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Some social anarchists believe, like a lot of socialists, that as long as the state exists it should provide education for all. Democratic socialist and progressive candidates have run on universal cradle to college education. While this can make education slightly more accessible, it is still under the control of the state educational system and based on their propaganda. Doing something similar to what Mike Gravel proposed when he ran for president as a Libertarian Party candidate, and having a cradle to college universal voucher system, might allow for greater access alongside greater choice and autonomy. Such a voucher could go to fund a private student-led learning program or unschooling or even an anarchist free school or homeschooling cooperative. It could fund day care, trade school, community college, online schooling, certification programs, and so much more. Universal education partnered with a UBI would allow people to seek an education for the sake of an education and truly explore their passions, instead of worrying about a career. By pursuing their highest educational potential and putting those skills to use exploring new fields and making new developments in art, philosophy, science, technology, and more, people could contribute to the continual advancement and hopeful improvement of society. Whether or not we get vouchers, we can create educational cooperatives, unschool our kids or our comrades' kids, and advance the accessibility of the many alternatives which exist to traditional public educational propaganda and discipline.

With a focus on SMI2LE, RAW embraces anarcho-transhumanism and promotes, again, ideas which mirror Aaron Bastani's Fully Automated Luxury Communism in spirit. I can appreciate this drive, especially in terms of medical science and technology, environmental survival, and human advancement and collective flourishing. I believe that the RICH Economy plan holds up as a decent guideline, alongside David Graeber's and Aaron Bastani's, as possible paths toward achieving the end of work as we know it.

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it in slow steps, raising the minimum income perhaps 5 per cent per year for the first ten years. And, after the massive cybernation caused by Stage I has produced a glut of consumer goods, experimentally raise it further and faster toward the level of a true National Dividend."

Gradually raising the UBI to a livable level is usually the goal of most UBI plans and the RICH Economy is no different. This is a good idea, especially as automation continues to progress. Of course, this should only be a temporary solution with individual and cooperative agorist entrepreneurship, the sharing and circular economies, collective ownership of automated businesses, and communization of post-scarcity resources being more important long term goals as we work towards completely dissolving the state, and the UBI, along with it.

Stage IV

is a massive investment in adult education, for two reasons.

People can spend only so much time fucking, smoking dope, and watching TV; after a while they get bored. This is the main psychological objection to the workless society, and the answer to it is to educate people for functions more cerebral than fucking, smoking dope, watching TV, or the idiot jobs most are currently toiling at.

There are vast challenges and opportunities confronting us in the next three or four decades, of which the most notable are those highlighted in Tim Leary's SMI2LE slogan — Space Migration, Intelligence Increase, Life Extension. Humanity is about to enter an entirely new evolutionary relationship to space, time, and consciousness. We will no longer be limited to one planet, to a brief, less-than-a-century lifespan, and to the stereotyped and robotic mental processes by which most people currently govern their lives. Everybody deserves the chance, if they want it, to participate in the evolutionary leap to what Leary calls "more space, more time, and more intelligence to enjoy space and time.""

is to establish either the Negative Income Tax or the Guaranteed Annual Income, so that the massive unemployment caused by Stage I will not throw hordes of people into the degradation of the present welfare system."

The Negative Income Tax has been suggested by libertarian economist Milton Friedman as well as many Green Party candidates and progressives and would be a great first step if it were to be implemented and includes the implementation of a UBI, or Guaranteed Annual Income, as part of the plan. Whether or not we go the Negative Income Tax route, UBI should be implemented as Stage I states in its own terms. UBI has gained popularity with candidates including former Democratic presidential candidates Tulsi Gabbard and, most notably, Andrew Yang bringing it to popular attention and many more beginning to demand one in the face of the pandemic and related economic disasters. Andrew Yang suggested funding a UBI via a Value Added Tax (VAT) whereas others, such as the Georgists or geoists, advocate other funding methods, such as a Land Value Tax in the case of geoists, Carbon Taxes, or a Fair Tax which mixes a regressive flat tax with a UBI. Obviously some of those plans are more desireable and/or popular than others for various reasons.

Stage III

is to gradually, experimentally, raise the Guaranteed Annual Income to the level of the National Dividend suggested by Douglas, Bucky Fuller, and Ezra Pound, which would give every citizen the approximate living standard of the comfortable middle class. The reason for doing this gradually is to pacify those conservative economists who claim that the National Dividend is "inflationary" or would be practically wrecking the banking business by lowering the interest rate to near-zero. It is our claim that this would not happen as long as the total dividends distributed to the populace equaled the Gross National Product. But since this is a revolutionary and controversial idea, it would be prudent, we allow, to approach

Part 1: Bullshit Jobs

A little over 100 years since anarchists, socialists, communists, libertarians, and radical unionists in the so-called united states successfully won the long, difficult, and bloody battle for the eight hour workday, we are still overworked and underpaid despite technological advancements necessitating less and less labor to maintain the same quality of life.

To quote Bertrand Russell's *In Praise of Idleness*:

> "Modern technique has made it possible to diminish enormously the amount of labor required to secure the necessaries of life for everyone. This was made obvious during the war. At that time all the men in the armed forces, and all the men and women engaged in the production of munitions, all the men and women engaged in spying, war propaganda, or Government offices connected with the war, were withdrawn from productive occupations. In spite of this, the general level of well-being among unskilled wage-earners on the side of the Allies was higher than before or since. The significance of this fact was concealed by finance: borrowing made it appear as if the future was nourishing the present. But that, of course, would have been impossible; a man cannot eat a loaf of bread that does not yet exist. The war showed conclusively that, by the scientific organization of production, it is possible to keep modern populations in fair comfort on a small part of the working capacity of the modern world. If, at the end of the war, the scientific organization, which had been created in order to liberate men for fighting and munition work, had been preserved, and the hours of the week had been cut down to four, all would

have been well. Instead of that the old chaos was restored, those whose work was demanded were made to work long hours, and the rest were left to starve as unemployed. Why? Because work is a duty, and a man should not receive wages in proportion to what he has produced, but in proportion to his virtue as exemplified by his industry.

