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Theories of Surplus Value (Marx-Engels Collection Book 1)

door Karl Marx, Karl Kautsky

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47 Highlights

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 790

> The Physiocrats transferred the inquiry into the origin of surplus-value from the sphere of circulation into the sphere of direct production, and thereby laid the foundation for the analysis of capitalist production.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 792

> Quite correctly they lay down the fundamental principle that only that labour is productive which creates a surplus-value, in whose product therefore a higher value is contained than the sum of the values consumed during the production of this product. Since the value of raw and other materials is given, while the value of the labour-power is equal to the minimum of wages, this surplus-value can clearly only consist in the excess of labour which the labourer returns to the capitalist over and above the quantity of labour that he receives in his wage. But it does not appear in this form with the Physiocrats, because they have not yet reduced value in general to its simple substance — the quantity of labour or labour-time.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 808

> Hence for the Physiocrats agricultural labour is the only productive labour, because it is the only labour that produces a surplus-value, and rent is the only form of surplus-value which they know. The workman in industry does not increase the material substance; he only alters its form. The material — the mass of material substance — is given to him by agriculture. It is true that he adds value to the substance, not through his labour, but through the costs of production of his labour: through the total means of subsistence which he consumes during his labour, equivalent to the minimum of wages, which he receives from agriculture. Because agricultural labour is conceived as the only productive labour, the form of surplus-value which distinguishes agricultural labour from industrial labour, rent, is conceived as the only form of surplus-value. Profit on capital in the true sense, of which rent itself is only an offshoot, therefore does not exist for the Physiocrats. Profit is seen by them as only a kind of higher wages paid by the landowners, which the capitalists consume as revenue (and which therefore enters into their costs of production in the same way as the minimum wages of the ordinary workmen); this increases the value of the raw material, because it enters into the consumption costs which the capitalist, [the] industrialist, consumes while he is producing the product, transforming the raw material into a new product.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 870

> The first condition for the development of capital is the separation of landed property from labour — the emergence of land, the primary condition of labour, as an independent force, a force in the hands of a separate class, confronting the free labourer. The Physiocrats therefore present the landowner as the true capitalist, that is, the appropriator of surplus-labour. Feudalism is thus portrayed and explained from the viewpoint of bourgeois production; agriculture is treated as the branch of production in which capitalist production — that is, the production of surplus-value — exclusively appears. While feudalism is thus made bourgeois, bourgeois society is given a feudal semblance.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 895

> The surplus-value appears therefore as a gift of nature, through whose co-operation a definite quantity of organic matter — plant seeds, a number of animals — enables labour to transform more inorganic matter into organic.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 925

> Connected with this is laissez faire, laissez aller[b]; unhampered free competition, the removal from industry of all interference by the State, monopolies, etc. Since industry [as the Physiocrats see it] creates nothing, but only transforms values given it by agriculture into another form; since it adds no new value to them, but returns the values supplied to it, though in altered form, as an equivalent; it is naturally desirable that this process of transformation should proceed without interruptions and in the cheapest way; and this is only realised through free competition, by leaving capitalist production to its own devices.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 930

> The emancipation of bourgeois society from the absolute monarchy set up on the ruins of feudal society thus takes place only in the interests of the feudal landowner transformed into a capitalist ||229| and bent solely on enrichment. The capitalists are only capitalists in the interests of the landowner, just as political economy in its later development would have them be capitalists only in the interests of the working class.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 961

> How then does surplus-value arise? It does not arise from circulation, but it is realised in circulation. The product is sold at its value, not above its value. There is no excess of price over value. But because it is sold at its value, the seller realises a surplus-value. This is only possible because he has not himself paid in full for the value which he sells, that is, because the product contains a portion of value which has not been paid for by the seller, which he has not offset by an equivalent. And this is the case with agricultural labour. The seller sells what he has not bought. Turgot at first presents this unbought element as a pure gift of nature. We shall see, however, that in his writings this pure gift of nature becomes imperceptibly transformed into the surplus-labour of the labourer which the landowner has not bought, but which he sells in the products of agriculture.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 973

