

Learn Socialism Booklet

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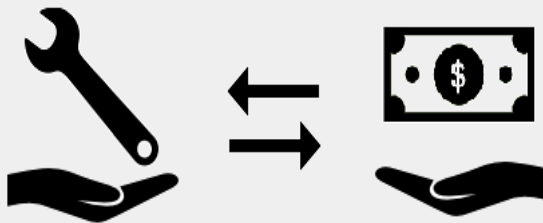
What Are Wages?

What are wages?

If you were to ask someone how much they get paid from their jobs, you'd get different answers depending on who they work for or which industry they're employed in.

A fast food worker might tell you they're paid \$8 or \$9 per hour; a bank worker might earn \$50k or \$60 per year; a steel fabrication worker might make \$15 or \$20 per hour.

But despite the different answers, these workers would all agree: their wages are the amount of money their employers (capitalists) pay them for a certain period or amount of work.



So it would seem pretty obvious that employers buy their workers' labor, and that workers sell their labor to their employers.

But what an employer actually buys is, more specifically, your **labor-power**.

Labor-power is a term meaning a person's **capacity to do work**, which is distinct from **labor**, which is the act of **doing the work**. Labor-power is potential, whereas labor is kinetic.

Labor-power



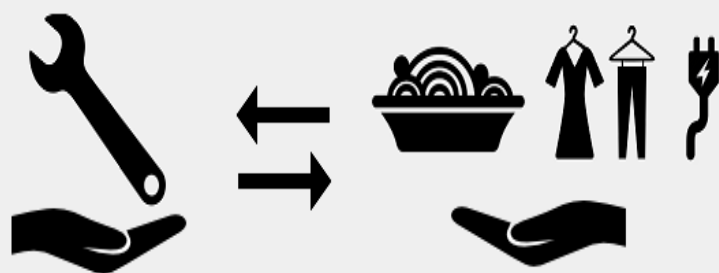
Labor

Once a worker's labor-power is bought, employers use it up by having their employee labor for a period of time, and during that time they will try to get the most labor out of the worker's labor-power as possible.

In the same way that an employer might buy 10 yards of fabric, 20 pounds of flour, or 30 sheets of steel, they also buy a certain amount of a worker's labor-power. But instead of being measured and bought in units of yards, pounds, or sheets, **labor-power is measured and bought in units of time**, most often by the hour (for hourly employees) or by the year (for salaried employees).

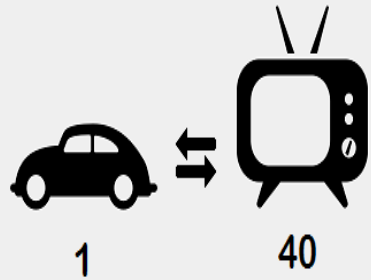
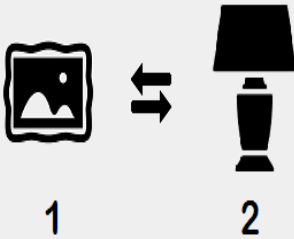
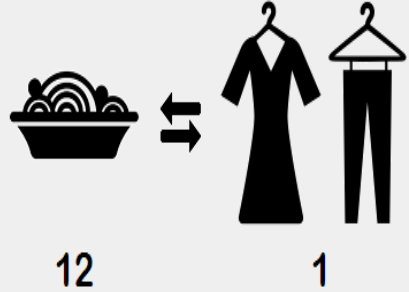
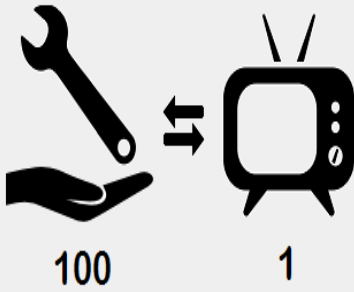
Labor-power, like fabric, flour, or steel, is a **commodity**. A commodity, in simple words, is anything which can be bought or sold in order to satisfy a want or a need.

A worker's primary **commodity**, which they can sell to satisfy the need of an employer, is their **labor-power**. In exchange for their labor-power, the worker receives money, which they can exchange for other commodities such as food, clothing, electricity, and so on.



So the exchange between employer and employee (**capitalist and worker**), is really an exchange of commodities: the capitalist receives a certain amount of the commodity labor-power to fulfill the needs of their business, and the worker receives a certain amount of commodities (in the form of money) to fulfill the basic wants and needs of life.

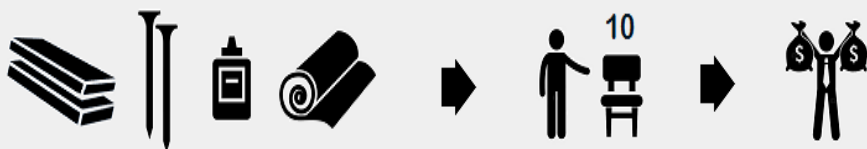
In this exchange, money is used as a placeholder, a way to represent the **exchange value** of labor-power. Exchange value simply means, "How much of **this commodity** can be exchanged for **that commodity**?"



Since an employer can't possibly have on-hand every commodity that a worker wants or needs, the exchange value of the worker's labor-power is **estimated** by the employer and paid to the worker **in the form of money**.

The exchange value of any commodity estimated in money is called its **price**. A **wage** is the exchange value of labor-power estimated in money, so the word "wage" is just a special word meaning the "price of labor-power", a special word for a special commodity which can only be found in human form.

Are a worker's wages actually a share in the product of a worker's labor?