This is the morality of the Slave State, applied in circumstances totally unlike those in which it arose. No wonder the result has been disastrous. Let us take an illustration. Suppose that, at a given moment, a certain number of people are engaged in the manufacture of pins. They make as many pins as the world needs, working (say) eight hours a day. Someone makes an invention by which the same number of men can make twice as many pins: pins are already so cheap that hardly any more will be bought at a lower price. In a sensible world, everybody concerned in the manufacturing of pins would take to working four hours instead of eight, and everything else would go on as before. But in the actual world this would be thought demoralizing. The men still work eight hours, there are too many pins, some employers go bankrupt, and half the men previously concerned in making pins are thrown out of work. There is, in the end, just as much leisure as on the other plan, but half the men are totally idle while half are still overworked. In this way, it is insured that the unavoidable leisure shall cause misery all round instead of being a universal source of happiness. Can anything more insane be imagined?"

Anton Wilson (RAW), helped to popularize a related economic theory known as the RICH Economy.

According to RAW, The RICH Economy "was devised by inventor L. Wayne Benner (co-author with Timothy Leary of Terra II) in collaboration with the present author [RAW]. It's a four-stage program to retool society for the cybernetic and space-age future we are rapidly entering. RICH means Rising Income through Cybernetic Homeostasis." The RICH Economy, put in relation to the previous essay, is a path towards achieving our Fully Automated Luxury Gay Space Anarcho-Communist future.

Stage I

is to recognize that cybernation and massive unemployment are inevitable and to encourage them. This can be done by offering a $100,000 reward to any worker who can design a machine that will replace him or her, and all others doing the same work. In other words, instead of being dragged into the cybernetic age kicking and screaming, we should charge ahead bravely, regarding the Toilless Society as the Utopian goal humanity has always sought."

This could be achieved via the state, as more or less suggested in RAW's essay through his fictional example, or via the free market with corporations and other businesses offering rewards for such employee contribution toward the advancement of job automation. Either way, this is an interesting idea that has merit and is worth discussing in relation to the implementation of a UBI. Of course others, such as those in the tech industry, are also incentivized by the market to work toward the automation of various industries and jobs they have never otherwise worked. So offering these types of rewards is something that should be encouraged among businesses on the free market, but a state tax-funded reward as a means towards accelerating automation is an unnecessary step in my opinion.

Stage II

worker and member owned cooperatives as advocated by Murray Rothbard in *Confiscation and the Homestead Principle*.

With increased worker-ownership, we will see a decrease in backlash against automation since workers will still maintain ownership stake and a secure income even if their job is replaced by automation. Instead they share in the remaining labor and everyone benefits from reduced hours. This actually encourages workers to look for more innovative ways to save labor. As these businesses and former government services increasingly automate, they transition from worker-ownership to member-ownership and the profit from them becomes a sort of UBI based on the value generated via the use of automated labor.

The less labor needed to continue normal operations efficiently means that we can all benefit from shorter workdays and use that free time to pursue other passions. Some may indeed just wish to enjoy life, vacation, and consume, but others will pursue passions in the arts, sciences, technology, healthcare, and other fields which may advance us further as a society. Society will not only survive but will likely flourish in a world without work.

Part 2: The RICH Economy

In my previous essay Bullshit Jobs and the End of Work (As We Know It) I discussed the economic phenomenon that David Graeber coined as "bullshit jobs," how the (transitionary) solution he suggested was to establish a universal basic income (UBI) and embrace automation leading to the end of work as we know it, and how this mirrors the ideas of fully automated luxury communism. Anarchist science fiction writer, Robert

It's this coercive promotion of work as a virtue that continues us down the path of linking the obtainment of necessary resources with the forced subjagation of the lower classes as workers. Because income and the obtainment of resources is tied to the idea of a job, we are forced to seek out jobs against our best interest. This creates a situation of "unemployment" and "underemployment." Whereas unemployment is a neutral statement of fact, underemployment is a concept based on a lack of livable income. This situation should be solved by a better distribution of the resources we already produce, instead of continuing to focus on creating jobs even when there is no useful labor to be done.

Due to unemployment, underemployment, and other various socio-economic reasons, people fight for the creation of even more jobs, supporting such ideas as a federal job guarantee or other wasteful and bloated ideas, creating busywork and other pointless jobs. These types of jobs have been dubbed "bullshit jobs" by the late anthropologist and anarchist David Graeber in his book *Bullshit Jobs: A Theory*. Often even those with useful jobs find themselves doing meaningless busywork or pretending to work in order to maintain the tradition of the 40 hour work week, thus engaging in "bullshit" work as well, even if to a lesser degree than those whose entire jobs are bullshit.

As Adam Connover put it in the Adam Ruins Everything episode *Work*:

> "[T]hat [40 hours per week] schedule you're clinging to is an outdated relic that does nothing but exhaust your employees and hurt your business… Most of that time is wasted. A recent survey found that employees spent only 45% of the workday on primary job duties…
>
> It used to be way worse. 100 years ago the average worker clocked 10 hour days, six days a week

> [with Church on Sundays for many]… Back then most workers rarely had a single day all to themselves. Luckily, there were two groups that fought for the modern Saturday: labor unions and Jewish people. And two two groups had an unlikely ally: the founder of Ford Motor Company, Henry Ford…
>
> Henry Ford was super racist and he despised labor unions, so he didn't help change the work week out of love for these guys… Ford didn't give an F150 about his employees' leisure time. He helped create Saturday because he knew it would be good for business. And as technology improved and productivity rose, everyone thought the work week would keep getting shorter.
>
> In 1930, the economist John Maynard Keynes predicted, "By 2030, we will be working for as little as 15 hours a week." Even Richard Nixon agreed, "The four day work week is inevitable within our time…" And for a while, it looked like they might have been right. For decades work hours steadily decreased, but in the 70s, americans started working longer and longer hours. We now work nearly four more weeks a year than we did in 1979."

