

Space for Notes



**Karl Marx**  
***Capital* Volume One**

**Part III:**  
**The Production of Absolute Surplus-Value**

**Chapter Ten:**  
**The Working-Day**

**Section 5 - The Struggle for a Normal Working-Day.**  
**Compulsory Laws for the**  
**Extension of the Working-Day**  
**from the Middle of the 14th to the End of the**  
**17th Century**

"What is a working-day? What is the length of time during which capital may consume the labour-power whose daily value it buys? How far may the working-day be extended beyond the working-time necessary for the reproduction of labour-power itself?" It has been seen that to these questions capital replies: the working-day contains the full 24 hours, with the deduction of the few hours of repose without which labour-power absolutely refuses its services again. Hence it is self-evident that the labourer is nothing else, his whole life through, than labour-power, that therefore all his disposable time is by nature and law labour-time, to be devoted to the self-expansion of capital. Time for education, for intellectual development, for the fulfilling of social functions and for social intercourse, for the free-play of his bodily and mental activity, even the rest time of Sunday (and that in a country of Sabbatarians!) [72] — moonshine! But in its blind unrestrainable passion, its were-wolf hunger for surplus-labour, capital oversteps not only the moral, but even the merely physical maximum bounds of the working-day. It usurps the time for growth, development, and healthy maintenance of the body. It steals the time required for the consumption of fresh air and sunlight. It higgles over a meal-time, incorporating it where possible with the process of production itself, so that food is given to the labourer as to a mere means of production, as coal is supplied to the boiler, grease and oil to the machinery. It reduces the sound sleep needed for the restoration, reparation, refreshment of the bodily powers to just so many hours of torpor as the revival of an organism, absolutely exhausted, renders essential. It is not the normal maintenance of the labour-power which is to determine the limits of the working-day; it is the greatest possible daily expenditure of labour-power, no matter how diseased, compulsory, and painful it may be, which is to determine the limits of the labourers' period of repose. Capital cares nothing for the length of life of labour-power. All that concerns it is simply and solely the maximum of labour-power, that can be rendered fluent in a working-day. It attains this end by shortening the extent of the labourer's life, as a greedy farmer snatches increased produce from the soil by robbing it of its fertility.

The capitalistic mode of production (essentially the production of surplus-value, the absorption of surplus-labour), produces thus, with the extension of the working-day, not only the deterioration of human labour-power by robbing it of its normal, moral and physical, conditions of development and function. It produces also the premature exhaustion and death of this labour-power itself. [73] It extends the labourer's time of production during a given period by shortening his actual life-time.

But the value of the labour-power includes the value of the commodities necessary for the reproduction of the worker, or for the keeping up of the working-class. If then the unnatural extension of the working-day, that capital necessarily strives after in its unmeasured passion for self-expansion, shortens the length of life of the individual labourer, and therefore the duration of his labour-power, the forces used up have to be replaced at a more rapid rate and the sum of the expenses for the reproduction of labour-power will be greater; just as in a machine the part of its value to be reproduced every day is greater the more rapidly the machine is worn out. It would seem therefore that the interest capital itself points in the direction of a normal working-day.

The slave-owner buys his labourer as he buys his horse. If he loses his slave, he loses capital that can only be restored by new outlay in the slave-mart. But "the rice-grounds of Georgia, or the swamps of the Mississippi may be fatally injurious to the human constitution; but the waste of human life which the cultivation of these districts necessitates, is not so great that it cannot be repaired from the teeming preserves of Virginia and Kentucky. Considerations of economy, moreover, which, under a natural system, afford some security for humane treatment by identifying the master's interest with the slave's preservation, when once trading in slaves is practiced, become reasons for racking to the uttermost the toil of the slave; for, when his place can at once be supplied from foreign preserves, the duration of his life becomes a matter of less moment than its productiveness while it lasts. It is accordingly a maxim of slave management, in slave-importing countries, that the most effective economy is that which takes out of the human chattel in the shortest space of time the utmost amount of exertion it is capable of putting forth. It is in tropical culture, where annual profits often equal the whole capital of plantations, that Negro life is most recklessly sacrificed. It is the agriculture of the West Indies, which has been for centuries prolific of fabulous wealth, that has engulfed millions of the African race. It is in Cuba, at this day, whose revenues are reckoned by millions, and whose planters are princes, that we see in the servile class, the coarsest fare, the most exhausting and unremitting toil, and even the absolute destruction of a portion of its numbers every year." [74]

