

# *Blog on Capitalism*

Exploring the nature of Capitalism

# Capitalism and Work: the White Man's Burden

Western people do not work in order to live.  
They live to work!

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The nigger is a lazy beast and must be compelled to work —  
compelled by Government — with a stick.

(Sir Rudolph Slatin <sup>1</sup> (in Gilbert Murray 1900 p. 135))

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 as before. But the world does not need 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 manufacture 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 demoralising. 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?  
(Russell 1935 pp.16,17)

### The White Man's Burden 🇺🇸

The 19<sup>th</sup> century was the century in which unregulated capitalism lay at the heart of most Western European public and private policy and practice. It was the century in which 'The Poor', long a vexing problem for responsible people — and, of course, a source of cheap labour and profit for capitalist enterprise — were taught to work.

By the end of the century, life was slowly improving for Western Europe's poor. But, for the responsible middle classes of Western Europe, the job was far from complete! A new 'Poor' had been found, indigent and slothful, in need of discipline and direction, in the extensive colonies for which they had accepted responsibility.

The next century would be the one in which Western working poor slowly gained legal rights and entitlements, enshrined in labour awards <sup>2</sup>. The wealth flowing into Western countries from the rest of the world would bring increasing material prosperity, improved living conditions, healthier diets, and even, for a period, the chance to pursue 'leisure' activities. This would not be true for the inhabitants of Europe's colonial empires.

The 19<sup>th</sup> was not only the century when The Poor learned to work. It was also the century of Western European colonial expansion. Populations around the world found themselves included, whether they liked it or not, in Western European empires.

A 1990 editorial in *The Ecologist* provides a bleak picture of a prime purpose of that expansion:

"History", wrote the French philosopher Voltaire, "is a fable upon which we are all agreed". So far as the colonial period

goes, the fable would have us believe that the colonial powers were primarily motivated by a desire to bring "progress" and "civilization" to their colonies. Whilst this may indeed have been true of the missionaries who trail-blazed Europe's colonial expansion, it was far from the minds of the main architects of colonial rule.

Contemporary writings... 3 make it clear that for the governments of the day, the principle justification for colonialism was unashamedly economic. Colonies provided the means by which the metropolitan powers could secure access to cheap food, cheap raw materials and labour, new markets for manufactured goods and new investment opportunities. It was as simple as that.

(*Ecologist* Vol 20 No 6 1990 p. 201)

Hirst, Murray and Hammond (1900) examined the formation of and conduct in British colonies in a book entitled *Liberalism and The Empire*:

Our colonies, like most other colonies, owe their original existence, in one sense or another, to mere adventure or the power of the sword. They owe their vitality and strength, and most of the finer characteristics which make them almost unique in the history of colonization, to very different causes: to the policy of non-interference, to the studied avoidance of aggression, to toleration and generous amity between conflicting creeds and diverse races, to Liberal principles and Liberal ideas.

...Authority, force, firmness, the detection of offences, the assertion of rightful claims and the punishment of enemies, are, no doubt, principles of great power and value in the world as it now stands; but they are not, and never have been, sufficient alone.

Self-criticism, persuasion, patience, a wise blindness to offences, a reluctance to stand on the outermost edge of every right, the appeasement of enmities, are principles also of great and, one used to hope, of increasing value.

...A fabric of human lives so vast as that for which Her Majesty's Government is now responsible surely demands for its good guidance both high principles and profound prudence.

...There is no sentiment in a nation so dangerous, there is no sentiment so easy to stimulate, as the false excess of patriotism 4.

(1900 Preface pp. v, vi, xi)

Gilbert Murray (1900) in an essay entitled *The Exploitation of Inferior Races*... provided a summary of common colonial practice toward 'the natives' in British colonial territories,

The 'corvee' or forced labour system, which implied a kind of formal, though very limited, 'slavery', is said to be still practised in some parts of British India, and exists in a very severe form in Natal. In Egypt it was abolished by us some years ago, but seems — though the statement has been denied — to have been reintroduced during the Soudan campaign under irregular and therefore exasperating conditions (Daily News, March 8, 1899).

In the Soudan itself we have, of course, recently proclaimed the formal abolition of slavery. The system we propose to substitute for it has been lucidly described by Sir Rudolph Slatin in an interview which appeared in several newspapers. [For instance, Daily Mail, March 11, 1899. 135]

'The nigger is a lazy beast,' said Slatin, 'and must be compelled to work — compelled by Government.' 'How?' asked his interlocutor. 'With a stick,' was Slatin's reply. Those who have followed the course of Slatin's singular career can perhaps form some notion of the probable weight of that stick! (1900 p. 135)

J. L. Hammond (1900) in an essay entitled *Colonial and Foreign Policy*, summed up the British attitudes and responsibilities to its empire,

It is the major premiss of the Imperialist argument that British civilization is the best in the world...

The moral hegemony of the world which we have undertaken — we are ready to share it with America when she behaves herself to our satisfaction or when Europe is more than usually insolent — might be expected to imply that our conduct and our influence should act as a beneficent example upon other States. The phrase is that we are the schoolmasters of Europe...

As schoolmasters we are told that we stand outside the discipline of the school. Mr. Bryce has shown that during the negotiations with the Transvaal Government we contrived to provoke war before we had discovered a *casus belli*.

It is not pretended that these negotiations would have been so conducted if we had been dealing with a Great Power, or, indeed, if we had known the strength of the Transvaal. In other words, we were taking advantage of our physical superiority.

And how is that course of action defended? By reminding ourselves of our missionary character! By recalling all the blessings which the world will reap from the extension of our Empire!

(in Hirst *et al* (1900) pp. 174-5)

## Getting things into Perspective! 🐦

Perspective is everything in understanding the real world.

From the Western European perspective, their colonies demonstrated their civilised approach to their responsibilities in life. Francis Hirst (1900, p. v) explained why:

They owe their vitality and strength, and most of the finer characteristics which make them almost unique in the history of colonization... to the policy of non-interference, to the studied avoidance of aggression, to toleration and generous amity between conflicting creeds and diverse races...

It all looked very different from the colonial perspective 6.

In a book entitled *Path to Nigerian Freedom*, Obafemi Awolowo, later to be a prominent Yoruba politician in independent Nigeria, spelled out his view of the nature of the colonial territory known as Nigeria and of the relationship between Nigerians and their colonial masters:

The conquest of one nation by another in an unprovoked act of aggression cannot be justified by any standard of morality. Britain came to Nigeria of her own choosing, and with motives which are only too well known. She sought to impose her rule on the various tribes that inhabited the country in order to attain her own selfish ends.

There was then no question of trusteeship. This was the result of a later compunction of conscience which usually dawns on any evil-doer who is not hardened beyond redemption. Those tribes with whom she first came into contact resisted the unwarranted attack on their political independence. They were overpowered by force of arms. Thereafter, each tribe was faced with a choice of one of two roads leading to subjection: defeat or surrender...

There are various national or ethnical groups in the country. Ten main groups were recorded during the 1931 census as follows: (1) Hausa, (2) Ibo, (3) Yoruba, (4) Fulani, (5) Kanuri, (6) Ibibio, (7) Munshi or Tiv, (8) Edo, (9) Nupe, and (10) Ijaw. According to Nigeria Handbook, eleventh edition, 'there are also a great number of other small tribes too numerous to enumerate separately...'

It is a mistake to designate them 'tribes'. Each of them is a nation by itself with many tribes and clans. There is as much difference between them as there is between Germans, English, Russians and Turks for instance. The fact that they have a common overlord does not destroy this fundamental difference...

All these incompatibilities among the various peoples in the country militate against unification.... It is evident from the experiences of other nations that incompatibilities such as we have enumerated are barriers which cannot be overcome by glossing over them.

(Awolowo 1947, pp. 24,48-9)

A passage from a 1924 speech <sup>7</sup> by Prince Marc Kojouharo Houènou, a Dahomeyan (now Benin) who fought for France in the 1st World War, provided a bleak African perspective on the 'colonial experience':

Europe has inaugurated in the Colonies an area of veritable savagery and real barbarism which is carried out with science and premeditation — with all the art and all the refinement of civilization. The unfortunate natives have mingled their destinies with yours...

We understand nothing of the egotistic and barbarous aims sought by certain civilized people who believe that civilization can only reach its zenith by ignoring original laws, and by debasing and enslaving men who have the natural right to live, to evolve, and to attain the full expression of their being...

...The problem arose at the moment of the discovery of America when Europeans intoxicated by glory, adventure, and above all by rapine, sought to conquer new territories which did not belong to them.

They destroyed the aborigines — exterminated them! Then, terrified at the void they had created around them and being themselves incapable of labour, they turned to Africa for workmen. It was Africa that furnished contingents for penal labour — this Africa with whose unhappy history you are unacquainted but which some day, one of her sons will outline for you in darts of fire, — a monument of shame for that civilization of which you boast.

Without humanity there is no civilization!

If the monsters, full of vice, sodden with alcohol, contaminated by disease, whom you send to us, have nothing else to offer than what they have already given us, then keep them yourselves, and let us revert to our misery and our barbarity. The whole fatality that burdens Eschyllean tragedies cannot compare with the blackness of the African tragedy.

Under cover of civilization, men are hunted like deers, plundered, robbed, killed; and these horrors are presented afterwards in eloquent orations as blessings. Hypocrisy and knavery are added to crimes!

(Houènou (1924) 1979, pp. 228,9)

By the end of the 19th century, Western European nations had divided

the world amongst themselves. As Awolowo (1947) claimed of British practice:

Those tribes with whom she first came into contact resisted the unwarranted attack on their political independence. They were overpowered by force of arms. Thereafter, each tribe was faced with a choice of one of two roads leading to subjection: defeat or surrender.

Hillaire Belloc put it well in a poem <sup>8</sup> which celebrated the deployment of the first Vickers machine gun (the Maxim). The British South Africa Company used several of them in what was euphemistically called a 'war' against the Ndebele in Matabeleland (southern Zimbabwe) in November 1893 (Blood was a Maxim gunner's name):

I shall never forget the way  
That Blood stood on this awful day  
Preserved us all from death.  
He stood upon a little mound  
Cast his lethargic eye around,  
And said beneath his breath;  
'Whatever happens, we have got  
The Maxim Gun, and they have not.'

As a popular British song of the period put it:

Some talk of Alexander,  
And some of Hercules  
Of Hector and Lysander,  
And such great names as these.  
But of all the world's great heroes,  
There's none that can compare  
With a tow, row, row, row, row, row,  
To the British Grenadier

Millions of people around the world found themselves included within European empires, their lives reorganised to ensure that they, like The Poor of Western Europe in previous centuries, learned to work. There was a great deal to be done, and the responsible people of Western Europe, as 'schoolmasters' to the world, knew that they had a duty to ensure that 'the natives' (the Western colonial term for 'The Poor' of the world) learned to work.

An introduction to the summary of the UNESCO (2002) *International Symposium on Post-Development* has phrased it well,

By 1914, 84.4 % of the world's terrestrial area had been colonized by the Europeans. With colonization there came a new paradigm of development.

...According to many voices the paradigm of development has not changed. It emerges in new forms, in the current pursuit



of neo-liberal globalization.

According to François Partant, the French banker-turned-critic of development;

the developed nations have discovered for themselves a new mission — to help the Third World countries advance along the same road to development which is nothing more than the road on which the West had guided the rest of humanity for several centuries.

[Partant, F., *La Fin du Développement*, Francois Maspero, Paris, 1982]

As any well enculturated Western European would have told you <sup>9</sup>, colonialism, no matter what a few leftist trouble-makers and opportunists might say, was *not* about 'exploiting' the natives. They were children in need of parental direction, supervision and discipline. In their child-like simplicity they simply did not realise the true potential of the lands within which they lived and their true responsibilities before God. They had been living from hand-to-mouth and had neither the intelligence nor skills needed to realise their own potential.

It was the responsibility of Western Europeans to 'teach them the practice of frugality and industry' which they themselves had learned over four centuries — to 'develop' them <sup>10</sup>. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this was Western Europe's inescapable responsibility. It was 'the White Man's burden'.

Rudyard Kipling (1899) <sup>11</sup> explained it:

Take up the White Man's burden —  
Send forth the best ye breed —  
Go bind your sons to exile  
To serve your captives' need;  
To wait in heavy harness,  
On fluttered folk and wild —  
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,  
Half-devil and half-child.

