

# Replacing the whole capitalist stack

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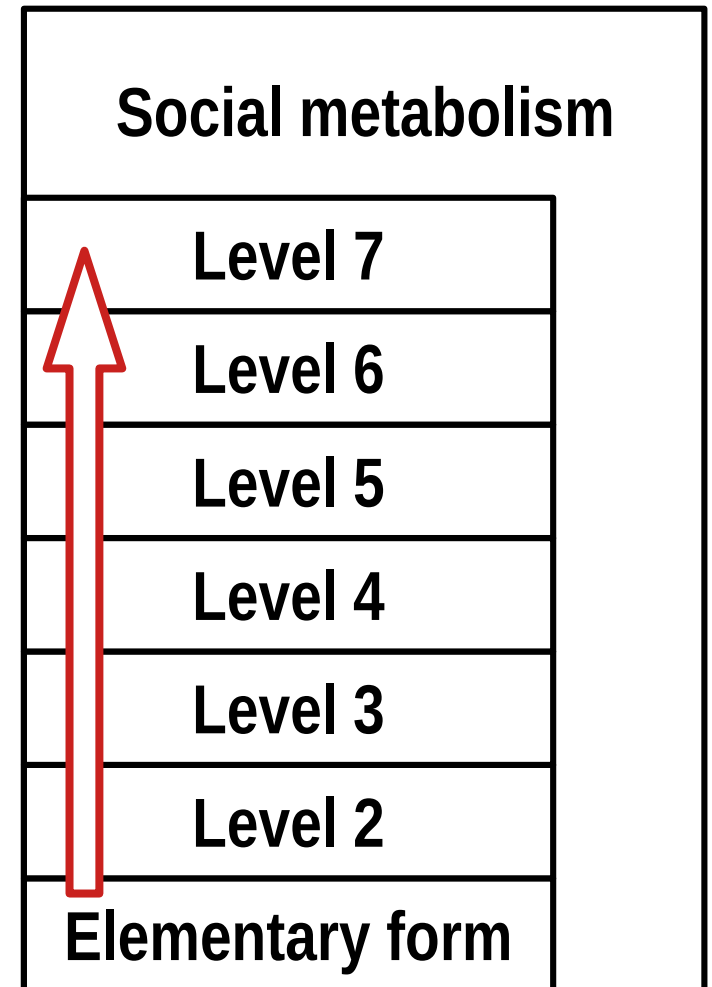
# Capitalism as a stack of functions & forms

„We therefore have to consider the whole process in its formal aspect; that is to say, the change in form or the **metamorphosis** of commodities through which the **social metabolism** is mediated.“ (Marx, Cap. Vol. 1, 198f)

„The wealth of societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails appears as an 'immense collection of commodities'; the individual commodity appears as its **elementary form**.“ (125)

[Btw: I strongly recommend „Capital“ translation by Ben Fowkes, published at Penguin 1976, not the 1887 release]

## Capitalist stack



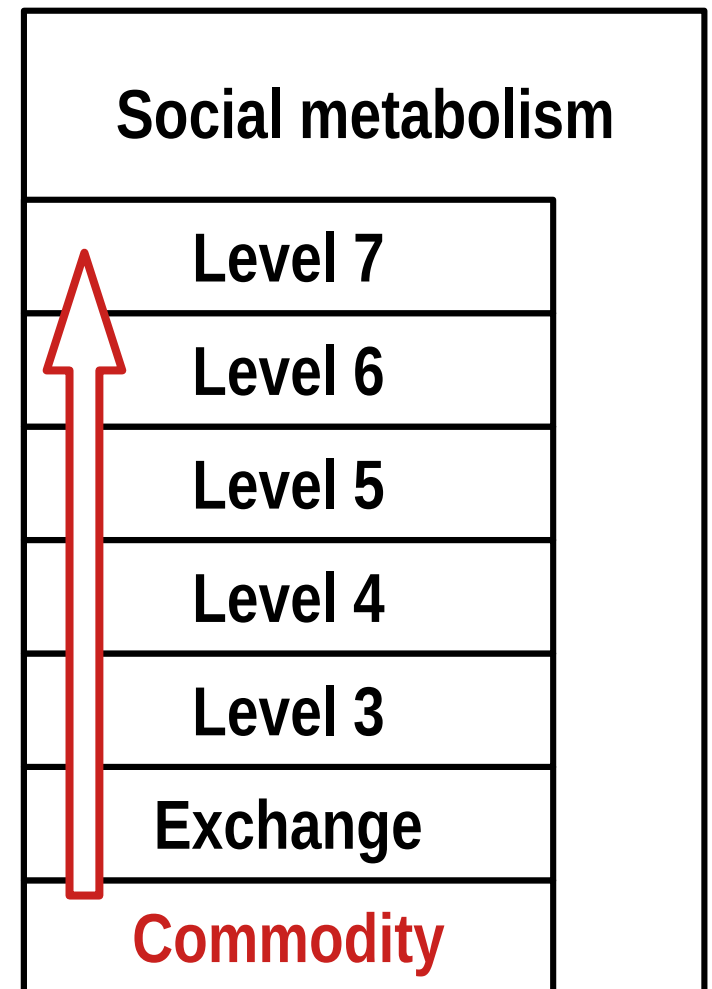
# „...the individual commodity as elementary form“

