

Outlined by F. Forest

VALUE, EXCHANGE VALUE, SURPLUS VALUE: HOW APPLICABLE TO CAPITALIST SOCIETY & HOW TO OTHER SOCIETIES

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Introductory: Vol.I, pp.195-196: "This sphere that we are deserting, within whose boundaries the sale & purchase of l-p goes on, is in fact a very Eden of the innate rts. of man. There alone rule Freedom, Equality, Property & Bentham.....On leaving this sphere of simple circulation or of exchange of commodities, which furnishes the "Free-trader Vulgaris" with his views & ideas, & with the standard by which he judges a society based on capital & wages, we think we can perceive a change in the physiognomy of our dramatis personae....The one (money owner+FF) with an air of importance, smirking, intent on business; the other, timid & holding back, like one who is bringing his own hide to market & has nothing to expect but --a hiding."

Not only is the vulgar economist who sees only the phenomenal world wrong but even the classical economists who did turn attention to sphere of production failed to realize what lies behind the forms of value. Voll, p.93, footnote: "It is one of the chief failings of classical economy that it has never succeeded by means of its analysis of commodities & in particular of their value, in discovering that form under which value becomes exchange v. Even Adam Smith & Ricardo, the best representatives of the school, treat the form of value as a thing of no importance, as having no connection with the inherent nature of commodities. The reason for this is not solely because their attention is entirely absorbed in the analysis of the magnitude of value. It lies deeper. The value form of the product of labor is not only the most abstract but is also the most universal form, taken by the prod. in bourg. ~~and~~ prod. & stamps that prod. as a particular species of social prod. & thereby gives it its special historical character. If then we treat this mode of prod. as one eternally fixed by nature for every state of society, we necessarily overlook that which is the differentia specifica of the value-form & consequently of the commodity form & of its further developments, money-form, capital form, etc."

NB

Application of economic categories to: (A) Pre-Capitalist societies.

Voll, p.88: "Compulsory labor is just as properly measured by time, as commodity-producing labor; but every serf knows that what he expends in the service of his lord is a definite quantity of his own personal l-p....No matter then what we may think of the parts played by the different classes of people themselves in this society, the social relations between individuals in the performance of their labor, appear at all events as their own mutual personal relations, & are not disguised under the shape of social relations between the products of labor."

Critique of Pol. Eco. p.53: "Direct barter, the original natural form of exchange, represents rather the beginning of the transformation of use-values into commodities than that of commodities into money. Exchange value has as yet no form of its own but is still directly bound up with use-value."

(B) Capitalist society:

(1) Fetishism of Commodities, p.83 Vol.I "A commodity is therefore a mysterious thing simply because in it the social character of men's labor appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the produce of that labor; bec use the relation of the producers to the ~~sum~~ total of their own labor is presented to them as a social relation, existing not between themselves, but between the products of their labor."

THE REIFICATION OF SOCIAL RELATIONS HAS TWO EFFECTS:

(a) it attributes an independent power to things: Vol.III, p.961: "Vulgar eco. really does nothing else but to interpret, in doctrinaire fashion, the ideas of persons entrapped insap. conditions of prod. & performing the function s of agts. ~~in~~ such prod., to systematize & to defend these ideas, "(read to end of par., then proceed to p.968)"In Capital - "profit, or better Capital - Interest, Land - Rent, Labor - Wages of Labor, in this eco. trinity expressing professedly the connection of value & of wealth in general with their sources we have the complete mystification of the cap. mode of prod., the transformation of social conditions into things, the indiscriminate amalgamation of the material conditions of prod. with their historical & social forms."

(b) and it eternalized categories of cap. eco., such as value: Vol. I, p. 227 "It is however, just this ultimate money form of the world of commodities that actus ly conceals, instead of disclosing, the social character of prt. labor & the social relations between the individual producers.....The categories of bourg. eco. consist of such like forms. They are forms of thought expressing with

social validity the conditions & relations of a definite historically determined mode of prod., viz. prod. of commodities. The whole mystery of commodities, all the magic & necromancy that surrounds the products of labor so long as they take the form of commodities, vanishes so soon as we come to other forms of production."

(2) Value of commodities. Vol. I, p. 46: "As values, all commodities are only definite masses of congealed labor-time."; p. 89: "The secret of the expression of value, namely, that all kinds of labor are equal

NB and equivalent because, & so far as they are human labor in general, cannot be deciphered until the notion of human equality has already acquired the fixity of a popular prejudice. This however is possible only in a society in which the great mass of the produce of labor takes the form of commodities in which consequently the dominant relation between man & man is that of owners of commodities."

p. 85: "The recent scientific discovery, that the products of labor so far as they are values, are but material expressions of the human labor spent in their production, marks indeed an epoch in the history of the dev. of the human race but by no means dissipates the mist thru which the social character of labor appears to us to be an obj. character of the products themselves."