...To seek another's profit,  
And work another's gain.

...Watch sloth and heathen Folly  
Bring all your hopes to nought.

Take up the White Man's burden —  
And reap his old reward:  
The blame of those ye better,  
The hate of those ye guard —  
The cry of hosts ye humour  
(Ah, slowly!) toward the light: —

"Why brought he us from bondage,  
Our loved Egyptian night?"

...Take up the White Man's burden —  
Have done with childish days —  
The lightly proffered laurel,  
The easy, ungrudged praise.  
Comes now, to search your manhood  
Through all the thankless years  
Cold, edged with dear-bought wisdom,  
The judgment of your peers!  
(Rudyard Kipling *McClure's Magazine* 1899)

They would go where civilised people had never before ventured, assume the heavy duties of parenthood, and shine the light of civilisation and the Gospel into the 'spiritual darkness' of 'heathen lands'.

Lowell Mason had expressed it well in a missionary hymn written in 1823,

From Greenland's icy mountains, from India's coral strand;  
Where Afric's sunny fountains roll down their golden sand:  
From many an ancient river, from many a palmy plain,  
They call us to deliver their land from error's chain.

What though the spicy breezes blow soft o'er Ceylon's isle;  
Though every prospect pleases, and only man is vile?  
In vain with lavish kindness the gifts of God are strown;  
The heathen in his blindness bows down to wood and stone.

Shall we, whose souls are lighted with wisdom from on high,  
Shall we to those benighted the lamp of life deny?  
Salvation! O salvation! The joyful sound proclaim,  
Till earth's remotest nation has learned Messiah's Name.

Waft, waft, ye winds, His story, and you, ye waters, roll  
Till, like a sea of glory, it spreads from pole to pole:  
Till o'er our ransomed nature the Lamb for sinners slain,  
Redeemer, King, Creator, in bliss returns to reign.

Western Europeans were on a millennial mission [12](#). Good would triumph over evil, order over chaos, frugality and industry over improvidence and indolence. Responsible people, whose souls were 'lighted with wisdom from on high', had a duty to those who 'call us to deliver their land from error's chain'. And, a duty to ensure that all was in readiness for the arrival of that millennial golden age. If this entailed a little harshness, discipline and social disruption, that was unfortunate but necessary!

All schoolmasters knew that true learning requires obedience. As Sir

John Eardley Wilmot had explained in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century,

to break the natural ferocity of human nature, to subdue the passions and to impress the principles of religion and morality, and give habits of obedience and subordination to paternal as well as political authority, is the first object to be attended to by all schoolmasters who know their duty and do it.

(*The Gentleman's Magazine (1811) Volume 109 p. 449*

(originally in Volume 73 p. 136))

Middle class Western Europeans had learned the lessons of their own history well.

The resolute firmness of the person who acts in this manner, and in order to obtain a great though remote advantage, not only gives up all present pleasures, but endures the greatest labour both of mind and body, necessarily commands our approbation.

(Adam Smith 1759 Part 4 Ch. 2)

### The 'Development' Business

'The natives' would never progress or become 'developed' without Western European help. Richard Whateley, Archbishop of Dublin, in 1854, had explained the problem,

Men, left in the lowest, or even anything approaching the lowest, degree of barbarism, in which they can possibly subsist at all, never did, and never can raise themselves, unaided, into a higher condition.

(in Campbell 1871 Pt 1 P.1)

Unless those already enlightened took responsibility for enlightening those who lived in darkness they would continue in ignorance and sloth! Missionary attitudes in central Africa in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and on into the 20<sup>th</sup>, have been summed up neatly by Cairns,

The proper attitude was indicated by Carson of the L. M. S. [London Missionary Society] who, after noting that African men spent 'much time in indolence', remarked that it was inconceivable 'how the practice of that vice in the African race can be supposed to conduce to happiness in them when it makes us so miserable'.

(1965, p. 80)

Western European 'responsible' people of the middle ranks had taught their own poor the evil of sloth and the virtue of work over more than six centuries <sup>13</sup>. They brought both the experiences and practices they had acquired in doing so with them as they tackled the problem in their colonies.

As they had determinedly set about teaching the poor to work, they had also taught *themselves* that work was indispensable to a moral life. The Western European middle classes which took responsibility for reorganising vast areas of the world during the later 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, were committed to work, for its own sake. It was *moral* to work and *immoral* not to do so.

In the words of Adam Smith, asserted by countless other writers of the 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (and still being asserted today), the lives of virtuous people would and should demonstrate,

a steady perseverance in the practice of frugality, industry, and application, though directed to no other purpose than the acquisition of fortune.  
(1759 Part 4 Ch. 2)

Western middle classes became and have remained convinced that everyone *should* work for their living and that they have a responsibility to ensure that the indolent *do* learn to work. To appreciate the driving force of the invasion of the world by Western Europeans over the past two centuries, we need to understand the Western belief in the fundamental importance of work, for its own sake, for its character building potential.

Of course the West invaded (and continues to invade) the world for its resources. Of course the West has profited from its appropriation of the environments of others. But they have done so for the best of all possible reasons.

They were and are in the 'Development' business! <sup>14</sup> In 'developing' the territories of the world, they were enabling the 'development' of their inhabitants. They were bringing order to the chaos of their lives, they were providing them with the opportunity to work. They were in the 'job creation' and 'work training' business!

Russell's observations, with which we started this discussion, highlight the inevitable consequences of human beings building particular understandings into their primary ideologies <sup>15</sup>. Work became a form of organisation and activity which no longer needed to be 'explained'. To question its importance was either absurd or subversive. To suggest that the working day should be halved, was foolish. To suggest that work was not of equal importance everywhere on earth was equally silly. The reason why the rest of the world was impoverished and 'backward' was that they did not know how to 'put in a full day's work' <sup>16</sup>.

Over the past seven hundred years Western individuals and communities have progressively been reorganised and reoriented to what we now know as *economic* principles and practices <sup>17</sup>. People *know* that the economic presumptions contained within and expressed through the forms of organization within which they are enmeshed are correct,

they make *intuitive sense* 18.

The need for constant expansion of self-interested consumption and accumulation, as evidences of commitment to work, is built into the primary ideologies of Western communities. Western people are not *ensnared* in the forms of meaning and organization and processes of interaction and activity within which they find themselves. If those forms were not there, they would feel compelled to create them or something very similar to them. Indeed, they have done precisely this through most of the world as they have gained influence in other communities 19.

Although Western people *think* the principles which underpin the forms of organization and interaction in terms of which they organise their lives, they have not always thought in these ways or organized their lives by the fundamental economic principles which now govern life. The emergence of "modern" ways of thinking and organising life was slow and painful for most Western Europeans 20.

The majority of people, during the 16<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, had to be *taught* to take these principles seriously, and the disciplines imposed on them by those Western Europeans who gained control of government and who were already thinking in these ways were harsh 21.

Since the basic presumptions and principles of thought of a community determine all the behaviours and interactions of its people, they cannot easily be altered. Attempts at such radical social engineering inevitably disrupt communities and confuse and confound the minds of their members 22. Western Europe did not escape cultural confusion as its cognitive frame changed. As Foucault (1971) described, in Western Europe it produced, over several centuries, a pervasive awareness of uncontrolled madness in the minds of most people.

During the seven centuries it took Western communities to shift from feudalism to modern ways of thinking, the constantly expanding "middle classes" 23 recognised a deep responsibility for re-educating the "lower classes" 24.

The final triumph of modern ways of thinking in Western communities has been heralded over the past 50 years by the progressive disappearance of the "lower classes" as more and more people who come from such backgrounds have begun to think and act in middle class ways 25. With the advent of colonial empires, Western middle classes found themselves with a similar responsibility to 'the natives' of the world.

#### Of Globalisation and 'Failing States'

When human beings are convinced of the rightness of their causes they usually feel a moral responsibility to compel those who don't understand

or live by the principles which underpin their lives to conform to them.

We have seen the disastrous consequences of this many times in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. From Stalin, to Hitler, to Pol Pot, to the ethnic-cleansings of the 1990s, to numerous wars waged by both Western and other communities, human beings have amply demonstrated their insistence that those who are weaker than they should be made to think and live as they do.

Western Europeans have been engaged in such a mission for the past several centuries, and chief amongst their concerns has been the need to convince people everywhere of the importance of *work*.

Western people are, of course, not the only ones enmeshed in home-grown systems of meaning, organization and interaction. This is the condition of humanity. People, everywhere, organise themselves and their worlds in ways which are consonant with their forms of categorisation and classification.

The problem, in trying to understand both ourselves and others, is that, just as the languages of people are historically determined and unique to the communities which speak them, so are the forms of organization and interaction in communities. They are expressions of the underlying principles of categorisation and classification which have been historically, and subconsciously, shaped through history [26](#).

Western people *know* that work is important, and organise their individual lives and their communities in ways which stress and reinforce the importance of the organisational forms and processes of interaction required by work. But, let's not forget that other communities are just as consistent in their thinking, just as certain of the importance of their own understandings of the world, and just as committed to maintaining them through time. And, because these structures and principles are historically, and uniquely determined within communities, it is most unlikely that they will reinforce or give coherence to the Western commitment to work.

People can, of course, be taught the Western understandings, and, while the West is dominant and they need to behave in those ways in order to succeed in that Western dominated world, they will appear to live by those understandings. However, if the influence of the West wanes, so too does the commitment of those people to ordering their lives by Western understandings. Then, they begin, inevitably and less than consciously, to reshape their own behaviours and interactions to fit the unconscious ordering principles of their own communities.

Britain, in the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D., provides an excellent historical illustration of this.

By 400 A.D. the Romans had occupied Britain for almost four hundred years and had determinedly set about making it into a Roman Province.

As Gildas (c.494 or 516-c.570) says, Britain

was no longer thought to be Britain, but a Roman island; and all their money, whether of copper, gold, or silver, was stamped with Caesar's image.

(Chapter 7)

Yet, on the withdrawal of the Roman legions between 400 and 410 A.D., life rapidly reverted to pre-Roman ways. As Catherine Hills (1990) says,

around 400 AD Romanists see the end of most of the kinds of information which can be deployed to reconstruct life in Britain for the previous three and a half centuries. Written sources disappeared, and coins, wheel-thrown pottery and masonry building went out of use...

[E]ssentially, from a Romanist's point of view it is obvious that the institutions and way of life of Roman Britain disappeared soon after 400 AD. The absence of 'Roman' kinds of evidence means that we are dealing with a different kind of society, possibly a different kind of people.

Any region which has been subjected to enforced reorganisation and commitment to externally imposed understandings of the world will experience a period of turmoil and chaos as those imposed forms become less dominant in the lives of inhabitants.

Britain, in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, experienced just such turmoil as rival 'kings' battled for ascendancy and neighbouring groups, taking advantage of the chaos, invaded the region. Gildas, a century after the exodus of the Roman legions, provided a graphic (if polemically biased) description of the chaos which ensued with the waning of Roman influence in Britain,

...neither to this day are the cities of our country inhabited as before, but being forsaken and overthrown, still lie desolate; our foreign wars having ceased, but our civil troubles still remaining.

(Chapter 26)

As the empires of Western Europe have crumbled, the institutions in their post-colonial territories, established by them to ensure continuity with the colonial past, have become decreasingly effective. The 21<sup>st</sup> century has produced its own examples of post-colonial territories suffering turmoil and chaos in the increasing numbers of 'fragile' and 'failed' states which are a growing concern for Western people [27](#).

Many post-colonial territories are in various stages of change. They are slowly, but inevitably, metamorphosing into communities which exhibit similarities with the pre-colonial communities from which they came. Any reassertion of pre-colonial principles of categorisation and classification will inevitably be slow and difficult. Over time, forms of organisation and interaction will emerge which echo those of the past

though they will, of course, not simply replicate past forms.

First, any form which emerges is simply one of a range of possible forms, any or all of which might be generated from the same fundamental categorical principles. So, even if the same principles were in operation one would find different surface forms over time.

Secondly, the principles themselves are not static, they change through time and the forms of interaction and organisation which emerge will reflect such changes.

This has been demonstrated time and again in Third World communities as Western influence has become less dominant.

Of course, the longer the period during which a community has been subjected to enforced reorganisation to Western understandings of reality, the greater the disruption. It is inevitable that there will be chaos and turmoil as opposing groups attempt to reorder their worlds to their own advantage.