Products take commodity form, when separated private producers produce for exchange (aka markets)

Commodity has „twofold nature“: usefulness (aka use value) and mediatability (aka value), which is „crucial to an understanding of political economy“ (132)

Remark: These definitions remain true if the mediation is done through plans

## Capitalist stack



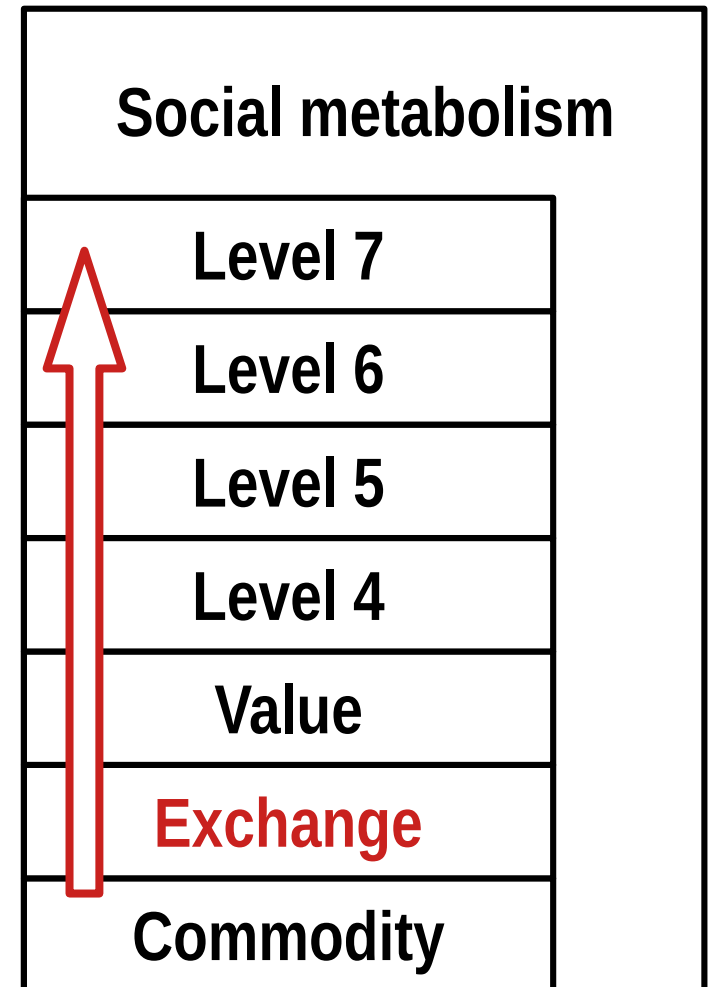
# Exchange

Exchange means coupling of giving and taking – individually & collectively, but **not** societally (▶ planetary overshoot).

Coupling means expressing the production effort of a commodity in another commodity.

Generalisation: Expressing the production effort of a commodity in one general commodity representing the **value**.

## Capitalist stack



# Value

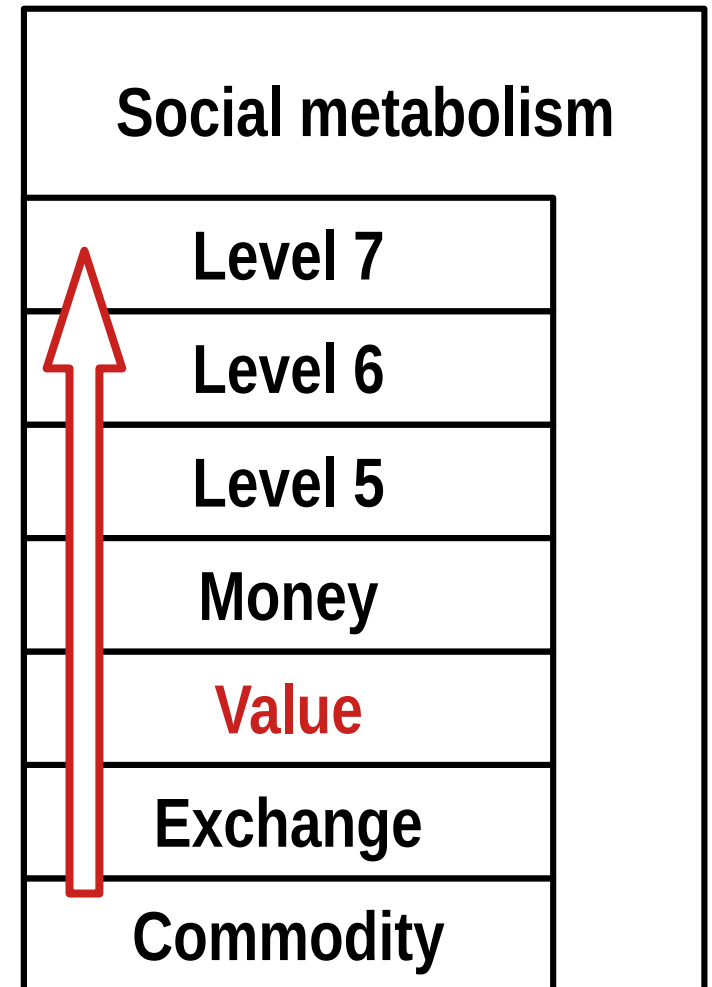
Value is invisible and unmeasurable.

