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### PART II

#### MARK'S CAPITAL AND THE PARIS COMMUNE

##### I. The Despotic Plan of Capital vs. the Cooperative Plan of Labor

The theoretical axis of Capital by Karl Marx is the question of plan — the despotic plan of capital against the plan of freely-associated workers. In the first edition of CAPITAL, published in 1867, Marx had already shown that capitalist production means the subordination of man to the factory machine and the factory clock. In his chapter on "Cooperation" he showed how man is not an individual laborer but many laborers working together in one place.

In cooperative production the despotic plan inherent in capitalist production reveals itself in a form all its own — the hierarchic structure of control over social labor. To keep production going on an ever-expanding scale, to extract the greatest amount of surplus or unpaid labor, requires a whole army of foremen, managers, superintendents. These all work for the capitalist with one aim and purpose: to force labor out of the many laborers. The attempt to control cooperative labor within capitalist confines must of necessity assume a despotic form. Planned despotism arises not out of the cooperative form of the labor process but out of the antagonistic relationship between the workers, on the one hand, and the capitalist and his bureaucracy on the other hand.

Cooperation under the mastership of the capitalist is in direct opposition to the cooperating laborers. The worker had lost his individual skill to the machine. But he gained a new power in cooperating with his fellow workers. The capitalist's simultaneous employment of workers in one place has been willed by the capitalist, not the worker. But this increase in labor productivity creates a social power that the workers feel strongly. For from the start this is a mass power.

Cooperation is in itself a productive power, a power due to cooperation, the power of social labor. But under capitalistic control this cooperative labor is not allowed to develop freely. Its function is confined to the production of value. It cannot release its new, social, human energies so long as the old mode of production continues. Thus the nature of the cooperative form of labor power is in opposition to the capitalist integument, the value-form. At the same time the monstrous creation of monotony, speed-up, uniformity, military regularity and more speed-up robs science also of its self-development, confining it to the single purpose of extracting ever greater amounts of surplus, unpaid labor from the workers.

#### The Absolute Contradiction

This develops into the absolute contradiction between the

nature of machine industry and the value-form of its operation. Technology had analyzed the few main fundamental motions. There it stopped. It could go no further because there is no such thing as an abstract, remote, classless development of machinery. Technology is an integral part of the development of the productive forces. To exclude from it the greatest productive force -- living labor -- cripples and emasculates science itself. Under capitalism the separation of the intellectual powers of production from manual labor, the incorporation of all science into the machine, means the transformation of the intellectual power into the might of capital over labor. In a word, it means the transformation of man into a mere fragment of a man, just when the technical necessities of the machine demand variation in labor, fluidity, mobility.

Due to the cooperative form of the labor process the resistance of the workers is also a mass power. The workers' revolt develops from their fight against the instrument of labor into their struggle against the capitalistic conditions of labor. The workers thus at one and the same time fight for their emancipation and against the capitalistic limitations of science.

This is what Marx announced to the whole world in 1867. Before this theoretic onslaught, so total as to include both history and the actuality of the class struggle, bourgeois economics lay prostrate. Whereas nearly fifty years ago Ricardo had at least posed the contradiction in machine production, vulgar economy was now reduced to denying it altogether. The vacuity of their thinking can be seen in their argument that since the contradiction is not inherent in machinery "as such", it is a delusion to think that there are contradictions in machinery under capitalist control. This adding of two and two and coming up with zero did not stop the bourgeois economist, however, from declaiming against the "backwardness" and stupidity of the worker who broke up the machinery.

#### The New Insights of the Workers.

But if the workers are too absorbed in their concrete struggles to indulge in these abstract arguments, their actual struggles are full of new perceptions. True they fought the machine itself as a competitor. But the first appearance of machinery as a handmaiden of capital was its true appearance. Machinery "as such" was a product of the economists' imagination. The proletariat therefore from the first was on the right track. And in the deepening of their struggles with capital, the workers learnt to fight not the instrument of labor but the capitalistic process of labor and through that struggle the road to their emancipation. The capitalist ideologists try to argue away the workers' enslavement to capital while society itself is being threatened with destruction of its human resources. The worker's revolt, on the other hand, tries to free modern industry itself from the death penalty which hangs over all society:

"Modern industry indeed compels society, under penalty of death, to replace the detail-worker of today, crippled by life-long repetition of one and the same trivial operation, and thus reduced to the mere fragment of a man by the fully developed individual, fit for a variety of labors, ready to face any change in production, and to whom the different social functions he performs, are but so many modes of giving free scope to

his own natural and acquired powers."