This is because, despite increased automation in various industries, we have stuck to traditional workerist views of labor as a virtue in itself. Instead of trading in the benefits of automation and other labor saving technologies for the luxury of a shorter work schedule, modern capitalism continues to force workers to toil needlessly to justify their value and thus we have such an abundance of bullshit jobs. As Graeber described them, bullshit jobs are, "a form of paid employment that is so completely pointless, unnecessary, or pernicious that even the

> unnecessary. Establishing a UBI would allow us to rid the market of "bullshit jobs" and focus on more meaningful work. People will still work to solve problems in their communities because it actively improves our lives as a communal species. People will do the work necessary for the survival of themselves and those they care about and as a communal species, we realize we can better survive by helping our communities. In fact, with fewer people tied up in "bullshit jobs," we will have more people with the free time to focus on the work needed to survive and solve other problems which may come up. People will also be inspired to create new technology as proven by the open source movement and others. These things do not happen because we are coerced into them, they happen because we actively enjoy doing these things and/or see the benefit to them getting done. And sure we will see a shift away from mass production of rather pointless goods and accessories and towards everyday necessities, cherished luxuries, and artistic ventures. However, freed from the coercion of "work or starve," these goods and services that we find most valuable will influence the dynamics of supply and demand and the market will naturally shift accordingly. In other words, a market more free of coercion tends to be better at reading actual market signals and functions better. After all the freer the market, the freer the people."

UBI could also become independent of the state if we mutualize public utilities, parks, hospitals, and other useful state projects as well as every business and organization propped up by state funding, subsidies, or political lobbying, turning ownership over to the workers and community members to become

automated companies while the rest of us are unemployed and starving. Now of course not every industry can be automated in such a way, but the point is that with the threat of automation displacing workers, focusing on bargaining power only helps those workers not currently automated away. For everyone else, they just have to hope that the bargaining power of the employed is used to benefit the working class as a whole (including the unemployed) and not just themselves and their co-workers.

But the entire notion that UBI doesn't increase bargaining power is completely untrue. The main reason most people hesitate getting involved with labor unions is due to fear of losing their job in retaliation. This fear is automatically less immediate if one has a UBI to fall back on to meet their basic needs. This means that the labor movement would have more freedom than ever. And workers who wish not to work under a boss can pull their UBIs together with others in their communities to form worker cooperatives, collectives, partnerships, and sole proprietorships. Between a newly unleashed labor movement and a newfound capital base, workers are much less tied to the whims of their bosses and are freer to shape the economic situations they desire than they would otherwise be able to under our current system.

Lastly, UBI has been criticized for giving people no incentive to work. While it does lessen the coercive aspects of working since you will still have your basic needs taken care of regardless and you are not put in a "work or die" scenario, that is in no way a bad thing. Such coercion is completely

employee cannot justify its existence even though, as part of the conditions of employment, the employee feels obliged to pretend that this is not the case."

To quote David Graeber's essay *On the Phenomenon of Bullshit Jobs: A Work Rant*:

> "[R]ather than allowing a massive reduction of working hours to free the world's population to pursue their own projects, pleasures, visions, and ideas, we have seen the ballooning of not even so much of the 'service' sector as of the administrative sector, up to and including the creation of whole new industries like financial services or telemarketing, or the unprecedented expansion of sectors like corporate law, academic and health administration, human resources, and public relations. And these numbers do not even reflect on all those people whose job is to provide administrative, technical, or security support for these industries, or for that matter the whole host of ancillary industries (dog-washers, all-night pizza delivery) that only exist because everyone else is spending so much of their time working in all the other ones.
>
> These are what I propose to call 'bullshit jobs'.
>
> It's as if someone were out there making up pointless jobs just for the sake of keeping us all working. And here, precisely, lies the mystery. In capitalism, this is precisely what is not supposed to happen. Sure, in the old inefficient socialist states like the Soviet Union, where employment was considered both a right and a sacred duty, the system made up as many jobs as they had to (this is why in Soviet department stores it took three clerks to

> sell a piece of meat). But, of course, this is the sort of very problem market competition is supposed to fix. According to economic theory, at least, the last thing a profit-seeking firm is going to do is shell out money to workers they don't really need to employ. Still, somehow, it happens.
>
> While corporations may engage in ruthless downsizing, the layoffs and speed-ups invariably fall on that class of people who are actually making, moving, fixing and maintaining things; through some strange alchemy no one can quite explain, the number of salaried paper-pushers ultimately seems to expand, and more and more employees find themselves, not unlike Soviet workers actually, working 40 or even 50 hour weeks on paper, but effectively working 15 hours just as Keynes predicted, since the rest of their time is spent organizing or attending motivational seminars, updating their facebook profiles or downloading TV box-sets."

Graeber breaks bullshit jobs into roughly five categories:

1. "flunkies, who serve to make their superiors feel important, e.g., receptionists, administrative assistants, door attendants

2. goons, who oppose other goons hired by other companies, e.g., lobbyists, corporate lawyers, telemarketers, public relations specialists

3. duct tapers, who temporarily fix problems that could be fixed permanently, e.g., programmers repairing shoddy code, airline desk staff who calm passengers whose bags do not arrive

nomic mobility, it would also allow them much more freedom in how to spend the money they receive. Of course this could be harmful to those currently receiving more benefits than what the UBI would pay out, however there is a solution that has been proposed. Andrew Yang has suggested that instead of fully replacing one system with another, we offer people a choice between the two systems. This way they would not stack on top of each other costing the taxpayers tons of extra money, but rather people would be given a choice between heavily restricted means-tested benefits or cold hard cash with no strings attached. As long as the UBI is set at a livable level, most people would likely choose the cash, allowing the current welfare system to fade into obscurity. Partnering a UBI with other solutions in the fields of healthcare and schooling access can also go a long way towards making sure individuals don't fall through the cracks.