As people no longer order their lives by those *rational* forms of meaning and organization which the West has introduced into their communities, Western people will inevitably feel threatened. They will (and do) consider that they have a responsibility to intervene and re-impose forms of organisation which they see as rational and necessary to successful integration into the global economy.

This is particularly true when non-Western people appear to lose their commitment to forms of organization and activity which maximise the possibility and quality of productive employment. Then, Western people know that if they cannot organise *themselves* to work, it is perfectly acceptable, indeed, necessary, that multi-national enterprises base their productive activities in their communities. This is one of the reasons why Western organisations have argued so strongly for economic globalisation over the past thirty years.

For many people in Third World countries however, globalisation seems like a new form of ruthless colonialism, a conspiracy of the rich against the poor and defenceless. As Marjorie Mbilinyi, author of *Big Slavery: The Crisis of Women's Employment and Incomes in Tanzania* (1991), says:

We could have a lot of despair in Africa right now. Many of us see this as a moment of mass genocide. And it's a very conscious one, we think, on the side of at least some big government actors as well as some of the actors in agencies like the World Bank and the IMF.

The peoples of Africa are being steadily impoverished. They are also being dispossessed of their lands. Governments like Tanzania, partly in response to popular demand, had begun to



nationalise assets and try to guide the economy in the direction that would meet the basic needs of the people and increase national control and make it more inward orientated. Now we have complete reversal so that it is almost worse than in the colonial period.  
(Mbilinyi 1994)

Fantu Cheru claims of African experience:

The overwhelming consensus among the poor in Africa today is that development, over the past 25 years, has been an instrument of social control. For these people, development has always meant the progressive modernisation of their poverty.

The absence of freedom, the sacrifice of culture, the loss of solidarity and self reliance which I personally observed and experienced in many African countries, including my own, explains why a growing number of poor Africans beg: please do not develop us!  
(Cheru 1989, p. 20)

Western people, however, *know* that multi-national enterprises are not exploiting resources and cheap labour. They are opposing socialist, dictatorial and anarchic tendencies. They are ensuring that communities are once again guided into market-led economic development. They are providing employment which might help to turn those countries once more back to *economic* prosperity. Not only are they providing some cash inflow to communities, they are, even more importantly, reintroducing them to "work discipline".

### Work discipline, titles of consumption and status 🐼

Over seven centuries of teaching themselves and their 'Poor' the importance of work, Western people have built a wide range of presumptions into the concept to buttress its importance. It has become important for its own sake, a form of organisation and activity to which all truly moral people commit themselves.

Any suggestion that people should be freed from work to other activity without losing income would be regarded by most Western people as impractical, irresponsible, foolish or subversive. While many people might find Bertrand Russell's vignette with which this discussion started, clever, few would accept that his solution is 'practical'.

### The Computer Revolution 🐼

This has never been better demonstrated than in the Western response to the computer revolution of the past thirty years. During the 1960s Western people first became aware of the transforming possibilities of the computer revolution which was looming on the horizon. A report

from a specialist committee to President Lyndon Johnson of the USA in 1964 examined the issue and made a number of recommendations. They were summarised by Macbride in 1967:

Distribution of titles of consumption (i.e., money) has been via jobs... this will have to end. The continuance of the income-through-jobs link as the only major mechanism for distributing effective demand – for granting the right to consume – now acts as the main brake on the almost unlimited capacity of a cybernated productive system.

Further, up to this time resources have been distributed on the basis of contributions to production, with machines and men competing for employment on somewhat equal terms. In the developing cybernated system, potentially unlimited output can be achieved by systems of machines which will require little cooperation from human beings.

(Macbride (1967, p. 195); see [AD Hoc Committee on the Triple Revolution](#) (1964) 29)

Numerous articles were written in newspapers and magazines speculating on how people would *fill in their time* when robots and other computer based technologies made their lives easier and freed human beings to leisure activity. And, equally, speculation was rife as to "how to distribute the abundance that is the great potential of cybernation" when consumption was no longer tied to work. How would we distribute income to people when machines were doing the producing and money had become simply a means to obtain goods and services produced by them, with the "income-through-jobs link" broken?

Of course, there seems no logical reason why, if we invent machines to do our work for us, we should not reward ourselves by gaining increased leisure time and by distributing the means for obtaining the goods and services produced in some other way than as rewards for work. The reality, however, has been very different from the speculated futures of those articles.

### [Globalisation, Free Trade Zones and Definitions of Employment](#)

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century people either work for longer hours, with more demanding pressures, or find themselves, involuntarily, committed to casual and part-time work or to unemployment queues. And the incomes of people are, if anything, more closely tied to work than they were forty years ago. Business taxes, duties, tariffs and other forms of public impost on economic activity have been reduced to ensure the continued competitiveness of industry. And government services and welfare payments have correspondingly been cut back <sup>30</sup> — often because it has been claimed that they 'reward improvidence' <sup>31</sup>.

Through the rest of the world over the past thirty years, the

globalisation of productive enterprise has resulted in the reorganisation of entire populations to provide low paid labour for export goods.

From the mid 1970s, transnational companies increasingly began to locate their low-wage production activities in selected Third World countries, taking advantage of new transport developments, particularly the development of container shipping which transformed Western waterfronts during the 1970s.

Those who were most directly involved in Third World development planning and programs saw this new movement to produce low-wage goods in Third World countries as providing a new base for national development in those countries. With the failure of import substitution industrialisation, and the faltering of value-added industrial development [32](#), this new move by transnational companies to relocate in Third World countries was seen as a 'window of opportunity' for Third World people.

Where government-directed planning had not succeeded, private investment from Western countries would. Development agencies, therefore, strongly promoted various forms of deregulation to facilitate transnational investment in the Third World.

The result, for Western populations, was a transient affluence as goods made in non-Western sweat-shops flooded Western supermarkets and malls. It also resulted in increasing unemployment among low-skilled workers. This last effect was rapidly disguised, in Western nations, by altering the definition of employment to include all people who 'did any work at all for pay or profit'. The U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics gives the current definition of employment,

...people are considered employed if they did any work at all for pay or profit during the survey week. This includes all part-time and temporary work, as well as regular full-time, year-round employment.

(USBLS 2010)

Even one hour of paid work in a week now qualifies an individual for definition as 'employed'. The definition has been completely divorced from any consideration of a 'living income'. The relation between 'employment statistics' and living standards has been broken, allowing for the disguised growth of a low paid, marginalised workforce in Western countries [33](#).

In third world countries, a variety of 'free trade zones' were established as governments competed to attract transnational companies. As [Wikipedia](#) puts it,

A free trade zone (FTZ) or export processing zone (EPZ) is an area of a country where some normal trade barriers such as tariffs and quotas are eliminated and bureaucratic requirements are lowered in hopes of attracting new business

and foreign investments. It is a region where a group of countries has agreed to reduce or eliminate trade barriers. Free trade zones can be defined as labor intensive manufacturing centers that involve the import of raw materials or components and the export of factory products.

Free trade zones are domestically criticized for encouraging businesses to set up operations under the influence of other governments, and for giving foreign corporations more economic liberty than is given indigenous employers who face large and sometimes insurmountable "regulatory" hurdles in developing nations. However, many countries are increasingly allowing local entrepreneurs to locate inside FTZs in order to access export-based incentives.

Because the multinational corporation is able to choose between a wide range of underdeveloped or depressed nations in setting up overseas factories, and most of these countries do not have limited governments, bidding wars (or 'races to the bottom') sometimes erupt between competing governments.

Sometimes the domestic government pays part of the initial cost of factory setup, loosens environmental protections and rules regarding negligence and the treatment of workers, and promises not to ask payment of taxes for the next few years.

When the taxation-free years are over, the corporation that set up the factory without fully assuming its costs is often able to set up operations elsewhere for less expense than the taxes to be paid, giving it leverage to take the host government to the bargaining table with more demands, but parent companies in the United States are rarely held accountable.

From the late 1970s, Western governments, seeking ways in which to stimulate their own faltering trade [34](#), lowered tariff barriers to selected Third World countries. However, the consequences have been rather different than initially anticipated by the experts. As Jorge Nef recounts:

The transnationalisation of production and the displacement of manufacturing to the semi-periphery, on account of the 'comparative advantages' brought about by depressed economic circumstances and the 'low-wage economy', results in import dependency in the North.

This deserves further explanation. The import dependency mentioned here does not mean that developed countries become dependent on less-developed countries for the satisfaction of their consumption needs. Since most international trade takes place among transnationals, all that import dependency means is First World conglomerates buying from their affiliates or from other transnationals relocated in

peripheral territories.

The bulk of the population at the centre, therefore, becomes dependent on imports coming from core firms domiciled in 'investor friendly' host countries. Via plant closures and loss of jobs, such globalism replicates in the centre similarly depressed conditions to those in the periphery.

Manufacture evolves into a global maquiladora operating in economies of scale and integrating its finances and distribution by means of major transnational companies and franchises (for an analysis of maquiladoras, see Kopinak 1993, pp.141-162). Abundant, and above all cheap, labour and pro-business biases on the part of host governments are fundamental conditions for the new type of productive system.

Since there are many peripheral areas with easy access to inexpensive raw materials and with unrepresentative governments willing to go out of their way to please foreign investors, a decline of employment and wages at the centre will not necessarily create incentives to invest, or increase productivity. Nor would it increase 'competitiveness'. Since production, distribution, and accumulation are now global, it would rather evolve into a situation of permanent unemployment, transforming the bulk of the blue collar workers — the 'working' class — into a 'non-working' underclass.

(Nef 1995, ch. 3)

So, what has gone wrong? Why have not new technologies, which have, unarguably, enabled more efficient and less labour intensive production, enriched human beings everywhere and freed them to non-work activity? In order to understand why, in a climate which should have led to shorter working hours and increasing material prosperity, people have found themselves working harder and for longer, amongst other things [35](#), we need to understand the peculiar nature of *work* in Western communities.

#### Distinction between labour and work

Through the past seven centuries Western people have evolved a very distinctive and peculiar understanding of the nature of work [36](#), which necessitates making a clear distinction between the terms *labour* and *work*.

The term *labour*, for our purposes, will refer to any activity which includes expenditure of physical or mental effort especially when difficult or compulsory. It is normally defined as human activity that provides goods or services.

*Work*, on the other hand, cannot be so simply defined since it not only

includes labour but a variety of moral prerogatives of labour. The following discussion of work, for reasons which we have already spelt out, relates only to understandings in Western communities. Nothing we are talking of can simply be translated to "human beings" at large. They are culturally specific understandings which reflect the peculiar history of Western communities over the past several centuries.

The term *work*, as we will define it, includes the services performed by workers for an *income* since one of the important reasons given by people who are asked why they work is that without work they would not be "able to afford to live". As Macbride(1967 p.195) put it, "Distribution of titles of consumption (i.e., money) has been via jobs" 37.

But it does not only refer to activity which generates an income. It is also, and perhaps far more importantly, the term we use to imply that an object is performing as *it was meant to perform* 38. So, we are able to ask "is it working?", and the person to whom we are speaking knows that in order to answer the question he or she must check its *performance* and that performance should be judged against the *potential* of the item.

There is a teleological dimension to the term. 'Work' is understood, in a less than conscious way amongst most Western people, to be directed toward an end or shaped by a purpose, primarily related to individuals *achieving their potential*. People *ought* to work.

This understanding of the meaning of work implies that objects, or people, have been designed to perform in certain ways. When they are performing as they have been designed to, they are *working*, when they are doing something other than what they have been designed to do, they are *not working* or they are *disabled*.

### The Able-bodied and the Disabled — The Deserving Poor 🐦

During the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in Western Europe, there emerged a clear division between the "deserving" and the "undeserving" poor. Those who were undeserving were those who, while "able-bodied", yet were not employed and/or relied on welfare support to one extent or another for subsistence. The deserving poor were those who could not help being unemployed. The largest category of these were people who were classified as in some way "disabled" as a consequence of some physical imperfection or other which interfered with their ability to be employed.

During the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, as Mackelprang and Salsgiver (1996) explain, it was assumed that it was the responsibility of the community to repair these imperfections so as to ensure that such people could engage in work.

In the United States, institutions dedicated to perfecting the

imperfect sprang up (Rothman, 1971) with the hope that professional intervention could cure these inadequacies. When a cure was not possible, people with disabilities could at least be trained to become functional enough to "perform socially or vocationally in an acceptable manner" (Longmore, 1987b, p. 355).