So long, however, as the economic status of labor remains what it is under capitalism, it is impossible for modern industry to escape that death penalty. The depth and breadth of the class struggles are a sign that the contradictions of capitalist production are driving toward a new resolution. Again Paris, where all social revolutions have hitherto received their highest expression, is the testing ground of two modes of labor. The struggle is fought out in the open in the form of a seizure of power of the capitalist state.

## 2. The Paris Commune -- a Form of Workers' Rule

The social revolution that erupted in Paris on March 18, 1871 was not like anything ever before seen in history. The treason of the ruling class necessitated the saving of French civilization by the proletariat. A few months earlier Napoleon III had lost the Franco-Prussian war. The bourgeois republic which took over the reigns of government found that it was more afraid of revolutionary Paris than of Bismarck's army. With the flight to Versailles of this government, the revolutionary proletariat reached the greatest turning point in history -- the remolding of itself as the ruling class.

Louis Blanqui, famous revolutionary and head of a secret armed force, had been plotting insurrection seriously, unremittingly, for years. He tried again when the Republic of France showed itself ready to sell out to Bismarck. But, without mass support, the insurrectionary plan of his elite group failed of necessity. In real life the insurrection came at the peak of the ascending revolution, not vice versa.

On March 18th the soldiers were ordered by the head of the reactionary government, M. Thiers, to transport the cannon of Paris to Versailles. The milkmaids who were on the streets surrounded the soldiers. Although the men had not yet come into the streets this early morning and the women were not armed, they held their own. As in every real people's revolution, new strata of population are awakened. This time it was the women who were the first to act. Then the reveille was sounded and all of Paris was in the streets. The spies of Thiers barely managed to escape with the information that it was impossible to inform on the leaders of the uprising since it comprised the entire population.

### A New State-Power.

The act of self-defense was also the act of self-government. Just as the Second Empire was the natural offspring of the parliamentary government which had crushed the 1848 revolution, so the parliamentary government that had succeeded Napoleon III had but one function -- to be the engine of class despotism. The workers found they had to smash this state to smithereens.

The first act of the revolution was to arm itself. The armed people struck out against the ubiquitous state organs -- the army, the police, officialdom -- which were such a faithful copy of the hierarchic division of labor in the factory. The first workers' state in history, called

the Commune of Paris, was born.

The Commune was composed in the main of Blanquists and Proudhonists. But the Blanquists became Communards only by giving up their insurrectionary plan and riding on the wave of the people's revolution. The Proudhonists likewise had to give up their schemas. The development of large-scale production had already undermined the artisan type which formed the social base for Proudhonism. Now the 1871 revolution destroyed entirely its philosophy of no political activity. The Parisian workers who had just overthrown bourgeois domination got down to the task of ruling themselves and to set down the conditions of their labor. And all this was being done while the enemy was at the gates.

#### The Destruction of Bureaucratism

The first decree of the first workers' state was the abolition of the standing army. The first announcement of the type of political rule to be set up is typical: "All public services are reorganized and simplified."

The armed people smashed parliamentarism. The people's assembly was not to be a parliamentary talk-shop but a working body. Those who pass the laws also execute them. There was thus to be no division between the executive and legislative bodies. The sham independence of the judiciary was likewise eliminated. Judges, as all other representatives, are to be elected and to be subject to recall. Representatives of the proletariat, however, are not yet the proletariat as a whole. Therefore, to assure control over the elected representatives, they too are subject to recall. Thus the power remains always in the hands of the mass as a whole.

Public service was to be accomplished at a workman's wage. Thus was laid the basis of cheap government. The hierarchic division of labor was given further blows. The decree separating church and state abolished religious control of education and kindled intellectual life on all fronts. True to its proletarian spirit, some districts began immediately to clothe and feed their children. Education was to be open and free to all. But, even above that, the reorganization of the methods of education was to begin with the fullest participation of the whole people. The first call went out to teachers and parents. The teachers were instructed "to employ exclusively the experimental and scientific method, that which starts from facts, physical, moral and intellectual."

