

Entry Level

approaches to

getting used to

the idea

of talking

about

class

F I R S T

W O R D S

There's very little set-up needed to introduce this zine. I've been fortunate to have excellent contributors who have graciously allowed me to use their writings to talk about class. The pieces in here stand so well on their own that there's just not much for me to say up front.

All that seems necessary to provide is just a little context about how this zine came about and what i wish i could have added to make the zine even stronger.

"Entry Level" came about as a sort of primer on ideas about class for the WisCon 33 convention. Some discussion on my LiveJournal in early 2009 showed that i wasn't alone in feeling disappointed by the level of class discussions at past WisCons. Since i'm a zinemaker by nature, i thought perhaps the best contribution i could make to ongoing discussions of class by the speculative literature community would be to compile a zine like this.

The contributions range from pieces re-printed from previous publication on the web (i'm grateful to Carene, BC Holmes, Vom Marlowe, and John Scalzi) to pieces written specifically for this zine (thanks to Maladroit, Jess Adams, and Chris Hill). One piece was re-worked from a presentation — i'm deeply grateful to Hannah Ridge for whipping up (on short notice!) such an excellent, accessible overview of Marxist ideas of class. I'm also very thankful for the bibliography donated by class scholar Barbara Jensen — i think this zine would have been seriously lacking without a list of recommended readings to encourage deeper, more expanded examinations of class.

I do wish there had been time to acquire some writing that looks at the intersections of class and race, class and gender, class and sexuality, class and ability/disability. I'm also curious to delve more into other causal factors of class outside of economics — whether class is affected by what region you're from, what your ethnic background is. And, of course, there's much more to look at when discussing class outside of the English-speaking northern hemisphere, class outside of the majority world. This, however, just tells me there's room for more zines. Keep an eye out for "Entry Level 2: Marxist Boogaloo"!

Speaking of Marx, a word about the final piece in this zine. I've heard good arguments both for and against adhering to Marxist ideas in discussing class. Personally, i'm fairly neutral about Marx and Marxism, but i do

recognize his importance as one angle from which to approach discussions of class. Since it seems that many people (myself included) only have the haziest idea of what Marxist ideas are, i thought that in addition to Hannah's overview it might not be a bad idea to let Karl speak for himself. The piece i've chosen to include is the excerpt (a set of 3 asterisks marks where material has been cut) from "Wage, Labor, and Capital" that i read back in the day when i was an English major studying literary criticism. I find that Marx himself is not as completely inaccessible as some of the academic criticisms and interpretations written about him. Tho' i'm still not saying he's easy bathroom reading.

And that's really all i have to say. Take this zine to the bathroom! Take it on the bus — on the plane home from WisCon. Read it over breakfast. Read it when you're really bored. Just read it. Just think about it. Feel free to argue about it.

But let's just talk about it, okay?

*Chris W. * May 2009*

*Crabby Media collaborative * crabbymedia.org*

2014 update: *This zine was one of the first efforts of a group that eventually came to be known as Friends of Dennis — “a grassroots fan project dedicated to fostering discussions of class and classism from within a speculative literature framework.” Visit us on the web at friendsofdennis.org to learn more about our work.*

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a tiny

manifesto

for

big

discussions

Jess Adams

Over the last few years, I've done a lot more thinking and talking about class, class privilege, and the social effects and impacts of class. For me these conversations usually happen on the internet; I've also been a part of difficult conversations on this topic while attending the feminist SF/F convention WisCon. What I've learned is that these conversations are difficult in a way that other conversations about the intersection of the personal and political aren't.

Class, in the U.S., is often regarded as something one can move in or out of. We like to think that it's not permanent. We like to think that if we get the right job, enough money, the right status markers, that we will leave the class of our origin behind and become something else. Generally, we think that if one moves "up", that something is "better". If one moves "down", that something is "ruined".

There is a lot of American Literature that reinforces this — most of my knowledge of how we discuss class is knowledge that I came by in an academic setting, reading the novels of my culture, so many of which are (directly or indirectly) talking about class. It wasn't until I was out of college and starting to learn how to talk less about the realms of the literary and more about personal and political experience that I came to understand that I had some sort of place in the class structure, and to have an idea about what that place might be.

We have some trouble, in U.S. culture, talking about class because (I think) of our societal assumption that class is fluid. We also have trouble recognizing our own position in the class structures in our culture.

What we don't have a lot of trouble with is reading what we think of as class markers. We can talk about these pretty handily, often without realizing or recognizing that we use them as limiters. We use a great variety of outward markers to make assumptions about class —

someone's house, someone's car, someone's educational status, someone's job. It's easy to make these assumptions, and it's often difficult to see that we are making them.

This is often where discussions get tricky: we assume that, because we can see a certain element that we associate with some kind of class privilege, that that person has a certain economic background, a certain class background. This assumption can be used to shut that person out of, for example, a conversation about privilege.

It's really easy to point out someone else's privilege, as you perceive it. Often, whether it's intended or not, these sorts of declarations of someone else's privilege can be used to shut them down, to silence them. It doesn't matter if the assumption is accurate — if you make someone have to explain and divulge their background, the derailing is successful.

I've caught myself thinking, while involved in some Very Important Internet Debate, "Check Your Privilege". I'm most often thinking it at someone who's not myself. (I have been known to *tell* someone else to check their privilege.) This is problematic for two reasons:

- If I'm telling someone else to check their privilege, the odds are good that I'm not checking my own.
- I'm making an assumption about what their privilege is. I might be right — but I might just as easily be wrong.

This is part of why I wish that we had a better vocabulary for discussing class, and a better understanding of the ways in which our class background can shape us. If we aren't willing to acknowledge that class structures exist in our society, and we're not willing to admit that they can impact us and color our perceptions, then it's more difficult to fight these derailing and silencing tactics.

Like a lot of other work in social justice,

we're going to have to learn how to *listen*, and how to forestall our assumptions, as well as how to talk about these issues. As with so many issues in social justice, we need to learn to see past the surface, and to see the many connections that make us all who we are. My hope is that we can find a common vocabulary, a way of speaking about and understanding class issues in the U.S. that makes it easier for us to communicate about them and to break down divisive misconceptions.

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Rough and Ready Marxism

Hannah Ridge

Marx defined, specifically, three distinct classes: the 'aristocracy,' the 'bourgeoisie,' and the 'proletariat.' Then we have two more classes, who sort of shift around and sit very uncomfortably next to the first three: the 'petty bourgeoisie' and the 'lumpenproletariat.'

Marx and Marxism. Two words which get dropped into conversations about class an awful lot. Deservedly because Marx and his ideas have become the bedrock of how we think about class. But (and there is always one) do we actually know what we're referring to when we use the word 'Marxism'? Or has it become one of those words where we know what it sort of means and sort of tells us, and we use it as a shortcut to the end of the conversation? Personally I suspect that we do. That we might know what we think it should mean, what it seems to mean in conversation and writing, and that it has something to do with class structures and class definition. All of which are sufficient when we're talking about class, but, really, we should know what these words we throw around mean. Words have power after all.

We'll call this a primer then. Back to basics. Rough and ready Marxism.

Marx defined, specifically, three distinct classes: the 'aristocracy,' the 'bourgeoisie,' and the 'proletariat.' Then we have two more classes, who sort of shift around and sit very uncomfortably next to the first three: the 'petty bourgeoisie' and the 'lumpenproletariat.'

the aristocracy:

land owners and nobility.

The aristocracy takes us back into the past. They're the class of land owners and nobility and inheriting giant swathes of countries because you happened to be born first (and male). Their ancestors were the people who went around stealing land off people, and then making those people work what had been their own land for their new masters. They sit at the head of the class table and get served the best food first accompanied by the best wine.

the bourgeoisie:

the employers — own factories and control output.

The middle of the table is composed of the bourgeoisie. They are the employers. They own factories and control output. Marx characterised them as being entirely concerned with making the greatest amount of money possible and spending as little money as possible. Like the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie rely on other people to do the work for them. Unlike the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie pay people to do the work. But they pay people the smallest amount possible in order to ensure their workers subsist and have to keep coming back to work.

the proletariat:

the workers — Marx's proletariat owned nothing but their labour power.

At the end of the table, as far away from the aristocracy as the seating arrangements will allow, and shifting uncomfortably away from the bourgeoisie, we have the proletariat. Or: the workers. Marx's proletariat owned nothing but their labour power. That was all they had to bargain with in the world. It is this labour power that they sell to the bourgeoisie, and are paid a subsistence wage for. For Marx, though, the proletariat was the most important class. They had to be, he pointed out, educated and made literate in order to be the efficient workers that their employers needed. They also, Marx believed, would begin to band together as a result of being a tightly packed mass in workplaces and urban areas. This feeling of community would transform itself into unionisation and movements for social change, and the bourgeoisie would have sown the seeds of their own destruction.

Those three are Marx's broad-brush-stroked three main classes. All occupying different parts

of the class table. Shifting in and around them is the petty bourgeoisie, and hanging around outside the door because they weren't allowed in, is the lumpenproletariat. The petty bourgeoisie is composed of people in professions like teaching, nursing, journalism, or who work for the government or run their own small businesses. The petty bourgeoisie are the floating voters of the class table: they'll side with whichever of the three main classes appeals most to them and their needs and interests. The lumpenproletariat is, in Marx's own words, "the scum of the earth." They were, for Marx, a rabble of unemployable and entirely alienated people who were nothing more than would be murderers and the pawns of anyone with an ounce of power. Which means it's probably a good thing they haven't been allowed in the dining hall.

