True Communism and Its Basis on a Voluntary Division of Labor

Thus far, it has been argued that Marx’s theory of estrangement rests on his observation that productive activity is based on an involuntary division of labor. This emphasis is examined further on the basis of Marx’s views on communism, since he suggested that communism was a desirable goal, through which man would be free from estrangement (MEW, E. 1.T., pp. 536-537). However, if communism is the desired form of social organization in which man is not estranged, we would expect—if our emphasis on the centrality of the involuntary division of labor to Marx’s theory of estrangement is correct—that Marx views communism as a form of social organization based on a voluntary division of labor. When discussing the ways in which Marx envisioned communism, we will consider only those writings that deal directly with the division of labor under communism, and that might imply a form of social organization based on an involuntary division of labor. If Marx’s writings reveal substantial evidence that he envisioned communism as a form of social organization based on a voluntary division of labor, our emphasis on the centrality of the involuntary division of labor to Marx’s theory of estrangement will be considerably strengthened.

Whenever we refer to communism here, we do not mean that transitional form of society which Marx in his Manuscripts called “crude com-
munism.” Rather, we mean “true communism,” or that form of social organization which Marx perceived to be the most ideal. At this point, it is immaterial whether Marx’s communism is realizable or whether it remains a utopia. This is a totally different question. Marx’s vision of communism is of importance here because it helps isolate the basis and properties of his theory of estrangement. The reader is therefore advised to suspend his questions concerning the realizability of Marx’s vision of communism and to take what Marx has to say on the subject of communism as an aid in deciphering Marx’s thought in general and his theory of estrangement in particular.

TRUE COMMUNISM

In the *German Ideology*, Marx proclaims that the communist revolution “removes the division of labor” (CW, 5, p. 380; MEW, 3, p. 364). What he means, of course, is that the involuntary division of labor, and not the division of labor as such, will be abolished. Neither does Marx envision communism as a society of isolated individual producers who are not subject to the coercion of the division of labor. Rather, his vision is of man cooperating freely, and voluntarily.

Let us now picture to ourselves, by way of change, a community of free individuals, carrying on their work with the means of production in common, in which the labour-power of all the different individuals is consciously applied as the combined labour-power of the community. All the characteristics of Robinson’s labour are here repeated, but with this difference, that they are social, instead of individual (C1, pp. 82-83; MEW, 23, p. 92).

This theme is reiterated in the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* in which Marx again focuses not on the division of labor as such, but on that division of labor which subjugates man.

[I]n a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of individuals under the division of labour, and therewith also the antithesis between mental and physical labour, has vanished; after labour, from a mere means of life, has itself become the prime necessity of life; after the productive forces have also increased with
the all-round development of the individual, and all the springs of co-operate wealth flow more abundantly—only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be fully left behind and society inscribe on its banners: from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs! (CGP, p. 10; MEW, 19, p. 21).

Marx does not always make an explicit connection to communism when mentioning the voluntary division of labor and juxtaposing, as well as preferring, it to the involuntary one. Nevertheless, the message seems to be the same, namely, that the ideal condition is one in which the division of labor is based on voluntary cooperation rather than a forced one (see also MEW, 3, p. 72). For example, in the *German Ideology* (MEW, 3, p. 74) Marx mentions that the alien forces under which the individual is subsumed can be abolished only if individuals directly subsume the division of labor. He adds that this can be done only through the collectivity, which will in turn allow the development of one’s talents. Only through the collectivity or community of individuals can personal liberty be gained.

In the *German Ideology*, we encounter the famous passage on the society with an involuntary division of labor in which man is

a hunter, a fisherman, a shepherd, or a critical critic, and must remain so if he does not want to lose his means of livelihood; whereas in communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner, just as I have in mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic (MEW, 3, p. 33; translation mine.)

Marx’s point of view is even carried over and applied to the arts. Here, too, Marx criticizes the coercive nature of the involuntary division of labor and its undesirable consequences, consequences that do not arise if the division of labor is voluntary.

[T]he exclusive concentration of artistic talent in particular individuals, and its suppression in the broad mass which is bound up with this, is a consequence of division of labour. . . . In any case, with a communist
organisation of society, there disappears the subordination of the artist
to local and national narrowness, which arises entirely from the division
of labour, and also the subordination of the individual to some definite
art, making him exclusively a painter, sculptor, etc.; the very name amply
expresses the narrowness of his professional development and his depen­
dence on division of labour. In a communist society there are no painters
but only people who engage in painting among other activities” (CW, 5,

It can be said, then, that Marx does not only believe that under communism
the division of labor will be a voluntary one and that there will be a full and
free development of each individual (MEW, 23, p. 618). In a logically consis­
tent manner, he concludes that “[c] ommunism deprives no man of the
power to appropriate the products of society; all that it does is to deprive
him of the power to subjugate the labour of others by means of such ap­
propriation” (CW, 6, p. 500; MEW, 4, p. 477). Hence, what distinguishes
communism is “not the abolition of property generally, but the abolition
of bourgeois property” (CW, 6, p. 498; MEW, 4, p. 475). Again, Marx
objects not to the private appropriation of products but to that kind of
private appropriation of products which leads to the creation of an involun­
tary division of labor, that is, to the subjugation of the labor of others.
Later in his life, he took the same theoretical position when analyzing the
reasons why the communism of early primitive societies broke down.

When the labor of others is no longer subjugated, the exploitation of
man will also be terminated. The question that arises then is how pro­
duction will occur. In The Poverty of Philosophy, Marx suggests that
production will be organized on the basis of consensus, thus making
coercion superfluous.

What is today the result of capital and the competition of workers
among themselves will be tomorrow, if you sever the relation between
labour and capital, an actual agreement based upon the relation be­
tween the sum of productive forces and the sum of existing needs”
(CW, 6, p. 143; MEW, 4, p. 104).

Not only is such free cooperation based on consensus devoid of coercion,
“the social relations of the individual producers, with regard both to their
labour and to its products, are in this case perfectly simple and intelligible,
and that with regard not only to production but also to distribution" (C1, p. 83; MEW, 23, p. 93). This could not be said for the bourgeois form of social organization which is based on an involuntary division of labor. In bourgeois society, as in earlier epochs, the division of labor developed behind the back, as it were, of individuals, thus preventing the social relations of the individual producers from becoming "perfectly simple and intelligible."