#### "The Political Form at Last Discovered"

The utopians had been busy inventing political forms of rule, the anarchists ignoring all political forms, the petty-bourgeois democrats accepting the parliamentary form. But this Commune is what the workers came up with -- smash the state form of capital's rule; supersede with a commune-type of self-government. This then was "the political form at last discovered to work out the economic emancipation of the proletariat." Marx had deduced from history that the bourgeois state-form would disappear and the proletariat organized as the ruling class would be the point of transition to a classless society. Now he hailed the heroism of the Communards. He studied this specific form of proletarian rule and disclosed its secret: "The political rule of the producer cannot exist with the perpetuation of his social slavery."

The inseparability of politics and economics was established by the Commune by its own working existence. Its Commission of Labor and Exchange, staffed mainly by members of the First International (which had been organized under Marx's leadership) accomplished its greatest work not in the decrees it passed, but in the stimulation it gave to workers to take things into their own hands. It began by asking the workers to reopen the works which had been abandoned by their owners and run them by "the cooperative association of the workers employed in them." The aim was to transform land and means of production into mere instruments of "free and associated labor."

#### "Free and Associated Labor"

The Commune's workshops themselves were models of shops organized on a proletarian democratic basis. The workers themselves appointed the directors, shop and bench foremen. These were subject to dismissal by the workers if relations or conditions proved unsatisfactory. Not only were wages, hours and working conditions set but, above all, a factory committee met every evening to discuss the next day's work.

Thus plain working men under circumstances of unexampled difficulty governed themselves. The Commune, by being the self-government of the producers, set free all the elements of the future society. Marx described it as "Working, thinking, fighting, bleeding Paris -- almost forgetful, in its incubation of a new society, of the cannibals at its gates -- radiant in the enthusiasm of its historic initiative!"

The spontaneous mass outburst that took the form of the Commune of Paris lasted only two months before the Parisian workers were massacred by the bloodiest terror in history. But in those two short months the workers accomplished more miracles than capitalism had in as many centuries. The greatest miracle was its working existence. It abolished the standing army and armed the people instead. It smashed to smithereens state bureaucracy, placed public officials on a workman's salary and made them subject to recall. It abolished the division between the legislative and the executive and transformed the parliament from a talking to a working body. It created new conditions for labor. On all fronts the creative initiative of the masses had ensured the maximum activity of the mass and the minimum for its elected representatives. It thus stripped the fetishisms off all forms of rule: economic, political, intellectual.

#### 3. The Fetishism of Commodities Vs. The New Form of Cooperation

It was the totality of the reorganization of society that shed new insight into the totality of the contradictions of commodity production. By smashing the old state-form and superseding it with the Commune, an end had been put to the hierarchic division of labor, the division between politics and economics included. By exposing the bourgeois state to be the public force of social enslavement that it was, the proletariat demonstrated how the absolutely new form of cooperation, released from its value-integument, expresses itself. This was so clearly the absolute opposite of the dialectic movement of labor under capitalism, forced into a value-form, that all the fetishisms were stripped off the latter.

Ever since Marx had broken from bourgeois society, some three decades before the Paris Commune, he had been busy analyzing the social form of production called capitalism. From the start he had begun with labor. It was the concept of alienated labor that made it possible for him to dig deep into the mysteries of capitalist production. By the time he had reached the first edition of CAPITAL Marx had succeeded in showing that what appeared ideally as plan revealed itself in the process of production to be the undisputed authority of the capitalist. What Marx now shows as clearly was that this despotism also hides itself in the market in the commodity, seemingly simple and everyday, in reality a monstrous fetish.

There is nothing simple about a commodity. It is a great fetish that makes the despotic conditions of capitalist production appear as if they were self-evident truths of social production. Nothing could be further from the truth. Just as these conditions were historically determined and rest on the servitude of the laborer, so the commodity from the start of capitalism is a reflection of the dual character of labor. It is from the start a unity of opposites, use-value and value, which, in embryo, contains all the contradictions of capitalism.

#### The Duality of Capitalist Society.

This simple thing was beyond the perception of the greatest bourgeois economist, Ricardo, despite the discovery of labor as the source of value. Although classical political economy had reduced value to its labor content, it had never once asked itself WHY this content, labor, assumed this form, value.

