Nowadays he is lucky if it is furnished with a little garden, or if he may rent, far away from his cottage, a few roods.

"Landlords and farmers," says Dr. Hunter, "work here hand in hand. A few acres to the cottage would make the labourers too independent."<sup>596</sup>

The process of forcible expropriation of the people received in the 16th century a new and frightful impulse from the Reformation, and from the consequent colossal spoliation of the church property. The Catholic church was, at the time of the Reformation, feudal proprietor of a great part of the English land. The suppression of the monasteries, &c., hurled their inmates into the proletariat. The estates of the church were to a large extent given away to rapacious royal favourites, or sold at a nominal price to speculating farmers and citizens, who drove out, *en masse*, the hereditary subtenants and threw their holdings into one. The legally guaranteed property of the poorer folk in a part of the church's tithes was tacitly confiscated.<sup>597</sup> "Pauper ubique jacet", cried Queen Elizabeth, after a journey

their battalions of foot; whereby also it comes to pass that those nations have much people and few soldiers" ("The Reign of Henry VII." Verbatim reprint from Kennet's England. Ed. 1719. Lond., 1870, p. 308).

<sup>594</sup> Dr. Hunter, l. c. ["Public Health. Seventh report," London, 1865], p. 134. "The quantity of land assigned" (in the old laws) "would now be judged too great for labourers, and rather as likely to convert them into small farmers" (George Roberts, *The Social History of the People of the Southern Counties of England in Past Centuries*. Lond., 1856, pp. 184-185).

<sup>595</sup> "The right of the poor to share in the tithe, is established by the tenure of ancient statutes" (Tuckett, l. c., Vol. II., pp. 804-805).

through England.<sup>596</sup> In the 43rd year of her reign the nation was obliged to recognise pauperism officially by the introduction of a poor rate.<sup>597</sup>

"The authors of this law seem to have been ashamed to state the grounds of it, for" (contrary to traditional usage) "it has no preamble whatever."<sup>598</sup>

By the 16th of Charles I, ch. 4, it was declared perpetual,<sup>599</sup> and in fact only in 1834 did it take a new and harsher form.<sup>600</sup> These immediate results of the Reformation were not its most lasting ones. The

<sup>596</sup> William Cobbett, *A History of the Protestant Reformation*, § 471.

<sup>597</sup> The "spirit" of Protestantism may be seen from the following, among other things. In the south of England certain landed proprietors and well-to-do farmers put their heads together and propounded ten questions as to the right interpretation of the poor-law of Elizabeth. These they laid before a celebrated jurist of that time, Sergeant Snigge (later a judge under James I) for his opinion.<sup>599</sup> "Question 9—Some of the more wealthy farmers in the parish have devised a skilful mode by which all the trouble of executing this Act (the 43rd of Elizabeth) might be avoided. They have proposed that we shall erect a prison in the parish, and then give notice to the neighbourhood, that if any persons are disposed to farm the poor of this parish, they do give in sealed proposals, on a certain day, of the lowest price at which they will take them off our hands; and that they will be authorised to refuse to any one unless he be shut up in the aforesaid prison. The proposers of this plan conceive that there will be found in the adjoining counties, persons, who, being unwilling to labour and not possessing substance or credit to take a farm or ship, so as to live without labour, may be induced to make a very advantageous offer to the parish. If any of the poor perish under the contractor's care, the sin will lie at his door, as the parish will have done its duty by them. We are, however, apprehensive that the present Act (43rd of Elizabeth) will not warrant a prudential measure of this kind; but you are to learn that the rest of the freeholders of the county, and of the adjoining county of B, will very readily join in instructing their members to propose an Act to enable the parish to contract with a person to lock up and work the poor; and to declare that if any person shall refuse to be so locked up and worked, he shall be entitled to no relief. This, it is hoped, will prevent persons in distress from wanting relief, and be the means of keeping down parishes" (R. Blakey, *The History of Political Literature from the Earliest Times*. Lond., 1855, Vol. II., pp. 84-85). In Scotland, the abolition of serfdom took place some centuries later than in England. Even in 1698, Fletcher of Saltoun, declared in the Scotch parliament, "The number of beggars in Scotland is reckoned at not less than 200,000. The only remedy that I, a republican on principle, can suggest is to restore the old state of serfdom, to make slaves of all those who are unable to provide for their own subsistence".<sup>600</sup> Eden, l. c., Book I, ch. 1, pp. 60-61, says, "The decrease of villenage seems necessarily to have been the era of the origin of the poor. Manufactures and commerce are the two parents of our national poor". Eden, like our Scotch republican on principle, errs only in this: not the abolition of villenage, but the abolition of the property of the agricultural labourer in the soil made him a proletarian, and eventually a pauper. In France, where the expropriation was effected in another way, the ordonnance of Moulins, 1566, and the Edict of 1656, correspond to the English poor-laws.<sup>601</sup>

property of the church formed the religious bulwark of the traditional conditions of landed property. With its fall these were no longer tenable.<sup>1)</sup>

Even in the last decade of the 17th century, the yeomanry, the class of independent peasants, were more numerous than the class of farmers. They had formed the backbone of Cromwell's strength, and, even according to the confession of Macaulay,<sup>602</sup> stood in favourable contrast to the drunken squires and to their servants, the country clergy, who had to marry their masters' cast-off mistresses.<sup>a</sup> About 1750, the yeomanry had disappeared,<sup>2)</sup> and so had, in the last decade of the 18th century, the last trace of the common land of the agricultural labourer. We leave on one side here the purely economic causes of the agricultural revolution. We deal only with the forcible means employed.

After the restoration of the Stuarts, the landed proprietors carried, by legal means, an act of usurpation, effected everywhere on the Continent without any legal formality. They abolished the feudal tenure of land, i.e., they got rid of all its obligations to the State, "indemnified" the State by taxes on the peasantry and the rest of the mass of the people, vindicated for themselves the rights of modern private property in estates to which they had only a feudal title, and, finally, passed those laws of settlement, which, *mutatis mutandis*, had the same effect on the English agricultural labourer, as the edict of the Tartar Boris Godunof on the Russian peasantry.<sup>603</sup>

The "glorious Revolution"<sup>604</sup> brought into power, along with William of Orange, the landlord and capitalist appropriators of surplus

<sup>1)</sup> Professor Rogers, although formerly Professor of political economy in the University of Oxford, the hotbed of Protestant orthodoxy, in his preface to the *History of Agriculture* lays stress on the fact of the pauperisation of the mass of the people by the Reformation.<sup>605</sup>

<sup>2)</sup> "A Letter to Sir. T. C. Banbury, Bart., on the High Price of Provisions. By a Suffolk Gentleman." Ipswich, 1795, p. 4. Even the fanatical advocate of the system of large farms, the author [J. Arbuthnot] of the *Inquiry into the Connection between the Present Price of Provisions&c.*, London, 1773, p. 139, says: "I most lament the loss of our yeomanry, that set of men who really kept up the independence of this nation; and sorry I am to see their lands now in the hands of monopolising lords, tenanted out to small farmers, who hold their leases on such conditions as to be little better than vassals ready to attend a summons on every mischievous occasion."

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<sup>a</sup> The fourth German edition further has "Even the rural wage labourers still were co-owners of common property."

value.<sup>1)</sup> They inaugurated the new era by practising on a colossal scale thefts of state lands, thefts that had been hitherto managed more modestly. These estates were given away, sold at a ridiculous figure, or even annexed to private estates by direct seizure.<sup>2)</sup> All this happened without the slightest observation of legal etiquette. The Crown lands thus fraudulently appropriated, together with the robbery of the Church estates, as far as these had not been lost again during the republican revolution,<sup>606</sup> form the basis of the today princely domains of the English oligarchy.<sup>3)</sup> The bourgeois capitalists favoured the operation with the view, among others, to promoting free trade in land, to extending the domain of modern agriculture on the large farm system, and to increasing their supply of the free agricultural proletarians ready to hand. Besides, the new landed aristocracy was the natural ally of the new bankocracy, of the newly-hatched *haute finance*, and of the large manufacturers, then depending on protective duties. The English bourgeoisie acted for its own interest quite as wisely as did the Swedish bourgeoisie who, reversing the process, hand in hand with their economic allies, the peasantry, helped the kings in the forcible resumption of the Crown lands from the oligarchy. This happened since 1604 under Charles X and Charles XI.

Communal property — always distinct from the State property just dealt with — was an old Teutonic institution which lived on under cover of feudalism. We have seen how the forcible usurpation of this, generally accompanied by the turning of arable into pasture land, begins at the end of the 15th and extends into the 16th century. But, at

<sup>1)</sup> On the private moral character of this bourgeois hero, among other things: "The large grant of lands in Ireland to Lady Orkney, in 1695, is a public instance of the king's affection, and the lady's influence.... Lady Orkney's endearing offices are supposed to have been — foeda labiorum ministeria<sup>a</sup>." (In the Sloane Manuscript Collection, at the British Museum, No. 4224. The Manuscript is entitled: "The character and behaviour of King William, Sunderland, etc., as represented in Original Letters to the Duke of Shrewsbury from Somers Halifax, Oxford, Secretary Vernon, etc." [pp. 1, 3]. It is full of curiosities.)

<sup>2)</sup> "The illegal alienation of the Crown Estates, partly by sale and partly by gift, is a scandalous chapter in English history ... a gigantic fraud on the nation" (F. W. Newman, *Lectures on Political Economy*, London, 1851, pp. 129, 130). //For details as to how the present large landed proprietors of England came into their possessions see *Our Old Nobility. By Noblesse Oblige*, London, 1879.—F. E. //

<sup>3)</sup> Read, e.g., E. Burke's Pamphlet<sup>607</sup> on the ducal house of Bedford, whose offshoot was Lord John Russell, the "tomtit of Liberalism".

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<sup>a</sup> base services performed with the lips

that time, the process was carried on by means of individual acts of violence against which legislation, for a hundred and fifty years, fought in vain. The advance made by the 18th century shows itself in this, that the law itself becomes now the instrument of the theft of the people's land, although the large farmers make use of their little independent methods as well.<sup>1)</sup> The parliamentary form of the robbery is that of Acts for enclosures of Commons, in other words, decrees by which the landlords grant themselves the people's land as private property, decrees of expropriation of the people. Sir F. M. Eden refutes his own crafty special pleading, in which he tries to represent communal property as the private property of the great landlords who have taken the place of the feudal lords, when he, himself, demands a "general Act of Parliament for the enclosure of Commons" (admitting thereby that a parliamentary *coup d'état* is necessary for its transformation into private property), and moreover calls on the legislature for the indemnification for the expropriated poor.<sup>2)</sup>

Whilst the place of the independent yeoman was taken by tenants at will, small farmers on yearly leases, a servile rabble dependent on the pleasure of the landlords, the systematic robbery of the Communal lands helped especially, next to the theft of the State domains, to swell those large farms, that were called in the 18th century capital farms<sup>3)</sup> or merchant farms,<sup>4)</sup> and to "set free" the agricultural population as proletarians for manufacturing industry.

The 18th century, however, did not yet recognise as fully as the 19th, the identity between national wealth and the poverty of the people. Hence the most vigorous polemic, in the economic literature of that time, on the "enclosure of commons". From the mass of materials that lie before me, I give a few extracts that will throw a strong light on the circumstances of the time.<sup>608</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> "The farmers forbid cottagers to keep any living creatures besides themselves and children, under the pretence that if they keep any beasts or poultry, they will steal from the farmers' barns for their support; they also say, keep the cottagers poor and you will keep them industrious, &c., but the real fact, I believe, is that the farmers may have the whole right of common to themselves" (*A Political Inquiry into the Consequences of Enclosing Waste Lands*, London, 1785, p. 75).

<sup>2)</sup> Eden, I, c., preface [pp. XVII, XIX].

<sup>3)</sup> "Capital Farms." Two letters on the Flour Trade and the Dearness of Corn. By a person in business. London, 1767, p. 19.

<sup>4)</sup> "Merchant Farms." An Enquiry into the Causes of the Present High Price of Provisions, London, 1767, p. 111. Note.—This excellent work, that was published anonymously, is by the Rev. Nathaniel Forster.

"In several parishes of Hertfordshire," writes one indignant person, "24 farms, numbering on the average 50-150 acres, have been melted up into three farms."<sup>1)</sup> "In Northamptonshire and Leicestershire the enclosure of common lands has taken place on a very large scale, and most of the new lordships, resulting from the enclosure, have been turned into pasturage, in consequence of which many lordships have not now 50 acres ploughed yearly, in which 1,500 were ploughed formerly. The ruins of former dwelling-houses, barns, stables, &c.," are the sole traces of the former inhabitants. "An hundred houses and families have in some open-field villages ... dwindled to eight or ten.... The landholders in most parishes that have been enclosed only 15 or 20 years, are very few in comparison of the numbers who occupied them in their open-field state. It is no uncommon thing for 4 or 5 wealthy graziers to engross a large enclosed lordship which was before in the hands of 20 or 30 farmers, and as many smaller tenants and proprietors. All these are hereby thrown out of their livings with their families and many other families who were chiefly employed and supported by them."<sup>2)</sup> It was not only the land that lay waste, but often land cultivated either in common or held under a definite rent paid to the community, that was annexed by the neighbouring landlords under pretext of enclosure. "I have here in view enclosures of open fields and lands already improved. It is acknowledged by even the writers in defence of enclosures that these diminished villages increase the monopolies of farms, raise the prices of provisions, and produce depopulation ... and even the enclosure of waste lands" (as now carried on) "bears hard on the poor, by depriving them of a part of their subsistence, and only goes towards increasing farms already too large."<sup>3)</sup> "When," says Dr. Price, "this land gets into the hands of a few great farmers, the consequence must be that the little farmers" (earlier designated by him "a multitude of little proprietors and tenants, who maintain themselves and families by the produce of the ground they occupy by sheep kept on a common, by poultry, hogs, &c., and who therefore have little occasion to purchase any of the means of subsistence") "will be converted into a body of men who earn their subsistence by working for others, and who will be under a necessity of going to market for all they want.... There will, perhaps, be more labour, because there will be more compulsion to it.... Towns and manufactures will increase, because more will be driven to them in quest of places and employment. This is the way in which the engrossing of farms naturally operates. And this is the way in which, for many years, it has been actually operating in this kingdom."<sup>4)</sup> He sums up the effect of the enclosures thus: "Upon the whole, the circumstances of the lower ranks of men are altered in almost every respect for the worse. From little occupiers of land, they are reduced to the state of day labourers and hirelings; and, at the same time, their subsistence in that state has become more difficult."<sup>5)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> Thomas Wright, "A Short Address to the Public on the Monopoly of Large Farms", 1795, pp. 2, 3.