The exchange of products as it occurred under capitalist and precapitalist social formations will also cease to exist under communism:

Within the co-operative society based on common ownership of the means of production, the producers do not exchange their products; just as little does the labour employed on the products appear here as the value of these products, as a material quality possessed by them, since now, in contrast to capitalist society, individual labour no longer exists in an indirect fashion but directly as a component part of the total labour" (CGP, p. 8; MEW, 19, p. 19).

Earlier, in The Poverty of Philosophy, Marx made the same point when referring to communism: "[I]n principle, there is no exchange of products—but there is the exchange of the labour which co-operates in production" (CW, 6, p. 143; MEW, 4, p. 104). The emphasis is on cooperation, and the fact that individuals are freely engaged in cooperation. In contrast, under production based on an involuntary division of labor, they are brought together by force. Again with communism as a point of reference, Marx states:

[I]f it is assumed that all members of society are immediate workers, the exchange of equal quantities of hours of labour is possible only on conclusion that the number of hours to be spent on material production is agreed on beforehand. But such an agreement negates individual exchange (MEW, 4, p. 104).²

Under communism, then, individuals distribute their products but do not exchange them. Distribution occurs on the basis of need, however. According to Marx, under communism products do not become commodities through the act of exchange, nor is there any commodity production in the sense that products are specifically produced for exchange.
Without commodity production, the separation of a product’s use value from its exchange value will also cease. And since exchange value—which is determined by the relative amount of labor time embodied in a given product—will be nonexistent as a category, production decisions will no longer be made on the basis of whether the relative amount of embodied labor is low enough as to realize a surplus value upon being exchanged. The production of use values will no longer depend on a product’s exchange value since products will not be produced for exchange, but will be produced directly for use instead. Marx makes this point in *The Poverty of Philosophy*:

"[I]n a future society, in which class antagonism will have ceased, in which there will no longer be any classes, use will no longer be determined by the *minimum* time of production; but the time of production devoted to an article will be determined by the degree of its social utility" (CW, 6, p. 134; MEW, 4, p. 93).

And in the *Grundrisse* he writes that

as soon as labour in the direct form has ceased to be the great well-spring of wealth, labour time ceases and must cease to be its measure, and hence exchange value [must cease to be the measure] of use value . . . . With that, production based on exchange value breaks down (G, p. 705; MEW, G, p. 593).

Thus far, it has been shown that, for Marx, communism is a society based on a voluntary division of labor. This voluntary division of labor can be guaranteed only if property that could be used to subjugate others is held in common. In addition, the division of labor under communism can be voluntary only if products are not exchanged, although distributed differentially on the basis of need, and production is regulated on the basis of consensus with everyone freely cooperating. Since Marx’s theory of estrangement comes directly from his observation that man under capital is coerced into a life-situation in which he is prevented from living according to his nature, it can be concluded that communism eliminates estrangement. Communism is the solution to estrangement because it is based on a voluntary division of labor and thus lacks the coercion responsible for man’s estrangement.
There is yet another way in which Marx considers the voluntary division of labor to be crucial. If throughout the history of social life under an involuntary division of labor, man has been coerced in various ways, history, too, has not been made consciously. The conscious making of history is for Marx a logical outcome of a society based on a voluntary division of labor.

In history up to the present, it is certainly likewise an empirical fact that separate individuals have, with the broadening of their activity into world-historical activity, become more and more enslaved under a power alien to them (a pressure which they have conceived of as a dirty trick on the part of the so-called world spirit, etc.), a power which has become more and more enormous and, in the last instance, turns out to be the world market . . . . All-round dependence, this primary natural form of the world-historical co-operation of individuals, will be transformed by this communist revolution into the control and conscious mastery of these powers, which, born of the action of men on one another, have till now overawed and ruled men as powers completely alien to them (CW, 5, pp. 51-52; MEW, 3, p. 37).

Similarly, Marx mentions that the communistic social organization will end the subjection of production to the forces of supply and demand, since man will directly control exchange and production (MEW, 3, p. 35). "The reality which communism creates is precisely the true basis for rendering it impossible that anything should exist independently of individuals, insofar as reality is nevertheless only a product of the preceding intercourse of individuals" (CW, 5, p. 81; MEW, 3, p. 70). Thus, for Marx,

communism differs from all previous movements in that it overturns the basis of all earlier relations of production and intercourse, and for the first time consciously treats all naturally evolved premises as the creations of hitherto existing men, strips them of their natural character and subjugates them to the power of the united individuals (CW, 5, p. 81; MEW, 3, p. 70).

And in the German Ideology he writes that
with the community of revolutionary proletarians . . . who take their conditions of existence and those of all members of society under their control . . . it is as individuals that the individuals participate in it. For it is the association of individuals (assuming the advanced stage of modern productive forces, of course) which puts the conditions of the free development and movement of individuals under their control—conditions which were previously left to chance and had acquired an independent existence over against the separate individuals precisely because of their separation as individuals and because their inevitable association, which determined the division of labour, had, as a result of their separation, become for them an alien bond (CW, 5, p. 80; MEW, 3, pp. 74-75).

We have been investigating the various ways in which Marx views social organization under communism. Not only has it become apparent that Marx directly views communism to be founded on a voluntary division of labor, it is also the case that Marx's overall vision of life under communism does not contradict the thesis that, for Marx, the voluntary division of labor is central when it comes to communism. Thus, Marx's views of the distribution and ownership of products under communism, as well as his theory of history, are directly derived from the postulate that communism is based on a voluntary division of labor. What has emerged is that as the involuntary division of labor is central to Marx's theory of estrangement, the voluntary division of labor envisioned under communism is central to Marx's vision of a world without estrangement. Therefore, we find that our emphasis on the centrality of the involuntary division of labor to Marx's theory of estrangement is justified and that our argument is considerably strengthened.

COMMUNISM AS THE ELIMINATION OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE GROUP

Marx's vision of the ideal life as one in which there is a voluntary division of labor implies that individuals are coerced neither by other individuals nor groups of individuals. This is not to say that individuals will not have conflicts of interest under communism. Marx explicitly states that individuals will cooperate on the basis of consensus; production and distribution will occur upon agreement. What is particular to Marx's vision of communism is the fact that, although differences
of interest may occur, they are overcome by consensus free of coercion. He argues against those who, following Max Stirner, see social life in general as a struggle between general and personal interests (CW, 5, p. 245; MEW, 3, p. 228). Marx says that "the communists by no means want, as Saint Max believes, . . . to do away with the 'private individual' for the sake of the 'general', selfless man" (CW, 5, p. 247; MEW, 3, p. 229).

