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# The Time of Their Lives: Time, Work and Leisure in the Daily Lives of Ruling-Class Men

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## **The Time of Their Lives: Time, Work and Leisure in the Daily Lives of Ruling-Class Men**

Mike Donaldson and Scott Poynting

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### **Introduction**

This chapter is about what ruling-class men do in their daily lives. How do they invest, pass or spend their time? We are not dealing here with the 'everyday', but with the exceptional life conditions and activities of the richest and most powerful fraction of men in the world: say, the richest one to five per cent, whose interests and decisions so widely determine, that is rule, the conditions and activities of the rest of us. A 1996 United Nations Human Development Report identifies 358 men whose wealth equals the combined income of 2.3 billion people, forty-five per cent of the world's population. (1) Most such people are, of course, men. (2) It takes a very special masculinity, however, to maintain this rule, and many years of work - of servants and educators and many other people, directed by parents - go into producing this (3). Here we deal, however, not with the lifetimes of ruling-class men, their life courses, which is the subject of a whole book (4) but with their daily lives.

The men whose lives we examine here are generally those whose families have belonged to that top echelon of the extremely rich for three or more generations. We are looking for patterns which repeat themselves over several lifetimes among families whose maintenance of wealth and power is indisputable and sustained. For reasons of space, we cannot elaborate here the methodology which we bring to this study, which we call *found life history*.(5) Suffice to note that it applies life-history methods to autobiographies and biographies as a way of overcoming the virtual impossibility of recording life-history interviews With these distant and unavailable men at [the summit of plutocracy. We attempt to make from this 'found' material a reading of the particular biography and the social system, movement back and forth from one to the other.

We begin our discussion of ruling-class men's time, work and leisure with a look at their leisure pursuits. For the amount, choice of and control over their leisure, as much as anything else, marks their daily lives as very different from those of the rest of us. We will then compare these with the patterns to be found daily in their work. We conclude with some more general observations about time in the lives of these men.

### **Leisure**

For the very rich men with whom we are concerned here, the hours of the working day are not as clearly delineated as those whose livelihood is earned in wage labour. The boundary between their work and leisure is quite blurred, and the leisure activities of ruling-class men tend to be those cultural processes which resemble their life's 'work'.

### *Sport*

Typically, ruling-class sports involve exclusiveness, large amounts of space, and competition. Thus ocean-going yachting is a popular pastime with millionaires. Few

can afford it; it comes with access to exclusive yachting clubs; it requires a lot of space in which to moor and maintain the vessel. In ocean yacht races, there are definite winners and losers, and winning can often depend on the latest, most expensive technology. Billionaire Frank Lowy, sailed the 36metre Australian-built motor cruiser *Illona* for many years. It was fitted with sleeping accommodation for ten to twelve in five luxurious staterooms and was on sale for \$US5.5 million. Chartered out through a company directed by Frank Lowy and his two eldest sons, it was occasionally hired by Westfield Holdings for company business, which helped defray its upkeep. (6) Charles Curran, who has large holdings in and sits on the boards of QBE Insurance and Perpetual Trustees owns the million-plus yacht *Sydney* which has acquitted itself well in the annual Sydney-Hobart yacht race. At twenty metres, *Sydney* is generally considered pretty large, but is five times smaller than Howard Hughes' motor yacht which accommodated a crew of thirty and was the world's seventh largest ocean-going vessel in private hands. He paid about \$US15 million for it (in 1990s currency) and hired the Irish captain Carl ('Jock') Flynn to sail it from Scotland across the Atlantic to Newport where it was 'elaborately refitted, with sumptuous furnishings of white and gold, and solid gold taps and fixtures, in the bathrooms [with] a master stateroom with a vast double bed covered in wolf skins in which the owner could enjoy the company of his various companions'. (7)

Cowes Week, the annual yachting regatta off the north coast of the Isle of Wight in England, has had Royal patronage almost from its beginning and members of the royal family used to stay on the 'royal yacht *Britannia*' commencing their annual summer holiday.(8) *Britannia* is a large vessel. Judy Cassab was 'amazed' to find herself dining on it with fifty six guests including Sir James Rowland, the chief justice, two archbishops and the architect, Harry Seidler.(9)

And yes, size does matter. Kerry Packer's 'floating resort', the eighty-seven metre blue-hulled *Arctic P*, equipped with a helipad and room on the bow for at least ten people to sit with half a metre between them, is too big to berth at some of the *a la mode* Mediterranean harbours (10) but for greater manoeuvrability he has his \$360,000 speedboat (11).