The other major criticism from the left is based upon the notion that we should be fighting to increase our bargaining power whereas UBI serves more to make us into passive consumers. This idea is still based on increasingly outdated modes of production. While there will always be other work to do, job retraining programs have largely proven to be ineffective at helping a large majority of manual laborers and other skilled and unskilled workers retrain for much more high tech jobs such as coding. With the current rate of automation, the idea of worker-ownership within our current economic model increasingly looks like a handful of capitalists owning fully

Some may find their advocacy for a UBI to be antithetical to anarchist ideals, but in my previous essay, *An Anarchist Case for UBI*, I stated:

> "As an alternative to our current welfare system, a UBI would be far less bureaucratic and costly to administer. Currently, there are over 70+ means-tested welfare programs in existence. These include everything from renter's assistance to food stamps to medical coverage. Currently, however, these programs come with a whole host of qualifications which require one to stay within certain criteria in order to maintain benefits. The problem with this model is that it limits opportunities for growth. One must manage their economic life in such a way that they either truthfully meet the criteria by way of turning down opportunities for advancement, or one must arrange their work to be off the records entirely which also limits one's job opportunities even if less so. To top that off, the benefits received come with a multitude of restrictions. Someone getting $200 in food stamps per month doesn't have the option to use said money to invest in a business opportunity which would supply them with way more grocery money than food stamps alone while also offering a chance at more long term stability. Hell, someone on food stamps can't even buy hot food legally which doesn't make much sense for those who are homeless and receiving such benefits.
>
> So collapsing these various means-tested welfare programs into one program which everyone qualifies for regardless of income level or other such qualifiers would not only allow people more eco-

4. box tickers, who create the appearance that something useful is being done when it is not, e.g., survey administrators, in-house magazine journalists, corporate compliance officers

5. taskmasters, who manage—or create extra work for—those who do not need it, e.g., middle management, leadership professionals"

The standard of the 40 hour work week, with minimum wage calculated based on that yet still not even set to a true living wage, leaves people dependent on work and motivates the unemployed and underemployed to fight for job creation, no matter how pointless or destructive. From supporting the creation of new fossil fuel pipelines, to clear cutting forests to build more needless chain stores, to fighting for a state-enforced federal jobs guarantee, to being misled into supporting corporatist "job creator" propaganda that tricks one into simping for the rich.

But who gets to decide what qualifies as bullshit work? To quote Graeber's essay again:

> "Now, I realise any such argument is going to run into immediate objections: 'who are you to say what jobs are really "necessary"? What's necessary anyway? You're an anthropology professor, what's the "need" for that?' (And indeed a lot of tabloid readers would take the existence of my job as the very definition of wasteful social expenditure.) And on one level, this is obviously true. There can be no objective measure of social value.
>
> I would not presume to tell someone who is convinced they are making a meaningful contribution to the world that, really, they are not. But what

about those people who are themselves convinced their jobs are meaningless? Not long ago I got back in touch with a school friend who I hadn't seen since I was 12. I was amazed to discover that in the interim, he had become first a poet, then the front man in an indie rock band. I'd heard some of his songs on the radio having no idea the singer was someone I actually knew. He was obviously brilliant, innovative, and his work had unquestionably brightened and improved the lives of people all over the world. Yet, after a couple of unsuccessful albums, he'd lost his contract, and plagued with debts and a newborn daughter, ended up, as he put it, 'taking the default choice of so many directionless folk: law school.' Now he's a corporate lawyer working in a prominent New York firm. He was the first to admit that his job was utterly meaningless, contributed nothing to the world, and, in his own estimation, should not really exist.

There's a lot of questions one could ask here, starting with, what does it say about our society that it seems to generate an extremely limited demand for talented poet-musicians, but an apparently infinite demand for specialists in corporate law? (Answer: if 1% of the population controls most of the disposable wealth, what we call 'the market' reflects what they think is useful or important, not anybody else.) But even more, it shows that most people in these jobs are ultimately aware of it. In fact, I'm not sure I've ever met a corporate lawyer who didn't think their job was bullshit. The same goes for almost all the new industries outlined above. There is a whole class of salaried professionals that, should you meet them at par-

In reference to Aaron Bastani's book *Fully Automated Luxury Communism*, luxurycommunism.com states:

> "Automation, rather than undermining an economy built on full employment, is instead the path to a world of liberty, luxury and happiness. Technological advance will reduce the value of commodities – food, healthcare and housing – towards zero. Improvements in renewable energies will make fossil fuels a thing of the past. Asteroids will be mined for essential minerals. Genetic editing and synthetic biology will prolong life, virtually eliminate disease and provide meat without animals."

In theory, we can indeed eliminate bullshit jobs, embrace automation, and shorten the individual work schedule quite significantly and quite easily if not for the fact that wages are not at living wage levels for a lot of people as is and cutting their hours without compensation of some sort would hurt them tremendously. Increased worker ownership would help solve some of this problem since, as Wolff pointed out, worker cooperatives tend not to fire workers, and thus if hours were shortened due to a decrease in needed labor, the workers would still receive their same pay for the same amount of production despite the decrease in needed labor. But we currently have a low rate of employee ownership in our current society and even increasing that will still leave the unemployed without the means to survive. This has led many workers and self-proclaimed ethical consumers to fight against automation in various industry operations as well as embrace bullshit jobs as a means towards the meaningless idea of full employment. So what is the alternative?

This is where the idea of a universal basic income (UBI) comes in as a possible temporary measure as advocated by both David Graeber, Aaron Bastani, and many others.

> of getting around it, and the point is they've done well. There is a professor at the Leeds University in England, School of Business; her name is Virginie Pérotin. She is the leading business school expert whose research is to compare worker co-ops and capitalist enterprises. Pérotin: find her, look at her work – it's available through the internet. She does the best job of literally comparing, and her research has an unambiguous conclusion: worker co-ops are more efficient production mechanisms than top-down hierarchical capitalist enterprises."