<sup>2)</sup> Rev. Addington, *Inquiry into the Reasons for or against Enclosing Open Fields*, London, 1772, pp. 37, 43, *passim*.<sup>6)</sup>

<sup>3)</sup> Dr. R. Price, l. c. [*Observation on Reversionary Payments...*, Ld., 1803], v. ii, pp. 155-156, Forster, Addington, Kent, Price, and James Anderson,<sup>6)</sup> should be read and compared with the miserable prattle of Sycophant MacCulloch in his catalogue, *The Literature of Political Economy*, London, 1845 [p. 194].

<sup>4)</sup> Price, l. c., pp. 147-148.

<sup>5)</sup> Price, l. c., pp. 159-160. We are reminded of ancient Rome. "The rich had got possession of the greater part of the undivided land. They trusted in the conditions of

In fact, usurpation of the common lands and the revolution in agriculture accompanying this, told so acutely on the agricultural labourers that, even according to Eden, between 1765 and 1780, their wages began to fall below the minimum, and to be supplemented by official poor-law relief. Their wages, he says, "were not more than enough for the absolute necessities of life".

Let us hear for a moment a defender of enclosures and an opponent of Dr. Price.

"Nor is it a consequence that there must be depopulation, because men are not seen wasting their labour in the open field.... If, by converting the little farmers into a body of men who must work for others, more labour is produced, it is an advantage which the nation" (to which, of course, the "converted" ones do not belong) "should wish for ... the produce being greater when their joint labours are employed on one farm, there will be a surplus for manufactures, and by this means manufactures, one of the mines of the nation, will increase, in proportion to the quantity of corn produced."<sup>61</sup>

The stoical peace of mind with which the political economist regards the most shameless violation of the "sacred rights of property" and the grossest acts of violence to persons, as soon as they are necessary to lay the foundations of the capitalistic mode of production, is shown by Sir F. M. Eden, philanthropist and tory, to boot. The whole series of thefts, outrages, and popular misery, that accompa-

the time, that these possessions would not be again taken from them, and bought, therefore, some of the pieces of land lying near theirs, and belonging to the poor, with the acquiescence of their owners, and took some by force, so that they now were cultivating widely extended domains, instead of isolated fields. Then they employed slaves in agriculture and cattle-breeding, because freemen would have been taken from labour for military service. The possession of slaves brought them great gain, inasmuch as these, on account of their immunity from military service, could freely multiply and have a multitude of children. Thus the powerful men drew all wealth to themselves, and all the land swarmed with slaves. The Italians, on the other hand, were always decreasing in number, destroyed as they were by poverty, taxes, and military service. Even when times of peace came, they were doomed to complete inactivity, because the rich were in possession of the soil, and used slaves instead of freemen in the tilling of it" (*Appian, Civil Wars, [De civilibus Romanorum bellis historiarum,] I.7.*) This passage refers to the time before the Licinian rogations.<sup>611</sup> Military service, which hastened to so great an extent the ruin of the Roman plebeians, was also the chief means by which, as in a forcing-house, Charlemagne brought about the transformation of free German peasants into serfs and bondsmen.

<sup>61</sup> [J. Arbuthnot,] *An Inquiry into the Connection between the Present Price of Provisions, &c., pp. 124, [128,] 129.* To the like effect, but with an opposite tendency: "Working-men are driven from their cottages and forced into the towns to seek for employment; but then a larger surplus is obtained, and thus capital is augmented" ([R.B. Seelly,] *The Perils of the Nation, 2nd ed., London, 1843, p. XVI.*).

nied the forcible expropriation of the people, from the last third of the 15th to the end of the 18th century, lead him merely to the comfortable conclusion:

"The due proportion between arable land and pasture had to be established. During the whole of the 14th and the greater part of the 15th century, there was one acre of pasture to 2, 3, and even 4 of arable land. About the middle of the 16th century the proportion was changed of 2 acres of pasture to 2, later on, of 2 acres of pasture to one of arable, until at last the just proportion of 3 acres of pasture to one of arable land was attained."<sup>612</sup>

In the 19th century, the very memory of the connexion between the agricultural labourer and the communal property had, of course, vanished. To say nothing of more recent times, have the agricultural population received a farthing of compensation for the 3,511,770 acres of common land which between 1801 and 1831 were stolen from them and by parliamentary devices presented to the landlords by the landlords?

The last process of wholesale expropriation of the agricultural population from the soil is, finally, the so-called clearing of estates, i. e., the sweeping men off them. All the English methods hitherto considered culminated in "clearing". As we saw in the picture of modern conditions given in a former chapter, where there are no more independent peasants to get rid of, the "clearing" of cottages begins; so that the agricultural labourers do not find on the soil cultivated by them even the spot necessary for their own housing. But what "clearing of estates" really and properly signifies, we learn only in the promised land of modern romance, the Highlands of Scotland. There the process is distinguished by its systematic character, by the magnitude of the scale on which it is carried out at one blow (in Ireland landlords have gone to the length of sweeping away several villages at once; in Scotland areas as large as German principalities are dealt with), finally by the peculiar form of property, under which the embezzled lands were held.

The Highland Celts were organised in clans, each of which was the owner of the land on which it was settled. The representative of the clan, its chief or "great man", was only the titular owner of this property, just as the Queen of England is the titular owner of all the national soil. When the English government succeeded in suppressing the intestine wars of these "great men", and their constant incursions into the Lowland plains, the chiefs of the clans by no means gave up their time-honoured trade as robbers; they only changed its form. On

their own authority they transformed their nominal right into a right of private property, and as this brought them into collision with their clansmen, resolved to drive them out by open force.

"A king of England might as well claim to drive his subjects into the sea," says Professor Newman.<sup>1)</sup>

This revolution, which began in Scotland after the last rising of the followers of the Pretender,<sup>6<sup>13</sup></sup> can be followed through its first phases in the writings of Sir James Steuart<sup>2)</sup> and James Anderson.<sup>3)</sup> In the 18th century the hunted-out Gaels<sup>6<sup>14</sup></sup> were forbidden to emigrate from the country, with a view to driving them by force to Glasgow and other manufacturing towns.<sup>4)</sup> As an example of the method<sup>5)</sup> obtaining in the 19th century, the "clearing" made by the Duchess of Sutherland will suffice here. This person, well instructed in economy,

<sup>1)</sup> I. c. [Fr. W. Newman, *Lectures on Political Economy*, London, 1851], p. 132.

<sup>2)</sup> Steuart says: "If you compare the rent of these lands" (he erroneously includes in this economic category the tribute of the taksmen<sup>6<sup>15</sup></sup> to the clanchief) "with the extent, it appears very small. If you compare it with the numbers fed upon the farm, you will find that an estate in the Highlands maintains, perhaps, ten times as many people as another of the same value in good and fertile province" (I. c. [*An Inquiry into the Principles of Political Economy*, Dublin, 1770], vol. i, ch. xvi, p. 104).

<sup>3)</sup> James Anderson, *Observations on the Means of Exciting a Spirit of National Industry, &c.* Edinburgh, 1777.

<sup>4)</sup> In 1860 the people expropriated by force were exported to Canada under false pretences. Some fled to the mountains and neighbouring islands. They were followed by the police, came to blows with them and escaped.

<sup>5)</sup> "In the Highlands of Scotland," says Buchanan, the commentator on Adam Smith, 1814, "the ancient state of property is daily subverted.... The landlord, without regard to the hereditary tenant" (a category used in error here), "now offers his land to the highest bidder, who, if he is an improver, instantly adopts a new system of cultivation. The land, formerly overspread with small tenants or labourers, was peopled in proportion to its produce, but under the new system of improved cultivation and increased rents, the largest possible produce is obtained at the least possible expense: and the useless hands being, with this view, removed, the population is reduced, not to what the land will maintain, but to what it will employ. The dispossessed tenants either seek a subsistence in the neighbouring towns," &c. (David Buchanan, *Observations on, &c. A. Smith's Wealth of Nations*. Edinburgh, 1814, vol. iv, p. 144). "The Scotch grandees dispossessed families as they would grub up coppice-wood, and they treated villages and their people as Indians harassed with wild beasts do, in their vengeance, a jungle with tigers.... Man is bartered for a fleece or a carcase of mutton, nay, held cheaper.... Why, how much worse is it than the intention of the Moguls, who, when they had broken into the northern provinces of China, proposed in council to exterminate the inhabitants, and convert the land into pasture. This proposal many Highland proprietors have effected in their own country against their own countrymen" (George Ensor, *An Inquiry Concerning the Population of Nations*, Lond., 1818, pp. 215, 216).

resolved, on entering upon her government, to effect a radical cure, and to turn the whole country, whose population had already been, by earlier processes of the like kind, reduced to 15,000, into a sheep-walk. From 1814 to 1820 these 15,000 inhabitants, about 3,000 families, were systematically hunted and rooted out. All their villages were destroyed and burnt, all their fields turned into pasturage. British soldiers enforced this eviction, and came to blows with the inhabitants. One old woman was burnt to death in the flames of the hut, which she refused to leave. Thus this fine lady appropriated 794,000 acres of land that had from time immemorial belonged to the clan. She assigned to the expelled inhabitants about 6,000 acres on the seashore — 2 acres per family. The 6,000 acres had until this time lain waste, and brought in no income to their owners. The Duchess, in the nobility of her heart, actually went so far as to let these at an average rent of 2s. 6d. per acre to the clansmen, who for centuries had shed their blood for her family. The whole of the stolen clanland she divided into 29 great sheep farms, each inhabited by a single family, for the most part imported English farm-servants. In the year 1821 the 15,000 Gaels were already replaced by 131,000 sheep. The remnant of the aborigines flung on the seashore, tried to live by catching fish. They became amphibious and lived, as an English author says, half on land and half on water, and withal only half on both.<sup>1) 616</sup>

But the brave Gaels must expiate yet more bitterly their idolatry, romantic and of the mountains, for the "great men" of the clan. The smell of their fish rose to the noses of the great men. They scented some profit in it, and let the seashore to the great fishmongers of London. For the second time the Gaels were hunted out.<sup>2)</sup>

But, finally, part of the sheep-walks are turned into deer preserves.

<sup>1)</sup> When the present Duchess of Sutherland entertained Mrs. Beecher Stowe, authoress of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, with great magnificence in London to show her sympathy for the negro slaves of the American republic — a sympathy that she prudently forgot, with her fellow aristocrats, during the civil war,<sup>7</sup> in which every "noble" English heart beat for the slaveowner — I gave in the *New York Tribune* the facts about the Sutherland slaves. (Epitomised in part by Carey in *The Slave Trade*, Philadelphia, 1853, pp. 203-204.) My article was reprinted in a Scotch newspaper, and led to a pretty polemic between the latter and the sycophants of the Sutherlands.<sup>617</sup>

<sup>2)</sup> Interesting details on this fish trade will be found in Mr. David Urquhart's *Portfolio*, new series.<sup>618</sup> — Nassau W. Senior, in his posthumous work [*Journals, Conversations and Essays...*, London, Vol. II, 1868, p. 282], already quoted, terms "the proceedings in Sutherlandshire one of the most beneficent clearings since the memory of man" (l. c.).

Every one knows that there are no real forests in England. The deer in the parks of the great are demurely domestic cattle, fat as London aldermen. Scotland is therefore the last refuge of the “noble passion”.

“In the Highlands,” says Somers in 1848, “new forests are springing up like mushrooms. Here, on one side of Gaick, you have the new forest of Glenfeshie; and there on the other you have the new forest of Ardverikie. In the same line you have the Black Mount, an immense waste also recently erected. From east to west—from the neighbourhood of Aberdeen to the crags of Oban—you have now a continuous line of forests; while in other parts of the Highlands there are the new forests of Loch Archaig, Glengarry, Glenmoriston, &c. Sheep were introduced into glens which had been the seats of communities of small farmers; and the latter were driven to seek subsistence on coarser and more sterile tracks of soil. Now deer are supplanting sheep; and these are once more dispossessing the small tenants, who will necessarily be driven down upon still coarser land and to more grinding penury. Deer-forests<sup>1)</sup> and the people cannot co-exist. One or other of the two must yield. Let the forests be increased in number and extent during the next quarter of a century, as they have been in the last, and the Gaels will perish from their native soil.... This movement among the Highland proprietors is with some a matter of ambition ... with some love of sport ... while others, of a more practical cast, follow the trade in deer with an eye solely to profit. For it is a fact, that a mountain range laid out in forest is, in many cases, more profitable to the proprietor than when let as a sheep-walk.... The huntsman who wants a deer-forest limits his offers by no other calculation than the extent of his purse.... Sufferings have been inflicted in the Highlands scarcely less severe than those occasioned by the policy of the Norman kings. Deer have received extended ranges, while men have been hunted within a narrower and still narrower circle.... One after one the liberties of the people have been cloven down.... And the oppressions are daily on the increase.... The clearance and dispersion of the people is pursued by the proprietors as a settled principle, as an agricultural necessity, just as trees and brushwood are cleared from the wastes of America or Australia; and the operation goes on in a quiet, businesslike way, &c.”<sup>2)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> The deer-forests of Scotland contain not a single tree. The sheep are driven from, and then the deer driven to, the naked hills, and then it is called a deer-forest. Not even timber-planting and real forest culture.