Value is a societal relationship of all efforts to produce the commodities, which are successfully exchanged.

Value is expressed in certain proportions of the general commodity **money**.

Value appears as exchange value denominated as price.

## Capitalist stack



# Money

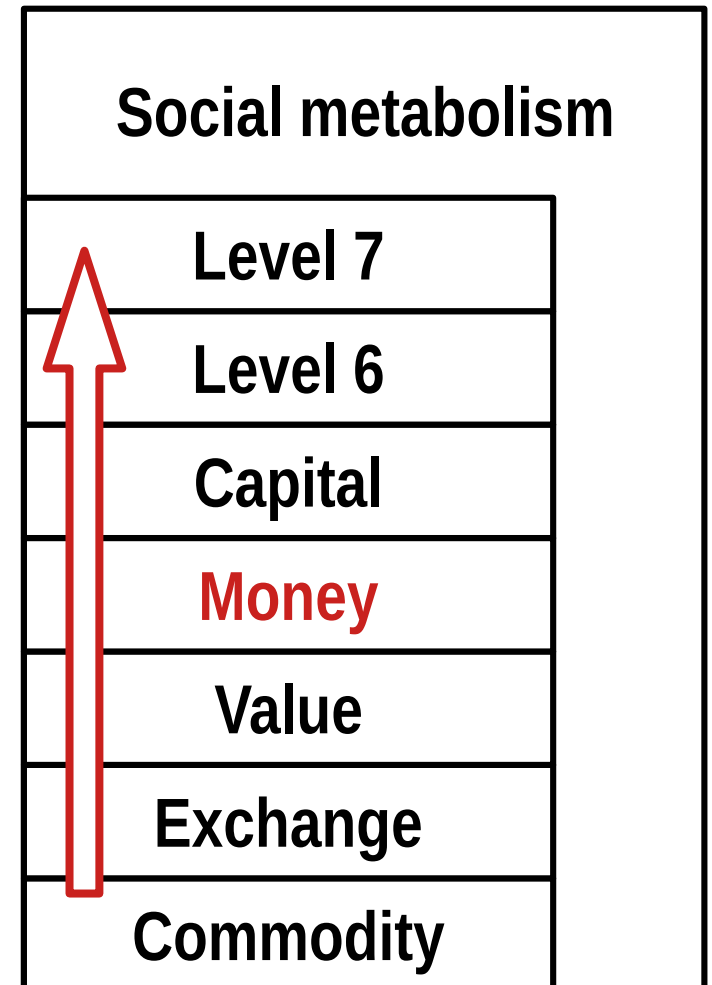
Money is the unit of account in capitalism.

„(M)oney functions as a means of circulation ... because in it the value possessed by commodities has taken on an independent shape“ (212)

Formula of exchange: C – M – C

Invested money is **capital**.