The idea of using worker cooperatives as a means to achieve communist outcomes via market means is mirrored in the concept of Venture Communism which seeks to invest in cooperatives and outcompete capitalist firms. Of course to give worker cooperatives a real fighting chance, we have to abolish the web of state subsidies, occupational licensing, and corporatist regulations that all work together to limit market competition and disproportionately advantage capitalist business models. This sort of market-based means not only mirrors but compliments the ideas and goals of anarcho-syndicalists, who also advocate the abolition of existing labor laws. These laws, although ostensibly meant to empower labor against capital, actually subject the labor movement to bureaucratic structures that dull the power of organized labor.

Between the ideas of venture communism, syndicalism, and the cooperative, P2P, open source, and sharing and circular economy movements, there seems to be a radical push to communize various markets and industries, and those tendencies would be further unleashed within a truly freed market system.

With the embrace of automation alongside cooperative ownership, we could move towards the reality of fully automated luxury communism via the means of the free market.

ties and admit that you do something that might be considered interesting (an anthropologist, for example), will want to avoid even discussing their line of work entirely (one or t'other?) Give them a few drinks, and they will launch into tirades about how pointless and stupid their job really is.

This is a profound psychological violence here. How can one even begin to speak of dignity in labour when one secretly feels one's job should not exist? How can it not create a sense of deep rage and resentment. Yet it is the peculiar genius of our society that its rulers have figured out a way, as in the case of the fish-fryers, to ensure that rage is directed precisely against those who actually do get to do meaningful work. For instance: in our society, there seems a general rule that, the more obviously one's work benefits other people, the less one is likely to be paid for it. Again, an objective measure is hard to find, but one easy way to get a sense is to ask: what would happen were this entire class of people to simply disappear? Say what you like about nurses, garbage collectors, or mechanics, it's obvious that were they to vanish in a puff of smoke, the results would be immediate and catastrophic. A world without teachers or dock-workers would soon be in trouble, and even one without science fiction writers or ska musicians would clearly be a lesser place. It's not entirely clear how humanity would suffer were all private equity CEOs, lobbyists, PR researchers, actuaries, telemarketers, bailiffs or legal consultants to similarly vanish. (Many suspect it might markedly improve.) Yet apart from

a handful of well-touted exceptions (doctors), the rule holds surprisingly well.

Even more perverse, there seems to be a broad sense that this is the way things should be. This is one of the secret strengths of right-wing populism. You can see it when tabloids whip up resentment against tube workers for paralysing London during contract disputes: the very fact that tube workers can paralyse London shows that their work is actually necessary, but this seems to be precisely what annoys people. It's even clearer in the US, where Republicans have had remarkable success mobilizing resentment against school teachers, or auto workers (and not, significantly, against the school administrators or auto industry managers who actually cause the problems) for their supposedly bloated wages and benefits. It's as if they are being told 'but you get to teach children! Or make cars! You get to have real jobs! And on top of that you have the nerve to also expect middle-class pensions and health care?'

If someone had designed a work regime perfectly suited to maintaining the power of finance capital, it's hard to see how they could have done a better job. Real, productive workers are relentlessly squeezed and exploited. The remainder are divided between a terrorised stratum of the, universally reviled, unemployed and a larger stratum who are basically paid to do nothing, in positions designed to make them identify with the perspectives and sensibilities of the ruling class (managers, administrators, etc.)—and particularly its financial avatars—but, at the same time, foster a simmering resentment against anyone whose work has clear

So in Mondragon, for example, workers decided that the highest paid workers should not get more than somewhere between six and eight times what the lowest paid worker does. They don't want terrible inequality. What kind of inequality? The kind we have here in the United States, with a typical relationship between a corporate CEO and the worker at the bottom is more like 300:1 not six or eight to one.

If you want to do something about the inequality that haunts the capitalist world this is how you do it. They've already done it. If you visit the city of Mondragon, you'll see that they don't have the inequality that other cities, even in Spain, will show you unfortunately in great detail.

They've done other things: they have decided that the workers will elect, hire and fire the supervisors – the exact reverse of capitalism. Once a year the workers in Mondragon meet and they discuss and assess the supervisors, and if they're not happy with the supervisors they fire them. The workers fire their supervisors not the other way around. and they've been doing this for the entire 60-70 years that they have grown and been successful.

So here you have it: worker coops that are small, worker coops that are large. I picked, of course, those that have been very successful. I'm not suggesting that if you have a worker co-op you have no problems. Worker coops fail just like capitalist enterprises do but it's a completely different experience when they fail. They handle it in different ways, they have mechanisms to cope better than I think capitalist firms do. When there's a downturn, they don't fire people, they work other ways

Arizmendi gave a speech to his parish and he made a joke; he said if we wait for a capitalist to come here to employ us, to give us jobs, we will all die of old age before that happens. So if we don't want to die sooner than later we're going to have to become our own employer and with that idea he set up – under the protection of the Roman Catholic Church – a worker co-op in a little city of Mondragon in the north of Spain.

Okay now we go to the present: the Mondragon Cooperative Corporation today is the seventh largest corporation in Spain. Its total employment is over a 100 000 workers; not all of them, but a large portion of them work in cooperatives – worker cooperatives. And in those cooperatives they have figured out, not only how to grow from six to a 100 000 in 2018 (today), they have competed against many capitalist enterprises in that part of Spain and they have won in those competitive struggles, because it turns out that a co-op can be just as efficient – often more efficient – in producing goods and services for the minimum cost as a capitalist factory can. And in part, that's because in a worker co-op all the workers, being owners and runners of the enterprise, have much more of a commitment to making it efficient than the workers in a capitalist enterprise ever do. That's why capitalists have to use up money to have counseling and music and benefits, trying to get workers to have a feeling towards something they don't control. That is not necessary in a worker co-op because it's not a feeling, it's the reality that they control the situation.

> and undeniable social value. Clearly, the system was never consciously designed. It emerged from almost a century of trial and error. But it is the only explanation for why, despite our technological capacities, we are not all working 3–4 hour days."