Let's take for example a worker employed by a furniture manufacturer. The employer supplies their worker with the wood, nails, glue, and fabric, as well as the machinery and tools needed to perform the work. The worker gets busy and puts together ten chairs. The employer then takes the chairs and sells them.

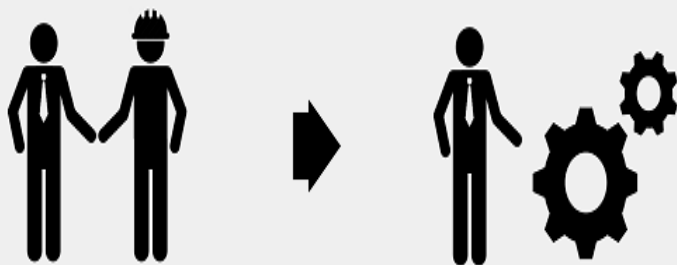
Are the worker's wages a share in the sale of those chairs?

No. Whether the employer sells the chairs for a profit, a loss, or only manages to break even, the worker will receive their wages, usually long before the sale of the product.

Employers don't pay employees from the money they receive after selling a commodity, but from the money they already have in their possession, with already existing capital.

The worker who built the chairs doesn't receive a share in the sale of the chairs because the worker does not own the chairs anymore than the materials or the tools used to build them.

The relationship between the capitalist employer and the worker is **not a business partnership** where two parties each receive a share in the product of their shared work. Instead, the capitalist buys a worker's labor-power in the same way that they buy materials or productive equipment such as machinery and tools, or any other instrument of labor.



A worker's labor-power, their capacity to perform work, isn't something which they can sell separately from themselves.

So to the capitalist, the worker is an instrument of labor.

Why does a worker sell their labor-power?

In order to live.



But turning labor-power into action (performing work) is the active expression of a person's own life. It is a **life-activity** which can often be the source of our greatest joy and self-expression.

This **life-activity** is what every worker sells, as a **commodity**, in order to receive what they need to continue to exist. Workers sell their very lives so that they can stay alive.

Work becomes not **a part** of life, but **a sacrifice** of life.

For the worker who has no choice but to sell portions of their life to another, **the product** of their **life-activity** is no longer the goal of their **life-activity**.



Chairs aren't what the furniture manufacturer's employees make for themselves; shirts aren't what the clothing manufacturer's employees make for themselves; meals aren't what a restaurant's cooks make for themselves.

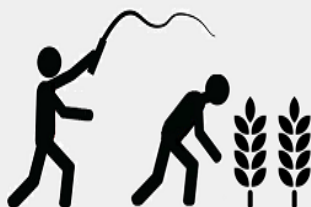
Workers produce these things for capitalists. What they produce for themselves is only one thing: **wages**.



For the worker who spends 8, 10, or 12 hours a day building chairs, sewing shirts, or cooking meals, do they consider that activity to be a manifestation of life? Do they consider that **to be** life?

Not often. Life for the worker **begins** where these activities end. Those long hours of work have no meaning except to earn a wage which enables them to finally leave work to enjoy some entertainment, to eat, to sleep, to spend a little time with their families.

Labor hasn't always been wage-labor, and labor-power hasn't always been sold as a commodity.



Under slavery, a slave doesn't sell their labor-power as a commodity. Slaves are themselves sold as commodities, and their labor-power belongs to the slave owner once and for all.

Under feudalism, a serf sells a portion of their labor-power to the owner of the land. Serfs don't receive wages from their lord; instead, the lord receives a tribute from the serf.



Under capitalism, a wage-worker has no choice but to sell portions of their life to those who are private owners of the means of production.

The worker appears to have a choice in the sale of their labor-power, because they can sometimes leave the employment of a particular capitalist if they want to. But for the worker whose only source of income is the sale of their labor-power, they can't leave the employment of the capitalist class as a whole, unless they give up their existence.

As a result, wage-workers don't belong to one particular capitalist, but to the entire capitalist class.

**Is Wage-Labor
a
Voluntary
Exchange?**

When a worker sells their labor-power to a capitalist for a wage, is it a "**voluntary** exchange"?

Workers under capitalism occasionally have the freedom to choose whether to sell their labor-power to this capitalist or that capitalist, so the worker appears to have a choice. But can they choose to **not sell** their labor-power (and therefore portions of their life) altogether?



In reality, if a worker weighs this option, they discover that the choice isn't a choice at all, but comes down to this: **work** (for the capitalist class) or face starvation and homelessness.

For the worker whose only source of income is the sale of their labor-power, **the choice has been removed** beforehand, especially if they have families or loved ones who also depend on their incomes.



This amounts to **coercion**: the practice of persuading someone to do something by the use of force or threats. In this case, workers face the threat of losing their means to survival. They don't experience this threat from one particular capitalist, but from **the entire capitalist class**.

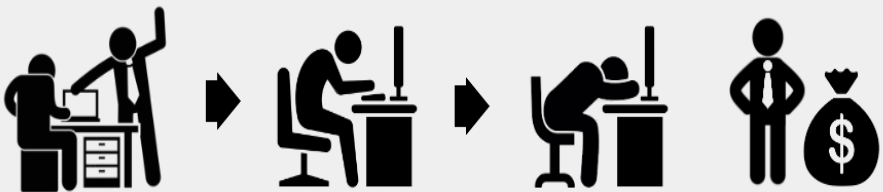
But haven't people **always** had to work for their survival?

Of course. Nature compels us to work in order to fulfill our needs. Work has always been and is still essential to our survival. It's also essential to the expression of who we are as individuals, and inseparable from our nature as a species.