> In this first conception we have, to begin with, the essence of surplus-value — that it is value realised in sale, without the seller having given an equivalent for it, without his having bought it. Unpaid value. But in the second place this is conceived as a pure gift of nature, this excess over the wage of labour; because after all it is a gift of nature, it depends on the productivity of nature that the labourer is able to produce in his day's labour more than is necessary for the reproduction of his labour-power, more than the amount of his wages. In this first conception the total product is still appropriated by the labourer himself … And this total product is divided into two parts. The first forms his wages; he is presented as his own wage-labourer, who pays himself the part of the product that is necessary for the reproduction of his labour-power, for his subsistence. The second part, which is the excess over the first, is a gift of nature and forms surplus-value. The nature of this surplus-value, of this pure gift of nature, will however take clearer shape, when the premise of the proprietor who cultivates his land is abandoned and the two parts of the product, wages and surplus-value, accrue to different classes, the one to the wage-worker, the other to the landowner.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 995

> In this, way, therefore, the relation between capital and wage-labour arises in agriculture itself. It first arises when a number of people find themselves cut off from ownership of the conditions of labour — above all from the land — and have nothing to sell but their labour itself.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 1106

> The view of Adam Smith and his followers that the accumulation of capital is due to personal stinting and saving and self-denial of the capitalists also originates from the view of the Physiocrats that profit (including interest) is merely revenue for the consumption of the capitalists. They could say this because they only regarded land rent as the true economic, so to speak legitimate, source of accumulation.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 1132

> Whence, therefore, comes surplus-value? That is, whence comes capital? That was the problem for the Physiocrats. Their error was that they confused the increase of material substance, which because of the natural processes of vegetation and generation distinguishes agriculture and stock-raising from manufacture, with the increase of exchange-value. Use-value was their starting-point. And the use-value of all commodities, reduced, as the scholastics say, to a universal, was the material substance of nature as such, whose increase in the same form occurs only in agriculture.>

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 1273

> Adam Smith expressly states that the development of the productive powers of labour does not benefit the labourer himself. He says

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Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 1294

> In the first part of this work, when dealing with the analysis of the commodity, I have already pointed out Adam Smith's inconsistency in his treatment of how exchange-value is determined. In particular, [I have shown] how he sometimes confuses, and at other times substitutes, the determination of the value of commodities by the quantity of labour required for their production, with its determination by the quantity of living labour with which commodities can be bought, or, what is the same thing, the quantity of commodities with which a definite quantity of living labour can be bought. Here he makes the exchange-value of labour the measure for the value of commodities. In fact, he makes wages the measure; for wages are equal to the quantity of commodities bought with a definite quantity of living labour, or to the quantity of labour that can be bought by a definite quantity of commodities. The value of labour, or rather of labour-power, changes, like that of any other commodity, and is in no way specifically different from the value of other commodities. Here value is made the measuring rod and the basis

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Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 1302

> for the explanation of value—so we have a vicious circle.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 1370

> But since the "distribution" of the value of the product between capitalist and worker is itself based on an exchange between commodities —commodities and labour-power —Adam Smith is justifiably startled. The fact that he had also made the value of labour, or the extent to which a commodity (or money) can purchase labour, the measure of value, has a disturbing effect on Smith's argument when he comes to the theory of prices, shows the influence of competition on the rate of profit, etc.; it deprives his work of all unity, and even excludes a number of essential questions from his inquiry. As we shall soon see, however, it did not affect his exposition of surplus-value in general, because here he keeps consistently to the correct

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Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 1375

> determination of value by the labour-time expended in different commodities.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 1392

> It can be seen that in all these passages Adam Smith confuses the labour of other people with the produce of this labour. The exchange-value of the commodity which anyone possesses consists —after the division of labour— in the commodities belonging to someone else which he can buy, i.e., in the quantity of someone else's labour which is contained in them, the quantity of someone else's materialised labour. And this quantity of the labour of others is equal to the quantity of labour that is contained in his own commodity. As he expressly says:

