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Capital, Volume One  
An audio play

## **Karl Marx: Capital, Volume One**

*An audio play by Helgard Haug  
and Daniel Wetzel/Rimini Protokoll*

Spremberg: (*opening the Braille edition*) Rolling, right? A large leather case with a Velcro fastener. In it there are two pretty fat Braille books from volume one. This first volume alone makes up thirteen similar tomes! So they fit into these handy cases, which fill the entire hallway. And if you buy something like this—I remember the first big Duden dictionary in Braille—22 such things, they just sold the bookcase with it. So, what do you want to hear from me?

Lolette: Everything.

Kuczynski: Everything.

Mailänder: Everything.

Spremberg: Let's begin. First of all—there's not so much here: a figure made up of three symbols. The first is ER—dots in the same space, one under the other—so the dots: one, two, four, five, and six. The next is somehow the opposite—dots two three, four, five, six: ST and then ER again: *Erster* (First). Then there's a word where you can't really shorten much in it. The only thing that is abbreviated is SCH.

Lolette: That's the doorbell.

Mailänder: Ah, that must be Mr Kuczynski

Spremberg: All the other letters are separately written out: A B SCH N I TT (P A R T)

Lolette: Mr Kuczynski—and now it really is him.

KUCZYNSKI Hello

Lolette: Hello

Mailänder: Oh, hello

Spremberg: And then below that, there's *Ware* (commodity) and *Geld* (money), although the first word is again only made up of three signs. You can shorten the AR. The word *und* (and) is likewise only a 'u' – and *Geld* (money) is also just 3 signs. One cuts some corners. And below that there's:

### **Chapter One—The Commodity**

KUCZYNSKI Chapter One

Spremberg: First Chapter and underneath that

Heinrichs: The Commodity

Lolette: ah, the commodity, mmm

Spremberg: and then it continues.

Mailänder: Capital as an audio play

Spremberg: With another subheading—first

KUCZYNSKI as an audio play?

Spremberg: “The Two Factors of the Commodity:”

Mailänder: The wealth of societies

Spremberg: Use-value and Value (Substance of Value, Magnitude of Value)

Mailänder: in which the capitalist mode of production prevails appears as an ‘immense collection of commodities’ (*laughs*)

Spremberg: All of it underlined with dots in order to show that that’s the next category and then, and then the text begins: “The wealth of societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails appears as an ‘immense collection of commodities’” – first footnote; I’ll skip that for now – “the individual commodity appears as its elementary form.”

Mailänder: Mr Kuczynski says:

Spremberg: “Our investigation therefore begins with the analysis of the commodity.”

Kuczynski: Christian Spremberg was born blind—

Spremberg: “The commodity is, first of all, an external object, a thing which through all its qualities satisfies human needs...”

Kuczynski: In my imagination, Christian Spremberg is only made up of hands and mouth when he reads.

Spremberg: “Nor does it matter here how the thing satisfies man’s needs”

Kuczynski: So, as feeling

Spremberg: “whether directly as a means of subsistence, i.e. an object of consumption,”

Kuczynski: and speaking.

Spremberg: “or indirectly as a means of production. Every useful thing, for example, iron, paper, etc., may be looked at from the two points of view of quality and quantity.”

Kuczynski: If you want to read this book

Spremberg: “Every useful thing is a whole composed of many properties;”

Kuczynski: then you need a year for it.

Spremberg: “it can therefore be useful in various ways.”

Kuczynski: and so we have—

Spremberg: “The discovery of these ways and hence of the manifold uses of things is the work of history.”

Kuczynski: Yes, I mean

Spremberg: “So also is the invention of socially recognized standards of measurement for the quantities”

Kuczynski: we read

Spremberg: Right, so the problem is now, is that *Masse* (mass) or *Maße* (measurement)—you have to read a bit further; I guess mass—

Kuczynski: Yes so, I’ve got to flip really quickly

Lolette: Thomas Kuczynski

Spremberg: Statistician

Kuczynski: through

Spremberg: is considering

Lolette: considering—considering

Kuczynski: Yes, I'd have to change pages every four seconds, that is, flip pages every eight seconds—

Spremberg: one, two, three, four, five, six, seven...

Kuczynski: Right? Because you have two pages. So and this 8 second rhythm you can do it to a beat. Per line we have then 1/10 of a second.

Spremberg: Oh, not even I can read it that fast.

Kuczynski: Then we have 1/10 of a second per line.

Mailänder: Ms—um—um—um—yeah, what?

Lolette: Lolette.

Mailänder: Ms Lolette says,

Lolette: What's it all about anyway? It's all Greek to me!

Kuczynski: To turn Marx's *Capital, Volume 1* into an Audio Play in 54 minutes is a totally crazy idea.

Lolette: What's so crazy about the idea?

Kuczynski: Capital is a scientific work. It's 750 pages. How am I supposed to convert 750 pages into 54 minutes? Of course I can flip through Capital, right—every eight seconds I need to turn the page because I've only got four seconds a page, or I can read a line now and then: "The usefulness of a thing makes it a use-value. But this..." – Yeah, so if you kind of cut it in half (*played at half again the speed*); maybe if you cut it to a quarter it'll work as well. (*played at four times the speed*)—but at a tenth of a second! No way. There's nothing left.

