Reading guide for *Capital* (vol. 1)
Chapter 15

The following reading guide is from* Liberation School's *online course. It is meant to help guide you through the text rather than tell you what to read for or what is or isn't important.

Ch. 15: Machinery and modern industry

Section 1. The development of machinery

1) Under capitalism, what is machinery's purpose?
2) How did manufacture change into modern industry?
3) What does the fully developed machine consist of?
4) What are machines?
5) What's the difference between the cooperation of machines and a complex system of machinery? Why is it important?
6) What impact does a revolution in machinery have for other realms of production?
7) Can you think of a current example of this?

Section 2: The value transferred by machinery to the product

1) How does the machine transfer value to the finished commodity?
2) How are the values of machines and of tools different?
3) What is the requirement for a capitalist to purchase machinery? Under what condition would it make sense to them?

Section 3: The proximate effects of machinery on the workman

1) How does machinery impact supplementary labor-power (women and children)?
2) How does machinery lengthen the working day?
3) How does machinery speed up labor?
4) What two ways can machinery produce *relative* surplus-value?

Section 4: The factory

1) Marx begins by citing Ure's definitions of factories. Which one defines the capitalist factory system?
2) In what ways does the machine deskill the worker? What are the effects of this?

Section 5: The strife between workman and machine

1) How does machinery alter the struggle between capital and labor?
2) After machinery is introduced, how does the struggle develop? What two stages does it go through?
3) What was necessary for the struggle to progress?
4) How does machinery replace workers and drive down the value of labor power?

5) How do capitalists use machinery to discipline the workers' movement?
6) How does machinery further concentrate wealth?

Section 6: The theory of compensation as regards the workpeople displaced by machinery

1) What's wrong with the bourgeois economist argument that machinery that displaces workers sets enough capital free to employ the same number of workers?
2) When workers are displaced by machinery, what are their future labor prospects like?
3) How could the introduction of machinery in one industry throw workers out of work in that industry, and also potentially increase the need for labor-power in other industries?
4) How does machinery produce markets for luxury items?

Section 7: Repulsion and attraction of workpeople by the factory system

1) Bourgeios political economists say that machinery increases number of workers employed. What does Marx say in response?
2) How does machinery intensify colonialism?
3) In this section, what succinct summary of capitalist economic cycles (booms and busts) provide?
4) How do these cycles relate to the employment of labor-power?
5) Why can periods of crisis be beneficial to capitalists? What does it allow them to do?

Section 8: Revolution effected in manufacture, handicrafts, and domestic industry by modern industry

1) How does machinery increase the exploitation and oppression of labor-power on domestic industries and manufacture?
2) How do the Factory Acts, when they are applied to other industries, propel the industrial revolution?

Section 9: The factory acts

1) What realities of machine factories are revealed in this section?
2) What arguments about education show up here?
3) Read the paragraph that begins with "Modern industry never views or treats the existing form of a production process as the definitive one" (Online PDF: 318-19; IP: 457-8; Penguin: 617-8.
    a. Why is Modern Industry revolutionary?
    b. How does it turn economic progress into a social calamity?
    c. What does this calamity compel us to produce in response?
4) How does capitalism increase the exploitation of children by parents?
5) How do the contradictions matured by machinery create the elements to "explode" it and form a new society? (note: this is in the last paragraph before the next section).

Section 10: Modern industry under agriculture

1) How does modern industry revolutionize agriculture?
2) What's the significance of capitalism concentrating populations in cities?
3) How does machinery disperse agricultural workers?