*Mutato nomine de te fabula narratur.* For slave-trade read labour-market, for Kentucky and Virginia, Ireland and the agricultural districts of England, Scotland, and Wales, for Africa, Germany. We heard how over-work thinned the ranks of the bakers in London. Nevertheless, the London labour-market is always over-stocked with German and other candidates for death in the bakeries. Pottery, as we saw, is one of the shortest-lived industries. Is there any want therefore of potters? Josiah Wedgwood, the inventor of modern pottery, himself originally a common workman, said in 1785 before the House of Commons that the whole trade employed from 15,000 to 20,000 people. [75] In the year 1861 the population alone of the town centers of this industry in Great Britain numbered 101,302. "The cotton trade has existed for ninety years.... It has existed for three generations of the English race, and I believe I may safely say that during that period it has destroyed nine generations of factory operatives." [76]

No doubt in certain epochs of feverish activity the labour-market shows significant gaps. In 1834, e.g. But then the manufacturers proposed to the Poor Law Commissioners that they should send the "surplus-population" of the agricultural districts to the north, with the explanation "that the manufacturers would absorb and use it up." [77] Agents were appointed with the consent of the Poor Law Commissioners. ... An office was set up in Manchester, to which lists were sent of those workpeople in the agricultural districts wanting employment, and their

names were registered in books. The manufacturers attended at these offices, and selected such persons as they chose; when they had selected such persons as their 'wants required', they gave instructions to have them forwarded to Manchester, and they were sent, ticketed like bales of goods, by canals, or with carriers, others tramping on the road, and many of them were found on the way lost and half-starved. This system had grown up unto a regular trade. This House will hardly believe it, but I tell them, that this traffic in human flesh was as well kept up, they were in effect as regularly sold to these [Manchester] manufacturers as slaves are sold to the cotton-grower in the United States.... In 1860, 'the cotton trade was at its zenith.' ... The manufacturers again found that they were short of hands.... They applied to the 'flesh agents, as they are called. Those agents sent to the southern downs of England, to the pastures of Dorsetshire, to the glades of Devonshire, to the people tending kine in Wiltshire, but they sought in vain. The surplus-population was 'absorbed.'" The Bury Guardian said, on the completion of the French treaty, that "10,000 additional hands could be absorbed by Lancashire, and that 30,000 or 40,000 will be needed." After the "flesh agents and sub-agents" had in vain sought through the agricultural districts, "a deputation came up to London, and waited on the right hon. gentleman [Mr. Villiers, President of the Poor Law Board] with a view of obtaining poor children from certain union houses for the mills of Lancashire." [78]

What experience shows to the capitalist generally is a constant excess of population, i.e., an excess in relation to the momentary requirements of surplus-labour-absorbing capital, although this excess is made up of generations of human beings stunted, short-lived, swiftly replacing each other, plucked, so to say, before maturity. [79] And, indeed, experience shows to the intelligent observer with what swiftness and grip the capitalist mode of production, dating, historically speaking, only from yesterday, has seized the vital power of the people by the very root — shows how the degeneration of the industrial population is only retarded by the constant absorption of primitive and physically uncorrupted elements from the country — shows how even the country labourers, in spite of fresh air and the principle of natural selection, that works so powerfully amongst them, and only permits the survival of the strongest, are already beginning to die off. [80] Capital that has such good reasons for denying the sufferings of the legions of workers that surround it, is in practice moved as much and as little by the sight of the coming degradation and final depopulation of the human race, as by the probable fall of the earth into the sun. In every stockjobbing swindle every one knows that some time or other the crash must come, but every one hopes that it may fall on the head of his neighbor, after he himself has caught the shower of gold and placed it in safety. *Après moi le déluge!* [After me, the flood!] is the watchword of every capitalist and of every capitalist nation. Hence Capital is reckless of the health or length of life of the labourer, unless under compulsion from society. [81] To the out-cry as to the physical and mental degradation, the premature death, the torture of over-work, it answers: Ought these to trouble us since they increase our profits? But looking at things as a whole, all this does not, indeed, depend on the good or ill will of the individual capitalist. Free competition brings out the inherent laws of capitalist production, in the shape of external coercive laws having power over every individual capitalist. [82]