Lolette: "There is an internal, insoluble contradiction contained in this project: Karl Marx: Capital, Volume 1" is an audio play and is also not one. It aims to take this book as its object and yet cannot succeed at this goal. The audio play takes place and also does not take place."

Stage Manager: Attention! The audience is entering. Clear the stage. Lighting crew to your positions.

Heinrichs: In the preface

Spremberg: Michael Heinrich—

Heinrichs: to this first volume

Spremberg: Mathematician and politician

Heinrichs: he writes that he regards the figures of landowner and capitalist by no means in a positive light—but the persons are only

Mailänder: roles

Lolette: exactly, roles

Mailänder: What role am I playing—

Lolette: Yes

Heinrichs: roles

Mailänder: I'm looking where Marx says it

Heinrichs: Personifications of economic categories: If I am an owner of commodities and I bring my commodities to the market, then I have to fulfill the logic of the

commodity. If I am a capitalist and want to stay one, then I have to fulfill the logic of capital. Of course nobody can keep me from dropping out, but then I would no longer be a capitalist.

L/Mailänder: Roles.

Mailänder: What role am I playing?

Lolette: Yes.

Mailänder: Now?

Lolette: Yes.

Mailänder: What—I'm supposed to say what role I'm playing now?

Lolette: Yes.

Mailänder: Investment consultant

Lolette: I've had it up to here with such people.

Mailänder: Yes, and I have earned a lot of money with it. I owned a company called Nordanalyse, and accumulated some 200 Million in Hamburg

Lolette: hmm

Mailänder: And this accumulated money I spent in order to—well, on luxury and I really enjoyed duping others, like normal millionaires, into thinking I was a billionaire. And if you are a billionaire, then all the average millionaires just come and say, "Oh, please, please may we invest just a little bit more money?" And I promised them factor 13.

Margevic: Factor 13

Franz, Kuczynski, Spremberg: Factor 13

Mailänder: Factor 13, yes.

Spremberg: Factor: 13

Mailänder: Yes, that means I get 100,000 and then pay 1.3 million in returns. Of course not right away. You have to wait.

Lolette: Such rogues—very interesting to come across someone like that.

Mailänder: hmm. My best clients were so-called sons. You know, people who inherited a lot from birth and thought, "My father was dumb to actually work for his millions. I'll just go to the investment consultant and earn thirteen times that without having to work."

Lolette: hmmm.

Stage Manager: And the performance has begun. The performance is on now.

## **Chapter Two:**—*The Process of Exchange*

Mailänder: So we're standing here backstage at the Schauspielhaus Zurich. And our play is on at this moment. Karl Marx. Capital, Volume 1.

Zwerg: In 1944, as Soviet troops approached Riga, my parents were...

Mailänder: and Jochen Noth is standing beside me. Mr Noth, what's going on on stage at this exact moment?

Noth: At this moment on stage, Talivaldis Margevics is telling his story. And Franziska

Zwerg, a Russian translator, is translating it.

Zwerg: And even though my father tried to hold her back, my mother got into the comfortable wagon that was offered to her and headed in the direction of the Soviet zone.

Mailänder: But what is the story about?

Noth: It's the story of how he was transported as a child to the Soviet Union in a cattle car along with his mother. And almost died because there was nothing to eat and nothing to drink, and:

Zwerg: it turned out that the train stopped at a station in a small Polish town. The Poles on the platform were trading and selling wares to the travelers. My mother stood in the door of the cattle car with me in her arms and pleaded for help. A Polish woman noticed this and approached the door and said to my mother, "Give me the child!"

Warnholz: How do I evaluate myself?

Zwerg: My mother said no.

Warnholz: Do I say, "I'm good," or do I say, "I'm bad," or do I say, "I'm average?"

Zwerg: She said to her, "You know that if the boy stays with you he will die on the way."

Warnholz: How does one evaluate oneself?

Zwerg: "But if you give him to me, then I have a chance of reviving him."

Warnholz: In relation to my work, if I say, "I'm great; I'm the best!" then they say to me, "Sorry, but you're overqualified. This is the wrong job for you."

Zwerg: "Ok, well, if you don't want to give him to me, then I'll just buy him off you."

Warnholz: If I say, "I'm average," then they say, "No, we can—we have to do better." So I say, "Oh, yeah..."

Zwerg: "I'll give you two loaves of bread for him."

Warnholz: "I'm keeping up with everyone else," then they say, "This is not the right job for you. You can't achieve what we demand."

Zwerg: My mother said no.

Warnholz: So, how do you assess yourself then?

Zwerg: Then the Polish woman said, "Ok, then I'll give you a kilo of butter, but sell me the boy."

Warnholz: So imagine you're now a part of a large company, standing at a large machine and are supposed to produce however many thousands of parts a day. And suppose they think you can't handle it or else maybe you could make more than you do, and one day the boss comes and says, "Now, go on and evaluate yourself."

Zwerg: When my mother once more refused, the Polish woman said, "Look, I've got a lot of milk with me. Take it."

Warnholz: And imagine, you can't do it.

Zwerg: “But sell me the boy.”

Warnholz: And there are some, who shoot themselves in the foot.