But it's not all play. Rupert Murdoch and Kerry Packer struck the Super League deal in the isolated and beautiful Bay of Islands in northern New Zealand aboard the former \$30 million *Morning Glory*, an Italian-designed luxury ketch (12). The Aga Khan can leave even this behind in his jet-propelled *Shergar* (named after his missing horse), one of the three fastest boats in the world. The crew of seven are able to focus on the essentials like preparing and serving lunch for they can simply dial in the destination and the satellite-linked navigation system clicks on to automatic.(13)

Skiing is an exhilarating sport, with a good deal of cachet, which can be practised in exotic winter retreats or exclusive resorts. Expensive travel and lodging is routinely undertaken for the purpose - often abroad or afar: St Moritz in Europe, Aspen in North America, and the like. One executive has affirmed: 'Doing things is more important than people ... I want my children to learn to ski well. In skiing one only needs man and hill; nobody else is needed'.(14)

Golf lends itself to business conversations on the course, and embodies competitive individualism, but is only to be played with appropriate people. Membership of the right clubs, or indeed ownership of private golf links, can ensure the requisite exclusivity. While staying at their holiday homes at Palm Beach, north of Sydney, those who can afford the \$40,000 membership can play, golf together at Elanora or Terrey Hills. But no amount of cash can secure membership of the exclusive Pacific Club and the Cabbage Tree Club which in 1996 still banned Japanese and Koreans.(15) More exclusive still is to own your own golf course. Ellerston, Kerry Packer's private course on his Hunter Valley property, was designed by champion golfer Greg Norman and is regarded as one of Australia's best.(16)

Tennis, for the more youthful tycoon, like golf requires access to expensive spaces and infrastructures, and can be an aggressive, one-on-one pursuit. Mixed tennis can also provide ruling-class men with an occasion for meeting prospective wives and mistresses. The houses of the very rich invariably include tennis courts.(17)

Equestrianism is in many places an important part of ruling-class cultural capital, especially on country properties where the animals can be kept, ridden and bred. Polo combines horsemanship, competition, the means to convey and ownership of suitable ponies, paddocks, stables, grounds and sheds and the employment of players, grooms and assistants. As the Duke of Edinburgh has eloquently put it, 'polo is not exactly cheap and anyone wishing to play must either be well-heeled, have a good job or be supported by an indulgent parent or sponsor'. (18) So important are horses in the royal family that the young Prince Charles' assignments with young women were procured for him by his equerry. Princes William and Harry each told their father in 2002 that they wanted to live in Argentina and play professional polo. Prince Charles used his connections to make some concessions to his sons, enabling them to combine polo with royal duties. (19) According to publicity from his Duchy of Cornwall officials, at 54 Prince Charles no longer regularly competes; he now only plays for charity occasions, raising 8,000 pounds a year through this 'work'. 'The Prince of Wales works staggeringly hard', said the source. (20) Kerry Packer actually died in 1990 while playing polo, but was revived thanks to his personal intensive-care ambulance attending the game. His country retreat in the Hunter Valley has 'extensive recreational facilities and fully equipped polo grounds'. (21) Packer also spends three months of every year playing polo in England where he has his own team, and outlays millions of dollars annually on horses, stables and players.

Rupert Murdoch learned to ride horses at the age of five. (22) Cruden Farm, where he lived as a child, had a stables and a tennis court. By 1989, Murdoch practised 'a bit of tennis, skiing at Christmas'. The homes of Rupert and Anna Murdoch (his second wife) at that stage included a ski house in the mountains of Aspen, Colorado, as well as their triplex apartment in New York, Beverley Hills villa, flat in London and country property outside Canberra. (23)

Shawcross writes that Murdoch had 'loved to play the country squire at his Australian property, Cavan, and that there were 'constant house parties there in the late [1960s] and early seventies'.(24) He recounts how one News executive came to Cavan one weekend and Rupert insisted that they play tennis. 'The man had no shoes, but did not dare to disobey the command. Murdoch always played tennis as if the future of

tile world hung on his winning. At the end of a typically aggressive match, the executive's feet were raw; Riddell thought that Murdoch did not even notice'.(25)

### *Balls, Dinners, Exclusive Restaurants and Clubs*

Dinners and balls such as 'charity' balls and other leisure events call for the presence and participation of ruling-class men, though competitiveness here is largely the province of ruling-class women. This does not prevent ruling-class men from practising their rituals of hierarchy, making business contacts or exchanging business information at such occasions. Artist Judy Cassab observed the following in the marquee of the Murdochs:

