

The Analytical and Practical Significance of Labour is Not a Commodity

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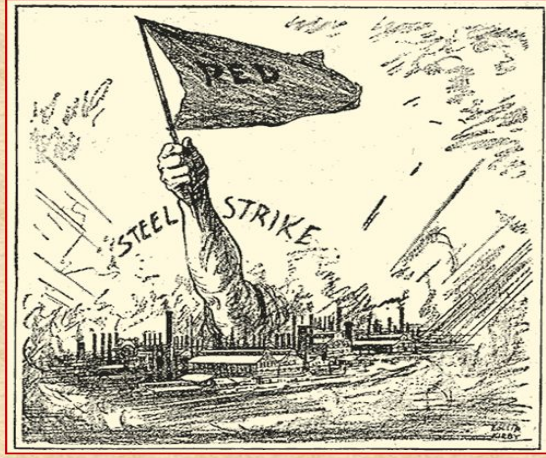
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SOCIAL JUSTICE
DECENT WORK

1919: The Great Labour Revolt & Red Scare

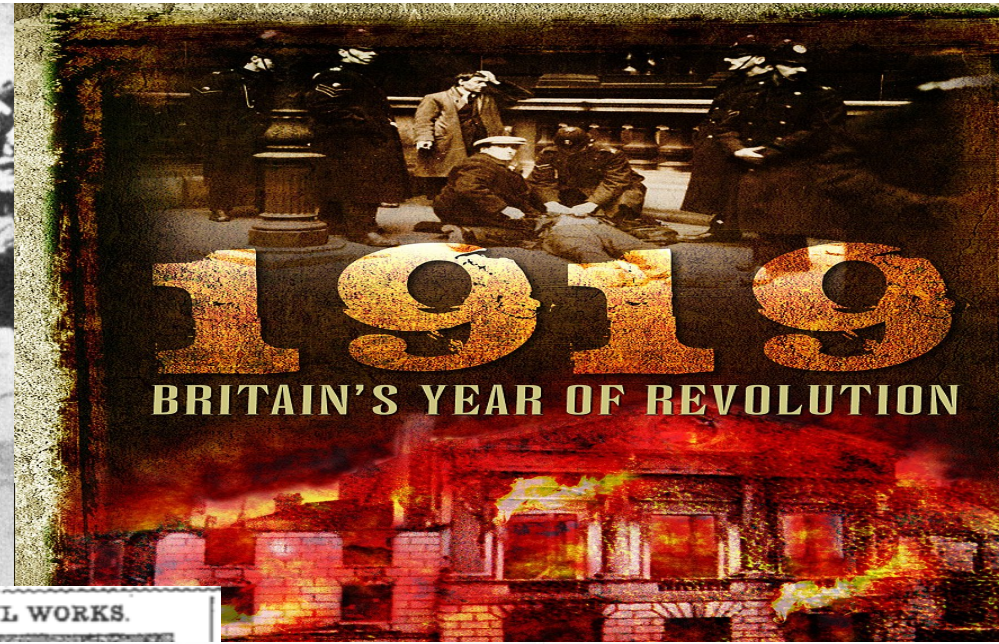
Steel Strike - 1919



"Winning Out of the Smoke" - New York World



BAYONNE STRIKERS SHOT DOWN WHEN THEY ATTACK OIL WORKS.



The Morning Bulletin
VOL. X, No. 22 TWELVE PAGES EDMONTON, ALBERTA, MONDAY, MAY 26, 1919 CITY EDITION

GENERAL STRIKE IN CITY AT 11 A.M. TODAY

Labor Unions Vote Three to One for Walk Out--Definite Order of Strike to Develop

RIGORS OF PEG STRIKE RULES ARE LESSENED

Free Press New Jersey Daily Paper Under Very Great Difficulties

NEWS BY WIRELESS

No Mail Received and No Sellers Pay Forthcoming--Union Work

At eleven o'clock this morning, unless news has been received before that time that the Winnipeg strike is settled, or from some accredited source that it is about to be settled, business in Edmonton will be tied up by a walkout of members of local trade unions in sympathetic support of the Winnipeg strike.