<sup>2)</sup> Robert Somers, *Letters from the Highlands; or the Famine of 1847*, London, 1848, pp. 24, 25, 26, 28, 12, passim. These letters originally appeared in *The Times*. The English economists of course explained the famine of the Gaels in 1847, by their overpopulation. At all events, they “were pressing on their food-supply”. The “clearing of estates”, or as it is called in Germany, “Bauernlegen”, occurred in Germany especially after the 30 years’ war,<sup>540</sup> and led to peasant revolts as late as 1790 in Kursachsen.<sup>619</sup> It obtained especially in East Germany. In most of the Prussian provinces, Frederick II for the first time secured right of property for the peasants. After the conquest of Silesia he forced the landlords to rebuild the huts, barns, etc., and to provide the peasants with cattle and implements.<sup>620</sup> He wanted soldiers for his army and tax-payers for his treasury. For the rest, the peasant life that the peasant led under Frederick’s system of finance and hodge-podge rule of despotism, bureaucracy and feudalism, may be seen from the following quotation from his admirer, Mirabeau: “Flax represents one of the greatest sources of wealth for the peasant of North Germany. Unfortunately for the hu-

man race, this is only a resource against misery and not a means towards well-being. Direct taxes, forced labour service, obligations of all kinds crush the German peasant, especially as he still has to pay indirect taxes on everything he buys ... and to complete his ruin he dare not sell his produce where and as he wishes; he dare not buy what he needs from the merchants who could sell it to him at a cheaper price. He is slowly ruined by all these factors, and when the direct taxes fall due, he would find himself incapable of paying them without his spinning-wheel; it offers him a last resort, while providing useful occupation for his wife, his children, his maids, his farm-hands, and himself; but what a painful life he leads, even with this extra resource! In summer, he works like a convict with the plough and at harvest; he goes to bed at nine o'clock and rises at two to get through all his work; in winter he ought to be recovering his strength by sleeping longer; but he would run short of corn for his bread and next year's sawing if he got rid of the products that he needs to sell in order to pay the taxes. He therefore has to spin to fill up this gap ... and indeed he must do so most assiduously. Thus the peasant goes to bed at midnight or one o'clock in winter, and gets up at five or six; or he goes to bed at nine and gets up at two, and this he does every day of his life except Sundays. These excessively short hours of sleep and long hours of work consume a person's strength, and hence it happens that men and women age much more in the country than in the towns" (Mirabeau, l. c., t. III, pp. 212 sqq.).

Note to the second edition. In March 1866, 18 years after the publication of the work of Robert Somers quoted above, Professor Leone Levi gave a lecture before the Society of Arts<sup>289</sup> on the transformation of sheep-walks into deer-forest, in which he depicts the advance in the devastation of the Scottish Highlands. He says, with other things: "Depopulation and transformation into sheep-walks were the most convenient means for getting an income without expenditure.... A deer-forest in place of a sheep-walk was a common change in the Highlands. The landowners turned out the sheep as they once turned out the men from their estates, and welcomed the new tenants—the wild beasts and the feathered birds.... One can walk from the Earl of Dalhousie's estates in Forfarshire to John o'Groats, without ever leaving forest land.... In many of these" (woods) "the fox, the wild cat, the marten, the polecat, the weasel and the Alpine hare are common; whilst the rabbit, the squirrel and the rat have lately made their way into the country. Immense tracts of land, much of which is described in the statistical account of Scotland as having a pasturage in richness and extent of very superior description, are thus shut out from all cultivation and improvement, and are solely devoted to the sport of a few persons for a very brief period of the year."<sup>621</sup> The London *Economist* of June 2, 1866, [pp. 645-46] says, "Amongst the items of news in a Scotch paper of last week, we read.... 'One of the finest sheep farms in Sutherlandshire, for which a rent of £ 1,200 a year was recently offered, on the expiry of the existing lease this year, is to be converted into a deer-forest.' Here we see the modern instincts of feudalism ... operating pretty much as they did when the Norman Conqueror ... destroyed 36 villages to create the New Forest.... Two millions of acres ... totally laid waste, embracing within their area some of the most fertile lands of Scotland. The natural grass of Glen Tilt was among the most nutritive in the country of Perth. The deer-forest of Ben Aulder was by far the best grazing ground in the wide district of Badenoch; a part of the Black Mount forest was the best pasture for black-faced sheep in Scotland. Some idea of the ground laid waste for purely sporting purposes in Scotland may be formed from the fact that it embraced an area larger than the whole county of Perth. The resources of the forest of Ben Aulder might give some idea of the loss sustained from the forced desolations. The ground would pasture 15,000 sheep, and as it was not more than one-thirtieth part of

The spoliation of the church's property, the fraudulent alienation of the State domains, the robbery of the common lands, the usurpation of feudal and clan property, and its transformation into modern private property under circumstances of reckless terrorism, were just so many idyllic methods of primitive accumulation. They conquered the field for capitalistic agriculture, made the soil part and parcel of capital, and created for the town industries the necessary supply of a "free" and outlawed proletariat.

## Chapter XXVIII

### BLOODY LEGISLATION AGAINST THE EXPROPRIATED, FROM THE END OF THE 15TH CENTURY. FORCING DOWN OF WAGES BY ACTS OF PARLIAMENT

The proletariat created by the breaking up of the bands of feudal retainers and by the forcible expropriation of the people from the soil, this "free" proletariat could not possibly be absorbed by the nascent manufactures as fast as it was thrown upon the world. On the other hand, these men, suddenly dragged from their wonted mode of life, could not as suddenly adapt themselves to the discipline of their new condition. They were turned *en masse* into beggars, robbers, vagabonds, partly from inclination, in most cases from stress of circumstances. Hence at the end of the 15th and during the whole of the 16th century, throughout Western Europe a bloody legislation against vagabondage. The fathers of the present working class were chastised for their enforced transformation into vagabonds and paupers. Legislation treated them as "voluntary" criminals, and assumed that it depended on their own good will to go on working under the old conditions that no longer existed.

In England this legislation began under Henry VII.

Henry VIII. 1530<sup>622</sup>: Beggars old and unable to work receive a beggar's licence. On the other hand, whipping and imprisonment for sturdy vagabonds. They are to be tied to the cart-tail and whipped until the blood streams from their bodies, then to swear an oath

the old forest ground in Scotland ... it might, &c.... All that forest land is as totally unproductive.... It might thus as well have been submerged under the waters of the German Ocean.... Such extemporised wildernesses or deserts ought to be put down by the decided interference of the Legislature."

to go back to their birthplace or to where they have lived the last three years and to "put themselves to labour". What grim irony? In 27 Henry VIII the former statute<sup>623</sup> is repeated, but strengthened with new clauses. For the second arrest for vagabondage the whipping is to be repeated and half the ear sliced off; but for the third relapse the offender is to be executed as a hardened criminal and enemy of the common weal.

Edward VI: A statute of the first year of his reign, 1547,<sup>624</sup> ordains that if anyone refuses to work, he shall be condemned as a slave to the person who has denounced him as an idler. The master shall feed his slave on bread and water, weak broth and such refuse meat as he thinks fit. He has the right to force him to do any work, no matter how disgusting, with whip and chains. If the slave is absent a fortnight he is condemned to slavery for life and is to be branded on forehead or back with the letter S; if he runs away thrice, he is to be executed as a felon. The master can sell him, bequeath him, let him out on hire as a slave, just as any other personal chattel or cattle. If the slaves attempt anything against the masters, they are also to be executed. Justices of the peace, on information, are to hunt the rascals down. If it happens that a vagabond has been idling about for three days, he is to be taken to his birthplace, branded with a redhot iron with the letter V on the breast and be set to work, in chains, in the streets or at some other labour. If the vagabond gives a false birthplace, he is then to become the slave for life of this place, of its inhabitants, or its corporation, and to be branded with an S. All persons have the right to take away the children of the vagabonds and to keep them as apprentices, the young men until the 24th year, the girls until the 20th. If they run away, they are to become up to this age the slaves of their masters, who can put them in irons, whip them, &c., if they like. Every master may put an iron ring round the neck, arms or legs of his slave, by which to know him more easily and to be more certain of him.<sup>11</sup> The last part of this statute provides, that certain poor people may be employed by a place or by persons, who are willing to give them food and drink and to find them work. This kind of parish-slaves was kept up in England until far into the 19th century under the name of "roundsmen".

<sup>11</sup> The author of the *Essay on Trade, etc.*, [J. Cunningham,] 1770, says, "In the reign of Edward VI indeed the English seem to have set, in good earnest, about encouraging manufactures and employing the poor. This we learn from a remarkable statute which runs thus: 'That all vagrants shall be branded, &c.,'" l. c., p. 5.

Elizabeth, 1572<sup>625</sup>: Unlicensed beggars above 14 years of age are to be severely flogged and branded on the left ear unless some one will take them into service for two years; in case of a repetition of the offence, if they are over 18, they are to be executed, unless some one will take them into service for two years; but for the third offence they are to be executed without mercy as felons. Similar statutes: 18 Elizabeth, c. 13, and another of 1597.<sup>11) 628</sup>

James I: Any one wandering about and begging is declared a rogue and a vagabond. Justices of the peace in petty sessions<sup>629</sup> are authorised to have them publicly whipped and for the first offence to imprison them for 6 months, for the second for 2 years. Whilst in prison they are to be whipped as much and as often as the justices of the peace think fit.... Incorrigible and dangerous rogues are to be branded with an R on the left shoulder and set to hard labour, and if they are

<sup>11)</sup> Thomas More says in his *Utopia* [London, 1869, pp. 41-42]: "Therfore that on covetous and unsatiable cormaraunte and very plague of his native countrey maye compasse aboute and inclose many thousand akers of grounde together within one pale or hedge, the husbandmen be thrust owte of their owne, or els either by coneyne and fraude, or by violent oppression they be put besydes it, or by wrongs and iniuries thei be so wiered that they be compelled to sell all: by one meanes, therfore, or by other, either by hooke or crooke they muste needes departe awaye, poore, selye, wretched soules, men, women, husbands, wiues, fatherlesse children, widowes, wofull mothers with their yonge babes, and their whole householde smal in substance, and muche in numbre, as husbandrye requireth many handes. Awaye thei trudge, I say, owte of their knownen accustomed houses, fyndynge no place to reste in. All their houshalde stuffe, which is very little woorthe, though he it might well abide the sale: yet beeynge sodainely thruste owte, they be constrainyd to sell it for a thing of nought. And when they haue wandered abrode tyll that be spent, what cant they then els doe but steale, and then iustly pardy be hanged, or els go about beggyng. And yet then also they be caste in prisyon as vagaboundes, because they go aboute and worke not: whom no man wyl set a worke though thei neuer so willyngly profre themselues thereto." Of these poor fugitives of whom Thomas More says that they were forced to thieve, "72,000 great and petty thieves were put to death", in the reign of Henry VIII (Holinshed, *Description of England*, Vol. 1, p. 186<sup>626</sup>). In Elizabeth's time, "rogues were trussed up apace, and that there was not two years commonly wherein three or four hundred were not devoured and eaten up by the gallows" (Strype's *Annals of the Reformation and Establishment of Religion and other Various Occurrences in the Church of England during Queen Elizabeth's Reign*. Second ed., 1725, Vol. 2). According to this same Strype, in Somersetshire, in one year, 40 persons were executed, 35 robbers burnt in the hand, 37 whipped, and 183 discharged as "incorrigible vagabonds". Nevertheless, he is of opinion that this large number of prisoners does not comprise even a fifth of the actual criminals, thanks to the negligence of the justices and the foolish compassion of the people; and the other counties of England were not better off in this respect than Somersetshire, while some were even worse.<sup>627</sup>

caught begging again, to be executed without mercy. These statutes, legally binding until the beginning of the 18th century, were only repealed by 12 Anne, c. 23.<sup>630</sup>

Similar laws in France, where by the middle of the 17th century a kingdom of vagabonds (*truands*) was established in Paris. Even at the beginning of Louis XVI's reign (Ordinance of July 13th, 1777) every man in good health from 16 to 60 years of age, if without means of subsistence and not practising a trade, is to be sent to the galleys. Of the same nature are the statute of Charles V for the Netherlands (October, 1531), the first edict of the States and Towns of Holland (March 19, 1614), the "Plakaat" of the United Provinces (June 25, 1649), &c.

Thus were the agricultural people, first forcibly expropriated from the soil, driven from their homes, turned into vagabonds, and then whipped, branded, tortured by laws grotesquely terrible, into the discipline necessary for the wage system.<sup>631</sup>

It is not enough that the conditions of labour are concentrated in a mass, in the shape of capital, at the one pole of society, while at the other are grouped masses of men, who have nothing to sell but their labour power. Neither is it enough that they are compelled to sell it voluntarily. The advance of capitalist production develops a working class, which by education, tradition, habit, looks upon the conditions of that mode of production as self-evident laws of Nature. The organisation of the capitalist process of production, once fully developed, breaks down all resistance. The constant generation of a relative surplus population keeps the law of supply and demand of labour, and therefore keeps wages, in a rut that corresponds with the wants of capital. The dull compulsion of economic relations completes the subjection of the labourer to the capitalist. Direct force, outside economic conditions, is of course still used, but only exceptionally. In the ordinary run of things, the labourer can be left to the "natural laws of production", i. e., to his dependence on capital, a dependence springing from, and guaranteed in perpetuity by, the conditions of production themselves. It is otherwise during the historic genesis of capitalist production. The bourgeoisie, at its rise, wants and uses the power of the state to "regulate" wages, i. e., to force them within the limits suitable for surplus value making, to lengthen the working day and to keep the labourer himself in the normal degree of dependence. This is an essential element of the so-called primitive accumulation.

The class of wage labourers, which arose in the latter half of the

14th century, formed then and in the following century only a very small part of the population, well protected in its position by the independent peasant proprietary in the country and the guild organisation in the town. In country and town master and workmen stood close together socially. The subordination of labour to capital was only formal—i. e., the mode of production itself had as yet no specific capitalistic character. Variable capital preponderated greatly over constant. The demand for wage labour grew, therefore, rapidly with every accumulation of capital, whilst the supply of wage labour followed but slowly. A large part of the national product, changed later into a fund of capitalist accumulation, then still entered into the consumption fund of the labourer.

Legislation on wage labour (from the first, aimed at the exploitation of the labourer and, as it advanced, always equally hostile to him),<sup>1)</sup> is started in England by the Statute of Labourers,<sup>a</sup> of Edward III, 1349. The ordinance of 1350 in France, issued in the name of King John, corresponds with it. English and French legislation run parallel and are identical in purport. So far as the labour statutes aim at compulsory extension of the working day, I do not return to them, as this point was treated earlier (Chap. X., Section 5).

The Statute of Labourers was passed at the urgent instance of the House of Commons. A Tory says naïvely:

“Formerly the poor demanded such *high* wages as to threaten industry and wealth. Next, their wages are so *low* as to threaten industry and wealth equally and perhaps more, but in another way.”<sup>2)</sup>

A tariff of wages was fixed by law for town and country, for piece work and day work. The agricultural labourers were to hire themselves out by the year, the town ones “in open market”. It was forbidden, under pain of imprisonment, to pay higher wages than those fixed by the statute, but the taking of higher wages was more severely punished than the giving them. //So also in Sections 18 and 19 of the

<sup>1)</sup> “Whenever the legislature attempts to regulate the differences between masters and their workmen, its counsellors are always the masters,” says A. Smith.<sup>632</sup> “L'esprit des lois, c'est la propriété,” says Linguet.<sup>508</sup>

<sup>2)</sup> [J. B. Byles,] *Sophisms of Free Trade*. By a Barrister. Lond., 1850, p. 206. He adds maliciously: “We were ready enough to interfere for the employer, can nothing now be done for the employed?”