Socialists are not at all opposed to working or being compelled to work **by nature**; they're opposed to being compelled to work **under the direction and rule of a dominant and exploitative class**. In capitalist societies, that dominant and exploitative class is the **capitalist class**.

By privately owning the **means of production**, the capitalist class exploits our **need to work for survival** for their own benefit, to ensure that we're compelled to work **for them**.



Rather than have workers labor for the benefit of the wealthy, socialism seeks to liberate workers so that they can work under their own rule, **through democracy**, so that the full value of their labor benefits themselves, their loved ones, their communities, and society as a whole.

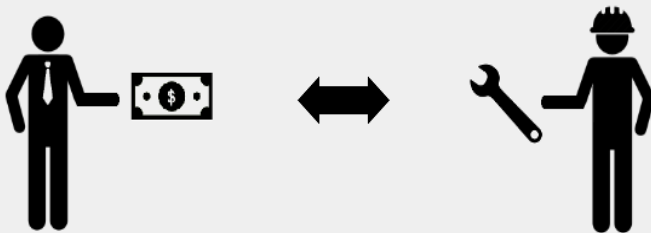
We all have to work to survive. We do this best when we **work together**, and we all live better when we work to fulfill the needs of **every person**.

Getting Paid
vs.
Getting Richer

Getting paid does not mean the same thing as **getting richer**.

Under capitalism, employees (**workers**) sell their labor-power to employers (**capitalists**) in exchange for wages.

You may have heard proponents of capitalism claim that this exchange between employer and employee is one where **both** are getting richer.



This **sounds true**, because both are receiving something which they previously did not have: the capitalist receives **labor**, the worker receives **money**.



But what each gets out of the exchange are actually two **very different things**.

When a capitalist receives labor from a worker, what they're receiving is an **increase** in the value of their **capital**.



Labor



is applied to



capital.

Capital is wealth in the form of money or other assets which is used to **generate more wealth**. Money used for investment and assets such as machinery, production equipment, facilities, company branding, company vehicles, patents, software, and so on are all examples of **capital**.

When a worker receives wages from a capitalist, what they're receiving is money which they will mostly use to purchase **consumables**.



Wages



are applied to



consumables.

Consumables are commodities (goods and services for sale) that are intended to be **used up and then replaced**. Commodities like food, water, gas, clothes, electricity, medicine, personal vehicles, rented housing, and so on are all examples of **consumables**.

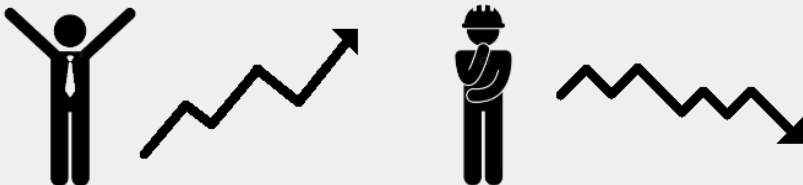
To become richer means to **increase** your wealth.

If a worker uses most or all of their wages to buy **consumables** (which they need to continue their existence, or to maintain a standard of living), then they are not getting richer. After those consumables are bought and used, the worker has no more wealth than they had to begin with.



The only party who is getting richer in this exchange is the **capitalist**, whose **capital** value is **increased by the labor of the worker**.

While capitalists get richer, **competition between capitalists** on the market and **competition between workers** within the labor market **pushes wages downward**, meaning workers have less and less money to spend on the consumables they need.



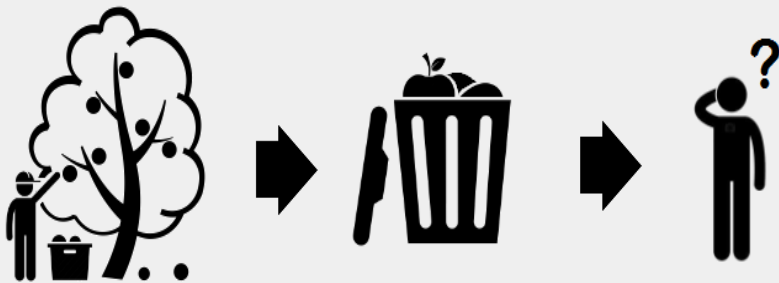
This is what is meant by the phrase, "The rich get richer, and **the poor get poorer**."

**The Market:
Capitalism's System
of
Distribution**

In capitalist economies there is a disconnection between **needs** and the fulfillment of needs.

There are people without homes, without food, without clothing, without healthcare, without electricity, without drinkable water; the list of **unfulfilled needs** is without end.

The production of goods and services is higher now than at any point in human history, which should be a good thing for everyone. And yet the waste of those goods and services has also achieved historic heights, and much of what societies produce never reach the people who need them.

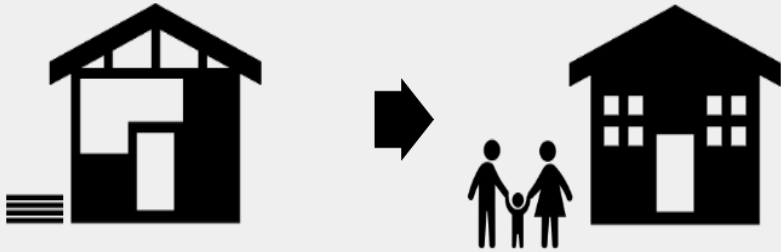


So, at a time in human history when production **could** fulfill the life needs of every person, **why doesn't it?**

Part of the answer can be found in capitalism's method of **distribution**.

Economics is primarily about two things:

1. **Production** (making things).
2. **Distribution** (getting those things to the people who need them).



The distribution of goods and services is essential to every economy. Distribution is how we determine **who** gets the things that are produced in society, and **how much** of those things they get.