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So that's the three main classes, as defined by Marx, and his two subsidiary ones. Reasonably simple, thus far, right? Except that I'm sure I'm not the only person to be thinking that there is one problem with these definitions: we don't really live like that anymore. Marx's definitions are very time-specific. You could use them to construct a simple history of class war up until the twentieth century, but then it all falls down because the world, as we know it, is infinitely more complex than Marx's three-maybe-five class definitions need it to be.

This means that all the conversations we have about class, in which we use Marx's definitions, are being immediately written off, in the grand scheme of things, by the fact that the terminology doesn't work anymore. Ask someone to tell you what class they consider themselves, and you'll get to see them tie themselves in knots. Ask them which of Marx's classes they belong to, and the answer will probably come a lot quicker. The other main problem is that Marx's idea of class rests centrally on the idea of the proletarian uprising. We may want to see one of these in the world, but it has to be admitted that we

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do not, exactly, have any working models to point to and use as reference. There are other problems, but, as is generally the way with discussions of Marx, explanation of them would either be very long or very technical, or, more likely, both. If anyone is interested, however, there are some references at the end of this piece.

The question, I suppose, now is 'where does this leave us in relation to Marx?' Marx's definitions of class form the basis of how we talk about, and write about, class. At the same time, Marx's definitions don't fit the world we live in anymore, which means they aren't that relevant to our discussions of class. We're using terminology which is an inexact fit because it is the only terminology we have. I'd say we need to create our own terminology for how the world is now, but class is a slippery subject. It wriggles and squirms and is nigh on impossible to pin down. Marx's version of class depends

upon what you have to sell, whether or not you need to sell it, whether or not you are making other people sell it to you, and how much someone will pay you for it. Our version of class, elusive as it is, seems to depend more upon where we're from, how we were educated, what we think about education, what our parents did, what we do for fun, what we do for a living, what we want to do for a living, how we think of the world, and a myriad of other possibilities. We can't discard the conversation though. Class, obviously, is still important to us. We may not live in Marx's strictly defined world anymore, with his very rigid definitions, but the endless debates about class show us one thing: we still need to know where we fall within the scale. However, we are very much not in Marx's class structures anymore because part of the modern class debate is founded upon the fact that, these days, we get to define class for ourselves.

And now, the references.

I wrote the bare bones of this piece as a university presentation, and if I have decoded my notes correctly, I owe a huge debt of gratitude to Daniel T. O'Hara for his chapter 'Class' in Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin's *Critical Terms for Literary Study* (pgs. 413-415 especially.)

If you are interested in further discussion of the problems we face with Marxism, these days, I suggest that you investigate Fredric Jameson's *Postmodernism, Or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. It is not, exactly, an easy read, but bits of it may be worth ploughing through. (Available online here: http://www.eng.fju.edu.tw/Literary_Criticism/postmodernism/jameson_text_complete.htm)

Jon Elster's *Karl Marx: A Reader* is also helpful for understanding some more of Marx. Again, the book is academic in style, and somewhat pompous, but it can be of some use. As can his *Making Sense of Marx*.

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She enjoys gin and occasionally composing music for
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Middle-Class

EDUCATED

What is class?

Part the First: Rhetorical Questions

Is it in the things we do, or know?

Does a higher class equate with more knowledge,
more money, or both?

Does it relate to how little or how much we
consume, and how conspicuous or modest we are
about our possessions?

For me, does a higher class mean:

- eating out more than two days a week?
- my kids have more afterschool activities than
your kids?
- taking more than a week of vacation time
during the year? Or going further away than
one state line? Using more than one mode of
transportation?
- my motor vehicle can beat up your motor
vehicle?

Does a higher class mean you have a wide
network of associates you can discuss with other
associates while in the pick-up line after school or
when you run into someone at the bank?

For me, does a higher class mean:

- I forget how to mind my cell-phone manners in
the theatre, on a tour bus, in class?
- stopping in the middle of the cereal aisle to have

a 30-minute conversation with someone I will see
in church tomorrow?

- spitting chewed hamburger on someone else's
car because they parked too close to your new
SUV? (true story!)
- having pride in your kids instead of all the things
you've given them?

Does working class mean that you have no higher
education? Or does it just mean that your labor is
more visibly done at the end of the day?

Who gets to decide my class?

The government when they assess my taxes?

People in the local X-Mart?

The preacher at the First Baptist Church?

Or do I decide my class when I interact with
people whose perceived class is the same as or
different than my own?

Is class an attitude you can put on or take off like
a cloak or a pair of white gloves?

Do I think I would be happier with more stuff?

**If we were to suddenly come into enough
money to buy shiny new vehicles and remote
homes for weekend trips, would "we" become
"them"?**

Part the Second: Origins

When I think of where I was when I was six, living in a single-wide trailer in a mobile home park, I think we were pretty lower class. One of the first things I remember is obtaining a second car, a red Ford Maverick for my mom to drive to her new job when I started school. My dad always worked for the same place as far as I can remember, but they must have saved up because when I was 8 we moved into a two-story house in a subdivision only a block from my school.

Then when my mom moved out and filed for divorce, we were back living in a trailer again. On a shoestring budget, I remember using a can of tomato sauce, loaf bread or canned biscuits, and sliced American cheese to make pizza in the toaster oven. I have spent half a lifetime shuffling back and forth between these two types of housing (house to double-wide to house to single-wide and single mom), and one of the biggest things that I think affects my perception of my class is where I live. When I live in a trailer I feel my origins, I feel distinctly lower class. Does this have to do with the implied impermanence of a mobile home? The treatment I got from the prof's kids on the school bus, when I lived with my recently-divorced mom on the side of town all the University of Georgia instructors lived on? Wearing my Sky City™ branded jeans one day and looking for a seat in the back only to be told "Bugg off! ha ha ha Get it? Bug off?"

My mom, when she finished school in St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada, taught elementary kids for a couple of years. Before I was born, my dad taught at a few technical schools, and from the time I was two or three he worked in the system writing grants and coordinating educational programs. So I come from an educational background, the desire to learn and share learning is in my blood, it would seem.

Another thing that skews my perception of class is the love I have for words and a lack of that love in others. I was thinking recently of how it would be like to live in a family where reading is not practiced regularly, where books are not a common part of the décor, where the newspaper is considered just a way to get the sports scores. The thought of a home like that made me sad. And the thought of a home like that also made me think of people I perceived as lower-class, folks whose idea of a good weekend off from their second-shift job was to rent 10+ movies to watch over Saturday and Sunday (been there, divorced their son). Going to the local carnival instead of a walk on a nature trail; going to the truck show instead of an art show.

And here's a thoughtful pause: they were happy to live like that.

I was not. Does that make me a snob? I have done most of these things, but I prefer the educational activities to the blissfully unaware entertainment venues.

My perception is that reading is a ticket out of lower class.

We read and expand our vocabulary, and get opportunities in school to join gifted or accel programs.

We read and learn neat things about science or numbers and yearn to be engineers or architects or doctors.

We read and grow enamored of the way words interact with each other and become writers or teachers or publishers.

Part the Third: The End

Most of the people I hang out with are well-educated. That is to say, they have obtained or are obtaining degrees beyond high school, they have more education than I do. People at work are frequently taken aback when I tell them I have almost obtained an associate's degree. Their perception is that I have education beyond that. There are few things we discuss that I do not understand, but does that make me their equal? They certainly treat me so.

Am I better off/happier than I was? If so, what makes the difference — money, education, AGE?

I AM happier than I was in early adulthood, but I don't think it has to do with my class, education (or lack thereof), the money I make, the number of things I own. I think it has to do with having found the right combination of family and friends who share my values and experiences. That hasn't come with the attainment of a permanent home or job, it has come with age. I think of my class as a fluid middle-class educated, able to hang out and converse with people all through the class spectrum, but I wouldn't want to live anywhere else but here.

Maladroit is a barely- 40 administrative associate at a Small Public Institution in Georgia. She has so far produced the one-hit-wonder Memory Aids Digestion (2006) zine. She lives to read and eat, and hang out with her on-line and related-by-marriage extended family.

Being Poor

John Scalzi

Being poor is knowing exactly how much everything costs.

Being poor is getting angry at your kids for asking for all the crap they see on TV.

Being poor is having to keep buying \$800 cars because they're what you can afford, and then having the cars break down on you, because there's not an \$800 car in America that's worth a damn.

Being poor is hoping the toothache goes away.

Being poor is knowing your kid goes to friends' houses but never has friends over to yours.

Being poor is going to the restroom before you get in the school lunch line so your friends will be ahead of you and won't hear you say "I get free lunch" when you get to the cashier.

Being poor is living next to the freeway.

Being poor is coming back to the car with your children in the back seat, clutching that box of Raisin Bran you just bought and trying

to think of a way to make the kids understand that the box has to last.

Being poor is wondering if your well-off sibling is lying when he says he doesn't mind when you ask for help.

Being poor is off-brand toys.

Being poor is a heater in only one room of the house.

Being poor is knowing you can't leave \$5 on the coffee table when your friends are around.

Being poor is hoping your kids don't have a growth spurt.

Being poor is stealing meat from the store, frying it up before your mom gets home and then telling her she doesn't have to make dinner tonight because you're not hungry anyway.

Being poor is Goodwill underwear.

Being poor is not enough space for everyone who lives with you.

Being poor is feeling the glued soles tear off your supermarket shoes when you run around the playground.

Being poor is your kid's school being the one with the 15-year-old textbooks and no air conditioning.

Being poor is thinking \$8 an hour is a really good deal.

Being poor is relying on people who don't give a damn about you.

Being poor is an overnight shift under fluorescent lights.

Being poor is finding the letter your mom wrote to your dad, begging him for the child support.

Being poor is a bathtub you have to empty into the toilet.

Being poor is stopping the car to take a lamp from a stranger's trash.