Over the past two centuries, Western communities have identified a variety of "disabled" people. Into this residual category are placed any who are, in any way, "deficient". The range of people placed into this category is remarkably wide, including those who are mentally retarded or otherwise mentally 'impaired', blind, deaf, lame, exhibiting some other form of physical abnormality or 'deformity', or suffering from any of a variety of long-term illnesses.

Even today, the term "disabled" is applied to any who are in any way "impaired" and are therefore "dependent". This is exemplified in the acts passed in most Western countries over the past fifty years, such as the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (1992) which guarantees to the physically or mentally impaired protection against discrimination (see Anderson 1992). This category includes not only those with physical or mental problems, but also many whose "impairment" is social in nature.

But for the need to be able to perform at "work" and so ensure their "independence" <sup>39</sup>, there could be little reason for the existence of such a widely inclusive category of people. These are the "dependent" ones, those who must be "cared for".

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century Western communities developed quite specific programs for dealing with these "unrepairable" people. Such people were concluded to be permanent "dependents" who should be cared for by the community but were, nonetheless, a drain on its resources. It was believed that they should, to a large extent, be separated from the rest of the community lest others become in some way contaminated.

Professionals lost confidence in their ability to perfect people with disabilities, concluding that they were innately unproductive and thus endemically without worth. No intervention could bring about change because the laws of nature deemed people with disabilities unfit (Longmore, 1987a).

People with disabilities were to be prevented from marrying or having children for fear of propagating their imperfections. As the 19<sup>th</sup> century progressed, institutions to deal with the threat and nuisance of people with disabilities increased dramatically, and they were increasingly isolated and institutionalized, sometimes in sub-human conditions. (Mackelprang and Salsgiver (1996))

## Work and its antonyms 📖

For those who are not “handicapped” or “disabled”, there are two contrasting states to *work* in Western communities. The first is usually termed *unemployment*, this is, as most dictionaries define the term, “a period of *involuntary idleness*”. It is during periods of *un*employment that people are paid “the dole”. Synonyms of the term include: alms, charity, gratuity, handout, mite, pittance, trifle. Being unemployed is assumed to be related to misfortune and heartache, to living from hand-to-mouth.

The unemployed person is being denied the *opportunity to work*, and there is something morally wrong with a person who accepts this situation with equanimity. People who are not given the chance to work *should* feel a sense of adversity, of affliction, of being judged as good-for-nothing and worthless. Those who lose their jobs are said to have been *declared redundant*.

## Work and leisure 📖

While Western people assume the right to 'leisure time', this is not a right which even in the 21st century is universally recognised or honoured. The 'forty hour week' was something which Western working people gained only after prolonged, organised protest. It was only in the 1930s that legal acceptance of the principle of a forty hour week was finally won in Western nations. It never has been in most Third World nations. Paid annual leave was also first included in Western industrial awards during the 1930s (though usually only one week).

It was during the boom years following the Second World War that both the forty hour week and annual leave became accepted as a basic entitlements in Western industrial labour awards. The effective period during which 'leisure' has been available to the bulk of Western working people has been less than sixty years. During the discussion on 'leisure' which follows we need to realise how long it took to have such time recognised as legitimate and for how short a time it has been a 'basic entitlement' for Western workers.

While most Western people over the past fifty years have assumed the right to limited working hours and paid annual leave, the entitlements have always been questioned by employers and are by no means ensured into the future. Since the 1970s low paid workers have found their entitlements slowly whittled away. Many need to juggle more than one job in order to 'make ends meet'.

In Third World countries, with labour organisation weak or non-existent, it is not uncommon for workers to be employed six days a week and ten hours a day. This, of course, leaves very little time for 'leisure activities'.



There is, however, where leisure is accepted as a legitimate entitlement of workers, a state in which the person is *not working* both legitimately and necessarily. This is a state of *voluntary idleness*. The overarching, positive antonym for work is *leisure*, which can be divided into active and passive categories of behaviour.

The active forms of leisure include pastimes, sports, games, recreation and other *amusements*. These are times when the person “charges the batteries”, engaging in refreshing diversions so that they will be mentally and physically re-tuned to better perform in the realm of work. The passive forms of leisure include: relaxation, repose, rest, requiescence. These periods should provide the person with stillness, with a tranquillity not possible in the busy round of work activities.

These times also have a *purpose*. They are times when the individual is able to distance himself or herself from the busy round and take stock, getting work into perspective so that they will perform more effectively and efficiently than before <sup>40</sup>.

When people are found to be run-down, worn-out or exhausted by the pressing urgencies of work they can be prescribed times of leisure, when they can, for a period, escape the *duties of life* and become mentally and physically renovated. Even these times are considered to be intimately intertwined with work. They are not separate, alternative bases for life, they are the activities and times when human beings, who are *naturally and morally* fashioned for work, re-create themselves, and, in doing so, function more effectively within the world of work.

This conceptualisation of *work* as “appropriate performance” is not closely tied to particular vocations or aptitudes <sup>41</sup>. It is, rather, in human beings, considered to be diligent application to productive endeavour <sup>42</sup>. It is very often dissociated from an individual’s own aptitudes and abilities unless these have clearly been honed so as to improve the person’s potential for work.

There is almost a sense of illegitimacy about “working” at something which one enjoys for itself — enjoyment, after all, is one of the definitional properties of *leisure*. If one was to respond to the question, “what would you do if you didn’t have to work?” with the reply “what I am now doing” most Western people would find it difficult to accept. There seems to be a contradiction inherent in doing what one calls *work* in a time when one no longer is required to work.

So, for instance, an artist who paints because he or she greatly enjoys the activity, or a tennis player who makes a living from the game, seem in some way to be “cheating”. Such people have blurred the boundaries between work and leisure. In order to ensure that this does not provide people with escape from the normal necessity to work they must be categorised as in some way “special”. And, in order to remain legitimate they need to be seen as in some way “driven” to apply themselves to

their activity by some inner compulsion. Work is about discipline, about applying oneself to activity which is in some way an imposition of ordered *endeavour* upon the individual.

Those who are not inwardly driven soon find that people around them supply much of the needed resolve to engage in work through their expressed attitudes toward these deviant people. It is the lucky few who are able to combine personal interest with work but they, driven to constant involvement in a form of activity which is normally defined as *leisure*, need to demonstrate that they have an extraordinary commitment to the attainment of perfection. They are *professionals* not "amateurs".

The realm of leisure is constantly being redefined as more and more leisure activities are *professionalised*, transforming them from leisure to work, from a form of activity presumed to be "relaxing" to one which the individual is diligently focused upon and from which the individual "derives an income". We speak of this phenomenon as the professionalization of sport, leisure etc..

### The organization of work 🐦

Although one would hardly perform work if there were no income attached to it, there is more to work than the income obtained. Work should be performed over extensive periods of time, and the time set aside for it should be spent in activities which are clearly defined as "work related". Talking with someone involved in a large corporation, I was told the following story:

Several people in an office had found that, by hurrying through their tasks, they were able to perform most of the day's required activities in the first three to four hours of the day. They therefore decided to do this and spent much of the afternoon in playing cards.

The manager of their section of the corporation decided that this was entirely unacceptable (for reasons which you, if you are a Western person, will already understand, even if you can't articulate them). He called the offending workers into his office to remonstrate with them.

They asked him whether there was any expressed dissatisfaction with the quality or consistency of their efforts. He answered that there wasn't but that there was a perception that they were lazy because they spent so much time in playing cards. He explained that they were not employed to play cards, but to carry out the duties of their positions.

They were asked, in future, to "space" their work and spread it over the entire day. They were not to indulge in card playing or in excessive periods of "morning tea" or "afternoon tea" but

were to use their time in "work related" activity.

This is, of course, reminiscent of Parkinson's (1957) Law:

Work expands to fill the time available for its completion and subordinates multiply at a fixed rate, regardless of the amount of work produced.

...A lack of real activity does not, of necessity, result in leisure. A lack of occupation is not necessarily revealed by a manifest idleness. The thing to be done swells in importance and complexity in a direct ratio with the time to be spent.  
(Parkinson 1957)

A Western person, hearing this story, immediately recognises a whole constellation of reasons why the workers could not be allowed to continue to "play" during "work hours". Work, in almost all forms of employment, covers a period, and tasks are performed through that period. There are, in all jobs not directly driven by assembly line practices or by "piece" work, times of disguised "inactivity" through the period. Most workers, if they concentrated their efforts, could perform the required tasks of their positions in much less than the *time span* of work.

It was this recognition which led to "Taylorism" (see Taylor 1911), the scientific management programs of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, which aimed to eliminate "inefficiencies" and ensure that workers performed in the most productive manner possible. It has, similarly, resulted in recent management strategies to "streamline" companies, through concentrating work activity within a smaller workforce <sup>43</sup>.

As we observed earlier, these practices are aimed, at a time when new technologies are simplifying work tasks and increasing productivity in many areas, at increasing the work commitment of individuals, requiring them both to work harder and for longer hours. For reasons with which most Western people find it hard to disagree, new management strategies are aimed at *increasing* commitment to work, not at lessening it. And, we know that this is as it *ought* to be. As soon as we find that a term has a teleological dimension of this kind, we immediately also know that the term is a *prescriptive* one. The term *work* is such a term in the English language.

It is undeniable that *labour* is something in which all people everywhere engage because some of the tasks which need to be performed in any community require an expenditure of physical or mental effort which is at times irksome to those required to perform the tasks. However, the need to allot a specific period of each day to the performance of such tasks, and then to ensure that people are managed in such a way as to maximise their activity, is a distinctively Western need.

It is this allotment of set times to maximised labour-related activity

which uniquely defines *work* in Western communities. This complements the equally unique relationship perceived between production, possessions and status in Western communities <sup>44</sup> and ensures that people are focused on the status maintenance and attainment prerequisites of their communities.

Because our drive to consumption and accumulation is open-ended, Western people argue that so too must our commitment be to producing the goods and services we “need” <sup>45</sup>. This is, in fact, a *consequence* of the Western belief that individuals should diligently apply themselves to productive endeavour, to work, rather than a *cause* of it. It is not that we work because our needs are constantly expanding. Rather, the ability to acquire a constantly expanding range and quality of goods and services *is evidence of our strong commitment to work* <sup>46</sup>.

Of course, in the minds of most Western people the two are intimately connected. Since our prime means of obtaining the income necessary to obtaining the goods and services we need is work, we are quite sure that unless we work we will not be able to obtain those goods and services. This, of course, is true, but simply demonstrates how strongly Western people, over the past four centuries, have reinforced the need to work through closely tying both material wellbeing and status attainment and maintenance to its performance.

The most important forms of behaviour, organization and meaning in any community are strongly reinforced through the ways in which they are made “necessary” through tying individual and communal wellbeing to them. So people sense that unless they are maintained, life will become increasingly difficult. Over a period of more than four centuries Western European communities increasingly buttressed “work” in this way. Now, in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, Western people are, indeed, very certain that unless they commit themselves to work, both their own wellbeing and the wellbeing of the communities in which they live will be at risk.

In a very real sense, Western people do not work in order to live, they live to work!

### Teaching Western Europeans to work 🇺🇸

So, how did it happen that Western Europeans became so convinced of the central importance of work? To understand this, we need to look back into Western Europe’s historical experiences <sup>47</sup>. Here we will focus on a few of the presumptions and practices which led to the present Western commitment to work.

In the past, during the 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, as Foucault says,

If it is true that labor is not inscribed among the laws of nature, it is enveloped in the order of the fallen world. This is

why idleness is rebellion — the worst form of all ... the sin of idleness is the supreme pride of man once he has fallen, the absurd pride of poverty... In the Middle Ages, the great sin... was pride... All the 17<sup>th</sup> century texts, on the contrary, announced the infernal triumph of Sloth: it was sloth that led the round of vices and swept them on. (Foucault 1971: 56-7)

As Foucault says, by the 17<sup>th</sup> century, *responsible* Western people had come to believe that commitment to work was either based on natural law requirements, or that it was necessary to sanctification. The emphasis, among the "responsible people" of 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century Western Europe, was on the *necessity* to engage in *work*, that is, in productive enterprise: *in realising the **potential** of one's own capacity to labour*; of one's own innate "talents"; and of the environment available for exploitation. John Locke, in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, put it like this,

God gave the world to men in common; but... it cannot be supposed he meant it should always remain common and uncultivated. He gave it to the use of the industrious and rational (and *labour* was to be *his title* to it).  
(1982, p.21).