In capitalist economies, **how much** of something gets distributed and **who** it gets distributed to is determined by one thing, a **system of distribution** called **the market**.

A market system of distribution is one where goods and services are traded in exchange for other goods and services.



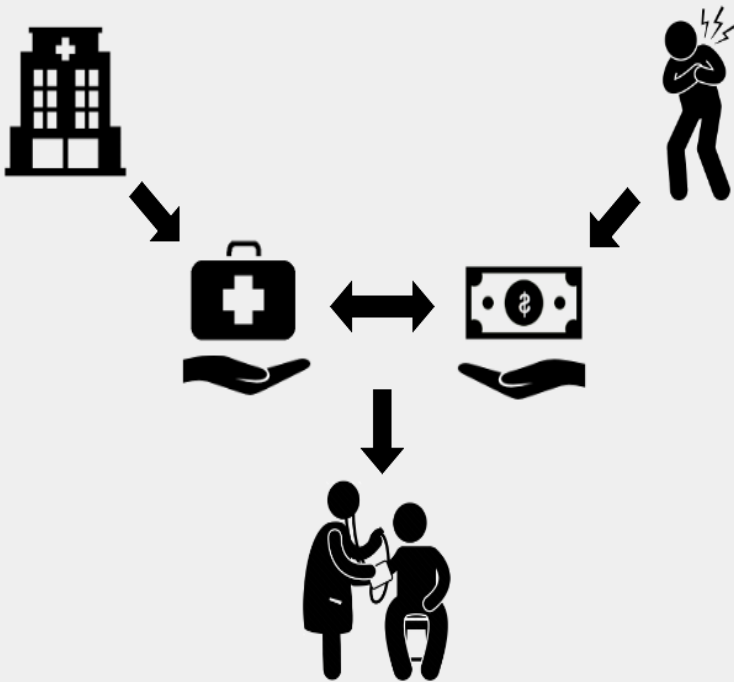
Although it's possible to exchange some goods and services through bartering, exchange within a capitalist market system is primarily done through the use of money.



Money is a medium of exchange; it's a facilitator which is intended to make the exchange of goods and services (called "commodities") easier by representing all of the potential commodities which it can be exchanged for.

The market system is how capitalism **distributes** goods and services. When society produces something, if a person wants or needs that something **distributed** to them, they have to **buy it** through the market system and the process of exchange.

The moment at which a person purchases something is the moment at which their want or need is **connected** with the thing that fulfills their want or need.



But this system of distribution--which everyone in capitalist societies relies on to connect their needs with the fulfillment of their needs--is also the **very same reason** why so many people's needs are never fulfilled.

One of the main disadvantages to the market system of distribution is that although everyone is **allowed to buy** (have distributed to them) **whatever they want or need**, they can only do so **if they have money**.

Without a sufficient amount money, the chain of distribution becomes **broken**, and the goods and services which societies produce don't reach the people who need them. People's needs become **disconnected from** the fulfillment of their needs.

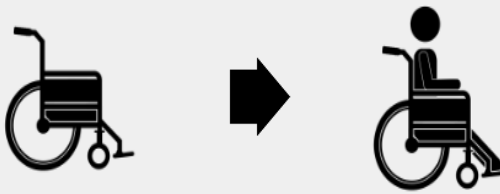


For example, in the U.S.:

3.5 million homeless people **are disconnected from** 18.6 million empty homes (a ratio of almost 6:1).

1 in 6 people face hunger and food insecurity and **are disconnected from** 60 million tons (or \$160 billion) worth of annually wasted produce foods.

If goods or services exist which people could **use** to fulfill their **needs**, then it would seem logical to most people that what a society should do is **distribute them to the people who need them** so that they can **use** them.



But in a capitalist market economy, goods and services aren't produced **for use**; they're produced **for sale**.

In a market economy, increasing and maximizing **profit**, rather than satisfying social **needs**, is the aim of all production.

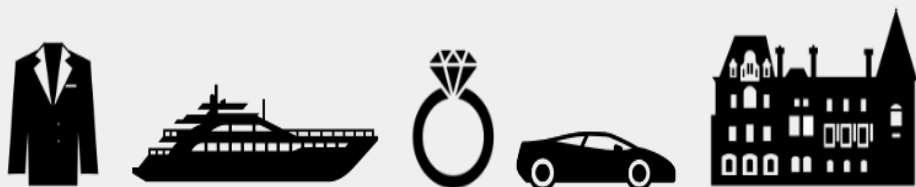


This difference in the **intent**--the main goal and purpose behind production--dramatically affects why we produce, what we produce, how we produce, when we produce, and for whom we produce.

Since production under capitalism is **guided** by the drive to obtain **money and profit**, workers are directed (by capitalists) to work on producing goods and services which will make the most **profit** (for capitalists); in other words, those things which people with the **most money** will want to buy.



Many things which societies **could** produce in order to provide for people's needs **aren't** produced at all, or are produced in insufficient quantity, while labor and resources are wasted on the production of **empty and pointless products**, or **luxuries** for the rich.



Many other things which societies **do** produce (as in the case of produce like fruits and vegetables), are often thrown away if capitalists decide they are unmarketable to **those with money**, even if those things are in acceptable condition and will satisfy the needs of **those who don't have the money** to buy them.

The way capitalism organizes production is also the very same reason why so many people **don't have enough money** to acquire the goods and services they need **in the first place**.

Because capitalists have to **compete** with one another to sell their commodities for the best price on the market, they must do everything they can to increase efficiency and produce at the lowest possible costs, or risk being **out-competed** and driven out of business.

