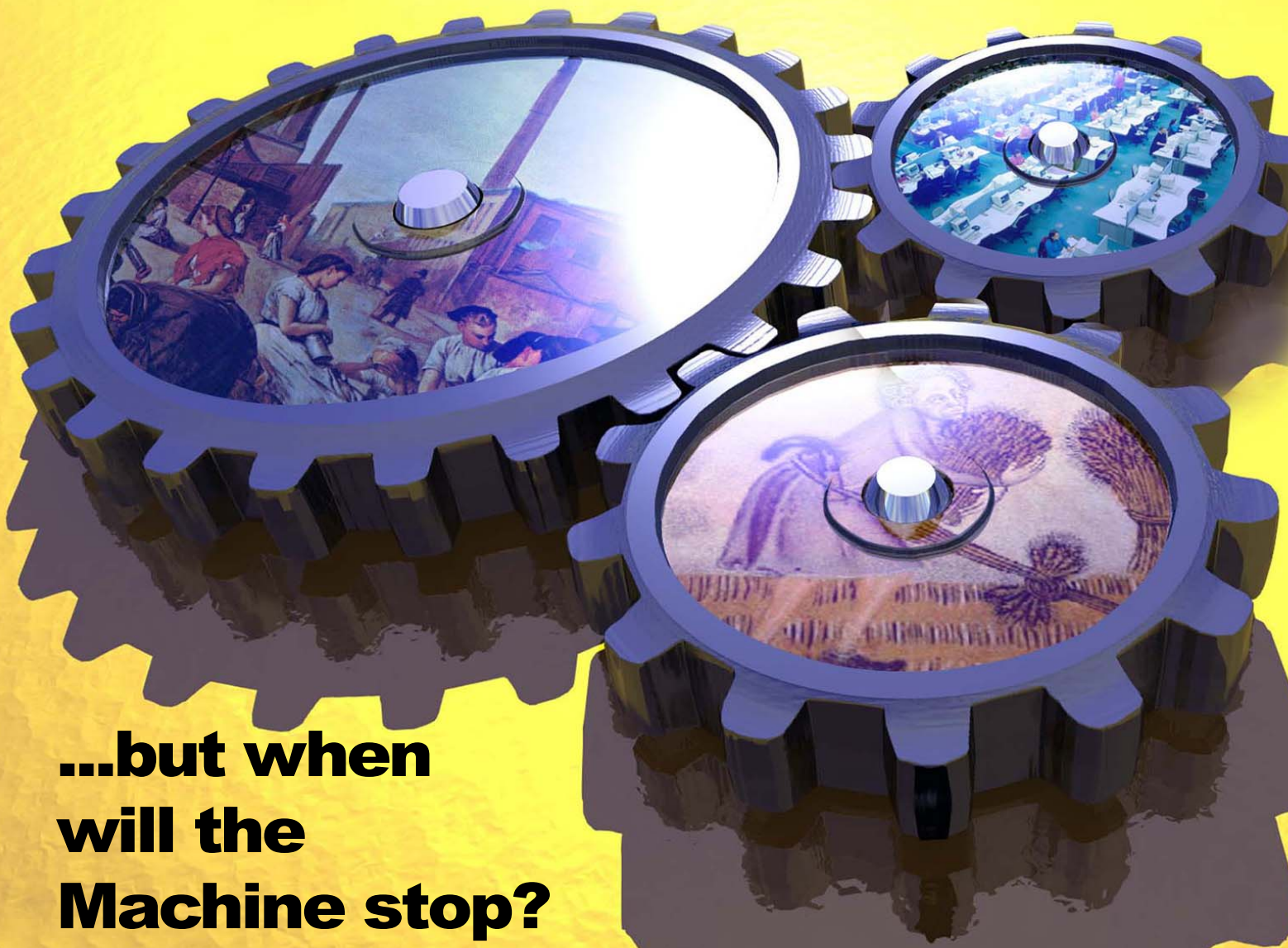


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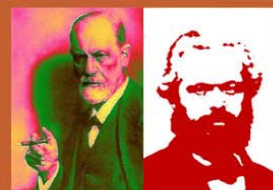
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The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on **Saturday 6th May** at the address below. Correspondence should be sent to the General Secretary. All articles, letters and notices should be sent to the editorial committee at: The Socialist Party, 52 Clapham High street, London SW4 7UN.
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Introducing The Socialist Party

The Socialist Party is like no other political party in Britain. It is made up of people who have joined together because we want to get rid of the profit system and establish real socialism. Our aim is to persuade others to become socialist and act for themselves, organising democratically and without leaders, to bring about the kind of society that we are advocating in this journal. We are solely concerned with building a movement of socialists for socialism. We are not a reformist party with a programme of policies to patch up capitalism.

We use every possible opportunity to make new socialists. We publish pamphlets and books, as well as CDs, DVDs and various other informative material. We also give talks and take part in debates; attend rallies, meetings and demos; run educational conferences; host internet discussion forums, make films presenting our ideas, and contest elections when practical. Socialist literature is available in Arabic, Bengali, Dutch, Esperanto, French, German, Italian, Polish, Spanish, Swedish and Turkish as well as English.

The more of you who join the Socialist Party the more we will be able to get our ideas across, the more experiences we will be able to draw on and greater will be the new ideas for building the movement which you will be able to bring us.

The Socialist Party is an organisation of equals. There is no leader and there are no followers. So, if you are going to join we want you to be sure that you agree fully with what we stand for and that we are satisfied that you understand the case for socialism.

Editorial

Striking while the iron is hot

We have been pleased to see recently that in some parts of Europe the working class of wage and salary earners have been flexing their proverbial muscles. In France, millions have taken to the streets in protest at new employment laws aimed at the young, and have done so with some success as the French President, Jacques Chirac, has now withdrawn the proposals for fear of a further political backlash.

Here in Britain there has been the biggest strike wave for many years, and at a time when senior figures in the government are already at one another's throats. Years ago, Blair and Brown used to claim that the UK had one of the best records on industrial relations in the world. Indeed, in recent years the number of days lost through strike action in the UK have been a fraction of what they were in the 1980s and 90s, and 2004 saw the lowest number of individual disputes on record, at 130.

Recently all that has changed. First, university lecturers went on strike in early March (followed since by 'action short of a strike'), using the opportunity presented by the new system of tuition fees and funding to be introduced in higher education this year to extract pay increases from the employers' organisation. If successful, it is hoped that this would help close the relative pay gap that has opened up over the last 20 years and more between academics and other professions.

Then - and more significantly still - was the action by over a million state sector workers on 28th March. Across the UK, council buildings, and services such as libraries and day centres were shut down, schools and colleges were prevented from opening and other essential services (such as the Mersey tunnels and ferries, the Newcastle Metro, etc) did not operate. This was primarily over an attempt to change the terms and conditions of the main local

government workers' pension scheme, so that they would be forced to accept lower pensions or work longer. However, the union driving much of the strike action, UNISON, also claimed in one of their press releases that "this strike is against an attempt by the Government and the employers to see how far they can go. If they win on pensions they will try it on something else. This is a defining issue for the union".

Since this initial day of action others have been planned. Interestingly, UNISON have developed a tactic of encouraging smaller groups of their key workers (such as meat workers) to go on strike for a few days at a time on a rotating basis, so as to cause maximum disruption, and the union has effectively been paying many of these workers to take selective action out of its strike fund.

From a socialist perspective, it is good to see the working class fighting back in this way. The gains made by wage and salary workers over time on pay, pensions and other related issues have not, after all, been granted by benevolent governments or employers - they have been fought for, mainly by workers organised in trade unions.

If those gains are to be defended and consolidated, democratic and unified action by workers is necessary to put maximum pressure on employers and their representatives. But workers need to remember one thing - while such action is necessary within capitalism, there can be no lasting solution to the problems the market economy creates within the market system itself. It is the task of socialists to help those struggling within the system to see the bigger picture and recognise that lasting solutions to the problems faced by workers everywhere can only lie in removing the market economy and its imperatives from our lives completely.

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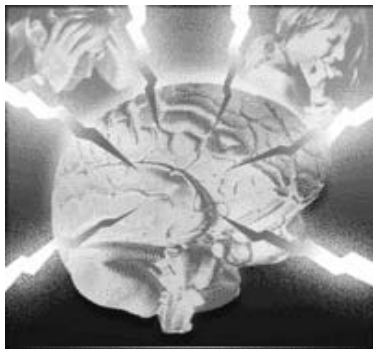
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Destressing society

We are always interested in constructive feedback and this month two professors respond to a piece from Pathfinders last October, on the question of animal testing. Kenneth Boyd, Professor of Medical Ethics and Director of

Clinical Skills at the University of Edinburgh:

"Very many thanks for the interesting article on science, socialism and the animal question, much of which I agree with. I am certainly not put off by socialism, with many of whose aims I also agree, not least its argument for being 'pragmatic' about animal testing. But how safe it is to 'assume, after capitalism, a dramatic fall in heart disease and obesity' and 'in poverty and stress-related diseases', I'm not sure. I think that's a matter of faith, rather than necessarily of 'evidence-based thinking', and the future all-too-often fails to turn out as we expect. In a way also, that assumption sounds too like the utopian claims of those in both the pro- and the anti-animal testing camps who argue on the one hand that if only we continue, and on the other that if only we abolish animal testing, all will be well. The danger in such claims, I think, is that they may distract us from doing whatever is possible, to create a more just and caring society and to relieve both human and animal suffering, in the present, despite all the obstacles presented by how power is currently exercised in the political and market arenas."

It is true that the original article makes the large assumption



that there will be a fall in the incidence of common stress-related diseases when the market system is superseded by communal ownership. Anyone who is not familiar with the socialist case might very well object that such an assumption is faith and not evidence-based. So how unsafe an assumption is it? The BUPA website lists the main causes of stress as follows (abridged):

- Work: job demands, long working hours, poor organisational skills and difficult relationships with colleagues. (Socialism will abolish coerced employment. People will choose where, when, how, who with and even whether they work).
- Life events: Major life events, such as losing a loved one, getting divorced, becoming a parent, moving house, changing jobs, becoming unemployed are all common causes of stress. (See above. Socialists have no plans to abolish birth, love and death however, which is why the assumption is of a fall in stress not the disappearance of it.)
- Money worries: According to the MORI research for the Samaritans, money worries were quoted as being one of the biggest causes of stress. Concerns about not having enough money to pay bills or worries about losing a job and a steady income are particularly stress-inducing. (Socialism will abolish money and therefore money problems, ergo, it will abolish one of the biggest stressors).
- Performance pressure: Many people find themselves receiving increasing demands from other people, whether at work or in their personal lives, and feel under pressure to perform well. (Socialism is a cooperative working concept, not competitive).

So much has been studied and written on stress that there is simply no point going any further into the subject here. Far from being a matter of faith, the evidence is overwhelming that modern capitalist society is stressful and that most of this stress is caused by money or insecurity over money, and the consequent knock-on effects this has on personal relationships. Is it really so unscientific to make this assumption, when science itself proceeds by assumptions? One of the problems socialists have, which Professor Boyd presumably will not allow, is that we are not in a position to 'prove' that socialism is better for people than capitalism. Only the establishment of socialism in practice will ever do that. However, as the professor knows perfectly well, science itself is unable to prove anything very much at all, whether it is a theory of gravity, evolution, or climate change, so it seems a little unreasonable to expect socialists to do what

scientists cannot.

As an afterthought, Professor Boyd might also be interested in a report (*New Scientist*, April 15) that the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston have been running trials of olanzapine and resperidone, anti-psychotic drugs normally given to schizophrenics, on children with an average age of 4. The same article refers to a book, *The Bipolar Child*, published in 2000, which claimed that the disorder can be detected in 2 year olds. Although the article rightly condemns the act of 'disease mongering', where drug companies persuade people they are suffering from mental health disorders simply in order to sell them drugs (most of which don't work anyway), the message is clear: mental health problems are a billion dollar business in capitalism, and now even your toddlers aren't safe.