The establishment of a normal working-day is the result of centuries of struggle between capitalist and labourer. The history of this struggle shows two opposed tendencies. Compare, e.g., the English factory legislation of our time with the English labour Statutes from the 14th century to well into the middle of the 18th. [83] Whilst the modern Factory Acts compulsorily shortened the working-day, the earlier statutes tried to lengthen it by compulsion. Of course the pretensions of capital in embryo — when, beginning to grow, it secures the right of absorbing a

*quantum sufficit* of surplus-labour, not merely by the force of economic relations, but by the help of the State — appear very modest when put face to face with the concessions that, growling and struggling, it has to make in its adult condition. It takes centuries ere the "free" labourer, thanks to the development of capitalistic production, agrees, i.e., is compelled by social conditions, to sell the whole of his active life. his very capacity for work, for the price of the necessaries of life, his birth-right for a mess of pottage. Hence it is natural that the lengthening of the working-day, which capital, from the middle of the 14th to the end of the 17th century, tries to impose by State-measures on adult labourers, approximately coincides with the shortening of the working-day which, in the second half of the 19th century, has here and there been effected by the State to prevent the coining of children's blood into capital. That which to-day, e.g., in the State of Massachusetts, until recently the freest State of the North-American Republic, has been proclaimed as the statutory limit of the labour of children under 12, was in England, even in the middle of the 17th century, the normal working-day of able-bodied artisans, robust labourers, athletic blacksmiths. [84]

The first "Statute of Labourers" (23 Edward III., 1349) found its immediate pretext (not its cause, for legislation of this kind lasts centuries after the pretext for it has disappeared) in the great plague that decimated the people, so that, as a Tory writer says, "The difficulty of getting men to work on reasonable terms (i.e., at a price that left their employers a reasonable quantity of surplus-labour) grew to such a height as to be quite intolerable." [85] Reasonable wages were, therefore, fixed by law as well as the limits of the working-day. The latter point, the only one that here interests us, is repeated in the Statute of 1496 (Henry VII.). The working-day for all artificers and field labourers from March to September ought, according to this statute (which, however, could not be enforced), to last from 5 in the morning to between 7 and 8 in the evening. But the meal-times consist of 1 hour for breakfast, 1 1/2 hours for dinner, and 1/2 an hour for "noon-meate," i.e., exactly twice as much as under the factory acts now in force. [86] In winter, work was to last from 5 in the morning until dark, with the same intervals. A statute of Elizabeth of 1562 leaves the length of the working-day for all labourers "hired for daily or weekly wage" untouched, but aims at limiting the intervals to 2 1/2 hours in the summer, or to 2 in the winter. Dinner is only to last 1 hour, and the "afternoon-sleep of half an hour" is only allowed between the middle of May and the middle of August. For every hour of absence 1d. is to be subtracted from the wage. In practice, however, the conditions were much more favourable to the labourers than in the statute-book. William Petty, the father of Political Economy, and to some extent the founder of Statistics, says in a work that he published in the last third of the 17th century: "Labouring-men (then meaning field-labourers) work 10 hours per diem, and make 20 meals per week, viz., 3 a day for working-days, and 2 on Sundays; whereby it is plain, that if they could fast on Friday nights, and dine in one hour and an half, whereas they take two, from eleven to one; thereby thus working 1/20 more, and spending 1/20 less, the above-mentioned (tax) might be raised." [87] Was not Dr. Andrew Ure right in crying down the 12 hours' bill of 1833 as a retrogression to the times of the dark ages? It is true these regulations contained in the statute mentioned by Petty, apply also to apprentices. But the condition of child-labour, even at the end of the 17th century, is seen from the following complaint: "'Tis not their practice (in Germany) as with us in this kingdom, to bind an apprentice for seven years; three or four is their common standard: and the reason is, because they are educated from their cradle to something of employment, which renders them the more apt and docile, and consequently the more capable of attaining to a ripeness and quicker proficiency in business. Whereas our youth, here in England, being bred to nothing before they come to be apprentices, make a very slow progress and require much longer time wherein to reach the perfection of accomplished artists." [88]

