Poverty / Relative wage / Industrial reserve army

"A house may be large or small; as long as the surrounding houses are equally small it satisfies all social demands for a dwelling. But let a palace arise beside the little house, and it shrinks from a little house to a hut. The little house shows now that its owner has only very slight or no demand to make; and however high it may shoot up in the course of civilization, if the neighbouring palace grows to an equal or even greater extent, the occupant of the relatively small house will feel more and more uncomfortable, dissatisfied and cramped within its four walls. ?A noticeable increase in wages presupposes a rapid growth of productive capital. The rapid growth of productive capital brings about an equally rapid growth of wealth, luxury, social wants, social enjoyments. Thus, although the enjoyments of the workers have risen, the social satisfaction that they give has fallen in comparison with the increased enjoyments of the capitalist, which are inaccessible to the worker, in comparison with the state of development of society in general. Our desires and pleasures spring from society; we measure them, therefore, by society and not by objects which serve for their satisfaction. Because they are of a social nature, they are of a relative nature. ?In general, wages are determined not only by the amount of commodities for which I can exchange them. They embody various relations.? – Marx, Wage Labour and Capital, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1985, pp. 32-33

“The raising of wages excites in the worker the capitalist’s mania to get rich, which he, however, can only satisfy by the sacrifice of his mind and body. The raising of wages presupposes and entails the accumulation of capital, and thus sets the product of labour against the worker as something ever more alien to him….

“An enforced *increase of wages* (disregarding all other difficulties, including the fact that it would only be by force, too, that such an increase, being an anomaly, could be maintained) would therefore be nothing but better *payment for the slave*, and would not win either for the worker or for labor their human status and dignity.” – Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, CW, Vol. 3, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1975, pp. 238, 280

“But just as little as better clothing, food, and treatment, and a larger peculium, do away with the exploitation of the slave, so little do they set aside that of the wage worker. A rise in the price of labour, as a consequence of accumulation of capital, only means, in fact, that the length and weight of the golden chain the wage worker has already forged for himself, allow of a relaxation of the tension of it.” – Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Chapter – XXV, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974, pp. 579-80

Great beauty / Accumulation / Industrial reserve army

“The great beauty of capitalist production consists in this — that it not only constantly reproduces the wage-worker as wage-worker, but produces always, in production to the accumulation of capital, a relative surplus-population of wage-workers.” – Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1974, p. 702, Also
at: http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch33.htm

“The greater the social wealth, the functioning capital, the extent and energy of its growth, and, therefore, also the absolute mass of the proletariat and the productiveness of its labour, the greater is the industrial reserve army. The same causes which develop the expansive power of capital, develop also the labour power at its disposal. The relative mass of the industrial reserve army increases therefore with the potential energy of wealth. But the greater this reserve army in proportion to the active labour army, the greater is the mass of a consolidated surplus population, whose misery is in inverse ratio to its torment of labour. The more extensive, finally, the lazarus layers of the working class, and the industrial reserve army, the greater is official pauperism. *This is the absolute general law of capitalist accumulation.*” - Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1974, p. 603, Also at: http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch25.htm

Greater the social wealth, the greater is "the industrial reserve army" as Engels called it in 1845 in *The Conditions of the Working Class in England* (see *Anti-Dühring*, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1969, p. 325).

“Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole, *i.e.,* on the side of the class that produces its own product in the form of capital.” - Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1974, p. 604, Also at: http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch25.htm

Hence:

Instead of the conservative motto: “A fair day's wage for a fair day's work!” they [the working class] ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword: “Abolition of the wages system!" - Marx, *Value, Price and Profit*, Also at: http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1865/value-price-profit/ch03.htm#c14

"It is capitalistic accumulation itself that constantly produces, and produces in the direct ratio of its own energy and extent, a relativity redundant population of labourers, *i.e*., a population of greater extent than suffices for the average needs of the self-expansion of capital, and therefore a surplus population. " p. 590
" The labouring population therefore produces, along with the accumulation of capital produced by it, the means by which it itself is made relatively superfluous, is turned into a relative surplus population; and it does this to an always increasing extent.” p. 591
The “industrial reserve army … belongs to capital quite as absolutely as if the latter had bred it at its own cost. … it creates, for the changing needs of the self-expansion of capital, a mass of human material always ready for exploitation.” p. 592
Marx, Capital, Vol. 1, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974, Ch. 25. Also at: **https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch25.htm#S3**