Being poor is making lunch for your kid when a cockroach skitters over the bread, and you looking over to see if your kid saw.

Being poor is believing a GED actually makes a goddamned difference.

Being poor is people angry at you just for walking around in the mall.

Being poor is not taking the job because you can't find someone you trust to watch your kids.

Being poor is the police busting into the apartment right next to yours.

Being poor is not talking to that girl because she'll probably just laugh at your clothes.

Being poor is hoping you'll be invited for dinner.

Being poor is a sidewalk with lots of brown glass on it.

Being poor is people thinking they know something about you by the way you talk.

Being poor is needing that 35-cent raise.

Being poor is your kid's teacher assuming you don't have any books in your home.

Being poor is six dollars short on the utility bill and no way to close the gap.

Being poor is crying when you drop the mac and cheese on the floor.

Being poor is knowing you work as hard as anyone, anywhere.

Being poor is people surprised to discover you're not actually stupid.

Being poor is people surprised to discover you're not actually lazy.

Being poor is a six-hour wait in an emergency room with a sick child asleep on your lap.

Being poor is never buying anything someone else hasn't bought first.

Being poor is picking the 10-cent ramen instead of the 12-cent ramen because that's two extra packages for every dollar.

Being poor is having to live with choices you didn't know you made when you were 14 years old.

Being poor is getting tired of people wanting you to be grateful.

Being poor is knowing you're being judged.

Being poor is a box of crayons and a \$1 coloring book from a community center Santa.

Being poor is checking the coin return slot of every soda machine you go by.

Being poor is deciding that it's all right to base a relationship on shelter.

Being poor is knowing you really shouldn't spend that buck on a Lotto ticket.

Being poor is hoping the register lady will spot you the dime.

Being poor is feeling helpless when your child makes the same mistakes you did, and won't listen to you beg them against doing so.
Being poor is a cough that doesn't go away.

Being poor is making sure you don't spill on the couch, just in case you have to give it back before the lease is up.

Being poor is a \$200 paycheck advance from a company that takes \$250 when the paycheck comes in.

Being poor is four years of night classes for an Associates of Art degree.

Being poor is a lumpy futon bed.

Being poor is knowing where the shelter is.

Being poor is people who have never been poor wondering why you choose to be so.

Being poor is knowing how hard it is to stop being poor.

Being poor is seeing how few options you have.

Being poor is running in place.

Being poor is people wondering why you didn't leave.

*John Scalzi writes things.
Visit him at <http://whatever.scalzi.com>.*

In which I fail to buy the tools I need. Again.

Rather a long essay about math and class and opportunity

Vom Marlowe

I've been teetering back and forth about whether to get this new computer and I realized why. This will be the second computer I have ever bought. EVER. I'm middle aged and have been in computer-intensive fields my entire adult life.

I used the computer labs in college (hideous waste of resources — all the time it took to go down there, all the distraction I couldn't prevent, all that awfulness — no one here will be surprised to find out I wouldn't spend ten cents a page to print a draft copy to proofread, either, I bet). I won a lottery computer for my senior year, which was a damn good thing, because I had to write a thesis (approximately 100 pages). My school was smart enough to know that those of us who didn't have a computer would be hampered. Then I went to grad school, where I also did not have one. I lived off campus and my professors used to email us stuff the morning of class and

I would miss it because I couldn't get on the train and get to campus and go to the labs and log in and read the emails before class. *headdesk* My brother sent me a computer at some point during graduate school, one of his old ones, but it was old and prone to tetchiness. I wrote several short stories on it and many papers, but it got tetchier and tetchier and I finally replaced it with a typewriter, because I couldn't afford a computer. When my professors found out I didn't have a computer anymore, they handed me a laptop, their eyes a little white around the edges. (These were not especially compassionate guys — they expected me to *teach myself* academic German in a year — not conversational, but academic — and French, too, in my spare time.) When I went to live back in the Midwest to finish my degree from away, I bought my first ever computer. A shiny new iMac, because only Macs could do the stuff I needed (Classics).

I used that Mac until it couldn't run OS upgrades anymore, and then I kept using it. (I still have it but I can't use it because I can't get drivers for printers. Its core is still fine.) My brother sent me another of his old hand-me-downs, running Windows ME. That's what I started my craft business on: I learned how to make a website and do digital photos and set up PayPal buttons and pay tax forms.

Eventually, my brother sent my mom a laptop and a projector to do presentations on. She refused to take it out of the box for four months. (A shiny new Dell.) Finally, I took it out of the box, because I thought if I showed her how it worked, it would be less scary. *looks a bit shifty* Well, the thing is — er. I sort of loaded a bunch of art poses on it, and I tried to show my mom how cool it was — look, now you can do figure drawing — you can project life-size figures! But this backfired, because my mom thought it might spontaneously start showing nude

I've been thinking about class and oppression and opportunity. There's the upfront costs, sure, like no opportunity to take classes, but there's a thousand and one barriers to the opportunities that exist.

women in a dancer pose across the screen while she was at work or something. Oops. That would be my current computer. (My brother finally got my mom a much less nice laptop. Part of her concern was that it was so shiny and expensive and pretty — she'd break it. The one he got her was good, but more replaceable. He'd originally bought to it strap to his Roomba to program it do things. Yes, my family is eccentric.) So I'm stuck at the moment. I *want* to buy a new computer. My laptop gets a lot of abuse and I can't run my programs on my mom's laptop (not the art ones). I *need* a backup. I can *afford* a backup. I will pay cash

upfront and still have a full bank account. But I can't seem to send the email to Dell saying, yes, that's fine, I'll take it. I know the price I've got is a good one, a nice and comfortable several hundred dollars off. I know that it's exactly what I need. I know I've done my due diligence on quality. And yet. And yet.

It's stupidly hard to pick up the phone or send an email or click buy now. I haven't managed it yet.

Then I was studying my physics book outside yesterday, sprawled on the grass in the backyard (first time I'd had a backyard to sprawl in in twenty years). I remembered the Algebra class I took at the junior college. Yes, this is going somewhere. See, when I was in high school, I had to take Algebra. I was in regular Algebra, because I'd taken Geometry from this jerk and my grades went A B C D by quarter — no kidding. Anyway. I took regular Algebra. The teacher was a golf coach

and a good ole boy. Every girl who took his class was either a good girl or not a good girl. All the good girls got Bs. All of them. None of our homework was ever graded for process or end result. The same with tests. It's incredibly hard to learn math if you don't know when you're doing it correctly or incorrectly and math builds on itself: skip a couple of concepts and you're screwed. (It didn't matter if you got 100% of the answers correct, you also got a B, by the way.)

So I didn't know Algebra. I needed to go to college, and I knew I needed math to get in. So I forced the stupid school system to let me take Algebra at the junior college, which I was attending in the afternoon instead of regular high school classes. (My mom's compromise with the principal, since I wanted to quit but, I quote, 'We can't afford to lose her test scores.') So I went to this Algebra class, and it had a young guy teaching it. I don't think he'd had much experience teaching, but he knew math really really well.

He told us we should get scientific calculators, but that they were 'optional.' Everyone bought one, but my mom refused because we didn't have any money. Technically, the calculators were optional, so I needed to do the math myself. So I did.

Towards the end of the semester, he dragged me aside after class to talk about a test he'd just returned. He had this kind of weird expression on his face and he said, "So, I finally realized, when I was grading your exam, that you weren't

using a calculator." I nodded. He said, "Did you forget your calculator that day?" I shook my head. "Have you--" He was sort of at a loss. "Have you ever had a calculator for this class?" I shook my head again, "You said they were optional." He sort of nodded, a bit dazed, "Technically. I've never seen anyone solve problems the way you did on the last portion of the exam." Oh shit, I thought, dammit, my grade is fucked again. "I'm sorry!" "No," he said, "the math is good. It's ingenious, actually, and saves a ton of steps. But I never taught you to do that." I nodded, dejected, used to doing it Wrong, and tried to apologize. "No! No! It's great — it's really good. I can't believe you did that. I had to look some things up in an advanced math book to figure out how it all worked." My bus showed up before he could succeed in talking me into getting a calculator ('We can't afford it and you said they're optional' vs. 'I can't require it but I think it would be a good idea').

I got to the final almost twenty minutes late, because our beater car wouldn't start. If I'd been another few minutes late, I wouldn't have been able to take the final at all, instead of just having a shortened time. I didn't get an A in the class. I got a C. When I took the class again from a different professor in the spring, I still didn't have a calculator. He wasn't as good at math and had no idea what to make of my weird approaches to the problem. I got another C.

That's the last math class I ever took.

I've been thinking about class and oppression and opportunity. There's the upfront costs, sure, like no opportunity to take classes, but there's a thousand and one barriers to the opportunities that exist. When I was in college, I kept oversleeping and missing my first class. Why? I didn't have a reliable alarm.

I didn't have a reliable alarm.

Thirty thousand dollars spent on my tuition and no alarm to get up. That's low class. Yes, I had loan money, but I couldn't get the loan money until I'd been in classes for several weeks — a nice preventative measure from the guvmint to stop kids from taking out loan money, blowing it on a stereo, and then scampering. Of course, it also meant I couldn't buy books for class. Yeah.

I sometimes wonder what my life would have been like if I'd had an alarm, or a computer, or just not had to take a job and spent the extra twenty minutes a week studying or sleeping. I wonder what would have happened if I'd had someone just hand me a calculator. Or what would have happened if my high school advisors had been supportive of my desire to go to college instead of telling me that it was 'too expensive' and trying to talk me out of it. I don't know what would have happened to me if the schools I wanted to attend hadn't had application fee waivers.