## Capitalist stack



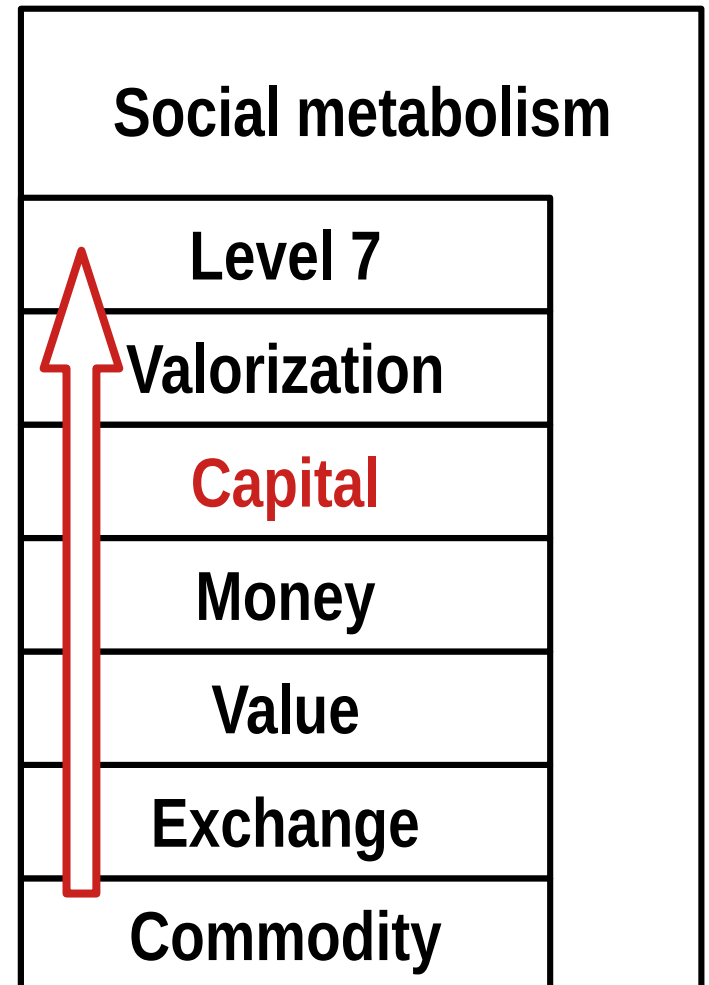
# Capital

Formula of circulation:  $M - C - M'$ ,  
 where ' indicates surplus value

„As the conscious bearer of this movement, the possessor of money becomes a capitalist (...) The objective content of the circulation ... is his subjective purpose, (...) he functions as a capitalist, i.e. as capital personified and endowed with consciousness and a will.“ (254)

Remark: These functions can be executed by the workers as well.

## Capitalist stack

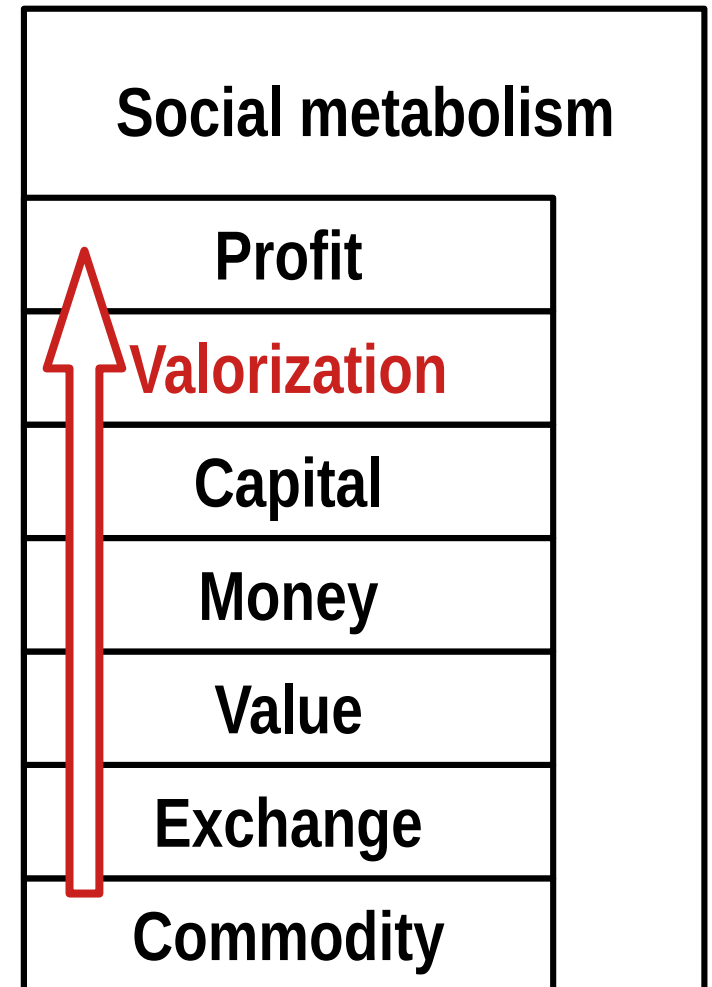


# Valorization

Valorization of value means making more value (money) from invested value (money as capital) by exploiting labour (surplus value), nature (gratis), and care (partly gratis)

„(V)alue is here the subject“ – „It is constantly changing from one form into the other, without becoming lost in this movement; it thus becomes transformed into an automatic subject“ – „valorization is therefore self-valorization“ (255)

## Capitalist stack





# Profit

„The rate of profit is ... the ratio of the surplus-value to the total capital advanced“ (660)

