

Wednesday

Dear J:

Again I have to back out of the appointment, though it is for my benefit. The following has occurred to upset my schedule: (1) My sister's tonsils have become a complicated affair and they have kept her 3 days in the hospital without operating; they will first operate tomorrow and I will be busy thus Thursday; (2) Bernard's brother paid us a surprise visit which means that instead of having typed the MS yesterday ~~last~~ evening upon return from distribution, I first did it now. I was hoping you could meet me Saturday instead, and, if at all possible, I would greatly appreciate it if you could come to my place, since it may not be possible for me to leave the house if my sister needs attention, but I can definitely work with you at my house. Please let me know on this.

Now, as to the MS, which is enclosed. I hope you realize now that at least on matter of space, I was right; your version is not shorter than mine. In fact, when you consider that you have some points that you wish to develop further, wish to add another section on the army of unemployed, and have to still cover the single society (I could literally faint with surprise if ever you got that into the 2-3 pages you insist you can do it in), and that I have to write a section on subordination of labor to capital, enlarge on abstract and concrete labor (could not do that while typing yours) and a couple of other points, it will be considerably larger than my version. I agree that some points I had should be left ^{out} rather, and those left in should be enlarged, but to what extent that elaboration should be I do not know whether I see eye to eye with you. Some of my structure I miss in the first draft of yours; at other points

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I fail to understand the point of not "proving" some of the points, instead of leaving them for the time when the point of view will be contested. We can discuss that again when I see you.

If we can finish the first complete draft of your version of capitalist society's law of value by the week-end--and that will be a week later than I had planned--I will settle down to solid rewriting all of next week and complete it once for all.

I take for granted that you remembered to tell Grace to tell Murray re Friday; if not, please write me when you can see him.

If and when you come Saturday morning, please bring with you two more scraps you still have of my outlines on value, (the outline on c.c.&v.c. and the letter accompanying that transmittal where I spoke of the wonders of concrete labor), and the Selected Works of KM; it has the Manifesto which I do not have at hand and also some other quotations which I need from Civil War in France. Many thanks.

Yours
R

How are you & your
thesis on Europe?

Dear J:

I've got something new on how a commodity arises in the process of production. It is true that both m.p. and l.p. are the capitalist's property. But the exercise of l.p. is, after all, the activity of the worker, not the capitalist. The activity of the worker is that concrete something that makes out of a product a use-value and that at the same time endows it with value. Yarn is, ~~after~~ just a product, an article to be made use of by the laborer in creating a different article which will only assume a use-value after the particular laborer has fashioned it into an article of utility, which will at the same time be the carrier of the value which in the market, will be calculated as exchange value. Did it have an exchange value before it was worked on by the laborer? Yes, but it lost it along with its ~~use~~-value when within the process of production it went thru its real process of transformation; in that real process of labor it was just a product. Dead labor can only live by sucking living labor, which means that only living labor transforms it from a ~~useless~~ useless thing (as m.p. are when not used, for ex.) into a use-value and ex value. Marx also states that from the process it is being moved away as a product, but shows its real nature--the labor time incorporated in it--when put into a relationship with another product.

I now also understand why Marx insists that the use-value of variable capital is not labor power, but means of consumption, which the laborer consumes outside of the process of production, and why he so insistently keeps pounding that the classical economists mistake the exchange of variable capital for l.p. with the process of dead labor sucking up living labor which occurs only within the l.p. It is not only that the laborer thus gets paid only for his labor power, and not for his labor, and that wage labor thus hides true social relations. Even the useful qualities of labor power, says Marx, is a gift of the worker to the capitalist. In other words, now that with the help of Marx we learned that only abstract labor creates value we

promptly forget the "greatness" of concrete labor. Even when the capitalist makes the worker keep time with abstract labor, socially-necessary labor time is the labor time of a particular labor who accomplishes wonders with his skill.

Do you remember also how he exposes the classical economists (I, 335) who do not understand the law of s.v. ^{that} hold instinctively to it because it is a necessary consequence of the general law of value. ~~It is~~ Perhaps that does not seem to have a direct connection with the above exposition of concrete and abstract labor from the Archives, but watch the next sentence "It tries to rescue the law from collision with contradictory phenomena by a violent abstraction." That sentence gave me a lot of trouble and I could not understand it until I reread my Archives and then realized that the "violent abstraction" again referred to their reducing a commodity to labor in general instead of to labor in a two-fold character, thus not only missing the point that only abstract labor creates value but also only ^{living} concrete labor creates use values and dead labor can become ~~an~~ a value to be realized after its contact with living labor. Of course it is only when labor is materialized that it is value but the point is that that is done within the process of production. Thus a commodity is not only something that makes the relations between men appear as the relations between things, but it is a social relation of production even as capital is, and consists not only of use value and ex-^v but has congealed in it the inverted relation between dead labor and living labor. The capitalist has won out on the time limit element and thus dead labor dominates living labor, yet the activity of the worker has made it a use-value for some one.

Spent time reading Pravda & Izvestia; they really (MS ought to learn from them) ~~try~~ to prove slave labor by claiming slave markets exist where the transported Russians are sold to individuals for domestic labor, or enterprises for industrial labor, are driven to work given only two meals a day, and driven from work into concentration camps where in the middle of the night they are awakened to be counted.

See your early ¹⁹¹⁰⁻¹⁹¹⁵ because I'll have to
leave 4:30 p.m. ~~your~~ 8930