[Communist theoreticians, the only communists who have time to devote to the study of history, are distinguished precisely by the fact that they alone have discovered that throughout history the "general interest" is created by individuals who are defined as "private persons". They know that this contradiction is only a seeming one because one side of it, what is called the "general interest", is constantly being produced by the other side, private interest, and in relation to the latter it is by no means an independent force with an independent history—so that this contradiction is in practice constantly destroyed and reproduced. Hence it is not a question of the Hegelian "negative unity" of two sides of a contradiction, but of the materially determined destruction of the preceding materially determined mode of life of individuals, with the disappearance of which this contradiction together with its unity also disappears (CW, 5, p. 247; MEW, 3, p. 229).³

Accordingly, those who view the subject of private versus general interest as not determined by history have great difficulty in understanding the communists.

[Communism is quite incomprehensible to our saint because the communists do not oppose egoism to selflessness or selflessness to egoism, nor do they express this contradiction theoretically either in its sentimental or in its highflown ideological form; they rather demonstrate its material source, with which it disappears of itself (CW, 5, p. 247; MEW, 3, p. 229).

This material force consists of the continuous development of the human forces of production. This development of "the capacities of the human species takes place at the cost of the majority of human individuals and even classes, in the end it breaks through this contradiction and coincides with the development of the individual" (TS 2, p. 118;
Hence, for Marx, communism can be founded only after productivity has reached a certain level. Productivity, defined as the time needed to produce a given product, facilitates the creation of a society in which individuals freely cooperate and in which there is no longer any struggle between personal and general interests. Historically speaking, then, Marx's vision of a society based on a voluntary division of labor can be realized only if the foundations for it have been laid in man's increased alternatives through increased productivity. This increase in alternatives is for Marx a necessary condition for the existence of a society in which the development of "the capacities of the human species... coincides with the development of the individual."

For Marx, another condition must be present for the abolition of the conflict between personal and general interests. Marx sees communism accompanied by a change in the consciousness of individuals. In the *German Ideology*, he writes that in communism

> we are... concerned with individuals at a definite historical stage of development and by no means merely with individuals chosen at random, even disregarding the indispensable communist revolution, which itself is a general condition for their free development. The individuals' consciousness of their mutual relations will, of course, likewise be completely changed, and, therefore, will no more be the "principle of love" or dévoûment than it will be egoism (CW, 5, p. 439; MEW, 3, p. 425).

Since the "principle of love" or dévoûment will exist as little as the notion of egoism, it must be inferred that under communism individuals will no longer perceive such dichotomies as personal versus general interest which are so characteristic of societies with private property, that is, with an involuntary division of labor. In contrast, it can now be reiterated what communism, for Marx, is not.

Although communism enables individuals to associate freely, it cannot be conceived of as providing the social environment conducive to the peculiarities of an individual. Thus, individuals cannot be compared with a plant which, in order to grow, must be provided by nature with water, soil, sunshine, and the like. Communism must not be envisioned as a society in which each individual has a claim to be nurtured according to the peculiarity of his person. Marx gives the following criticism of the group who called themselves the true socialist:
The demand for a true socialist society is based on the imaginary demand of a coco-nut palm that the "totality of life" should furnish it with "soil, warmth, sun, air and rain" at the North Pole. This claim of the individual on society is not deduced from the real development of society but from the alleged relationship of the metaphysical characters—individuality and universality. You have only to interpret single individuals as representatives, embodiments of individuality, and society as the embodiment of universality, and the whole trick is done. And at the same time Saint-Simon's statement about the free development of the capacities has been correctly expressed and placed upon its true foundation. This correct expression consists in the absurd statement that the individuals forming society want to preserve their "peculiarity", want to remain as they are, while they demand of society a transformation which can only proceed from a transformation of themselves" (CW, 5, p. 476; MEW, 3, pp. 464-465).

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL

Not only an analysis of Marx's vision of communism can show that Marx considered estrangement to be the result of an involuntary division of labor; the postulate that the involuntary nature of the division of labor is central to his theory of estrangement can also be shown to be valid with regard to his views on the development of the individual. The individual is seen to be at his highest level of development when the dichotomy between necessary labor and disposable time, that is free time, no longer exists.

Marx pointed out the importance of increased spare time in several works. He agrees with Ricardo's postulate that "wealth is disposable time, and nothing more" (MEW, 26.3, p. 252). For Marx, disposable time is time for the free development of the individual (MEW, G, p. 527). The individual can spend free time in such a way as to be free from any coercion that normally accompanies necessary labor time, that is, the time necessarily spent in the service of a capitalist in order to make a livelihood. Under capital, however, as a result of the capitalist's appropriation of surplus value, disposable time is unequally distributed. The worker works more hours than he is compensated for, thus allowing the capitalist to lead a life of leisure. The capitalist does not need to spend necessary time in order to have a livelihood (MEW, G, p. 527). He is, however, interested in reducing the worker's disposable time because of his need to
increase the surplus value, that is, the time for which the worker receives no compensation.

[A] part from extremely elastic bounds, the nature of the exchange of commodities itself imposes no limit to the working-day, no limit to surplus-labour. The capitalist maintains his rights as a purchaser when he tries to make the working-day as long as possible, and to make, whenever possible, two working-days out of one. On the other hand, the peculiar nature of the commodity sold implies a limit to its consumption by the purchaser, and the labourer maintains his right as seller when he wishes to reduce the working-day to one of definite normal duration. There is here, therefore, an antinomy, right against right, both equally bearing the seal of the law of exchanges. Between equal rights force decides. Hence is it that in the history of capitalist production, the determination of what is a working-day presents itself as the result of a struggle, a struggle between collective capital, i.e., the class of capitalists, and collective labour, i.e., the working-class (C1, p. 225; MEW, 23, p. 249).

Marx considers the outcome of this struggle important:

Time is the room of human development. A man who has no free time to dispose of, whose whole lifetime, apart from the mere physical interruptions by sleep, meals, and so forth, is absorbed by his labour for the capitalist, is less than a beast of burden (WPP, pp. 67-68; MEW, 16, p. 144).