REDUCE
COST



REDUCE
WAGES



REDUCED ACCESS TO
GOODS / SERVICES



Because capitalists need to reduce production costs to stay competitive, they experience pressure from the market to keep workers' wages **as low as possible**, and to terminate jobs which are not seen as profitable.

This means that workers have **less and less money** to buy (have distributed to them) the goods and services that they **need**, and which **they themselves produce**. Many workers have very little money at all, and many others are without jobs and money entirely.

Capitalism produces for sale, not use. But imagine a system of economics which does **the opposite**.

Imagine a system where societies produce for **use**.

Imagine a system where instead of workers competing against one another to sell their labor to **capitalists**, or being told by **capitalists** how to direct their labor, **workers come together** to decide **for themselves** how to direct **their own labor**, to decide what to produce and who to produce it for.



Imagine a system where instead of **competing for money**, members of societies **cooperate** and work together, not for the production of luxuries for the rich, not to produce empty, pointless, and redundant products, or to let the useful things they produce go to waste, but to plan production and distribution **for the fulfillment of every person's needs**.

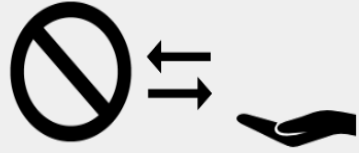
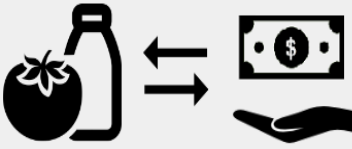


This is the type of system which socialism aims to achieve.

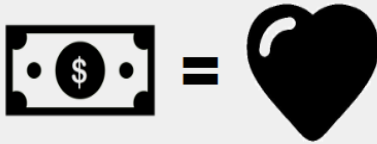
**7 Main
Characteristics
of a
Market Economy**

7 Main Characteristics of a Market Economy:

1. People buy whatever goods and services they want, **but only if they can pay for them with money.**



2. Money, therefore, becomes necessary for life.



3. People are forced to do or to sell anything in order to obtain money for their survival.



4. Increasing and maximizing profit rather than satisfying social needs is the aim of all production and investment.



7 Main Characteristics of a Market Economy:

5. Discipline over those who produce the wealth of society (workers) is exercised **by money**, by those who have **the most money**, and by the conditions of work that one must accept **in order to earn money**.



6. Rationing of scarce goods is based on who has more money rather than who has worked harder or longer or has a greater need for those goods.



7. Since people aren't technically kept from trying to get rich, and workers are paid for their labor, people acquire a false sense that each person receives (and has received) what they deserve economically, and that both the rich and the poor are responsible for their life circumstances.



These characteristics of a market economy reverberate throughout capitalist societies and, like falling dominos, cause many social and economic problems to escalate, such as: increasing inequality between the rich and poor, worsening exploitation of workers, growing unemployment, increasing political influence for those with more money, and an increase in economic crimes and acts of desperation.

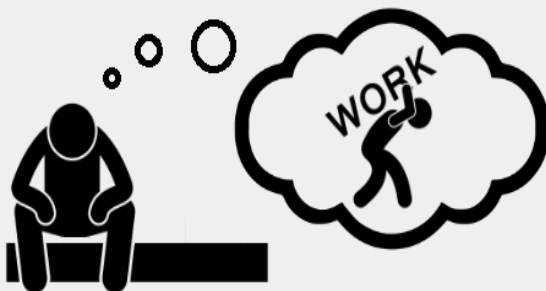
Alienation of Labor

When you think about the hours you spend at work, what sort of **feelings** do you experience? Fulfillment? Meaning? Connection? Belonging? Empowerment? Happiness?

Or do you experience the opposite of these? Does work feel **meaningless, hopeless, without purpose, or without end**? Do you feel **trapped**, as though you have **no control over your own life**? Does it leave you feeling **lonely, distant, or isolated**? Does it feel like an obstacle to your real hopes and dreams, to becoming **the person you want to be**?

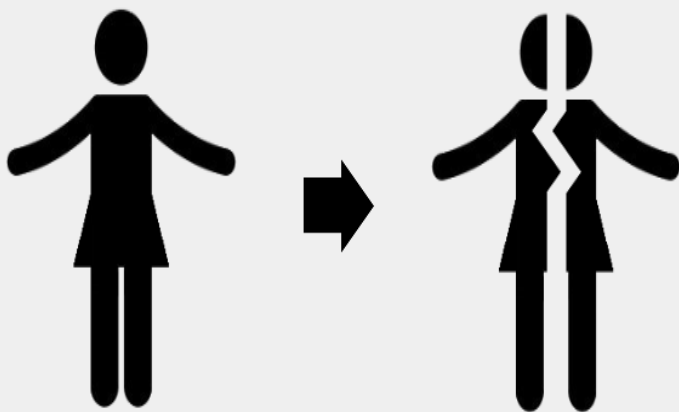


If you've ever felt the second way about your work, then there's a very good chance you've experienced something called **alienation**.



Alienation is a word which describes the **coming apart** of things that **belong together**, and which belong together in such a way that to separate them goes **against their design**.

When humans experience alienation, we experience a separation of **ourselves** from important parts of what it means to be human, the separation of which goes **against our human design** and can cause us to feel stressed, worried, lonely, dissatisfied, despaired, and even lacking in identity or meaning in life.