Meanwhile, Jonathan Wolff, Professor of Philosophy at University College in London, has this to say: "Very nice article. I think we agree about a lot, except, possibly, the chances of actually achieving the socialist future you describe!" And, er, that's it. Now, were Professor Wolff to present this concise estimation of the viability of socialism to Professor Boyd, the latter might object on the grounds that this looked suspiciously like an argument based on faith rather than evidence. After all, socialists avoid the deterministic trap of claiming that socialism is inevitable, precisely because this would be a faith-based position. But it cuts both ways, and those who argue that socialism will never happen are also guilty of the same kind of faith-based determinism. We understand that the professor argues in his new book "Why Read Marx Today?" that Marx' grand theories were 'sweeping' and 'unsubstantiated' and must be abandoned, but we have no doubt that he arrived at this conclusion in the proper scientific manner and after a full and frank review of the available evidence. It is a well known fact that scientists never make sweeping unsupported statements.



Be nice, or else

The idea of cooperation is predicated on a lack of compulsion to take part. Or is it? A new study based on an investment game (*New Scientist*, April 15) which pitted a voluntary group against a group which was allowed to punish non-contributors, found that the coercive group gave better returns and attracted the most players, despite two-thirds of the subjects initially opting for the non-coercive group. The researchers claim that this result gives an important insight into the nature of cooperation, and this might have socialists worried, except for two things. One is that it is always risky to make judgments about human nature based upon present-day human behaviour. Most opinion polls, for example, would show that virtually all humans disapprove of rape and murder, which might lead one to suppose that such crimes were extremely rare and that humans are naturally peaceful. In fact these crimes are not at all rare yet we do not necessarily conclude from this that humans are naturally rapists and murderers. How people behave, therefore, in a game today does not reliably indicate how they will behave in a game at some future date.

Secondly, it is often assumed that cooperation relies simply on good will, and that it lacks any mechanism for sanctions. Socialism is not an idealised fairyland where anybody may do just as they like. If an individual's actions impact adversely on those around them, the community would not be slow to apply sanctions. The only question is, what would those sanctions be? In a cooperative community, it is quite possible that the labels 'uncooperative', or 'self-serving', or 'wasteful', or 'proprietary' would be such stigmas that people would go to considerable lengths to avoid earning them. At any rate, sanctions in socialism, were there ever a need for them, would be socially agreed and socially administered, in general proportion to the offence committed. How different from capitalism, where the theft of trinkets or pieces of paper can mean the theft of years from your life and the inhuman zoo of the prison system?

Right about Kenya

Dear Editors

The letter "Wrong on Kenya?" (March *Socialist Standard*) by Okoth Osewe can't be taken as a passing cloud.

Osewe knows very well, if he has been existing in Kenya, that no attempt at socialism has been made here. Those few who have talked about it are, like him, opportunist or capitalist's apologists. Thus his Kenya Socialist Democratic Alliance (KSDA) party is non-existent or it exists only on paper.

On the issue of the constitution, Osewe knows very well that this process was hijacked by opportunists (like him) and politicians. During the campaign for either yes or no, it was clear that these were campaigns not to either reject or support the document, but to propel some people to positions of leadership. Many politicians saw this as an opportunity to prepare themselves for next year's general election.

Why people like Osewe "pambana" (struggle) join the campaigns for the draft leaves a lot to be explained. Why the need to use so much money to campaign for the rejection of the draft?

The No campaign was led by politicians (like Osewe) who are always opposing the government. The campaign was tribalistic, hatred was obvious, propaganda for swing vote. Those who always think that they are the ones who can lead (and not be led) positioned themselves in the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM). This wasn't a campaign for a constitution but for proper elections. Kenyans know better.

Socialism can only be brought about by a majority of workers organising for it.

Politicians like Osewe and many others will not, will never get anywhere near establishing socialism.

Kenyan workers know that their situation has never improved despite our constitution being amended so many times since independence. The situation isn't likely to get anywhere even with the introduction of the so-called "Bomas Draft", "Wako draft" or any other document. Reforms which have come and gone haven't made changes in our lives.

Kenya is surely ripe for socialism but people like Osewe will only manage to have beautiful socialist titles but will never manage to organise Kenyans for socialism.

I invite him to join us in our struggle for common ownership, democratic control and leaderless cause.

Only when we join hands will our desire for socialism materialise. And then socialism will rule the world, Kenya included, in the not too distant future.

PATRICK NDEGE, Nairobi, Kenya

pouring the product down their kitchen sink. The name of the product gives rise to images of a magical little creature that pops out of the contained and does the job required, and as an imaginatively-inclined person I tend to be a bit too taken in by this kind of imagery. I had a smile on my face as I gently and slowly poured the magical product down my bedroom sink, bit by bit. It did occur to me that I could smell it, but I thought nothing of it at the time, and I was delighted to find twenty minutes later that my sink was working once again. Hurrah for Mr Muscle!!!

A couple of days later I found myself with a seriously painful sore throat. I wasn't sure exactly what it had been caused by although I had a number of ideas as possibilities. Swallowing was agony for a couple of days. After I'd gotten over the worst of it I went to the doctor to see if he had any advice. He told me that sore throats were only really caused by infections or by chemical fumes. I told him about my use of the Mr Muscle product and he said he regarded it as a very likely cause.

I thought I'd tell a few people about what had happened as a warning to them not to be as imprudent as I'd been. A friend told me that when he'd had a blocked sink he'd asked the hardware store shopkeeper what the best thing to use was, and had been told that a couple of kettles of boiling water was as good as anything. He'd tried this and it had worked perfectly. "Oh" I thought to myself, feeling a little humbled... and my mind wandered to visions of a society in which TV advertisements were replaced by helpful practical advice, and dangerous toxic chemicals were presented for what they were.... Wow! What would that be like?

ADAM WATERHOUSE, Bristol

continued on page 18

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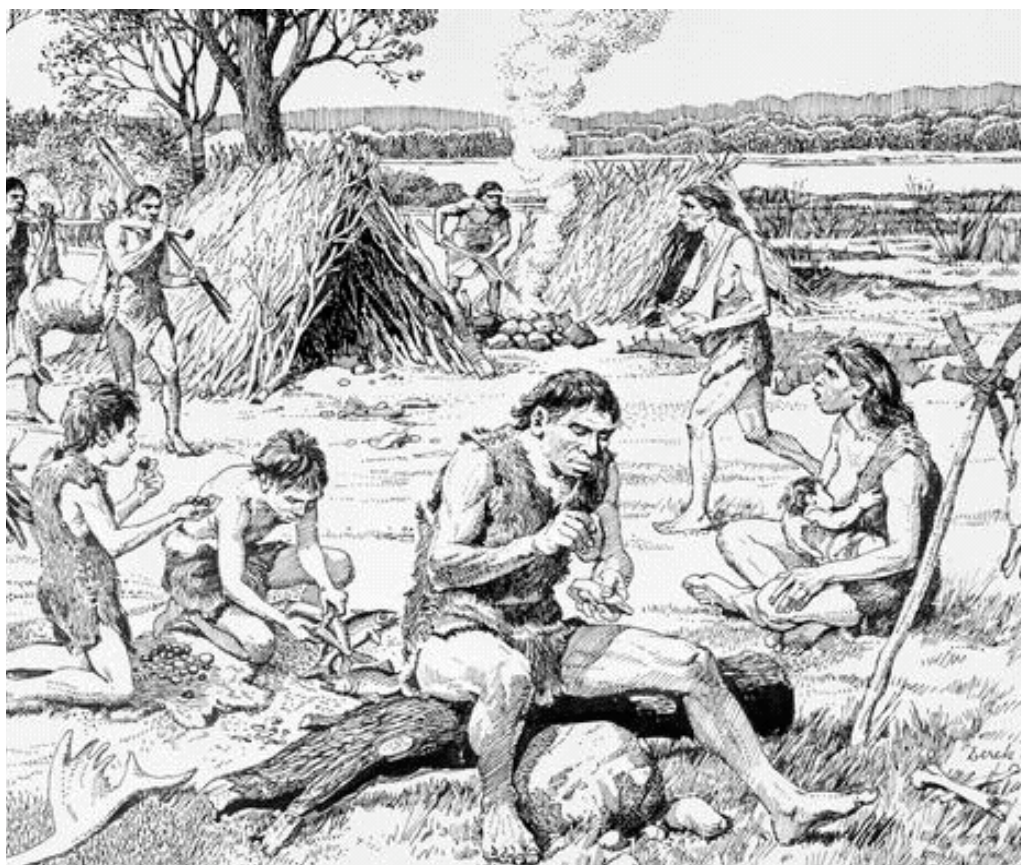
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Labour without end?

Futurologists, Alvin Toffler being the best known, have long heralded the imminent arrival of the "post-industrial society" - an arcadia in which automation has almost done away with work and our main problem will be how to cope with an excess of leisure. Indeed, labour productivity has risen steadily and at an accelerating rate throughout the last century, except for a blip in the period 1975-85, when labour productivity in the US (though not in Western Europe) fell slightly. But it is only in a rational (i.e., socialist) society, where the means of life serve the community as a whole, that higher productivity will equal less work.

It is a little recognized fact that since the 1970s working hours have tended to rise. There appear to be only two books about recent trends in working time: Juliet B. Schor, *The Overworked American: The Unexpected Decline of Leisure* (BasicBooks, 1992) and Pietro Basso, *Modern Times, Ancient Hours. Working Lives in the Twenty-First Century* (translated from Italian by Giacomo Donis; Verso, 2003). Schor is concerned with the US and has a reformist orientation, while Basso attempts a Marxist analysis and focuses more on Europe. Today's young wage and salary workers work longer hours than their parents and grandparents did at the same age. There is less time not only for relaxation, hobbies, self-education, and political activity, but even for parenting, family life, sleep, socializing, and sex - much to the detriment of our quality of life and physical and emotional health.

It isn't just a matter of the number of

hours per day, week, or year. Working time has been "rationalized" as well as increased. That means greater intensity of effort and reduced opportunity for rest, social interaction, and even going to the toilet during the workday (zero "dead time," also known as the Toyota system). It means "variable" or "flexible" schedules - flexible for the boss, not the worker - with more night and weekend work to keep costly machinery in nonstop operation. Many couples now meet only to hand over the kids as they change shifts. And while some are mercilessly overworked, others are thrown out of work altogether, all in the name of profitability.

Working time has gone through some dramatic ups and downs in the course of history. Chattel slaves, of course, were forced to work long hours, though not always as long as wage slaves in the early days of capitalism, when 14 or even 16-hour days and 7-day weeks (i.e., 5,000 hours a year or more) were imposed on

children and adults alike. Medieval peasants, by contrast, had led a more leisurely life. Thanks largely to the numerous holidays of the church calendar, according to four studies of Britain in the 13th to 16th centuries they typically worked 2,000 hours a year or less. The working hours of "primitive" tribal people also tend to be relatively short. Capitalist "progress" put paid to such idleness.

In the mid-19th century working hours stood at about 3,500 hours a year (according to studies of Britain in 1840 and the US in 1850). In England the Ten Hours Bill (May 1, 1848) brought the work week down to 60 hours in the countryside (where the Sabbath was enforced) and 70 hours in the cities (where it was not). For decade after decade the working class movement struggled for the 8-hour day, but it was not achieved until after World War I. Children were finally taken out of the mines and factories and put in school. Eventually the weekend and



Work through the ages. Opposite page: "primitive" tribal people; medieval peasant. This page: 19th century mill workers; 21st century call centre

annual vacation came (though not for all). By the late 1940s the typical work year in most "developed" countries was down below 2,000 hours - just about where it had been in the middle ages.

After this the story varies somewhat from country to country. In France and Germany, where the trade unions fought for "work sharing" and the 35-hour week, the postwar decades saw a further modest decline in working hours. Paid vacations are much longer in these countries than in the US and Japan. In the US working hours were stable in the 1950s and 1960s, only to start rising again in the 1970s: the average work week increased by almost three hours between 1973 and 1997. In Britain the rise in hours appears to have levelled off in recent years. According to the UK Labour Force Survey, the proportion of employed persons usually working over 45 hours a week rose from 21 percent in 1991 to 24 percent in 1997 and then fell to 19 percent in 2003.