Anna and Rupert Murdoch greeted the arriving guests, passing us to an army of waiters with trays of champagne and Pims and flies. With the exception of Tim Stonier there are no artists among tile 250, but all the well-known faces from television and politics are visible. The Prime Minister and Hazel Hawke, Punch Sulzberger, chairman and publisher of the New York Times, and John Howard, the Wrans James Mollison, the Capons. We are in a huge tent, worthy of the Shah of hall. I glimpse Rolf Harris, John Spender, Paul Keating, senators, Adele Weiss, Dame Leonie Kramer. While orchids and bush flowers fill the six-foot-long glass rubes across the tell[. Rupert and Hawke made speeches. Later at home Jancsi said that it's like Genghis Khan vanquishing the government, and everybody bows, worships, pays court and genuflects.(26)

'[B]ecoming a regular supper guest or black-tie companion' of the 'London Establishment' was instrumental in their 'rallying around' Conrad Black.(27) Black himself explains:

I don't spend all my time just chatting will, people, shmoozing ... but it is important to have contacts who are well placed just to keep in touch with them. If you're trying to build a business to find out what's available, what's going on, it's important. That's what I'm interested in. (28)

Exclusive restaurants serve as places for leisurely conspicuous consumption, as well as the conduct of negotiations, briefings and liaison. Clubs, such as the Guards, Garrick, Macquarie, Melbourne, St James, Carlton, Jockey, Union, Victoria, Australian, Canadian, Toronto, Porcupine and of course Whites, can serve the same function, with their exclusiveness guaranteed by membership rules rather than market mechanisms. Even more so, these are men's spaces, and as exclusive of women as is the boardroom:

The best select their members with considerable care. Wealth alone does not guarantee admittance but without it one cannot even get a hearing. Once in, one shares a(1 the privileges and obligations associated with such institutions but there is usually a Strict social order. A new member is expected to take a back seat, even if he has more millions than any of the others ... It is taken for granted that everyone is rich; The actual amounts do not matter.

A study of directors of large corporations by Georgina Murray found that forty-nine per cent of them favour clubs as a way of networking. (30) The clubs are exclusive in the sense that aspirants need to be nominated for membership; they are very expensive and many still exclude women, although most no longer overtly exclude

Jews, Asians and blacks. The mean of club membership for her sample was three clubs while the maximum number of memberships was nine.

### *Collecting*

The rich also collect very expensive things which accrue in value and, like the acquisitiveness they practise at work, add to their wealth. Indeed, Conrad Black's friend Hal Jackman 'believes Black will continue buying newspapers. "It's just what he gets off on," says Jackman. "It's expanding, it's like collecting books, toy soldiers, anything" (31) 'I myself am a collector of model battleships', Black wrote in his autobiography, *A Life in Progress*. (32) As a youth, he collected military books; by the age of 17 or 18 he had his own library of almost a thousand military encyclopaedias and military books.(33) As a young man, he and his father 'spent night after night in sidewalk cafes, sipping cognac and drinking coffee, "discussing tile world, where Rommel went wrong in the desert, Macarthur's greatest battles, forever listing the ten greatest this and the ten greatest that"' (34) After their father's death, Black and his brother were mentored in business by his friend Bud McDougald, who had promised George Black to look after their interests as they learnt the ropes. He invited them to his farm, 'where in addition to collecting cars he bred fine horses and miniature poodles'.(35)

The rich often collect paintings, of course. Rupert Murdoch, like his father, collected art. His collection at Cavan included paintings by Australian artists Tom Roberts, George Lambert, Arthur Boyd and Fred Williams. (36) Karl Lagerfeld, the celebrated couturier who seems also to collect houses - seven in four countries - and fashion labels - he owns three - converted the apartment near Saint-Sulpice given to him by his mother 'into a set for [his] Art Deco collection'.(37)

### *Vactions*

Vacation leisure time for ruling-class men is often spent in exclusive resorts and their environs. As a child, Conrad Black wintered in Nassau, where his father belonged to the elite Porcupine Club. Here the eight-year-old shook hands with the Prince of Wales, something he recalls with pleasure. (38) Now,

Since 1978, the year he took control of Argus, Black had spent his winters in Palm Beach, the bastion of dynastic opulence on Florida's Atlantic coast. For winter there was not only to follow in the footsteps of former Argus head Bud McDougald, but also to rub shoulders with the cream of American tycoonery. 'Palm Beach isn't everyone's cup of tea', Black told writer Peter Newman. 'Some people are offended by the extreme opulence, but I find it sort of entertaining'. (39)