Zwerg: Again my mother said no. So then the Polish woman said, “Ok, well, then take everything that I have with me. But sell him to me.” When my mother again refused, the Polish woman turned to leave, but then stopped suddenly, turned around and came to the wagon door and just gave my mother everything she had with her. I only learned about this story a year ago and I asked my mother, “Why have you kept that from me my entire life?” She answered that she was afraid to admit that there had actually been a moment where she had doubted whether it might be better to give me away in order to save my life. And so I had to be a commodity once in my life.

Spremberg: So I’d like to honor a request that has already been voiced here. It was produced in Japan by Kio Sakomoki. And the title is Supy-Jaky. Enjoy—released on Electrola in the year 1963.

Kuczynski: So a real product of the global market.

Spremberg: Exactly.

Kuczynski: —What brought you to Volume 1 of Capital?

Lolette: In my parents’ home, it was in my father’s studio. He was a teacher of Marxism-Leninism for a time.

Kuczynski: Yes

Lolette: At the university in Potsdam. And there were all the volumes of Marx there, and all the volumes of Lenin, and for a while Stalin—all the volumes, until they went into the oven one cold winter. But I actually grew up with those books.

Kuczynski: Ah

Spremberg: Which winter was so cold that Stalin was needed to provide warmth? I can imagine that that was shortly after his death?

Kuczynski: no

Lolette: no, no, no. Not that early. Everything was ok then. I don’t know, sixty-two, or—or.

Kuczynski: The winter of 62/63—

Lolette: Exactly. I remember it well. There was so much snow, so much ice, and very little fuel for heating, and so my father decided that if Stalin is anyway no longer in favor, then at least we can have a warm cottage.

Spremberg: I think it came out in May—after that cold winter.

Lolette: I don’t know.

Spremberg: There was also a German version of the Blue Diamonds. It was also a huge success in Germany.

Mailänder: Mr Noth, when do you have to go onstage? Do we still have a bit of time?

Noth: No, we don’t have so much time left. I have to go on stage in 1966.

Mailänder: Why do you have to go on stage in 66?

Noth: Because that was the year in which Talivaldis and I both first studied Capital comprehensively. He was forced to study it in Riga, and I studied it by choice in Heidelberg.

Spremberg: Michael Heinrich

Heinrichs: Capital is being discussed

Spremberg: Mathematician and Politician

Heinrichs: but no one has really read it.

Mailänder: Mr Ky, what should we say about him?

Kuczynski: Well, he made a nice little introduction to Marx's Critique of Political Economy. He's also written a thick book on value.

Lolette: yeah yeah.

### **Chapter Three**—*Money, or the Circulation of Commodities*

Lolette: Christian Spremberg

Spremberg: Christian Spremberg, that's me

Lolette: Call Center Agent

Spremberg: Agent

Lolette: Ah

Spremberg: Well, my main job—really to make ends meet—is in a Call Center. But on the side—I represent the example of accumulation—I have a large music collection, which of course has cost me a load of capital in my life. But now—

Kuczynski: Money

Spremberg: Yes, it has cost money. Right, of course, it costs money.

Glassworks man: Money

Record: Greetings, dear friends of Bahlsen! For your listening and dancing pleasure,

Spremberg: Many examples can be heard from this collection

Record: Max Greger presents Bahlsen Melodies

Mailänder: Ah, Spremberg's playing something at the moment

Spremberg: These German Electrolas have a very special feature that makes them immediately recognizable. Where the label starts, there's a heavily striated edge. You can also hear it if you accidentally hit it. It sounds really summer-like, doesn't it? That's the thing about them, that you can pick out pretty quickly, and so I don't have to spoil these records with Braille, at least not if I want get rid of them again later. Yes, they also have a certain exchange value. For example, I got this in exchange for an LP from VT: it's a sound postcard from the 50s. You could buy them at newsstands back then. This one here, I've been told it's got different vehicles on the front and if we get a sound out of it—always takes a bit of delicate finger work—ah, there it comes. It's



nice, without making you jump for joy.

Record: “You too can drive the new Taunus. Drive the 17M. So comfortable, safe, and convenient.”

Spremberg: Yes, that was really something for the consumer. There were also of course similar records for the salesman, so that he would know how to sell something. Something like this one here, for example. This is again a completely normal record. In the first lines it begins, “When a customer is standing in front of you”. That indicates that it’s really intended for the salesman. It’s for a product that I don’t know. The brand’s called Acella. We’ll play this record now and while it’s running, watch Jochen Noth in action as he places a glass of Marx wine, from the house in Trier where Karl Marx was born, on the shelf. Then keep watching as he sits on a rug, while Rudi Dutschke delivers a speech. And you can also watch him burn money. But now let’s hear the fetish crackle. Ahh, what a beautiful sound.

Mailänder: Ladies and Gentleman of the audience, if you could see the piece right now, then you would see Jochen Noth moving across the stage and at the same time

Spremberg: Ms Zwerg asks,

Zwerg: Mr Kuczynski, what would the department store of your dreams look like?

Spremberg: Mr Kuczynski answers

Kuczynski: It would be organized like Capital by Marx: on each floor a detailed plan, so that you’d know precisely that trousers are hanging to the left and jackets to the right, so that if you want to buy trousers, you won’t go to the right and then end up buying a jacket even though you don’t actually need one. Something like that could never happen in the department store of my dreams.