This decision was arrived at as the result of the strike vote taken among the local unions during the week-end, and which was counted on Sunday afternoon. According to figures handed out by the propaganda committee subsequently appointed, the vote in favor of a strike was 34 unions for and 4 against, with some others yet to send in their votes. Some 43 unions were supposed to record their vote. Although not given out officially, it is understood that the individual voting was about 1670 in favor of a strike to 500 against.

The Edmonton strike will automatically cease with the conclusion of hostilities in Winnipeg. Workers have been warned not to pay any attention to news of the cessation that might be given out by the newspapers, but to wait until direct word is given out by the central strike committee, or through the government at Ottawa.

The Trades and Labor hall in the Purvis block on 101st street was a hubbub on Sunday afternoon. The results of the strike vote taken by the local unions was supposed to be handed in for counting during the hours of 6 and 7 P.M.

BOLSHEVIK IN TIGHT CORNER AFTER REVERSES

Paris Peace Conference Continues Today Interest in Russian Situation

NO ARRESTION--KOLCHAK

Leningrad and Tientsin Facing Most Critical Period in Bolshevik Regime

Paris, May 25.—Interest in the Russian situation, which has been of late the main topic of conversation at the Peace Conference, was revived today by the news that the Bolsheviks had been defeated in the battle of Tientsin, and that the Russian government had been restored.

Missing Airmen

Petrograd Is Closely Invested By Success Of The Estonians

LONDON, May 25.—(Reuters)—Over time and land operations have continued in the Baltic region, according to reports forwarded by the Baltic Fleet commandant in Riga on Sunday of Thursday. It is believed the Bolsheviks, pressed by the Estonian forces, are abandoning the positions in Pskov. Machines and other war material have been found in Pskov, and it is reported that the Estonians have taken possession of the city.

Austrian Treaty Almost Ready For Submission To Delegates; German Counter Draft Complete

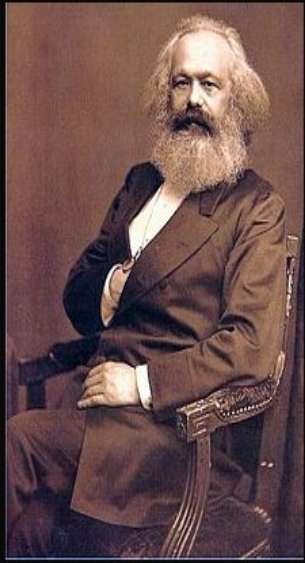
Reported That Counter Proposals Will Demand German Admission for Rhineland—Also Claim Right to Keep Border Coal Districts

CALGARY TO STRIKE

CALGARY, May 25.—A general strike has been called in Calgary to take effect at 11 o'clock tomorrow morning. Practically all unions affiliated with the Trades Council will be affected, the vote being favor to call in favor of essential activities.

During Air for Dead Arrive from Atlantic up by D. Sopwith

LONDON, May 25.—The arrival of the bodies of the two airmen who were killed in the crash of the Sopwith triplane, which was shot down by the German forces, has been announced.