Still, during the greater part of the 18th century, up to the epoch of Modern Industry and machinism, capital in England had not succeeded in seizing for itself, by the payment of the weekly value of labour-power, the whole week of the labourer, with the exception, however, of the agricultural labourers. The fact that they could live for a whole week on the wage of four days, did not appear to the labourers a sufficient reason that they should work the other two days for the capitalist. One party of English economists, in the interest of capital, denounces this obstinacy in the most violent manner, another party defends the labourers. Let us listen, e.g., to the contest between Postlethwayt whose Dictionary of Trade then had the same reputation as the kindred works of MacCulloch and MacGregor to-day, and the author (already quoted) of the "Essay on Trade and Commerce." [89]

Postlethwayt says among other things: "We cannot put an end to those few observations, without noticing that trite remark in the mouth of too many; that if the industrious poor can obtain enough to maintain themselves in five days, they will not work the whole six. Whence they infer the necessity of even the necessities of life being made dear by taxes, or any other means, to compel the working artisan and manufacturer to labour the whole six days in the week, without ceasing. I must beg leave to differ in sentiment from those great politicians, who contend for the perpetual slavery of the working people of this kingdom; they forget the vulgar adage, all work and no play. Have not the English boasted of the ingenuity and dexterity of her working artists and manufacturers which have heretofore given credit and reputation to British wares in general? What has this been owing to? To nothing more probably than the relaxation of the working people in their own way. Were they obliged to toil the year round, the whole six days in the week, in a repetition of the same work, might it not blunt their ingenuity, and render them stupid instead of alert and dexterous; and might not our workmen lose their reputation instead of maintaining it by such eternal slavery? ... And what sort of workmanship could we expect from such hard-driven animals? ... Many of them will execute as much work in four days as a Frenchman will in five or six. But if Englishmen are to be eternal drudges, 'tis to be feared they will degenerate below the Frenchmen. As our people are famed for bravery in war, do we not say that it is owing to good English roes t beef and pudding in their bellies, as well as their constitutional spirit of liberty? And why may not the superior ingenuity and dexterity of, our artists and manufacturers, be owing to that freedom and liberty to direct themselves in their own way, and I hope we shall never have them deprived of such privileges and that good living from whence their ingenuity no less than their courage may proceed." [90] Thereupon the author of the "Essay on Trade and Commerce" replies: "If the making of every seventh day an holiday is supposed to be of divine institution, as it implies the appropriating the other six days to labour" (he means capital as we shall soon see) "surely it will not be thought cruel to enforce it .... That mankind in general, are naturally inclined to ease and indolence, we fatally experience to be true, from the conduct of our manufacturing populace, who do not labour, upon an average, above four days in a week, unless provisions happen to be very dear.... Put all the necessities of the poor under one denomination; for instance, call them all wheat, or suppose that ... the bushel of wheat shall cost five shillings and that he (a manufacturer) earns a shilling by his labour, he then would be obliged to work five days only in a week. If the bushel of wheat should cost but four shillings, he would be obliged to work but four days; but as wages in this kingdom are much higher in proportion to the price of necessities ... the manufacturer, who labours four days, has a surplus of money to live idle with the rest of the week . ... I hope I have said enough to make it appear that the moderate labour of six days in a week is no slavery. Our labouring people do this, and to all appearance are the happiest of all our labouring poor, [91] but the Dutch do this in manufactures, and appear to