Mailänder: So now Ms Zwerg is talking about a contest in which children between the ages of eight and ten—um, children participate in a drawing contest and then they can spend the night in a department store as the prize. And now Ms Zwerg asks Mr Kuczynski

Zwerg: And if you were to win this drawing contest, how would you spend the night in the department store?

Kuczynski: First of all, I would consult Marx. Capital, Volume 1, of course. Page 42. Mr Spremberg, if you please.

Spremberg: Let us now consider the residue, the remainder of the product of labor. Nothing remains of it but that same spectral concreteness, merely a gelatin of various human labor. [Ich find den Zitat nicht!]

Kuczynski: and this spectral concreteness. I’d look at that the entire night—seven floors worth of it.

Mailänder: And Jochen Noth is standing there—ah, so now everything’s going so quickly—I’m getting confused—I can’t describe so quickly how everything is changing here.

**Chapter 4 [in English this is all of Part 2]**—*The Transformation of Money into Capital*

Selenz: The Transformation of Money into Capital. I'm going to check that out—it's definitely all in the Internet.

**Chapter 5 [Chapter 7]**—*The Labour Process and the Valorization Process*

Mailänder: Lolette says

Lolette: In the run-up to this whole thing, I said it a bit in the Internet. To read all of Capital now, I don't have any desire to do that, nor do I have time. And not really any interest either, but I'm the kind of person who actually reads prefaces and tables of content—in order to have the feeling I've at least got some clue as to what it's about. I've read it and said to myself, "Ok, I understand it, but I can't explain it", or at least I have the feeling that I can't explain it so that my neighbor will understand it. Or you can discuss it and talk about it, but without total certainty.

Dutschke: In his unconscious feelings of guilt, the puritanical merchant sought to secure the love and mercy of God by fulfilling the duties of his occupation.

Spremborg: Full stop.

Mailänder: I can see him now

Dutschke: The capitalist businessman

Mailänder: Jochen Noth—

Dutschke: lusting after profit, fat and greedy in business ventures,

Mailänder: shitting on the carpet.

Dutschke: strives in his work to own capital, to gain money

Spremborg: Open parenthesis

Mailänder: Rudi Dutschke explains what money and the drive to accumulate has to do with shitting, why it is a compulsive anal activity.

Spremborg: Close parenthesis

Dutschke: Psychoanalytically, it represents only a regressive, abject anal symbol for love

Spremborg: Comma

Dutschke: which sociologically just expresses the reified mode of appearance of capital,

Spremborg: Comma

Dutschke: and of the capitalistically mediated separation of producers from their means of production.

Spremborg: Mr Margevic asks

Margevic: Who the fuck is Rudi Dutschke?

Spremborg: And how do you say 'Bargeld' in English? Cash! Here's Johnny Cash.

Kuczynski: So dear listeners, now rise up from your armchairs and go to your bookcases. There you will most likely find volume 1 of Capital.

Lolette: Maybe it would be nice to pick up Capital for once.

Kuczynski: Look for it. I'm fairly sure you have it.

## **Chapter 6** [Chapter 8]—*Constant Capital and Variable Capital*

Mailänder: Look under the letter M in the philosophers section. It might be near Machiavelli or else Marcuse. It could also be that you have a section for Money and Economy, and perhaps it is the only book that you have on the subject.

Kuczynski: Yes, or perhaps an entire section devoted to Marx.

Lolette: Where do you keep Volume 1?

Kuczynski: Volume one of Capital?

Lolette: Yes!

Kuczynski: It takes up around 1.5 meters in my bookcase—all of the various editions that I have of Volume One of Capital. Behind my writing desk is a bookcase and the top row is only devoted to Marx, Engels, and books on the two gentlemen.

Mailänder: You've now got five minutes

Lolette: So maybe stand up and—and

Kuczynski: In 5 minutes I'll report back

Warnholz: 1966

Mailänder: Now it's Mr Noth's turn

Noth: icho-lio...

Spremborg: I assume that not everyone understands what Mr Noth has just said to you. That was Chinese, but he told me what it meant beforehand. He said, "In 1966 I voluntarily studied the first volume of Capital by Karl Marx for one year in an SDS [Socialist German Student Organization] study group in Heidelberg."

Noth: Correct.

## **Chapter 7** [Chapter 9]—*The Rate of Surplus Value*

Kuczynski: So, my name is Thomas Kuczynski. I am an independent journalist [writer] for the tax office, but my actual work, for which I earn no money, is this—a new edition of Capital Volume One. And I spend my days on that.

Lolette: And you do this voluntarily?

Kuczynski: Yes, voluntarily.

Lolette: Yes—yes

Kuczynski: Yes and what do you do?

Lolette: I do something completely different: I work as a prostitute. Because of an illness, I was somehow a bit hindered from getting it together sexually—as they say—and it only finally really worked when I was 49. And then I thought, "Now, it finally works and so let's see if we can make the—"

Kuczynski: enjoyment

Lolette: Right, make the enjoyment useful.

Kuczynski: right, ok

Spremberg: And you can live on that?