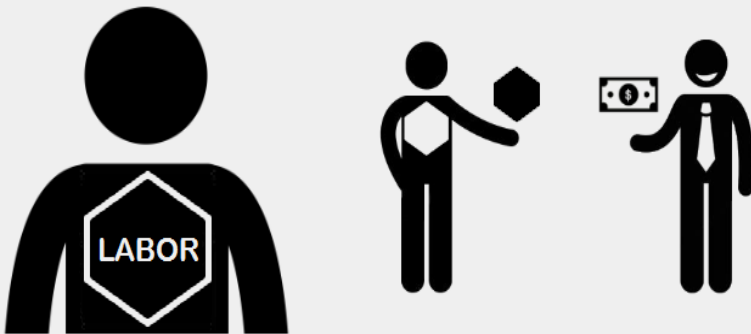


Alienation under capitalism occurs in many ways, but for wage-workers (those who sell their labor-power to capitalists in exchange for wages) it begins with the **alienation of labor**.

The Alienation of Labor

Labor (performing work) is a life-activity. A life-activity is the active expression of one's life through action. As a life-activity, labor has the potential to be one of our greatest sources of fulfillment, of enjoyment, of empowerment, of connection with others, and of realizing who we are as individuals.

For human beings, this life-activity is one of the most important parts of being human.



Under capitalism, wage-workers must sell this life-activity—one of the most important parts of their humanity—in order to survive. The result is a separation of ourselves from our labor (the coming apart of things which belong together). This separation is called the alienation of labor.

There are four main parts which make up the alienation of labor.

1. Alienation from the Products of Our Labor.
2. Alienation from the Labor Process.
3. Alienation from One Another.
4. Alienation from Self.

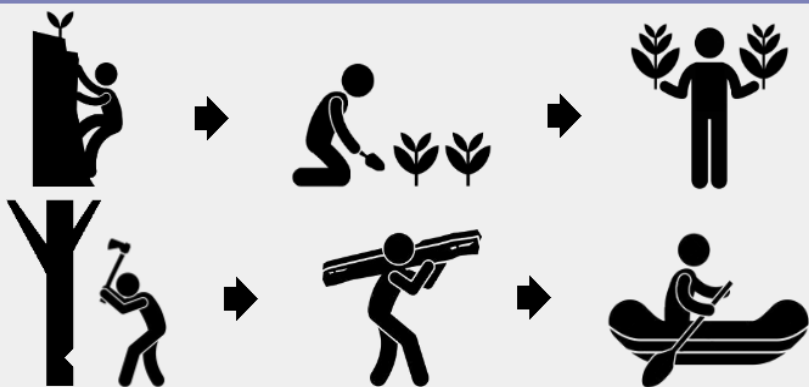




1. Alienation from the Products of Our Labor

Human beings produce in order to fulfill their needs; and not only for their physiological and safety needs, but also their psychological, social, emotional, self-esteem, and self-realization needs—needs which all humans have. When we produce for our own fulfillment, for the fulfillment of those we care about, and **according to our own design**, we **see ourselves** and others **reflected** in the products of our labor. The products of our labor **gain meaning** to us.

Humans also produce as a means of empowerment. Having the ability to transform the natural world with **our own labor** is a tool which empowers us to create **our own freedom**, and to gain control over **our own lives**.



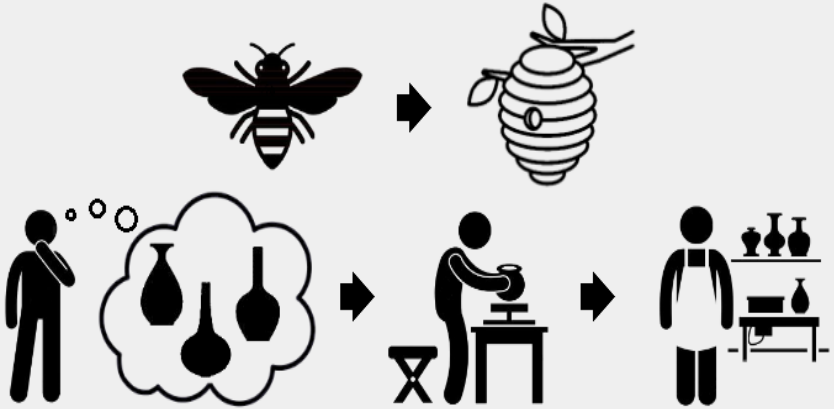
When wage-workers produce under capitalism, they produce things which are not of their own design nor meant for their own fulfillment. Because of this, wage-workers develop a sense of alienation (of no longer feeling connected) to the products of their labor. They do not recognize the products of their labor as being products of their own creation. The products of their labor lose meaning for them.



Under capitalism, the product of a wage-worker's labor is not only removed of meaning, but is also physically removed from their possession; what the worker produces is not owned by the worker, but by a capitalist. This means the removal of empowerment from the worker, which is then given to the capitalist. The product of the wage-worker's labor no longer serves to empower themselves, but to empower others with power over them. The product of their labor is no longer for their own liberation, but for their domination.

2. Alienation from the Labor Process

In nature, most species produce what they need **according to instinct**. Humans produce differently. Rather than produce entirely by instinct, we're driven to produce **freely** (of our own choosing) and **consciously** (of our own design). Humans learn, build upon the knowledge of others, and imagine their own designs and methods of production. For us, the process of labor isn't only a means to an end, but is **itself** a fulfilling and enjoyable source of **freedom** and **creative expression**.



Under capitalism, the option to produce **freely** is removed from wage-workers, who **are not** owners of the means of production, and so have **little to no choice** but to sell their labor-power to capitalists, who **are** owners of the means of production, in order to survive. Wage-workers no longer experience their labor as a **source** of freedom, but as the **removal** of freedom.

