

and became a great power loom, so its ownership changed hands, that it developed from a tool of production for use, into a machine of production for profit. So also the machinery of farming. One other thing: that as it grows larger and larger, so does its very nature change. The forked stick was an individual tool, as was also the wooden plow, but the great modern plow is a strictly social product, a social tool. So also a point is reached where from being the property of an individual, it becomes the property of a Class. It becomes—capital. Even the nature of the products change. From products for use they become, with the enlargement of the machine, with the social production of the tool, social products for exchange—commodities. So also changed the social standing of the dweller on the soil. From being the owner of a farm and number of hand tools, he becomes a slave harnessed to the social machinery, producing a great stream of wealth for masters he has never seen. And here is the secret of the poverty of the Western farmer.

As we pointed out, he never was an owner of means of production—a peasant proprietor. Capital was ahead of him, and the laws of capitalist development go their way no matter who suffers.

The farm slave himself cannot fail to notice that every new machine has this tendency—to cover more ground in quicker time than heretofore, and to become larger and more expensive. We have mentioned commodities, and this brings us to the crux of the pamphlet. Why are the machines growing ever larger? What is the reason for the continued effort to do the job quicker? What is a commodity? What do we mean by social production?

To take the last first: The farm slave is not a producer of farm products. That is, he cannot do this alone, he must have the aid of the rest of the workers. Imagine starting