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### Wages

The price of [Labour Power](#).

Let us take any worker; for example, a weaver. The capitalist supplies him with the loom and yarn. The weaver applies himself to work, and the yarn is turned into cloth. The capitalist takes possession of the cloth and sells it for 20 shillings, for example. Now are the wages of the weaver a share of the cloth, of the 20 shillings, of the product of the work? By no means. Long before the cloth is sold, perhaps long before it is fully woven, the weaver has received his wages. The capitalist, then, does not pay his wages out of the money which he will obtain from the cloth, but out of money already on hand.....Wages, therefore, are not a share of the worker in the commodities produced by himself. Wages are that part of already existing commodities with which the capitalist buys a certain amount of productive labor-power.....

Now, the same general laws which regulate the price of commodities in general, naturally regulate wages, or the price of labor-power. Wages will now rise, now fall, according to the relation of supply and demand, according as competition shapes itself between the buyers of labor-power, the capitalists, and the sellers of labor-power, the workers. The fluctuations of wages correspond to the fluctuation in the price of commodities in general. But within the limits of these fluctuations the price of labor-power will be determined by the cost of production, by the labor-time necessary for production of this commodity: labor-power.

What, then, is the cost of production of labor-power?

It is the cost required for the maintenance of the laborer as a laborer, and for his education and training as a laborer.

Karl Marx, [Wage Labour and Capital](#)

## Wage Hustling

Workers who take for themselves more than what the boss has agreed to pay. This is done through labor-time. When a worker consistently takes time for themselves during the time they have agreed and been paid to work for the boss, they are wage hustling -- the opposite of being overworked. It is essential to note that both the worker and the boss are participants -- coercion is sometimes involved. The worker is being opportunistic or lazy (hustling), or sedentary (overworked); while the boss is either being deceived or tyrannical.

The hustle can take place in all manner of degrees: from a worker who simply spends a couple minutes talking to co-workers about weekend activities, sporting events, or shows, to those workers who spend hours of company time reading books, talking to co-workers, even sleeping -- in one way or another taking the time for personal affairs that the worker has already agreed to be working.

Naturally, this is not a part of any formal contract with the boss, and only a liberal boss allows workers to freely engage in this activity, often in exchange for when they put in unpaid over time for example. The worker engages in wage hustling to convince the boss that they're working, will make it up, or are doing such a good job that they don't need to work the extra hours others do. As with any hustle, some workers have established quite a system about doing this.

This is a critical concept to apprehend because it is pervasive, yet workers do this for themselves, and thus often times in conflict with other workers who have to do the work that the hustler is slacking off on. The hustle is the law of the jungle -- the hustler looks out for their own interests, not anyone else.

Thus, the work of a Communist is to help create an environment to foster solidarity, and show the common need between all workers to have this extra time. A communist must help build a union to create the needed conditions so that workers don't need to hurt each other with a hustle to get the time they need, and so the overworked gain justice in benefits. When the working day can be won to reasonable hours and the union grows strong, *then* those few lazy workers who still hustle can be dealt with through the democracy of workers' self-management.

See Also: [Wages](#), [Capitalism](#), [Union](#), [Ethics](#)

## Wage Labour

Wage labour is the mode of production in which the labourer sells their capacity to work as a [commodity](#).

The pre-condition for wage labour is a [class of people who have no other way of living](#), and a class of people who own the [means of production](#) as their [Private Property](#). The [capitalist](#) who buys the [labour power](#), and pays for it at its [value](#), own the labour process and the product of labour, and can sell the product in order to realise a [profit](#). The worker, on the other hand is [alienated](#) from her own labour.

Their commodity, labor-power, the workers exchange for the commodity of the capitalist, for money, and, moreover, this exchange takes place at a certain ratio. So much money for so long a use of labor-power. For 12 hours' weaving, two shillings. And these two shillings, do they not represent all the other commodities which I can buy for two shillings? Therefore, actually, the worker has exchanged his commodity, labor-power, for commodities of all kinds, and, moreover, at a certain ratio. By giving him two shillings, the capitalist has given him so much meat, so much clothing, so much wood, light, etc., in exchange for his day's work. The two shillings therefore express the relation in which labor-power is exchanged for other commodities, the exchange-value of labor-power....