The option to produce **consciously** is removed from wage-workers, who have **little to no choice** but to produce according to the design and methods of their employer's choosing. Wage-workers no longer experience their labor as a **source** and **outlet** for their creativity, but as the **removal** of their creativity.

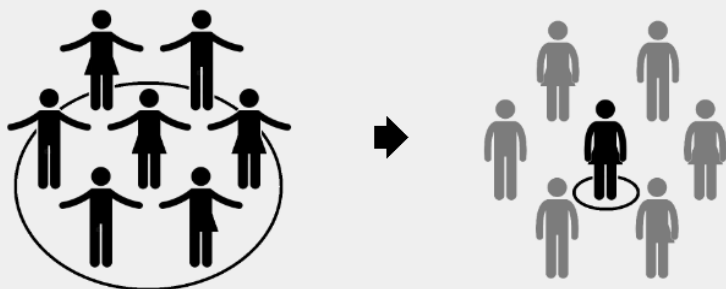
The option to choose the conditions under which they work (where they work, how many hours, sitting or standing, when to rest, etc.) is also removed from wage-workers, who have **little to no choice** but to accept whatever conditions are imposed upon them by their employer.

3. Alienation from One Another

3

Throughout the majority of human history, humans worked to produce not only for themselves, but for one another, to secure each other's safety, love, and belonging. This drive to care for and produce for one another is a psychological need which ensures our greater chances of survival when fulfilled. Working as an act of unity and shared responsibility towards others allows us to connect to one another as human beings.

Capitalism atomizes us. It reduces us from the social creatures we are to the level of individuals. It expects us to stand on our own, contrary to our design, and directs us to pursue individual self-interest above all.



To survive under capitalism, wage-workers compete against one another to sell their labor. Rather than work in cooperation to ensure each other's survival, wage-workers work in competition. Rather than seeking to uplift one another, to secure each other's safety, love, and belonging, wage-workers must perceive each other as potential threats to their survival, whose full-time jobs are to exclude, scrutinize, out-compete, push out, and push down other human beings.

Wage-workers are also often physically separated from one another, quarantined to their assigned work stations, cubicles, or offices in order to discourage and minimize social interaction while maximizing production (and profit) for the capitalists who employ them. As a result, wage-workers often see each other as strangers, and so feel isolated, lonely, and disconnected from one another.

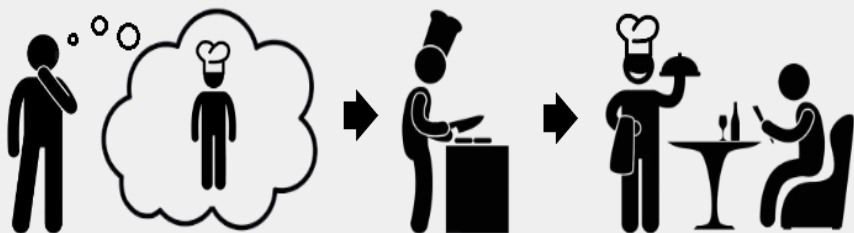
This alienation doesn't always end after work. Even during their off hours, wage-workers are often so stressed about their income and survival that they're unable to provide their loved ones with the emotionally attuned care and attention they need. They may be physically present, but become emotionally absent. This can be especially detrimental to children who need the constant interaction of the adults in their lives for their healthy development.

4. Alienation from Self

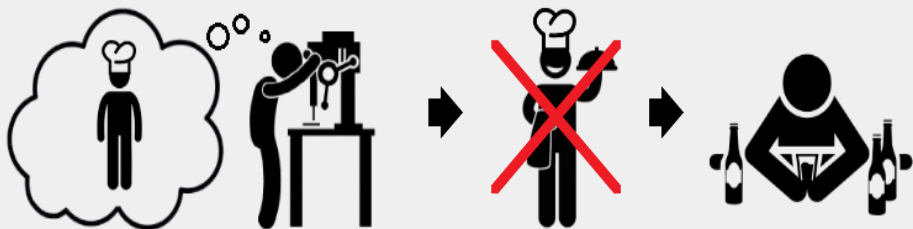
4

Humans don't only create commodities with their labor, they also create **themselves**. Our work can be our greatest means of realizing our deepest potential. It has the capacity to help us realize our innermost talents and interests, some of which we may not even be aware of.

What we do, what we create, and what we contribute to the world is directly connected to who we are, and so our labor gives us a way to understand and develop ourselves as individuals, to express ourselves and our full humanness.



Under capitalism, alienation from their labor means that wage-workers are alienated from the potential to realize themselves **through** their labor, and so they are more and more alienated from **themselves** and the opportunity to **develop themselves** according to their own hopes and dreams, possibly one of the worst effects of alienated labor.

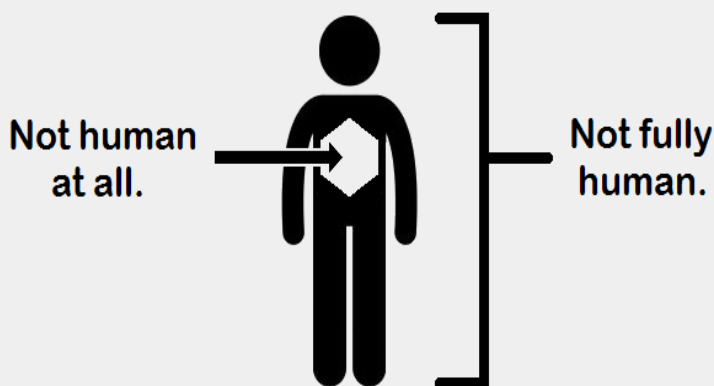


With the majority of their time, labor, and energy spent working to create wealth for capitalists, stressing about their income, and worrying about their survival, wage-workers more often than not have **little to nothing** left to dedicate to the pursuit of their own development and their own happiness. Alienated from their labor and themselves, wage-workers begin to feel more and more that **something is missing from their lives**, that life has become meaningless and unsatisfying. They work only to stay alive, **not to truly live**.