Anyway. I'm middle aged. I make a good, comfortable living and I live in a good neighborhood now, free of gunshots or crime. My car is reliable, my benefits are good. I don't have expensive

hobbies, or even cable, and my biggest entertainment is through the computer. I can afford a new one. It won't hurt me to buy it. But it's still hard. My mind knows I can afford it, but my soul still isn't sure. Maybe I won't ever be sure. But it made me think, so I'm putting it out there.

No, I still haven't clicked the buy it now button. But I will. By the end of today.

*Vom Marlowe loves ink, socks, and stories. She lives in the Midwest with her very oomphy, very German dog, Pookie. You can find her at:
<http://vom-marlowe.livejournal.com>.*

THE VIEW FROM THE CHEAP SEATS

Chris Hill

The British Class system is an odd thing. I am sure that if you speak to many people in the UK they would deny that there is such a thing anymore; that we have a mobile society where everyone has the same opportunities.

Of course this is rubbish. Not only is the class system as strong as ever, with evidence that the gap between the poorest and the richest continues to grow, but we assess the class of people every time we meet someone for the first time. It is an ingrained part of the British psyche.

This assessment is instinctive and formed by a number of factors: the way someone walks, how they dress, how they stand, the words they use, the accent they use words in, and so on. Of course often this assessment is going to be wrong, but the presumptions are already made and are likely to colour your relationships with these people.

This is something that we learn without ever being actually taught. It starts being ingrained at a very young age. To give an example: when my dad was still in the army we lived in army accommodation in Rippon, Yorkshire. We were encouraged to play with the girl next door (nicely spoken, clean, father an officer) but actively discouraged from playing with the boy across the road who was 'a bit rough.' I would have been at most four years old.

But class is a complex thing and not easy to define. What class do you belong to? Is it what you are born into? Is it defined by interests, life style, income, job?

Class mobility is not, of course, a total fiction. I personally probably confuse a lot of people. I was born decidedly working class, got a reasonably good education and a degree and now work in IT, a middle-class profession. I have a middle-class wife, own my own home and pay to have the house cleaned once every two weeks. I am fairly well-spoken: I have a neutral tone, clear diction and very little trace of a local accent. It is the accent that tends to confuse people the most: some people have not believed that I come from a working class background because of it. It is actually one of life's little mysteries; I have no idea why I didn't pick up a local accent while my siblings did.

But what does being brought up working class actually mean?

My thesis is that your class of birth directly influences three things:

1. The opportunities life presents you with
2. How much power you have
3. The expectations your friends and family have of you

I can only talk about my own, and my family's, experiences. As you will gather by reading on, I was *poor* working class, so my experiences are going to be filtered differently from many others with theoretically similar backgrounds.

I was born in Southampton in 1966, my dad an enlisted man in the army, my mum a housewife. I was the second offour children.

My dad was born in 1944 and was brought up in the small East Sussex town of Lewes. His father, who was Irish, worked in the stables and died when my dad was seven from, I believe, blood poisoning. My mum was born in 1945, again to an army family. I believe my grandfather was in the transport division. He had an opportunity to train as a medical technician when he was younger but alas that needed money, money he didn't have. If my grandfather had the money he would have moved from the working class into the middle class but the opportunity did not exist (I will admit here that I have no idea whether there were any grants available that he could have made use of: it is not my thesis that these disadvantages cannot be overcome, just that you have to make a great deal of effort to overcome them.)

My dad left the army in 1971 and after a couple of short term jobs settled into being one of the Estate Maintenance men on a dairy farm near Andover in Hampshire. He was paid fortnightly in

But class is a complex thing and not easy to define.

What class do you belong to? Is it what you are born into? Is it defined by interests, life style, income, job?

cash and we lived in a tied cottage. What this means is that you had a house that was rent free for as long as you were in that job. This may sound like a good deal, but think about it. The tied cottage gave the Old Man (as we called the owner of the farm) an excuse to keep the wages low and gave him an unprecedented amount of power over the farm workers. For example, sometimes he used to go on fishing trips to his Scotland estate and left behind the farm workers' pay in the form of a cheque. At this time it wasn't as easy to get a bank account as it is today and many of the farm workers, including my dad, didn't have one. So at best it would take several days to get a cheque changed and that is several days that the previous fortnight's pay had to stretch. The men might protest but what could they do? I don't know if any of them belonged to the union, but I doubt it. If they went on strike, they would just lose their jobs with no real recourse. In many ways it was quite astonishingly feudal.

The wages were generally sufficient to get by with on a day to day basis but not enough for many extras. For example there was no way we could afford to keep a car on the road and

this, once again, reduced the available opportunities. For example, when my secondary school started up a drama group the organisers initially didn't tell me, although they knew I was interested, because they knew that I would have trouble getting home again afterwards.

You could also draw a fairly direct line between the relative poverty and my parents' eventual divorce. Because we had no car, once we were all home we were stuck together, in a poorly-heated farm cottage in the middle of nowhere. During the winter we pretty much lived in one room, so we could not escape each other. The smallest dispute between my parents (usually over money) became a full scale battle — although there was never any physical violence — followed often by days of stony silence (it is also worth noting that by this point my mum was on fairly large doses of Valium for anxiety and often took more than she was prescribed). Eventually mum started seeing someone else, a friend of my uncle, and, for a while at least, moved in with him. After some time my parents did get back together but, even after the birth of my youngest brother, the rifts were never really going to be healed. They didn't finally get divorced until I was at university but the dice was loaded pretty much from the moment we moved to the farm.

One thing that comes out of situations like my parents' is that you either get very good at managing money or you go under. The key fact is that my family, and others in similar circumstances, had no alternative income streams; if you ran out of cash before the next pay day, tough. My parents didn't always get it right: at

times they had various goods bought on Hire Purchase (instalment plans) that had to be returned, and ended up with a couple of Country Court judgements against them.

So moving on, what about expectations? I was the first person in my family to go to university and the first to own their own home, but none of this was planned. My parents' expectation of my education was fairly basic; I wasn't really pushed to succeed, in fact looking back what often seemed to be the most important thing to my parents was 'don't get into trouble.' I don't know where my academic bent really came from; my dad has a couple of O-Levels, my mum none. In fact all of my siblings and nephews are pretty bright; if there is a genetic component to intelligence I wonder what my parents' education would have been like if they had had the encouragement, opportunity and interest.

I got a reasonable set of O-Levels and went off to sixth form college to study for my A-Levels. Again, family support was not great; my parents were constantly concerned about the expense of me being in further education rather than working, and did once try to persuade me to leave. After that I went out to work, rather than straight to university, mainly to keep my parents happy. I don't think they (or I come to that) really understood the grant system, and that they would not actually be out of pocket. Except, of course, the money I would pay them while I was working (over half my salary eventually). It was a lonely time for me, as all of my friends had gone off to university while I was left behind. Eventually I did go and looking back I was fairly lucky with my timing.

University grants were 'means tested'; in other words your parents had to fill in a form to prove that they couldn't afford to pay for your education. It was on odd rule that although I had been working for two years it was still based on my parents' income, but that was how it was calculated at the time!

While I was studying the government was going through plans to replace the grant system with student loans, and my final year at university was the last year when full grants were offered. While it may be that having a grant system in the first place can be seen as a great privilege, it did take the pressure off during university. My family was used to being in debt (if my path through life has been guided by anything at all it is not to end up broke like my parents were and indeed still are) and if the current student loans had been the system when I was going to university *I would not have gone*. I would not have been able to stand the idea of being in that much debt. In fact, statistics have shown that the number of working class students attending university is once again in decline.

This brings us on to the final point I wanted to make: you never entirely escape your roots; much of the time I still feel like a working-class guy punching above my weight in a middle-class world. By many standards I have a successful adult life. I have a good job that is well paid and I am respected by my peers. But always at the back of my mind is the worry that I am going to be 'found out'; that eventually someone is going to spot that I'm a fake, that I don't deserve to be there, that my achievements are by luck rather than skill; Impostor Syndrome, I

believe it is called.

A part of this also comes specifically from the way I was brought up: never make a scene, never stand up for yourself, don't show your head above the parapet. That was something I was *taught*, and I learned it so well that at the age of 42 I still feel hugely uncomfortable being the centre of attention.

I was thinking about conclusions and how I felt about all this, and this is what I came up with. My parents may not have encouraged my sense of self-worth, but on the other hand they taught me my love of music — my love of stage musicals can be traced back directly to family sing-alongs when I was a kid. Living in an isolated environment may have made me uncomfortable with crowds but also helped me be self-sufficient. Being broke most of the time may have meant that I didn't have the holidays, new bicycles, etc, that many of my peers had but it also taught me not to expect the world to hand things to me on a platter.

Of course I wish that some things could have been different, but like everyone else I am the sum of my birth and experiences. And, you know, most of the time I'm okay with who I am. What more can anyone ask for?

Chris lives in a small rural town in the south of England. He is a regular reviewer for Vector, the BSFA critical magazine, and has also reviewed for Interzone. He is a previous BSFA Awards administrator and is currently serving as an Arthur C. Clarke Award judge. He is married to Penny with no children but the normal fannish contingent of cats.

KRIK! CLASS!

...now I find myself thinking, almost daily, about just how much wealth I have access to simply by winning some birth lottery about what country I happened to be born into.

BC Holmes

Several years ago, I saw a good panel at WisCon about class. Most of the panelists talked in terms of their own poor or working class roots. The one point that I really grokked was that Terri Windling said something about how stories operate in different classes.

She said that when upper-middle class or upper class folk talk about something, they abstract and use concept-talk. But in lower classes, people say, "Well, I had an uncle Pete who once did something like that, and here's how it turned out." Terri was saying that stories are a special currency in lower classes, and she felt that that really helped her as a story teller.