But the putting of labor-power into action -- i.e., the work -- is the active expression of the laborer's own life. And this life activity he sells to another person in order to secure the necessary means of life. His life-activity, therefore, is but a means of securing his own existence. He works that he may keep alive. He does not count the labor itself as a part of his life; it is rather a sacrifice of his life. It is a commodity that he has auctioned off to another. The product of his activity, therefore, is not the aim of his activity. What he produces for himself is not the silk that he weaves, not the gold that he draws up the mining shaft, not the palace that he builds. What he produces for himself is wages ; and the silk, the gold, and the palace are resolved for him into a certain quantity of necessaries of life, perhaps into a cotton jacket, into copper coins, and into a basement dwelling. And the laborer who for 12 hours long, weaves, spins, bores, turns, builds, shovels, breaks stone, carries hods, and so on -- is this 12 hours' weaving, spinning, boring, turning, building, shovelling, stone-breaking, regarded by him as a manifestation of life, as life? Quite the contrary. Life for him begins where this activity ceases, at the table, at the tavern, in bed. The 12 hours' work, on the other hand, has no meaning for him as weaving, spinning, boring, and so on, but only as earnings, which enable him to sit down at a table, to take his seat in the tavern, and to lie down in a bed. If the silk-worm's object in spinning

were to prolong its existence as caterpillar, it would be a perfect example of a wage-worker.

The free laborer, on the other hand, sells his very self, and that by fractions. He auctions off eight, 10, 12, 15 hours of his life, one day like the next, to the highest bidder, to the owner of raw materials, tools, and the means of life -- i.e., to the capitalist. The laborer belongs neither to an owner nor to the soil, but eight, 10, 12, 15 hours of his daily life belong to whomsoever buys them. The worker leaves the capitalist, to whom he has sold himself, as often as he chooses, and the capitalist discharges him as often as he sees fit, as soon as he no longer gets any use, or not the required use, out of him. But the worker, whose only source of income is the sale of his labor-power, cannot leave the whole class of buyers, i.e., the capitalist class, unless he gives up his own existence. He does not belong to this or that capitalist, but to the capitalist class; and it is for him to find his man -- i.e., to find a buyer in this capitalist class.

Karl Marx

### [Wage Labour and Capital](#)

In [Capital](#), Marx treats [piece-work](#), in which the worker is paid by the quantity of product, rather than by labour-time, as a *form of wage-labour*, not an essentially different from wage-labour. This form of payment is simply a means of forcing the worker to work harder, but what the worker is paid is nevertheless determined in the labour market, by the costs of production of a day's labour, i.e., the historically and socially determined standard of living for the working class.

The more developed capitalism becomes the more common it is that workers are obliged to *sell their product* by means of contract labour for example. Like piece-work, [contract-labour](#) is an instrument used by the capitalists for the purposes of labour discipline, but the difference between the lot of the contract worker and that of the wage-worker is not fundamental. Lacking means of production, the contract worker is forced to sell their product at just such a price that enables them to live -- in other words, they earn the going rate of wages.

War

The organised practice of deception, on a large scale (usually between societies), in its most extreme form: violence.

*Further Reading:* [USSR and War](#), by Trotsky, [Art of War](#), Sun Tzu; [On War](#), General Carl von Clausewitz

## War Communism

The economic system of the [R.S.F.S.R.](#) enacted as a result of the wounds cut into the economy by the devastating [Civil War](#), all the more forceful by the economic taters inherited after Russia's [defeat in WWI](#).

One primary function of War Communism was the requisition of grain from the peasantry, in order to feed the starving urban population. The agricultural production in Russia declined since the outset of the First World War, and those who had food, hoarded it. Major agricultural regions were occupied by the [white armies](#) during the Civil War, intensifying the food problem further.

At the same time, Russian industry was completely dedicated to defending the country; the urban workers were building little that the peasantry could use. As a result, many peasants refused to sell their produce to the cities. The confiscations of grain for the urban workers created discontent among many peasants, who resented having grain taken away when nothing could be given in return.

After the Civil War ended, a [new economic policy](#) was enacted to help rebuild the ties between the urban workers and the peasantry.