Lolette: You can live on it—not exactly how people commonly imagine it, but I get by.

Warnholz: 1968, colon

Kuczynski: 1968, I had finished my studies and begun work as an assistant, and I had the unheard-of luck that no petition against the invasion of Czechoslovakia circulated in the institute where I was. So I didn't have to make any statement on it.

Mailänder: 1968

Spremberg: Jürgen Harksen says

Mailänder: Yes, well, Harksen was only eight at the time—and yet he also had an interesting experience that he has told me about

Spremberg: Jürgen Harksen says

Mailänder: So, I had a small matchbox collection, and since my father always bought me matchbox cars, I was the one with the most cars in the entire class, and since naturally I had barely any friends, I could only buy friends by saying, “Wanna play with my matchbox cars with me?” And then there were quite a few friends and afterwards they always wanted me to give them the car. And I did that just because I was good-natured and didn't want to lose their affections. I always gave them the cars and at some point that led to me having this extreme matchbox car debt. And well, at some point, I simply couldn't deliver anymore. And I was quite happy that I then changed schools and didn't have to deal with those kids any more.

## **Chapter 8 [Chapter 10]—*The Working Day***

Lolette: My work day lasts as long as my mobile phone is on—from around nine in the morning until about nine at night. Sometimes I leave it on until around ten or eleven in the event that someone else might call to make an appointment for the next day, or whatever. That means that whenever the mobile is on, I'm on call.

## **Chapter 9 [Chapter 11]—*The Rate and Mass of Surplus-Value***

Heinrichs: You can only really understand this volume once you've reached the end of the third volume.

Warnholz: 1969

Mailänder: Oh, so now we're in 69.

Spremberg: In that year, the company 4711 released a commercial record. Somebody must have read a good book and copied the title from there. It was called: Jakaranda—the Fragrance from the Sun. Now Jochen Noth will tell you in Chinese that in 1969 I—that is, he—was arrested for the first time. There was an event in the city hall of

Heidelberg—“Students of Heidelberg Sing and Dance for Heidelberg”. I’m only emphasizing it because you might be able to pick it out. So we crashed this event and branded as an imperialist and colonialist event.

Noth: (*in Chinese*)

Warnholz: 1971

Mailänder: Now it’s—71. The year 1971 is now. The year 1971 begins with Mr Margevic

Mar: I made my first film in that year. It was supposed to show how nice life is on a collective farm.

Mailänder: He was supposed to make a propaganda film.

Zwerg: Interestingly enough, it was actually really quite nice on the collective farm where I filmed.

Spremborg: The translator Franziska Zwerg says

Zwerg: In 1971, as a two-year old, I was kidnapped from the shopping center Fix in East Berlin on Schönhauserallee while my mother was busy paying for some shashlik and didn’t pay attention to me for a moment.

Lolette: hmmm

Spremborg: Well, I hope you didn’t stay kidnapped?

Zwerg: No, after a few hours, a woman left me at the register.

Warnholz: 1973

Spremborg: Jochen Noth

Noth: China, China

Spremborg: Management Consultant

Kuczynski: Ok, well, he can call himself that as well.

Noth: In 1973 I was the secretary of the KBW [West German Communist Organization] in Heidelberg and a member of the central committee of the KBW.

Warnholz: In 1973 I did a two-week work-study at Böhler, a steel wholesaler and one of the largest suppliers to the arms industry.

Mailänder: Oh—yes—yes, that’s why you’re all here. Good.

Warnholz: After that I was meant to do a two-week work-study in a department store. But that didn’t go well. After one day, they sent me home because I’m really not cut out to be a salesperson. In 1974, I began my training as an electrician.

Mailänder: Now we’re talking about 1974.

Warnholz: Today I work as an electrician and am responsible for maintaining, programming, and repairing information systems.

Mailänder: Mr Warnholz is a reformed ex-gambler

Warnholz: I earn 19.83 euros an hour

Mailänder: now the head of a self-help group for gambling addicts

Warnholz: Up until ten years ago, I was involved in the union. I took part in around six strikes and six collective pay negotiations.

Mailänder: and now he's going to say that he dropped out because he got sick of hearing the sentence

Warnholz: But I dropped out because I got sick of hearing the sentence

M/Warnholz: We can come to a compromise

Mailänder: Exactly

Warnholz: The result of the negotiations had always already been decided

Mailänder: Everyone has a price

Warnholz: Everyone has a price—I'm convinced of that.

Spremborg: Mr Noth says

Noth: How can you say such a thing, Mr Warnholz? You've just now heard the story of a mother who refused to sell her child.

Spremborg: Mr Warnholz replies

Warnholz: Then the price wasn't right

Spremborg: Mr Noth asks

Noth: And for what price would you sell yourself?

Spremborg: Mr Warnholz answers

Warnholz: For 500,000 euros I'd leave two of my colleagues in the lurch—or at least rationalize their loss.

Spremborg: Mr Noth says:

Noth: If you were to do that in the role of a union-member, then you're right, then you'd be buyable. But if you were to do that in the role of a manager or owner, then you'd just be doing your job.

Spremborg: Mr Warnholz says

Warnholz: I'll change roles: fuck the union secretary. I'll be a manager.