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<sup>a</sup> See this volume, p. 293.

Statute of Apprentices of Elizabeth,<sup>211</sup> ten days' imprisonment is decreed for him that pays the higher wages, but twenty-one days for him that receives them.// A statute of 1360<sup>633</sup> increased the penalties and authorised the masters to extort labour at the legal rate of wages by corporal punishment. All combinations, contracts, oaths, &c., by which masons and carpenters reciprocally bound themselves, were declared null and void. Coalition of the labourers is treated as a heinous crime from the 14th century to 1825, the year of the repeal of the laws against Trades' Unions.<sup>381</sup> The spirit of the Statute of Labourers of 1349 and of its offshoots, comes out clearly in the fact, that indeed a maximum of wages is dictated by the State, but on no account a minimum.<sup>634</sup>

In the 16th century, the condition of the labourers had, as we know, become much worse. The money wage rose, but not in proportion to the depreciation of money and the corresponding rise in the prices of commodities. Wages, therefore, in reality fell. Nevertheless, the laws for keeping them down remained in force, together with the ear-clipping and branding of those "whom no one was willing to take into service". By the Statute of Apprentices 5 Elizabeth, c. 4, the justices of the peace were empowered to fix certain wages and to modify them according to the time of the year and the price of commodities. James I extended these regulations of labour also to weavers, spinners, and all possible categories of workers.<sup>1) 636</sup> George II extended the laws against coalitions of labourers to manufacturers.<sup>637</sup> In the man-

<sup>1)</sup> From a clause of Statute 1 James I, c. 6,<sup>635</sup> we see that certain clothmakers took upon themselves to dictate, in their capacity of justices of the peace, the official tariff of wages in their own shops. In Germany, especially after the Thirty Years' War,<sup>540</sup> statutes for keeping down wages were general. "The want of servants and labourers was very troublesome to the landed proprietors in the depopulated districts. All villagers were forbidden to let rooms to single men and women; all the latter were to be reported to the authorities and cast into prison if they were unwilling to become servants, even if they were employed at any other work, such as sowing seeds for the peasants at a daily wage, or even buying and selling corn (Imperial privileges and sanctions for Silesia, I., 125). For a whole century in the decrees of the small German potentates a bitter cry goes up again and again about the wicked and impudent rabble that will not reconcile itself to its hard lot, will not be content with the legal wage; the individual landed proprietors are forbidden to pay more than the State had fixed by a tariff. And yet the conditions of service were at times better after the war than 100 years later; the farm servants of Silesia had, in 1652, meat twice a week, whilst even in our century, districts are known where they have it only three times a year. Further, wages after the war were higher than in the following century" (G. Freytag, [Neue Bilder aus dem Leben..., Leipzig, 1862, pp. 35-36]).

ufacturing period *par excellence*, the capitalist mode of production had become sufficiently strong to render legal regulation of wages as impracticable as it was unnecessary; but the ruling classes were unwilling in case of necessity to be without the weapons of the old arsenal. Still, 7 George III forbade a higher day's wage than 2s. 7 $\frac{1}{2}$  d. for journeymen tailors in and around London, except in cases of general mourning; still, 13 George III, c. 68, gave the regulation of the wages of silk weavers to the justices of the peace<sup>638</sup>; still, in 1796, it required two judgments of the higher courts to decide, whether the mandates of justices of the peace as to wages held good also for non-agricultural labourers; still, in 1799, an act of Parliament ordered that the wages of the Scotch miners should continue to be regulated by a statute of Elizabeth<sup>a</sup> and two Scotch acts of 1661 and 1617. How completely in the meantime circumstances had changed, is proved by an occurrence unheard-of before in the English Lower House. In that place, where for more than 400 years laws had been made for the maximum, beyond which wages absolutely must not rise, Whitbread in 1796 proposed a legal minimum wage for agricultural labourers. Pitt opposed this, but confessed that the "condition of the poor was cruel". Finally, in 1813, the laws for the regulation of wages were repealed.<sup>639</sup> They were an absurd anomaly, since the capitalist regulated his factory by his private legislation, and could by the poor-rates make up the wages of the agricultural labourer to the indispensable minimum. The provisions of the labour statutes as to contracts between master and workman, as to giving notice and the like, which only allow of a civil action against the contract-breaking master, but on the contrary permit a criminal action against the contract-breaking workman, are to this hour (1873) in full force. The barbarous laws against Trades' Unions<sup>640</sup> fell in 1825 before the threatening bearing of the proletariat. Despite this, they fell only in part. Certain beautiful fragments of the old statute vanished only in 1859.<sup>641</sup> Finally, the act of Parliament of June 29, 1871,<sup>642</sup> made a pretence of removing the last traces of this class of legislation by legal recognition of Trades' Unions. But an act of Parliament of the same date<sup>643</sup> (an act to amend the criminal law relating to violence, threats, and molestation), re-established, in point of fact, the former state of things in a new shape. By this Parliamentary escamotage the means which the labourers could use in a strike or lock-out were with-

<sup>a</sup> See this volume, pp. 277-78.

drawn from the laws common to all citizens, and placed under exceptional penal legislation, the interpretation of which fell to the masters themselves in their capacity as justices of the peace. Two years earlier, the same House of Commons and the same Mr. Gladstone in the wellknown straightforward fashion brought in a bill for the abolition of all exceptional penal legislation against the working class. But this was never allowed to go beyond the second reading,<sup>643</sup> and the matter was thus protracted until at last the “great Liberal party”,<sup>644</sup> by an alliance with the Tories, found courage to turn against the very proletariat that had carried it into power. Not content with this treachery, the “great Liberal party” allowed the English judges, ever complaisant in the service of the ruling classes, to dig up again the earlier laws against “conspiracy”,<sup>645</sup> and to apply them to coalitions of labourers. We see that only against its will and under the pressure of the masses did the English Parliament give up the laws against Strikes and Trades’ Unions, after it had itself, for 500 years, held, with shameless egoism, the position of a permanent Trades’ Union of the capitalists against the labourers.

During the very first storms of the revolution, the French bourgeoisie dared to take away from the workers the right of association but just acquired. By a decree of June 14, 1791,<sup>646</sup> they declared all coalition of the workers as “an attempt against liberty and the declaration of the rights of man”, punishable by a fine of 500 livres, together with deprivation of the rights of an active citizen for one year.<sup>1)</sup> This law which, by means of State compulsion, confined the struggle between capital and labour within limits comfortable for capital, has outlived revolutions and changes of dynasties. Even the Reign of Terror<sup>647</sup> left it untouched. It was but quite recently struck out of the Penal Code.<sup>155</sup> Nothing is more characteristic than the pretext for this bourgeois *coup d'état*. “Granting,” says Chapelier, the reporter of the Select Committee on this law, “that wages ought to be a little higher

<sup>1)</sup> Article I of this law runs: “As the abolition of any form of association between citizens of the same estate and profession is one of the foundations of the French constitution, it is forbidden to re-establish them under any pretext and in any form, whatever this might be.” Article IV declares, that if “citizens belonging to the same profession, craft, or trade have joint discussions and make joint decisions with the intention of refusing together to perform their trade or insisting together on providing the services of their trade or their labours only at a particular price, then the said deliberations and agreements ... shall be declared unconstitutional, derogatory to liberty and the declaration of their rights of man, etc.”: felony, therefore, as in the old labour statutes (*Revolutions de Paris*, 1791, t. III, p. 523).

than they are, ... that they ought to be high enough for him that receives them, to be free from that state of absolute dependence due to the want of the necessaries of life, and which is almost that of slavery", yet the workers must not be allowed to come to any understanding about their own interests, nor to act in common and thereby lessen their "absolute dependence, which is almost that of slavery"; because, forsooth, in doing this they injure "the freedom of their cidevant masters, the present entrepreneurs", and because a coalition against the despotism of the quondam masters of the corporations is—guess what!—is a restoration of the corporations abolished by the French constitution.<sup>1)</sup>

## Chapter XXIX

### GENESIS OF THE CAPITALIST FARMER

Now that we have considered the forcible creation of a class of outlawed proletarians, the bloody discipline that turned them into wage labourers, the disgraceful action of the State which employed the police to accelerate the accumulation of capital by increasing the degree of exploitation of labour, the question remains: whence came the capitalists originally? For the expropriation of the agricultural population creates, directly, none but great landed proprietors. As far, however, as concerns the genesis of the farmer, we can, so to say, put our hand on it, because it is a slow process evolving through many centuries. The serfs, as well as the free small proprietors, held land under very different tenures, and were therefore emancipated under very different economic conditions. In England the first form of the farmer is the bailiff, himself a serf. His position is similar to that of the old Roman *villicus*,<sup>a</sup> only in a more limited sphere of action. During the second half of the 14th century he is replaced by a farmer, whom the landlord provides with seed, cattle and implements. His condition is not very different from that of the peasant. Only he exploits more wage labour. Soon he becomes a *métayer*, a half-farmer. He advances one part of the agricultural stock, the landlord the other. The two di-

<sup>1)</sup> Buchez et Roux, *Histoire Parlementaire*, t. x, [p. 193-94,] p. 195.

<sup>a</sup> See this volume, p. 181, footnote 1.

vide the total product in proportions determined by contract. This form quickly disappears in England, to give place to the farmer proper, who makes his own capital breed by employing wage labourers, and pays a part of the surplus product, in money or in kind, to the landlord as rent. So long, during the 15th century, as the independent peasant and the farm labourer working for himself as well as for wages, enriched themselves by their own labour, the circumstances of the farmer, and his field of production, were equally mediocre. The agricultural revolution which commenced in the last third of the 15th century, and continued during almost the whole of the 16th (excepting, however, its last decade), enriched him just as speedily as it impoverished the mass of the agricultural people.<sup>1)</sup>

The usurpation of the common lands allowed him to augment greatly his stock of cattle, almost without cost, whilst they yielded him a richer supply of manure for the tillage of the soil. To this, was added in the 16th century, a very important element. At that time the contracts for farms ran for a long time, often for 99 years. The progressive fall in the value of the precious metals, and therefore of money, brought the farmers golden fruit. Apart from all the other circumstances discussed above, it lowered wages. A portion of the latter was now added to the profits of the farm. The continuous rise in the price of corn, wool, meat, in a word of all agricultural produce, swelled the money capital of the farmer without any action on his part, whilst the rent he paid (being calculated on the old value of money) diminished in reality.<sup>2)</sup> Thus they grew rich at the expense both of

<sup>1)</sup> Harrison in his *Description of England*,<sup>648</sup> says "although peradventure four pounds of old rent be improved to fortie, toward the end of his term, if he have not six or seven yeares rent lieng by him, fiftie or a hundred pounds, yet will the farmer thinke his gaines verie small".

<sup>2)</sup> On the influence of the depreciation of money in the 16th century, on the different classes of society, see *A Compendious or Briefe Examination of Certayne Ordinary Complaints of Divers of our Countrymen in these our Days*. By W. S., Gentleman. (London, 1581.) The dialogue form of this work led people for a long time to ascribe it to Shakespeare, and even in 1751, it was published under his name. Its author is William Stafford. In one place the knight reasons as follows:

"Knight: You, my neighbour, the husbandman, you Maister Mercer, and you Goodman Capper, with other artificers, may save yourselves metely well. For as much as all things are dearer than they were, so much do you arise in the prycе of your wares and occupations that ye sell agayne. But we have nothing to sell whereby we might advance ye price there of, to countervale those things that we must buy agayne." In another place the knight asks the doctor: "I pray you, what be those sorts that ye meane. And first, of those that ye thinke should have no losse thereby?—Doctor:

their labourers and their landlords. No wonder therefore, that England, at the end of the 16th century, has a class of capitalist farmers, rich, considering the circumstances of the time.<sup>1)</sup>

### Chapter XXX

#### REACTION OF THE AGRICULTURAL REVOLUTION ON INDUSTRY. CREATION OF THE HOME MARKET FOR INDUSTRIAL CAPITAL

The expropriation and expulsion of the agricultural population, intermittent but renewed again and again, supplied, as we saw, the

I mean all those that live by buying and selling, for as they buy deare, they sell thereafter. Knight: What is the next sort that ye say would win by it? Doctor: Marry, all such as have takings of fearmes in their owne manurance //cultivation// at the old rent, for where they pay after the olde rate they sell after the newe — that is, they paye for theire lande good cheape, and sell all things growing thereof deare. Knight: What sorte is that which, ye sayde should have greater losse hereby, than these men had profit? Doctor: It is all noblemen, gentlemen, and all other that live either by a stinted rent or stypend, or do not manure //cultivation// the ground, or doe occupy no buying and sellling."