I found that a very grounding thing. It made me much more interested in embracing story-telling as a way of communicating ideas. So, in that light, I'm gonna tell some stories about me, and hopefully use those stories to make a larger point.

I come from a relatively middle-class upbringing. I grew up in a small city of about 60,000 people, where the primary industry is chemical processing relating to the oil industry. My parents were both blue collar workers — my father was an electrician with Imperial Oil (a subsidiary of Esso, which is a Canadian branch of Exxon-Mobile) and my mother was a lab technician. She tested blood for various things.

My father was one of seven children; he grew up on a farm — a farm my great-great-some-number-of-greats-grandfather acquired when he landed in Canada from Ireland. My father's father worked two jobs — he was a farmer, and he also worked in the chemical plants.

My mother was one of four children. The person I generally think of

as my grandfather on my mother's side is actually her step-father. My mother's father died when she was a child, and my grandmother made ends meet waitressing and the like.

The reason I mention this is that I didn't really understand how those kinds of upbringings affected my parents' outlooks. Both of them came from backgrounds where they struggled to make ends meet. And both of them, in my opinion, had some behaviours around money that I'm still making sense of after having left home 24 years ago. Sadly, neither of them worked in unionized environments, and I certainly didn't get much awareness of the history of labour or anything like that.

The city where I grew up is striated. The farther north you go, the more affluent the families there. My family lived relatively north, and because the city only had four high schools, I went to Northern high.

I didn't understand this until much later into my adulthood, but my friends all came from a different class than I did. My friend H. was the son of a doctor. My friend A. was the daughter of a lawyer. My friends P. and E. were sons of managers in the chemical plants, and my friend D. was the son of a vice president in one of the chemical plants.

I remember when, years later, I finally figured out a thing or two about class, I was suddenly able to understand

how differently my friends' families operated from my own family. But until I sat down and thought through the background differences, there were all kinds of disconnects between my experiences and theirs.

My heroes, as a child, were all the intelligent, well-educated (and often upper class) individuals that filled the stories that I consumed in books, or comics or on television.

At one level, sadly, I concluded that there was something really dysfunctional about my family. Which is true. But at the time I read their dysfunction as lack of education or sophistication. In truth, the family was dysfunctional because my parents have issues.

Here's an example of what I mean: I'm the second university-educated person in my entire extended family (and it's a damn big family). My parents wanted me to go to university because they knew from their own backgrounds that getting an education is how one gets ahead in life. But at the same time, they would subtly police the boundaries of our own class: if I showed a geeky love for language, for example, I would have it explained to me that I was acting out-of-line with the norms of our social class. I was acting above my station.

What my station was tended to be a bit confused. My home life had most of the trappings of middle-class-hood, but my parents weren't,

I feel sometimes like my background doesn't exist in my friends' universes.

themselves, from that class, and their sense of their own "folk" was a bit strange.

That background was tremendously formative for me, in ways I still don't fully get. I try to explain stuff to people and I sometimes feel like I came from a different planet. Like, I grew up in a house with no books. My parents didn't get reading, so we had no books. All of my friends are reading geeks. They all had books. None of them has the experience of growing up in house without books. I'm very aware of my Other-ness when these conversations come up. And to be clear, I don't think that I'm very Other. I think I'm just a little bit Other. But I feel it. I feel sometimes like my background doesn't exist in my friends' universes.

At one level, this stuff is very real for me. I feel that I am constantly bumping up against the effects that this class dysphoria has caused in me.

Over the last few years, I've been getting more and more interested in social justice work in Haiti. I've been visiting Haiti, off and on, since about

2002.

As a result of my various trips over the years, I've been radically revisiting my thoughts about my upbringing.

While I accept that I come from a blue-collar middle-class family with an aftertaste of working poor attitudes, I am nonetheless much more keenly aware of just how much wealth and privilege I was born into.

In one sense, it's kind of ironic. What I most wanted to be, when I was growing up, was sophisticated and rich and now I find myself thinking, almost daily, about just how much wealth I have access to simply by winning some birth lottery about what country I happened to be born into.

Last year at WisCon, Stephen Schwartz and some others were on a panel about class. It was a pretty good panel. And there was one woman who talked about reading up on what it's like to live on a dollar a day. And there was something about her way of talking about that topic that really jarred me out of my "receptive audience member" space. It was clear to me that she was talking about book learning. Stuff she'd read. Articles. Books. She wasn't talking about having seen it.

I thought I understood what it was like to live on a dollar a day until

I went to Haiti and saw what that looked like.

I'm not saying that because I've been to Haiti, I get more Liberal Points. But I am saying that the theme of all these story points is that my blindness to class issues seems to know no depths. Every time I think I understand my place and my class and my world, I discover a new way in which I was blind to something.

Here's one last story: a while ago, I was reading a progressive LiveJournal community and the topic of OLPC (One Laptop Per Child) came up. As a geek and computer person, I think the OLPC is really neat. I love it. And the first time I saw one, I started trying to think up plans to send a bunch to Haiti. But I didn't.

Now, someone came on to this community and said: "Hey, OLPC is neat. I think this is great for kids in the third world. What do people think?"

And I tried to explain that I had also fallen in love with the OLPC, but I couldn't really justify sending them to Haiti when there were so many other needs. Food. Safe drinking water. Access to medical care. Trying to learn while hungry is a much greater impediment to education than not having a laptop.

The original poster replied: but OLPC can help with that! Get on the Intertubes! Download nutrition and health information. And me, I was

like, uh... I'm not sure you really get it. In addition to Not Really Helping the hunger issue, even stuff like electricity is going to be a problem.

Original poster: the OLPC is designed for very low power consumption!

And I tried very hard to explain. You almost have to see a place like Haiti to understand how many of your default assumptions don't apply. Unless you're a school for wealthy students, the school almost certainly has no electricity. Most of the students come from homes with no electricity. No electricity. None.

*

I talked earlier about being not having the tools to understand how my social class differed from that of my childhood friends. I think that the person I was speaking to about OLPC was similarly blind to what living in the third world is like because we are surrounded by wealth and luxury. Most of us have never had electricity inaccessible to us (unless we elect to).

A child who didn't have access to electricity doesn't really exist in that poster's world.

BC Holmes lives and writes in Toronto. She's been published in OnSpec, Strange Horizons and Aboriginal Science Fiction, and she's most interested in the intersection of science fiction and gender issues.

thinking out loud

more questions than answers

Chris Wrdnrd

This spring i've found myself engaged in a lot of discussions about class. Putting this zine together. Preparing to be on a panel at WisCon. In chat conversations with friends. In LiveJournal comment threads. And, most especially, at home. Eventually, i said to my spouse, "When did i become that woman who talks about class all the time??"

And it dawned on me 2 seconds later: I've always been someone who thought about class. In elementary school when my friends were taking ballet and piano lessons i desperately wanted but knew we couldn't afford. In middle school when i was the girl who went to Scout camp for free because i had sold the most cookies. In high school when there was simply no entertaining thoughts of applying to most colleges because they were completely unaffordable — and even the 2 i did apply to were by no means certain if the federal and state grants didn't come in.

I'm a woman who sees class issues everywhere because i was a girl who had class issues shoved in her face time after time.

And yet i know perfectly well that *living* class issues doesn't make me an expert on class issues. I may have hands-on experience, but that doesn't always translate to knowledge, wisdom, expertise. Not to mention my personal experience is that of a poor white girl in rural Central Pennsylvania in the U.S.

What i am, basically, is disgruntled that there is a class system and that it's often been used against me, and yet it's a system i don't entirely understand and don't really know how to attack or dismantle.

What i am, too, is good at asking questions. I've asked a lot of questions this spring — tho', again, they're questions based around my own experience. But i'll ask them again out loud.

What are your answers? What are your questions?

What is class?

*

Is it always based on a foundation of how much money a person/family has?

How is class affected by a person's:
education?

region (e.g., North/South, rural/urban)?

dialect/accent?

clothes/car/house/possessions?

race/ethnicity?

job? or partner's/parents's job?

*

Can we truly change our class? Is that always a good/bad thing?

Can we camouflage ourselves in the trappings of another class? Can we pass in order to get by?

*

How does class impact and shape a person's life?

Can that shape be re-shaped, those impacts overcome?

Is class destiny?

*

Why should we talk about class?

Why should the middle and upper classes even bother thinking about class?

Are class issues always about the poor? The truly impoverished?

Is it only important to talk about class in order to talk about things a person/family/society lacks?

*

How are the classes related? linked together?

Would the upper class *be* the upper class without the lower classes?

*

What does middle class even mean?

Who is upper class?

Who is lower class?

What the hell does "working class" mean in an age where nearly everyone works a job of some sort?

Who is poor?

What does poverty look like? — in the U.S., in other parts of the world?

*

What about Marx?

Are his ideas still valid? Are they outdated?

Is he still the best theorist there is about class? Are there other theorists?

*

What's *your* class?
How do you know?
Do you care?
Are you happy?

What does class do to a society?
Is it good for society? Bad?

Are we happy?

What is class?

Chris Wrdrnd lives in Seattle with 3 cats, 2 two-wheeled conveyances, 1 spouse, and 1/2 a garden.

You may need these on the next page....

Cut them out for maximum fun!



working class bingo

Carene

This bingo card began as a failed essay. I had been trying to write a "snappy answers to stupid questions" sort of thing, but the answers would not stay snappy. The more I tried to condense, the more sprawling and complex answers became.

In frustration, I posted my list to the Working Class/Poverty Class Academics mailing list, (www.workingclassacademics.org) and one of the members had an excellent idea: why not make it visual? So I took my list and made it into a small poster. Recently, inspired by the bingo cards on white privilege and feminism, I updated the list and recast it as a bingo card.