Many American activists make a great deal of the contrast between the US and Europe and point to Europe as a model for the US to emulate. However, the same processes are underway in Europe, and indeed throughout the world, even though they are more advanced in the US and Japan. (And in China the 11 or 12-hour day is standard.) Only certain groups of European production workers ever won the 35-hour week. For example, German metalworkers and typographers won an agreement for the 35-hour week in 1984, though it did not come into force until 1995. In exchange they had to accept intensified work regimes and "flexible" hours, including weekend work. Moreover, the employers have since

launched a largely successful counteroffensive against reduced working hours.

Why are working hours rising and what can we do about it?

Some commentators blame "consumerism" and the "work and spend

“Long hours make workers easier to control”

cycle". No doubt there are those who overwork, often in two full-time jobs, for the sake of conspicuous consumption - "to keep up with the Joneses". But the usual pattern is probably for people to work more in an effort to preserve their accustomed standard of living despite another trend of the last quarter century: the decline in real wages. Many overwork to save for their children's education or for retirement, although the overwork makes it much less likely that they'll survive to enjoy their "nest egg". And many have to overwork just to make ends meet or under pressure from their employers (e.g., compulsory overtime). Managers are especially vulnerable to such pressure: thanks to the cell phone, they can be called upon at any time and are thereby deprived of any *guaranteed* non-working time.

One important part of the explanation must be that it is cheaper for employers to hire a small number of employees to work long hours than it would be to divide up the available work

among a larger number of employees. Many labour-related costs - training, administration, fringe benefits - depend on the number of employees, not total employee-hours. So "downsizing" is always an appealing way of quickly improving a firm's profitability and competitive position. Long hours also have the advantage of making workers more dependent on a specific employer and therefore easier to control.

So could reforms change the incentive structure for both employers and employees in favour of shorter hours? Suggestions include improving the status of part-time work, abolishing higher rates for overtime, and banning compulsory overtime. Tax incentives could be devised for spreading available work more thinly. In principle such changes might have a certain effect. But if capitalists were to come under strong pressure from a reformist government in one country to shorten hours, they would surely move their assets elsewhere, as they already do to escape unwelcome regulation of other kinds.

Historical evidence does point to a clear relationship between working time and the willingness of workers and their organizations to fight for its reduction. Reduced hours have never flowed automatically from increased productivity. They have been won through long and intense struggle. And in today's world the struggle has to be waged on a global scale - not for the "right to work" but for the right to live, which includes the right to leisure. Or, to borrow the title of a classic pamphlet by Marx's son-in-law Paul Lafargue, the right to be lazy. ■
STEFAN

Mayday belongs to the workers. Although that means admitting that the rest of the year belongs to the capitalists it also means that we know who we are - the first step to changing our condition. That Mayday is commemorated by workers across the globe reminds us that we have a world to win and that we can win it.



Wage-labour versus capital

In the *Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels wrote of the nub of the class struggle:

"[wage labour] creates capital, i.e., that kind of property which exploits wage-labour, and which cannot increase except upon condition of begetting a new supply of wage-labour for fresh exploitation."

The basic fact is that there is no way within the system of producing goods for sale by employing waged labour - i.e. capitalism - for the system to be run for the benefit of those who must work for a living. Their labour makes more chains of capital for themselves, and capital is always ever hungrier for more and more labour to be sacrificed to it. As Marx and Engels put it:

"Capital is a collective product, and only by . . . the united action of all members of society, can it be set in motion. Capital is therefore not only personal; it is a social power."

To feed capital means to extend the number of people under its sway. As capital grows so too does the number of people who must sell their ability to work, i.e. the working class.

In a recently published document, the UK's Office of National Statistics (ONS) projects that by 2020 there will be something like 32.1 million people working in the UK. That is a growth of around 6.7 percent from 2005. That is, a growth of 6.7 percent for the social power of capital over the next fifteen years. A 6.7 percent rise in the absolute size of the working class - if their figures are actually correct. This figure includes the unemployed, since the International Labour Organisation (ILO) defines the workforce as anyone either employed or actively seeking and available for work. This last qualification is important.

The latest figures for the UK from the ONS state that there are 28.8 million people in employment. This includes not

only the 3.7 million self-employed people but also the 24.9 million employees (among whom will be listed such people as Executive Directors of companies and Premiership footballers). The distinction between employee and self-employed is more fluid these days, since some people work as contractors and are nominally self-employed for tax purposes only. Likewise others whose self-employment means servicing another larger business on a regular basis. That is an employment rate of 74.5 percent of the available work age population. The overall UK population is 60 million. 20.2 percent of that employment is in the public sector, working for the state.

“That so many hours, of so many lives are given over to capital is a testimony to the social power the working class exerts in the world”

What this means, in detail, is a total of 926 million hours worked per week. This is part of a rising trend which sees the average worker in employment (full-time or part-time) spending 32.2 hours a week at their duties, not including the journey to work, thinking about work and recovering from work. So, not only are more people working - absolutely - but the people in work are working longer. The state of the class war in Britain is an increase in exploitation.

The main tool driving this exploitation onwards is the permanent pool of unemployment that has been a feature of the economy for the past thirty years.

Currently there are around 1.5 million unemployed - i.e. people available for and looking for work - in the UK. Beyond that there are, as we have covered in this journal many times, people who want to work and who are not classified as unemployed but who are also a part of this mechanism.

Across the world a similar picture can be seen. As we reported in the *March Socialist Standard*, the ILO estimates that currently there are around 2.85 billion people in work (either employed, self-employed or an unpaid family member). In 2005 there were more people in work than in the previous year, up 1.5 percent - and up 16.5 percent since 1995.

And there are currently something like 192 million human beings who are unemployed. That is a global unemployment rate of 6.3 percent - a vast reserve army of labour - meaning that the global workforce available to capital encompasses more than half the human race. Between 1995 and 2005 this global workforce grew by 16.8 percent. Taken as a figure, it represents an incredible waste of the potential skills and talents available to our species.

The situation is worse though, since being in work is little guarantee of having a decent income. 1.4 billion of that 2.8 billion workers do not earn more than the equivalent of \$2 a day for their family members. 520 million of them are taking in less than \$1 a day. Obviously, the value of a dollar varies from country to country; but the real picture is that for over one sixth of the human race work offers no prospect of reward or opportunity for themselves or their family. Grinding, pitiless, toil is their lot - a lot demanded by capital.

These toiling billions helped produce an estimated growth in world wealth of 4.3 percent in 2005. Productivity per worker has increased by an average of 2 percent per year over recent years. The average total increase in wealth (productivity plus

employment) has been 3.8 percent. Most of the growth in wealth, therefore, comes from increasing efficiency in productivity - that is more effective procedures and machinery being used, i.e. more capital being invested. However a substantial part of that increase in wealth has come from an increasing size of the working class. Much of this can be seen in the fact that 40 percent of the global workforce works in agriculture, an arduous and labour intensive branch of industry.

A simple whistle stop tour of the statistics shows clearly how little the working class is benefiting from capitalism and from the increasing wealth that we are producing. That so many hours, of so many lives are given over to capital is a testimony to the social power it exerts in the world.

The increasing growth, however, of the numbers brought under the sway of capital should give us hope - we who acknowledge ourselves as part of the working class are proclaiming our membership in the majority of the human race. As our numbers grow, as our knowledge of ourselves grows, then the prospect of building a union of that working class to emancipate itself grows also.

The total size of the workforce already exceeds 3 billion - and given that we can add in children and other dependents, we can safely affirm that over half the world shares a common experience of toil and exploitation under the direct control of capital. A clear majority who could benefit from a revolutionary change to the system and in whom the capacity to make such a change rests.

Mayday belongs to the three billion. It belongs to the workers - we have a world to win, and we can win it. ■

PIK SMEET



Cooking the Books (1)

Money for Nothing

Towards the end of last year Roger Bootle, one of the "wise men" who advised Tory Chancellor Nigel Lawson, launched a new edition of his book with this title. According to an interview by Heather Stewart,

"The painful lesson he encourages the reader to learn is that it's an illusion to think we can have 'money for nothing' simply by buying and selling shares - or houses - from each other. Day-trading in equities, or dashing up the property ladder, has winners and losers - it doesn't make society, or the world, richer 'any more than taking in each other's washing'" (October, 9 October).

A perhaps unintended admission that nothing that goes on in the City or in estate agents' offices results in any increase in wealth, but is rather a drain on resources.

Wealth is something that satisfies some human want, real or imaginary. Some wealth is provided free by nature such as the air we breathe or the rays of the sun, but new wealth can only be produced in one way: by human beings applying their mental and physical energies to materials that originally came

first encountered the Socialist Party in a South Wales valley town. It was late 1972, and I was at a loose end politically. Years before, I had flirted with the Communist Party, to the outrage of my parents, despite my maternal grandparents having been CP supporters from the time of the Russian Revolution.

I used to read *Soviet Weekly*, and a lavishly illustrated magazine sent to me direct from Moscow, Soviet Union, full of happy smiling Russian workers on their way to exceeding the norms of the latest Five Year Plan. Nothing about Stalin having murdered thirty million or so of his own people. Nothing about the string of slave labour camps dotted around the Arctic Circle, Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago*, where political dissidents ended up.

What cured me of Bolshevism was the outbreak of the Hungarian uprising in 1956. My family possessed one of the few televisions in our street in those days. Here was film, direct from Budapest, of Russian tanks slaughtering Hungarian workers, whose only offence was to try to shake off Soviet tyranny. I wrote a blistering letter to *Soviet Weekly* but, of course, I never got a reply. One of the maxims of capitalist society is obviously 'when faced with the truth, ignore it.'

For the next sixteen years, except for one brief episode, I was more or less in the political wilderness. My father was a lifelong member of the NUM and its local predecessor, the South Wales Miners' Federation, the "Fed" whose subs had to be paid in secret, lest you ended up on the colliery owner's blacklist, then being unable to get a job in any colliery in the valley. Dad was an admirer of Aneurin Bevan, the Labour Health Minister, a former miner himself, and MP for a local constituency, Ebbw Vale. Bevan's stock went even higher in our house when he described the Conservatives as "lower

than vermin".

The watershed came in 1964. For the first time since 1951 a Labour government was elected. But it didn't turn out to be the promised land that some had thought. Far from it. Labour proved itself incapable of solving the intractable issues of capitalism, unemployment, poverty, homelessness, warfare and a host of other working class problems too.

Somewhere between 1964 and 1972, still looking for an alternative to capitalism, I joined Plaid Cymru, the Welsh nationalist party. Out of the frying pan into the fire! Some forty years later there are only one or two aspects of their policies I can recollect. They regarded themselves as a socialist party, by which they meant state capitalism, and they had the curious belief that the little countries of Europe were all doing better than the larger ones, as if capitalism was particularly considerate in this respect. Of course, it was twaddle. What Plaid didn't say was that in an independent Wales, the situation of the worker would be no different from in a larger political unit, i.e. they would have only their ability to work to sell, and so would be shut out from the wealth of society, which would be appropriated by a Welsh capitalist class. For the worker, nationalism is a total waste of time.

And so to 1972. On a November day I picked up a copy of the *Socialist Standard* in the local library. It came like a political thunderbolt. Here were ideas I had never encountered before. Free access to the wealth of society. Production for use. The workers have no country. Abolition of money. No more governments, no more states, no more frontiers, no armies, no war.

For the first time in my life, I felt politically free. ■

GREENIE

from nature, these days using machinery and equipment that had themselves been previously fashioned by human labour from materials from nature.

That new wealth can only result from the application of human labour was once so obvious that nobody challenged it until less than 150 years ago. It was only when the anti-capitalist implications of this obvious fact were realised by the ideological defenders of capitalism that they began to concoct another theory as to how wealth was produced.

One of the first to attack the labour theory of wealth production was the English academic, W. H. Mallock (1849-1923). He introduced a new "factor of production" in addition to the traditional three of Land (a gift of Nature), Labour and Capital (the product of Land and Labour): Entrepreneurship. According to him, without this fourth factor nothing would get produced as it was the entrepreneur who alone could bring the other three together; without entrepreneurs no wealth would be produced. So, it was they would be entitled to be called "the wealth producers".