Long before CAPITAL Marx had analyzed the duality pervading bourgeois society: "In our days overworking seems pregnant with its contrary; machinery gifted with the wonderful power of shortening and fructifying human labor, we behold starving and overworking it. The now-fangled sources of wealth, by some strange weird spell, are turned into sources of want. The victories of arms seem bought by the loss of character. At the same pace that mankind masters nature, man seems to become enslaved to other men or to his own infamy. Even the pure light of science seems unable to shine but on a dark background of ignorance. All our inventions and progress seem to result in enfeebling material forces with intellectual life, and in stultifying human life into a material force. This antagonism between modern industry and science on the one hand, modern misery and dissolution on the other hand; this antagonism between the productive powers and the social relations of our epoch is a fact, palpable, overwhelming and not to be controverted."

Nevertheless, when it came to the specific economic categories, Marx had not, as late as 1859, penetrated into the mysteries of the commodity. What he knew he attributed to general knowledge, writing in the CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY that everyone could see that production relations were really involved in the exchange of things so that very little mysticism attaches itself to the commodity. The mysticism rather is in the money and capital-fetish. By 1867 he sees the error and he singles out the fetish of the commodity-form. But even here the main emphasis is on the fantastic form which makes production relations appear as relations of things. In the CRITIQUE Marx practically replaced the commodity as presenting no special mystifying problem. In the first edition of CAPITAL Marx concentrates on the form of value. But its fantastic form of appearance is most striking in the equivalent form. In other words, he is still concerned with equality and inequality.

It is only because of the illumination shed upon the question by the Commune that Marx now sees that the major difficulty is in the elementary form of value. Having located the trouble at its source, the new emphasis is no longer on the fantastic form that a product of labor assumes. The crucial discovery is that it can have no other form because that is in truth what relations in capitalist production are: material relations between people and social relations between things.

#### All Human Relations Perverted

Everything under capitalism is inverted. Machines dominate man, not man machines. All science is embodied in the machine rather than in the actual producers. Everything is topsy-turvy. All human relations are confined, perverted. Material relations are dominant and dominant by virtue of the mastery of dead over living labor. Society moves through constant crisis and any impetus the masses give to the productive forces is taken over by the ruling bureaucracy and used against the masses. It cannot be otherwise so long as the process of production has mastery over man instead of being controlled by him.

This perverse relation of subject to object is so all-pervasive that it has in its grip not alone the oppressed class but even the oppressor class. That is why classical political economy could not solve the mystery. It met here its historic barrier:

"The value-form of the product of labor is not only the most abstract, but is also the most universal form, taken by the product in bourgeois production, and stamps that production as a particular species of social production and thereby gives it its special historical character. If then we treat this mode of production as one eternally fixed by nature for very parts of society, we necessarily overlook that which is the differentia specifica of the value-form, and consequently the commodity-form and of the further developments, money-form, capital-form, etc."

Marx had transformed the Ricardian theory of value into the theory of surplus-value by making the labor process the cornerstone of his analysis and showing what kind of labor produces value and surplus-value. Now Marx left political economy behind entirely. The Commune had created the objective and the subjective foundation for this leap by Marx. By releasing labor from the confines of value production, it showed how people could be freely associated without the despotism of capital or the mediation of things. Contrast the expansiveness of that movement with the mutilation of labor under capitalism, robbing the workers of all form of their own and reducing them merely to a component of labor in general. That is the specific character of labor under capitalism. The value-form which alone contains the reductions of the many varied concrete labors into one abstract mass is the necessary result of this specific character of capitalist labor. Seeing the positive achievements of the Commune, the richness of the human traits which once the full and free development of the individual has begun, brought into sharp relief for Marx that the fetishism of commodity arises from the form itself.

#### The Commune Illuminated Marx's Theoretical Problems

The form of value is not only a logical development. It

is a social phenomenon. It involves everything -- property, the state, the market. Capitalist private property is the opposite of self-earned private property. It is in fact based on the expropriation of the producer from the land and the consequent separation of the laborer from the means of labor. Yet the form of private property continues to embrace capitalistic property. The inversion does not stop there. The state is the engine of class despotism but it appears as if it stood above classes. In exposing the fetishism of the commodity-form, Marx shows that in reality the greatest production economist of the bourgeoisie, Ricardo, had never fully gotten away from the market and exchange. By dealing with their social relations openly, directly, the Communists moved the whole question of form from a debate among intellectuals to the serious activity of establishing a new social order.