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 1398

> It emphasis here is on the change brought about by the division of labour: that is to say, that wealth no longer consists in the product of one's own labour, but in the quantity of the labour of others which this product

> commands, the social labour which it can buy, the quantity of which is determined by the quantity of labour it itself contains. In fact, only the concept of exchange-value is here involved —that my labour now counts only as social labour, and consequently its product determines my wealth by its command over an equal quantity of social labour. My commodity, which contains a definite quantity of necessary labour-time, gives me command over all other commodities of equal value, and therefore over an equal quantity of the labour of others realised in other use-values.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 1453

> people who are hanging in mid air? If we strip Smith's statement of its naïve phrasing, it means nothing more than: capitalist production begins from the moment when the conditions of labour belong to one class, and another class has at its disposal only labour-power. This separation of labour from the conditions of labour is the precondition of capitalist production.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 1470

> states: the profit which is made on the sale of the complete manufacture originates not from the sale itself, not from the sale of the commodity above its value, is not profit upon alienation. The value, that is, the quantity of labour which the workmen add to the material, falls rather into two parts. One pays their wages or is paid for through their wages. By this transaction the workmen give in return only as much labour as they have received in the form of wages. The other part forms the profit of the capitalist, that is, it is a quantity of labour which he sells without having paid for it. If therefore he sells the commodity at its value, that is, for the labour-time contained in it, in other words if he exchanges it for other commodities in accordance with the law of value, then his profit originates from the fact that he has not paid for a part of the labour contained in the commodity, but has nevertheless sold it.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 1529

> Thus Adam Smith conceives surplus-value—that is, surplus-labour, the excess of labour performed and realised in the commodity over and above the paid labour, the labour which has received its equivalent in the wages —as the general category, ||254| of which profit in the strict sense and rent of land are merely branches. Nevertheless, he does not distinguish surplus-value as such as a category on its own, distinct from the specific forms it assumes in profit and rent. This is the source of much error and inadequacy in his inquiry, and of even more in the work of Ricardo.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 1566

> Thus interest on money, along with taxes or revenues derived from taxes—in so far as they are not deductions from wages themselves —are merely shares in profit and rent, which are themselves in turn reducible to surplus-value, that is, unpaid labour-time.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 1643

> Naturally, however, it is at the same time this deep insight of Adam Smith's that makes him irresolute and uncertain, cuts the firm ground from under his feet, and prevents him—in contrast to Ricardo—from reaching a consistent and comprehensive theoretical view of the abstract, general foundations of the bourgeois system.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 1749

> Lauderdale is right in this respect—that Adam Smith, after explaining the nature of surplus-value and of value, wrongly presents capital and land as independent sources of exchange-value. They are sources of revenue for their owners in so far as they are titles to a certain quantity of surplus-labour, which the labourer must perform over and above the labour-time required to replace his wages. Thus Adam Smith says for example:

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 3001

> Productive labour, in its meaning for capitalist production, is wage-labour which, exchanged against the variable part of capital (the part of the capital that is spent on wages), reproduces not only this part of the capital (or the value of its own labour-power), but in addition produces surplus-value for the capitalist, It is only thereby that commodity or money is transformed into capital, is produced as capital. Only that wage-labour is productive which produces capital. (This is the same as saying that it reproduces on an enlarged scale the sum of value expended on it, or that it gives in return more labour than it receives in the form of wages. Consequently, only that labour-power is productive which produces a value greater than its own.)

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 3006

> The mere existence of a class of capitalists, and therefore of capital, depends on the productivity of labour: not however on its absolute, but on its relative productivity. For example: if a day's labour only sufficed to keep the worker alive, that is, to reproduce his labour-power, ||301| speaking in an absolute sense his labour would be productive because it would be reproductive; that is to say, because it constantly replaced the values (equal to the value of its own labour-power) which it consumed. But in the capitalist sense it would not be productive because it produced no surplus-value. (It produced in fact no new value, but only replaced the old; it would have consumed it—the value—in one form, in order to reproduce it in the other. And in this sense it has been said that a worker is productive whose production is equal to his own consumption, and that a worker is unproductive who consumes more than he reproduces.)