Basically, bullshit jobs are enabled via corporate subsidies, corporatist protectionist regulations, corporate lobbying, business licensing, and the myriad of other laws and regulations that limit competition and reinforce oligarchical economic and political control. So under a truly stateless freed market system we could eliminate bullshit jobs altogether and decrease the barriers of entry to engage in increased individual and cooperative entrepeneurship. While abolishing bullshit jobs won't free us completely from work, it will greatly reduce the amount of work we need to do.

To again quote from *In Praise of Idleness*:

> "In a world where no one is compelled to work more than four hours a day, every person possessed of scientific curiosity will be able to indulge it, and every painter will be able to paint without starving, however excellent his pictures may be. Young writers will not be obliged to draw attention to themselves by sensational pot-boilers, with a view to acquiring the economic independence needed for monumental works, for which, when the time at last comes, they will have lost the taste and capacity. Men who, in their professional work, have become interested in some phase of economics or government, will be able to develop their ideas without the academic detachment that makes the work of university economists often seem lacking in reality. Medical men will have

> the time to learn about the progress of medicine, teachers will not be exasperatedly struggling to teach by routine methods things which they learnt in their youth, which may, in the interval, have been proved to be untrue."

But going beyond Graeber's call for the abolition of bullshit jobs, some anarchists have gone further in advocating for the abolition of work altogether, at least as we've grown to understand it. To quote from Bob Black's famous essay *Abolish Work*:

> "The alternative to work isn't just idleness. To be ludic is not to be quaaludic. As much as I treasure the pleasure of torpor, it's never more rewarding than when it punctuates other pleasures and pastimes. Nor am I promoting the managed time-disciplined safety-valve called "leisure;" far from it. Leisure is nonwork for the sake of work. Leisure is time spent recovering from work and in the frenzied but hopeless attempt to forget about work. Many people return from vacations so beat that they look forward to returning to work so they can rest up. The main difference between work and leisure is that at work at least you get paid for your alienation and enervation.
>
> I am not playing definitional games with anybody. When I say I want to abolish work, I mean just what I say, but I want to say what I mean by defining my terms in non-idiosyncratic ways. My minimum definition of work is forced labor, that is, compulsory production. Both elements are essential. Work is production enforced by economic or political means, by the carrot or the stick. (The carrot is just the stick by other means.)

are they going to divide up the income amongst themselves? How much of a surplus for expansion are they going to remove from their income rather than give it to themselves (or) use it?

All of those decisions, normally done by the capitalist minority at the top, is instead decided and debated collectively and democratically. They have been stunningly successful either as successful or more successful than the capitalistically organized bakeries, cheese shops and restaurants in that area by the way, a few miles north of them in California is something called the Alvarado Street Bakery – even more famous, a much larger entity – has been equally successful in becoming one of the major bread making factories and distributors in northern California.

I could give you many more examples,the number of worker coops is growing now as interest expands in them, but what all of these examples are, is relatively small. These are companies that often start with 10 or 20 employees getting together and then they grow. Let me switch then to a large example. In this case I'm going to pick the most famous in the world because it's something that people interested in this topic should explore: it's called the Mondragon Cooperative Corporation. It's located in the Basque Country, in the northern part of Spain just below the Pyrenees Mountains that separate Spain from France.

Back in 1956 this part of northern Spain was very very poor, it had become even poorer because of the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s and then World War II. So by 1956, this was a desperately poor part of Spain, and a local Catholic priest named Father

That makes perfect sense – that is indeed how capitalism works, but that's not what I mean when I talk about cooperatives. Nobody has the authority to tell you who can and cannot call what they do cooperative, I'm just saying that what I mean and what the people like me mean about worker cooperatives is that they cooperate in organizing the work. And basically what that means is: no hierarchy, no board of directors, supervisors, capitalists at the top deciding what you produce, how you produce, where you produce, and what to do with the profits. Instead you democratize the workplace; you say that all the people that come to work in a store, or an office, or a factory together – one-person one-vote – make all those decisions. That's all. It's not very complicated and as I say it has existed from time immemorial.

Let me end then with a couple of examples, one small and one large. And I will choose as my examples existing businesses today that I personally have visited, just so you know where I get my information from. One of these businesses is located in the Bay Area of San Francisco, California. It is a bakery and a cheese store that has expanded and is now also a pizza restaurant. It employs over a 100 people, it has expanded over the last 30 years that it has existed because it is stunningly successful. It is located in San Francisco, Berkeley and other communities in that part of California; everything they do is collective. They all get together and make the decisions: What are they going to sell? What are they going to produce? How are they going to do it? What technology are they going to use? What are their hours? How

But not all creation is work. Work is never done for its own sake, it's done on account of some product or output that the worker (or, more often, somebody else) gets out of it. This is what work necessarily is. To define it is to despise it. But work is usually even worse than its definition decrees. The dynamic of domination intrinsic to work tends over time toward elaboration. In advanced work-riddled societies, including all industrial societies whether capitalist or "communist," work invariably acquires other attributes which accentuate its obnoxiousness…

Such is "work." Play is just the opposite. Play is always voluntary. What might otherwise be play is work if it's forced. This is axiomatic. Bernie de Koven has defined play as the "suspension of consequences." This is unacceptable if it implies that play is inconsequential. The point is not that play is without consequences. This is to demean play. The point is that the consequences, if any, are gratuitous. Playing and giving are closely related, they are the behavioral and transactional facets of the same impulse, the play-instinct. They share an aristocratic disdain for results. The player gets something out of playing; that's why he plays. But the core reward is the experience of the activity itself (whatever it is). Some otherwise attentive students of play, like Johan Huizinga (*Homo Ludens*), *define* it as gameplaying or following rules. I respect Huizinga's erudition but emphatically reject his constraints. There are many good games (chess, baseball, Monopoly, bridge) which are rule-governed but there is much more to play than game-playing. Conversation, sex, dancing,

travel—these practices aren't rule-governed but they are surely play if anything is. And rules can be *played with* at least as readily as anything else…

It is now possible to abolish work and replace it, insofar as it serves useful purposes, with a multitude of new kinds of free activities. To abolish work requires going at it from two directions, quantitative and qualitative. On the one hand, on the quantitative side, we have to cut down massively on the amount of work being done. At present most work is useless or worse and we should simply get rid of it. On the other hand — and I think this the crux of the matter and the revolutionary new departure — we have to take what useful work remains and transform it into a pleasing variety of game-like and craft-like pastimes, indistinguishable from other pleasurable pastimes except that they happen to yield useful end-products. Surely that shouldn't make them *less* enticing to do. Then all the artificial barriers of power and property could come down. Creation could become recreation. And we could all stop being afraid of each other.