be a very happy people. The French do so, when holidays do not intervene. [92] But our populace have adopted a notion, that as Englishmen they enjoy a birthright privilege of being more free and independent than in any country in Europe. Now this idea, as far as it may affect the bravery of our troops, may be of some use; but the less the manufacturing poor have of it, certainly the better for themselves and for the State. The labouring people should never think themselves independent of their superiors.... It is extremely dangerous to encourage mobs in a commercial state like ours, where, perhaps, seven parts out of eight of the whole, are people with little or no property. The cure will not be perfect, till our manufacturing poor are contented to labour six days for the same sum which they now earn in four days." [93] To this end, and for "extirpating idleness debauchery and excess," promoting a spirit of industry, "lowering the price of labour in our manufactories, and easing the lands of the heavy burden of poor's rates," our "faithful Eckart" of capital proposes this approved device: to shut up such labourers as become dependent on public support, in a word, paupers, in "an ideal workhouse." Such ideal workhouse must be made a "House of Terror," and not an asylum for the poor, "where they are to be plentifully fed, warmly and decently clothed, and where they do but little work." [94] In this "House of Terror," this "ideal workhouse, the poor shall work 14 hours in a day, allowing proper time for meals, in such manner that there shall remain 12 hours of neat-labour." [95]

Twelve working-hours daily in the Ideal Workhouse, in the "House of Terror" of 1770! 63 years later, in 1833, when the English Parliament reduced the working-day for children of 13 to 18, in four branches of industry to 12 full hours, the judgment day of English Industry had dawned! In 1852, when Louis Bonaparte sought to secure his position with the bourgeoisie by tampering with the legal working-day, the French working people cried out with one voice "the law that limits the working-day to 12 hours is the one good that has remained to us of the legislation of the Republic!" [96] At Zürich the work of children over 10, is limited to 12 hours; in Aargau in 1862, the work of children between 13 and 16, was reduced from 12 1/2 to 12 hours; in Austria in 1860, for children between 14 and 16, the same reduction was made. [97] "What a progress," since 1770! Macaulay would shout with exultation!

The "House of Terror" for paupers of which the capitalistic soul of 1770 only dreamed, was realised a few years later in the shape of a gigantic "Workhouse" for the industrial worker himself. It is called the Factory. And the ideal this time fades before the reality.

---

### Footnotes

[72] In England even now occasionally in rural districts a labourer is condemned to imprisonment for desecrating the Sabbath, by working in his front garden. The same labourer is punished for breach of contract if he remains away from his metal, paper, or glass works on the Sunday, even if it be from a religious whim. The orthodox Parliament will hear nothing of Sabbath-breaking if it occurs in the process of expanding capital. A memorial (August 1863), in which the London day-labourers in fish and poultry shops asked for the abolition of Sunday labour, states that their work lasts for the first 6 days of the week on an average 15 hours a-day, and on Sunday 8-10 hours. From this same memorial we learn also that the delicate gourmands among the aristocratic *hypocrita* of Exeter Hall, especially encourage this "Sunday labour." These "holy ones," so zealous in *cute curanda*, ["in attending to their bodily pleasures"] show their Christianity by the humility with which they bear the overwork, the privations, and the hunger of others. *Obsequium ventris istis* (the labourers) *perniciosius est*. ["Gluttony is more ruinous to their (the workers') stomachs?"]

[73] "We have given in our previous reports the statements of several experienced manufacturers to the effect that over-hours ... certainly tend prematurely to exhaust the working power of the men." (l. c., 64. p. xiii.)

[74] Cairnes, *The Slave Power*, pp. 110. 111.

[75] John Ward, *The Borough of Stoke-upon-Trent*, London, 1843, p. 42.

[76] Ferrand's Speech in the House of Commons, 27th April, 1863.

[77] Those were the very words used by the cotton manufacturers." I. c.