Marx never looked at concrete events one-sidedly, to see how they conformed to his previously-established theory. The theory always gained in depth by the processes of history itself. Not alone was the form of value fully clarified. Important additions were introduced into the final part, on the "Accumulation of Capital". In analyzing the "General Law of Capitalist Accumulation", Marx now poses the question of the ultimate development of the law of concentration and centralization of capital:

"In a given society the limit would not be reached until the moment when the entire social capital were united in the hands either of a single capitalist or of a single capitalist corporation."

Yet the importance of this analysis is not so much in the prediction of state-capitalism as in the categorical statement that follows: This logical development does not in any way change the general absolute law of capitalism -- the creation of the unemployed army. The greater the development of constant capital (machines) at the expense of variable capital (living labor), the greater the accumulation of misery at the other pole, the greater too are the revolts of the working-class.

So we are back to history and its processes. But so firmly does Marx have his feet on the ground that he does not allow CAPITAL to end with the historical tendency and its famous "expropriation of the expropriators." No, he insists on returning us to present-day capitalism and its origin in primitive accumulation. Marx ends the major work of his life with the reminder that "the capitalist mode of production and accumulation and therefore capitalist private property, have for their fundamental condition the annihilation of self-earned private property: in other words the expropriation of the laborer. Integral to Marx's conception of the present and future of capitalism is this moving analysis of the bloody path by means of which capitalism came to power, putting down the revolt of the peasants against their expropriation from the land and herding them into the factory. There, disciplined, they would presumably be unable to revolt any more. In reality the revolt of the new class of proletarians -- a class always increasing in numbers and disciplined, united, organized by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself -- is the road not alone to their emancipation but to the end of class rule.



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### 1. The Despotic Plan of Capital vs. the Cooperative Plan of Labor

Ever since Marx had broken from bourgeois society, some three decades before the Paris Commune, he had been busy analyzing the social form of production called capitalism. From the start he had begun with labor. It was the concept of alienated labor that made it possible for him to dig deep into the mysteries of capitalist production. By the time he had reached the first edition of CAPITAL, Marx had succeeded in showing that what appeared ideally as plan revealed itself in the process of production to be the undisputed authority of the capitalist.

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stupidity of the worker who broke up the machinery.

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But if the workers are too absorbed in their concrete struggles to indulge in these abstract arguments, it is the actual class struggles which shed strong illuminations on the theoretical problems by virtue of the fact men engaged in these struggles are full of new perceptions. True, they fought the machine itself as a competitor. But the first appearance of machinery as a handmaiden of capital was its true appearance. Machinery "as such" was a product of the economists' imagination. The proletariat therefore from the first was on the right track. And in the deepening of the struggles with capital, the workers learned to fight not the instrument of labor but the capitalistic process of labor and through that the limitations on science's development. The capitalist ideologists try to argue away the workers' enslavement to capital while society itself is being threatened with destruction of its human resources. The workers' revolt, on the other hand, tries to free modern industry itself from the death penalty which hangs over all society;

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poses itself to the laws of the centralization of capital leading to its concentration in the hands of one single capitalist or one single capitalist corporation.

## 2. The Paris Commune -- a Form of Workers' Rule

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The inseparability of politics and economics was established by the Commune, by its own working existence. Its Commission of Labor and Exchange, staffed mainly by members of the International, accomplished its greatest work not in the decrees it passed, but in the stimulation it gave to workers to take things into their own hands. It began by asking the workers to reopen the works which had been abandoned by their owners and run them themselves "the cooperative association of the workers employed in them." The aim was to transform land and means of production into mere instruments of "free and associated labor."

The Commune's workshops themselves were models of shops organized on a proletarian democratic basis. The works themselves appointed the directors, shop and bench foremen. These were subject to dismissal by the workers if relations or conditions proved unsatisfactory. Not only were wages, hours and working conditions set but, above all, a factory committee met every evening to discuss the next day's work.