<sup>1)</sup> In France, the régisseur, steward, collector of dues for the feudal lords during the earlier part of the Middle Ages, soon became an homme d'affaires, who by extortion, cheating, &c., swindled himself into a capitalist. These régisseurs themselves were sometimes noblemen. E. g., "This is the account given by M. Jacquer de Thoraisse, knight, and lord of a manor near Besançon, to the lord who administers the accounts at Dijon for his highness the Duke and Count of Burgundy, of the rents appurtenant to the above-mentioned manor, from the 25th day of December 1359 to the 28th day of December 1360" (Alexis Monteil, *Histoire des Matériaux manuscrits*, etc.,<sup>649</sup> pp. 234-35.) Already it is evident here how in all spheres of social life the lion's share falls to the middleman. In the economic domain, e. g., financiers, stock-exchange speculators, merchants, shoopkeepers skim the cream; in civil matters, the lawyer fleeces his clients; in politics the representative is of more importance than the voters, the minister than the sovereign; in religion God is pushed into the background by the "Mediator", and the latter again is shoved back by the priests, the inevitable middlemen between the good shepherd and his sheep. In France, as in England, the great feudal territories were divided into innumerable small homesteads, but under conditions incomparably more unfavourable for the people. During the 14th century arose the farms or *terriers*. Their number grew constantly, far beyond 100,000. They paid rents varying from  $\frac{1}{12}$  to  $\frac{1}{5}$  of the product in money or in kind. These farms were fiefs, sub-fiefs, &c., according to the value and extent of the domains, many of them only containing a few acres. But these farmers had rights of jurisdiction in some degree over the dwellers on the soil; there were four grades. The oppression of the agricultural population under all these petty tyrants will be understood. Monteil says that there were once in France 160,000 judges, where today, 4,000 tribunals, including justices of the peace, suffice.<sup>650</sup>

town industries with a mass of proletarians entirely unconnected with the corporate guilds and unfettered by them; a fortunate circumstance that makes old A. Anderson (not to be confounded with James Anderson) in his "History of Commerce",<sup>651</sup> believe in the direct intervention of Providence. We must still pause a moment on this element of primitive accumulation. The thinning-out of the independent, self-supporting peasants not only brought about the crowding together of the industrial proletariat, in the way that Geoffroy Saint Hilaire explained the condensation of cosmical matter at one place, by its rarefaction at another.<sup>1)</sup> In spite of the smaller number of its cultivators, the soil brought forth as much or more produce, after as before, because the revolution in the conditions of landed property was accompanied by improved methods of culture, greater co-operation, concentration of the means of production, &c., and because not only were the agricultural wage labourers put on the strain more intensely,<sup>2)</sup> but the field of production of which they worked for themselves, became more and more contracted. With the setting free of a part of the agricultural population, therefore, their former means of nourishment were also set free. They were now transformed into material elements of variable capital. The peasant, expropriated and cast adrift, must buy their value in the form of wages, from his new master, the industrial capitalist. That which holds good of the means of subsistence holds with the raw materials of industry dependent upon home agriculture. They were transformed into an element of constant capital. Suppose, e. g., a part of the Westphalian peasants, who, at the time of Frederick II, all spun flax, forcibly expropriated and hunted from the soil; and the other part that remained, turned into day labourers of large farmers. At the same time arise large establishments for flax-spinning and weaving, in which the men "set free" now work for wages. The flax looks exactly as before. Not a fibre of it is changed, but a new social soul has popped into its body. It forms now a part of the constant capital of the master manufacturer. Formerly divided among a number of small producers, who cultivated it themselves and with their families spun it in retail fashion, it is now concentrated in the hand of one capitalist, who sets others to spin and weave it for him. The extra labour expended in flax-spinning realised itself formerly in extra income to numerous peasant families, or

<sup>1)</sup> In his *Notions de Philosophie Naturelle*. Paris, 1838.

<sup>2)</sup> A point that Sir James Steuart emphasises.<sup>652</sup>

maybe, in Frederick II's time, in taxes *pour le roi de Prusse*.<sup>a</sup> It realises itself now in profit for a few capitalists. The spindles and looms, formerly scattered over the face of the country, are now crowded together in a few great labour barracks, together with the labourers and the raw material. And spindles, looms, raw material, are now transformed, from means of independent existence for the spinners and weavers, into means for commanding them and sucking out of them unpaid labour.<sup>1)</sup> One does not perceive, when looking at the large manufactories and the large farms, that they have originated from the throwing into one of many small centres of production, and have been built up by the expropriation of many small independent producers. Nevertheless, the popular intuition was not at fault. In the time of Mirabeau, the lion of the Revolution, the great manufactories were still called manufactures réunies, workshops thrown into one, as we speak of fields thrown into one. Says Mirabeau:

"We are only paying attention to the grand manufactories, in which hundreds of men work under a director and which are commonly called *manufactures réunies*. Those where a very large number of labourers work, each separately and on his own account, are hardly considered; they are placed at an infinite distance from the others. This is a great error, as the latter alone make a really important object of national prosperity.... The large workshop (*manufacture réunie*) will enrich prodigiously one or two entrepreneurs, but the labourers will only be journeymen, paid more or less, and will not have any share in the success of the undertaking. In the discrete workshop (*manufacture séparée*), on the contrary, no one will become rich, but many labourers will be comfortable; the saving and the industrious will be able to amass a little capital, to put by a little for a birth of a child, for an illness, for themselves or their belongings. The number of saving and industrious labourers will increase, because they will see in good conduct, in activity, a means of essentially bettering their condition, and not of obtaining a small rise of wages that can never be of any importance for the future, and whose sole result is to place men in the position to live a little better, but only from day to day.... The large workshops, undertakings of certain private persons who pay labourers from day to day to work for their gain, may be able to put these private individuals at their ease, but they will never be an object worth the attention of governments. Discrete workshops, for the most part combined with cultivation of small holdings, are the only free ones."<sup>2)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> "I will allow you," says the capitalist, "to have the honour of serving me, on condition that, in return for the pains I take in commanding you, you give me the little that remains to you" (J.J. Rousseau, *Discours sur l'Économie Politique* [, p. 70]).

<sup>2)</sup> Mirabeau, l. c., t. III, pp. 20, 21, 109, passim. That Mirabeau considers the separate workshops more economical and productive than the "combined", and sees in the latter merely artificial exotics under government cultivation, is explained by the position at that time of a great part of the continental manufactures.

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<sup>a</sup> "For the King of Prussia", in other words, for a man who will give nothing in return.

The expropriation and eviction of a part of the agricultural population not only set free for industrial capital, the labourers, their means of subsistence, and material for labour; it also created the home market.

In fact, the events that transformed the small peasants into wage labourers, and their means of subsistence and of labour into material elements of capital, created, at the same time, a home market for the latter. Formerly, the peasant family produced the means of subsistence and the raw materials, which they themselves, for the most part, consumed. These raw materials and means of subsistence have now become commodities; the large farmer sells them, he finds his market in manufactures. Yarn, linen, coarse woollen stuffs—things whose raw materials had been within the reach of every peasant family, had been spun and woven by it for its own use—were now transformed into articles of manufacture, to which the country districts at once served for markets. The many scattered customers, whom stray artisans until now had found in the numerous small producers working on their own account, concentrate themselves now into one great market provided for by industrial capital.<sup>1)</sup> Thus, hand in hand with the expropriation of the self-supporting peasants, with their separation from their means of production, goes the destruction of rural domestic industry, the process of separation between manufacture and agriculture. And only the destruction of rural domestic industry can give the internal market of a country that extension and consistence which the capitalist mode of production requires. Still the manufacturing period, properly so called, does not succeed in carrying out this transformation radically and completely. It will be remembered that manufacture, properly so called, conquers but partially the domain of national production, and always rests on the handicrafts of the town and the domestic industry of the rural districts as its ultimate basis. If it destroys these in one form, in particular branches, at certain points, it calls them up again elsewhere, because it needs them

<sup>1)</sup> "Twenty pounds of wool converted unobtrusively into the yearly clothing of a labourer's family by its own industry in the intervals of other work—this makes no show; but bring it to market, send it to the factory, thence to the broker, thence to the dealer, and you will have great commercial operations, and nominal capital engaged to the amount of twenty times its value.... The working class is thus emersed to support a wretched factory population, a parasitical shop-keeping class, and a fictitious commercial, monetary, and financial system (David Urquhart, l.c. [Familiar Words..., London, 1855], p. 120).

for the preparation of raw material up to a certain point. It produces, therefore, a new class of small villagers who, while following the cultivation of the soil as an accessory calling, find their chief occupation in industrial labour, the products of which they sell to the manufacturers directly, or through the medium of merchants. This is one, though not the chief, cause of a phenomenon which, at first, puzzles the student of English history. From the last third of the 15th century he finds continually complaints, only interrupted at certain intervals, about the encroachment of capitalist farming in the country districts, and the progressive destruction of the peasantry. On the other hand, he always finds this peasantry turning up again, although in diminished number, and always under worse conditions.<sup>1)</sup> The chief reason is: England is at one time chiefly a cultivator of corn, at another chiefly a breeder of cattle, in alternate periods, and with these the extent of peasant cultivation fluctuates. Modern industry alone, and finally, supplies, in machinery, the lasting basis of capitalistic agriculture, expropriates radically the enormous majority of the agricultural population, and completes the separation between agriculture and rural domestic industry, whose roots—spinning and weaving—it tears up.<sup>2)</sup> It therefore also, for the first time, conquers for industrial capital the entire home market.<sup>3)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> Cromwell's time forms an exception. So long as the Republic lasted, the mass of the English people of all grades rose from the degradation into which they had sunk under the Tudors.<sup>653</sup>

<sup>2)</sup> Tuckett is aware that the modern woollen industry has sprung, with the introduction of machinery, from manufacture proper and from the destruction of rural and domestic industries [Tuckett, l. c., vol. 1, pp. 142-43]. "The plough, the yoke, were 'the invention of gods, and the occupation of heroes;' are the loom, the spindle, the distaff, of less noble parentage. You sever the distaff and the plough, the spindle and the yoke, and you get factories and poor-houses, credit and panics, two hostile nations, agricultural and commercial" (David Urquhart, l. c., p. 122). But now comes Carey, and cries out upon England, surely not with unreason, that it is trying to turn every other country into a mere agricultural nation, whose manufacturer is to be England. He pretends that in this way Turkey has been ruined, because "the owners and occupants of land have never been permitted by England to strengthen themselves by the formation of that natural alliance between the plough and the loom, the hammer and the harrow" ([Carey,] *The Slave Trade*, p. 125). According to him, Urquhart himself is one of the chief agents in the ruin of Turkey, where he had made Free-trade propaganda in the English interest. The best of it is that Carey, a great Russophile by the way, wants to prevent the process of separation by that very system of protection<sup>a</sup> which accelerates it.

<sup>3)</sup> Philanthropic English economists, like Mill, Rogers, Goldwin, Smith, Fawcett,

<sup>a</sup> See this volume, pp. 562, 745.

## Chapter XXXI

### GENESIS OF THE INDUSTRIAL CAPITALIST

The genesis of the industrial<sup>1)</sup> capitalist did not proceed in such a gradual way as that of the farmer. Doubtless many small guild masters, and yet more independent small artisans, or even wage labourers, transformed themselves into small capitalists, and (by gradually extending exploitation of wage labour and corresponding accumulation) into full-blown capitalists. In the infancy of capitalist production, things often happened as in the infancy of mediæval towns, where the question, which of the escaped serfs should be master and which servant, was in great part decided by the earlier or later date of their flight. The snail's pace of this method corresponded in no wise with the commercial requirements of the new world market that the great discoveries of the end of the 15th century created.<sup>580</sup> But the Middle Ages had handed down two distinct forms of capital, which mature in the most different economic social formations, and which, before the era of the capitalist mode of production, are considered as capital quand même—usurer's capital and merchant's capital.

"At present, all the wealth of society goes first into the possession of the capitalist ... he pays the landowner his rent, the labourer his wages, the tax and tithe gatherer their claims, and keeps a large, indeed the largest, and a continually augmenting share, of the annual produce of labour for himself. The capitalist may now be said to be the first owner of all the wealth of the community, though no law has conferred on him the right to this property ... this change has been effected by the taking of interest on capital ... and it is not a little curious that all the law-givers of Europe endeavoured to prevent this by statutes, viz., statutes against usury.... The power of the capitalist over all the wealth of the country is a complete change in the right of property, and by what law, or series of laws, was it effected?"<sup>2)</sup>

The author should have remembered that revolutions are not made by laws.

The money capital formed by means of usury and commerce was prevented from turning into industrial capital, in the country by the

&c., and liberal manufacturers like John Bright, & Co., ask the English landed proprietors, as God asked Cain after Abel,<sup>634</sup> Where are our thousands of freeholders gone? But where do you come from, then? From the destruction of those freeholders. Why don't you ask further, where are the independent weavers, spinners, and artisans gone?

<sup>1)</sup> Industrial here in contradistinction to agricultural. In the "categoric" sense the farmer is an industrial capitalist as much as the manufacturer.

<sup>2)</sup> *The Natural and Artificial Rights of Property Contrasted.* Lond., 1832, pp. 98-99. Author of the anonymous work: "Th. Hodgskin."

feudal constitution, in the towns by the guild organisation.<sup>1)</sup> These fetters vanished with the dissolution of feudal society, with the expropriation and partial eviction of the country population. The new manufactures were established at sea-ports, or at inland points beyond the control of the old municipalities and their guilds. Hence in England an embittered struggle of the corporate towns against these new industrial nurseries.

The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signalised the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief momenta of primitive accumulation. On their heels treads the commercial war of the European nations, with the globe for a theatre. It begins with the revolt of the Netherlands from Spain,<sup>655</sup> assumes giant dimension in England's Anti-Jacobin War,<sup>464</sup> and is still going on in the opium wars against China, &c.<sup>656</sup>

The different momenta of primitive accumulation distribute themselves now, more or less in chronological order, particularly over Spain, Portugal, Holland, France, and England. In England at the end of the 17th century, they arrive at a systematical combination, embracing the colonies, the national debt, the modern mode of taxation, and the protectionist system. These methods depend in part on brute force, e. g., the colonial system. But they all employ the power of the State, the concentrated and organised force of society, to hasten, hothouse fashion, the process of transformation of the feudal mode of production into the capitalist mode, and to shorten the transition. Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one. It is itself an economic power.

Of the Christian colonial system. W. Howitt, a man who makes a speciality of Christianity, says:

"The barbarities and desperate outrages of the so-called Christian race, throughout every region of the world, and upon every people they have been able to subdue, are not to be paralleled by those of any other race, however fierce, however untaught, and however reckless of mercy and of shame, in any age of the earth."<sup>2)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> Even as late as 1794, the small cloth-makers of Leeds sent a deputation to Parliament, with a petition for a law to forbid any merchant from becoming a manufacturer (Dr. Aikin, l. c. [*A Description of the Country...*, London, 1795, pp. 564-65]).

<sup>2)</sup> William Howitt, *Colonisation and Christianity: A Popular History of the Treatment of the Natives by the Europeans in all their Colonies*. London, 1838, p. 9. On the treatment

The history of the colonial administration of Holland — and Holland was the head capitalistic nation of the 17th century —

"is one of the most extraordinary relations of treachery, bribery, massacre, and meanness".<sup>1)</sup>

Nothing is more characteristic than their system of stealing men, to get slaves for Java. The men stealers were trained for this purpose. The thief, the interpreter, and the seller, were the chief agents in this trade, native princes the chief sellers. The young people stolen, were thrown into the secret dungeons of Celebes, until they were ready for sending to the slave-ships.<sup>659</sup> An official report says:

"This one town of Macassar, e. g., is full of secret prisons, one more horrible than the other, crammed with unfortunates, victims of greed and tyranny fettered in chains, forcibly torn from their families."

To secure Malacca, the Dutch corrupted the Portuguese governor. He let them into the town in 1641. They hurried at once to his house and assassinated him, to "abstain" from the payment of £21,875, the price of his treason. Wherever they set foot, devastation and depopulation followed. Banjwangi, a province of Java, in 1750 numbered over 80,000 inhabitants, in 1811 only 8,000. Sweet commerce!