Warnholz: 1975

Noth: 1975—

Spremborg: That's Jochen Noth

Noth: I spent eight months in a prison in Baden-Württemberg. We organized a demonstration against the visit of McNamara, the former defense minister of the US during the Vietnam War, and during the demonstration, we tried to break through the line of police. That led to a number of us, including myself, being sentenced to several months prison. While I was sitting in prison, there were several further convictions: breaching the public peace, press law, you name it, insulting politicians, etc. And it all came out to many months that I would have had to sit in prison—

Spremborg: but then he suddenly emigrated to China.

Noth: There, I worked at first for about two years for Radio Beijing. That's something like Radio France International or Deutsche Welle, so it broadcasts propaganda. We lived in a friendship hotel.

Spremborg: And there?

Noth: At the time when we were living there, it was like a gathering point for survivors of almost every revolutionary movement of the twentieth century: beginning with the Spanish Civil War, one of Che Gúevara's lieutenants was there, the president of the Sudanese Communist Party, an extremely tall black man and heavy drinker; you ran into him every night in the club. Half of the central committee of the Indonesian CP was there. They lived with us in the same compound. So it was basically a very, very exciting time. Yet the effects of the revolutionary authoritarianism, which we had imitated in Heidelberg—on daily life, on the political system, on the economy—it all led me to slowly lose my Maoist convictions. Gradually, I actually really wanted to return to Germany, where my family was. But I had one problem: I didn't have a passport anymore. I was a political immigrant. I would have gone back to Germany, but then I definitely would have had to spend a fairly long time in jail. The problem was finally resolved with the help of the German embassy and an amnesty and I was able to return to Germany in 1988.

Spremberg: Requests

Record: It's going better, always better, better—it goes on, on—we make miraculous products...

Noth: Should we try it together once?

Spremberg: The two of us can start

Noth: The two of us will start. Whoever wants to join in is welcome to.

S/Noth: Onward in battle for the rights of the working classes and the people. Onward in the battle for the victory of Socialism. Hey, Comrade—what's with you?

Warnholz: I haven't heard such nonsense in a while.

Lolette: I'd like to hear "She Swings Her Bag, Swings Her Bag" from Mr Spremberg's collection. Seems to fit the topic. By Gisela May—anyone know it?

Spremberg: Maybe I have it.

Lolette: We listened to that record in 85, no, wait a sec. It was 89. We had a speaker in the kitchen and in every room, but the record was playing the entire day because I found her voice so nice: And she swings her bag, swings her bag, swings her bag, when she—then she sings real deep—when she turns a trick, and she leans against the lamppost round six, or whatever, or against the lamppost and she waits.

Stage Manager: Technicians for the wall [curtain ???] please— Technicians ... [Ich verstehe das nicht ganz.]

Mailänder: I'll bet that—oh, no, it couldn't possibly be three, could it?

Kuczynski: Sure.

Mailänder: Ok, I'll bet three percent of the listeners have actually found a book in their bookcases, which is blue and has "Capital" written on it.

Kuczynski: It might also be red.

Mailänder: Yeah, I know. I know that edition.

Kuczynski: The very nice Parkland edition.

Mailänder: Right, Parkland edition.

Kuczynski: Or black.

Mailänder: Yes, most definitely not green.

Kuczynski: No—I don't know a green one—but of course black is the edition from

Mailänder: Uhlstein

Kuczynski: the book association of Darmstadt—No, Uhlstein is a red coal color

Mailänder: No

Kuczynski: But of course

Mailänder: I'm positive

Kuczynski: That's the Ziegelstein

Mailänder: There's an Uhlstein edition that has a black cardboard case around it, which looks like a recycled cardboard case

Kuczynski: Yes

Mailänder: So it looks like a piece of tar from the street

Kuczynski: Yes, that's why I called it a coal color

Mailänder: Oh, ok, we're probably talking about the same edition

Kuczynski: Yes

Mailänder: We also have

Kuczynski: Brown—that's the people's edition—so before 1933, they were either brown or grey.

Zwerg: In the GDR there was a children's magazine called FröSi—which means something like “be happy and sing.” The following record insert comes from this magazine.

Record: Carpe Diem, Carpe diem, Carpe diem—seize the day

Mailänder: Oh, what I—I've not yet said at all what I spent all that money on.

Spremberg: Jürgen Harksen says,

Mailänder: I really did spend all this money and you see I had a big mansion in Hamburg and then one in Ibiza and then I had this entire warehouse full of luxury cars, something around a hundred. And then later after the year 1992, I had an airplane always ready to take off at Hamburg airport and

## **Chapter 10 [Chapter 12]—*The Concept of Relative Surplus-Value***

Mailänder: I reserved three hotel suites around the world.

Record: Carpe diem—the day is ours and we will make use of it. It's about a happier, better world.

Kuczynski: Yeah, that's finished.

Zwerg: It doesn't work



Mailänder: Well, until 93, business was good. I could even pay back all the investors who wanted to get out early. Of course not at thirteen times the price, but at least one, two, or three times the price, whatever the cash level was at at the time. But then fate came knocking in the form of a tax audit. And on the day of the audit, I remember thinking: “It’s happened to me.” But I hadn’t reckoned on the extent of the tax office’s greed. For them it was mostly about identifying taxable income. And so, believe it or not, I received a tax bill of 88 million marks.