Naturally, entrepreneurs were delighted at this new advance in economic "understanding" and today that there are four "factors of production" is incorporated in all economics textbooks. For instance, a typical such book (in the occurrence, *Economics* by Ralph T. Byrns and Gerald W. Stone) states

that "economists conventionally refer to four broad categories of resources: land, labour, capital and entrepreneurship" explaining:

"Entrepreneurs provide a special type of human resource; they combine labour, natural resources and capital to produce goods and services while incurring risk in their quest for profits. After paying wages, rent and interest for the use of other resources, entrepreneurs keep any money left over from their sales revenue. An entrepreneur's profit is a reward for organizing production, bearing business risks, and introducing innovations that improve the quality of life".

Even a GCSE level economics student should be able to see the fallacy in this (though they would be ill-advised to point it out if they want to pass their exam). Organising production, and introducing innovations, is clearly Labour, the exercise of mainly mental energy, and these days is largely done by hired, if highly trained and highly paid, wage workers no different in principle from the other workers hired by the capitalist enterprise concerned.

Profit is not a "reward" for anything. It is a claim on wealth arising from the fact that the means and instruments of production used to produce new wealth are private property. In other words, it's a non-work, property income and as such a prime example of "money for nothing" that Roger Booth seems to have overlooked.

Hours, wages and profits



The struggle to reduce the length of the working day is the embodiment of class struggle in capitalism. Although class struggle in pre-capitalist society took on different forms, class conflict between those who monopolised the means of producing wealth and those who laboured to produce surplus product was a constant feature. In these societies the producers were openly compelled not only to provide the means of their own subsistence but also that of the owner of the means of production. This expropriated labour took on different appearances in different societies. In slave society the slave master owned the slave's entire day and maintained the slave in much the same way as the prudent factory owner might look after his machinery. In feudal society the serf was tied to plots of land, which were cultivated in return for unpaid work or surplus product.

Capitalism turned human labour power into a commodity - something bought and sold. As feudalism gave way to the wage labour of early capitalism, the surplus product so obvious in feudal society became hidden by the apparent freedom of the workers to sell their labour power to an employer who would pay the highest wages. But while this arrangement has the appearance of a 'fair day's work for a fair day's pay' it actually hides worker exploitation that is the source of alienation.

When capitalists buy a worker's labour they buy the worker's capacity to work for a full day. Wages are set, however, like every other commodity, by the value of labour-power needed to reproduce them, which in the case of labour is the value of food, clothing, etc. needed to keep the worker in a fit condition to work. But the value of 'labour power' is different from the value created by the worker's labour and this difference, called surplus value, belongs to the capitalist.

The working day under capitalism therefore divides into two parts; 'necessary labour' when the workers actually earn what they are paid in wages, and 'surplus labour' which is the time spent producing 'surplus value' for the capitalist employer. Naturally, it is in the interest of the worker to earn a wage sufficient to purchase the necessities of life in the shortest possible time. Conversely, once the worker's wages have been paid, it is in the interest of the employer, the purchaser of labour power, to make the worker work as long as possible. Accordingly, in early capitalist society the owner always looked to expand working hours and keep the worker working to the limits of human endurance.

Where the length of the working day is reduced the natural tendency of the capitalist is to increase the intensity of the working day. The capitalists endeavours to get more work from the workers in order to maintain or increase the level of 'surplus value' which is the source of their profit. Accordingly, in many cases the reduction in working hours over the last 200 years has been achieved by intensifying work and making the employee work harder to earn their wage.

Factory Laws

The factory system transformed the way people worked. Under a system of wage labour workers were forced to submit to the regimentation of factory life where the division of labour and pace of work were

set by power-driven machinery with fixed hours, six days a week. Improvements in machinery encouraged the substitution of women and children for men to reduce the price of labour power, and by 1816 a working day of 16 or 18 hours, regardless of age or gender, was common in conditions that were cramped, airless, deafening and dangerous. Parliament, representing the interests of the ruling class, was naturally attached to the doctrines of a laissez-faire political economy where social problems were instinctively ignored.

As early as 1810, Robert Owen, the philanthropist industrialist, raised the demand for a ten-hour working day, which was instituted on his enterprise at New Lanark. By 1817 he was calling for an eight-hour day under the slogan 'Eight hours labour, Eight hours recreation, Eight hours rest.' His demands came to nothing and it wasn't until the 1830s and 1840s that a movement for shorter working hours developed into agitation for the ten-hour working day for children who were often taken by mill owners from parish workhouses in batches and treated as slave labour. The *short time movement* coalesced around the Leeds Tory evangelical, Richard Oastler, who headed the Yorkshire Factory Movement that organised public meetings and mass marches, including that in York on Easter Sunday 1832. It also delivered a petition to parliament where another evangelical, Michael Sadler, gathered parliamentary support for the reduction of child working hours.

The movement faced bitter opposition. Radicals, many of them factory owners, citing the laissez-faire doctrines of Jeremy Bentham, justified opposition to a reduction in the working day by asserting that state intervention was inappropriate because it interfered with the natural workings of the market. Mill owners were hostile to the *Ten Hour Movement* because a shorter working day for children would inevitably result in a restriction on adult working hours. Cheap child labour, they argued, maintained adult workers' productivity and if working hours were restricted it would reduce profits and make it uneconomic to keep the workplace open beyond 10 hours simply to employ adult labour. As well as reducing profits a reduction in working hours would lead to unemployment, they claimed, because better working conditions and shorter working hours would raise production costs and make goods less competitive on foreign markets.

This reasoning was supported by eminent economists, notably Nassau Senior, the Oxford professor of Political Economy, who made the claim, ridiculed by Marx (and by what happened when working hours were reduced), that the entire profit from industry was generated in the last hour's work each day and therefore any reduction in the working day would eliminate profit altogether. Other apologists for child exploitation claimed that the employment of child labour for long hours was acceptable because it had occurred in agriculture for centuries and even suggested that long working hours occupied otherwise idle children and kept them from becoming a social nuisance. Too much leisure time for the poor was seen as a dangerous and undesirable development.

Set against this background it is hardly surprising that early legislation to restrict child labour, including the Factory Acts of 1819, 1831 and 1833, was weak and

ineffective. Despite the commitment in the Factory Act of 1833 (piloted by Lord Ashley, later Earl of Shaftesbury) to reducing child working hours to 8 hours for 9-13 year-olds and 12 hours for young people of 14-18, it was never effectively enforced and applied only to cotton mills. The Act appointed four inspectors to supervise the Act but mill owners responded



by introducing the 'relay system' of child labour so that factories could still remain open from 5.30am to 8.30pm. The 1833 Act was also passed at the expense of the short-time movement that advocated shorter working hours for all workers.

Further legislation followed but it wasn't until 1847 that the reformer and Chartist sympathiser John Fielden



introduced a parliamentary bill to limit the working day to ten hours for all women and young persons up to the age of 18. It was accompanied by massive demonstrations and marches throughout the north of England and passed through parliament without amendment. This Act was a consequence of an alliance between the Chartist movement and the representatives of the landed aristocracy, the Tories, against the rising industrial bourgeoisie, who in 1846 had succeeded in the repeal of the Corn Laws. Although the textile industry was suffering a trade depression and most factories were already on a ten-hour day, manufacturers hindered the implementation of the 1847 Act by cutting wages in order to encourage opposition to the legislation on the grounds that workers needed to work the longer hours.

Three years later, the Factory Act of 1850 reduced factory opening to 12 hours each day, with the provision that factories must close at 2pm on a Saturday. The Act also reduced the working day for women and young persons to ten and a half hours, which in practice meant that male working hours also started to be restricted. As the reduction in working hours was introduced, the intensity of work increased, which meant that in many cases the anticipated fall in production did not occur and output actually increased. But the regulations only applied to textile mills and the next struggle was to

extending the coverage of the Act across industry, finally achieved in 1867.

In the next decade, the 1874 Factory Act reduced the working day to ten hours for women and young persons. Almost immediately agitation for the *Nine Hours Movement* began and won a reduction of hours in the engineering and building industries. Trade Unions, which received full legal recognition in 1876, joined the struggle for a reduction in working hours through collective bargaining and strikes, especially in the north east of England. By the 1880s the movement began to gather around the demand for an eight-hour day.

Reversal of improvements

But the defeat of the 'New Unionism' (the organisation of the unskilled) in the 1890s gave new leverage to the employers and further reductions in working hours were halted and sometimes reversed. In 1906 the factory working week still averaged 54 hours and by the 1920s had only reduced to 47 hours. Not until the late 1960s did a 40-hour working week become the accepted standard. The 8-hour day was accompanied by a real increase in holidays and pensions, achieved largely, however, by increasing the intensity of work.

Since the 1970s the struggle to reduce working hours has disappeared and improvements in working conditions have gradually been reversed. The weakening of national constraints on the movement of capital from country to country has meant that investment focuses on short-term profit through share prices rather than on long-term dividends. This has increased pressure on employers to make more profit and intensify the working conditions of their employees. Jobs have similarly moved from country to country in search of lower costs and new technologies begun to make it cheaper to invest in machines instead of people.

The security of life-long employment has been abandoned and replaced by 'short term relationships,' where workers are expected to periodically migrate from job to job and undergo regularly retraining. The correlation between economic growth and improving social welfare has been cut and part-time working, which often denies bargaining power or employment benefits, has been expanded. Part-time working has also released capitalism from the need to provide a living wage, forcing working people to rely on multiple incomes from a variety of jobs. Unpaid overtime has become widespread and pensions and the retirement age are under attack.

In capitalism, struggle to defend and where possible improve working conditions, as generations of workers did to reduce the length of the working day, is important. But no amount of reform will eliminate the irreconcilable clash of interest between the capitalist and the working class, even if the working day were to reduce to an absolute minimum. It is only in a society of common ownership where production is for use not profit and where exchange, labour as a commodity and the wages system have been abolished that work will become a creative and rewarding experience. In such a society the distinction between work and leisure will disappear and because work will be voluntary, freed from the alienation of wage labour, the concept of working hours will cease to have meaning. ■

STEVE TROTT



setting one category of worker against another. The students who sparked off the movement against the CPE have been presented as privileged middle-class youth relatively unconcerned with the dire situation faced by immigrants in the run-down sink estates of the suburbs. The de Villepin government asked us to believe that these contracts were designed specifically to help a population of workers which has been consigned to suburban dumping grounds for more than three decades. (The fact that de Villepin waited for more than three weeks of demonstrations before he discovered this ideological fig-leaf shows how clumsy the public relations job has been.) Another strategy was to present French workers as dyed-in-the-wool conservatives defending a status quo made irrelevant by globalisation, the highly indebted nature of the French state and the need to remain in the vanguard of the technological revolution.

Inevitably, the 'phenomenal success' of Tony Blair's 'Third Way' in reducing the level of unemployment to a mere 5 percent was wheeled out as a counter-example to French timidity, notwithstanding the fact that the definition of unemployment in Britain has been changed over 20 times since the 1970s in order to disguise the real situation. Workers in Britain are well aware that the

unemployment and insecurity which they see all around them does not find its way into the official statistics. The deregulation of the labour market in Great Britain over the last two decades has resulted in a doubling in recorded levels of official poverty and a new category of working poor has emerged to replace the indemnified unemployed. The recent mass strike of over 1.5 million public sector workers clearly shows that workers in Britain are by no means living in a neo-liberal cornucopia.

This said, it's true that many French workers have enjoyed a level of protection denied to many new entrants into the labour market, young workers and immigrants. The permanent work contract provides access to a range of social benefits and protections which are envied by those workers who hop from one short-term contract to another. The government obviously hoped that this would constitute a source of resentment and jealousy which could be exploited. It's true that workers on permanent contracts are difficult to fire, given that breaking a contract in these cases is very expensive, compensation being proportional to the number of years worked. But this tactic has backfired: even short-term contracts are better than the almost total absence of legal guarantees contained in the CPE and CNE. Besides, over half a million 'baby boom' workers are now leaving the labour force every year heading for retirement, so the level of youth unemployment is bound to fall. The question is whether or not these relatively secure jobs will remain on offer to the new entrants.