It was the necessity to "make the most of oneself through industrious endeavour" that lay at the root of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century insistence that everyone become involved in productive endeavour.

As Locke (1982, Ch. 5) argued in 1692, God commanded human beings to labour, and the property they accumulated as a consequence of their labour *demonstrated their commitment to that industriousness* which God required. To do otherwise than industriously accumulate personal property was to rebel against the natural order established by God for the wellbeing of both individuals and communities. Not only was one rebelling against God, by breaking the natural laws for human "progress" the person was also refusing to take his or her communal responsibilities seriously.

The term *work* summarised and expressed, in human organization and behaviour, the central presumptions of the emerging *primary ideology* of Western Europe <sup>48</sup>. Commitment to work demonstrated that the person, as an individual, was dedicated to obtaining the returns which the industrious gained for their dedicated effort. Those returns were important both to the individual and to the community in which he lived. Richard Baxter affirmed this when he proclaimed in 1678,

If God show you a way in which you may lawfully get more than in another way (without wrong to your soul or to any other), if you refuse this and choose the less gainful way, you cross one of the ends of your Calling, and you refuse to be God's steward. (quoted in Gilbert 1980:33).

As Foucault (1971:46) claims, during the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries there was far greater concern about the consequences of *idleness* than of *illness*. It was considered the responsibility of both Governments and responsible citizens to *teach* the "idle poor" the virtues of consistent work. As Sir William Coventry, in the 1670s, claimed, poor laws 49, which protected the idle from the consequences of their sloth, should be repealed and the Government should establish "workhouses 50 ... where such as will not work for themselves may be compelled to work for others" (in Appleby 1978, p. 151).

Sayings emphasising the sinfulness of sloth proliferated through Western Europe, summed up in a number of very similar English proverbs: "Idleness is the beginning of all sin"; "The devil makes work for idle hands"; "Idleness breeds vice"; "Idleness is the devil's workshop". If sloth was sin, indigence and pauperism were its consequences.

By the 18<sup>th</sup> century it was well understood that indigence was closely tied to immorality. The harshness of the workhouses between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was necessary to discourage the moral depravity of sloth. And, just as the evils of idleness were denounced, so the virtues of *industry* were heralded. There was virtue in *steady or habitual effort*, in *diligence in an employment*, in applying oneself in a disciplined way to productive endeavour, in "adopting those habits of industry, which always tend to steadiness and sobriety of conduct, and to consequent material wealth and prosperity" (Codere 1951, p. 24).

### The morality of work

There was a *morality* in the consistent, daily commitment of the individual to work, to industriousness 51. The individual gained respect and status through clearly demonstrating a consistent, continual commitment to harnessing his or her environment in the interests of accumulation and production. A *conspicuous* commitment to *industry* became the primary evidence of the individual's commitment to upholding the central moral values of Western Europe.

In any community, the morality of individuals is measured in terms of consistent commitment to the central tenets and understandings which drive and give force to systems of status and respect in the community. In Western Europe it became an accepted fact that "responsible people" work hard, and that, as Locke (1982, p. 27) said, "*labour makes the far greatest part of the value of things*" 52. So, it was entirely necessary that individuals who worked hard should retain possession of the things whose value they had thus increased and this "necessarily introduces *private possessions*" (Locke 1982, p. 22). Hard work gives value to objects, and the evidence of hard work is, therefore, an accumulation of private property. In order to demonstrate the virtues of individuals it was necessary that those who created value should possess the objects

within which that value was expressed.

The accumulation of private property *by individuals* was both just and appropriate since, through their own industry, they had created the property they accumulated. It was neither appropriate nor just that those who created the wealth should be required to share it with others who did not create wealth. Rather, those who did not create wealth for themselves should be compelled to do so. Otherwise they would be a drain on those who through their own productive endeavour had accumulated wealth and had, in this way, demonstrated their commitment to the central moral values of their communities.

Responsible governments ensured that the conditions encouraging and facilitating such activity were maintained, and that those who were "not responsible" were "made responsible" by making the condition of their lives as difficult as possible until they committed themselves to work. This has remained, throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and on into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a prime responsibility of Government. Governments should educate and train the "workforce", and should provide every inducement and encouragement to people to "work". They should, conversely, strongly discourage idleness and vagrancy <sup>53</sup>.

For the past several centuries Western European communities have had (and most still have) strongly enforced laws calculated to ensure that people were "gainfully employed" and had "visible means of support". Anything which might discourage people from strong and continuous commitment to work should be removed in the interests of ensuring that people "worked for their living". Over the past four centuries concerted efforts have been made by responsible Western Europeans to strip people of any other means of subsistence than work aimed at increasing the cash worth and extent of their private property.

### From indolent subsistence to labour-pool worker

#### Teaching 'The Poor' to Work

As a legacy of the feudal period in Western Europe, many poor peasants between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries owned small parcels of land which provided all or part of their subsistence. They also had rights of use in areas of common land attached to manorial estates but available to all associated with the estate, whether small farmers or rural labourers, where they could forage and graze animals. The land was used for subsistence, not for increasing cash income or private property.

This focus in life was one which emphasised *communally determined limitations on the accumulation of property*, not an open ended accumulation of private property <sup>54</sup>. As such, in the minds of the responsible people of Western Europe, the land these people held was being used "inappropriately". Therefore, as Locke (1982 Ch. 5)

reasoned, it should be forfeited to those who would use it "productively", that is, to increase cash income and private property.

Not only were these peasants using the lands they controlled inappropriately, because they obtained a part of their subsistence from it, wage labour, for many of them, was an additional source of income used to augment the subsistence obtained from their own or common land. The Poor were not strongly oriented to the emerging status systems based on accumulation and conspicuous consumption which were driving activity among those who had come to be called the "middle class". In consequence, the "labouring poor" were unreliable workers. They seemed ready to work for only so long as was necessary to obtain the additional income required for a subsistence lifestyle. If they did not need the money, they saw little reason to work <sup>55</sup>.

By the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century it was already recognised by those who were gaining control in Western Europe that so long as the poor had access to land and could supply part of their own subsistence requirements independently of the emerging work oriented economy, they would continue to treat work in this way. The answer, of course, was to strip away the small parcels of land from the poor, and to take away their access to common land, making them entirely dependent on work in the cash economy for their subsistence. The reasons given for the expropriation of these lands were varied, including, of course, Locke's argument that land-holding should be rationalised to increase its economic productivity.

The upshot was that in England, between 1700 and 1845, more than seven million acres of common land was expropriated and consolidated in the hands of larger landowners who put the greater part of it into pasturage. Considerably more land was transferred from small to large landowners through the termination of leaseholds and through challenging ownership rights where small-holders lacked documentation supporting their ownership, though no records are available to determine the amount of land transferred in this way.

Those who lost their lands in this consolidation became wholly dependent on cash work and increasingly reliant on the social welfare provided by parishes under the Poor Laws. They became a 'labour-pool', dependent for their livelihoods on employment within the mines, factories and sweat-shops of Western Europe; in competition with each other for scarce jobs <sup>56</sup>.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries the responsible people of Western Europe found themselves with a new responsibility. They had long accepted their responsibility for re-organising and re-educating the poor of Western Europe. Now they had to accept the same responsibility for 'the natives' of their colonies.



## Teaching 'The Natives' to Work

Responsible Western people were well aware of the problems they had encountered in educating the poor in Western Europe over more than four centuries. They realised that one of the major mistakes made had been to engage in land reform without taking into account the movement of people from the countryside. Having nowhere to go, they had 'clogged the highways and byways' during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries and become a major problem in the cities of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

They determined not to make the same mistake in their colonies. The colonial authorities would divide the land into regions, setting aside some of the less agriculturally productive areas as 'native reserves' onto which the surplus native population could be moved. They would become a labour-pool of workers, managed by the colonial administration, and employed by various economic enterprises in the colony.

Western Europeans had learned over more than four centuries that human beings were independent individuals not communal beings <sup>57</sup>. As the British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, talking to *Women's Own* magazine, October 31 1987, explained,

...there is no such thing as society. There are individual men and women.

So, no account needed to be taken of existing indigenous forms of social organisation or understandings of their environments. In colony after colony, they employed the same strategy:

- Assess the economic potential of the territory;
- determine where lower or higher concentrations of population were needed;
- pass the necessary laws and regulations to legitimise the reorganisation;
- and move the native populations accordingly.

This freed up agriculturally valuable land for large scale farming and created labour pools for mining, plantation, large-scale agricultural enterprise and other economic activity. Colonial administrations also closely controlled movement of native populations out of their reserves to the administrative centres. The consequent breakdown in law and order and in living standards among indigenous populations on the newly created reserves were evidence, if any were needed, of the childlike inability of the natives to care for themselves <sup>58</sup>.

Gilbert Murray (1900), a late 19<sup>th</sup> century student of British colonial labour practices, provided a clear summary of the systems of labour

exploitation found in British colonies. It has been included in the following footnote [59](#).

He goes on to provide graphic examples of the ways in which 'useful' and 'useless' 'natives' were treated in various Western European colonies (see footnote [60](#)).

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, during Western Europe's expansion into the rest of the world, the emphasis on the importance of work was as strong, if not stronger than in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Western Europeans took their commitment to work with them as they invaded the rest of the world.

A common theme of those who wrote on the problems in the countries and communities for which they felt they had to take responsibility was that "traditional" people seemed so unwilling to put in a "full day's work".

As Cairns explains,

The intrinsic value of work was revealed by Bishop Smythies (U. M. C. A.) when he noted Africans east of Lake Nyasa clearing ground and cultivating 'on the steepest, most stoney slopes' of a mountain side.

This seems to point to one good thing which may come from the evil of African wars. If all was quiet and there was no fear of... marauding tribes and yet no civilisation to quicken thought, in a climate where everything comes easily to hand so readily if there are only rivers as there are here, the people would have nothing to keep them from becoming more and more enervated.

(1965, p. 79).

Henry Drummond, commenting on the people of the same area, claimed that "apart from eating, their sole occupation is to talk, and this they do unceasingly" (Cairns 1965: 79). As Cairns claims of European attitudes,

the general attitude was that work, more for the sake of the virtues which it fosters than for the wealth it created, was necessary to a well-ordered purposeful life  
(1965, p. 79).

Western Europeans, intent on colonial expansion, believed that they were on a "civilising" mission and that one of their most important responsibilities was to teach people in other countries and communities to *work*. Sir Rudolph Slatin's remedy for the people of The Sudan, described by Gilbert Murray, was an example of a common theme,

'The nigger is a lazy beast,' said Slatin, 'and must be compelled to work — compelled by Government.' 'How?' asked his interlocutor. 'With a stick,' was Slatin's reply.

(Gilbert Murray 1900 p. 135)

Bernard Magubane provided a succinct description of Western attitudes toward non-Western communities in his description of relations between Europeans and Africans in South Africa,

Before they were physically subdued, African traditional societies with plenty of land confronted the requirements of capitalism with difficult problems. The wants of an African living within his subsistence agriculture, cultivating his own *mealies* (corn), were confined to a *kaross* (skin cloak) and some pieces of home-made cotton cloth. The prospects of leaving his family to work in a mine, in order to earn wages with which he could buy things he had no use for, did not at once appeal to him.

James Bryce observed that,

The white men, anxious to get to work on the goldreefs, are annoyed at what they call the stupidity and laziness of the native, and usually clamour for legislation to compel the native to come to work, adding, of course, that regular labour would be the best thing in the world for natives.

(Magubane 1975, p. 233)

This belief in the virtue of work was, by the 19<sup>th</sup> century, so ingrained in Western Europeans that they *knew* that it was both logical and rational that people be compelled to work, no matter what their objections. Western Europeans had a moral duty to teach the world to work, and they have gone about it in non-Western communities with a missionary zeal.

Over the past forty years, with the resurgence of deregulated capitalism, the reorganisation of non-Western regions and communities to serve the demands of capitalism has continued apace. In free trade zones, maquiladoras and export processing zones, wherever labour is cheap and regulation relaxed or non-existent, people will work in substandard conditions, receive low wages, and live in slums. And, all the while, Western peoples and those who emulate their lifestyles in non-Western countries and communities will continue to expand their consumption and accumulation of the products of that exploitation.