[78] I. c. Mr. Villiers, despite the best of intentions on his part, was "legally" obliged to refuse the requests of the manufacturers. These gentlemen, however, attained their end through the obliging nature of the local poor law boards. Mr. A. Redgrave, Inspector of Factories, asserts that this time the system under which orphans and pauper children were treated "legally" as apprentices "was not accompanied with the old abuses" (on these "abuses" see Engels, I. c.), although in one case there certainly was "abuse of this system in respect to a number of girls and young women brought from the agricultural districts of Scotland into Lancashire and Cheshire." Under this system the manufacturer entered into a contract with the workhouse authorities for a certain period. He fed, clothed and lodged the children, and gave them a small allowance of money. A remark of Mr. Redgrave to be quoted directly seems strange, especially if we consider that even among the years of prosperity of the English cotton trade, the year 1860 stands unparalleled, and that, besides, wages were exceptionally high. For this extraordinary demand for work had to contend with the depopulation of Ireland, with unexampled emigration from the English and Scotch agricultural districts to Australia and America, with an actual diminution of the population in some of the English agricultural districts, in consequence partly of an actual breakdown of the vital force of the labourers, partly of the already effected dispersion of the disposable population through the dealers in human flesh. Despite all this Mr. Redgrave says: "This kind of labour, however, would only be sought after when none other could be procured, for it is a high-priced labour. The ordinary wages of a boy of 13 would be about 4s. per week, but to lodge, to clothe, to feed, and to provide medical attendance and proper superintendence for 50 or 100 of these boys, and to set aside some remuneration for them, could not be accomplished for 4s. a-head per week." (*Report of the Inspector of Factories for 30th April, 1860*, p. 27.) Mr. Redgrave forgets to tell us how the labourer himself can do all this for his children out of their 4s. a-week wages, when the manufacturer cannot do it for the 50 or 100 children lodged, boarded, superintended all together. To guard against false conclusions from the text, I ought here to remark that the English cotton industry, since it was placed under the Factory Act of 1850 with its regulations of labour-time, &c., must be regarded as the model industry of England. The English cotton operative is in every respect better off than his Continental companion in misery. "The Prussian factory operative labours at least ten hours per week more than his English competitor, and if employed at his own loom in his own house, his labour is not restricted to even those additional hours." (*Rep. of Insp. of Fact., 31st October, 1855*, p. 103.) Redgrave, the Factory Inspector mentioned above, after the Industrial Exhibition in 1851, travelled on the Continent, especially in France and Germany, for the purpose of inquiring into the conditions of the factories. Of the Prussian operative he says: "He receives a remuneration sufficient to procure the simple fare, and to supply the slender comforts to which he has been accustomed ... he lives upon his coarse fare, and works hard, wherein his position is subordinate to that of the English operative." (*Rep. of Insp. of Fact. 31st Oct., 1855*, p. 85.)

[79] The over-worked "die off with strange rapidity; but the places of those who perish are instantly filled, and a frequent change of persons makes no alteration in the scene." (*England and America*. London, 1833, vol. I, p. 55. By E. G. Wakefield.)

[80] See *Public Health. Sixth Report of the Medical Officer of the Privy Council, 1863*. Published in London 1864. This report deals especially with the agricultural labourers. "Sutherland ... is commonly represented as a highly improved county ... but ... recent inquiry has discovered that even there, in districts once famous for fine men and gallant soldiers, the inhabitants have degenerated into a meagre and stunted race. In the healthiest situations, on hill sides fronting the sea, the faces of their famished children are as pale as they could be in the foul atmosphere of a London alley." (W. Th. Thornton. *Overpopulation and its Remedy*. I. c., pp. 74, 75.) They resemble in fact the 30,000 "gallant Highlanders" whom Glasgow pigs together in its wynds and closes, with prostitutes and thieves.

[81] "But though the health of a population is so important a fact of the national capital, we are afraid it must be said that the class of employers of labour have not been the most forward to guard and cherish this treasure.... The consideration of the health of the operatives was forced upon the mill-owners." (*Times*, November 5th, 1861.) "The men of the West Riding became the clothiers of mankind ... the health of the workpeople was sacrificed, and the lace in a few generations must have degenerated. But a reaction set in. Lord Shaftesbury's Bill limited the hours of children's labour," etc. (*Twenty-Second Report of the Registrar-General*, for October 1861.)