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 3013

> Productivity in the capitalist sense is based on relative productivity—that the worker not only replaces an old value, but creats a new one; that he materialises more labour-time in his product than is materialised in the product that keeps him in existence as a worker. It is this kind of productive wage-labour that is the basis for the existence of capital.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 3090

> Productive labour is here defined from the standpoint of capitalist production, and Adam Smith here got to the very heart of the matter, hit the nail on the head. This is one of his greatest scientific merits (as Malthus rightly observed, this critical differentiation between productive and unproductive labour remains the basis of all bourgeois political economy) that he defines productive labour as labour which is directly exchanged with capital; that is, he defines it by the exchange through which the conditions of production of labour, and value in general, whether money or commodity, are first transformed into capital (and labour into wage-labour in its scientific meaning).

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Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 3095

> This also establishes absolutely what unproductive labour is. It is labour which is not exchanged with capital, but directly with revenue, that is, with wages or profit (including of course the various categories of those who share as co-partners in the capitalist's profit, such as interest and rent). Where all labour in part still pays itself (like for example the agricultural labour of the serfs) and in part is directly exchanged for revenue (like the manufacturing labour in the cities of Asia), no capital and no wage-labour exists in the sense of bourgeois political economy. These definitions are therefore not derived from the material characteristics of labour (neither from the nature of its product nor from the particular character of the labour as concrete labour), but from the definite social form, the social relations of production, within which the labour is realised. An actor, for example, or even a clown, according to this definition, is a productive labourer if he works in the service of a capitalist (an entrepreneur) to whom he returns more labour than he receives from him in the form of wages; while a jobbing tailor who comes to the capitalist's house and patches his trousers for him, producing a mere use-value for him, is an unproductive labourer. The former's labour is exchanged with capital, the latter's with revenue. The former's labour produces a surplus-value; in the latter's, revenue is consumed.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 3105

> Productive and unproductive labour is here throughout conceived from the standpoint of the possessor of money, from the standpoint of the capitalist, not from that of the workman; hence the nonsense written by Ganilh, etc., who have so little understanding of the matter that they raise the question whether the labour or service or function of the prostitute, flunkey, etc., brings in returns. |303||

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 3136

> it is clear that the unproductive labourers, those whose services are directly exchanged against revenue, will for the most part be performing only personal services, and only an inconsiderable part of them (like cooks, seamstresses, jobbing tailors and so on) will produce material use-values. That they produce no commodities follows from the nature of the case. For the commodity as such is never an immediate object of consumption, but a bearer of exchange-value. Consequently only a quite insignificant part of these unproductive labourers can play a direct part in material production once the capitalist mode of production has developed. They participate in it only through the exchange of their services against revenue. This does not prevent, as Adam Smith remarks, the value of the services of these unproductive labourers being determined and determinable in the same (or an analogous) way as that of the productive labourers: that is, by the production costs involved in maintaining or producing them. Other factors also come into play in this connection, but they are not relevant here.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 3209

> Here, therefore, Adam Smith falls back into the Physiocratic ||308| standpoint. The real "productive labour", which produces a surplus-value and therefore a "neat produce", is agricultural labour. He abandons his own view of surplus-value and accepts that of the Physiocrats. At the same time he asserts, as against the Physiocrats, that manufacturing (and according to him, also commercial) labour is nevertheless also productive, even if not in this highest sense of the word. He therefore drops the definition by social form, the definition of what a "productive labourer" is from the standpoint of capitalist production; and asserts, in opposition to the

> Physiocrats, that the non-agricultural, industrial class reproduces its own wages, that is, it does after all produce a value equal to the value it consumes, and thereby “continues, at least, the existence of the stock or capital which employs it”. Hence arises, under the influence of and in contradiction to the Physiocrats, his second definition of what is “productive labour.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 3346

