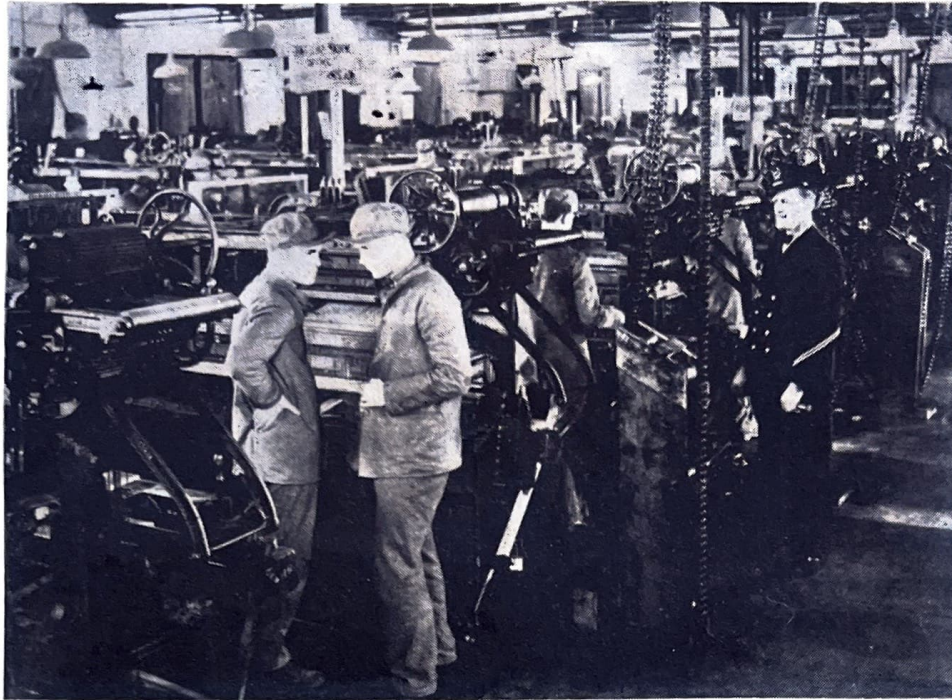


ABOLISH WAGE LABOR



Capital allows us only one kind of productive activity: wage-earning people have to be broken in for years before they are willing to accept the loss of 1/3 of their time to working, not to mention the other 2/3 of their time which is spent recuperating from work. Ideologists maintain that work is necessary, because they equate commodity-production with social wealth. But nowadays being rich doesn't necessarily mean that you lead an exciting life; it just means that you own a lot of objects.

Society leads proletarians to believe that, if they work hard enough, they can lead this mythical "good life," thereby condemning them to mind-numbing work at some idiotic activity with the goal of obtaining ridiculous objects.

All those hours lost on the job, all those unfulfilled desires, and in return, a salary, the reward for having participated in commodity-production. And the only thing one can do with this reward is acquire more commodities. A salary gives access only to what is marketable. Unfortunately there is no way that it can make life any more fulfilling.

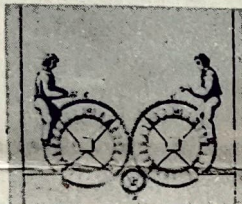
The things we give up in order to work are never returned to us. The misery of consumerism is a direct reply to the misery of work.

Any non-wage-earning activity takes on an inhuman quality: drinking becomes alcoholism, to rest is to vegetate, and to learn is to consume ideology. Physical and intellectual interests become manias: the appreciation of games becomes fan hysteria, fishing and hunting are only poor excuses for adventurous activities, hobbies only a mimicry of parcellized labor.

If we have to work, the reasons are not natural, but social. The work society and the class society are one and the same. The master wants the slave to produce, because only what is produced can be owned. The capitalist doesn't give a shit about the pleasure possible in any activity, because this pleasure cannot be stocked up, accumulated or translated into money.

When we work we are totally subservient to an outside authority. Our existence has little, if any, sense, its purpose being the production of merchandise.

Since its beginnings capitalism has relentlessly revolutionized its methods of production and increased work productivity. All this mechanization hasn't done much to alleviate humanity's distress. Jobs requiring dexterity and close attention have been progressively eliminated, not so that workers may engage in more rewarding activities, but in order to make every producer a wage-slave. When you look at wage-earning in general, you see that between the day laborer and the engineer, the difference is only in the degrees of misery, and more importantly in the kinds of illusions the individual has about his or her life. For all those whose major activity consists in shuffling papers, working out insoluble and absurd problems, in smiling and groveling on command, in communicating out-dated knowledge or in guarding gold bars, factories, lawns, children etc. . . . For these people, work is not only pain, effort or abusive work paces, it is also emptiness, boredom, uselessness and futility.