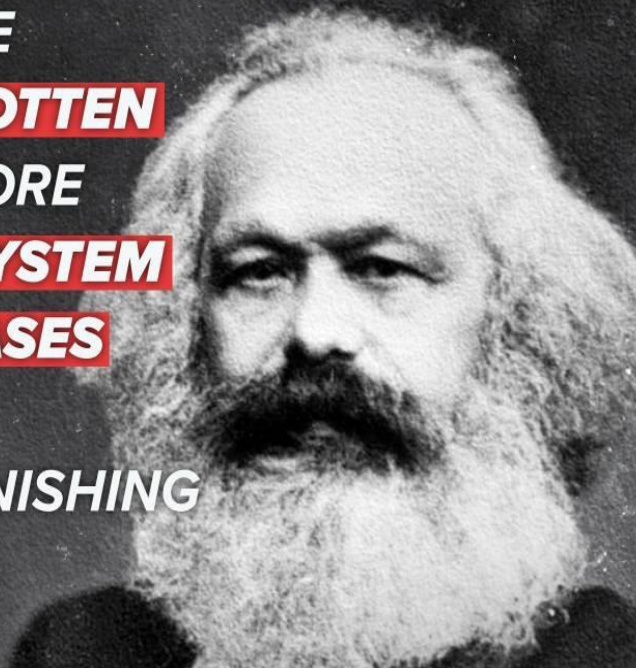


The labour-power is a commodity, not capital, in the hands of the labourer, and it constitutes for him a revenue so long as he can continuously repeat its sale; it functions as capital after its sale, in the hands of the capitalist, during the process of production itself.

(Karl Marx)

izquotes.com

“THERE MUST BE
SOMETHING ROTTEN
IN THE VERY CORE
OF **A SOCIAL SYSTEM**
WHICH INCREASES
ITS WEALTH
WITHOUT DIMINISHING
ITS MISERY.”



**UNLIMITED
EXPLOITATION OF
CHEAP LABOUR
POWER IS THE SOLE
FOUNDATION OF THEIR
POWER TO COMPETE**

KARL MARX

Let the ruling classes
tremble at a
communist revolution.
The proletarians have
nothing to lose but
their chains. They
have a world to win.
Workingmen of all
countries, unite!

—Karl Marx







Fundamental Documents

- ❑ Constitution, 1919

 - ❑ New Art. 19(9) on the abrogation of obsolete Conventions

- ❑ Declaration of Philadelphia, 1944

 - ❑ Since 1946 annexed to the Constitution

- ❑ Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, 1998

- ❑ Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, 2008

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF ILO

1. Labour is not a commodity
2. Freedom of expression & of association are essential to sustained progress.
3. Poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere.
4. The war against wants requires to be carried with unrelenting vigor within each nation & by continuous & concentered efforts in which the representatives of the workforce & employers, enjoying equal status with those of governments. There should be a free discussion & democratic decision with a view to the promotion of a common welfare