(READ ALSO  
PP. 298-9  
O. CRI.IQUE)

p. 70: "When at the beginning of this ch. we said, in common parlance, that a commodity is both use-v & an ex.-v. we were, accurately speaking, wrong. A commodity is a use-v or obj. of utility and a value. It manifests itself as this 2-fold thing i.e. as soon as its v. assumes an independent form, viz. the form of exchange value."

p. 209 "Value is independent of the particular use-v by which it is borne."

p. 170: "Use-values must therefore never be looked upon as the real aim of the capitalist; neither must the profit on any single transaction. The restless never-ending process of profit making alone is what he aims at."

p. 55: "An increase in the quantity of use-values is an increase in material wealth. With 2 coats 2 men can be clothed, with one coat only one man. Nevertheless an increased quantity of material wealth may correspond to a simultaneous fall in the magnitude of its value. This antagonistic movement has its origin in the 2-fold character of labor."

(Class may here be referred to Vol. III, p. 468 -- "even if worker worked 24 hrs." -- FF)

(3) Two-fold character of labor embodied in commodities.

Vol. I, p. 48 "I was the 1st to point out & examine critically this two-fold nature of the labor contained in commodities... this point is the pivot on which a clear comprehension of pol. eco. turns." Concrete labor produces use-values; abstract labor creates value and hence surplus value. The two-fold character not only embraces concrete

and abstract labor in the sense of producing use-values and exchange value but also

in the sense that concrete labor merely transfers value while abstract labor creates value, which is the key to the social accumulation of capital and reveals the nation of the whole capitalist society, but that would take us into the heart & core of Vol. II, "Reproduction and Circulation of Aggregate Social Capital" before we have taken up the most elementary conceptions of constant & variable capital. We must first learn the elementary.

(4) Specifically capitalist prod. Before Marx approaches the capitalist problem of making withdrawing more value from circulation than he threw into it at the start, he emphasizes that that is the core of the problem: "Hic Rhodus, hic salta!" Marx then proceeds to take up the question of the buying and selling of labor power. It is only after that transaction is completed that we reach the specifically capitalist prod.: "The Production of Absolute Surplus Value and later of Relative S. V." In other words it is only from the moment that labor power becomes a COMMODITY & creative of value this commodity when it enters the labor process creates s.v.

p. 189: "It (capital) can spring into life only when the owner of the means of prod. & subsistence meets in the mkt. with the free laborer selling his l.p. And this one historical condition comprises a world's history. Capital therefore announces from its 1st appearance a new epoch in the process of social prod."

( Read here also from the Archives, then proceed to p. 187: "The second essential condition...", then p. 206 "The labor process turned into the process by which the cap. consumes l-p, exhibits two characteristic phenomenon", then to p. 641: "The original transformation of money into capital proceeds...", then tell his. of how those pages happened to be added. -- FF)

C--Transitional to Soc. & Socialist Societies

Pov. of Philosophy, p. 66&68: "Up to the present the productive forces have been developed thanks to this regime of the antagonism of classes. To say now that, because all the wants of all the workers were satisfied, men could give themselves up to the creation of products of a superior order, more complicated industries, would be to make abstraction of the antagonism of classes and to overthrow the whole development of history." .....In a future society where the antagonism of classes will have ceased, where there will no longer be classes, use will no longer be determined by the minimum time of production; but the time of social prod. which will be devoted to the various objects will be determined by their degree of social utility."

The Critique of the Gotha Program, p.29 : "With the cooperative commonwealth based on the social ownership of the means of prod., the producers do not exchange their products; just as little does the labor embodied in the products appear as the value of these products, as a material quality possessed by them since now, in contrast to capitalist society, the individual labor no longer exists as an indirectly but as a directly constituent part of the total labor...."(Continue to end of page.

Capital, Vol.I, pp.90-91: "Let us now picture to ourselves, by way of a change, a community of free individuals...."(cont. thry to end of par.)

If goods were produced by labor in direct social relations there would be no two-fold character of labor and reason for social division of classes and realization of value by exchange would vanish. But even that is preliminary to full Communism, read Gotha Program, p.31: "From each according to his capacity to each according to his need."

Anti-Duhring, p.348: "From the moment when society enters into possession..." thru p.348-7 "Finally when the specific commodity l.p. appears on the mkt. its value is determined like that of any other commodity, by the labor time socially necessary for its production. The value form of products therefore already contains in germ the whole capitalist form of prod., the antagonism between capitalists and wage workers, the industrial reserve army, crises, To seek to abolish the cap. form of prod. by establishing 'true value' is therefore equivalent to attempting to abolish catholicism by establishing the 'true' Pope, or to set up a society in which at least the producers control their products by the logical application of an economic category which is the most comprehensive expression of the subjection of the producers by their own product."

( TO BE  
TRANSPPOSED TO  
P.2)

Letter of Engels to Kautsky (Aus der Pruezeit des Marxismus, p.145)  
"Value is a strictly historical category; neither before nor after capitalism, does there exist value production."

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