Caveat: the card is drawn from my experience as a white working class woman (most of these have been said directly to me), so it's only one beginning point, from one viewpoint, not the final word.

*Carene is a working class feminist and
long-time science fiction/fantasy fan.*

W O R K I N G C L A S S				
B I N G O				
You're too smart to be working class	You went to college, so you can't speak for the working class	There are no poor people in the suburbs	Define "working class" No wait – let me do it for you	But you don't <i>look</i> poor
Working class people don't read	You're different – most working class people won't get it	I saw a woman in the grocery store buying lobster with food stamps	You're just being divisive	You make too much money to be working class
Well, you're not poor <i>now</i> - get over it	Can you cite <i>STATISTICS</i> to show that a modern working class exists?	Why are you so ANGRY?	All of us here have internet access, so obviously we're all affluent	You have a chip on your shoulder
Unions are obsolete	Lighten up – trailer trash is hip	I heard about a janitor who makes \$50,000 a year - can you <i>believe</i> that?	We're all really working class because we all work	The men who work for my dad's construction company are all cheerful, happy guys
The working class is disappearing	My grandparents were working class	MARXISM MARXISM MARXISM MARXISM MARXISM	You wear your working class background like a badge of honor	There are millions of people in the Third World a lot worse off than you are

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Wage, Labor, and Capital

Karl Marx

Preliminary

From various quarters we have been reproached for neglecting to portray the economic conditions which form the material basis of the present struggles between classes and nations. With set purpose we have hitherto touched upon these conditions only when they forced themselves upon the surface of the political conflicts.

* * *

Now, after our readers have seen the class struggle of the year 1848 develop into colossal political proportions, it is time to examine more closely the economic conditions themselves upon which is founded the existence of the capitalist class and its class rule, as well as the slavery of the workers.

* * *

We therefore proceed to the consideration of the first problem.

What are Wages? How are they Determined?

If several workmen were to be asked: "How much wages do you get?", one would reply, "I get two shillings a day", and so on. According to the different branches of industry in which they are employed, they would mention different sums of money that they receive from their respective employers for the completion of a certain task; for example, for weaving a yard of linen, or for setting a page of type. Despite the variety of their statements, they would all agree upon one point: that wages are the amount of money which the capitalist pays for a certain period of work or for a certain amount of work.

Consequently, it appears that the capitalist buys their labor with money, and that for money they sell him their labor. But this is merely an illusion. What they actually sell to the capitalist for money is their labor-power. This labor-power the capitalist buys for a day, a week, a month, etc. And after he has bought it, he uses it up by letting the worker labor during the stipulated time. With the same amount of money with which the capitalist has bought their labor-power (for example, with two shillings) he could have bought a certain amount of sugar or of any other commodity. The two shillings with which he bought 20 pounds of sugar is the price of the 20 pounds of sugar. The two shillings with which he bought 12 hours' use of labor-power, is the price of 12 hours' labor. Labor-power, then, is a commodity, no more, no less so than is the sugar. The first is measured by the clock, the other by the scales.

* * *

Consequently, labor-power is a commodity which its

possessor, the wage-worker, sells to the capitalist. Why does he sell it? It is in order to live.

But the putting of labor-power into action — i.e., the work — is the active expression of the laborer's own life. And this life activity he sells to another person in order to secure the necessary means of life. His life-activity, therefore, is but a means of securing his own existence. He works that he may keep alive. He does not count the labor itself as a part of his life; it is rather a sacrifice of his life. It is a commodity that he has auctioned off to another. The product of his activity, therefore, is not the aim of his activity. What he produces for himself is not the silk that he weaves, not the gold that he draws up the mining shaft, not the palace that he builds. What he produces for himself is wages; and the silk, the gold, and the palace are resolved for him into a certain quantity of necessities of life, perhaps into a cotton jacket, into copper coins, and into a basement dwelling. And the laborer who for 12 hours long, weaves, spins, bores, turns, builds, shovels, breaks stone, carries hods, and so on — is this 12 hours' weaving, spinning, boring, turning, building, shovelling, stone-breaking, regarded by him as a manifestation of life, as life? Quite the contrary. Life for him begins where this activity ceases, at the table, at the tavern, in bed. The 12 hours' work, on the other hand, has no meaning for him as weaving, spinning, boring, and so on, but only as earnings, which enable him to sit down at a table, to take his seat in the tavern, and to lie down in a bed. If the silk-worm's object in spinning were to prolong its existence as caterpillar, it would be a perfect example of a wage-worker.

Labor-power was not always a commodity (merchandise). Labor was not always wage-labor, i.e., free labor. The slave did not sell his labor-power to the slave-owner, any more than the ox sells his labor to the farmer. The slave, together with his labor-power, was sold to his owner once for all. He is a commodity that can pass from the hand of one owner to that of another. He himself is a commodity, but his labor-power is not his commodity. The serf sells only a portion of his labor-power. It is not he who receives wages from the owner of the land; it is rather the owner of the land who receives a tribute from him. The serf belongs to the soil, and to the lord of the soil he brings its fruit. The free laborer, on the other hand, sells his very self, and that by fractions. He auctions off eight, 10, 12, 15 hours of his life, one day like the next, to the highest bidder, to the owner of raw materials, tools, and the means of life — i.e., to the capitalist. The laborer belongs neither to an owner nor to the soil, but eight, 10, 12, 15 hours of his daily life belong to whomsoever buys them. The worker leaves the capitalist,

to whom he has sold himself, as often as he chooses, and the capitalist discharges him as often as he sees fit, as soon as he no longer gets any use, or not the required use, out of him. But the worker, whose only source of income is the sale of his labor-power, cannot leave the whole class of buyers, i.e., the capitalist class, unless he gives up his own existence. He does not belong to this or that capitalist, but to the capitalist class; and it is for him to find his man — i.e., to find a buyer in this capitalist class.

* * *

By what are wages determined?

Now, the same general laws which regulate the price of commodities in general, naturally regulate wages, or the price of labor-power. Wages will now rise, now fall, according to the relation of supply and demand, according as competition shapes itself between the buyers of labor-power, the capitalists, and the sellers of labor-power, the workers. The fluctuations of wages correspond to the fluctuation in the price of commodities in general. But within the limits of these fluctuations the price of labor-power will be determined by the cost of production, by the labor-time necessary for production of this commodity: labor-power.

What, then, is the cost of production of labor-power?

It is the cost required for the maintenance of the laborer as a laborer, and for his education and training as a laborer.

Therefore, the shorter the time required for training up to a particular sort of work, the smaller is the cost of production of the worker, the lower is the price of his labor-power, his wages. In those branches of industry in which hardly any period of apprenticeship is necessary and the mere bodily existence of the worker is sufficient, the cost of his production is limited almost exclusively to the commodities necessary for keeping him in working condition. The price of his work will therefore be determined by the price of the necessary means of subsistence.

Here, however, there enters another consideration. The manufacturer who calculates his cost of production and, in accordance with it, the price of the product, takes into account the wear and tear of the instruments of labor. If a machine costs him, for example, 1,000 shillings, and this machine is used up in 10 years, he adds 100 shillings annually to the price of the commodities, in order to be able after 10 years to replace the worn-out machine with a new one. In the same manner, the cost of production of simple labor-power must include the cost of propagation, by means of which the race of workers is enabled to multiply itself, and to replace worn-out workers with new ones. The wear and tear of the worker, therefore, is calculated in the same manner as the wear and tear of the machine.

Thus, the cost of production of simple labor-power

amounts to the cost of the existence and propagation of the worker. The price of this cost of existence and propagation constitutes wages. The wages thus determined are called the minimum of wages. This minimum wage, like the determination of the price of commodities in general by cost of production, does not hold good for the single individual, but only for the race. Individual workers, indeed, millions of workers, do not receive enough to be able to exist and to propagate themselves; but the wages of the whole working class adjust themselves, within the limits of their fluctuations, to this minimum.

Now that we have come to an understanding in regard to the most general laws which govern wages, as well as the price of every other commodity, we can examine our subject more particularly.

The Nature and Growth of Capital

Capital consists of raw materials, instruments of labor, and means of subsistence of all kinds, which are employed in producing new raw materials, new instruments, and new means of subsistence. All these components of capital are created by labor, products of labor, accumulated labor. Accumulated labor that serves as a means to new production is capital.

So says the economists.

What is a Negro slave? A man of the black race. The one explanation is worthy of the other.

A Negro is a Negro. Only under certain conditions does he become a slave. A cotton-spinning machine is a machine for spinning cotton. Only under certain conditions does it become capital. Torn away from these conditions, it is as little capital as gold is itself money, or sugar is the price of sugar.

In the process of production, human beings work not only upon nature, but also upon one another. They produce only by working together in a specified manner and reciprocally exchanging their activities. In order to produce, they enter into definite connections and relations to one another, and only within these social connections and relations does their influence upon nature operate — i.e., does production take place.

These social relations between the producers, and the conditions under which they exchange their activities and share in the total act of production, will naturally vary according to the character of the means of production. With the discover of a new instrument of warfare, the firearm, the whole internal organization of the army was necessarily altered, the relations within which individuals compose an army and can work as an army were transformed, and the relation of different armies to another was likewise changed.

We thus see that the social relations within which

individuals produce, the social relations of production, are altered, transformed, with the change and development of the material means of production, of the forces of production. The relations of production in their totality constitute what is called the social relations, society, and, moreover, a society at a definite stage of historical development, a society with peculiar, distinctive characteristics. Ancient society, feudal society, bourgeois (or capitalist) society, are such totalities of relations of production, each of which denotes a particular stage of development in the history of mankind.