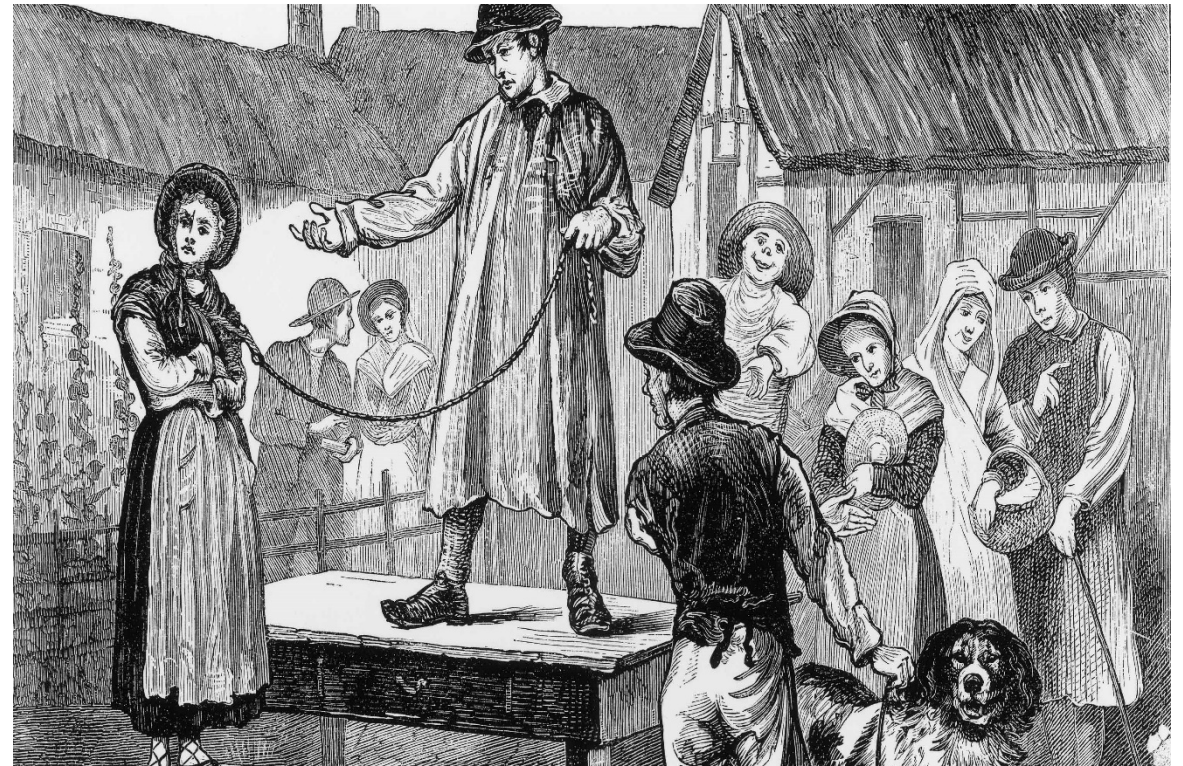
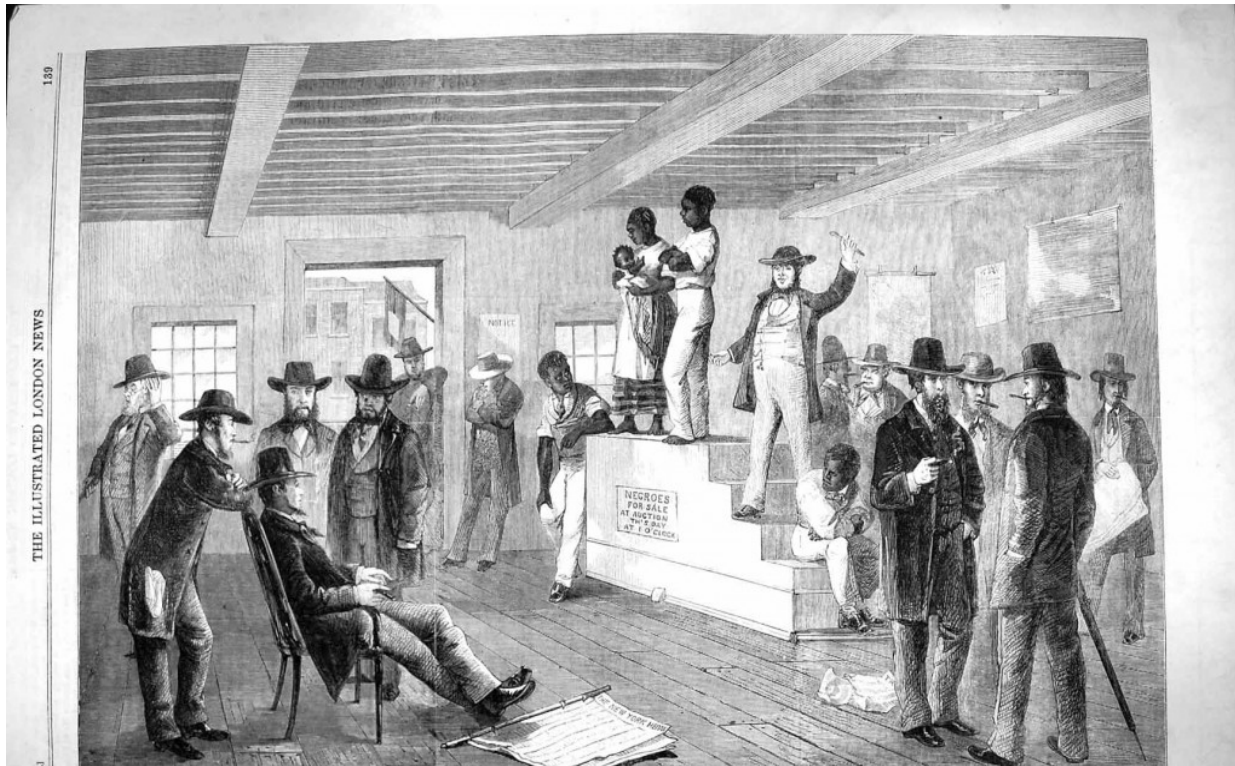


THE LABOR OF A HUMAN BEING IS NOT A
COMMODITY OR ARTICLE OF COMMERCE.