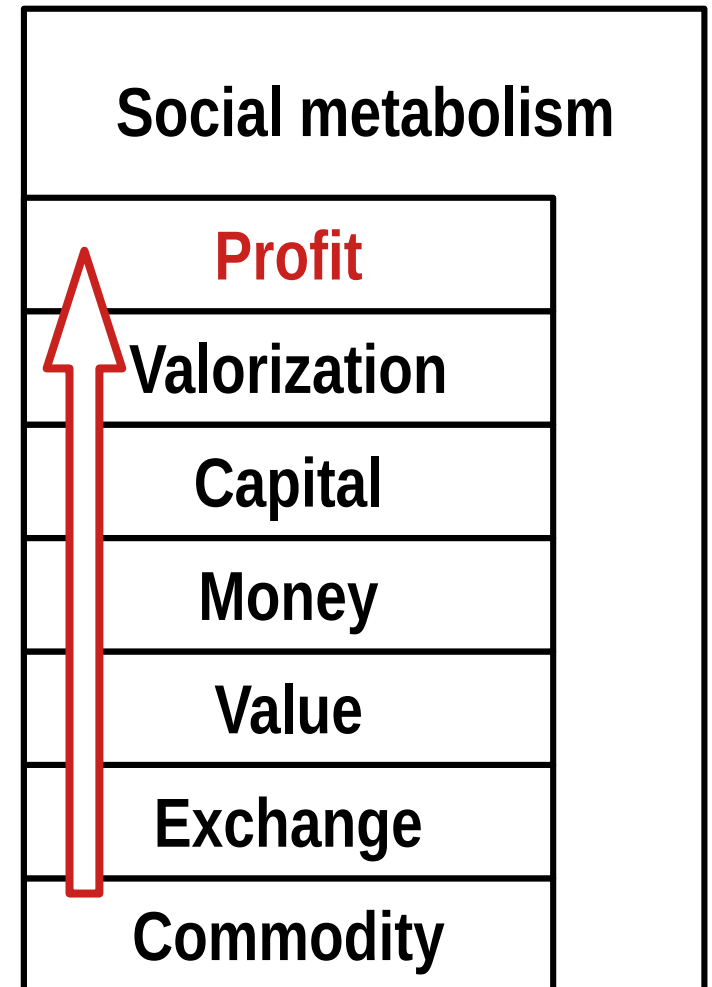
„The production of surplus-value, or the making of profits, is the absolute law of this mode of production“ (769)

„Just as man is governed, in religion, by the products of his own brain, so, in capitalist production, he is governed by the products of his own hand.“ (772)

Profits are privately appropriated

Profits have to be reinvested due to competition → accumulation

## Capitalist stack

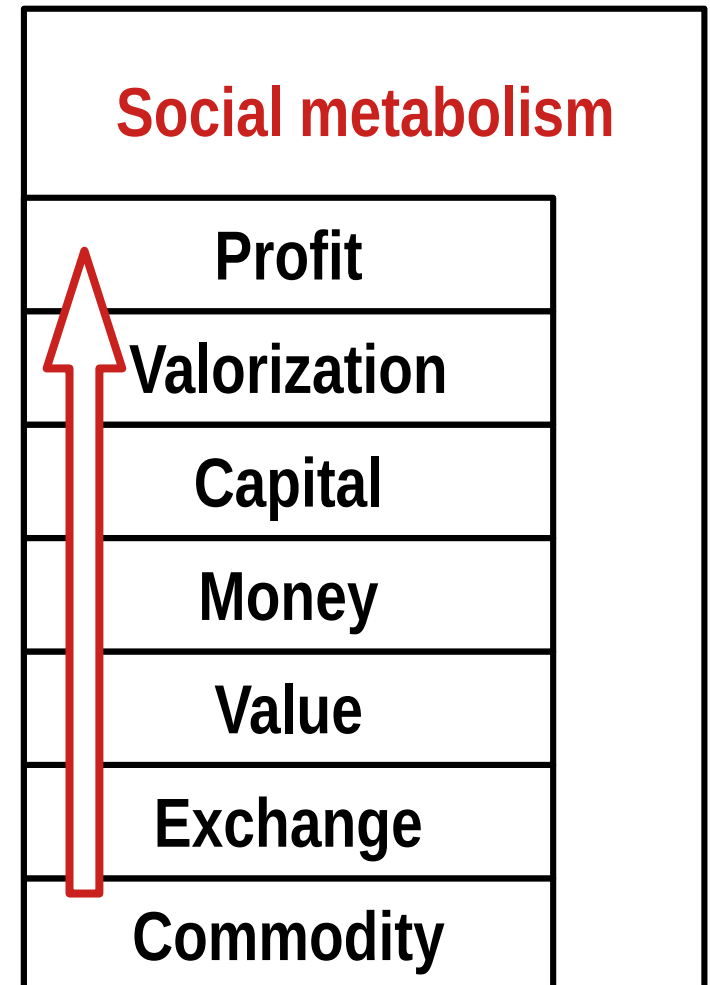


# Social metabolism

Inherently contradictory socialisation:  
 „Capitalist production ... develops the techniques and the degree of combination of the social process of production by simultaneously undermining the original sources of all wealth – the soil and the worker.“ (638)

- ▶ Social & ecological externalities
- ▶ Compulsion to work
- ▶ Separation of privatised care work due to opposite logics

