

letters

Law must further require that employers pay double- or triple-time for hours worked beyond L . This requirement can easily be made self-policing. Since salary rates below L would be unaffected, practically all weekly gross incomes would be reduced by the same factor $(1 - ku)$ as L . Just as feedback loops stabilize the flight of the inherently unstable space shuttle, so too the present feedback loop can stabilize employment in an inherently unstable economy.

Under the proposed system, employers could maintain or increase productivity only by hiring or technological innovation, and innovation would no longer cause hardship. As a specific example, suppose $u = 10\%$ and $k = 3.0$. This would allow $L = 28$ hours per week. At this level both private and public employers would feel enormous pressure to hire, to re-distribute work among employees, to transform long-term plans into short-term plans, and to move projects from back burner to front burner. Only in these ways could L be increased. *The net effect of this proposal would be an equitable and long-overdue re-distribution of employment.* As u diminishes, the appropriate response is to increase k , so as to hold L nearly constant while forcing u to diminish still further. As u approaches zero, k can be made very large without harmful effect (other perhaps than the shanghaiing of workers from the unemployment lines by employers!). By such "fine tuning" it may be possible to eliminate unemployment completely for all time. Thereafter, with $u = 0$, the formula would automatically restore the 40-hour week.

The very essence of the present situation is that there is not enough necessary and socially beneficial work to go around under a 40-hour week. Our society therefore supports entire parasite classes and parasite industries. Prominent among these is the rapidly emerging mugging industry. A re-distribution of necessary and socially beneficial work is imperative. The present distribution is both cruel and unusual. A feedback-controlled workweek is the obvious, fairest, and least painful of ways in which to accomplish this re-distribution.

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4/82

Refusenik degrees revoked

The Royal Society of Canada has just completed its Centenary Meetings (30 May-3 June) in Ottawa. On its program was an entire session devoted to "The Critical Century, Human Rights," which dealt with its various aspects

pertaining to Canada. Nevertheless, this is such an important international issue that more attention must be paid to the implementation of human rights worldwide.

It is not an oversimplification to say that had human rights existed in Argentina, attention would have been paid by the dictatorial rulers to the demands of their people for "bread and work" rather than indulge, *à la* Mussolini, in a tragic war over the Falklands. If human rights existed in the USSR and the goal were to improve the lot of the Soviet citizen, enormous funds would not be squandered on weapons of mass destruction, that are threatening our very existence on this planet. Instead, the USSR, which poses as a paragon of human rights, sends its dissidents and refuseniks into exile (Sakharov), jails (Scharansky), concentration camps (Orlov), and insane asylums (Davletov), for daring to ask that their rights be granted in accordance with the Helsinki agreement.

The latest abhorrent example is the revoking of academic degrees of refuseniks, some of whom have devoted a lifetime in science and technology, simply because they requested to emigrate to Israel. A stenographic transcript of the cynical proceedings of a kangaroo court composed of academics from Moscow University, which stripped V. G. Melamed of his PhD in Physics-Mathematical Sciences, appeared in *Nature* (Vol. 297, 6 May 1982) and illustrates the deliberately pernicious methods used to dehumanize and oppress our colleagues, such as Melamed. Surely, we must protest such degrading and inhuman acts by writing or wiring, as individuals or societies, President Leonid Brezhnev and President A. P. Alexandrov, the USSR Academy of Sciences, before the revoking of degrees becomes a veritable plague in the USSR.

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6/82

The refusenik vs. the rector

Anatoly Logunov is right! I second his request (May, page 119). A physics journal should stick to the facts. There are two sides to every story, as you are fond of saying, and the same holds for the opportunists in the USSR. I am surprised that Logunov did not suggest you clean up your own mess first—perhaps he did but his letter was shortened so that there may be more space for the tirades of Brailovskys, Azbels, Dikiis, Freidlins, Freimans, Irlins, Reitmans and Vasilevskis—none of them Russians but all of them having had their education paid in its entirety by

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PHYSICS TODAY / AUGUST 1982 15