As a consequence, Marx approves of the legally limited working-day since it “shall make clear ‘when the time which the worker sells is ended, and when his own begins’.” He exclaims “Quantum mutatus ab illo!” (C1, p. 286; MEW, 23, p. 320). For Marx the working-day should be clearly limited because it increases, or at least makes possible, the planned use of one’s disposable time for one’s own purposes. In this regard Marx cites Engels who writes that the Ten Hours Act the worker “is enabled to prearrange his own minutes for his own purposes.” He shares Engels’ hope that since the factory acts have made the workers masters of their own time, they have been given “a moral energy which is directing them to the eventual possession of political power” (C1, p. 286; MEW, 23, p. 320).
The importance of the struggle for disposable time can be summed up by a passage from *Capital*:

The intensity and productiveness of labour being given, the time which society is bound to devote to material production is shorter, and as a consequence, the time at its disposal for the free development, intellectual and social, of the individual is greater, in proportion as the work is more and more evenly divided among all the able-bodied members of society, and as a particular class is more and more deprived of the power to shift the natural burden of labour from its own shoulders to those of another layer of society. In this direction, the shortening of the working-day finds at last a limit in the generalisation of labour. In capitalist society spare time is acquired for one class by converting the whole life-time of the masses into labour-time (C1, p. 496; MEW, 23, p. 552).  

The increase of spare time is important because, for at least a part of the day, the worker is not subject to direct domination. Marx, therefore, sees the struggle for disposable time as one that enhances the condition in which man will be free from domination by other men, including by social forces alien to him. It is a struggle in which Marx sees an attempt to escape the involuntary division of labor. In its place should come a society based on a voluntary division of labor and devoid of the dichotomy between free time and necessary labor time. For this to occur, Marx postulates the necessity of historical development. It will be recalled that Marx considered the individual in primitive communistic societies to be still “tied” to the community as an unborn infant is tied to the mother through the umbilical cord. Of the Asian social formations, based on property held in common he says that they remained stable because, among other things, “the individual does not become independent vis-à-vis the commune.” For this reason, even though individuals may have spare time at their disposal, the availability of free time to individuals is merely a necessary but not sufficient condition.

Suppose now such an eastern bread-cutter requires 12 working-hours a week for the satisfaction of all his wants. Nature's direct gift to him is plenty of leisure time. Before he can apply this leisure time productively for himself, a whole series of historical events is required (C1, p. 482; MEW, 23, p. 538).
The historical events of which Marx speaks are those events that will increase man's productive powers, although they may occur at the expense of his spare time. Marx makes the assumption that as long as man does not adequately control nature, the options for his individual development, as well as that of society, are limited, although spare time may be relatively abundant. While the productive powers are being developed, the foundations are laid not only to bring nature increasingly under man's control, but also to enable the individual to cooperate freely. The goal is both to sever the umbilical cord by which primitive man is tied to society and to shake loose all forms of social domination that have accompanied man as the development of the productive powers has proceeded throughout history. Again, as with communism, the true development of the individual is possible only if the productive powers of man are developed sufficiently and the involuntary division of labor is abolished; if man is less subject to the blind forces of nature; and if he can live free from the coercion of other men. For example:

In fact, the realm of freedom actually begins only where labour which is determined by necessity (Not) and by external expediency (äussere Zweckmässigkeit) ceases; thus in the very nature of things it lies beyond the sphere of actual material production. Just as the savage must wrestle with nature to satisfy his wants, to maintain and reproduce life, so must civilised man, and he must do so in all social formations and under all possible modes of production. With his development this realm of physical necessity expands as a result of his wants; but, at the same time, the forces of production which satisfy these wants also increase. Freedom in this field can only consist in socialised man, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with nature, bringing it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by a blind force (als von einer blinden Macht); and achieving this with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most favorable to, and worthy of, their human nature. But it nonetheless still remains a realm of necessity. Beyond it begins that development of human energy which is an end in itself, the true realm of freedom, which, however, can blossom forth only with this realm of necessity as its basis. The shortening of the working-day is its basic prerequisite (MEW, 25, p. 828; translation mine).  

Clearly, as is pointed out above, Marx sees the shortened working-day as
an important step in the struggle for a society devoid of an involuntary division of labor. The struggle is aided by the tendency in the capitalist mode of production to reduce the labor time needed to produce commodities and thus increase the productivity. Under capital, this tendency is desirable because it results in a greater surplus which the capitalist can appropriate. With the abolition of the capitalist mode of production, production is no longer based on "the reduction of necessary labour time so as to posit surplus labour" (G, p. 706). Rather, there will be a "general reduction of the necessary labour of society to a minimum, which then corresponds to the artistic, scientific etc. development of the individuals in the time set free, and with the means created, for all of them" (G, p. 706; MEW, G, p. 593).

It must not therefore be concluded that a dichotomy between necessary labor and disposable time will persist in a society based on a voluntary division of labor, a society in which labor time ceases to be the measure of wealth and hence, in which "exchange value [must cease to be the measure] of use value" (G, p. 705). Neither must it be assumed that, if capitalism is no longer a reality, productivity gains could no longer be realized. The facts are quite the contrary. For Marx, the reduction in necessary labor time to a minimum will in itself lead to an increased level of productivity.

[T]he saving of labour time [is] equal to an increase of free time, i.e., time for the full development of the individual, which in turn reacts back upon the productive power of labour as itself the greatest productive power. From the standpoint of the direct production process it can be regarded as the production of fixed capital, this fixed capital being man himself (G, pp. 711-712; MEW, G, p. 599).

Similarly, a maximum of disposable time feeds back upon the individuals insofar as they become transformed: "Free-time—which is both idle time and time for higher activity—has naturally transformed its possessor into a different subject, and he then enters into the direct production process as this different subject" (G, p. 712; MEW, G, p. 599). Marx suggests that "it goes without saying . . . that direct labour time itself cannot remain in the abstract antithesis to free time in which it appears from the perspective of bourgeois economy" (G, p. 712).

This theme is reiterated in Theories of Surplus-Value.
114 ESTRANGEMENT

[1]t is self-evident that if labour-time is reduced to a normal length and, furthermore, labour is no longer performed for someone else, but for myself . . . it acquires a quite different, a free character, it becomes real social labor. . . —the labour of a man who has also disposable time must be of a much higher quality than that of the beast of burden (TS3, p. 257; MEW, 26.3, p. 253).