[82] We, therefore, find, e.g., that in the beginning of 1863, 26 firms owning extensive potteries in Staffordshire, amongst others, Josiah Wedgwood, & Sons, petition in a memorial for "some legislative enactment." Competition with other capitalists permits them no voluntary limitation of working-time for children, &c. "Much as we deplore the evils before mentioned, it would not be possible to prevent them by any scheme of agreement between the manufacturers.~.. Taking all these points into consideration, we have come to the conviction that some legislative enactment is wanted." (*Children's*

*Employment Comm. Rep. I*, 1863, p. 322.) Most recently a much more striking example offers. The rise in the price of cotton during a period of feverish activity, had induced the manufacturers in Blackburn to shorten, by mutual consent, the working-time in their mills during a certain fixed period. This period terminated about the end of November, 1871. Meanwhile, the wealthier manufacturers, who combined spinning with weaving, used the diminution of production resulting from this agreement, to extend their own business and thus to make great profits at the expense of the small employers. The latter thereupon turned in their extremity to the operatives, urged them earnestly to agitate for the 9 hours' system, and promised contributions in money to this end.

[83] The labour Statutes, the like of which were enacted at the same time in France, the Netherlands, and elsewhere, were first formally repealed in England in 1813, long after the changes in methods of production had rendered them obsolete.

[84] "No child under 12 years of age shall be employed in any manufacturing establishment more than 10 hours in one day." (*General Statutes of Massachusetts*, 63, ch. 12. The various Statutes were passed between 1836 and 1858.) "Labour performed during a period of 10 hours on any day in all cotton, woollen, silk, paper, glass, and flax factories, or in manufactories of iron and brass, shall be considered a legal day's labour. And be it enacted, that hereafter no minor engaged in any factory shall be holden or required to work more than 10 hours in any day, or 60 hours in any week; and that hereafter no minor shall be admitted as a worker under the age of 10 years in any factory within this State." *State of New Jersey. An Act to limit the hours of labour*, etc., § I and 2. (Law of 18th March, 1851.) "No minor who has attained the age of 12 years, and is under the age of 15 years, shall be employed in any manufacturing establishment more than 11 hours in any one day, nor before 5 o'clock in the morning, nor after 7.30 in the evening." (*Revised Statutes of the State of Rhode Island*, etc., ch. 139, § 23, 1st July, 1857.)

[85] *Sophisms of Free Trade*. 7th Ed. London, 1850, p. 205, 9th Ed., p. 253. This same Tory, moreover, admits that "Acts of Parliament regulating wages, but against the labourer and in favour of the master, lasted for the long period of 464 years. Population grew. These laws were then found, and really became, unnecessary and burdensome." (l. c., p. 206.)

[86] In reference to this statute, J. Wade with truth remarks: "From the statement above (i.e., with regard to the statute) it appears that in 1496 the diet was considered equivalent to one-third of the income of an artificer and one-half the income of a labourer, which indicates a greater degree of independence among the working-classes than prevails at present; for the board, both of labourers and artificers, would now be reckoned at a much higher proportion of their wages." (J. Wade, *History of the Middle and Working Classes*, pp. 24, 25, and 577.) The opinion that this difference is due to the difference in the price relations between food and clothing then and now is refuted by the most cursory glance at *Chronicon Preciosum*, By Bishop Fleetwood. 1st Ed., London, 1707; 2nd Ed., London, 1745.

[87] W. Petty. *Political Anatomy of Ireland, Verbum Sapienti*, 1672, Ed. 1691, p. 10.