- SAMUEL GOMPERS -

What is the Significance of 'Labour is Not a Commodity?'

- Definition of a Commodity: a relatively homogeneous or standardized good or service bought and sold in a market.
- Outmoded 19th century concept with Slavery and Wife-Selling?



Outmoded Concept of 19th Century Factories?



Is Labor Still a Commodity in 2019?



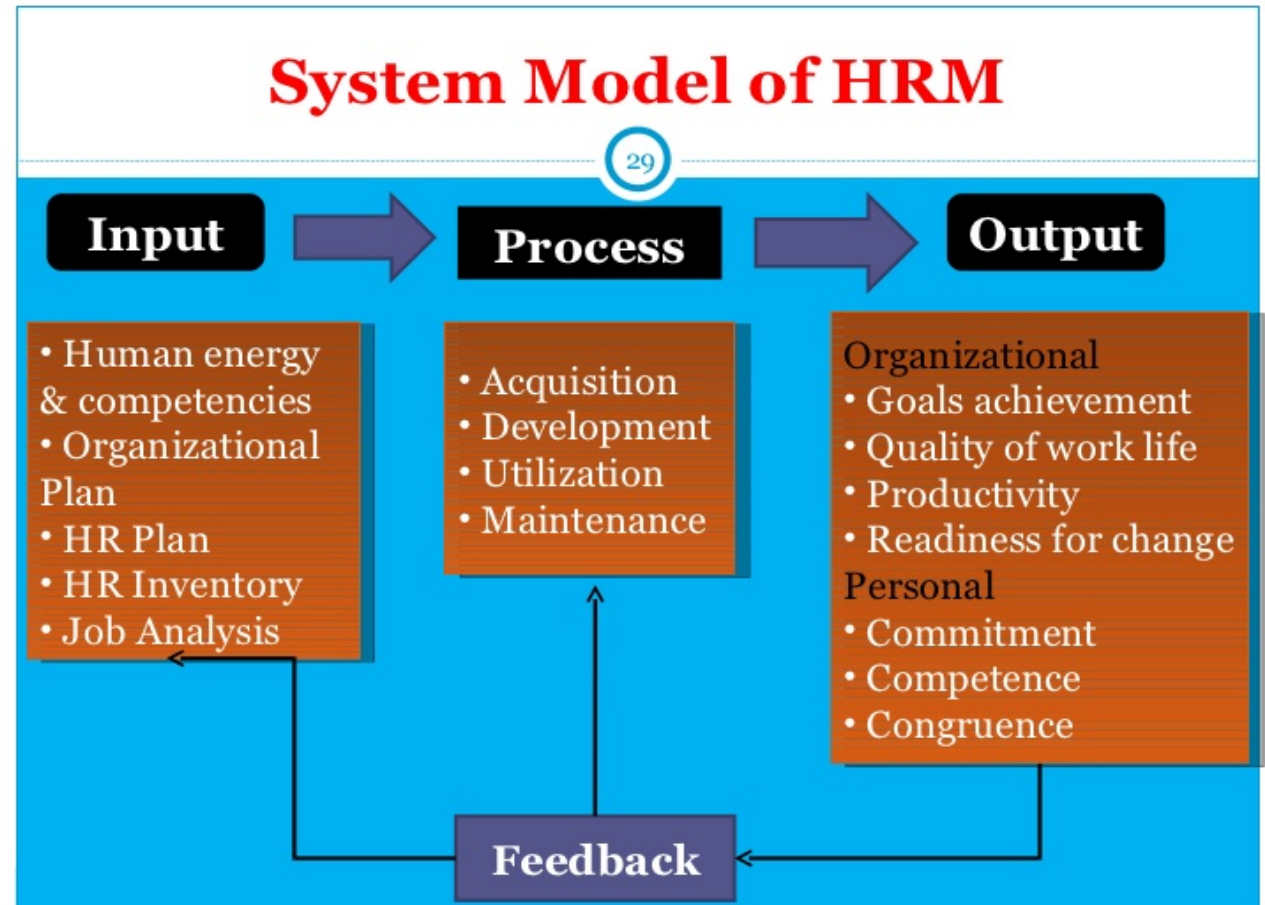
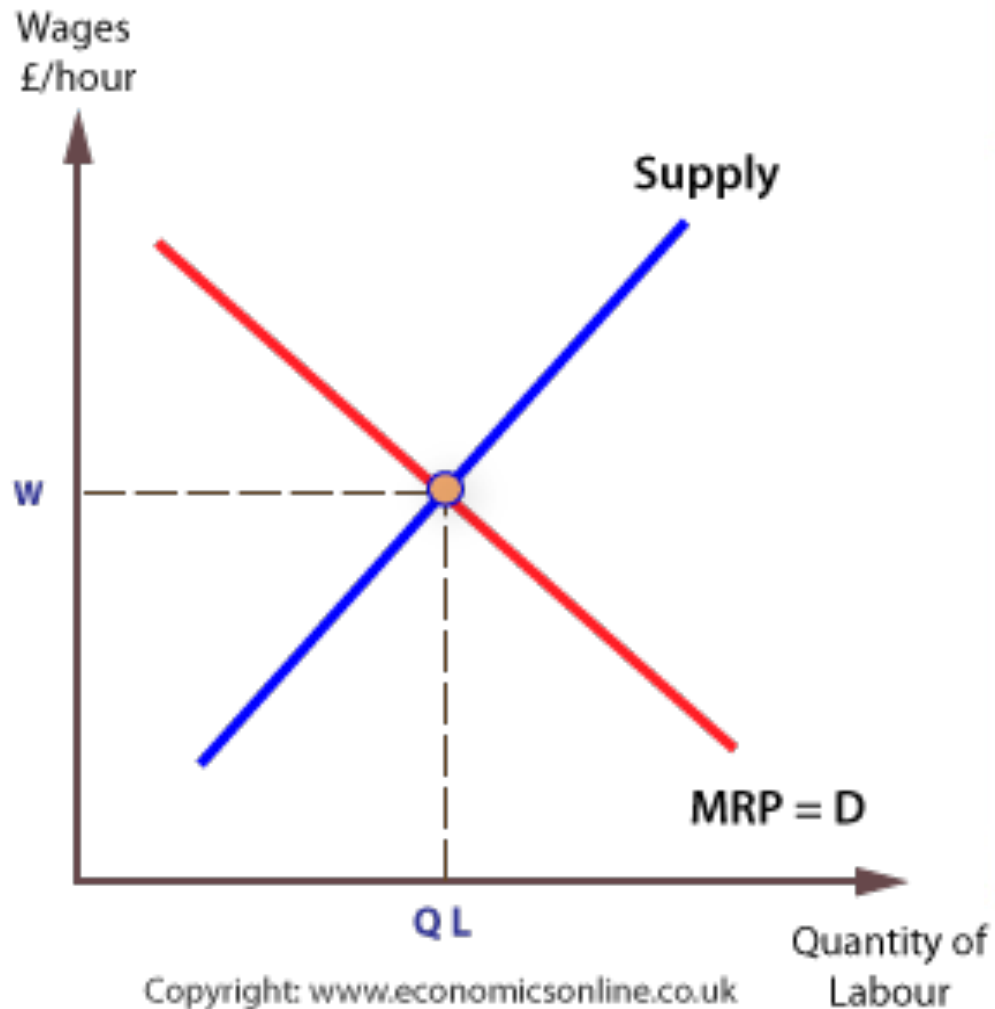
Labour Not a Commodity: Ideological Slogan of Pro-Labour Groups?