## Conclusion 🗨️

So long as commitment to work, and its inevitable companions — ever-expanding consumption and accumulation — are among the central primary ideological presumptions of Western communities, unregulated capitalism will continue to produce conditions like these around the world.

The emphasis upon the importance of work in Western communities has

not diminished in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Writers as diverse as Thorstein Veblen, John Dewey, Hannah Arendt and Daniel Bell have argued that work is a moral imperative and has, as Bell put it, "always stood at the center of moral consciousness" (in Wolfe 1997 p. 559) [61](#).

The most important duties and responsibilities of community members, those which, as Kant ((1785) 1909) suggested, secure our own "freedom", are strongly reinforced through the ways in which they are made "necessary" to both individual and communal wellbeing. In Western communities, a wide range of common-sense reasons is given as to why people must be involved in work:

- The economic wellbeing of the country *requires* that everyone commit themselves to consistent hard-work – only in this way will the gross national product continue to grow and the economy "expand". Bureaus of Statistics publish tables showing "days lost" due to a lack of commitment to work, to absenteeism [62](#).
- People who don't put work first fail to establish themselves financially and so become a drain on the community through becoming, at one time or another in their lives, dependent on "welfare". Consequently, their children become "disadvantaged" and in later life are unable to "achieve their potential" in the world of work.
- Those who diligently apply themselves to work become "successful" and grow in self-confidence. They earn respect from others and become recognised as dependable and reliable (or, alternatively, as ruthless and dominant). In consequence they become leaders, those who will be able to take up responsibilities and see them through [63](#).

These understandings permeate Western consciousness. They are presented and reinforced in many different ways. Perhaps the most pervasive and effective ways in which they are reinforced are through the varieties of forms of product and service promotion and in the various forms of "entertainment" to which the vast majority of Western people subject themselves for three or four hours a day.

Whether in salacious soap operas, or in advertisements for motor cars, those most admired are usually those who seem to have been able to succeed in the workplace, in the economic arena. They are wealthy, suave, sophisticated, with the easy grace of those who know their *own worth*. They provide models against which we can measure ourselves or that we can attempt to live by.

To the successful go the spoils! To them belong the fast cars, the yachts, the lavish entertainments and the lifestyles of the "rich and famous". Far from challenging the central moral tenets of Western communities, the magazines and television entertainments of the West strongly reinforce them.

The West is no longer centrally concerned with sexual morality — that belongs to a past age, when people were prudish and no-one seemed prepared even to talk about the possibility of sexual adventure. It is no longer centrally concerned with violence since most of its entertainments glorify it, though it is roundly condemned in the abstract.

It is, of course, centrally concerned with social justice: in a “user pays” environment people get what they deserve! And it is centrally concerned with economic success, which is *assumed* to be related to work.

There is little evidence that people living in Western communities are evolving beyond their deep-seated moral commitment to work. After a brief flirtation with the 'evils' of 'regulation', 'protectionism' and 'social welfare' <sup>64</sup> in the 1930s-1970s, Western communities have reasserted their subordination to deregulated capitalism and commitment to:

- Individual self-promotion through expanding consumption,
- A 'user-pays' world,
- And unconstrained 'development' of the world's economic resources.

### A Personal Observation 🐞

Others have explained that the amazing efflorescence of knowledge and invention of the past three hundred years could not possibly have occurred without the capitalist work ethic. It has been the drive to 'profit', [William Booth's '10%](#)', which has brought about this explosion in intellectual exploration. I agree. Without an external goad and without a drive to harness human intelligence in this way, the achievements of the modern era would largely not have occurred.

The epitaph of the era might well be, that human beings have been driven to, and beyond, the limits of their individual intellects by those myopically committed to self-promotion and the accumulation of material wealth.

The focuses of intellectual endeavour in the West have far-too-often *not* emerged from the intellectual curiosity of the researchers, but from a short-sighted drive to satisfy and shape the demands of the employment and investment marketplaces.

The forces which have channelled and circumscribed Western intellectual endeavour have seldom come from intelligent exploration and understanding of long-run consequences. They have been determined by the needs and wants of the capitalist and the consumer.

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## Endnotes

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- 1 Pasha of Egypt and Inspector General of the British Army in The Sudan.
  - 2 It would take another fifty years for many of the entitlements which, over the past half century, most Western workers have seen as basic, to be securely written into law in most Western nations — such as the forty hour week and two weeks paid

annual leave.

Memory is short. In the past thirty years increasing numbers of Western people have accepted the deregulated capitalist argument that such 'luxuries' are not sustainable. They seem to have forgotten (or don't know about) the bitter experiences of the West's Poor in previous centuries (with whom, of course, they don't identify — see [What shall we do with The Poor](#) for more on this). Unthinking believers in the 'power of the marketplace' are allowing hard-won employment conditions to be eroded.

3 A few quotations from influential Western Europeans set the scene:

We must find new lands from which we can easily obtain raw materials and at the same time exploit the cheap slave labour that is available from the natives of the colonies. The colonies would also provide a dumping ground for the surplus goods produced in our factories.

(Cecil Rhodes, Founder of Rhodesia. [Now Zambia and Zimbabwe])

The colonial question is, for countries like ours which are, by the very character of their industry, tied to large exports, vital to the question of markets ... From this point of view ... the foundation of a colony is the creation of a market.

(Jules Ferry, Speech to the French House of Deputies, July 1885)

We have spoken already of the vital necessity of new markets for the old world. It is, therefore, to our very obvious advantage to teach the millions of Africa the wants of civilization, so that whilst supplying them, we may receive in return the products of their country and the labour of their hands.

(Lord Lugard, British Governor of Nigeria.)

The most useful function which colonies perform ... is to supply the mother country's trade with a ready-made market to get its industry going and maintain it, and to supply the inhabitants of the mother country — whether as industrialists, workers or consumers — with increased profits, wages or commodities.

(Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, *De la Colonisation chez les Peuples Modernes*, 1874.)

(From [Ecologist Vol 20 No 6 — November / December 1990 pp. 201-2](#))

4 Experiences in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century have once again demonstrated the validity of this assertion (see [Revitalisation Movements and Fundamentalism](#) for more on this).

5 This was the start of the Boer War in South Africa, reminiscent of

the Iraq adventure of the 1<sup>st</sup> decade of this century — what is it about the start of centuries and the West?

- 6 See Achebe (1969); Césaire (1972) Fanon (1967); Kenyatta (1965); Memmi (1967) for descriptions of European colonisation from the perspective of the colonised and Mphahlele (1959) for a description of life for non-Europeans in South Africa *before* apartheid.
- 7 to the Inter-Allied School of Higher Social Studies, University of Paris  
As Alphonse Karr (1849) put it "plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose" (The more it changes, the more it is the same).
- 8 included in *The Modern Traveler* (1898)
- 9 And as any well trained *Third World Development* person of the past 50 years would tell you...
- 10 Edward Goldsmith (1997) suggests that this mission is still strong in Western understanding of their responsibility for those who are, even now, 'undeveloped'.
- 11 The full poem is below:

Take up the White Man's burden —  
Send forth the best ye breed —  
Go bind your sons to exile  
To serve your captives' need;  
To wait in heavy harness,  
On fluttered folk and wild —  
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,  
Half-devil and half-child.

Take up the White Man's burden —  
In patience to abide,  
To veil the threat of terror  
And check the show of pride;  
By open speech and simple,  
An hundred times made plain  
To seek another's profit,  
And work another's gain.

Take up the White Man's burden —  
The savage wars of peace —  
Fill full the mouth of Famine  
And bid the sickness cease;  
And when your goal is nearest  
The end for others sought,  
Watch sloth and heathen Folly  
Bring all your hopes to nought.

Take up the White Man's burden —  
No tawdry rule of kings,  
But toil of serf and sweeper —

The tale of common things.  
The ports ye shall not enter,  
The roads ye shall not tread,  
Go mark them with your living,  
And mark them with your dead.

Take up the White Man's burden —  
And reap his old reward:  
The blame of those ye better,  
The hate of those ye guard —  
The cry of hosts ye humour  
(Ah, slowly!) toward the light: —  
"Why brought he us from bondage,  
Our loved Egyptian night?"

Take up the White Man's burden —  
Ye dare not stoop to less —  
Nor call too loud on Freedom  
To cloke your weariness;  
By all ye cry or whisper,  
By all ye leave or do,  
The silent, sullen peoples  
Shall weigh your gods and you.

Take up the White Man's burden —  
Have done with childish days —  
The lightly proffered laurel,  
The easy, ungrudged praise.  
Comes now, to search your manhood  
Through all the thankless years  
Cold, edged with dear-bought wisdom,  
The judgment of your peers!  
(Rudyard Kipling *McClure's Magazine* 1899)

- 12 See [Responsibility for securing the future](#) for more on this.
- 13 See [From personalised, cooperative hierarchical relationships to object-oriented, competitive oppositional relationships](#) and [What shall we do with The Poor](#) for more on this.
- 14 Having been involved with and observing those involved in this business (both religious and secular) through most of my life, I know that almost all of them deeply believe in what they're doing. They find it incomprehensible that someone like myself should question the importance of their activities.
- 15 See [Primary and Secondary Ideologies](#) for more on this.
- 16 This belief is as strong now as it has been over the past hundred years. Western nations and communities send personnel and provide financial support to dozens of 'aid' organisations which are committed to providing education, 'life skills' and 'work skills' to the impoverished of the world.

17 See [People and Recognised Environments](#) for more on this.

18 It was this intuitive recognition of the truth of the basic principles underpinning his ideas which was used by Stanley Jevons (who was one of the pioneers in spelling out the basic principles of neo-classical economics) in 1871, as evidence in his argument for the universal validity of economic propositions. As he says,

The science of economics, however, is in some degree peculiar, owing to the fact, pointed out by J. S. Mill and Cairnes, that its ultimate laws are known to us immediately by intuition... (1970, p. 88).

What is known "intuitively" is that which is fundamental to processes of thought, action, interaction and organisation in any community, those forms and understandings which constitute the principles and presumptions of the primary ideologies of communities (see [Primary and Secondary Ideology](#)). These are, of course, specific to particular communities, so, what makes "intuitive sense" in one community may well seem less than rational in another.

19 The number of conferences and learned papers (particularly by economists) on 'sustainable development' and 'degrowth' has proliferated over recent years (another 'growth industry'?). They are replete with optimistic assessments of the future (for one of the latest sets of conference papers see Giorgos Kallis *et al* 2010). This, despite the continued emphasis on economic growth and explosion in advertising expertise over the past fifty years.

However, Western middle classes (now the vast majority of Western community members (see [The emergence of 'class'](#))) are highly unlikely to develop 'sustainable' lifestyles. This would require them to drastically reduce their wants and needs. That could only happen, in the long-run, if they changed the basic drivers of their systems of status and prestige attainment and maintenance.

These are expressions of particular primary ideological presumptions of Western thought, action and organisation (see [Primary and Secondary Ideology](#)). So, they are highly unlikely (in the short to medium-term) to be changed by the conscious decisions of individuals. We might, as individuals, determinedly reduce our needs and wants (I would recommend this only if you are able to truly dissociate yourself from the need for the approval and respect of others who remain within the system) but we should not delude ourselves that our lifestyles will change the course of Western civilisation.

Of course, if more and more individuals adopt similar lifestyles, in the long-run it is likely that the basic drivers of Western systems of status and prestige attainment and maintenance will alter. However, the consequences of such change are all but impossible

to predict.

- 20 See [From Feudalism to Capitalism](#) for a summary of the processes through which Western Europeans moved from feudal to modern forms of meaning, interaction, organisation and activity.
- 21 See [What shall we do with The Poor?](#) for more on this. Also Thompson 1980, 1967; Polanyi 1957; Wilson 1969 for descriptions of the experiences of those on the receiving end of this four-century-long re-education program.
- 22 See [The Breakdown and Revitalisation of Communities](#) for more on the experiences of colonial territories.
- 23 comprising those who had begun to reorder their lives by the emerging economic principles
- 24 Comprising those who were not ordering their lives by the new economic presumptions. Were Third World governments to implement some of the measures used by Western Europeans during this re-education period, Western nations would be the first to loudly protest the inhumane treatment and insist that those governments be pressured to change their policies.
- 25 It has become fashionable to use the term "class" in defining variant socio-economic groupings in communities. This, however, too easily links the features of 19<sup>th</sup> century classes to what is a very different phenomenon. The "lower classes" were not simply the economically disadvantaged, they were the groups within the community who were being re-educated to take their place within a capitalist system. People who have already accepted that their lives should be organised in terms of capitalism can still find themselves economically disadvantaged, but they are not members of the "lower classes" as traditionally defined.
- 26 Because these principles are even more fundamental than linguistic principles (indeed they underpin linguistic principles), while the superficial organisation of life might be changed as a result of Western pressures, the underlying rationale for behaviour will remain very consistent through time.