### **Chapter 11** [13]—*Co-operation*

Mailänder: But fortunately I could even earn money with this paper. So, for example, if I had a meeting with a new client, or even with an old client, I would leave this document out on my desk, and then on some pretext or other I’d leave the room. I could be pretty certain that my client would peek and then spread this around in the wealthy Hanseatic state of Hamburg. “You know what Harksen has to pay in taxes?” And that was of course great for my credit standing.

### **Chapter 12** [14]—*The Division of Labour and Manufacture*

Warnholz: Yes, but the machine

Mailänder: says Mr Warnholz

Warnholz: Worker or any other person—he always tries to beat the machine.

Mailänder: Warnholz is not only a worker—he gambled away 250,000 in twelve years.

Lolette: mmm

Warnholz: And the system is made in such a way that you can’t dominate it.

Mailänder: What surprised me the most about him is that he says that he actually never really played to win, but rather

Warnholz: I want to get rid of my money

Mailänder: to lose.

Warnholz: Nuts. Yeah, and? Money comes in—tock, tock, tock. There it goes.

Kuczynski: You’d find this is all splendidly expressed in Capital, if you can read it.

Spremborg: Open it up.

Kuczynski: That’s the problem.

Spremborg: Turn the page.

Warnholz: I’ve just skipped forward. From 16 to page 27

Kuczynski: uh!

Warnholz: but

Spremborg: page 52

Warnholz: I, uh—when was that? When was I on the night shift? I was on the night shift for three days. I always took it along then.

Kuczynski: So that you could sleep better?

Warnholz: I always had to start again from page one

Spremborg: Page 697

Warnholz: Now I take notes

Kuczynski: yes

Warnholz: just like that. But anyway it's really difficult. So—

Kuczynski: yes, it is

Spremborg: go back again, please

Kuczynski: take a look at page 391

Warnholz: Just have to put on my glasses. If not, I can't see anything at all.

Kuczynski: This great quotation from John Stuart Mill

Warnholz: John Stuart Mill says, "It is questionable if all the mechanical inventions yet made have lightened the day's toil of any human being."

Kuczynski: that's the first line of Chapter 13 [15]. And Marx's wonderfully laconic answer:

K/Warnholz: "That is, however, by no means the aim of the application of machinery under capitalism."

Kuczynski: So.

Warnholz: I myself once saw inside such a slot machine.

Warnholz: and push it up

Warnholz: supposedly they're breaks—the buttons. Supposedly you can influence it. It's not actually possible at all. The machine does what it wants.

Warnholz: The first jackpot. Don't put the jackpot back in—in the next machine.

#### **Chapter 14 [16]—*Absolute and Relative Surplus-Value***

Warnholz: Toss it in. I don't want to win. I want to play. Nuts. So what?

Mailänder: Harksen—stupidly, I got involved with a group of businesspeople from the red light district in Hamburg. They gradually grew impatient and one day, in 1994, I found a wooden cross in my garden. Written on it: Jürgen Harksen 1960 – 1994.

That's when I knew it was time to get out of Germany.

#### **Chapter 15 [17]—*Changes of Magnitude in the Price of Labour-Power and in Surplus-Value***

#### **Chapter 16 [18]—*Different Formulae for the Rate of Surplus-Value***

#### **Chapter 17 [19]—*The Transformation of the Value (and Respectively the Price) of Labour-Power into Wages***

## **Chapter 18 [20]**—*Time-Wages*

Mailänder: So I remember when I read the phrase, “Capital vaporizes everything standing and constant,” [Den find ich auch nicht. habe auch den Manifesto Online durchgesucht und nicht gefunden. Ich brauche mehr Kontext.] for the first time, I had to laugh.

Kuczynski: But that’s from the Communist Manifesto

Mailänder: Really?

Kuczynski: Yes

Mailänder: Oh, no.

Kuczynski: vaporizes everything standing and constant.

Mailänder: I think that’s also somewhere as a note in Capital as well—am I wrong?

Kuczynski: Um, yeah, it is

Mailänder: It’s quoted.

Kuczynski: In a footnote

Mailänder: In a footnote—yeah, yeah, right, right. I remember it too.

Kuczynski: yes

Mailänder: The footnote

Kuczynski: Yes, there are incredibly funny sections—In the background, you can hear the actors’ voices laughing.

Galke: So laughter comes from the stomach.

Mailänder: Laugh training

G: First the air comes out. Everyone just try it once.

Mailänder: Laugh training from an actor

Galke: You can also do it without sound—we recognize this as well—then it’s just this throaty laughter.

Mailänder: Yes, I also find this quote that you recite—uh, the one mentioning increases of 300%

Galke: start slowly

Mailänder: stamping all human

Kuczynski: yes

Mailänder: laws under foot, or something like that.

Kuczynski: yeah—but in this case, that’s not Marx

Mailänder: no

Kuczynski: but rather a union-member’s free interpretation of Marx.

Kuczynski: “With a corresponding profit, capital becomes bold. 10% assured and one can apply it everywhere, 20%

Galke: Yeah, now it starts getting tough—go on, go on

Kuczynski: and it becomes lively. 50% positively reckless

Galke: and maybe now try it up high. Exactly, just like she does it.