Here he is a neighbour to the second Viscount Rothmere, a fact he also recounts with pride.(40) He writes lovingly of retreating here to 'the huge, splendidly maintained mansions, the swarms of Rolls Royces and Ferraris and Mercedes Benzes and Aston Martins, the violently rich winters in the Everglades and Bath and Tennis. (41)

Australia has its own Palm Beach, just forty kilometres from the centre of Sydney. It has been exclusive to the very rich for more than one hundred years, keeping its beautiful bushland, rainforest and beach relatively intact. There are very few blocks of flats or highrise developments, little public transport, no freeways or railway,

hotels, motels, caravan parks, camping grounds or suburban malls. There are few footpaths and even fewer children's playgrounds and no bike tracks.(42) According to the *Sydney Morning Herald's* Property Editor, Jonathan Chancellor, the area, along with Portsea, south of Melbourne, like 'ultra chic' Last Hampton in the USA, is 'so trendy... that scores ... fly in from Europe and the US, many with their chefs and nannies in tow'. (43)

This is 'big C conservative territory, a staunchly family kind of place, where the teen age daughters of the establishment wear Palm Beach Surf Club swimmers ... [and] congregate in bronze-limbed clumps, harder to crack than membership of the Palm Beach Surf Club'.(44) '

According to David Edwards a real estate agent with L.J. Hooker Palm Beach, seventy per cent of the properties on the Palm Beach peninsula are weekenders and there will 'never be any more than 1,267 cities worth having'.(45) In 1997, Lady Sonia McMahon paid \$970,000 for her Palm Beach weekender to Lady Burton-Taylor who had downsized just around the corner. A proximate weekend home sold for \$2.4 million, (46) well under the 1996 peak of \$3.74 million.(47) Sam Chisholm bought the beachfront bungalow, Melaleuka, next to Kerry Packer's. He paid \$3.1 million and demolished it. (48) It was not far from the Fairfaxs' large Tudor-style house, Boanbong, was just along the street from the Hordern family's Kalua. Prime Ministers visited, among them Bob Menzies, a friend of several Palm Beach habitues who included the Whites, the Moses, the Fairfaxs and the Packers. Kalua is now owned by businessman Ian Joye, who rents it out, along with round-the-clock security, for \$33,500 per week. Rupert Murdoch and his wife Wendi Deng have stayed there; as have son Lachlan Murdoch and his wife Sarah O'Hare. Rupert Murdoch 'told friends he was hugely impressed with the house and Palm Beach's holiday environment'.(49)

### *Gambling*

Ruling-class men often see their work as akin to gambling, and they tend to enjoy gambling - sometimes prodigiously- for recreation. If this leisure doesn't always involve winning, it does involve dealing in money - like their work: 'investing', calculation, risk-taking, gains and losses. Kerry Packer's penchant for gambling is legendary. According to one report he lost in one weekend at the races what it would take us fifty-five years of work at our current wage to earn, let alone save; and during a three-day splurge at Las Vegas he gambled with chips each one worth more than our houses.(50) 'At a decisive point in our bid for Tourang', complains Conrad Black, '[Packer] flew to Las Vegas, taking various prize-fighters, polo players, and business associates with him, won \$7 million in four days and tipped the croupiers \$66,000 each on his way out'. (51)

When he was at boarding school at Geelong Grammar, Rupert Murdoch used to sneak off to the races to have a bet. (52) Shawcross asserts that gambling has continually been present in Murdoch's recreational as much as his working life. (53)

### *Leisure as Work, Working at Leisure*

Are those sumptuous and notoriously long lunches indulged in by big businessmen part of their 'working day'? Certainly, crucial introductions are made, political influence is cultivated and exercised, intelligence is exchanged, and deals are

clinched. Conrad Black's descriptions of repasts in clubs and exclusive restaurants and exquisite at-home dinners include accounts of the elevated company; his judgments of the relative intelligence and charm displayed by his hosts, guests, and fellow diners; the politics of dinner conversations and after-dinner speeches - and details of the food:

I went via New York (and sat next to Nancy Reagan at Jayne Wrightsman's splendid dinner for her), and on the second day of my London visit went to Chequers for lunch with Margaret Thatcher . . .

The American raid on Libya occurred on the day I arrived in London and I made one of my rare interventions, in the *Daily Telegraph's* editorial policy by telling Max not to take up a policy that would give aid and comfort to Gaddafi and that would strain the Anglo-American alliance. Two weeks before I had attended David Rockefeller's dinner in New York for Lord Carrington and when the guest of honour, who was then secretary-general of NATO ...