The English East India Company,<sup>124</sup> as is well known, obtained, besides the political rule in India, the exclusive monopoly of the tea-trade, as well as of the Chinese trade in general, and of the transport of goods to and from Europe. But the coasting trade of India and between the islands, as well as the internal trade of India, were the monopoly of the higher employés of the company. The monopolies of salt, opium, betel and other commodities, were inexhaustible mines of wealth. The employés themselves fixed the price and plundered at will the unhappy Hindus. The Governor-General took part in this private traffic. His favourites received contracts under conditions whereby they, cleverer than the alchemists, made gold out of nothing. Great fortunes sprang up like mushrooms in a day; primitive accumulation went on without the advance of a shilling. The trial of Warren Hastings swarms with such cases. Here is an instance. A con-

of the slaves there is a good compilation in Charles Comte, *Traité de la Législation*. 3me éd. Bruxelles, 1837. This subject one must study in detail, to see what the bourgeoisie makes of itself and of the labourer, wherever it can, without restraint, model the world after its own image.<sup>657</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> Thomas Stamford Raffles, late Lieut-Gov. of that island, *The History of Java and its dependencies*, Lond., 1817.<sup>658</sup>

tract for opium was given to a certain Sullivan at the moment of his departure on an official mission to a part of India far removed from the opium district. Sullivan sold his contract to one Benn for £40,000; Benn sold it the same day for £60,000, and the ultimate purchaser who carried out the contract declared that after all he realised an enormous gain. According to one of the lists laid before Parliament, the Company and its employés from 1757-1766 got £5,940,498 from the Indians as gifts. Between 1769 and 1770, the English manufactured a famine by buying up all the rice and refusing to sell it again, except at fabulous prices.<sup>1)</sup>

The treatment of the aborigines was, naturally, most frightful in plantation colonies destined for export trade only, such as the West Indies, and in rich and well-populated countries, such as Mexico and India, that were given over to plunder. But even in the colonies properly so called, the Christian character of primitive accumulation did not belie itself. Those sober virtuosi of Protestantism, the Puritans of New England, in 1703, by decrees of their assembly set a premium of £40 on every Indian scalp and every captured red-skin: in 1722 a premium of £100 on every scalp; in 1744, after Massachusetts-Bay had proclaimed a certain tribe as rebels, the following prices: for a male scalp of 12 years and upwards £100 (new currency), for a male prisoner £105, for women and children prisoners £55, for scalps of women and children £50. Some decades later, the colonial system took its revenge on the descendants of the pious pilgrim fathers,<sup>660</sup> who had grown seditious in the meantime. At English instigation and for English pay they were tomahawked by red-skins. The British Parliament proclaimed bloodhounds and scalping as "means that God and Nature had given into its hand".

The colonial system ripened, like a hothouse, trade and navigation. The "societies Monopolia" of Luther<sup>265</sup> were powerful levers for concentration of capital. The colonies secured a market for the budding manufactures, and, through the monopoly of the market, an increased accumulation. The treasures captured outside Europe by undisguised looting, enslavement, and murder, floated back to the mother-country and were there turned into capital. Holland, which first fully developed the colonial system, in 1648 stood already in the acme of its commercial greatness.

<sup>1)</sup> In the year 1866 more than a million Hindus died of hunger in the province of Orissa alone. Nevertheless, the attempt was made to enrich the Indian treasury by the price at which the necessities of life were sold to the starving people.

It was "in almost exclusive possession of the East Indian trade and the commerce between the south-east and north-west of Europe. Its fisheries, marine, manufactures, surpassed those of any other country. The total capital of the Republic was probably more important than that of all the rest of Europe put together."<sup>661</sup>

Gülich forgets to add that by 1648, the people of Holland were more overworked, poorer and more brutally oppressed than those of all the rest of Europe put together.

Today industrial supremacy implies commercial supremacy. In the period of manufacture properly so called, it is, on the other hand, the commercial supremacy that gives industrial predominance. Hence the preponderant rôle that the colonial system plays at that time. It was "the strange God" who perched himself on the altar cheek by jowl with the old Gods of Europe, and one fine day with a shove and a kick chucked them all of a heap. It proclaimed surplus value making as the sole end and aim of humanity.<sup>662</sup>

The system of public credit, i. e., of national debts, whose origin we discover in Genoa and Venice as early as the Middle Ages, took possession of Europe generally during the manufacturing period. The colonial system with its maritime trade and commercial wars served as a forcing-house for it. Thus it first took root in Holland. National debts, i. e., the alienation of the state—whether despotic, constitutional or republican—marked with its stamp the capitalistic era. The only part of the so-called national wealth that actually enters into the collective possessions of modern peoples is—their national debt.<sup>663</sup> Hence, as a necessary consequence, the modern doctrine that a nation becomes the richer the more deeply it is in debt. Public credit becomes the *credo* of capital. And with the rise of national debt-making, want of faith in the national debt takes the place of the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost,<sup>663</sup> which may not be forgiven.

The public debt becomes one of the most powerful levers of primitive accumulation. As with the stroke of an enchanter's wand, it endows barren money with the power of breeding and thus turns it into capital, without the necessity of its exposing itself to the troubles and risks inseparable from its employment in industry or even in usury. The state creditors actually give nothing away, for the sum lent is transformed into public bonds, easily negotiable, which go on functioning in their hands just as so much hard cash would. But further,

<sup>661</sup> William Cobbett remarks that in England all public institutions are designated "royal"; as compensation for this, however, there is the "national" debt.<sup>664</sup>

apart from the class of lazy annuitants thus created, and from the improvised wealth of the financiers, middlemen between the government and the nation—as also apart from the tax-farmers, merchants, private manufacturers, to whom a good part of every national loan renders the service of a capital fallen from heaven—the national debt has given rise to joint-stock companies, to dealings in negotiable effects of all kinds, and to agiotage, in a word to stock-exchange gambling and the modern bankocracy.

At their birth the great banks, decorated with national titles, were only associations of private speculators, who placed themselves by the side of governments, and, thanks to the privileges they received, were in a position to advance money to the State. Hence the accumulation of the national debt has no more infallible measure than the successive rise in the stock of these banks, whose full development dates from the founding of the Bank of England in 1694. The Bank of England began with lending its money to the Government at 8%; at the same time it was empowered by Parliament to coin money out of the same capital, by lending it again to the public in the form of bank-notes. It was allowed to use these notes for discounting bills, making advances on commodities, and for buying the precious metals. It was not long ere this credit money, made by the bank itself, became the coin in which the Bank of England made its loans to the State, and paid, on account of the State, the interest on the public debt. It was not enough that the bank gave with one hand and took back more with the other; it remained, even whilst receiving, the eternal creditor of the nation down to the last shilling advanced. Gradually it became inevitably the receptacle of the metallic hoard of the country, and the centre of gravity of all commercial credit. What effect was produced on their contemporaries by the sudden uprising of this brood of bankocrats, financiers, rentiers, brokers, stock-jobbers, &c., is proved by the writings of that time, e. g., by Bolingbroke's.<sup>1)665</sup>

With the national debt arose an international credit system, which often conceals one of the sources of primitive accumulation in this or that people. Thus the villainies of the Venetian thieving system formed one of the secret bases of the capital wealth of Holland to whom Venice in her decadence lent large sums of money. So also was it with

<sup>1)</sup> "If the Tartars were to flood into Europe today, it would be a difficult job to make them understand what a financier is with us." Montesquieu, *Esprit des lois*, t. IV, p. 33, ed. Londres, 1769.

Holland and England. By the beginning of the 18th century the Dutch manufactures were far outstripped. Holland had ceased to be the nation preponderant in commerce and industry. One of its main lines of business, therefore, from 1701-1776, is the lending out of enormous amounts of capital, especially to its great rival England. The same thing is going on today between England and the United States.<sup>666</sup> A great deal of capital which appears today in the United States without any certificate of birth, was yesterday, in England, the capitalised blood of children.

As the national debt finds its support in the public revenue, which must cover the yearly payments for interest, &c., the modern system of taxation was the necessary complement of the system of national loans. The loans enable the government to meet extraordinary expenses, without the tax-payers feeling it immediately, but they necessitate, as a consequence, increased taxes. On the other hand, the raising of taxation caused by the accumulation of debts contracted one after another, compels the government always to have recourse to new loans for new extraordinary expenses. Modern fiscality, whose pivot is formed by taxes on the most necessary means of subsistence (thereby increasing their price), thus contains within itself the germ of automatic progression. Overtaxation is not an incident, but rather a principle. In Holland, therefore, where this system was first inaugurated, the great patriot, De Witt, has in his *Maxims* extolled it as the best system for making the wage labourer submissive, frugal, industrious, and overburdened with labour.<sup>667</sup> The destructive influence that it exercises on the condition of the wage labourer concerns us less however, here, than the forcible expropriation, resulting from it, of peasants, artisans, and in a word, all elements of the lower middle class. On this there are not two opinions, even among the bourgeois economists. Its expropriating efficacy is still further heightened by the system of protection, which forms one of its integral parts.

The great part that the public debt, and the fiscal system corresponding with it, has played in the capitalisation of wealth and the expropriation of the masses, has led many writers, like Cobbett, Double-day and others,<sup>668</sup> to seek in this, incorrectly, the fundamental cause of the misery of the modern peoples.

The system of protection was an artificial means of manufacturing manufacturers, of expropriating independent labourers, of capitalising the national means of production and subsistence, of forcibly abbreviating the transition from the mediæval to the modern mode of

production. The European states tore one another to pieces about the patent of this invention, and, once entered into the service of the surplus value makers, did not merely lay under contribution in the pursuit of this purpose their own people, indirectly through protective duties, directly through export premiums. They also forcibly rooted out, in their dependent countries, all industry, as, e. g., England did with the Irish woollen manufacture. On the continent of Europe, after Colbert's example,<sup>669</sup> the process was much simplified. The primitive industrial capital, here, came in part directly out of the state treasury. "Why," cries Mirabeau, "why go so far to seek the cause of the manufacturing glory of Saxony before the war? 180,000,000 of debts contracted by the sovereigns!"<sup>1)</sup>

Colonial system, public debts, heavy taxes, protection, commercial wars, &c., these children of the true manufacturing period, increase gigantically during the infancy of modern industry. The birth of the latter is heralded by a great slaughter of the innocents.<sup>670</sup> Like the royal navy, the factories were recruited by means of the press-gang. Blasé as Sir F. M. Eden is as to the horrors of the expropriation of the agricultural population from the soil, from the last third of the 15th century to his own time; with all the self-satisfaction with which he rejoices in this process, "essential" for establishing capitalistic agriculture and "the due proportion between arable and pasture land"<sup>a</sup>—he does not show, however, the same economic insight in respect to the necessity of child-stealing and child-slavery for the transformation of manufacturing exploitation into factory exploitation, and the establishment of the "true relation" between capital and labour power. He says:

"It may, perhaps, be worthy the attention of the public to consider, whether any manufacture, which, in order to be carried on successfully, requires that cottages and workhouses should be ransacked for poor children; that they should be employed by turns during the greater part of the night and robbed of that rest which, though indispensable to all, is most required by the young; and that numbers of both sexes, of different ages and dispositions, should be collected together in such a manner that the contagion of example cannot but lead to profligacy and debauchery; will add to the sum of individual or national felicity?"<sup>2)</sup>

"In the counties of Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and more particularly in Lancashire," says Fielden, "the newly-invented machinery was used in large factories built

<sup>1)</sup> Mirabeau, l. c., [*De la monarchie prussienne...*] t. vi, p. 101.

<sup>2)</sup> Eden, l. c., Vol. I, Book II, Ch. I, pp. 420-422.

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<sup>a</sup> See this volume, p. 718.

on the sides of streams capable of turning the water-wheel. Thousands of hands were suddenly required in these places, remote from towns; and Lancashire, in particular, being, till then, comparatively thinly populated and barren, a population was all that she now wanted. The small and nimble fingers of little children being by very far the most in request, the custom instantly sprang up of procuring *apprentices* from the different parish workhouses of London, Birmingham, and elsewhere. Many, many thousands of these little, hapless creatures were sent down into the north, being from the age of 7 to the age of 13 or 14 years old. The custom was for the master to clothe his apprentices and to feed and lodge them in an “apprentice house” near the factory; overseers were appointed to see to the works, whose interest it was to work the children to the utmost, because their pay was in proportion to the quantity of work that they could exact. Cruelty was, of course, the consequence.... In many of the manufacturing districts, but particularly, I am afraid, in the guilty county to which I belong //Lancashire//, cruelties the most heart-rending were practised upon the unoffending and friendless creatures who were thus consigned to the charge of master-manufacturers; they were harassed to the brink of death by excess of labour ... were flogged, fettered and tortured in the most exquisite refinement of cruelty; ... they were in many cases starved to the bone while flogged to their work and ... even in some instances ... were driven to commit suicide.... The beautiful and romantic valleys of Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Lancashire, secluded from the public eye, became the dismal solitudes of torture, and of many a murder. The profits of manufacturers were enormous; but this only whetted the appetite that it should have satisfied, and therefore the manufacturers had recourse to an expedient that seemed to secure to them those profits without any possibility of limit; they began the practice of what is termed “night-working”, that is, having tired one set of hands, by working them throughout the day, they had another set ready to go on working throughout the night; the day-set getting into the beds that the night-set had just quitted, and in their turn again, the night-set getting into the beds that the day-set quitted in the morning. It is a common tradition in Lancashire, that the beds *never get cold.*”<sup>1)</sup>