[88] *A Discourse on the necessity of encouraging Mechanick Industry*, London, 1690, p. 13. Macaulay, who has falsified English history in the interests of the Whigs and the bourgeoisie, declares as follows: "The practice of setting children prematurely to work ... prevailed in the 17th century to an extent which, when compared with the extent of the manufacturing system, seems almost incredible. At Norwich, the chief seat of the clothing trade, a little creature of six years old was thought fit for labour. Several writers of that time, and among them some who were considered as eminently benevolent, mention with exultation the fact that in that single city, boys and girls of very tender age create wealth exceeding what was necessary for their own subsistence by twelve thousand pounds a year. The more carefully we examine the history of the past, the more reason shall we find to dissent from those who imagine that our age has been fruitful of new social evils... That which is new is the intelligence and the humanity which remedies them." (*History of England*, vol. 1., p. 417.) Macaulay might have reported further that "extremely well disposed" amfs du commerce in the 17th century, narrate with "exultation" how in a poorhouse in Holland a child of four was employed, and that this example of "*vertu mise en pratique*" passes muster in all the humanitarian works, *a la* Macaulay, to the time of Adam Smith. It is true that with the substitution of manufacture for handicrafts, traces of the exploitation of children begin to appear. This exploitation existed always to a certain extent among peasants, and was the more developed, the heavier the yoke pressing on the husbandman. The tendency of capital is there unmistakably; but the facts themselves are still as isolated as the phenomena of two-headed children. Hence they were noted "with exultation" as especially worthy of remark and as wonders by the far-seeing "friends du commerce," and recommended as models for their own time and for posterity. This same Scotch sycophant and fine talker, Macaulay, says: "We hear to-day only of retrogression and see only progress." What eyes, and especially what ears!

[89] Among the accusers of the workpeople, the most angry is the anonymous author quoted in the text of *An Essay on Trade and Commerce, containing Observations on Taxes, &c.*, London, 1770. He had already dealt with this subject in his earlier work: *Considerations on Taxes*. London, 1765. On the same side follows Polonius Arthur Young, the unutterable statistical prattler. Among the defenders of



the working-classes the foremost are: Jacob Vanderlint, in: *Money Answers all Things*. London, 1734 the Rev. Nathaniel Forster, D. D., in *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Present High Price of Provisions*, London, 1767; Dr. Price, and especially Postlethwayt, as well in the supplement to his *Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce*, as in his "Great Britain's Commercial Interest explained and improved." 2nd Edition, 1755. The facts themselves are confirmed by many other writers of the time, among others by Josiah Tucker

[90] Postlethwayt, l. c., "First Preliminary Discourse," p. 14.

[91] *An Essay*, &c. He himself relates on p. 96 wherein the "happiness" of the English agricultural labourer already in 1770 consisted. "Their powers are always upon the stretch, they cannot live cheaper than they do, nor work harder."

[92] Protestantism, by changing almost all the traditional holidays into workdays, plays an important part in the genesis of capital.

[93] *An Essay*, 4c., pp. 15, 41, 96, 97, 55, 57, 69. — Jacob Vanderlint, as early as 1734, declared that the secret of the out-cry of the capitalists as to the laziness of the working people was simply that they claimed for the same wages 6 days' labour instead of 4.

[94] l. c., p. 242.

[95] l. c. "The French," he says, "laugh at our enthusiastic ideas of liberty." l. c., p. 78.

[96] "They especially objected to work beyond the 12 hours per day, because the law which fixed those hours, is the only good which remains to them of the legislation of the Republic." (*Rep. of Insp. of Fact.*, 31 st October, 1856, p. 80.) The French Twelve Hours' Bill of September 5th, 1850, a bourgeois edition of the decree of the Provisional Government of March 2nd, 1848, holds in all workshops without exceptions. Before this law the working-day in France was without definite limit. It lasted in the factories 14, 15, or more hours. See *Des classes ouvrières en France, pendant l'année 1848*. Par M. Blanqui." M. Blanqui the economist, not the Revolutionist, had been entrusted by the Government with an inquiry into the condition of the working-class.

[97] Belgium is the model bourgeois state in regard to the regulation of the working-day. Lord Howard of Welden, English Plenipotentiary at Brussels, reports to the Foreign Office May 12th, 1862: "M. Rogier, the minister, informed me that children's labour is limited neither by a general law nor by any local regulations; that the Government, during the last three years, intended in every session to propose a bill on the subject, but always found an insuperable obstacle in the jealous opposition to any legislation in contradiction with the principle of perfect freedom of labour."

-----  
(Originally) Transcribed by Zodiac