I don't suggest that most work is salvageable in this way. But then most work isn't worth trying to save. Only a small and diminishing fraction of work serves any useful purpose independent of the defense and reproduction of the work-system and its political and legal appendages. Thirty years ago, Paul and Percival Goodman estimated that just five percent of the work then being done — presumably the figure, if accurate, is lower now — would satisfy our minimal needs for food,

> would make the cost of accounting greater than the production cost, if any). This parallels a major strain of thinking among socialists in the free culture/open source/P2P movement. They see the communist mode of production practiced by Linux and other open-source developers as the kernel of a new post-capitalist, post-scarcity social formation. Much as capitalist production started out in tiny islands inside the larger feudal economy and later became the core of a new, dominant social formation, commons-based peer production is the core around which the post-capitalist economy will eventually crystallize."

Marxist economist Richard Wolff has promoted the cooperative movement as a primary means to build a basis for communism in the so-called united states. To quote *Richard Wolff on Worker Cooperatives versus Capitalist Enterprises & the History of the Labour Movement*:

> "[C]ooperative is a name given to many different things – when I talk about cooperatives I'm talking about cooperation in the work process. I'm not talking about cooperation in the purchasing process. For example, here in the United States we have many thousands of what we call "food co-ops". What that is is a collection of people who get together and form a cooperative to buy their daily food. They cooperate in buying it, they don't cooperate in producing it, they don't cooperate even in the store that makes it available to you. They cooperate in the act of purchasing and they recognize that if large groups of people purchase together they can buy things for less money than they would have to pay if they buy individually.

But while demanding the socialization of rent and profit may be frowned upon by capitalists as "class warfare," they're totally OK with the socialization of their operating costs. The main reason modern production is so centralized and both firms and market areas are so large, is that the state has subsidized transportation infrastructure at the expense of the general public, and made it artificially cheap to ship goods long distance. This makes large-scale, inefficient producers artificially competitive against small-scale producers in the local markets they invade with the state's help. That's why we have giant retail chains driving local retailers out of business, using their own internalized "warehouses on wheels" wholesale operations to distribute goods manufactured by sweatshops in China.

The past forty years' loss of biodiversity, deforestation, and CO2 pollution has occurred because the ecosystem as a whole is an unowned dump, rather than being a regulated commons. The state typically preempts "ownership" of forests, mineral deposits, etc. — often to the prejudice of indigenous peoples already inhabiting the areas — and then gives privileged access to extractive industries that are able to strip mine them of resources without internalizing the actual costs incurred.

As surprising as it might seem, there's a strong parallel between this free market vision of abundance and the Marxist vision of full communism. Carl Menger wrote of economic goods (i.e., goods subject to economic calculation because of their scarcity) becoming non-economic goods (i.e., that their abundance and near-zero production cost

clothing and shelter. Theirs was only an educated guess but the main point is quite clear: directly or indirectly, most work serves the unproductive purposes of commerce or social control. Right off the bat we can liberate tens of millions of salesmen, soldiers, managers, cops, stockbrokers, clergymen, bankers, lawyers, teachers, landlords, security guards, ad-men and everyone who works for them. There is a snowball effect since every time you idle some bigshot you liberate his flunkies and underlings also. Thus the economy *implodes*.

Forty percent of the workforce are white-collar workers, most of whom have some of the most tedious and idiotic jobs ever concocted. Entire industries, insurance and banking and real estate for instance, consist of nothing but useless paper-shuffling. It is no accident that the "tertiary sector," the service sector, is growing while the "secondary sector" (industry) stagnates and the "primary sector" (agriculture) nearly disappears. Because work is unnecessary except to those whose power it secures, workers are shifted from relatively useful to relatively useless occupations as a measure to ensure public order. Anything is better than nothing. That's why you can't go home just because you finish early. They want your *time*, enough of it to make you theirs, even if they have no use for most of it. Otherwise why hasn't the average work week gone down by more than a few minutes in the last sixty years?…

Finally, we must do away with far and away the largest occupation, the one with the longest hours, the lowest pay and some of the most tedious tasks

> around. I refer to *housewives* doing housework and child-rearing. By abolishing wage-labor and achieving full unemployment we undermine the sexual division of labor. The nuclear family as we know it is an inevitable adaptation to the division of labor imposed by modern wage-work. Like it or not, as things have been for the last century or two it is economically rational for the man to bring home the bacon, for the woman to do the shitwork and provide him with a haven in a heartless world, and for the children to be marched off to youth concentration camps called "schools," primarily to keep them out of Mom's hair but still under control, but incidentally to acquire the habits of obedience and punctuality so necessary for workers. If you would be rid of patriarchy, get rid of the nuclear family whose unpaid "shadow work," as Ivan Illich says, makes possible the work-system that makes it necessary. Bound up with this no-nukes strategy is the abolition of childhood and the closing of the schools. There are more full-time students than full-time workers in this country. We need children as teachers, not students. They have a lot to contribute to the ludic revolution because they're better at playing than grown-ups are. Adults and children are not identical but they will become equal through interdependence. Only play can bridge the generation gap.
>
> I haven't as yet even mentioned the possibility of cutting way down on the little work that remains by automating and cybernizing it."

The fact is, due to increased automation, we are seeing a decrease in the amount of labor needed to maintain our cur-

her own livelihood), she can target the price to the consumer's ability to pay.

That form of enclosure, via "intellectual property," is why Nike can pay a sweatshop owner a few bucks for a pair of sneakers and then mark them up to $200. Most of what you pay for isn't the actual cost of labor and materials, but the trademark.