## Capitalist stack



# Overcoming capitalism? Real Socialism

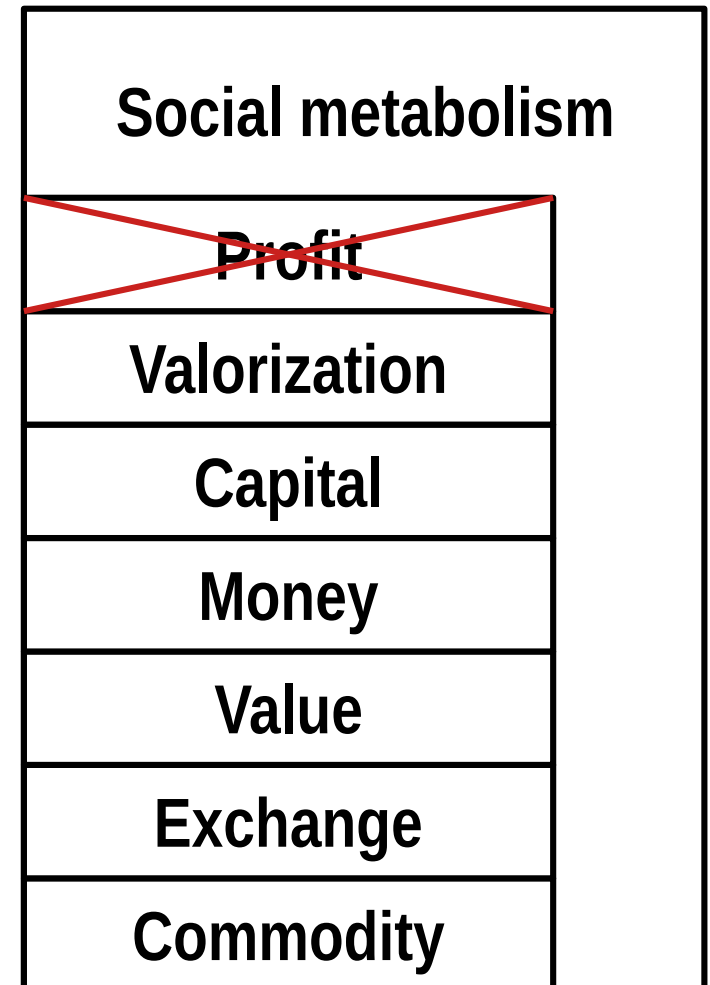
## Replacements & modifications:

- Working class ↔ capitalist class
- State property ↔ private property
- Central plan ↔ market mediation
- No profit = state appropriation and redistribution of surplus value

„The socialist state was faced with the task of controlling the entire mechanism of commodity-money relations“ (text-book of socialist polit. economy, 487)

- ▶ Low productivity → high externalities
- ▶ Compulsion to work
- ▶ Separation of privatised care work

## Socialist stack



# Participatory economy (Parecon)

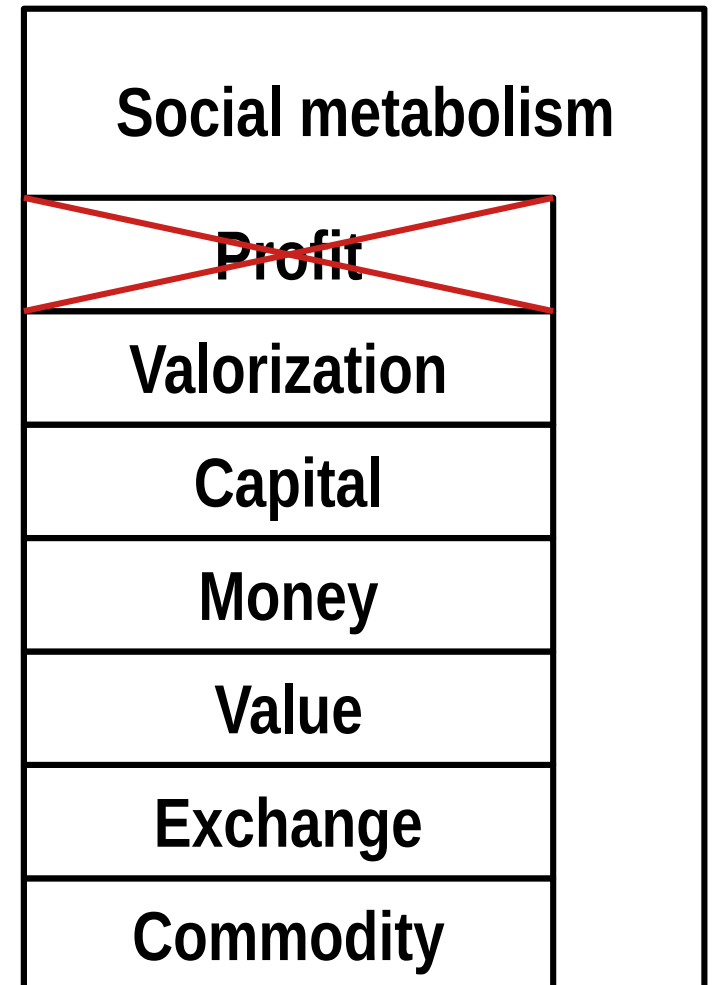
## Replacements & modifications:

- Working class ↔ capitalist class
- Societal property ↔ private property
- Decentral plans + Iteration Facilitation Board ↔ market mediation
- Pricing-in externalities and care
- Wages according to work load

## Probably:

- ▶ Compulsion to work
- ▶ Separation of privatised care work

## Socialist stack



# Working time accounting (Group of International Communists, 1930)

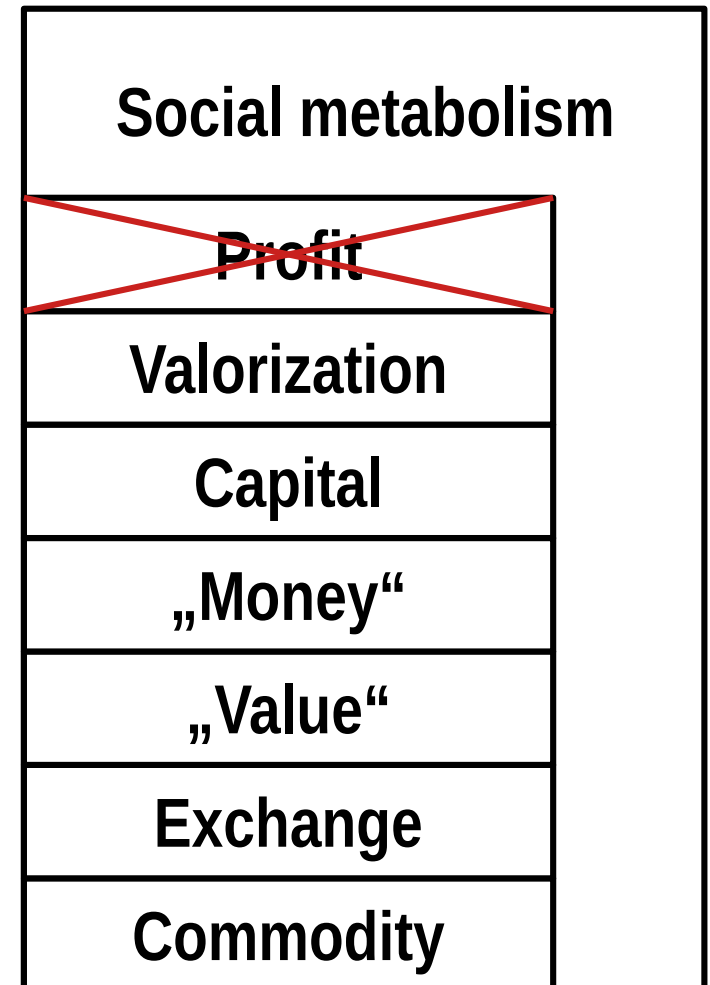
## Replacements & modifications:

- Working class ↔ capitalist class
- Societal property ↔ private property (only means of production)
- Decentral plans + central accounting authority ↔ market mediation
- „Value“ = straight working time
- „Money“ = work certificates

## Probably:

- ▶ Externalities (ecological & social)
- ▶ Compulsion to work
- ▶ Separation of care work

## Socialist stack



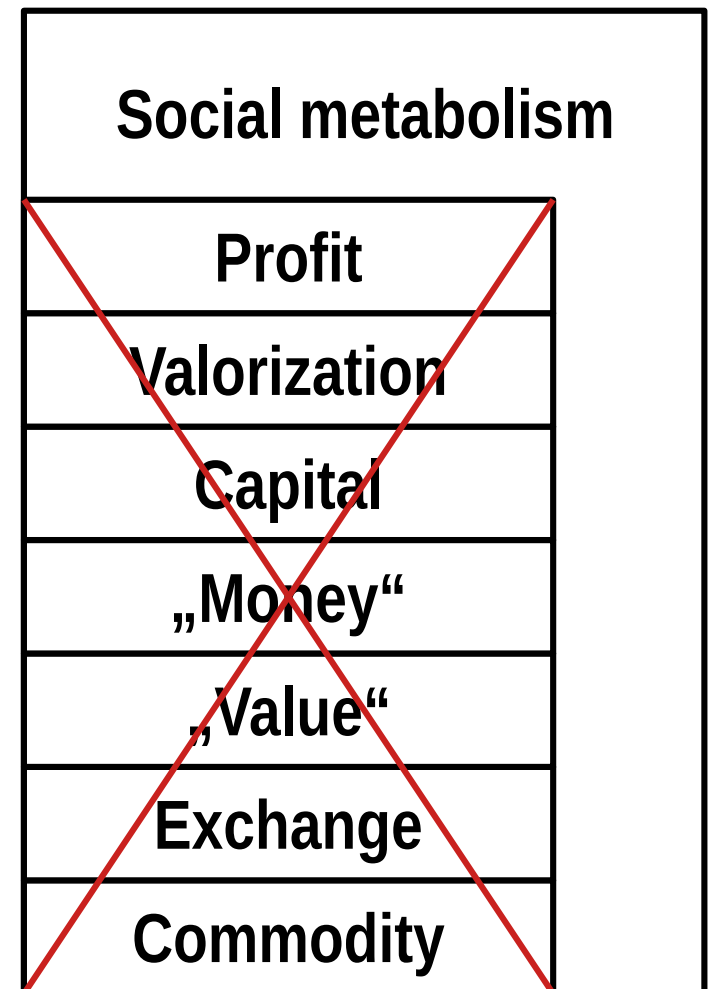
# Replacing/modifying capitalist categories?