Examples Today, But Exceptions?



Labour as a Commodity in Theory, but Useful Abstraction?



The ILO definition of labour

- **ILO Constitution and the Philadelphia Declaration of 1944**

“Labour is not a commodity.”

Workers should not be subject to ‘market forces’ in the same way as oranges and lemons, and they have the rights and need for security and social protection.

<http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/iloconst.htm>

Commodity vs. Non-Commodity Work Input

- Both horse and human are animals that provide labour-power (body & energy → work) for production (horse-power/man-power).
- Should the human worker be treated the same as the horse worker?
- 4 reasons the answer is NO.



1: Human Agency vs. Horse Agency

- Agency is a living thing's capability to initiate behaviors and exert power to achieve its interests.
- Both humans and horses display agentic behavior but human agency is unique because people have higher-order consciousness of themselves and their existential situation, a much-expanded and social-ethical set of motivating needs, wants and interests.
- A human treated as a commodity can't achieve consciously desired needs, wants, and life self-realization. A horse lacks consciousness of these things.
- Thus: Labour Not a Commodity → Allow Workers to Live/Experience a Full Human Life. An Economy is to produce Happy People!

2: Human Interests vs. Horse Interests

- A Commodity is Owned by a Person and is this person's Legal Property to (1) Sell to another person at any Time for any Price and (2) Use for whatever Purpose and Treat in any way desired.
- A Commodity has no legally recognized independent Being and no associated legally-protected Interests.
- A Commodity can be Exploited for Value and then Thrown Away.



2: Political Democracy → Industrial Democracy

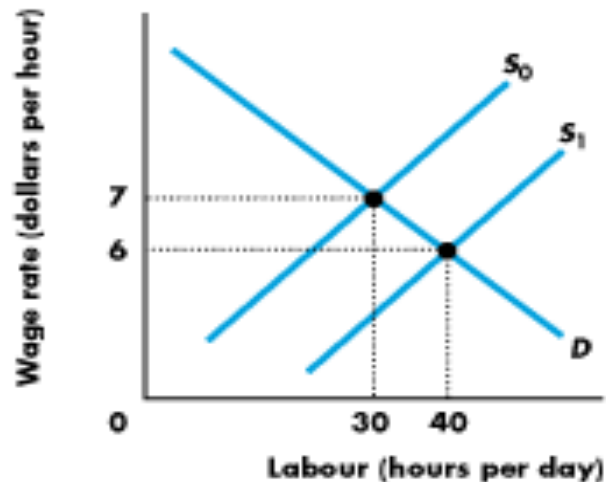
A Commodity Doesn't Have Citizenship Rights

- “The agitation for freedom of combination and factory legislation has been a demand for a ‘constitution’ in the industrial realm. This Magna Carta will, as democracy triumphs, inevitably be conceded to the entire wage-earning class.” (S. & B. Webb, 1897: 841)
- “Labor is not a part of the public unless it is recognized as having a public importance. Prior to that laborers are treated as commodities to be bought and sold according to supply and demand. Afterward they are treated as citizens with rights of public protection.” (J. Commons, 1919: 33)
- The ILO is part of a ‘Labour Liberation Movement.’