The hard fact is that it's quite clear that in the long run greater job insecurity is on the cards for everyone. Long term permanent jobs - jobs for life - are getting

Class struggles in France

Doubtless many readers of the Socialist Standard will already know that the strikes and demonstrations in France last month had to do with the new work contracts which the de Villepin government introduced into the legislative process over three months ago. Some of this legislation is already on the statute books: the so-called Contrat Nouvelle Embauche (New Hiring Contract), for example, already covers more than 300,000 hirings in small enterprises. It was only over the infamous Contrat Première Embauche (First Hiring Contract) that President Chirac has back-pedalled in the face of massive demonstrations. This ultra-liberal legislation was aimed at establishing more flexibility into what is often considered to be a highly protective and rigid system of employment relations in France. This legislation was justified in terms of the high levels of unemployment experienced by young people, the recent riots in France being presented as a wake-up call heard only by right-wing politicians but ignored by the more consensual politicians on the left. French workers were being asked to believe that the scrapping of legal protection against arbitrary hiring and firing was in their own interest.

Both the CNE and the CPE established the principle of abrupt firings with little or no legal protection for workers during a two-year trial period. The CNE affects workers in small enterprises and can be applied to workers of any age whilst the CPE was aimed at young workers up to 26 years of age. Once the two-year period is up (if it ever is), the happy workers will be offered permanent contracts, so everything will turn out well, in theory. Other legal dispositions packaged under the misleading term 'law of equal opportunities' include the possibility of hiring apprentices at

14 years of age and the possibility of inducing 15-year-olds to work at night. This partial return to nineteenth-century practices, we are told, would loosen up hiring practices and significantly reduce the high levels of unemployment recorded in the statistics produced by governmental agencies. The cost, of course, will be a significant increase in the insecurity experienced by workers who risk being laid off at any moment. This means that they will soon be unable to find decent accommodation, accumulate pension rights or simply plan for the future in such a way as to constitute normal family life. The contrast with the existing legislation centred on the permanent contract with built-in pension provision and a range of social benefits could not be sharper.

Big Lie

The difficulty of getting workers to swallow the big lie that job insecurity is a good thing being obvious, the government resorted to an ideological broadside aimed at



scarcer and even the public sector has been



to get them to accept. What has surprised many commentators has been the brilliant organisation and determination of students formerly presented as apathetic and passive by their elders. Rather than seeking the help of professional politicians and full-time student unionists, the students set up their own system of co-ordination with elected delegates and they undertook mammoth debates on the issues involved in the new legislation. (Some of the debates lasted 72 hours.) Taking advantage of the new forms of communication offered by internet and high-speed trains they improvised a

nationwide movement which quickly led to the closure of 60 of the 90-odd universities in France and the partial closure of dozens of high schools. The various attempts made to establish links with production workers have resulted in a spectacular leap forward in political awareness, workers suffering from poverty wages and unemployment having been invited to speak at student assemblies. Safety inspectors, experts on employment problems and workers in jobcentres have been given a chance to talk of their experience. Outreach into the high schools in the run-down suburbs resulted in the presence of thousands of black and Arab youths in the demonstrations, offering an apprenticeship in peaceful political agitation to youngsters subject to social stigma and popular prejudice.

Anyway, it was fun seeing the conservative government caught with its pants down. De Villepin's authoritarian imposition of the new legislation via the undemocratic procedure of decrees failed to impress the masses. His popularity, never very great, is now in free fall and his political career is seriously compromised. Nobody ever elected him anyway. Chirac, a burnt-out old wheeler-dealer elected *faute de mieux* in a second round play-off with Le Pen, promulgated the CPE law while at the same time promising to amend it in such a way as to remove some of the more contentious aspects. In the end he had to withdraw it. The short-term winner has been Chirac's sworn enemy and would-be successor, the insanely ambitious Sarkozy. As you can imagine, the cartoonists had a field day and the only people not laughing are the leaders of the French 'socialist' party who are increasingly filling the vacuum in their political programme with precisely those Blairite nostrums that the young are refusing.

The moment the trade union movement was reluctant to get engaged in a full-blown conflict with the government. Doubtless this has something to do with the fiasco of its mobilisation to counter the government's pension 'reforms' three years ago but it could also reflect the fact that the students have done a good job in discrediting the prime minister and dividing the government. However, the unions could have shown a little bit more muscle. Although the CPE has been withdrawn, the employers seem very attached to the CNE which constitutes a real threat to workers and, it may be added, to the ability of unions to organise workers. Indeed, the

MEDEF, the bosses' union, wants to generalise the CNE to all sectors and age-groups. The students, future workers, tried to expand their movement to incorporate all the various categories of workers but they clearly failed to generalize their demands adequately. Vague slogans against the precarious society more often than not failed to reach those workers who have been living from hand to mouth for some time. The reason for this is fairly simple: the general outlook of many of the poorer workers is constrained by the absence of qualifications and the urgent need to find cash. By staying largely at the level of a simple defence of their own immediate interests (in a movement which had all the strengths and weaknesses of spontaneity) the students were confronted by the rapid demobilisation of the movement as the examination season looms into sight. The movement was, after all, a student one albeit with a considerable amount of grass-roots support from the trade unions. The suspicion that the aim of the movement was simply that of defending the value of academic qualifications - what distinguishes the students from the unskilled workers - is, in this sense, inescapable. The unions, for their part, were only too glad to keep the movement within the narrow bounds of the defence of wages and conditions, notwithstanding the considerable level of economic insecurity which already exists. On the other hand there were many hopeful signs that the students were getting to grips with a more general malaise and that the movement was groping towards a wider perspective. It is at this point that the absence of a deeper understanding of what capitalism implies and of the need for a socialist movement embracing all categories of wage-earner was at its most glaring.

placed on a slimfast diet. The bosses want workers who can be hired and fired in reaction to sudden and unexpected changes in demand in markets where every sale counts. Industrial jobs have been disappearing fast to be replaced by service sector jobs which are notoriously badly-paid and insecure. These trends do not respect political frontiers. The left-wing government under Lionel Jospin imposed a shorter working week in exchange for greater flexibility in working patterns, production workers being placed on call for work during the weekends or in the evenings to meet sudden fluctuations in demand with disastrous consequences for family life. Real wage levels are stagnant or falling. Pension rights have been reduced. A capitalism which attempted to adjust fluctuations in world demand by modifying monetary exchange rates in accordance with the rules laid down by the International Monetary Fund has been replaced by a highly volatile monetary system in which adjustments are made by hiring and firing production workers. The new generation of workers is facing a future where they will be considered simply as commodities, labour power, to be bought and sold in line with demand, all human safeguards having been removed.

The movement

The movement against the new employment legislation was initiated by students at the universities of Poitiers and Rennes. Despite superficial resemblances, these students do not have the same profile as the relatively privileged students who took to the barricades in May 1968. Nowadays university students in France tend to come from the more threatened sections of that section of the working class known as "the middle-class". Elite students usually go to the so-called 'Grandes ecoles' where they are guaranteed access to a world-class education, contacts into the upper-reaches of the civil service and entry into well-paid jobs in multinational corporations. They are even paid a salary whilst they study. By way of contrast, students in the universities tend to finance their studies by doing Mac-jobs, grants being rare and piss-poor. About 40 percent of students drop out in the first couple of years, disgusted by the ramshackle organisation of the faculties and courses given by a small army of hourly-paid teachers who are already living in the state of insecurity that the young are fighting against. Those who do succeed in this often unimaginative system are usually rewarded by a succession of badly-paid or even unpaid training courses, quite rightly presented as an apprenticeship into the real world of work (exploitation).

It is this threatened section of the so-called "middle-class" which has finally come out in open revolt against the absence of perspectives which capitalism has been trying

A Personal Note

I am not alone in having been taken completely by surprise by the students' movement. The rapidity of its expansion and its extension to other categories in the population was nothing short of incredible. After the heavy and depressing riots of November with their mindless violence and undercurrent of racial tension, it has been comforting to see an outburst of political activity clearly directed against the poverty and loneliness of capitalist society. Despite the images shown on television, the massive demonstrations were on the whole good-natured and peaceful. The mixing together of young and old, and absence of sectarian politics, and the generally high level of debate was particularly encouraging. Although the movement has not taken a socialist direction, there is clearly a lot of discontent out there seeking a political expression and there does seem to be something of a resumption of the class struggle in Europe as a whole. ■

MALCOM MANSFIELD



Freud and Marx: do they mix?



From left: Freud, Marcuse, Reich, and Fromm

Freud was born 150 years ago this month. Here we look at those who have tried to combine his theories with those of Marx.

Freud, who was an atheist and regarded himself as a scientific materialist, put forward a theory to explain irrational behaviour. As a doctor specialising in mental disorders and a pioneer in this field, he was quite entitled to put forward the hypothesis that mental disorders were generally connected with sexual repression in early childhood. But he was equally required to propose a mechanism as to how this could come about. His suggested materialist explanation was that there existed in human beings a special form of instinctual energy—sexual energy—to which he gave the name "libido". That gave other scientists something to go on, something to look for in the physiology of human beings.

The trouble is that no such instinctual sexual energy has ever been found. Freud has, however, been proved right that what happens in early childhood is of crucial importance for the development of the adult personality. Other scientists have confirmed that this is the period of fairly rapid learning. But there is no reason to suppose that this is all about sex. Sexual preferences and orientations will be just one amongst many other things that will be learned during this period.

It is also true that people have been taught (more in the past than today) irrational ideas and attitudes about sex and this has had a harmful effect on their adult sex life and, in extreme cases, on their mental health. Freud's critics don't deny this but say he was wrong to seek to reduce everything to the expression or repression or diversion of some instinctual sexual energy.

Instinctual energy?

Wilhelm Reich, like Freud, was a medical doctor. At first he had been interested in the physiology of sex but then, under Freud's influence, became interested in its psychology as well. But he always retained an interest in physiology and was the one of Freud's followers who took the most seriously Freud's hypothesis that there existed a material energy form called "libido" or "instinctual sexual energy" and set about trying to find it.

His break with Freud did not come over this, but over politics. Freud was an ordinary defender of liberal capitalism and wanted to keep his theories as essentially a clinical cure for certain forms of mental illness. Reich didn't agree. He felt that a free society could exist if people in general were taught to take a rational attitude to sex. This

led him in 1927 to join the Communist Party, from which he was to be expelled in 1933.

Reich offered an explanation as to why fascism had developed: sexual repression in early childhood. According to him, the particular form of sexual repression and family life practised in pre-Nazi Germany led to people, including workers, coming to have an authoritarian personality which inclined them to follow and be dependent on leaders, who represented the patriarchal father-figure they had been brought up to believe in and which, as a result, they had a psychological need for.

Reich's theory didn't have much impact at the time but it was revived in the 1960s and 70s when his *The Sexual Revolution* and *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* were hugely popular, being reprinted many times and translated into many languages. The combination of Marxism and sexual liberation caught the mood of the time. His argument in *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* as to why people had supported fascism was transferred virtually unchanged to explain why people supported capitalism; it was as if its title had been "the mass psychology of capitalism". In this way sexual liberation came to be seen as being intrinsically anti-capitalist.

There is nothing wrong with sexual liberation but it stands on its own and doesn't need Reich's psychological theories to justify it. Since the 60s and 70s the so-called sexual revolution has proceeded. The patriarchal family is not half so patriarchal as it used to be and is not so widespread either—yet capitalism is as solidly supported by the majority of people as it ever was. Which in itself undermines theories based on Reich as to why workers support capitalism.

In 1939 Reich claimed to have found Freud's posited instinctual sexual energy, calling it "orgone". After that, he went completely haywire, claiming that it came from outer space and could cure cancer. As a result of refusing to stop selling "orgone boxes" to cure cancer, he was jailed for contempt of court and in fact died in the hospital wing of a prison in 1957.

This pathetic end should not disguise the fact that he was merely trying to prove what was at the basis of Freud's theories: that there was such a thing as sexual energy. He failed, and so has everybody else. These days not even most Freudians defend the existence of sexual energy in the sense Freud understood it, as an instinctual bodily energy that could be repressed or diverted into other forms of bodily energy.

Philosophical speculations

Although Freud did believe that ultimately a materialist basis for mental states would be

found—that the nature of the "sexual energy" he posited would eventually be uncovered—he himself never claimed it had been or was anywhere near to being discovered. This didn't prevent him from continuing to speculate on the basis that it did exist. Indeed, from one point of view, Freud can be better seen as a speculative philosopher than as a practising scientist, at least in his later years. The trouble was that he came up with speculative theories which could neither be proved nor disproved.