Marx cautions, however, that "labour cannot become play, as Fourier would like, although it remains his great contribution to have expressed the suspension not of distribution, but of the mode of production itself" (G, p. 712). Instead, Marx describes the production process under communism as

both discipline, as regards the human being in the process of becoming and, at the same time, practice [Ausübung], experimental science, materially creative and objectifying science, as regards the human being who has become, in whose head exists the accumulated knowledge of society" (G, p. 712; MEW, G, pp. 599-600).

In this discussion of Marx's vision of communism, it became evident that, for Marx, communism is a society based on a voluntary division of labor. This confirmed our postulate that the involuntary division of labor Marx observed in capitalist and many precapitalist societies is central to his theory of estrangement, since communism, for Marx, is above all a society devoid of estrangement. The centrality of the involuntary division of labor in Marx's theory of estrangement is also clear with regard to Marx's views of the development of the individual. For Marx, the true development of the individual cannot come about until the whole society is freed from the involuntary division of labor and the forces of production have been developed sufficiently. This is so even for the class which in a given society may not be forced to work for a living. Thus, just as much as the capitalist is estranged, he and society are also prevented from full and free development as long as the involuntary division of labor prevails. Marx's views on the development of the individual are, therefore, intricately related to his assessment of the consequences of the involuntary division of labor. Insofar as these views call
for a voluntary division of labor such that the individual may fully and freely develop, the full development of the individual coincides with and depends on the establishment of communism. And insofar as this development can occur only in a society devoid of estrangement, it can be concluded that the centrality of the involuntary division of labor to Marx's theory of estrangement indirectly also derives from his views on the development of the individual.

DISCUSSION

As we have seen, Marx believes that communism will be founded on and will depend on the productivity gains realized under capital. The inherent capitalist tendency to lower the amount of labor time used in the production of commodities does in fact result in a greater level of productivity. Thus, the necessary labor time can be set to a minimum while maximizing the amount of free time. However, this very maximization of free time will lead to further productivity increases. An increase in productivity therefore represents a step in the direction of eliminating scarcity, particularly in Marx's vision of a communist society in which exploitation ceases to exist. The question that arises is whether communist society will be free from scarcity. There is no evidence showing that Marx believed communist society will be, or even could be, devoid of any scarcity. Even under communism, man will have to work for his maintenance as well as for that of his offspring.

Scarcity is a major point of discussion in Knecht's work. In his comparison of Sartre's and Marx's theory of estrangement, Knecht (1975) points out that Sartre's theory of estrangement is more broadly conceived than Marx's. Sartre deliberately set out to establish a theory of estrangement that would not be bound to and derived from specific historical conditions. His theory rests on the assumption that scarcity does exist and that it exists independent of any socioeconomic organization. Because of this scarcity, with which individuals must cope, individuals become estranged in the process. As a consequence, Sartre also tends to view social organization as a means of coping with scarcity which results in the estrangement of the individual. Thus, because of scarcity one man appears to the other as a coercive "anti-man," in any historical period and in all human relationships, including the family and the community of friends (Knecht, 1975: 87). According to Sartre, estrangement can be
eliminated only if scarcity is overcome. However, while Sartre does not state that scarcity will never be overcome, he does maintain that estrangement can slowly be reduced even under scarcity (Knecht, 1975: 98).

Although Marx does not assume the end of scarcity under communism, he is not as concerned about it as Sartre and does not cite it as the basic cause of past or future estrangement. Sartre incessantly pursues the problem of estrangement from the point of view of how the individual will directly or indirectly experience interference from other individuals, because of the underlying phenomenon of scarcity. Marx, however, assumes that communism will be accompanied by a change in consciousness. "We are . . . concerned with individuals at a definite historical stage of development and by no means merely with individuals chosen at random," he says. Thus, Marx, while not assuming the absence of scarcity, is able to say that under communism the development of the forces of production "coincides with the development of the individual." Since "the individuals' consciousness of their mutual relations will . . . be completely changed," and production and distribution will be based on agreement with everyone participating freely, Marx does not believe scarcity results in renewed estrangement. He thinks that the consciousness of individuals under communism will constantly identify the development of individuals with that of society. Sartre sees this unity as unstable, although he does envision situations in which a group of individuals cooperate freely without the coercion of anyone. Such a group, Sartre argues, can be a collectivity of individuals involved in storming the Bastille, or any other group with homogeneous goals (Knecht, 1975: 210). However, as a result of the persisting scarcity, such groups are unstable and tend to become coercive. Thus, Knecht (1975: 274) writes that scarcity is the direct cause of the failure of associations previously free from estrangement.

Sartre can visualize situations in which the consciousness of individuals would be so changed that a group could achieve homogeneity with respect to its members' goal-directedness. All the same, he is certain that this change is not likely to persist in the long run. It may therefore be concluded that Sartre, although admitting some historical influences on individuals, excludes others. For example, the associated individuals involved in the storming of the Bastille were subject to definite historical influences bringing about that change in consciousness leading to the uncoerced cooperation in storming the Bastille. Unlike Marx, Sartre would
not postulate that the establishment of communist society would bring about a change in consciousness so persistent that, despite the continuous presence of scarcity, estrangement would never reappear. Sartre may therefore be accused of basing his theory of estrangement on a concept of the individual that is not sufficiently historic. Such a claim could be substantiated by the fact that his theory of estrangement is derived not from historical categories but from the principle of scarcity, which in itself is assumed to be independent of historical conditions. For Sartre, scarcity is a reality of life transcending historical periods (Knecht, 1975). Accordingly, contrary to Marx, estrangement is not seen as a phenomenon associated with distinct historical phases. Although estrangement may be overcome, once overcome it is not assumed that this overcoming, while in itself an event of history, will receive history’s “seal of guarantee” as Marx tended to postulate. As one example of the way in which Marx links the abolition of estrangement to a definite historical period, the following pronouncement from the Manifesto may be cited: “In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all” (CW, 6, p. 506; MEW, 4, p. 482).

For Marx, this can only be the consequence of a revolution introducing a new historical epoch. By means of a revolution, the proletariat “makes itself the ruling class, and, as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of production, then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms and of classes generally, and will thereby have abolished its own supremacy as a class” (CW, 6, p. 506; MEW, 4, p. 482).