Communities might appear to change and adapt when they are forced to accept new ways of organisation. However, over time, those new ways inevitably become reshaped to make them consistent with the underlying cognitive principles and structures through which community members make sense of themselves and their worlds.

As anthropologists have come to realise over the past thirty years, the term *culture* should not be seen as referring to immutable forms of organisation, interaction and meaning. The *surface features* of human community, which include what has over the past century been referred to as culture, can change considerably, yet remain consonant with the underlying principles

expressed in those surface forms. So, all “cultural” change within communities must be understood in terms of the fundamental cognitive principles which order both thought and community (see [Primary and Secondary Ideology](#))

27 See Stefan Mair, 2008, '[The Need to Focus on Failing States](#)' in *Failed States*, Vol. 29 (4), for a balanced discussion of the nature of failed states and reality of their threat to 'international security'

28 The rationality of a community is, of course, always relative to its cognitive frame.

29 The relevant section of the report is as follows:

The fundamental problem posed by the cybernation revolution in the U.S. is that it invalidates the general mechanism so far employed to undergird people’s rights as consumers. Up to this time economic resources have been distributed on the basis of contributions to production, with machines and men competing for employment on somewhat equal terms. In the developing cybernated system, potentially unlimited output can be achieved by systems of machines which will require little cooperation from human beings. As machines take over production from men, they absorb an increasing proportion of resources while the men who are displaced become dependent on minimal and unrelated government measures — unemployment insurance, social security, welfare payments. These measures are less and less able to disguise a historic paradox: That a substantial proportion of the population is subsisting on minimal incomes, often below the poverty line, at a time when sufficient productive potential is available to supply the needs of everyone in the U.S.

...There is no question that cybernation does increase the potential for the provision of funds to neglected public sectors. Nor is there any question that cybernation would make possible the abolition of poverty at home and abroad. But the industrial system does not possess any adequate mechanisms to permit these potentials to become realities. The industrial system was designed to produce an ever-increasing quantity of goods as efficiently as possible, and it was assumed that the distribution of the power to purchase these goods would occur almost automatically. The continuance of the income-through jobs link as the only major mechanism for distributing effective demand — for granting the right to consume — now acts as the main brake on the almost unlimited capacity of a cybernated productive system.

...An adequate distribution of the potential abundance of goods and services will be achieved only when it is understood that the major economic problem is not how to increase production but how to distribute the abundance that is the great potential of cybernation. There is an urgent need for a fundamental change in the mechanisms employed to insure consumer rights. ([AD Hoc Committee on the Triple Revolution \(1964\)](#))

- 30 See [The Triumph of Neoliberalism](#) for more on this.
- 31 See [No Charity!!](#) for similar claims in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries
- 32 See [From Developmentalism to Privatisation](#) for more on this.
- 33 See [The Triumph of Neo-liberalism](#) for more on this.
- 34 Western economies, contrary to popular economic opinion, are not based on scarcity but on glut. It therefore becomes inevitable, over time, that production will result in oversupply and suppliers will, therefore experience difficulty in moving stock. See [Glut not Scarcity](#) for more on this.
- 35 see [The Triumph of Neo-Liberalism](#) for some of the other forces involved.
- 36 For this reason, one needs to be very careful in employing the term when discussing organisation and activity in non-Western communities. The term carries all the baggage of Western presumptions of what is important in life, including key presumptions of the primary ideologies of Western communities (see [Primary and Secondary Ideology](#)).
- 37 We need to clearly differentiate between causes and consequences when understanding the nature of work. As we will see later, cash income has historically been used as a primary means of enforcing and reinforcing the commitment of Western people to "habits of industry".
- Over the past two decades, as Western people have recommitted themselves to their economic formulations of life, it has, once again been used in this way, with "user pays" schemes being promoted and reliance on Government welfare payments being challenged. It is, therefore, understandable that Western people strongly link the two.
- This does not mean, however, that work and income must logically *necessarily* be tied to each other. What it does demonstrate is that Western people have so closely tied both material and social wellbeing to "habits of industry", that is, to work, that they can scarcely conceive of any other means for distributing income.
- 38 See [Fulfilling One's Potential](#) for an examination of the reasons why Western Europeans became so concerned that individuals "perform" to their potential.
- 39 See [From Interdependence to Independence](#) for discussion of this deep felt need in Western communities for individuals to be "independent"
- 40 As we have already suggested, these times have not always been available to Western workers. They have been negotiated between those who believe they have a moral responsibility to ensure that work is taken seriously and those who represent the



workers and who, themselves, feel that people have a moral responsibility to work.

The times negotiated have always been justified in terms of the overall increased efficiency of workers when they are allowed these times of relaxation and leisure. This is why, if a person uses these times in ways which do not refresh and re-equip him or her for work, employers have always believed they have the "right" to challenge the use being made of leisure time. This is, of course, reminiscent of Karl Marx's claim,

The Roman slave was held by fetters: the wage-labourer is bound to his owner by invisible threads. The appearance of independence is kept up by means of a constant change of employers, and by the *fictio juris* of a contract.

(Marx *Capital* 1887 Chapter XXIII)

- 41 Though we gear our education systems to determining the aptitudes of children and to honing those aptitudes so that they might be as successful as possible in work in later lives.

So important is work to most people in Western communities that it seems not only desirable but necessary that other forms of organisation and activity be geared to supporting it or to preparing people to better perform in the world of work.

Education in Western communities is not geared to increasing knowledge or to the pursuit of wisdom or "truth", it is geared to equipping people to more effectively participate in the "workforce" and few people in those communities would argue that it should be otherwise.

- 42 Decreasingly defined as the production of goods and services, and more and more defined as the production of a cash income. That is, whereas being "productive" was considered centrally important with the cash return secondary, now "material success" is the focus and being "productive" is increasingly assessed by the cash return for one's endeavours.

This is one of the reasons why we now sense that we live in a "consumer society", rather than in a "producer society". The most direct evidence of the size of our "income" is our levels of consumption, not our levels of production. This leads, inevitably, to extending our consumption beyond our income so that we are also living in a "credit society".

The pressures to spend come not only from advertising, they also come from our own self-image, from our need to show ourselves and others that we really are "successful". Disturbing as it might be (certainly to me!), increasing numbers of people feel the need to 'go shopping' when they are feeling depressed.

- 43 See Sewell & Wilkinson (1992); Jenkins (1994); [The Reorganisation of Work](#)

- 44 See [Subsistence and Status](#) for further discussion
- 45 See [The relationship between community social templates, resource utilisation and constantly escalating productive and consumptive demands](#) for a discussion of the nature of “needs” in Western communities.
- 46 See Locke 1982, ch. 5; [Private Ownership, Consumption and Accumulation](#) for further discussion
- 47 These have been dealt with in [What Shall we do with The Poor](#)
- 48 See [Primary and Secondary Ideology](#)
- 49 In British history, a body of laws undertaking to provide relief for the poor, developed in sixteenth-century England and maintained, with various changes, until after World War II. The Elizabethan Poor Laws, as codified in 1597-98, were administered through parish overseers, who provided relief for the aged, sick, and infant poor, as well as work for the able-bodied in workhouses. Late in the 18th century, this was supplemented by the so-called Speenhamland system of providing allowances to workers who received wages below what was considered a subsistence level. The resulting increase in expenditures on public relief was so great that a new Poor Law was enacted in 1834, based on a harsher philosophy that regarded pauperism among able-bodied workers as a moral failing. The new law provided no relief for the able-bodied poor except employment in the workhouse, with the object of stimulating workers to seek regular employment rather than charity. ("Poor Law". (2010). In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Retrieved February 08, 2010, from Encyclopædia Britannica Online: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/469923/Poor-Law.>)
- 50 Institutions to provide employment for paupers and sustenance for the infirm, found in England from the 17th through the 19th century and also in such countries as The Netherlands and in colonial America. The Poor Law of 1601 in England assigned responsibility for the poor to parishes, which later built workhouses to employ paupers and the indigent at profitable work. It proved difficult to employ them on a profitable basis, however, and during the 18th century workhouses tended to degenerate into mixed receptacles where every type of pauper, whether needy or criminal, young or old, infirm, healthy, or insane, was dumped. These workhouses were difficult to distinguish from houses of correction. According to prevailing social conditions, their inmates might be let out to contractors or kept idle to prevent competition on the labour market. The Poor Law Amendment of 1834 standardized the system of poor relief throughout Britain, and groups of parishes were combined into unions responsible for workhouses. Under the new law, all relief to the able-bodied in their own homes was forbidden, and all who

wished to receive aid had to live in workhouses. Conditions in the workhouses were deliberately harsh and degrading in order to discourage the poor from relying on parish relief. Conditions in the workhouses improved later in the 19th century, and social-welfare services and the social-security system supplanted workhouses altogether in the first half of the 20th century. ("workhouse". (2010). In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Retrieved February 08, 2010, from Encyclopædia Britannica Online: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/648132/workhouse>).

- 51 See [How Born Again Christians rescued Capitalism](#) for a description of the deep religious commitment of Western Europeans, since the 18th century, to the moral requirements of Capitalism.
- 52 So convinced were Western Europeans of the value-creating nature of labour as spelt out by Locke (1982) that through the 18th and 19th centuries the "labour theory of value" became the standard for both classical economics and for Marx. Locke's argument for the logical primacy of individualised property and its necessary connection with individual industry has, in the early 21st century, remained central to neo-liberal arguments for the importance of private accumulation as both a reward of and spur to industriousness.
- 53 A vagrant was one who was able to work but preferred instead to live idly, often as a beggar. The punishment for this, during the 18th and 19th centuries, ranged from branding and whipping to conscription into the military services and transportation to penal colonies. During the 20th century, this form of behaviour continued to be punished though the severity of the punishments lessened as the century unfolded.
- 54 see [Subsistence and Status](#) for further discussion of these alternative emphases in accumulation
- 55 See [The Poor are lazy with no desire to better themselves](#) for more on this.
- 56 See [What shall we do with The Poor](#) for more on this.
- 57 See [From Interdependence to Independence](#) for discussion
- 58 This land redistribution has been perpetuated in many post-colonial countries. (see [Background to Land Reform in Zimbabwe](#); [Mugabe Is Right About Land Reform](#) for a specific example of these practices — replicated in most Western European colonies).

While colonial authorities closely controlled movement from native reserves into administrative centres during the colonial era, this was not considered acceptable practice for post-colonial authorities.

Following the Second World War, with the ideological

confrontation of capitalism and communism, Western nations became increasingly concerned with 'human rights', particularly with the right of individuals to freedom of movement and self-expression. No government should have the right to control movement. The United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights spelt this out clearly.

Western nations, seeing this as a crucial distinction between themselves and those aligned with the Eastern Bloc, put pressure on Third World governments to comply with the United Nations covenants, which, over the years, have consistently addressed current social, political and economic concerns of First World countries. Article 12 of the above Covenant reads:

1. Everyone lawfully within the territory of a State shall, within that territory, have the right to liberty of movement and freedom to choose his [sic] residence.
  2. Everyone shall be free to leave any country, including his own.
  3. The above-mentioned rights shall not be subject to any restrictions except those which are provided by law, are necessary to protect national security, public order, .. public health or morals or the rights and freedoms of others, and are consistent with the other rights recognised in the present Covenant.
- [UN 1976]

Not only were Third World governments pressured to implement such resolutions, a range of United Nations organisations (formed to provide development assistance) provided means of leverage to donor countries.

The consequence of this insistence on free movement has been that people, previously confined within reserves, are able to move to both employment and administrative centres and millions have done so. This has resulted in the slum conditions one finds in many Third World cities.

<sup>59</sup> See Moore and Feldman (1960), Day (1966), Kuper and Smith (1960), among many others, for discussion of colonial labour practices.