> To think of the whole profit as “revenue” for the capitalist is already in itself wrong. The law of capitalist production requires on the contrary that a part of the surplus-labour, of the unpaid labour, performed by the workman should be transformed into capital. When the individual capitalist functions as a capitalist—that is, as a functionary of capital—he himself may think of this as saving; but it also appears to him as a necessary reserve fund. The increase of the quantity of labour does not however depend only on the number of workmen, but also on the length of the working-day. The quantity of labour can therefore be increased without increasing the part of the capital that is converted into wages. Similarly, on this assumption there would be no need to increase the machinery, etc. (although it would wear out more quickly; but this makes no difference). The only thing that would have to be increased is the part of the raw material that resolves itself into seed, etc. And it remains true that, taking a single country (excluding foreign trade), surplus-labour must first be applied to agriculture before it becomes possible in the industries which get their raw materials from agriculture.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 3354

> A part of these raw materials, such as coal, iron, wood, fish, etc. (the last-named for example as manure), in a word, all fertilisers other than animal manures, can be got by merely increasing the labour (the number of labourers remaining the same). There can therefore be no lack of these. On the other hand it has been shown above that the increase of productivity in its origin always presupposes merely the concentration of capital, not the accumulation of capital. Later however each process supplements the other.> <The

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Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 6240

> This contrast between wealth that does not labour and poverty that labours in order to live also gives rise to a contrast of knowledge. Knowledge and labour become separated. The former confronts the latter as capital, or as a luxury article for the rich.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 8283

> In the first instance it is noteworthy that Rodbertus only takes into account the growth of relative surplus-value, i.e., the growth of surplus-value in so far as it arises out of the growing productivity of labour and not the growth of surplus-value derived from the prolongation of the working-day itself. All absolute surplus-value is of course relative in one respect. Labour must be sufficiently productive for the worker not to require all his time to keep himself alive. But from this point the distinction comes into force. Incidentally, if originally labour is but little productive, the needs are also extremely simple (as with slaves) and the masters themselves do not live much better than the servants. The relative productivity of labour necessary before a profit-monger, a parasite, can come, into being is very small. If we find a high rate of profit though labour is as yet very unproductive, and machinery, division of labour etc., are not used, then this is the case only under the following circumstances; either as in India, partly because the

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Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 8290

> requirements of the worker are extremely small and he is depressed even below his modest needs, but partly also because low productivity of labour is identical with a relatively small fixed capital in proportion to the share of capital which is spent on wages or, and this comes to the same thing, with a relatively high proportion of capital laid out in wages in relation to the total capital; or finally, because labour-time is excessively long, The latter is the case in countries (such as Austria etc.) where the capitalist mode of production is already in existence but which have to compete with far more developed countries. Wages can be low here partly because the requirements of the worker are less developed, partly because agricultural products are cheaper or—this amounts to the same thing as far as the capitalist is concerned—because they have less value in terms of money.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 8299

> The more productive one country is relative to another in the world market, the higher will be its wages as compared with the other. In England, not only nominal wages but [also] real wages are higher than on the continent. The worker eats more meat; he satisfies more needs. This, however, only applies to the industrial worker and not the agricultural labourer. But in proportion to the productivity of the English workers their wages are not higher (than the wages paid in other countries].

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 8368

> So in this respect absolute surplus-value is greater in industry so long as the normal working-day is not regulated by force of law. A second reason for a smaller amount of surplus-value being created in agriculture is the long period during which the product remains in the process of production without any labour being expended on it. With the exception of certain branches of agriculture such as stock-raising, sheep farming, etc., where the population is positively ousted from the land, the number of people employed relatively to the constant capital used, is still far greater—even in the most advanced large-scale agriculture—than in industry, or at least in the dominating branches of industry.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 8701

> It is quite simply the private ownership of land, mines, water, etc. by certain people, which enables them to snatch, intercept and seize the excess surplus-value over and above profit (average profit, the rate of profit determined by the general rate of profit) contained in the commodities of these particular spheres of production, these particular fields of capital investment, and so to prevent it from entering into the general process by which the general rate of profit is formed. Moreover, some of this surplus-value is actually collected in every industrial enterprise, since rent for the land used (by factory buildings, workhouses etc.) figures in every instance, for even where the land is available free, no factories are built, except in the more or less populated areas with good means of communication.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 9104