All of these add up to wage-workers becoming alienated from large parts of what it means **to be human**. The vital relationship between **humans** and their **labor** is among the most important aspects of our humanity; it's what distinguishes us from many other species, or from simple machines.

When wage-workers are forced by the conditions of a class system to sell their labor-power, to objectify a part of their humanity as though it were a commodity to be bought and owned by another, as though it were an object **separate from themselves** rather than **an essential part of themselves**, they are being **dehumanized**.

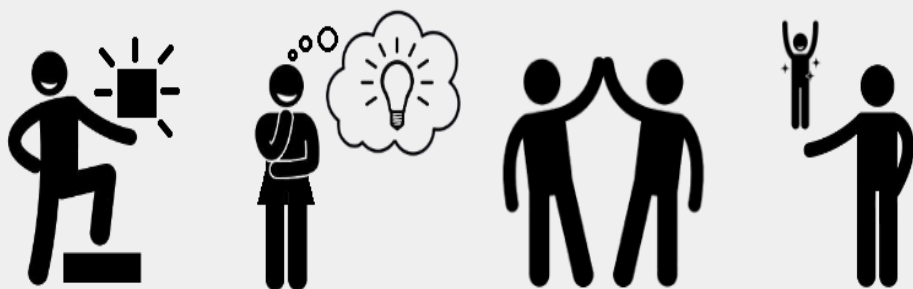
Dehumanization is what occurs when human qualities are removed from human beings, when human beings are regarded as being **not fully human** or **not human at all**. To consider a vital part of a human (their labor-power) as an object (a commodity) is to consider that part of them as being **not human at all**, and so is to regard that human as being **not fully human**.



For wage-workers, to not be considered as fully human means to not be treated as fully human, and to not experience life as a fully human life. For wage-workers who are alienated from their labor, human life exists only outside of their work, rather than inside their work. Their labor is not a part of life, or the expression of life, but a sacrifice of life.

Socialism aims to reduce, and one day even eliminate, alienated labor by placing the **working class** in power over the **means of production** (factories, workplaces, machinery, tools, infrastructure, natural resources, etc. used for production), and thus give workers ownership and control over their own labor, as well as the fruits of that labor.

By no longer being **coerced** by a **class system** to subject their labor to the dictatorial demands of their capitalist employers and the **capitalist class** as a whole, workers will be free to direct their labor according to their own choosing and to the needs of the **working class**, for their own benefit and for the benefit of all humanity, rather than for the profit of an exploitative class.



Socialism seeks to **restore** to the **working class** the products of their own labor, and their sense of pride, accomplishment, and empowerment in their labor; their ability to produce according to their own design, and under conditions of their own choosing; their connection with other human beings through their labor and their sense of solidarity and shared human destiny; and their natural right to develop themselves freely through their **labor**.



Glossary of Terms

Democratic Socialism is a term that often gets confused and misused in everyday political conversation. Countries like Norway, Sweden, and Denmark are often incorrectly called Democratic Socialist countries and praised for being a “mix of socialism and capitalism”, when actually they are **Social Democracies**. These two terms sound similar, but their meanings are very different.

Social Democracy

Social Democrats support a capitalist economic mode of production.

Social Democrats believe that capitalism can be “humanized” with economic and social interventions (such as regulations and social welfare programs) that promote equality and social justice.

Social Democrats aim to create policies within a capitalist system that lead to greater democratic and egalitarian outcomes aimed at curbing inequality, poverty, and oppression of underprivileged groups.

Social Democrats maintain that the goals of capitalism and the goals of democracy are compatible.

Social Democrats believe in **capitalism**: private ownership of the means of production.

Capital and the means of production are owned and dictated by the capitalist class: private owners who appropriate for themselves the wealth generated by the labor of others. Workers who are not owners of the means of production have no choice but to sell their labor-power to capitalists in return for wages which are less than the full value of their labor.

Democratic Socialism

Democratic Socialists support a socialist economic mode of production.

Democratic Socialists believe that capitalism can never be sufficiently “humanized”, and that equality between the exploiters and exploited in a capitalist society does not exist.

Democratic Socialists also aim to create policies that curb inequality, poverty, and oppression of underprivileged groups, but recognize that these issues can never be fully resolved under capitalism, that reforms will eventually only worsen the problems within capitalism, and that capitalism must ultimately be replaced with socialism.

Democratic Socialists view capitalism as inherently incompatible with the values of democracy, and believe that true democracy can only be achieved with socialism.

Democratic Socialists believe in **socialism**: social (worker) ownership of the means of production.

Capital and the means of production are socially owned and democratically controlled by the working class rather than private owners. Workers are no longer required to sell their labor-power to capitalists in exchange for wages, but instead retain (either individually or collectively) the full value of wealth created by their own labor.

Democratic Socialism is not a mix of capitalism and socialism; neither is Social Democracy, which is just capitalism with regulations and good intentions. Democratic Socialists are still socialists; they are simply socialists who believe in achieving socialism by operating within the democratic framework already in place within our political systems.

Recommended Continued Reading

Titles	Authors
Wage Labor and Capital	Karl Marx
Value, Price, and Profit	Karl Marx
Manifesto of the Communist Party	Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels
Capital (Das Kapital)	Karl Marx