Unlike Sartre, Marx envisions communist society as stable inasmuch as estrangement will not reoccur. History will have changed both the consciousness of individuals and the form of social organization so as to “guarantee” nonestrangement. According to this view, the relationship of the individual to society is “deduced from the real development of society,” and not the alleged relationship of the metaphysical characters—individuality and universality” (CW, 5, p. 476; MEW, 3, p. 464).

Marx also refuses to neglect the historical context. Because Marx sees the relationship of the individual to society within primitive societies in historical terms, it is incorrect to assume, as Hobbes tended to do, that a strong individual will begin to dominate weaker ones. To make such an
assumption, says Marx, is to start with a notion of isolated individuals, and not with the individual that is historically linked to other individuals in specific ways.

Marx admits that "there is no natural obstacle absolutely preventing one man from disburdening himself of the labour requisite for his own existence, and burdening another with it, any more, for instance, than unconquerable natural obstacles prevent one man from eating the flesh of another" (C1, p. 479). A general pattern of domination will occur only with an initial development of the productiveness of labor:

It is only after men have raised themselves above the rank of animals, when therefore their labour has been to some extent socialised, that a state of things arises in which the surplus-labour of the one becomes a condition of existence for the other (C1, p. 479; MEW, 23, pp. 534-535).

The historical conditions are, therefore, extremely important in explaining the behavior of individuals. Just as social relations change in history, so does consciousness. According to Marx, the perception of an antimony between the private and the general interest is also historically conditioned and is directly linked to the institution of private property. Hence, it is only natural that he assumes that different historical conditions (for example, those of primitive society or communism) will produce different social relations and a different consciousness of mutual relations in the individuals. Just as the domination of some over others was unlikely in primitive society, Marx thinks it unlikely that estrangement will recur under communism and that some will again begin to dominate others. The condition of nonestrangement under communism is for Marx—and in contrast to Sartre—stable.

That Marx views communism as a society with no reemergence of estrangement can be illustrated in yet another way. As has been shown, Marx sees communism as a type of society in which products are distributed on the basis of need. The unequal accumulation of personal property and the subsequent exchange of such accumulated property brought about the downfall of primitive communism as exemplified by the Iroquois Indians. As Engels remarked, this process brought the Iroquois to the threshold of civilization. On the basis of this initial regular exchange, the division of labor and private property arose. The division of labor developed and grew
without the consent of the individuals involved. Under communism, however, there is no room for the exchange of products and commodity production. Marx believes that the "mechanisms" that transformed primitive communist society and propelled history ever since will cease to exist and will not reemerge since production will no longer be based on exchange value but on agreement with products being collectively appropriated and distributed on the basis of need. Hence, history will be consciously directed history, and the division of labor will cease to be formed independently of the will of individuals:

The reality which communism creates is precisely the true basis for rendering it impossible that anything should exist independently of individuals, insofar as reality is nevertheless only a product of the preceding intercourse of individuals (CW, 5, p. 81; MEW, 3, p. 70).

In history up to the present it is certainly likewise an empirical fact that separate individuals have... become more and more enslaved under a power alien to them... a power which has become more and more enormous and, in the last instance, turns out to be the world market... All-round dependence, this primary natural form of the world-historical co-operation of individuals, will be transformed by this communist revolution into the control and conscious mastery of these powers, which, born of the action of men on one another, have till now overawed and ruled men as powers completely alien to them (CW, 5, p. 51; MEW, 3, p. 37; see also MEW, 3, p. 35).

For Marx communism is not the end of history. Rather, it is the beginning of a new type of history—consciously directed history. It is made possible by the elimination of "mechanisms" such as exchange, commodity production, and the resulting involuntary division of labor which hitherto propelled it. As long as these "mechanisms" are absent, Marx sees no reason to believe that communism will be an unstable social condition despite the presence of some scarcity. In this respect, Marx differs from Sartre.

The question may be asked now whether Marx also perceived man under the communism of primitive societies to be free from estrangement. It may be recalled that Marx and Engels thought these individuals were free
from coercion by others and were therefore not subject to the involuntary division of labor to be introduced only after exchange relationships have emerged. Consequently, Marx does not speak of estrangement or alien social forces dominating man in primitive communistic societies. If estrangement results from an involuntary division of labor, which in itself is a product of society, it must be concluded that, for Marx, man in primitive communistic societies is not estranged. Nonetheless, he does not consider this condition, primitive communism, to be desirable because man is still severely under the domination of nature and tied to his community as if through an umbilical cord. Only with the introduction of regular exchange does man first sever his symbiotic ties to the community and develop the forces of production that will eventually allow the realization of communism. Thus, while man cannot be said to be estranged under primitive communism, he is incapable of that type of life envisioned under communism since neither society nor the individual have yet become developed.

The development of man's productive powers and the individual has resulted in estrangement. Until a certain level of development has occurred, increases in the productive powers of man are for Marx only possible through estrangement. If, therefore, the development of the forces of production helps man bring nature under greater control (although resulting in estrangement), scarcity is in part overcome at the price of estrangement, at least for certain historical periods. At the price of estrangement, man increases his alternatives vis-à-vis nature and, therefore, develops himself as well as diminishes scarcity.

Scarcity must not be seen primarily as an independent variable definable in ahistorical terms. For Marx, scarcity also seems to be closely linked with the level of individual development. Historically, as the individual develops, new needs are created, and what is considered to be scarce may change because of certain historical developments. This cannot be said of animals whose needs are physiologically derivable and, therefore, not subject to historical change. Needs are ahistorically determinable with animals:

The different forms of material life are, of course, in every case dependent on the needs which are already developed, and the production, as well as the satisfaction, of these needs in an historical process, which is not found in the case of a sheep or a dog. (CW, 5, p. 82; MEW, 3, p. 71).
In *Capital* Marx points out that "at the dawn of civilization the productiveness acquired by labour is small, but so too are the wants which develop with and by the means of satisfying them" (C1, p. 479; MEW, 23, p. 535; see also quote in note 9; MEW, 25, p. 828).

For Marx, then, the development of man's productive powers is initially accompanied by estrangement. This development proceeds under communism in the absence of estrangement. However, only if necessary labor time can sufficiently be reduced by the development of productive forces is communism perceived to be realizable.

