

labor power. Wages are the price of a certain commodity, labor power. Wages, therefore, are determined by the same laws that determine the price of every other commodity. The actual price of commodity fluctuation always above and below the cost of production; but the rise and fall reciprocally balance each other. The fluctuation of wages corresponds to the fluctuation in price of commodities in general. But within the limits of these fluctuations the price of labor power will be determined by the cost of production, in this case, by the labor time necessary for production of this commodity: labor power. The cost of reproduction of labor power is the cost required for the maintenance of the laborer as a laborer, and for his education and training as a laborer. Therefore, the shorter the time required for training, up to a particular sort of work, the smaller is the cost of production of the worker, the lower is the price of his labor power, his wage. In those branches of industry in which hardly any period of apprenticeship is necessary and the mere bodily existence of the worker is sufficient, the cost of his production is limited almost exclusively to the commodities necessary for keeping him in working condition. The price of his work will, therefore, be determined by the price of the necessary means of subsistence. The cost of reproduction of simple labor power amounts to the cost of the existence and propagation of the worker. The price of this cost of existence and propagation constitutes wages. The wages thus determined are the minimum wages. This minimum wage, like the determination of the price of commodities in general by cost of production, does not hold good for the single individual, but only for the race. Individual workers, great numbers of them, do not receive enough to be able to exist and to propagate themselves; but the wages of the whole working class adjust themselves, within the limits of their fluctuations,