> First he describes the situation as he imagines it, where the owner of the land is at the same time the capitalist and slave-owner. Then there comes a separation. That part of the “product of labour” which has been taken from

> the workers—the “one natural rent”—is now split up into “rent of land and capital gain” ([Rodbertus, Sociale Briefe an von Kirchmann. Dritter Brief, Berlin, 1851,] pp. 81–82). (Mr. Hopkins—see notebook—explains this in even more simple and blunt terms.) Then Herr Rodbertus divides the “raw product” and “manufactured product” (p.89) between the landowner and the capitalist—petitio principii. One capitalist produces raw products and the other manufactured products. The landowner produces nothing, neither is he the “owner of raw products”. That [i.e., that the landowner is the “owner of raw products”] is the conception of a German “landed proprietor” such as Herr Rodbertus is. In England, capitalist production began simultaneously in manufacture and in agriculture. How a “rate of capital gain” (rate of profit) comes about, is explained by Herr Rodbertus purely from the fact that money now provides a “measure” of gain, making it possible to “express the relationship of gain to capital” (p. 94) and thus “supplying a standard gauge for the equalisation of capital gains” (p.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 9114

> He has not even a remote idea that this uniformity of profit is in contradiction to the equality of rent and unpaid labour in each branch of production, and that therefore the values of commodities and the average prices must differ. This rate of profit also becomes the norm in agriculture because the “return on property cannot be calculated upon anything other than capital” (p. 95) and by far the “larger part of the national capital is employed” (p. 95) in manufacture. Not a word about the fact that with the advent of capitalist production, agriculture itself is revolutionised, not only in a formal sense but really, and the landowner is reduced to a mere receptacle, ceasing to fulfil any function in production. According to

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Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 10421

> Malthus defends the interests of the industrial bourgeoisie only in so far as these are identical with the interests of landed property, of the aristocracy, i.e., against the mass of the people, the proletariat. But where these interests diverge and are antagonistic to each other, he sides with the aristocracy against the bourgeoisie. Hence his defence of the “unproductive worker”, over-consumption

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Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 10494

> It is not a base action when Ricardo puts the proletariat on the same level as machinery or beasts of burden or commodities because (from his point of view) their being purely machinery or beasts of burden is conducive to “production” or because they really are mere commodities in bourgeois production. This is stoic, objective, scientific. In so far as it does not involve sinning against his science, Ricardo is always a philanthropist, just as he was in practice too.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 10498

> The parson Malthus on the other hand, reduces the worker to a beast of burden for the sake of production and even condemns him to death from starvation and to celibacy. But when these same demands of production curtail the landlord’s “rent” or threaten to encroach on the ‘tithes” of the Established Church, or on the interests of the “consumers of taxes”; and also when that part of the industrial bourgeoisie whose interests stand in the way of progress is being sacrificed to that part which represents the advance of production—and therefore whenever it is a question of the interests of the aristocracy against the bourgeoisie or of the

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> conservative and stagnant bourgeoisie against the progressive—in all these instances “parson” Malthus does not sacrifice the particular interests to production but seeks, as far as he can, to sacrifice the demands of production to the particular interests of existing ruling classes or sections of classes. And to this end he falsifies his scientific conclusions. This is his scientific baseness, his sin against science, quite apart from his shameless and mechanical plagiarism. The scientific conclusions of Malthus are ‘considerate” towards the ruling classes in general and towards the reactionary elements of the ruling classes in particular; in other words he falsifies science for these interests, But his conclusions are ruthless as far as they concern the subjugated classes. He is not only ruthless; he affects ruthlessness; he takes a cynical pleasure in it and exaggerates his conclusions in so far as they are directed against the poor wretches, even beyond the point which would be scientifically justified from his point of view.*