[The] development of productive forces . . . is an absolutely necessary practical premise, because without it privation, *want* is merely made general, and with *want* the struggle for necessities would begin again, and all the old filthy business would necessarily be restored (CW, 5, p. 49; MEW, 3, pp. 34-35).16

The reduction of necessary labor time can be equated with a reduction in scarcity or an increased satisfaction of needs. However, because new needs are created as the forces of production develop, scarcity remains a relative concept not solely definable according to physiological premises. Scarcity, along with needs, can therefore be said to be created as the productive powers of man develop. On the whole, the productive forces are thought to develop faster so that under communism man can minimize the necessary labor time and establish a society based on a voluntary division of labor. Some scarcity will still be present, even if only because nature can never be fully controlled.

"Just as the savage must wrestle with Nature to satisfy his wants, to maintain and reproduce life, so must civilized man, and he must do so in all social formations and under all possible modes of production" (C3, p. 820; MEW, 25, p. 828). Here Marx apparently contradicts a position he took earlier. In the *Manuscripts*, he says that man, in contrast to animals, "produces even when he is free from physical need and only truly produces in freedom therefrom" (CW, 3, p. 276; MEW, EB 1.T., p. 517). Considering his work as a whole, it seems that Marx did not equate "true productive activity" with that activity which occurs free from physical need. Rather, he envisioned a society in which production would occur on the basis of freely cooperating individuals regardless of the basis for
this cooperation. Thus, as long as man is able to satisfy his physical needs without being dominated by an alien will, he is not estranged and the division of labor is a voluntary one.

Marx does accept the fact that man is "determined, forced," by his needs, but he is quick to add that in this case "it is only my own nature . . . which exerts force upon me; it is nothing alien." Only if production is determined on the basis of exchange do my needs become a coercive force for others as well (G, p. 245; MEW, G, p. 157). Again, it can be seen that Marx's main emphasis is on the way needs are satisfied, not on the idea that man must produce in order to satisfy his needs. For Marx, communism is that form of social organization in which man is capable of producing, without coercion, the products required to satisfy his needs, since neither production nor distribution rests on exchange and the division of labor is voluntary.

MARX'S DEFINITION OF HUMAN NATURE RECONSIDERED

According to Marx, communism is not a society in which the individuals forming that society "want to preserve their 'peculiarity', while they demand of society a transformation which can only proceed from a transformation of themselves." Marx does not outline what human nature will be under communism. He is not concerned with human nature as it manifests itself in the various types of behavior and characters of individuals living under communism. He often criticizes those who, by extrapolating from behavior under capital, claimed to have found the ingredients of human nature. This criticism was intended to relativize statements about human nature which others thought to be absolute, and not to explicitly outline human nature under communism.

Marx was very concerned about human nature in another way. Earlier, we stated that Marx's theory of estrangement was derived from a biological, and not an historical, conception of human nature. Thus, man, unlike the animals, was found to be a producer capable of producing according to his will, and insofar as man is forced to subject his labor power and the product of his labor to an alien will he can be said to be estranged. Marx depicts communism as society without estrangement, a society in which neither one's labor power nor the product of one's labor is subject to an alien will. Cooperation is free and the division of labor voluntary. Com-
munism therefore permits man to live according to his nature, a nature based not on characteristics that may change in history but one that is biologically unique to man.

NOTES

1. The translation is mine insofar as *wie ich gerade Lust habe* is translated by "as I have in mind" rather than by "as I have a mind," as it appears in CW, 5, p. 47.

2. Marx uses the term *immédiat* (travailleurs immédiats), which can be translated by "immediate." However, *immédiat* designates the condition of someone *qui agit, qui produit sans intermédiaire*. (See Walther v. Wartburg, *Französisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Basel: Helbing & Lichtenbahn, 1952, p. 571).

3. Marx criticizes not only those who see a conflict between the private and the general interest from a historical perspective, but also those who see no such divergence as long as the individuals in an exchange society are allowed to pursue their private interests.

The economists express this as follows: Each pursues his private interest and only his private interest; and thereby serves the private interests of all, the general interest, without willing or knowing it. The real point is not that each individual's pursuit of his private interests promotes the totality of private interests, the general interest. One could just as well deduce from this abstract phrase that each individual reciprocally blocks the assertion of the others' interests, so that, instead of a general affirmation, this war of all against all produces a general negation. The point is rather that private interest is itself already a socially determined interest, which can be achieved only within the conditions laid down by society and with the means provided by society; hence it is bound to the reproduction of these conditions and means. It is the interest of private persons; but its content as well as the form and means of its realization is given by social conditions independent of all (G, p. 156; MEW, G, p. 74).

4. Marx elaborates on this theme elsewhere. When discussing the nature of the capitalist, he says that

fanatically bent on making value expand itself, he ruthlessly forces the human race to produce for production's sake; he thus forces the development of the productive powers of society, and creates those material conditions, which alone can form the real basis of a higher form of society, a society in which the full and free development of every individual forms the ruling principle (C1, p. 555; MEW, 23, p. 618; see also MEW, 19, p. 17; MEW, G, p. 716, and MEW, 3, p. 424).
5. In the *Grundrisse*, Marx uses the same argument when discussing the reasons why in primitive society a strong individual did not dominate weaker ones and thus forcefully extract labor from them.

It is of course very simple to imagine that some powerful, physically dominant individual, after first having caught the animal, then catches humans in order to have them catch animals; in a word, uses human beings as another naturally occurring condition for his reproduction (whereby his own labour reduces itself to ruling) like any other natural creature. But such a notion is stupid—correct as it may be from the standpoint of some particular given clan or commune—because it proceeds from the development of isolated *Individuals*. But human beings become individuals (vereinzelt) through the process of history (G, p. 496; MEW, G, p. 395).

Implicit in this statement is the postulate that it is inconceivable for a "primitive" individual even to consider perceiving his interest to be prior to the one of others, that is, to subordinate others to his will in such a manner that he benefits from the subordination. At this point, we should also recall that Marx did not explain the decay of primitive communism by the fact that some began to dominate others by virtue of personal physical strength. Rather, he explained it on the basis that personal property was unequally appropriated leading to social processes, as a result of which some became the subordinates of others.