### With the development of capitalist production during the manu-

<sup>1)</sup> John Fielden, l. c., [ *The Curse of the Factory System...*, London, 1836,] pp. 5, 6. On the earlier infamies of the factory system, cf. Dr. Aikin (1795), l. c., p. 219; and Gisborne, *Enquiry into the Duties of Men*, 1795, Vol. II.<sup>671</sup> When the steam-engine transplanted the factories from the country waterfalls to the middle of towns, the “abstentious” surplus value maker found the child material ready to his hand, without being forced to seek slaves from the workhouses.<sup>193</sup> When Sir R. Peel (father of the “minister of plausibility”), brought in his bill<sup>672</sup> for the protection of children, in 1815, Francis Horner, lumen of the Bullion Committee<sup>673</sup> and intimate friend of Ricardo, said in the House of Commons: “It is notorious, that with a bankrupt’s effects, a gang, if he might use the word, of these children had been put up to sale, and were advertised publicly as part of the property. A most atrocious instance had been brought before the Court of King’s Bench two years before, in which a number of these boys, apprenticed by a parish in London to one manufacturer, had been transferred to another, and had been found by some benevolent persons in a state of absolute famine. Another case more horrible had come to his knowledge while on a //Parliamentary// Committee ... that not many years ago, an agreement had been made between a London parish and a Lancashire manufacturer, by which it was stipulated, that with every 20 sound children one idiot should be taken.”<sup>674</sup>

factoring period, the public opinion of Europe had lost the last remnant of shame and conscience. The nations bragged cynically of every infamy that served them as a means to capitalistic accumulation. Read, e.g., the naïve Annals of Commerce of the worthy A. Anderson.<sup>651</sup> Here it is trumpeted forth as a triumph of English statecraft that at the Peace of Utrecht,<sup>675</sup> England extorted from the Spaniards by the Asiento Treaty<sup>676</sup> the privilege of being allowed to ply the negro trade, until then only carried on between Africa and the English West Indies, between Africa and Spanish America as well. England thereby acquired the right of supplying Spanish America until 1743 with 4,800 negroes yearly. This threw, at the same time, an official cloak over British smuggling. Liverpool waxed fat on the slave trade. This was its method of primitive accumulation. And, even to the present day, Liverpool "respectability" is the Pindar of the slave trade which—compare the work of Aikin [1795] already quoted—"has coincided with that spirit of bold adventure which has characterised the trade of Liverpool and rapidly carried it to its present state of prosperity; has occasioned vast employment for shipping and sailors, and greatly augmented the demand for the manufactures of the country" (pp. 338-339). Liverpool employed in the slave trade, in 1730, 15 ships; in 1751, 53; in 1760, 74; in 1770, 96; and in 1792, 132.<sup>677</sup>

Whilst the cotton industry introduced child slavery in England, it gave in the United States a stimulus to the transformation of the earlier, more or less patriarchal slavery, into a system of commercial exploitation. In fact, the veiled slavery of the wage workers in Europe needed, for its pedestal, slavery pure and simple in the new world.<sup>1)</sup>

Tantæ molis erat,<sup>678</sup> to establish the "eternal laws of Nature" of the capitalist mode of production, to complete the process of separation between labourers and conditions of labour, to transform, at one pole, the social means of production and subsistence into capital, at the opposite pole, the mass of the population into wage labourers, into "free labouring poor", that artificial product of modern society.<sup>2)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> In 1790, there were in the English West Indies ten slaves for one free man, in the French fourteen for one, in the Dutch twenty-three for one (Henry Brougham, *An Inquiry into the Colonial Policy of the European Powers*. Edin. 1803, vol. II, p. 74).

<sup>2)</sup> The phrase, "labouring poor", is found in English legislation from the moment when the class of wage labourers becomes noticeable. This term is used in opposition, on the one hand, to the "idle poor", beggars, etc., on the other to those labourers, who, pigeons not yet plucked, are still possessors of their own means of labour. From the Stat-

If money, according to Augier,<sup>1)</sup> "comes into the world with a congenital blood stain on one cheek, capital comes dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt."<sup>2)</sup>

## Chapter XXXII

### HISTORICAL TENDENCY OF CAPITALIST ACCUMULATION

What does the primitive accumulation of capital, i. e., its historical genesis, resolve itself into? In so far as it is not immediate transformation of slaves and serfs into wage labourers, and therefore a mere change of form, it only means the expropriation of the immediate producers, i. e., the dissolution of private property based on the labour of its owner. Private property, as the antithesis to social, collective property, exists only where the means of labour and the external conditions of labour belong to private individuals. But according as

ute Book it passed into political economy, and was handed down by Culpeper, J. Child, etc., to Adam Smith and Eden. After this, one can judge of the good faith of the "execrable political cant-monger", Edmund Burke, when he called the expression, "labouring poor",—"execrable political cant". This sycophant who, in the pay of the English oligarchy, played the romantic laudator temporis acti against the French Revolution, just as, in the pay of the North American Colonies, at the beginning of the American troubles,<sup>6</sup> he had played the Liberal against the English oligarchy, was an out and out vulgar bourgeois. "The laws of commerce are the laws of Nature, and therefore the laws of God" (E. Burke, l. c., [*Thoughts and Details on Scarcity...*, London, 1800,] pp. 31, 32). No wonder that, true to the laws of God and of Nature, he always sold himself in the best market. A very good portrait of this Edmund Burke, during his liberal time, is to be found in the writings of the Rev. Mr. Tucker. Tucker was a parson and a Tory, but, for the rest, an honourable man and a competent political economist. In face of the infamous cowardice of character that reigns today, and believes most devoutly in "the laws of commerce", it is our bounden duty again and again to brand the Burkes, who only differ from their successors in one thing—talent.

<sup>1)</sup> Marie Augier, *Du Crédit Public*, Paris, 1842 [, p. 265].

<sup>2)</sup> "Capital is said by a Quarterly Reviewer to fly turbulence and strife, and to be timid, which is very true; but this is very incompletely stating the question. Capital eschews no profit, or very small profit, just as Nature was formerly said to abhor a vacuum. With adequate profit, capital is very bold. A certain 10 per cent. will ensure its employment anywhere; 20 per cent. certain will produce eagerness; 50 per cent., positive audacity; 100 per cent., will make it ready to trample on all human laws; 300 per cent., and there is not a crime at which it will scruple, nor a risk it will not run, even to the chance of its owner being hanged. If turbulence and strife will bring a profit, it will freely encourage both. Smuggling and the slave trade have amply proved all that is here stated" (T. J. Dunning, l. c., [*Trades' Union and Strikes*,] pp. 35-36).

these private individuals are labourers or not labourers, private property has a different character. The numberless shades, that it at first sight presents, correspond to the intermediate stages lying between these two extremes. The private property of the labourer in his means of production is the foundation of petty industry, whether agricultural, manufacturing, or both; petty industry, again, is an essential condition for the development of social production and of the free individuality of the labourer himself. Of course, this petty mode of production exists also under slavery, serfdom, and other states of dependence. But it flourishes, it lets loose its whole energy, it attains its adequate classical form, only where the labourer is the private owner of his own means of labour set in action by himself: the peasant of the land which he cultivates, the artisan of the tool which he handles as a virtuoso. This mode of production presupposes parcelling of the soil, and scattering of the other means of production. As it excludes the concentration of these means of production, so also it excludes co-operation, division of labour within each separate process of production, the control over, and the productive application of the forces of Nature by society, and the free development of the social productive powers. It is compatible only with a system of production, and a society, moving within narrow and more or less primitive bounds. To perpetuate it would be, as Pecqueur rightly says, "to decree universal mediocrity".<sup>679</sup> At a certain stage of development it brings forth the material agencies for its own dissolution. From that moment new forces and new passions spring up in the bosom of society; but the old social organisation fetters them and keeps them down. It must be annihilated; it is annihilated. Its annihilation, the transformation of the individualised and scattered means of production into socially concentrated ones, of the pigmy property of the many into the huge property of the few, the expropriation of the great mass of the people from the soil, from the means of subsistence, and from the means of labour, this fearful and painful expropriation of the mass of the people forms the prelude to the history of capital. It comprises a series of forcible methods, of which we have passed in review only those that have been epoch-making as methods of the primitive accumulation of capital. The expropriation of the immediate producers was accomplished with merciless Vandalism, and under the stimulus of passions the most infamous, the most sordid, the pettiest, the most meanly odious. Self-earned private property, that is based, so to say, on the fusing together of the isolated, independent labouring individual with

the conditions of his labour, is supplanted by capitalistic private property, which rests on exploitation of the nominally free labour of others, i. e., on wage labour.<sup>1)</sup>

As soon as this process of transformation has sufficiently decomposed the old society from top to bottom, as soon as the labourers are turned into proletarians, their means of labour into capital, as soon as the capitalist mode of production stands on its own feet, then the further socialisation of labour and further transformation of the land and other means of production into socially exploited and, therefore, common means of production, as well as the further expropriation of private proprietors, takes a new form. That which is now to be expropriated is no longer the labourer working for himself, but the capitalist exploiting many labourers. This expropriation is accomplished by the action of the immanent laws of capitalistic production itself, by the centralisation of capital. One capitalist always kills many. Hand in hand with this centralisation, or this expropriation of many capitalists by few, develop, on an 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. Thus integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated.

1) "We are in a situation which is entirely new for society ... we are striving to separate every kind of property from every kind of labour" (Sismondi, *Nouveaux Principes de l'Econ. Polit.*, t. II, p. 434).

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.<sup>1)</sup>

## Chapter XXXIII

### THE MODERN THEORY OF COLONISATION<sup>2)</sup>

Political economy confuses on principle two very different kinds of private property, of which one rests on the producers' own labour,

<sup>1)</sup> The advance of industry, whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation of the labourers, due to competition, by their revolutionary combination, due to association. The development of modern industry, therefore, cuts from under its feet, the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates products. What the bourgeoisie, therefore, produces, above all, are its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable.... Of all the classes, that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes perish and disappear in the face of modern industry, the proletariat is its special and essential product.... The lower middle classes, the small manufacturers, the shopkeepers, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class ... they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels, *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei*, London, 1848, pp. 9, 11 [present edition, Vol. 6, pp. 495-96, 494].

<sup>2)</sup> We treat here of real colonies, virgin soils, colonised by free immigrants. The United States are, speaking economically, still only a colony of Europe. Besides, to this category belong also such old plantations as those in which the abolition of slavery has completely altered the earlier conditions.

the other on the employment of the labour of others. It forgets that the latter not only is the direct antithesis of the former, but absolutely grows on its tomb only. In Western Europe, the home of political economy, the process of primitive accumulation is more or less accomplished. Here the capitalist régime has either directly conquered the whole domain of national production, or, where economic conditions are less developed, it, at least, indirectly controls those strata of society which, though belonging to the antiquated mode of production, continue to exist side by side with it in gradual decay. To this ready-made world of capital, the political economist applies the notions of law and of property inherited from a pre-capitalistic world with all the more anxious zeal and all the greater unction, the more loudly the facts cry out in the face of his ideology. It is otherwise in the colonies. There the capitalist régime everywhere comes into collision with the resistance of the producer, who, as owner of his own conditions of labour, employs that labour to enrich himself, instead of the capitalist. The contradiction of these two diametrically opposed economic systems, manifests itself here practically in a struggle between them. Where the capitalist has at his back the power of the mother country, he tries to clear out of his way by force, the modes of production and appropriation, based on the independent labour of the producer. The same interest, which compels the sycophant of capital, the political economist, in the mother country, to proclaim the theoretical identity of the capitalist mode of production with its contrary, that same interest compels him in the colonies to make a clean breast of it, and to proclaim aloud the antagonism of the two modes of production. To this end he proves how the development of the social productive power of labour, co-operation, division of labour, use of machinery on a large scale, &c., are impossible without the expropriation of the labourers, and the corresponding transformation of their means of production into capital. In the interest of the so-called national wealth, he seeks for artificial means to ensure the poverty of the people. Here his apologetic armour crumbles off, bit by bit, like rotten touchwood. It is the great merit of E. G. Wakefield to have discovered, not anything new about the Colonies,<sup>1)</sup> but to have discovered in the Colonies the truth as to the conditions of capitalist produc-

<sup>1)</sup> Wakefield's few glimpses on the subject of modern colonisation are fully anticipat-ed by Mirabeau Père, the physiocrat, and even much earlier by English economists.

tion in the mother country. As the system of protection at its origin<sup>1)</sup> attempted to manufacture capitalists artificially in the mother country, so Wakefield's colonisation theory, which England tried for a time to enforce by Acts of Parliament, attempted to effect the manufacture of wage workers in the Colonies. This he calls "systematic colonisation".

First of all, Wakefield discovered that in the Colonies, property in money, means of subsistence, machines, and other means of production, does not as yet stamp a man as a capitalist if there be wanting the correlative—the wage worker, the other man who is compelled to sell himself of his own free-will. He discovered that capital is not a thing, but a social relation between persons, established by the instrumentality of things.<sup>2)</sup> Mr. Peel, he moans, took with him from England to Swan River, West Australia, means of subsistence and of production to the amount of £50,000. Mr. Peel had the foresight to bring with him, besides, 300 persons of the working class, men, women, and children. Once arrived at his destination, "Mr. Peel was left without a servant to make his bed or fetch him water from the river".<sup>3)</sup> Unhappy Mr. Peel who provided for everything except the export of English modes of production to Swan River!

For the understanding of the following discoveries of Wakefield, two preliminary remarks: We know that the means of production and subsistence, while they remain the property of the immediate producer, are not capital. They become capital, only under circumstances in which they serve at the same time as means of exploitation and subjection of the labourer. But this capitalist soul of theirs is so intimately wedded, in the head of the political economist, to their material substance, that he christens them capital under all circumstances, even when they are its exact opposite. Thus is it with Wakefield. Further: the splitting up of the means of production into the individual property of many independent labourers, working on their own account, he calls equal division of capital. It is with the political econ-

<sup>1)</sup> Later, it became a temporary necessity in the international competitive struggle. But, whatever its motive, the consequences remain the same.

<sup>2)</sup> "A negro is a negro. In certain circumstances he becomes a slave. A mule is a machine for spinning cotton. Only under certain circumstances does it become capital. Outside these circumstances, it is no more capital than gold is intrinsically money, or sugar is the price of sugar.... Capital is a social relation of production. It is a historical relation of production" (Karl Marx, *Lohnarbeit und Kapital*. N. Rh. Z. No. 266, April 7, 1849) [present edition, Vol. 9, pp. 211, 212].

<sup>3)</sup> E. G. Wakefield, *England and America*, vol. II, p. 33.

omist as with the feudal jurist. The latter stuck on to pure monetary relations the labels supplied by feudal law.

"If," says Wakefield, "all the members of the society are supposed to possess equal portions of capital ... no man would have a motive for accumulating more capital than he could use with his own hands. This is to some extent the case in new American settlements, where a passion for owning land prevents the existence of a class of labourers for hire."<sup>1)</sup>

So long, therefore, as the labourer can accumulate for himself—and this he can do so long as he remains possessor of his means of production—capitalist accumulation and the capitalistic mode of production are impossible. The class of wage labourers, essential to these, is wanting. How, then, in old Europe, was the expropriation of the labourer from his conditions of labour, i. e., the co-existence of capital and wage labour, brought about? By a social contract<sup>4+9</sup> of a quite original kind. "Mankind have adopted a ... simple contrivance for promoting the accumulation of capital," which, of course, since the time of Adam, floated in their imagination as the sole and final end of their existence: "they have divided themselves into owners of capital and owners of labour. ... This division was the result of concert and combination."<sup>2)</sup> In one word: the mass of mankind expropriated itself in honour of the "accumulation of capital". Now, one would think, that this instinct of self-denying fanaticism would give itself full fling especially in the Colonies, where alone exist the men and conditions that could turn a social contract from a dream to a reality. But why, then, should "systematic colonisation" be called in to replace its opposite, spontaneous, unregulated colonisation? But—but—

"In the Northern States of the American Union, it may be doubted whether so many as a tenth of the people would fall under the description of hired labourers.... In England ... the labouring class compose the bulk of the people."<sup>3)</sup>

Nay, the impulse to self-expropriation, on the part of labouring humanity, for the glory of capital, exists so little, that slavery, according to Wakefield himself, is the sole natural basis of Colonial wealth. His systematic colonisation is a mere *pis aller*,<sup>a</sup> since he unfortunately has to do with free men, not with slaves.