The same is true of artificial scarcity of land and capital. As David Ricardo and Henry George observed, there is some rental accruing on the natural scarcity of land as a non-reproducible good. There's considerable disagreement among Georgists, mutualist occupancy-and-use advocates, and other libertarians as to whether and how to remedy those natural scarcity rents. But artificial scarcity, based on the private enclosure and holding out of use of vacant and unimproved land, or on quasi-feudal landlord rights to extract rent from the rightful owners actually cultivating arable land, is an enormous source of illegitimate rent — arguably the major share of total land rent. And regardless of any other steps we may be advocate, principled libertarians are all in favor of abolishing this artificial scarcity and — at the very least — letting market competition from vacant land drive down land rent to its natural scarcity value.

We favor, as well, opening up the supply of credit to unfettered market competition, abolishing entry barriers for the creation of cooperative lending institutions, and abolishing legal tender laws of all kinds, so that market competition will eliminate a major portion of total interest on money.

> Life will become a game, or rather many games, but not — as it is now—a zero/sum game."

The freed market elimination of bullshit jobs and work as Bob Black defines it, tracks well with the ideas put forth in Kevin Carson's *Who Owns the Benefit? The Free Market As Full Communism*:

> "Why haven't the cybernetic revolution and the vast increases in productivity from technological progress resulted in fifteen-hour work weeks, or many necessities of life becoming too cheap to meter? The answer is that economic progress is enclosed as a source of rent and profit.
>
> The natural effect of unfettered market competition is socialism. For a short time the innovator receives a large profit, as a reward for being first to the market. Then, as competitors adopt the innovation, competition drives these profits down to zero and the price gravitates toward the new, lower cost of production made possible by this innovation (that price including, of course, the cost of the producer's maintenance and the amortization of her capital outlays). So in a free market, the cost savings in labor required to produce any given commodity would quickly be socialized in the form of reduced labor cost to purchase it.
>
> Only when the state enforces artificial scarcities, artificial property rights, and barriers to competition, is it possible for a capitalist to appropriate some part of the cost savings as a permanent rent. The capitalist, under these conditions, is enabled to engage in monopoly pricing. That is, rather than being forced by competition to price her goods at the actual cost of production (including

rent quality of life. Of course, we should always strive to want more than just our current quality of life and thus wish to have time to focus on societal improvement, but many who could contribute to such things are often busy doing bullshit work instead. That bullshit work not only consumes our time, leaving us little left over to work on our passion projects, but also makes us more prone to injuries which may further interfere with those activities. As Adam Connover put it, "[A]ll those extra hours are actually terrible for your business. Overtime increases the rate of mistakes and safety mishaps among industrial workers by 61%. And longer hours also lower the scores on cognitive performance tests which means you are literally working your employees stupid."

Different industries are automating at differing speeds and to varying degrees. Some industries are nearly fully automated with only a small crew of people needed to maintain the machines, whereas others are partially automated, cutting down on the number of physical workers needed to handle the job efficiently. Certain industries still consist primarily of manual labor, and will continue to, out of ease, necessity, or preference. And of course there are new jobs being created in new industries every day, and as technology and society progresses that will forever be the case, but still nowhere near enough to justify a 40 hour work week without the creation of bullshit jobs and busywork.

The abolition of bullshit jobs and the automation of labor is merely the start. There will still be necessary labor to be done in addition to the labor we voluntarily wish to pursue out of passion. From there, it's a matter of replacing the concept of "work" as we currently understand it with "play" as Bob Black and others have envisioned:

> "What I really want to see is work turned into play. A first step is to discard the notions of a "job" and an "occupation." Even activities that already have

some ludic content lose most of it by being reduced to jobs which certain people, and only those people, are forced to do to the exclusion of all else. Is it not odd that farm workers toil painfully in the fields while their air-conditioned masters go home every weekend and putter about in their gardens? Under a system of permanent revelry, we will witness the Golden Age of the dilettante which will put the Renaissance to shame. There won't be any more jobs, just things to do and people to do them.

The secret of turning work into play, as Charles Fourier demonstrated, is to arrange useful activities to take advantage of whatever it is that various people at various times in fact enjoy doing. To make it possible for some people to do the things they could enjoy, it will be enough just to eradicate the irrationalities and distortions which afflict these activities when they are reduced to work. I, for instance, would enjoy doing some (not too much) teaching, but I don't want coerced students and I don't care to suck up to pathetic pedants for tenure.

Second, there are some things that people like to do from time to time, but not for too long, and certainly not all the time. You might enjoy baby-sitting for a few hours in order to share the company of kids, but not as much as their parents do. The parents meanwhile profoundly appreciate the time to themselves that you free up for them, although they'd get fretful if parted from their progeny for too long. These differences among individuals are what make a life of free play possible. The same principle applies to many other areas of activity, especially the primal ones.

Thus many people enjoy cooking when they can practice it seriously at their leisure, but not when they're just fueling up human bodies for work.

Third — other things being equal — some things that are unsatisfying if done by yourself or in unpleasant surroundings or at the orders of an overlord are enjoyable, at least for a while, if these circumstances are changed. This is probably true, to some extent, of all work. People deploy their otherwise wasted ingenuity to make a game of the least inviting drudge-jobs as best they can. Activities that appeal to some people don't always appeal to all others, but everyone at least potentially has a variety of interests and an interest in variety. As the saying goes, "anything once." Fourier was the master at speculating about how aberrant and perverse penchants could be put to use in post-civilized society, what he called Harmony. He thought the Emperor Nero would have turned out all right if as a child he could have indulged his taste for bloodshed by working in a slaughterhouse. Small children who notoriously relish wallowing in filth could be organized in "Little Hordes" to clean toilets and empty the garbage, with medals awarded to the outstanding. I am not arguing for these precise examples but for the underlying principle, which I think makes perfect sense as one dimension of an overall revolutionary transformation. Bear in mind that we don't have to take today's work just as we find it and match it up with the proper people, some of whom would have to be perverse indeed…