For instance, he posited a "life instinct" and then, later, a "death instinct". He talked about a "pleasure principle" and a "reality principle". But how could the existence of such "instincts" and "principles" be proved? Some (most, in fact) of his followers—Reich for instance—denied that there was such a thing as a "death instinct". So, Freud said there was; Reich said there wasn't. But how to prove which one was right? You can't. There's no way of doing so.

One philosopher who took up Freud's philosophical speculations was Herbert Marcuse. He started from a book written by Freud in 1930, *Civilisation and Its Discontents*. This is one of the most anti-socialist books ever written since it provides a pseudo-scientific justification for the so-called "human nature" objection to socialism. Freud was quite explicit about this:

"(. . .) men are not gentle creatures, who want to be loved, who at most defend themselves if they are attacked; they are, on the contrary, creatures among whose instinctual endowments is to be reckoned a powerful share of aggressiveness. As a result, their neighbour is for them not only a potential helper or sexual object, but also someone who tempts them to satisfy their aggressiveness on him, to exploit his capacity for work without compensation, to use him sexually without his consent, to seize his possessions, to humiliate him, to cause him pain, to torture and to kill him".

According to Freud, human civilisation is based, and has to be based, on the repression of the basic "sexual" or "instinctual" energy he believed humans to have. What happened, in Freud's view, was that this repressed sexual energy was diverted into the work which had to be engaged in to produce the things humans needed to survive and build up the material side of civilisation. This speculation that the energy for work comes from diverted sexual energy is baseless. We know where we get this energy from—the food we eat, which is a form of chemical energy which the body converts into potential mechanical energy.

Without such sexual repression, Freud taught, we would all behave like babies do in the first year or so of their life seeking

immediate gratification, which in Freud's mind meant sexual gratification. But more, by this time Freud had introduced a "death instinct" into his speculative philosophy. So, without sexual repression, human society would collapse into an orgy of sex and violence.

Marcuse—who was a philosopher and not a scientific researcher—set out to show, in his *Eros and Civilisation* (1955), that Freudian theories did not necessarily rule out a free, non-repressive society. He accepted Freud's speculation that civilisation had originally been based on a necessary sexual repression, but added two riders: (1) that only a part of this had come from the conditions of scarcity which obliged humans to work, another part came from living in class-divided societies where ruling classes imposed an extra repression over and above that arising from natural scarcity, and (2) that, with the coming of automation and the like, scarcity had now been conquered. This being so, sexual repression—that imposed by natural conditions as well as that imposed by class-divided society—was no longer necessary. Civilisation need no longer be based on sexual repression. A free, non-repressive society was possible. Freud and socialism could be reconciled.

Marcuse's explanation as to why people accepted capitalism was that they had been psychologically manipulated into wanting it. In other words, that their basic "instincts" had been remoulded so as to fit in with capitalist society. In so doing he presented himself with a dilemma: if this was really the case, how could such people ever come to want to get rid of capitalism?

Community life

Erich Fromm tried to combine Freud's ideas with those of Marx in a quite different way. Whereas Freud (and Reich and Marcuse) saw the mind as something that could be explained in terms of the individual's instinctual biological development, Fromm said that the mind was a social phenomenon. Thus, while Freud explained mental illness in terms of the failure of an individual to develop normally through the various stages

of sexual development which his theory posited, Fromm (a medical doctor and practising psychiatrist himself) explained mental illness in terms of the failure of the individual to relate properly with other individuals. For him, not only the mind but (most) mental illnesses were social.

This might even be said to amount to the complete overthrow of the Freudian system. Fromm himself didn't go that far. He still believed in psychoanalysis as a therapy and he still thought in terms of a "life instinct" and a "death instinct". In his book *The Sane Society* (which also appeared in 1955) he wrote the following (which led orthodox Freudians to say that he wasn't really a Freudian at all):

"Freud, searching for the basic force which motivates human passions and desires, believed he had found it in the libido. But powerful as the sexual drive and its derivations are, they are by no means the most powerful forces within man and their frustration is not the cause of mental disturbances. The most powerful forces motivating man's behaviour stems from the conditions of his existence, the 'human situation'" (chapter 3).

By "the conditions of the human situation" Fromm meant that humans are the only animal species whose individual members have an awareness of themselves as separate individuals, have "self consciousness". This gives us a sense of individuality and freedom, says Fromm, but at the same time a sense of aloneness. According to him, the driving force behind human behaviour is not, as Freud claimed, the search for pleasure which was ultimately sexual, but the desire to overcome this sense of aloneness, the desire to feel part of a greater whole, the desire to be liked and accepted by other human beings.

This is a theory of human nature. In the argument about human nature that has gone on amongst socialists—is it human nature to be completely adaptable or are there conditions that humans couldn't adapt to because it would be contrary to their nature?—Fromm comes down in favour of the second view. Humans are social animals,

and we need each other not only practically so as to collectively produce the material things we need to live but also psychologically—we need to feel part of a group, of a community. From which it follows that any society which does not satisfy this psychological need, or which actively works to prevent it being satisfied, is incompatible with human nature.

The basic theme of Fromm's *The Sane Society* is that capitalism, because it encourages competition between individuals, pitting them against each other in a rat race for power, privilege and prestige, is a society that is incompatible with human nature. It is an "insane society", a "sick society". Only a society based on co-operation and community is a sane society as one which properly meets the psychological needs of human beings for a sense of belonging; not just a sense of belonging but a state of actually belonging to a real community.

The existence of false communities—such as those provided by racism, nationalism and religion—would seem to confirm Fromm's theory that there is a human need to be part of a community with other human beings and that capitalism is against "human nature" because it denies, and works against, this basic need. Although capitalism continually seeks to reduce us to isolated social atoms who only collide in the marketplace as buyers and sellers, the basic human need for community still expresses itself even if in distorted and perverted forms.

If true, this is the answer to the dilemma that Reich and Marcuse had got themselves into with their theory that capitalism had learned how to manipulate what they regarded as the driving force behind human behaviour—Freud's imaginary "sexual energy"—so as to create people whose very personality and character structure has been moulded for life under capitalism. It would mean that there was still hope for socialism. Capitalism can try to suppress the human need for co-operation and community but will never be able to succeed. ■

ADAM BUICK



Cooking the Books (2)

Footballers' Wages

When last December Richard Caborn, the Minister for Sport, suggested that limits should be placed on the income of professional

footballers, Arsène Wenger, the Arsenal manager, said that he wouldn't be against a limit on all incomes but would be against applying this just to footballers:

"You can't say that a sportsman should have a limited amount of income but a banker should get a £15 million bonus as he's a stockbroker who make a lot of money . . . We live in a world where the richest 50 people own 48 per cent of the riches of the whole earth. But do we just limit the salaries of footballers who normally come out of poor backgrounds - and you normally need special qualities to be a strong footballer?" (Times, 31 December).

It was a fair debating point, but economics is no about who is the most deserving of a high income. Bankers,

stockbrokers and other fat cats who award themselves huge bonuses are indeed useless parasites. Because they control a capitalist business they are able to siphon off, at the expense of other shareholders, a part of the profits for their own personal benefit in the form of a bloated "salary".

Footballers at least start from the same position as the rest of us: not owning any wealth from which to obtain an unearned income, to obtain what they need to live they have to go out on to the labour market and offer their mental and physical energies for sale. Most professional footballers, working for clubs in the lower divisions or for non-league clubs, never earn anything more than the average worker.

But some, those who play for the first teams of clubs (rather, businesses) in the Premier League, are paid fabulous amounts of money, by working class (if not capitalist class) standards. What is their income? Is it wages? Not really. It's more like rent. Rent is paid whenever there is a natural monopoly in something that cannot be increased, normally land, mineral deposits, waterfalls and other natural features that can be employed in production. The rent of land and natural resources is essentially fixed by

the paying demand for it. The higher the demand, the higher the rent.

As Arsène Wenger pointed out, "you normally need special qualities to be a strong footballer". It is these "special qualities - which are a sort of natural resource that cannot be increased - that enable the best footballers to command so high an income, but as rent rather than as the price for the mere sale of their labour power. Their income is so high because the demand for their talents is so high, Premier League football being Big Business with, thanks to television, a huge market.

Wenger was right to draw attention to the fact that we live in a world of inequality. That is a natural consequence of the workings of capitalism. Socialists want a world of equality, but this is not one where everybody has an equal income. On the contrary, it would be a world where nobody had a monetary income, large, small or equal, but where everybody would have an equal say in the way things are run and an equal right to satisfy their needs. And one in which, while there would still be (amateur) footballers, there'd be no bankers or stockbrokers.

"Better I die of radiation than my children of hunger..."

In the village of Orlovka, in the Chui region of Kyrgyzstan in post-Soviet Central Asia, there used to be a uranium mine. Its closure in the early 1990s led to massive unemployment in the area. But now the desperately poor local residents have found a new way to survive.

They sift through the waste dumped near the disused mine - "a moonscape of grey slag" - in search of material that they can sell to scrap merchants. There is iron and other metals, and graphite, but most valuable is silicon, which fetches \$10 per kilo and ends up at electronics plants in neighbouring China. About a third of the diggers are children. Some of their teachers are there too, for they can't get by on the pittance called a salary. Injuries are frequent. Some people get buried alive when the holes they are digging cave in.

Of course, there are many such places in the "undeveloped" countries. But this one has an additional hazard. The waste is full of radioactive gas (up to 400 micro-roentgens per hour). The diggers, their bodies covered with festering sores, are dying of radiation sickness. They are fully aware of the fact, but as one man said: "Better I die of radiation than my children of hunger."

Now for a little thought experiment. Suppose these people had been rounded up at gunpoint and forced to do this work on the orders of some military junta or Islamist or "communist" dictatorship. Just imagine the furore that human rights organizations around the world would raise against the regime committing such atrocities.

But they were not rounded up at gunpoint, and no armed guards are needed to keep them at their labours. They are "independent market actors" - "entrepreneurs," indeed, legally free to leave the scrap collecting business whenever they like. So none of their "human rights," as the term is usually understood, has been violated. They are lucky enough to live in a country that has been fulsomely praised as a model "democracy" with an excellent "human rights record" - at least by Central Asian standards. And yet they are not a whit better off for all that.

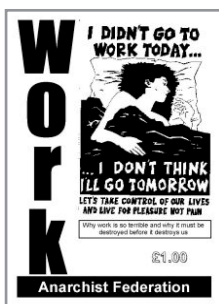
For there is one human right that they lack, and without it other human rights are not worth very much. They do not have the right of *access to the means of life*. "I wanted to work on the land," another digger remarked, "but unfortunately I don't have any." Quite so. And back into the radioactive gas... ■

Source: *Institute of War and Peace Reporting (London), Reporting Central Asia*, No. 438, March 10, 2006.

STEFAN

Recipe for disaster?

Work. Anarchist Federation. £1.00



It might be thought that a pamphlet on work would begin by setting out what is going to be meant by the word. But this pamphlet does not do so. Instead, it uses the word in two different, even contradictory, senses. Work "must be destroyed before it destroys us", proclaims the front cover. "Work is a disease" says an illustration. "Arguments against work" is one chapter heading.

But another chapter is headed "Work in a free society" though even this has the subtitle "freedom begins where work ends". So, after all, work is not going to be destroyed? It is not a disease (or, if it is, it's still going to exist in a "free society"?). So, in a free society, we are not going to be free when we work?

In physics work is the expenditure of energy. For humans, it is the exercise of a person's physical and material energies to produce something that has some use, an unavoidable feature of human existence which has to take place in all societies and so cannot be abolished or destroyed. Under capitalism most work takes the form of employment, which is the things the pamphlets says: boring, meaningless, done for the benefit of an employer. It is employment - working for wages - , not work as such, that is a "disease" that can be abolished. What is required is the transformation of work, not its impossible abolition.

The authors of *Work* make some strong and valid criticisms of the human consequences of capitalist *employment*. For many workers it means physical and nervous exhaustion, illness, often anti-social laws, damaged family relationships, the intensification and lengthening of the working week, job insecurity, the switch from long-term employment to sub-contracting and self-employment, usually with worse pay and conditions. Even the unemployed, they say, are now engaged in the "work" of "looking for work".