6. In *Theories of Surplus-Value*, Marx maintains the same theme in a somewhat more arithmetic form:

Assume that the productivity of industry is so advanced that whereas earlier two-thirds of the population were directly engaged in material production, now it is only one-third. Previously $2/3$ produced means of subsistence for $3/3$; now $1/3$ produces for $3/3$. Previously $1/3$ was net revenue (as distinct from the revenue of the labourers), now $2/3$. Leaving (class) contradictions out of account, the nation would now use $1/3$ of its time for direct production, where previously it needed $2/3$. Equally distributed, the whole $2/3$ would have more time for unproductive labour and leisure (MEW, 26.1, p. 189; translation mine).

The Progress Publishers' translation (TS1, p. 218) translates the last sentence in the following way: "Equally distributed, all (that is, the whole population) would have $2/3$ more time for unproductive labour and leisure." This translation cannot be correct because of the arithmetic. If a population previously spent one-third of its time as spare time (while two-thirds were needed to produce subsistence), it now has two-thirds in the form of spare time, while only one-third of the time is used for the direct production of subsistence. The spare time increased by 100 percent and not, as the translation implies, by 66-2/3 percent. The German "Gleichmässig verteilt, hätten alle $2/3$ mehr Zeit" is therefore best
translated as "Equally distributed, the whole 2/3 would have more time." Furthermore, if equally distributed, the capitalist class would have less—not more—spare time than previously, since it, too, must now spend one-third of its time producing means of subsistence.

7. Marx continues by saying that "before he spends it in surplus-labour for strangers, compulsion is necessary. If capitalist production were introduced, the honest fellow would perhaps have to work six days a week, in order to appropriate to himself the product of one working-day" (C1, p. 482; MEW, 23, p. 538).

8. *Aussere Zweckmässigkeit* is not optimally translated by "mundane considerations" (C3, p. 820). It implies that the worker who is uncoerced by necessity (Not) or by "external expediency" (*aussere Zweckmässigkeit*) has no mundane considerations. Marx's emphasis rather is on coercion brought about by *Not* or *aussere Zweckmässigkeit* and not on whether considerations are mundane or not.

The phrase *als von einer blinden Macht* is misleadingly translated in the Progress Publishers' edition by "as by the blind forces of Nature" (C3, p. 820).

In Roman society, which was based on slavery, the ties between the individual and the community were severed. While "the individuals may appear great," Marx maintains that "there can be no conception here of a free and full development either of the individual or of the society, since such development stands in contradiction to the original relation" (G, p. 487; MEW, G, pp. 386-387). Implicit here is the notion that the free and full development of the individual cannot come about unless the productive forces are sufficiently developed. Although slavery brought about a certain development, it was limited. The free and full development of the individual and society was impossible since the options, though increased, were still too limited. Also implicit here is the idea that, unless all men are free from coercion (involuntary division of labor), neither the individuals nor society can develop freely and fully even though some individuals have the spare time for their development through which in turn they may appear great.

9. {Capital} diminishes labour time in the necessary form so as to increase it in the superfluous form; hence posits the superfluous in growing measure as a condition—question of life or death—for the necessary. On the one side, then, it calls to life all the powers of science and of nature, as of social combination and of social intercourse, in order to make the creation of wealth independent (relatively) of the labour time employed on it. On the other side, it wants to use labour time as the measuring rod for the giant social forces thereby created, and to confine them within the limits required to maintain the already created value as value. Forces of production and social relations—two different sides of the development of the social individual—appear to capital as mere means, and are merely means for it to produce on its limited foundation. In fact, however, they are the material
conditions to blow this foundation sky-high. “Truly wealthy a nation, when the working day is 6 rather than 12 hours” (G, p. 706; MEW, G, pp. 593-594).

10. In Anti-Dühring (MEW, 20, pp. 274, 276), Engels also maintains that a society that is freed from the limits of capitalist production will be able to advance further because it creates new forces of production. This advance will be possible because abandonment of the previous division of labor and its replacement by a division of labor will allow for the education of many-sided individuals who will also understand the scientific basis of all industrial production. Quoting Marx, he points to the fact that under capital the factory system itself is already moving in such a direction:

[T]he employment of machinery does away with the necessity of crystallizing this distribution after the manner of Manufacture, by the constant annexation of a particular man to a particular function. Since the motion of the whole system does not proceed from the workman, but from the machinery, a change of persons can take place at any time without an interruption of the work (C1, p. 397; MEW, 23, pp. 443-444).

Engels states that once the economy no longer suffers under recurrent crises and the means of production are no longer privately owned, a practically limitless increase in production will occur. In contrast to the development postulated above, the one postulated here is seen only as a function of a reduction of losses (MEW, 20, p. 263).

11. Schaff (1964:110) maintains that it is impossible, as Sartre did, to merge existentialism with Marxism. Schaff considers Sartre’s attempt a failure because of the resulting inherent philosophical contradictions. (See also Schaff, 1964: 22, 26, 76, 78, 109.)

12. “For it is the association of individuals (assuming the advanced stage of modern productive forces, of course) which puts the conditions of the free development and movement of individuals under their control—conditions which were previously left to chance and had acquired an independent existence over against the separate individuals.” (CW, 5, p. 80; MEW, 3, p. 75).

13. As pointed out earlier, Marx envisions the further development of the forces of production also under communism but not at the expense of estrangement.

14. Here “diminishing scarcity” means that, through the development of the forces of production, a society’s necessary labor time is diminished. However, necessary labor time is in itself historically determined; what is necessary cannot be seen as invariable.

15. We note that Bedürfnis is translated by “want” rather than by “need.” In light of Marx’s use of the term Bedürfnis, it is difficult to justify one translation exclusively over another, although I prefer the translation “need.” For a further treatment, see Agnes Heller, 1976.
In reality, of course, what happened was that people won freedom for themselves each time to the extent that was dictated and permitted not by their ideal of man, but by the existing productive forces. All emancipation carried through hitherto has been based, however, on restricted productive forces. The production which these productive forces could provide was insufficient for the whole of society and made development possible only if some persons satisfied their needs at the expense of others, and therefore some—the minority—obtained the monopoly of development, while others—the majority—owing to the constant struggle to satisfy their most essential needs, were for the time being (i.e., until the creation of new revolutionary productive forces) excluded from any development. Thus, society has hitherto always developed within the framework of a contradiction—in antiquity the contradiction between free men and slaves, in the Middle Ages that between nobility and serfs, in modern times that between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat (CW, 5, p. 431-432; MEW, 3, p. 417).