Capital also is a social relation of production. It is a bourgeois relation of production, a relation of production of bourgeois society. The means of subsistence, the instruments of labor, the raw materials, of which capital consists — have they not been produced and accumulated under given social conditions, within definite special relations? Are they not employed for new production, under given special conditions, within definite social relations? And does not just the definite social character stamp the products which serve for new production as capital?

Capital consists not only of means of subsistence, instruments of labor, and raw materials, not only as material products; it consists just as much of exchange values. All products of which it consists are commodities. Capital, consequently, is not only a sum of material products, it is a sum of commodities, of exchange values, of social magnitudes. Capital remains the same whether we put cotton in the place of wool, rice in the place of wheat, steamships in the place of railroads, provided only that the cotton, the rice, the steamships — the body of capital — have the same exchange value, the same price, as the wool, the wheat, the railroads, in which it was previously embodied. The bodily form of capital may transform itself continually, while capital does not suffer the least alteration.

But though every capital is a sum of commodities — i.e., of exchange values — it does not follow that every sum of commodities, of exchange values, is capital.

Every sum of exchange values is an exchange value. Each particular exchange value is a sum of exchange values. For example: a house worth 1,000 pounds is an exchange value of 1,000 pounds: a piece of paper worth one penny is a sum of exchange values of 100 1/100ths of a penny. Products which are exchangeable for others are commodities. The definite proportion in which they are exchangeable forms their exchange value, or, expressed in money, their price. The quantity of these products can have no effect on their character as commodities, as representing an exchange value, as having a certain price. Whether a tree be large or small, it remains a tree. Whether we exchange iron in pennyweights or in hundredweights, for other products, does

this alter its character: its being a commodity, or exchange value? According to the quantity, it is a commodity of greater or of lesser value, of higher or of lower price.

How then does a sum of commodities, of exchange values, become capital?

Thereby, that as an independent social power — i.e., as the power of a part of society — it preserves itself and multiplies by exchange with direct, living labor-power.

The existence of a class which possess nothing but the ability to work is a necessary presupposition of capital.

It is only the dominion of past, accumulated, materialized labor over immediate living labor that stamps the accumulated labor with the character of capital.

Capital does not consist in the fact that accumulated labor serves living labor as a means for new production. It consists in the fact that living labor serves accumulated labor as the means of preserving and multiplying its exchange value.

Relation of Wage-Labour to Capital

What is it that takes place in the exchange between the capitalist and the wage-labor?

The laborer receives means of subsistence in exchange for his labor-power; the capitalist receives, in exchange for his means of subsistence, labor, the productive activity of the laborer, the creative force by which the worker not only replaces what he consumes, but also gives to the accumulated labor a greater value than it previously possessed. The laborer gets from the capitalist a portion of the existing means of subsistence. For what purpose do these means of subsistence serve him? For immediate consumption. But as soon as I consume means of subsistence, they are irrevocably lost to me, unless I employ the time during which these means sustain my life in producing new means of subsistence, in creating by my labor new values in place of the values lost in consumption. But it is just this noble reproductive power that the laborer surrenders to the capitalist in exchange for means of subsistence received. Consequently, he has lost it for himself.

Let us take an example. For one shilling a laborer works all day long in the fields of a farmer, to whom he thus secures a return of two shillings. The farmer not only receives the replaced value which he has given to the day laborer, he has doubled it. Therefore, he has consumed the one shilling that he gave to the day laborer in a fruitful, productive manner. For the one shilling he has bought the labor-power of the day-laborer, which creates products of the soil of twice the value, and out of one shilling makes two. The day-laborer, on the contrary, receives in the place of his productive force, whose results he has just surrendered to

the farmer, one shilling, which he exchanges for means of subsistence, which he consumes more or less quickly. The one shilling has therefore been consumed in a double manner -reproductively for the capitalist, for it has been exchanged for labor-power, which brought forth two shillings; unproductively for the worker, for it has been exchanged for means of subsistence which are lost for ever, and whose value he can obtain again only by repeating the same exchange with the farmer. Capital therefore presupposes wage-labor; wage-labor presupposes capital. They condition each other; each brings the other into existence.

Does a worker in a cotton factory produce only cotton? No. He produces capital. He produces values which serve anew to command his work and to create by means of it new values.

Capital can multiply itself only by exchanging itself for labor-power, by calling wage-labor into life. The labor-power of the wage-laborer can exchange itself for capital only by increasing capital, by strengthening that very power whose slave it is. Increase of capital, therefore, is increase of the proletariat, i.e., of the working class.

And so, the bourgeoisie and its economists maintain that the interest of the capitalist and of the laborer is the same. And in fact, so they are! The worker perishes if capital does not keep him busy. Capital perishes if it does not exploit labor-power, which, in order to exploit, it must buy. The more quickly the capital destined for production — the productive capital — increases, the more prosperous industry is, the more the bourgeoisie enriches itself, the better business gets, so many more workers does the capitalist need, so much the dearer does the worker sell himself. The fastest possible growth of productive capital is, therefore, the indispensable condition for a tolerable life to the laborer.

But what is growth of productive capital? Growth of the power of accumulated labor over living labor; growth of the rule of the bourgeoisie over the working class. When wage-labor produces the alien wealth dominating it, the power hostile to it, capital, there flow back to it its means of employment — i.e., its means of subsistence, under the condition that it again become a part of capital, that is become again the lever whereby capital is to be forced into an accelerated expansive movement.

To say that the interests of capital and the interests of the workers are identical, signifies only this: that capital and wage-labor are two sides of one and the same relation. The one conditions the other in the same way that the usurer and the borrower condition each other.

As long as the wage-laborer remains a wage-laborer, his lost is dependent upon capital. That is what the boasted

community of interests between worker and capitalists amounts to.

If capital grows, the mass of wage-labor grows, the number of wage-workers increases; in a word, the sway of capital extends over a greater mass of individuals.

* * *

The Interests of Capital and Wage-Labour are Diametrically opposed Effect of growth of productive Capital on Wages

* * *

To say that "the worker has an interest in the rapid growth of capital", means only this: that the more speedily the worker augments the wealth of the capitalist, the larger will be the crumbs which fall to him, the greater will be the number of workers than can be called into existence, the more can the mass of slaves dependent upon capital be increased.

We have thus seen that even the most favorable situation for the working class, namely, the most rapid growth of capital, however much it may improve the material life of the worker, does not abolish the antagonism between his interests and the interests of the capitalist. Profit and wages remain as before, in inverse proportion.

If capital grows rapidly, wages may rise, but the profit of capital rises disproportionately faster. The material position of the worker has improved, but at the cost of his social position. The social chasm that separates him from the capitalist has widened.

Finally, to say that "the most favorable condition for wage-labor is the fastest possible growth of productive capital", is the same as to say: the quicker the working class multiplies and augments the power inimical to it — the wealth of another which lords over that class — the more favorable will be the conditions under which it will be permitted to toil anew at the multiplication of bourgeois wealth, at the enlargement of the power of capital, content thus to forge for itself the golden chains by which the bourgeoisie drags it in its train.

Growth of productive capital and rise of wages, are they really so indissolubly united as the bourgeois economists maintain? We must not believe their mere words. We dare not believe them even when they claim that the fatter capital is the more will its slave be pampered. The bourgeoisie is too much enlightened, it keeps its accounts much too carefully, to share the prejudices of the feudal lord, who makes an ostentatious display of the magnificence of his retinue.. The conditions of existence of the bourgeoisie compel it to attend carefully to its bookkeeping. We must therefore examine more closely into the following question:

In what manner does the growth of productive capital affect wages?

If as a whole, the productive capital of bourgeois society grows, there takes place a more many-sided accumulation of labor. The individual capitals increase in number and in magnitude. The multiplications of individual capitals increases the competition among capitalists. The increasing magnitude of increasing capitals provides the means of leading more powerful armies of workers with more gigantic instruments of war upon the industrial battlefield.

The one capitalist can drive the other from the field and carry off his capital only by selling more cheaply. In order to sell more cheaply without ruining himself, he must produce more cheaply — i.e., increase the productive forces of labor as much as possible.

But the productive forces of labor is increased above all by a greater division of labor and by a more general introduction and constant improvement of machinery. The larger the army of workers among whom the labor is subdivided, the more gigantic the scale upon which machinery is introduced, the more in proportion does the cost of production decrease, the more fruitful is the labor. And so there arises among the capitalists a universal rivalry for the increase of the division of labor and of machinery and for their exploitation upon the greatest possible scale.

If, now, by a greater division of labor, by the application and improvement of new machines, by a more advantageous exploitation of the forces of nature on a larger scale, a capitalist has found the means of producing with the same amount of labor (whether it be direct or accumulated labor) a larger amount of products of commodities than his competitors — if, for instance, he can produce a whole yard of linen in the same labor-time in which his competitors weave half-a-yard — how will this capitalist act?

He could keep on selling half-a-yard of linen at old market price; but this would not have the effect of driving his opponents from the field and enlarging his own market. But his need of a market has increased in the same measure in which his productive power has extended. The more powerful and costly means of production that he has called into existence enable him, it is true, to sell his wares more cheaply, but they compel him at the same time to sell more wares, to get control of a very much greater market for his commodities; consequently, this capitalist will sell his half-yard of linen more cheaply than his competitors.

But the capitalist will not sell the whole yard so cheaply as his competitors sell the half-yard, although the production of the whole yard costs him no more than does that of the half-yard to the others. Otherwise, he would make no extra profit, and would get back in exchange only the cost of production. He might obtain a greater income from having set in motion a larger capital, but not from having made a

greater profit on his capital than the others. Moreover, he attains the object he is aiming at if he prices his goods only a small percentage lower than his competitors. He drives them off the field, he wrests from them at least part of their market, by underselling them.