<sup>1)</sup> l. c., vol. I, p. 17.

<sup>2)</sup> l. c., p. 18.

<sup>3)</sup> l. c., pp. 42, 43, 44.

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<sup>a</sup> makeshift

"The first Spanish settlers in Saint Domingo did not obtain labourers from Spain. But, without labourers, their capital must have perished, or, at least, must soon have been diminished to that small amount which each individual could employ with his own hands. This has actually occurred in the last Colony founded by Englishmen—the Swan River Settlement—where a great mass of capital, of seeds, implements, and cattle, has perished for want of labourers to use it, and where no settler has preserved much more capital than he can employ with his own hands."<sup>1)</sup>

We have seen that the expropriation of the mass of the people from the soil forms the basis of the capitalist mode of production. The essence of a free colony, on the contrary, consists in this—that the bulk of the soil is still public property, and every settler on it therefore can turn part of it into his private property and individual means of production, without hindering the later settlers in the same operation.<sup>2)</sup> This is the secret both of the prosperity of the colonies and of their inveterate vice—opposition to the establishment of capital.

"Where land is very cheap and all men are free, where every one who so pleases can easily obtain a piece of land for himself, not only is labour very dear, as respects the labourer's share of the produce, but the difficulty is to obtain combined labour at any price."<sup>3)</sup>

As in the colonies the separation of the labourer from the conditions of labour and their root, the soil, does not yet exist, or only sporadically, or on too limited a scale, so neither does the separation of agriculture from industry exist, nor the destruction of the household industry of the peasantry. Whence then is to come the internal market for capital?

"No part of the population of America is exclusively agricultural, excepting slaves and their employers who combine capital and labour in particular works. Free Americans, who cultivate the soil, follow many other occupations. Some portion of the furniture and tools which they use is commonly made by themselves. They frequently build their own houses, and carry to market, at whatever distance, the produce of their own industry. They are spinners and weavers; they make soap and candles, as well as, in many cases, shoes and clothes for their own use. In America the cultivation of land is often the secondary pursuit of a blacksmith, a miller or a shopkeeper."<sup>4)</sup>

With such queer people as these, where is the "field of abstinence" for the capitalists?

The great beauty of capitalist production consists in this—that it

<sup>1)</sup> I. c., vol. II, p. 5.

<sup>2)</sup> "Land, to be an element of colonisation, must not only be waste, but it must be public property, liable to be converted into private property" (I. c., Vol. II, p. 125).

<sup>3)</sup> I. c., Vol. I, p. 247.

<sup>4)</sup> I. c., pp. 21, 22.

not only constantly reproduces the wage worker as wage worker, but produces always, in proportion to the accumulation of capital, a relative surplus population of wage workers. Thus the law of supply and demand of labour is kept in the right rut, the oscillation of wages is penned within limits satisfactory to capitalist exploitation, and lastly, the social dependence of the labourer on the capitalist, that indispensable requisite, is secured; an unmistakable relation of dependence, which the smug political economist, at home, in the mother country, can transmogrify into one of free contract between buyer and seller, between equally independent owners of commodities, the owner of the commodity capital and the owner of the commodity labour. But in the colonies this pretty fancy is torn asunder. The absolute population here increases much more quickly than in the mother country, because many labourers enter this world as ready-made adults, and yet the labour market is always understocked. The law of the supply and demand of labour falls to pieces. On the one hand, the old world<sup>323</sup> constantly throws in capital, thirsting after exploitation and "abstinence"; on the other, the regular reproduction of the wage labourer as wage labourer comes into collision with impediments the most impudent and in part invincible. What becomes of the production of wage labourers, supernumerary in proportion to the accumulation of capital? The wage worker of today is tomorrow an independent peasant, or artisan, working for himself. He vanishes from the labour market, but not into the workhouse. This constant transformation of the wage labourers into independent producers, who work for themselves instead of for capital, and enrich themselves instead of the capitalist gentry, reacts in its turn very perversely on the conditions of the labour market. Not only does the degree of exploitation of the wage labourer remain indecently low. The wage labourer loses into the bargain, along with the relation of dependence, also the sentiment of dependence on the abstemious capitalist. Hence all the inconveniences that our E. G. Wakefield pictures so doughtily, so eloquently, so pathetically.

The supply of wage labour, he complains, is neither constant, nor regular, nor sufficient.

"The supply of labour is always, not only small, but uncertain."<sup>10</sup> "Though the produce divided between the capitalist and the labourer be large, the labourer takes so

<sup>10</sup> I. c., Vol. II, p. 116.

great a share that he soon becomes a capitalist.... Few, even of those whose lives are unusually long, can accumulate great masses of wealth.”<sup>1)</sup>

The labourers most distinctly decline to allow the capitalist to abstain from the payment of the greater part of their labour. It avails him nothing, if he is so cunning as to import from Europe, with his own capital, his own wage workers.

They soon “cease ... to be labourers for hire; they ... become independent land-owners, if not competitors with their former masters in the labour market.”<sup>2)</sup>

Think of the horror! The excellent capitalist has imported bodily from Europe, with his own good money, his own competitors! The end of the world has come! No wonder Wakefield laments the absence of all dependence and of all sentiment of dependence on the part of the wage workers in the colonies.

On account of the high wages, says his disciple, Merivale, there is in the colonies “the urgent desire for cheaper and more subservient labourers—for a class to whom the capitalist might dictate terms, instead of being dictated to by them. ... In ancient civilised countries the labourer, though free, is by a law of Nature dependent on capitalists; in colonies this dependence must be created by artificial means”.<sup>3)</sup>

What is now, according to Wakefield, the consequence of this un-

<sup>1)</sup> I. c., Vol. I, p. 131.

<sup>2)</sup> I. c., Vol. II, p. 5.

<sup>3)</sup> Merivale, I. c., [*Lectures on Colonisation and Colonies...*,] Vol. II, pp. 235-237, 314, *passim*. Even the mild, Free-trade, vulgar economist, Molinary, says: “In the colonies where slavery has been abolished without the compulsory labour being replaced with an equivalent quantity of free labour, there has occurred the opposite of what happens every day before our eyes. Simple workers have been seen to exploit in their turn the industrial entrepreneurs, demanding from them wages which bear absolutely no relation to the legitimate share in the product which they ought to receive. The planters were unable to obtain for their sugar a sufficient price to cover the increase in wages, and were obliged to furnish the extra amount, at first out of their profits, and then out of their very capital. A considerable amount of planters have been ruined as a result, while others have closed down their businesses in order to avoid the ruin which threatened them.... It is doubtless better that these accumulations of capital should be destroyed than that generations of men should perish” (how generous of Mr. Molinari!) “but would it not be better if both survived?” (Molinari, I. c., [*Études économiques...*, Paris, 1846,] pp. 51, 52). Mr. Molinari, Mr. Molinari! What then becomes of the ten commandments, of Moses and the prophets,<sup>489</sup> of the law of supply and demand, if in Europe the “entrepreneur” can cut down the labourer’s legitimate part, and in the West Indies, the labourer can cut down the entrepreneur’s? And what, if you please, is this “legitimate part”, which on your own showing the capitalist in Europe daily neglects to pay? Over yonder, in the colonies where the labourers are so “simple” as to “exploit” the capitalist, Mr. Molinari feels a strong itching to set the law of supply and demand, that works elsewhere automatically, on the right road by means of the police.

fortunate state of things in the colonies? A “barbarising tendency of dispersion” of producers and national wealth.<sup>1)</sup> The parcelling-out of the means of production among innumerable owners, working on their own account, annihilates, along with the centralisation of capital, all the foundations of combined labour. Every long-winded undertaking, extending over several years and demanding outlay of fixed capital, is prevented from being carried out. In Europe, capital invests without hesitating a moment, for the working class constitutes its living appurtenance, always in excess, always at disposal. But in the colonies! Wakefield tells an extremely doleful anecdote. He was talking with some capitalists of Canada and the state of New York, where the immigrant wave often becomes stagnant and deposits a sediment of “supernumerary” labourers.

“Our capital,” says one of the characters in the melodrama, “was ready for many operations which require a considerable period of time for their completion; but we could not begin such operations with labour which, we knew, would soon leave us. If we had been sure of retaining the labour of such emigrants, we should have been glad to have engaged it at once, and for a high price: and we should have engaged it, even though we had been sure it would leave us, provided we had been sure of a fresh supply whenever we might need it.”<sup>2)</sup>

After Wakefield has contrasted the English capitalist agriculture and its “combined” labour with the scattered cultivation of American peasants, he unwittingly gives us a glimpse at the reverse of the medal. He depicts the mass of the American people as well-to-do, independent, enterprising and comparatively cultured, whilst

“the English agricultural labourer is a miserable wretch, a pauper. ... In what country, except North America and some new colonies, do the wages of free labour employed in agriculture, much exceed a bare subsistence for the labourer?... Undoubtedly, farm-horses in England, being a valuable property, are better fed than English peasants.”<sup>3)</sup>

But, never mind, national wealth is, once again, by its very nature, identical with misery of the people.

How, then, to heal the anti-capitalistic cancer of the colonies? If men were willing, at a blow, to turn all the soil from public into private property, they would destroy certainly the root of the evil, but also the colonies. The trick is how to kill two birds with one stone. Let the Government put upon the virgin soil an artificial price, indepen-

<sup>1)</sup> Wakefield, l. c., [*England and America*,] Vol. II, p. 52.

<sup>2)</sup> l. e., pp. 191, 192.

<sup>3)</sup> l. c., Vol. I, pp. 24, 47, 246.

dent of the law of supply and demand, a price that compels the immigrant to work a long time for wages before he can earn enough money to buy land, and turn himself into an independent peasant.<sup>1)</sup> The fund resulting from the sale of land at a price relatively prohibitory for the wage workers, this fund of money extorted from the wages of labour by violation of the sacred law of supply and demand, the Government is to employ, on the other hand, in proportion as it grows, to import have-nothings from Europe into the colonies, and thus keep the wage labour market full for the capitalists. Under these circumstances, *tout sera pour le mieux dans le meilleur des mondes possibles*.<sup>2)</sup> This is the great secret of "systematic colonisation". By this plan, Wakefield cries in triumph,

"the supply of labour *must* be constant and regular, because, first, as no labourer would be able to procure land until he had worked for money, all immigrant labourers, working for a time for wages and in combination, would produce capital for the employment of more labourers; secondly, because every labourer who left off working for wages and became a landowner, would, by purchasing land, provide a fund for bringing fresh labour to the colony".<sup>3)</sup>

The price of the soil imposed by the State must, of course, be a "sufficient price"—i. e., so high

"as to prevent the labourers from becoming independent landowners until others had followed to take their place".<sup>3)</sup>

This "sufficient price for the land" is nothing but a euphemistic circumlocution for the ransom which the labourer pays to the capitalist for leave to retire from the wage labour market to the land. First, he must create for the capitalist "capital", with which the latter may be able to exploit more labourers; then he must place, at his own expense, a *locum tenens* on the labour market, whom the Government forwards across the sea for the benefit of his old master, the capitalist.

It is very characteristic that the English Government for years

<sup>1)</sup> "It is, you add, a result of the appropriation of the soil and of capital that the man who has nothing but the strength of his arms finds employment and creates an income for himself ... but the opposite is true, it is thanks to the individual appropriation of the soil that there exist men who only possess the strength of their arms.... When you put a man in a vacuum, you rob him of the air. You do the same, when you take away the soil from him ... for you are putting him in a space void of wealth, so as to leave him no way of living except according to your wishes" (Colins, l. c., t. III, pp. 267-71, *passim*).

<sup>2)</sup> Wakefield, l. c., Vol. II, p. 192.

<sup>3)</sup> l. c., p. 45.

practised this method of “primitive accumulation”, prescribed by Mr. Wakefield expressly for the use of the colonies. The fiasco was, of course, as complete as that of Sir Robert Peel’s Bank Act.<sup>a</sup> The stream of emigration was only diverted from the English colonies to the United States. Meanwhile, the advance of capitalistic production in Europe, accompanied by increasing Government pressure, has rendered Wakefield’s recipe superfluous. On the one hand, the enormous and ceaseless stream of men, year after year driven upon America, leaves behind a stationary sediment in the east of the United States, the wave of immigration from Europe throwing men on the labour market there more rapidly than the wave of emigration westwards can wash them away. On the other hand, the American Civil War<sup>7</sup> brought in its train a colossal national debt, and, with it, pressure of taxes, the rise of the vilest financial aristocracy, the squandering of a huge part of the public land on speculative companies for the exploitation of railways, mines, &c., in brief, the most rapid centralisation of capital. The great republic has, therefore, ceased to be the promised land for emigrant labourers. Capitalistic production advances there with giant strides, even though the lowering of wages and the dependence of the wage worker are yet far from being brought down to the normal European level. The shameless lavishing of uncultivated colonial land on aristocrats and capitalists by the Government, so loudly denounced even by Wakefield, has produced, especially in Australia,<sup>1)</sup> in conjunction with the stream of men that the gold-diggings attract, and with the competition that the importation of English commodities causes even to the smallest artisan, an ample “relative surplus labouring population”, so that almost every mail brings the Job’s news of a “glut of the Australian labour market”, and prostitution in some places there flourishes as wantonly as in the London Haymarket.

However, we are not concerned here with the condition of the colonies. The only thing that interests us is the secret discovered in the new world by the political economy of the old world, and proclaimed

<sup>1)</sup> As soon as Australia became her own law-giver,<sup>680</sup> she passed, of course, laws favourable to the settlers, but the squandering of the land, already accomplished by the English Government, stands in the way. “The first and main object at which new Land Act of 1862 aims is to give increased facilities for the settlement of the people” (*The Land Law of Victoria*, by the Hon. C. G. Duffy, Minister of Public Lands, Lond., 1862).

<sup>a</sup> See this volume, p. 151, footnote 1.