Thus, plain working men, under circumstances of unexampled difficulty, governed themselves. The Commune, by being the self-government of the producers, set free all the elements of the future society. Marx described it as a "working, thinking, fighting, bleeding Paris -- almost forgetful, in its incubation of a new society, of the cannibals at its gates -- radiant in the enthusiasm of its historic initiative!"

The spontaneous mass outburst that took this form of the ~~Commune~~ Commune of Paris lasted only two months before the Parisian workers were massacred by the bloodiest terror in history. But in those two short months, the workers accomplished more miracles than capitalism had in as many

centuries. The greatest miracle was its working existence. It abolished the standing army and armed the people instead. It smashed to smithereens state bureaucracy, placed public officials on a workman's salary and made them subject to recall. It abolished the division between the legislative and the executive and transformed the parliament from a talking to a working body. It created new conditions for labor. On all fronts the creative initiative of the masses had ensured the maximum activity of the mass and the minimum for its elected representatives. It thus stripped the fetichisms off all forms of rule: economic, political, intellectual.

### 3. The Fetishism of Commodities and Plan vs. Freely Associated Labor and Control of Production

It was the totality of the reorganization of society by the Communards that shed new insight into the perversity of relations under capitalism. By smashing the old state-form and superseding it with the Commune, an end had been put to the hierarchic division of labor, the division between politics and economics included. By exposing the bourgeois state to be the public force of social enslavement that it was, the proletariat demonstrated how the absolutely new form of cooperation, released from its value integument, expresses itself. This was so clearly the absolute opposite of the dialectic movement of labor under capitalism, forced into a value-form, that all the fetichisms were stripped off the latter.

Before the Commune, Marx had written that only freely associated labor could strip off the fetichism from commodities. Now that the Communards did precisely that, both illuminated and extended the theory so that in the Civil War in France, he writes that what is now clear is that if cooperative production itself is not to become "a sham and a snare" it must be under the workers own control. At the same time, he prepares a new, French edition of CAPITAL and there, as he tells us, in the afterword, he had changed the



changed the section on fetishism of commodities "in a significant manner."  
Marx asks:

"Whence then arises the enigmatical character of the product of labor, so soon as it assumes the form of commodities?" (IP ed, p. 42)

And he answers simply: "Clearly from this form itself."

But previous to this edition, this was not that clear to anyone not even to Marx. The simplicity of expression achieved in 1872 is worth tracing, especially since its significance has been lost even to Marxism.

There is nothing simple about a commodity. It is a great fetish that makes the despotic conditions of capitalist production appear as if they were self-evident truths of social production. Nothing could be further from the truth. Just as these conditions were historically determined and rest on the servitude of the laborer, so the commodity from the start of capitalism is a reflection of the dual character of labor. It is from the start a unity of opposites, use-value and value, which, in embryo contains all the contradictions of capitalism.

#### The Duality of Capitalist Society

This simple thing was beyond the perception of the greatest bourgeois economist, Ricardo, despite the discovery of labor as the source of value. Although classical political economy had reduced value to its labor content, it had never once asked itself WHY this content, labor, assumed this form, value.

Long before CAPITAL, Marx had analyzed the duality pervading bourgeois society: "In our days everything seems pregnant with its contrary; machinery gifted with the wonderful power of shortening and fructifying human labor, we behold starving and overworking it. The new-fangled sources of wealth, by some strange weird spell, are turned into sources of want. The victories of arms seen bought by the loss of character. At the same pace that mankind masters nature, man seems to become enslaved to other men or to his own

infamy. Even the pure light of science seems unable to shine but on a dark background of ignorance. All our inventions and progress seem to result in endowing material forces with intellectual life, and stultifying human life into a material force. This antagonism between modern industry and science on the one hand, modern misery and dissolution on the other hand; this antagonism between the productive powers and the social relations of our epoch is a fact, palpable, overwhelming and not to be controverted."