Kuczynski: At 100%

Galke: just imitate what she's doing

Kuczynski: it stamps all human laws beneath its feet. 300% and there is no crime that it won't risk—not even under threat of the gallows.”

Galke: Yes, exactly. When you can't stop at all anymore, it starts to cramp.

Kuczynski: and then you can laugh?

Mailänder: I'm smirking

Kuczynski: Yes

### **Chapter 19** [21]—*Piece-Wages*

### **Chapter 20** [22]—*National Differences in Wages*

Mailänder: So I went to South Africa. I could continue to live well there, even though I was in the middle of international bankruptcy proceedings.

### **Chapter 21** [23]—*Simple Reproduction*

Mailänder: And yet in the end, nothing helped at all, and in 2002, I was extradited to Germany and finally received six years and nine months

### **Chapter 22** [24]—*The Transformation of Surplus-Value into Capital*

### **Chapter 23** [25]—*The General Law of Capitalist Accumulation*

Spremborg: Any request?

Lolette: I'd just like to hear something by Elvis from Spremborg's record collection—something nice, nothing wild.

Spremborg: So, let's let the fetish duly crackle. You will now hear an Elvis song in Persian.

Lolette: This one goes out to an especially true fan, who knows a lot about stockings, and who has a proclivity for used stockings, and he is so considerate and nice and always sends me new, very nice stockings and takes the used ones back in return—with a little money as well. So a very nice person, who I've just recently met. So this one goes out to him and I hope he brings me new stockings soon.

Mailänder: So, Lolette, I've got to admit something to you now: I'm not really the investment fraud I've been pretending to be.

Lolette: That's not true.

Mailänder: He's actually called Harksen, and I wrote a biography of him.

Lolette: I don't believe it.

Mailänder: Yeah, well—some people are imposters, and some just pretend to be.

Lolette: But that's not nice to confuse me like that.

Stage Manager: The performance is over now, Ladies and Gentleman. The performance is over.

Spremberg: Ulf Mailänder

Mailänder: Mr Harksen

Spremberg: comments

Mailänder: is proof that not only can money be transformed into capital, but capital can also be transformed back into money.

Spremberg: Ulf Mailänder

Lolette: Ulf Mailänder reads

Mailänder: *Capital. Volume 1*. I came up with a very special way of dealing with this book. I put it down on the ground, got myself a big golden nail and a hammer to go with it, and then I drove this gilded nail through the book. And then I nailed the whole thing on the wall. It seems to me an appropriate symbolic closure to my study of *Capital*.

Then later I bought another copy of *Capital* secondhand.

Spremberg: reads

Mailänder: I just wanted to have it. Oh, I hate this sentence. Because it's wrong—it's just wrong. It's an embarrassing sentence.

Lolette: I'd feel the same.

Mailänder: wanted to have it

Lolette: Yes, totally.

Mailänder: What is it—to want to have something? That's just shit, if one wants to have something—yes, it's just perverse. To have, to have. Jeez, because I've got a library and at some point I thought: all these important books are in this library and so Capital belongs there as well, but this

Spremberg: Ulf Mailänder sums it up

Mailänder: I-just-wanted-to-have-it

Spremberg: Full stop

Mailänder: No—no,no, no. I did not want to have it. I just bought it.

Kuczynski: Well, then just say that.

Mailänder: Dear listener—

Kuczynski: So, have you finally found the book?

Mailänder: If you haven't found it yet, then you're not going to find it

Lolette: Yeah, yeah

Kuczynski: We've browsed through the volume in 54 minutes and are now on the last page. At the last sentence

Spremborg: "The only thing that interests us is the secret discovered in the New World by the political economy of the Old World, and loudly proclaimed by it: that the capitalist mode of production and accumulation, and therefore capitalist private property as well, have for their fundamental condition the annihilation of that private property which rests on the labour of the individual himself; in other words, the expropriation of the worker."

Kuczynski: Although I have to say that this sentence of course—we're completely misled; we don't at all know what the New World is or what the Old World is—

Mailänder: It's not stand-alone

Kuczynski: Yes, it's not an adequate conclusion. In the first edition, a short section follows

Mailänder: Yes—yes

Kuczynski: Yes

Lolette: What happened to it—that section?

Kuczynski: Well, Marx got rid of it for the second edition. He condemned it to death. It was intended as a bridge to the second volume of Capital, and so that's why it's even more clear that this last sentence is not a last sentence at all.

Mailänder: Mmm

Kuczynski: Yes. He just places a full stop here instead.

**Karl Marx: Capital, Volume One**

*an audio play by Helgard Haug  
and Daniel Wetzel / Rimini Protokoll*

cast:

*Thomas Kuczynski*

*Lolette*

*Ulf Mailänder*

*Talivaldis Margevic*

*Jochen Noth*

*Christian Spremberg*

*Sascha Warnecke*

*Ralf Warnholz*

*Franziska Zwerg*

*Rainer Galke*

etc.

Technical realization and direction: *Helgard Haug and Daniel Wetzel*

Recording: *Frank Böhle, Sebastian Brünger, Helgard Haug and Daniel Wetzel*

Sound: *Dirk Schwibbert*

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