Anyone can see how a worker is shaped by his or her job. The parcellization of tasks, the habit of obedience, have repercussions in the way a person is or the way s/he thinks. For wage-earners, the meaning of their relationship with society is lost, and with that their relationship to their own activity. Capital is a living contradiction. On the one hand, it strives for the reduction of work-time, and on the other hand, it proclaims work as the only source and measure of wealth. The proletarian, primary victim of the commodity economy, is also the one who perpetuates this economy by looking for ways to ease misery: junk food and video bliss to escape boredom and Off Track Betting so that there's always hope. There you have it, the affluent society, the per capita income that the system is so proud of! Since when is a cripple better off than someone in perfect health just because he owns a wheelchair?

There are an increasing number of work activities that are no longer directed towards satisfying even the most alienated consumer needs. They prostitute themselves directly to capital. Can there be any human signifi-

cance to the activities of a policeman, a soldier, a bank employee or even a distributive or advertising worker?



Never before has society had such formidable means at its disposal, and never have these been used in such a demented and inhuman way. Every day millions of people spin the web that holds them prisoners.

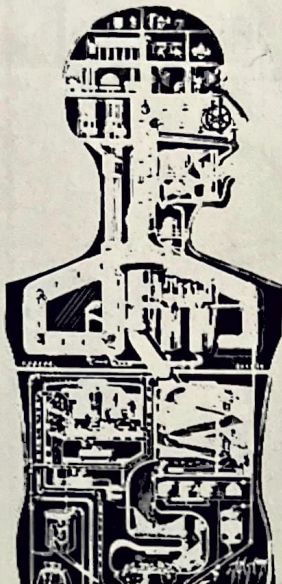
Recession and unemployment reveal even more clearly the absurdity of the wage-society, which consists at the same time in intense exploitation and incredible waste. Unemployment is only one of the subdivisions of wage-labor. By no means is it the negation of work, it's just work at degree zero. Nonetheless, unemployment has lost some of its ability to neutralize worker combativity: the growing contempt and disaffection for work bear witness to this fact.

Communist revolution is not just a modification of the status of property, nor is it just a change in the distribution of wealth. More than anything else it is the expression of a radical transformation of human activity. A transformation which modifies human relationships themselves, the relationships existing between people and the products of their activities, and the exchanges between nature and society.

There is no reason in the world that today, human activity should be confined to working. The solution to the problem is certainly not a return to a

more primitive life. On the contrary, fantastic developments have taken place in knowledge and technology; the solution lies in their utilization.

Der Mensch als Industriepalast



Some specialists claim that even thirty years ago a major portion of the means of production could have been completely automated. With the technological developments that have taken place since, even more would be possible today.

The only reason that automation has been limited to so few of its possible uses is that corporations have not found it financially feasible, since automation demands long term capital investments that prevent a rapid rotation of capital.

Today, refraining from expanding automation is called "charity." Tomorrow, when it's necessary to automate in order to keep up expansion and profit rates, the pink slips will be handed out in the name of progress and economic necessity. Man and machine are competitors on the market of "factors of production." This is the case because in capitalist production, human being and object, the living and mechanical materials of production, have a comparable use-value; both are only cogwheels. But capital as the expression of a social relation, cannot completely reduce people to robots, it cannot rid the process of production of the human factor, it cannot reduce itself to a community of objects that can reproduce themselves. This limit is imposed by the fact that value- and work-time are at the base of the economic regulation of the system.

Communism does not mean the replacement of human beings by machines, it means using the possibilities offered by modern technology in order to bring about a change in the possibilities of human activity.

Conflicts inherent to the society we now live in; conflicts between work time and free time, between production, apprenticeship and schooling, between what is experienced and what is attempted, these will be void of any meaning in communist society. We're not talking about some idyllic vision of the disappearance of all struggle and all suffering. It's just that it's important to show what possibilities exist in this world.

When we demand the abolition of wage-slavery, we are only using theoretical terms to express a movement that is already materializing before our very eyes, in wild-cat strikes, or riots, when American factory workers foul up assembly lines, and Polish workers loot state stores, when the effort is justified by passion, when wage earners disobey the mummies that govern them. When this happens, prattling gives way to speech, because people finally have things to say to each other and experiences to share. This movement is not a product of chance or a surprising historical coincidence. It's the point of development of the productive forces at which the order of the day is the refusal of work, the undermining of traditional values, and most important of all, rising above the taste for sacrifice and alienated effort. Historical possibilities, trapped within the commodity-economy, are preparing the ground for the last revolution: the result will be an international proletarian struggle against wage-slavery and all those who defend it.



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