The following is an excerpt from Gilbert Murray's (1900) essay describing labour practices in British colonies:

There are two really extensive and organic systems of exploiting the labour of inferior races.

The first is simply the old Graeco-Roman system improved and modified — the system of importing destitute or semi-destitute aliens to countries where they can serve us. The difference is that the ancients used undisguised force throughout the whole process; we use economic pressure to

get our labourers, though we mostly use force to keep them.

The simplest case is the system of indenture as applied to Indian and Chinese coolies, and to Polynesians or Kanakas. The labourer voluntarily signs an agreement for a term of years, and is shipped off to a foreign country, where he is, for most purposes, not under the ordinary law, but under special indenture regulations.

His freedom is curtailed in every direction; but, on the other hand, his wages are secured and his general condition inspected by Government. He is looked after when he is sick, protected against extremes of cruelty and dishonesty on the part of his master, and taken home again at the end of his time.

The system works well in places like Fiji, where the area is small, supervision easy, and the Government not dependent upon the employers <sup>65</sup>. It works ill in large continental regions, such as Queensland, where these conditions are reversed. About 15,000 indentured coolies leave India every year. About 10,000 Kanakas go from Polynesia to Queensland every year....

In all the above cases the alien labourer is imported.

But — and this forms the second of what we have called the really extensive and organic systems of exploiting inferior races — the great field for the working of the alien in modern times is the alien's own country.... In modern times, the increasing ease of communication has enabled white men to go abroad to all parts of the earth without suffering much real exile, and without losing the prospect of returning home at will.

Our Governments... are strong; our superior weapons make rebellions almost impossible. Consequently, we do not attempt to import blacks, coolies, and Polynesians into Great Britain...

The whole economic conditions are in favour of working the coloured man in his own home. It may also be permitted to us to reflect that, when the slave or subject is among his own people, there must remain to him a large remnant of life which is not utterly poisoned by the advent of the white master.

The whole of tropical mining, and almost the whole of tropical agriculture — the raising of rice, coffee, sugar, and the like — are carried out by gangs of cheap labourers of inferior race under the rule of white men. And not only in India, where it is a natural outcome of the system of Government, but in most of the semi-civilized nations of the world, white men can be found directing the ill-paid and often forced labour of the

inhabitants.

As to South Africa, I should for many reasons prefer to be silent <sup>66</sup>. That region is so wrapped in concealment and misrepresentation at the present moment, that it is hard to find any certain groundwork to build upon. Still, the South African systems are altogether too important to be omitted, and their main lines seem to be tolerably clear.

The capital feature of South African life, as every traveller observes, is that all unskilled work is done by black people. That is the rudimentary and essential condition of slavery, and is doubtless quite unavoidable. As to direct cruelty, the laws are, as usual, a great deal more humane than the facts, though some of the laws themselves sound a little odd to English ears.

A white master in Cape Colony is not allowed to flog his own servants, a Bill which gave him that power having recently been defeated; but he can send them to a magistrate to be imprisoned for negligence, insolence, or misbehaviour. A coloured man in Natal cannot walk on the footpath or go in a tramcar, and so on.

Yet a radical improvement in the laws would probably do more harm than good. The essential cause of cruelty and oppression is not the law, but, to quote Mr. Bryce's careful and temperate description,

'the strong feeling of dislike and contempt one might almost say of hostility which the bulk of the whites show to their black neighbours.'

This curious feeling, a compound in which physical repulsion, race hatred, and pride of birth seem to be accentuated by actual shame and remorse, appears to be even stronger in South Africa than in most similar societies.

Yet, on the whole, the cruelties to blacks in those regions seem to be less atrocious than in Australia. The following case, which I select from half a dozen as having been already published by Mr. Bryce, reminds one of Queensland:

'A shocking case of the kind occurred a few years ago in the Eastern Province. A white farmer — an Englishman, not a Boer — flogged his Kaffir servant so severely that the latter died; and when the culprit was put on his trial and acquitted by a white jury, his white neighbours escorted him home with a band of music.'

Two African systems of exploiting black labour seem to promise great developments — the compound and the location. At Kimberley the natives are herded, some 3,000 together, in compounds or huge enclosures, covered with wire

netting, and having no egress except an underground passage to the mines.

These special precautions are taken in order to prevent the blacks from stealing diamonds. They buy their food on the truck system from the company, and cannot go outside for any purpose. They are imprisoned in this way till the end of their contract time, which may in some cases be as short as three months.

The location system, which is contemplated at Johannesburg, consists in inducing large numbers of natives to settle with their families in the neighbourhood where their work is required. Once there, they are prevented by law from having enough land to live upon, prevented from leaving the locality by a rigorous system of passes, deliberately reduced to destitution by a Hut Tax and a Labour Tax, and thus forced into the mines to work at twopence a day, or whatever wage the Chamber of Mines thinks fit.

As Lord Grey [Governor of the Cape Colony and British territories in South Africa, and previously Governor in both New South Wales (Australia) and New Zealand] puts it :

'Means must be sought to induce the natives to seek spontaneously (*sic!*) employment at the mines, and to work willingly for long periods of more or less continuous service.'

The means he proposes are those mentioned above — a Hut Tax in money, which the native will be unable to pay except by resorting to the mines, and a Labour Tax on all able-bodied natives who are unable to show a certificate for four months' work in the year.

This is also the principle of the Glen Grey Act, passed in Cape Colony in 1894. The penalty for non-payment of the tax is imprisonment with hard labour — that is, we reduce the native to destitution by special laws in order to force him to work for us, and if he will not work then we can kidnap him! This system is so ingenious and elastic, offers such opportunities for the fraud which is normal in contracts between whites and blacks, and does its work of gradual demoralization so insidiously, and with so little shock to public feeling, that we may expect it to spread and flourish in other continents, almost in the manner of the Roman plantation system.

Like that system, the compound wishes to care for the welfare of its beasts. The employers — some of them, no doubt, made rich by selling liquor to blacks elsewhere — have set their faces against the supply of alcohol to their own workers. But, like the Romans, they will probably be disappointed. As a matter of fact, the mines have hitherto been the great centres of drinking, as well as of even more degrading corruption.

Mr. Scully, for instance (Blue Book G. 31, 1899, p. 76), notes the 'deplorable demoralization' of natives returning from the mines, 'brutish in their knowledge', and the increase, or introduction, among those to whom they return of phthisis, rheumatism, pulmonary diseases, and syphilis.

In military operations, again, we of the British Empire depend to a quite enormous extent upon soldiers of alien race, more, possibly, than any State since Carthage. Nearly all our African fighting before the present war, and most of our Indian fighting, has been done for us by natives. The great victories of Clive over the French, which we are accustomed to regard as proofs of British strength or valour, were almost entirely victories of Sepoys over Sepoys. The economic situation is really the same as in the other cases. We cannot spare more of the ruling race to fight. We take instead some naturally warlike savages, train them, officer them, and make them do the fighting for us.

(Gilbert Murray 1900 pp. 135-144)

- 60 The following extract is part of a larger description of European treatment of 'useful' and 'useless' indigenous peoples in their colonies:

A slave is ultimately a man spared in war; a man whom you might kill, but whom you prefer to keep, in order to make him work for you.

It is abundantly clear, if one considers the question, that this has historically been the position of most of the subject races in the British Empire. And it is in a sense their condition still. Those whom we cannot utilize we exterminate; those whom we can utilize we protect, and often enable to increase in numbers. Tasmanians were useless, and are all dead.

The Bhils are mostly dead. Australians were all but useless, good only for horse-taming and man-tracking, and they are dwindling to nothing. Red Indians, in spite of enormous care, and the large sums of money that a penitent Government now spends upon them, are dying gradually. In Africa, those blacks for whom we have some use tend, with certain exceptions, to increase and multiply; those for whom we have no use die by drink, by war, by economic pressure, and by the mere discouragement which works like poison in the veins of a race that finds its occupation gone.

The cruelties perpetrated by white men upon coloured men are, almost wherever and however they meet, stupendous. But the coloured men who are worked under definite rules and indentures are far better off than those who cannot be worked at all, or those who, under conditions of nominal equality, are forced to work, unprotected, beneath the hand of any chance master.

The Kanakas in Queensland, under the old indenture system,



were no doubt treated both harshly and unfairly. They were kidnapped, they were brutally used, they were cheated of their miserable earnings. And it may be doubted whether the improvement of their condition under the present system is as great as is alleged. Yet they were probably better off than the Matabele forced labourers, strong men held down under a weak and irregular system, which had necessarily to be backed up by fraud or violence. But go, if you dare, into a searching comparison between the treatment of the Queensland Kanakas, who were useful beasts of burden, and that of the Queensland aborigines, who were regarded as vermin, and you will bless the lot of the half-enslaved Kanaka.

Let no one delude himself with the fancy that, though the German Dr. Peters may flog his concubines to death, though Frenchmen in the New Hebrides may twist the flesh off their servants' backs with pincers, though our own newspapers may revel in reported horrors from the old Transvaal or the Congo Free State, Englishmen, Scotchmen, and Irishmen are quite of another breed. Not to speak of strange and unpleasant dealings with black women, I myself knew well one man who told me he had shot blacks at sight. I have met a man who boasted of having spilt poisoned meal along a road near a black-fellows camp, in order to get rid of them like rats.

My brother was the guest of a man in Queensland who showed him a particular bend of a river where he had once, as a jest, driven a black family, man, woman, and children, into the water among a shoal of crocodiles. My father has described to me his fruitless efforts to get men punished in New South Wales in old days for offering hospitality to blacks and giving them poisoned meat.

I received, while first writing these notes, a newspaper from Perth, giving an account of the trial of some Coolgardie miners for beating to death with heavy bits of wood a black woman and boy who had been unable to show them the way. The bodies were found with the shoulder-blades in shivers, and the judge observed that such cases were getting too common!

These atrocities are not necessarily the work of isolated and extraordinary villains. Two of the men mentioned above were rather good men than bad. Nor have I mentioned the worst class of outrages....

(1900, pp. 152-4)

- <sup>61</sup> This is of course an issue of debate in philosophical circles (cf Wolfe (1997) for an exploration of the debate). 'Work' is, of course, not a *universal* moral imperative. It is a moral issue only for Western communities and for people who have learned not only to behave, but also *think* in Western terms.

For the purposes of this discussion we are defining *morality* as acceptance of and compliance with forms of behaviour, attitude and interaction which individuals *intuitively recognise* as being of central importance to ensuring "quality of life" in their

communities.

Robert Greene (1997 p. 193), summarising Bonaventure, suggests that moral understandings are “apprehensions for which no reason could be given, apprehensions somehow rooted in affective human experience.” (Kant’s *moral imperative* below) (see [footnote](#) on the nature of such intuitions). Community members instinctively “know” that such attitudes and behaviours are inescapable requirements of life and are inevitably rewarded. The moral obligations imposed on community members are justified through appeal to these intuitively recognised forms.

As Immanuel Kant ((1785) 1909) has explained, the concepts of “the moral” and of “duty” go hand in hand. As he says,

We know our own freedom — from which all moral laws and consequently all rights as well as all duties arise — only through the moral imperative, which is an immediate injunction of duty; whereas the conception of right as a ground of putting others under obligation has afterwards to be developed out of it.

When a community becomes convinced that its members have certain inescapable duties and responsibilities, it buttresses and reinforces the associated forms of behaviour and organisation in a wide variety of ways so as to channel people into conformity. So, it becomes “common sense” that the person should conform to the moral order.

62 Definitions of Absenteeism and statistics of its incidence abound in both government statistics and in private assessments of 'the problem'. See [USLegal Definitions](#) for a succinct explanation of the issue.

63 Very similar reasons can be given for commitment to the requirements of any social template. In any society, the central processes of status attainment and maintenance, of self-image and self-respect are supported by claims such as these. And people in those societies are just as convinced of the validity of the claims as are Western people of the validity of theirs.

64 See [The emergence of Welfarism](#) for more on this. For a nation which is assumed to be amongst the best 'educated' on earth, it is sad to hear people in the United States equating 'social welfare' with 'socialism' and denouncing any who argue for social safety net provisions as 'socialists'.

65 It was the practice of indentured labour which created the large Indo-Fijian population of the present and has resulted in ongoing tension between indigenous Fijian and Indian populations. See Lal (1983) for a discussion.

66 The Boer War (1899-1902) had just started and a great deal of British propaganda of the time was painting the Boers as barely

civilised abusers of native populations.