And finally, let us remember that the current price always stands either above or below the cost of production, according as the sale of a commodity takes place in the favorable or unfavorable period of the industry. According as the market price of the yard of linen stands above or below its former cost of production, will the percentage vary at which the capitalist who has made use of the new and more faithful means of production sell above his real cost of production.

But the privilege of our capitalist is not of long duration. Other competing capitalists introduce the same machines, the same division of labor, and introduce them upon the same or even upon a greater scale. And finally this introduction becomes so universal that the price of the linen is lowered not only below its old, but even below its new cost of production.

The capitalists therefore find themselves, in their mutual relations, in the same situation in which they were before the introduction of the new means of production; and if they are by these means enabled to offer double the product at the old price, they are now forced to furnish double the product for less than the old price. Having arrived at the new point, the new cost of production, the battle for supremacy in the market has to be fought out anew. Given more division of labor and more machinery, and there results a greater scale upon which division of labor and machinery are exploited. And competition again brings the same reaction against this result.

Effect of Capitalist Competition on the Capitalist Class the Middle Class and the Working Class

We thus see how the method of production and the means of production are constantly enlarged, revolutionized, how division of labor necessarily draws after it greater division of labor, the employment of machinery greater employment of machinery, work upon a large scale work upon a still greater scale. This is the law that continually throws capitalist production out of its old ruts and compels capital to strain ever more the productive forces of labor for the very reason that it has already strained them — the law that grants it no respite, and constantly shouts in its ear: March! march! This is no other law than that which, within the periodical fluctuations of commerce, necessarily adjusts the price of a commodity to its cost of production.

No matter how powerful the means of production which a capitalist may bring into the field, competition will make their adoption general; and from the moment

that they have been generally adopted, the sole result of the greater productiveness of his capital will be that he must furnish at the same price, 10, 20, 100 times as much as before. But since he must find a market for, perhaps, 1,000 times as much, in order to outweigh the lower selling price by the greater quantity of the sale; since now a more extensive sale is necessary not only to gain a greater profit, but also in order to replace the cost of production (the instrument of production itself grows always more costly, as we have seen), and since this more extensive sale has become a question of life and death not only for him, but also for his rivals, the old struggle must begin again, and it is all the more violent the more powerful the means of production already invented are. The division of labor and the application of machinery will therefore take a fresh start, and upon an even greater scale.

Whatever be the power of the means of production which are employed, competition seeks to rob capital of the golden fruits of this power by reducing the price of commodities to the cost of production; in the same measure in which production is cheapened - i.e., in the same measure in which more can be produced with the same amount of labor — it compels by a law which is irresistible a still greater cheapening of production, the sale of ever greater masses of product for smaller prices. Thus the capitalist will have gained nothing more by his efforts than the obligation to furnish a greater product in the same labor-time; in a word, more difficult conditions for the profitable employment of his capital. While competition, therefore, constantly pursues him with its law of the cost of production and turns against himself every weapon that he forges against his rivals, the capitalist continually seeks to get the best of competition by restlessly introducing further subdivision of labor and new machines, which, though more expensive, enable him to produce more cheaply, instead of waiting until the new machines shall have been rendered obsolete by competition.

If we now conceive this feverish agitation as it operates in the market of the whole world, we shall be in a position to comprehend how the growth, accumulation, and concentration of capital bring in their train an ever more detailed subdivision of labor, an ever greater improvement of old machines, and a constant application of new machine — a process which goes on uninterruptedly, with feverish haste, and upon an ever more gigantic scale.

But what effect do these conditions, which are inseparable from the growth of productive capital, have upon the determination of wages?

The greater division of labor enables one laborer to accomplish the work of five, 10, or 20 laborers; it therefore increases competition among the laborers fivefold, tenfold,

or twentyfold. The laborers compete not only by selling themselves one cheaper than the other, but also by one doing the work of five, 10, or 20; and they are forced to compete in this manner by the division of labor, which is introduced and steadily improved by capital.

Furthermore, to the same degree in which the division of labor increases, is the labor simplified. The special skill of the laborer becomes worthless. He becomes transformed into a simple monotonous force of production, with neither physical nor mental elasticity. His work becomes accessible to all; therefore competitors press upon him from all sides. Moreover, it must be remembered that the more simple, the more easily learned the work is, so much the less is its cost to production, the expense of its acquisition, and so much the lower must the wages sink — for, like the price of any other commodity, they are determined by the cost of production. Therefore, in the same manner in which labor becomes more unsatisfactory, more repulsive, do competition increase and wages decrease.

The laborer seeks to maintain the total of his wages for a given time by performing more labor, either by working a great number of hours, or by accomplishing more in the same number of hours. Thus, urged on by want, he himself multiplies the disastrous effects of division of labor. The result is: the more he works, the less wages he receives. And for this simple reason: the more he works, the more he competes against his fellow workmen, the more he compels them to compete against him, and to offer themselves on the same wretched conditions as he does; so that, in the last analysis, he competes against himself as a member of the working class.

Machinery produces the same effects, but upon a much larger scale. It supplants skilled laborers by unskilled, men by women, adults by children; where newly introduced, it throws workers upon the streets in great masses; and as it becomes more highly developed and more productive it discards them in additional though smaller numbers.

We have hastily sketched in broad outlines the industrial war of capitalists among themselves. This war has the peculiarity that the battles in it are won less by recruiting than by discharging the army of workers. The generals (the capitalists) vie with one another as to who can discharge the greatest number of industrial soldiers.

The economists tell us, to be sure, that those laborers who have been rendered superfluous by machinery find new venues of employment. They dare not assert directly that the same laborers that have been discharged find situations in new branches of labor. Facts cry out too loudly against this lie. Strictly speaking, they only maintain that new means of employment will be found for other sections of the working class; for example, for that portion of the young generation

of laborers who were about to enter upon that branch of industry which had just been abolished. Of course, this is a great satisfaction to the disabled laborers. There will be no lack of fresh exploitable blood and muscle for the Messrs. Capitalists — the dead may bury their dead. This consolation seems to be intended more for the comfort of the capitalists themselves than their laborers. If the whole class of the wage-laborer were to be annihilated by machinery, how terrible that would be for capital, which, without wage-labor, ceases to be capital!

But even if we assume that all who are directly forced out of employment by machinery, as well as all of the rising generation who were waiting for a chance of employment in the same branch of industry, do actually find some new employment — are we to believe that this new employment will pay as high wages as did the one they have lost? If it did, it would be in contradiction to the laws of political economy. We have seen how modern industry always tends to the substitution of the simpler and more subordinate employments for the higher and more complex ones. How, then, could a mass of workers thrown out of one branch of industry by machinery find refuge in another branch, unless they were to be paid more poorly?

An exception to the law has been adduced, namely, the workers who are employed in the manufacture of machinery itself. As soon as there is in industry a greater demand for and a greater consumption of machinery, it is said that the number of machines must necessarily increase; consequently, also, the manufacture of machines; consequently, also, the employment of workers in machine manufacture; -and the workers employed in this branch of industry are skilled, even educated, workers.

Since the year 1840 this assertion, which even before that date was only half-true, has lost all semblance of truth; for the most diverse machines are now applied to the manufacture of the machines themselves on quite as extensive a scale as in the manufacture of cotton yarn, and the laborers employed in machine factories can but play the role of very stupid machines alongside of the highly ingenious machines.

But in place of the man who has been dismissed by the machine, the factory may employ, perhaps, three children and one woman! And must not the wages of the man have previously sufficed for the three children and one woman? Must not the minimum wages have sufficed for the preservation and propagation of the race? What, then, do these beloved bourgeois phrases prove? Nothing more than that now four times as many workers' lives are used up as there were previously, in order to obtain the livelihood of one working family.

To sum up: the more productive capital grows, the

more it extends the division of labor and the application of machinery; the more the division of labor and the application of machinery extend, the more does competition extend among the workers, the more do their wages shrink together.

In addition, the working class is also recruited from the higher strata of society; a mass of small business men and of people living upon the interest of their capitals is precipitated into the ranks of the working class, and they will have nothing else to do than to stretch out their arms alongside of the arms of the workers. Thus the forest of outstretched arms, begging for work, grows ever thicker, while the arms themselves grow every leaner.

It is evident that the small manufacturer cannot survive in a struggle in which the first condition of success is production upon an ever greater scale. It is evident that the small manufacturers and thereby increasing the number of candidates for the proletariat — all this requires no further elucidation.

Finally, in the same measure in which the capitalists are compelled, by the movement described above, to exploit the already existing gigantic means of production on an ever-increasing scale, and for this purpose to set in motion all the mainsprings of credit, in the same measure do they increase the industrial earthquakes, in the midst of which the commercial world can preserve itself only by sacrificing a portion of its wealth, its products, and even its forces of production, to the gods of the lower world — in short, the crises increase. They become more frequent and more violent, if for no other reason, than for this alone, that in the same measure in which the mass of products grows, and there the needs for extensive markets, in the same measure does the world market shrink ever more, and ever fewer markets remain to be exploited, since every previous crisis has subjected to the commerce of the world a hitherto unconquered or but superficially exploited market.

But capital not only lives upon labor. Like a master, at once distinguished and barbarous, it drags with it into its grave the corpses of its slaves, whole hecatombs of workers, who perish in the crises.

We thus see that if capital grows rapidly, competition among the workers grows with even greater rapidity — i.e., the means of employment and subsistence for the working class decrease in proportion even more rapidly; but, this notwithstanding, the rapid growth of capital is the most favorable condition for wage-labor.

Some crazy

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blood of the

EXPLOITED

**working
class**