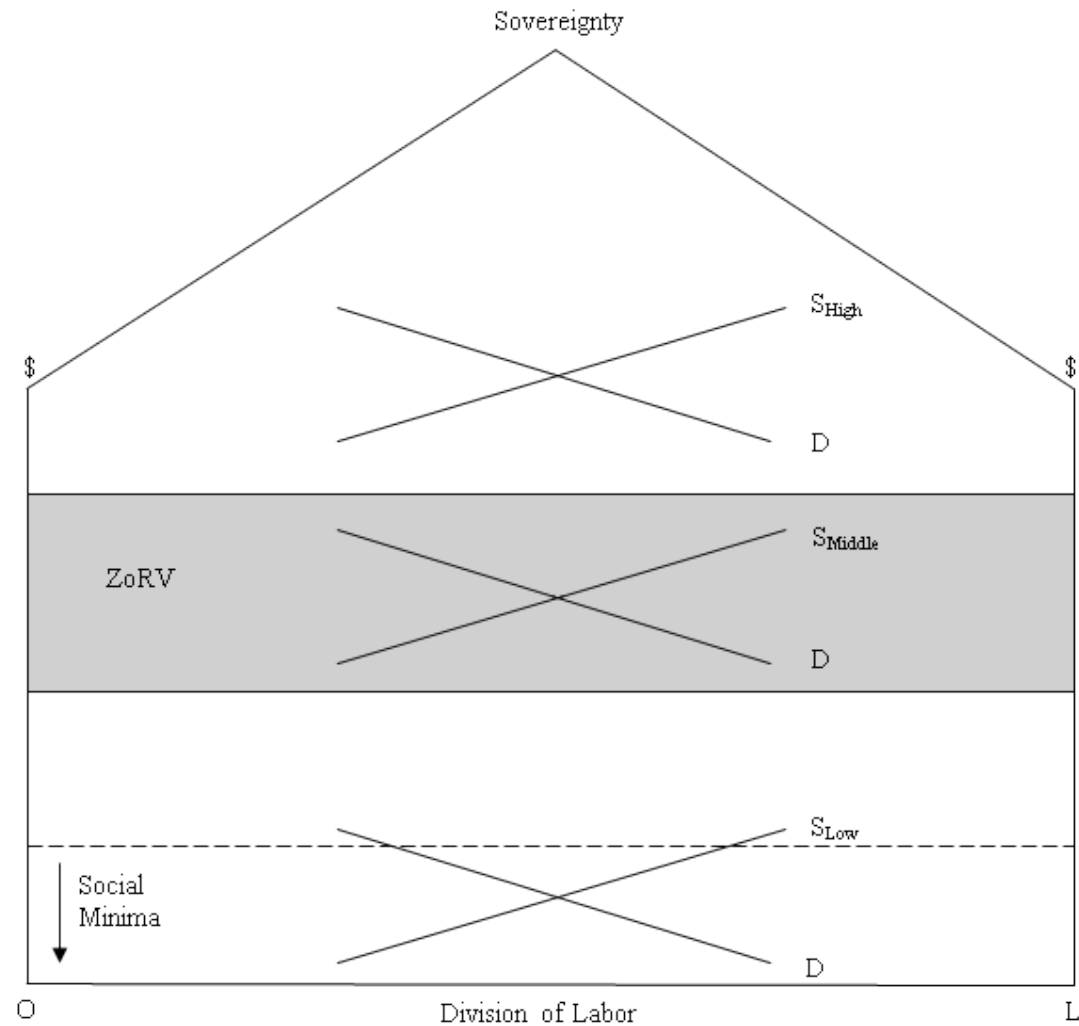


3: Market D/S Trading of Labour like a Commodity is Very Harmful to Efficiency and Wellbeing

- Continual Hire/Fire in a Commodity Market with No Job Security and No Ability to Save or Plan for Life & Family.
- Typically More Labour Supply than Demand, hence Wage ↓ and Families 'go out of business' to restore equilibrium.
- Little Compensating W Differential to Protect for Danger, Filth.



ILO & Governments Use Laws and Institutions to Raise Plane of Competition and Set a Floor



4: Use of Labour like a Commodity inside the Firm for Production is also Very Harmful

- A Commodity can be treated as the Owner chooses. And because the worker is Rented, not Owned, there is even less incentive to care about the the worker's wellbeing.
- Sidney Webb (1912) said the street trams took better care of their horses (owned) than their drivers (people)



Industrial Relations and ILO Born 100 Years Ago to
Ensure that Labor is Treated as a Human for
Mutual Gain Employment Relationship and Not as
a Horse Commodity for Profit Exploitation