We agree that in "a society without 'employment', without bosses and wage labour", the work of producing what society needs will be quite different: it will be "freely chosen", "not measured at all" and an "expression of a person's pleasure in what they are doing".

Where we disagree is over how the Anarchist Federation envisage such a society coming into being - by a general refusal to work:

"We will take our hands from the plough and the loom, rise up from our desks, cast off our boots and overalls, walk out of the hotels and restaurants, leave the factory and office, meeting with others to join in their refusal to work as they celebrate ours".

This is a recipe for disaster. If (as this scenario assumes) people had reached the stage of wanting to abolish capitalism and its employment and wage labour, then a more sensible option would surely be to organise, not to stop working, i.e. to stop producing

with all the consequences this would have on social life, but to keep production going under worker control while the transfer through political action of social control from the capitalist class to the community as a whole takes place.

ALB

Pie in the sky

What Price the Poor? William Booth, Karl Marx and the London Residuum. By Ann Woodall, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2005



William Booth

Booth and Marx arrived in London in 1849. Their reactions to the London poor, variously referred to as "the submerged tenth", "the dangerous class" or "the residuum" were very different. Booth, inspired mainly by

evangelical Christianity in his home-town of Nottingham, set up the Salvation Army and offered them pie in the sky when they died. Yet in its early years the "Sally Army" was militant in its defence of the poor. "The Salvation Army", Engels noted, "revives the propaganda of early Christianity, appeals to the poor as the elect, fights capitalism in a religious way, and thus fosters an element of early Christian class antagonism which one day may become troublesome to the well-to-do who now find the ready money for it". But it never did become a problem for the well-to-do. As Roy Hattersley wrote in his biography of Booth, his social policy "was intended to ameliorate the worst features of the existing order rather than to change it". Early the next century, in George Bernard Shaw's play *Major Barbara*, the capitalist Undershaft responds to the accusation that he did not understand what the Salvation Army did for the poor: "Oh yes I do. It draws their teeth: that is enough for me as a man of business".

Marx referred to the residuum as the "relative surplus population" which was comprised of both the "reserve army of labour", who could be employed, and the "lumpenproletariat" who could not. Woodall does a good job of explaining Marx's viewpoint on the necessary role of poverty under capitalism and the revolutionary socialist alternative.

LEW

A common humanity

Ancient Americans: rewriting the history of the New World. By Charles C. Mann. London :Granta Books, 2005



This book has three central claims, put forward with all the skill and understanding of a working popular science journalist. That pre-Columbus the Americas were more

populous than many have previously supposed; that humans have been in the Americas longer than supposed; and that the people there had shaped their own environments to a terrific extent - far from being the unspoilt wilderness of colonial lore.

In most of this Mann is merely communicating an emerging academic consensus that still has not filtered out into the popular domain. He highlights how children's schoolbooks still repeat stories about Indian life, culture and history that have subsequently been disproven. He also highlights how various vested interests have used the ideological constructions based on the previous histories for opposite ends, both aggressive industrialists and ecologists promoting various simplifying myths of naive Indians living in harmony with untamed nature.

Essentially, whilst without giving any definite backing to any particular population estimate, the book avers that the 'high counters' are now the dominant strand of demographic historiography. That most of the Americas were covered by human civilisations that would have been a match for most of the colonialist forces, if they had not succumbed to disease - disease that spread in advance of the European's arrival (indicating intercourse between the Indian civilisations) - disease that possibly wiped out about a fifth of the human race at that time.

Mann demonstrates how much of the habitat inhabited by Indians was inhospitable, but that they had, to use his metaphor, terraformed their environment. He uses the example of the Maya collapse - hundred of years prior to the arrival of the Europeans - to show how the environment humans had created could fall apart when neglected (as in this case) by civil war.

In this context, he demonstrates that the Americas had an independent discovery of agriculture, to the point of suggesting that Amazonian Indians effectively planted orchards to make good use of the forests difficult soil. He suggests that there were civilisations as venerable in their size and antiquity to equal the more famous supposed homes of civilisation in China and Sumeria (present day Iraq).

He uses one case, the domestication of maize, to show what American civilisation has contributed to the sum of human achievement, and highlights the crushing irony that it was the importation of maize to Africa, which allowed the population growth that made the slave trade possibly (the slaves were, it should be remembered, needed in part because the indigenous population of the Americas had died out).

Mann suggests that the image of the pristine wilderness was created by the fact that humans had ceased to manage these environments, that the so called savagery found in part of the Americas was not stone age tribes living lives without time or change, but the products of collapse and devastation.

This is hopeful stuff for socialists. If true, it confirms a common humanity shared by all the humans on the planet, and offers the prospect of adding rich unbroadcast stories of human achievement.
PS

Edinburgh and Glasgow Branches DAY SCHOOL FOR SATURDAY 13 MAY 2006

In the Community Central Halls, 314 Maryhill Road, Glasgow

THE CHANGING FACE OF CAPITALISM

1.00pm to 2.15pm **WHAT NEXT FOR THE TRADE UNIONS?**

The trade union movement has played an important part in the development of working class ideas, but now it finds itself in a crisis. Its political product the Labour Party has proven to be just another capitalist party. Brian Gardner (Glasgow Branch) considers the dilemma that it faces with the worsening of pension conditions and the insecurity of modern technology.

2.15pm to 3.30pm **THE DEATH OF THE LEFT?**

The demise of the Russian and eastern European Communist Parties has led to a crisis on the so-called left. Various Leninist and Trotskyist groups claim to be socialist organisations. In this talk Paul Bennett (Manchester Branch) deals with their claims and offers the alternative of World Socialism with its rejection of leadership and the reform of capitalism.

3.30pm to 5.00pm **CAPITALISM? KIDS' STUFF**

In this session we play a 50 minute DVD *Capitalism and Other Kids' Stuff* that likens the development of capitalism to a children's nursery. We examine how ownership gives rise to the state and all its coercive forces. We look at alternative ways of running society. We look at a moneyless, tradeless alternative to the profit system. This DVD was devised by and features Paddy Shannon (Lancaster Branch) He will deal with your questions and ideas.

Tea, coffee and light refreshments will be available, free of charge.
All welcome.

Summer School, Fircroft, 21-23 July, 2006

WHAT'S LEFT OF THE LEFT? Retreated or Defeated?

A slightly different format this year. Some speakers, but also some discussions groups considering papers and notes from overseas socialists. The object is to try to build up a global picture of the state of opposition to capitalism: what attacking moves and defences capitalist governments have made and what threats and/or opportunities this presents to the socialist movement.

Fircroft College has kindly held back its price increases so that we can maximise our numbers attending. Non-members are welcome. Full board for the weekend is £110. The Party can subsidise a small number of those attending at half price, but it's best to apply early. Free entry to all talks and discussion sessions.

For further information or booking a place (please don't leave it too late!) ring Ron Cook, **0121 553 1712**

Manchester

Monday, 22 May 8pm

WHY YOU SHOULD BE A SOCIALIST

Hare and Hounds,
Shudehill,
City Centre

Socialist Walk: a Thames tour of Rotherhithe.

Sunday, 11 June 11.00 am.
Meet at Canada Water tube station.

For information contact:

Vincent Otter on **07905 791638** or **020 8361 3017** or Richard Botterill on **01582 764929**

Chiswick

Tuesday, 16 May 8pm

THE LIBRARY OF EARLY SOCIALISTS

Speaker: Howard Comber
Committee Room, Chiswick Town Hall,
Heathfield Terrace, W4 (nearest tube:
Chiswick Park).



Wrong about Ireland?

Dear Editors.

I was saddened by Richard Montague's "The Easter Rising - 90 Years On" (April *Socialist Standard*). Montague's contemptuous view is not shared by many socialists in Wales, to whom national liberation continues to be an aspiration. Even a bourgeois republic would be a blessed improvement and relief from eight centuries of thralldom, stagnating under English rule.

Whatever the faults of Padraig Pearse, James Connolly and the five other signatories of the Irish Proclamation of Independence at Easter 1916, they were men of principle and courage dedicated to the well-being of the working people of all Ireland. We honour their memory, and the noble cause for which they fought and died. Pob bendith arnynt!

ALUN HUGHES, National Secretary, Plaid Gornwydd Cymru/Communist Party of Wales.

Reply: *Members of the Socialist Party in and from Wales, including those who speak Welsh, do not aspire to "national liberation" but to the emancipation of all humanity through the establishment of world socialism. It is not "English rule" that is responsible for the problems faced by workers in Wales, but capitalism. Which is why they would continue even if a "bourgeois republic" were to be established in Wales. Just look at Ireland - Editors.*

Vauxhall election

Dear Editors,

In the April *Socialist Standard*, Ivan took the time and trouble to profile the Labour MP for Vauxhall, Kate Hoey. He correctly describes how she mal-represents the workers of South London who may have voted for her.

What he omits is the most tragic part of the story. Unlike workers in every other constituency at the last election, those in

Vauxhall had the opportunity to hear and vote for the case for socialism, because our candidate, Danny Lambert, stood against her in last year's general election.

It is worth noting, that alone at the hustings, Comrade Lambert put forward the case for the genuine interest of the workers, unlike Hoey and all her fellow pretenders to office.

Perhaps any south London electors who read Ivan's article may care to reflect and lament upon their choice; however some for them have the chance to put things right, as three socialist candidates are contesting the local elections in Lambeth this May, where workers will once again have the choice of voting to overthrow a rotten system.

BILL MARTIN (by email)

There is also a Socialist Party candidate standing in Kingston in the local elections on 4 May.



No Socialism in Russia

It is very important to the Socialist Party of Great Britain that there should be no confusion about the state of affairs in Russia. The aim of the S.P.G.B. is to see Socialism established everywhere but our propaganda for Socialism is hampered by the belief, held by some people, that Socialism means the kind of social arrangements that existed in Russia under Stalin and exist still. There is no truth in this whatsoever. There is no Socialism (or Communism) in Russia, nor has there ever been.

What Russia has is a régime of dictatorship, administering what can best be described as a largely State Capitalist social system. The State apparatus is controlled by the Communist Party of Russia, the only political party that is allowed to exist in that country. Farcical so-called elections are held, but, as the workers of Russia are not allowed to form political parties of their own choice, only members of the Communist Party and those approved by them are permitted to stand at election and be elected. This is an issue by which to assess the recent talk of changed conditions in Russia. Stalin is dead and some of his actions have been repudiated but it is still the case that no political party is allowed to exist in Russia except the Communist Party. It was over 20 years ago that Stalin had to admit to some visiting Americans

that in Russia "only one party, the party of the workers, the Communist Party, enjoys legality." ("Interviews with Foreign Workers' Delegates". Published in Moscow 1934, p.13.)

The same idea had been pithily put still earlier by Bukharin, who declared that in Russia there is room for any number of political parties, as long as one is in power and the others in prison.

The British Communist Party has just reaffirmed its confidence in the Communist Party of Russia. Let it clearly be understood that this is a renewed declaration of support by the British Communist Party for a regime that suppresses all independent working class political activity. While this condition remains it is idle to pretend that the new rulers of Russia are showing evidence of a changeover from dictatorship to more democratic arrangements.

In asserting that there never has been Socialism in Russia the S.P.G.B. is not making a late discovery. Right from 1917 when the Communists were able to get power in Russia it has been emphasised by the S.P.G.B. that Socialism has not been established in that country.

(From editorial, *Socialist Standard*, May 1956)

Declaration of Principles

This declaration is the basis of our organisation and, because it is also an important historical document dating from the formation of the party in 1904, its original language has been retained.

Object

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

Declaration of Principles

The Socialist Party of Great Britain holds

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.)

by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the

last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

8. The Socialist Party of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.



Honour rooted in dishonour

We have been here before. We were here when New Labour were gleefully exploiting the Tories' embarrassment over episodes of sleaze like Neil Hamilton

and his cash for questions, while Tony Blair was encouraging the voters to believe that everything would be better, more open and honest, when he was at the head of the government. The party rosettes and the election manifestos had hardly been pushed down into the waste bins when that particular deception was exposed by the Bernie Ecclestone affair. Since then there has been a steady trickle of similarly discomfiting events. And now there is the engulfing flood of revelations of "honours" being awarded in exchange for donations and loans to the party or to finance some of Blair's desperate sticking plaster reforms of hospitals, schools... It is serious enough to involve the police, with one person arrested.