- Reform vs. revolution is a question of speed: reforms are gradual changes, revolutions abrupt changes (e.g. of power relations) – no longer useful
- The **depth of change** should be taken into account

Then:

- Reform = replacing/modifying some capitalist categories → relapse
- Revolution = replacing the whole capitalist stack → progress/sustain
- ▶ Simply for a sustainable future, we need a revolutionary approach

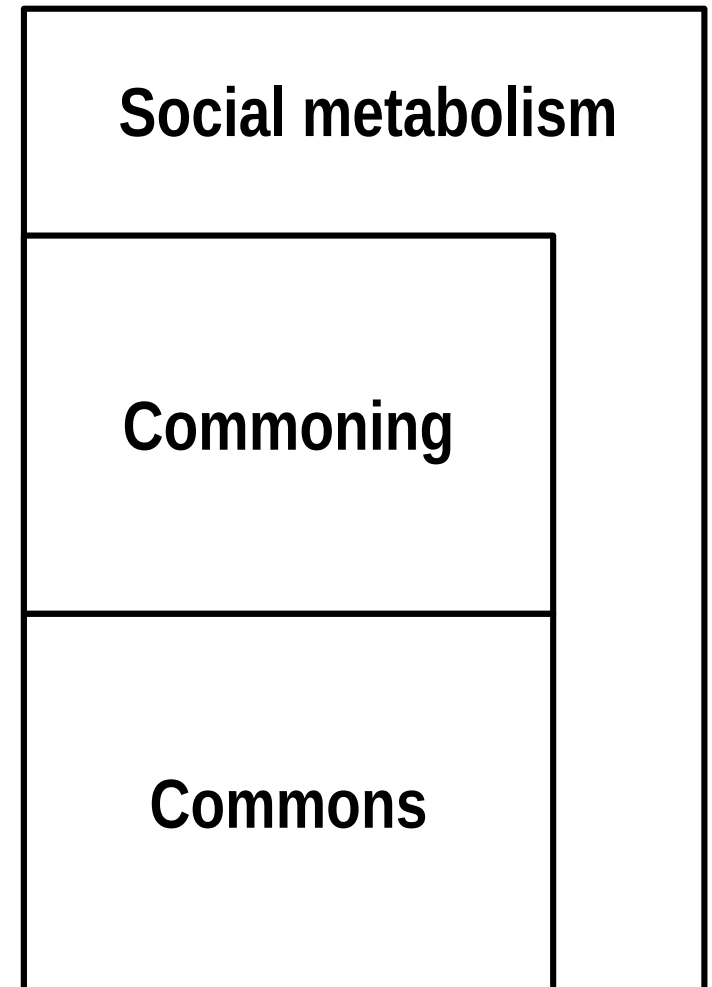
Something new



# What can replace the capitalist stack?

- We need a new kind of socialisation beyond capitalist categories
- This development has to start with the elementary social form, the **commons** instead of the commodity
- Mediation bases on **commoning**, the self-organized semi-autonomous social process around commons
- The resulting stack is much simpler, because the driving force are no longer inherent contradictions, but only needs

## Commonism



# Commonist materialism

- Producing **all** conditions of life: material, symbolic, social
  - ⇒ Production = reproduction & vice versa
  - ⇒ Care = Provision & vice versa
- Logic of inclusion through lack of domination
  - ⇒ Dependent autonomy (semi-autonomy + semi-dependence)
  - ⇒ Material-symbolic-social connectedness
- Others and other are not objects, but selves
  - ⇒ Other selves are subjects (according to critical psychology)
  - ⇒ Other self-will is the more than human nature
- Responsibility
  - ⇒ Individual: dependent-autonomous voluntariness
  - ⇒ Collective: material-symbolic-social disposition
  - ⇒ Societal: cooperative-proactive provision



# Discussion

**Thank you!** 😊