In general, but only in general, the logic of content and form of ~~the~~ labor was actual to Marx's thinking from the very beginning when, in 1844, he first worked out the concept of alienated labor. Nevertheless, insofar as economic categories were concerned, he accepted them, more or less, as worked out by classical political economy. That is true as late as the publication of Critique of Political Economy in 1859, when he still uses exchange-value in the sense of value not in the sense of value-form, merely taking for granted that "everyone knows" that what is really involved in the exchange of things are production relations. By 1867 and the first edition of CAPITAL, he singles out the commodity-form as the fetish. But even here, the main emphasis is on the fantastic form of appearance of production relations as exchange of things. It is only after the illumination of the Paris Commune that his French edition shifts the emphasis from its fantastic form of appearance to the necessity of that form of appearance because that is, in truth, what relations of people at the point of production are: "material relations between persons and social relations between things."

Having located the trouble at its source, Marx sees that a product of labor can have no other form than that of a commodity and hence the simplicity of his answer to whence the fetishism of commodities comes, "Clearly from the form itself."

### All Human Relations Are Perverted

It is not that Marx did not know before the Paris Commune that everything under capitalism is inverted, nor that machine dominates man, not man machines, nor that all science is embodied in the machine rather than in the actual producers. He wrote often enough of how confined and perverted all human relations are under capitalism and stressed that it cannot be otherwise as long as the process of production has mastery over man instead of being controlled by him.

This perverse relation of subject to object is so all-pervading that it has in its grip not alone the oppressed class but even the oppressor class. That is why classical political economy could not dissolve the mystery. It met here its historic barrier:

"The value form of the product of labor is not only the most abstract, but is also the most universal form, taken by the product in bourgeois production, and stamps that production as a particular species of social production and thereby gives it its special historical character. If then we treat this mode of production as one eternally fixed by nature for every state of society, we necessarily overlook that which is the differentia specifica of the value-form, and consequently the commodity-form and of the further developments, money-form, capital-form, etc."

What was new was that the Commune, by releasing labor from the confines of value production, show how people freely associated without the despotism of capital or the mediation of things. Contrast the expansiveness of that movement with the mutilation of labor under capitalism, robbing the workers of all form of their own and reducing them merely to a component of labor in general. That is the specific character of labor under capitalism. The value-form which alone contains the reductions of the many varied concrete labors into one abstract mass is the necessary result of this specific character of capitalist labor. Seeing the positive achievements of the Commune, the richness of the human traits when once the full and free development of each individual has begun, has become the condition for the full and free development of all, brought into such sharp relief that the fetishism of commodity arises from the form itself

that it deepened the meaning of the form of value as both a logical development and a social phenomenon. It involved everything -- property, the state, the market, the plan. By dealing with their social relations openly, directly, the Commune moved the whole question of form from a debate among intellectuals to the serious activity of workers facing with sober senses the conditions of their being and the relations among themselves and reorganizing them completely and thus establishing a new social order.

Marx never looked at concrete events one-sidedly to see how they conformed to his previously-established theory. ~~MAX~~ The theory always gained in depth by the processes of history itself. Not alone was the form of value fully illuminated. Important additions were introduced into the final part, on the "Accumulation of Capital." In analyzing the "General Law of Capitalist Accumulation," Marx now poses the question of the ultimate development of the law of concentration and centralization of capital:

"In a given society, the limit would be reached at the moment when the entire social capital were united in the hand either of a single capitalist or single capitalist corporation."

Yet the importance of this crucial addition, with which we shall deal in detail when we analyze our own age of state capitalism in Part IV, is not in the prediction of state-capitalism but in the fact that nothing at all fundamental is changed in the relations between classes by such an extreme development. On the contrary, all contradictions are pushed to the extreme.

We are back to history and its processes. But so firmly does Marx have his feet on the ground that he does not allow CAPITAL to end with the historical tendency and its famous "expropriation of the expropriators." No, he insists on returning us to present-day capitalism and its origin in primitive accumulation. Marx ends the major work of his life with the reminder that the "capitalist mode of production and accumulation and

therefore capitalist private property, have for their fundamental condition the annihilation of self-earned private property; in other words, the expropriation of the laborer." Integral to Marx's conception of the present and future of capitalism is this moving analysis of the bloody path by means of which capitalism came to power, putting down the revolt of the peasants against their expropriation from the land and then herding them into the factory whose discipline, the capitalist things, will suppress the very possibility of new revolts. In reality, the revolts of the new class of proletarians, "a class always increasing in numbers and discipline, united and organized by the very mechanism of capitalist production, are the road not alone to their emancipation, but to the end of class rule.