This raises the question of why there have been no prosecutions for something which has been illegal since 1925. It was Lloyd George who, as might be expected, was most infamously involved in what he described to a Tory MP as "...the cleanest way of raising money for a political party. The worst is that you cannot defend it in public". In line with this he defended and promoted it in private, by appointing an agent, Maundy Gregory, to arrange the sale of honours - for, of course, a suitable commission. Gregory operated from a dauntingly expensive office in the heart of Whitehall, complete with uniformed flunkey. His price list varied from £80,000 to £120,000 for a viscountcy to £10,000 to £15,000 for a knighthood. Less affluent clients were also looked after; for them Lloyd George invented the OBE, which cost about £100. The Labour MP Victor Grayson, perhaps in an effort to revive a flagging political career, denounced the sale of honours through the work of "a monocled dandy with offices in Whitehall". Soon afterwards he was mysteriously beaten up and then disappeared in suspicious circumstances, leading to the assumption that he had been murdered. Apart from such regrettable lapses Lloyd George and Gregory ran a civilised and profitable business, quite unthreatened by the fact that Lloyd George had sneered at the Lords as "...five hundred men, ordinary men chosen accidentally from among the unemployed".



Gregory



Grayson

Retirement

So blatant was the racket, from which Lloyd George made about £1.5million (about £150 million today) and Gregory about a fifth of that amount, that in 1925 it was deemed necessary to pass the Honours (Prevention of Abuses) Act, which should have landed a whole clutch of politicians, Tory as well as Labour, in trouble. In fact the only person to have been prosecuted was Gregory himself, who in 1933 was sent to prison for two months. After this "punishment" he retired comfortably to France on a generous pension as the price of his silence. The Tory MP who brokered that deal was awarded with a knighthood by the Labour Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald, who whinged that the Tory Leader Baldwin had involved him "...in a scandal by forcing me to give an honour because a man has paid £30,000 to get Tory headquarters and some Tories out of a mess". Was this, we may wonder, the same Ramsay MacDonald who had once described himself as a socialist?

And that was not the end of the affair, because since Gregory went about his odious business the sale of honours, under many guises, has continued to thrive. The Wilson government created Lords Sainsbury and Hamlyn, both of them contributors to party finances. Notoriously, the owner of the company which manufactured the Gannex raincoat so beloved by Wilson was ennobled as Lord Kagan; he was later jailed for corruption. Then there was Sir Eric Miller, who avoided further attentions from the Fraud Squad by committing suicide. That many of the peerages arranged by the Wilson government were rewards for donations to Labour Party funds was confirmed by Joe Haines, who was a kind of predecessor to Alastair Campbell in Wilson's Downing Street. Although there is evidence that Wilson was not entirely happy about his awards, feeling that he was under pressure from party fund raisers, his retirement nominations (the infamous "lavender list") was full of party donors and cronies. Haines refused to be included in it because he "...did not wish to appear in the kind of list which had Joe Kagan and Eric Miller and others whom I regarded as undeserving".

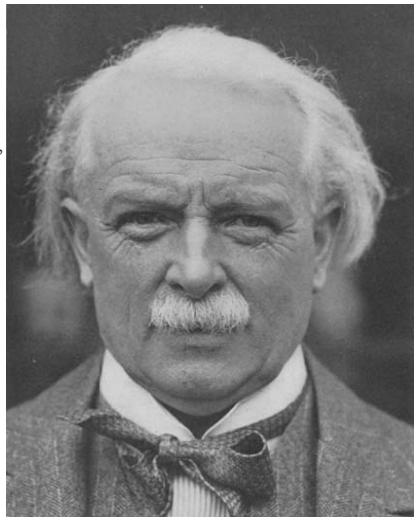
Heath

Among all these double dealings Ted Heath was something of an aberration. Although he reversed Wilson's decision to stop giving out political honours he was so sparing in his awards that he thought he had "...caused some grumbling among party members". During his three and three quarters years in office he nominated 34 new life peers, in contrast to the following five years of Labour government under Wilson and Callaghan when 144 "suitable" candidates were put up. The payback for what Heath called "grumbling" came when he was confronted with Thatcher in the 1975 leadership contest. A number of backbenchers seemed likely to have taken revenge for their disappointment at being overlooked for a comfortable, unchallenged seat in the Lords which they saw as the just reward for their long abasement to the needs of the party.

With the advent of Thatcher things in the Tory party got back to what might be called normal. The Iron Lady established a reputation second only to Lloyd George's for systematically using the honours system to raise money for the party or to reward or cajole restless backbenchers. Between 1979 and 1985 eleven industrialists were made peers after donating a total of £1.9 million to party finances; among them were Victor Matthews who gave £210,000, shipping magnate William Cayzer who gave £410,531 and Frank Taylor of the building firm Taylor Woodrow who donated £367,510. Then there were the knighthoods for the likes of Keith Showering (£424,000) and Nigel Brookes (£210,000). It was all summed up by the former MP, Chief Whip and Foreign Secretary Francis Pym who, undeterred by the fact that he himself had been ennobled as Lord Pym, told the Neill Committee on Standards in Public Life that "...a person had to put money where their mouth is to be considered for an honour".

Labour

But all of that was supposed to have ended when New Labour



Lloyd George - invented the honours scam which PMs have followed since.

arrived in Downing Street with their pledge to replace sleaze with transparency (politician's jargon for motivated obscurity) and reward on merit (to be assessed on the size of a donation). In some cases big money has been given to support the new city academies, which are supposed to be an improvement on schools which were "failing" because their pupils were performing as might be expected from the area they live in, the depth of their family poverty and the bleakness of their life horizons. The latter-day Maundy Gregory with the job of organising these donations was Des Smith, a head teacher who was also a schools adviser to the government. Smith was persuaded to tell an under cover reporter from the Sunday Times that someone could expect to get one of a range of honours depending on how much money they put into the academies, from an OBE for one academy to a knighthood for two and a peerage - a "certainty" - for five. As a result of his venture into that particular branch of New Labour transparency Mr. Smith has been the subject of close interest from the police.

But in a sense donations to the academies are actually to the Labour Party, since they are designed to boost the party's chances at the next election by financing one of Blair's pet projects. Rather more straightforward were the loans from individuals, which the party has defended on the grounds that the money was lent at "commercial" rates - which raises the question of why they did not simply approach their bank instead of people who had rather a lot to gain through lending the money. For example there is Ron Aldridge, chairman of the company Capita which paid him £501,000 in 2004. He also has shares in the company worth some £60 million. Capita has contracts to supply "support services" to the Criminal Records Bureau (which was not among their finest achievements); it runs call centres for the BBC and the NHS and it collects the London Congestion Charge. Aldridge has lent the party £1 million; he got an OBE in 1994. Another lender is Barry Townsley, chairman of a stock broking firm who was barred from the Stock Exchange trading floor in the 1980s after a scandal involving some share deals. He has lent the party £1 million. Townsley was recommended for a peerage by Tony Blair but he refused the offer, saying it was not worth the negative publicity.

Ironic

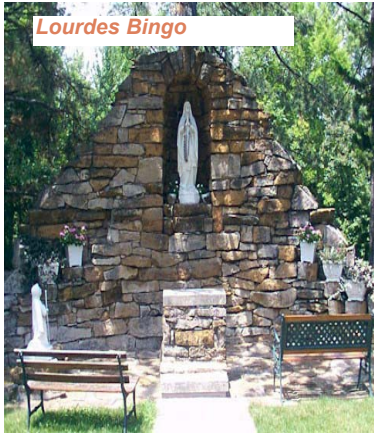
It is clearly misleading to refer to the baubles and titles dished out to venal business people and party hangers-on as honours. There is nothing honourable about them, except that they conform to the morality of capitalism. This is a society based on, and ruled by, the principle that sale and profit is a celebration while redundancy and loss is a tragedy. Yet the mouthpieces of capitalism, when it suits them, tell us that there are rewards for a finer morality where human service counts above the crudities of the balance sheet. It is ironically appropriate that even capitalism's "honours" are for sale. Yes we have been here before and will be here again. ■

IVAN

Voice from the Back

Miracle Worker

The Roman Catholic Church is not the unchanging, dogmatic organisation that its critics make out. Take their reform of what constitutes a miracle. "Lourdes miracles get a little easier. ... Monsignor Jaques Perrier, Bishop of Tarbes and Lourdes and the most senior cleric at the Catholic shrine, announced a "reform" of miracles there last week. Henceforth there will be new categories of "healing", recognised which takes into account advances of modern science. These will include "unexpected healings", "confirmed healings" and "exceptional healings". Critics say he is "devaluing" God's interventions in order to counter increasingly fierce competition in France from evangelical and Pentecostal churches" (*Observer*, 2 April). Nothing dogmatic about that, simply redefining their product to deal with the competition. It makes good marketing sense in a competitive society.



Lourdes Bingo

Testament expert from the University of Aberdeen and John Pritchard, Bishop of Jarrow are doubtful about the whole affair. Is it not wonderful that these learned men can get so worked up about ancient myths and yet remain silent about 8 million kids dying from lack of food and clean water every year?

Contrasts (1)

In a world where millions of children are dying of hunger the following item illustrates the madness of capitalism. "For most of us a sandwich is often the quickest, easiest and cheapest snack option - but try telling that to Selfridges. The upmarket store is about to unveil what it claims is the country's most expensive sarnie, costing a whopping £85.50. At the core of the 22cm x 13cm sandwich are slices of prime Wagyu beef, which gourmands agree is among the most succulent in the world. ... The meat will be flown in from Chile every day to ensure it is as fresh as possible (*Metro.co.uk*, 7 April).

Contrasts (2)

In the same issue of a newspaper we learn of the different lives of the exploited and those who live on exploitation. "Hundreds of people dressed in tattered rags, crawl ant-like over great mounds of mud. Barefoot children, some as young as 6, burrow deep into the hillside" (*Times*, 10 April) This is a description of the copper and cobalt mining in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where children are risking their lives for as



Congo miners

little as \$1 a day. On another page we read of the Duchess of Cornwall. "The Duchess wore the same red Phillip Treacy hat that she had worn the day after her wedding. Since her marriage she has developed a reputation for frugality. On their recent tour to Egypt, Saudi Arabia and India she wore the same outfit on three occasions."

Monks In Retreat

Socialists recognise we have a difficult task in convincing workers of the necessity of transforming capitalism to socialism. Some of our opponents claim that it is an impossible task and point to the tremendous influence of religious ideas. We claim that the advance of capitalism itself makes religious ideas less and less popular. Here is a recent example. "Monks and their monasteries go into retreat as recruits dwindle. Monks first arrived in Britain almost 2,000 years ago but they are now in danger of all but disappearing within a generation, figures suggest. A growing number of Roman Catholic monasteries are being sold as their ageing communities are hit by death and plunging vocations" (*Daily Telegraph*, 10 April).



Getting out of the habit

The Profit System

The whole purpose of production inside capitalism is to make a profit, if no market exists they sometimes have to invent one. "The practice of "disease-mongering" by the drugs industry is promoting non-existent illnesses or exaggerating minor ones for the sake of profits, according to a set of essays published by the open-access journal Public Library of Science Medicine" (*Times*, 1 April) Inside a socialist society we will deal with the real illnesses not frighten people about imagined ones in order to make a few quid. Capitalism is really a disgusting society. Let's get rid of it.

Judas The Obscure

A storm is brewing in academic circles as biblical scholars cross swords about the role of Judas in the bible story. "A papyrus manuscript discovered in the Egyptian desert was hailed yesterday as an authenticated copy of the lost Gospel of Judas - revealing that far from betraying Jesus, Judas sacrificed himself for his master" (*Times*, 7 April). Craig Evans, Payzant distinguished Professor of New Testament at Acadia Divinity College in Wolfville, Nova Scotia and Marvin Meyer, Grist Professor of Bible and Christian studies and Director of the Albert Schweitzer Institute of Chapman University, California are enthusiastic about the manuscript. Dr Simon Gathercole, a New

Free Lunch



by Rigg