It was against this backdrop that my visit to Mrs Thatcher occurred. Charles Powell, her secretary in foreign policy matters and an official of almost superhuman versatility, talent and discretion joined the Prime Minister, Andrew, and me. (Denis was at a football match.) (54)

His sort of account is seamlessly interwoven by Black with the business import of such meals and meetings:

After lunch I gently began to ask [Prime Minister Thatcher] what would happen if, in the unlikely event we had a work stoppage at the Daily Telegraph over introduction of the most modern newspaper technology in our new plants and had to import production personnel from Canada, and I got no farther. 'I would sign the work hermits myself', she declared.(55)

As a young man Black frequented the Toronto Club, 'the exclusive enclave to which Angus Corp. Chairman Bud McDougald had presented [him] with membership on his twenty-first birthday'. He would host there Margaret Thatcher as guest of honour, with Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, Governor-General Jean Sauve, and Henry Kissinger. Black and his brother used the private dining room of the brokerage firm, of which their father had bought a twenty-five per cent share to ease them into business, to host weekly roast-beef lunches, where they 'entertained the local financial and political heavyweights in the finest Old Toronto WASP never-too-early-for-stiff-drink tradition' Later, Black would 'power dine' at the 'Establishment restaurant', Winton's, which the entertainment writer for the *Globe and Mail* described as 'the leading noshery for movers and shakers of Toronto's business community'. Later still, according to Siklos, who notes 'Black slipped quickly and easily into the ranks of British tycoons', he would describe London as 'more interesting than Toronto ... an endless sequence of sumptuous lunches and dinners with terribly interesting people from all over the world'. This biographer quotes Black's friend Rupert Hambro as saying: 'He charmed an enormous number of people in this country ... by sitting next to them at dinner or by talking'.(56)

Indeed, there are no distinct lines dividing business from leisure for this class of men. Rupert Murdoch was 'at the races when the door to Fleet Street opened to him'.(57)



## Work

Despite his own penchant for late rising and long lunches, Conrad Black decried 'Australia's ostentatious lack of martyrdom to the work ethic'.(58) When a security guard dozed on duty at the wheel of his waiting car, he took 'the greatest pleasure' in waking him and ordering him to go and buy aspirin 'in the middle of a howling blizzard'.(59) Black's anecdote typifies the self-centredness of ruling-class men expressed in relation to the less powerful, and their pleasure in the exercise of power. It exemplifies, moreover, the extent to which they routinely rely, from childhood onwards, on the daily domestic labour of servants. In major ways and in a myriad of minor ways this labour frees their own time for more enjoyable and profitable pursuits.

Work-time is much more bounded for those who work for wages. Black's new 'hired hand', after his takeover of the *Post*, imposed 'a new right-wing order' there: 'One of Levy's first actions was to install a time-clock for employees'. (60) Black 'devised what he described as the elastic compensation system for the reporters and debated with them at the end of each week what they "deserved" on the basis of the volume and quality of their journalistic production'. (61)

When he bought the *Sunday Times* in 1956, Murdoch fired the majority of the staff and hired replacements more in tune with his media style. 'Rupert's a tremendous sacker', said a syndicated financial columnist who has known Murdoch for over twenty-five years. 'The fear of losing jobs concentrates one's mind', Murdoch said. (62) Davis describes Murdoch as ruthless when it comes to sackings, although 'he once told a television interviewer that he hated sacking people: "The first person I ever fired," he said, "I went and walked him round the park and I think I ended up in tears instead of him.'" Davis comments dryly that 'He must have shed a lot of tears since then; in true Beaverbrook tradition editors have been fired, long-term companions have been discarded, and his closest friends have had to take that symbolic walk around tile park'.(63) When he wanted to get rid of *Times* editor, Harry Evans, for failing to toe the Tory line, Murdoch summoned him to his office and dismissed him on the day of his father's funeral.(64)

Evans commented on the fear such approach instils: 'Somebody said to me the other day ... Mr Murdoch couldn't possibly dominate editors all over the world. Well, in fact, he can because they know what he wants and they live in fear'.(65) 'When Rupert asks you to do something, well, you just do it', said television news presenter Maury Povich.(66) BSkyB's new chief executive Murdoch's Sam Chisholm arrived with a fearsome reputation for toughness and brutality. He quickly made his mark. He lined up the BSkyB managing directors, asking each of them: 'Who are you?' and 'What do you do?' He told them not to talk to the press. 'Some of you may get a bulge in your trousers when you speak to journalists ... but how you act with regard to the press will influence what I do about your termination packets'.(67)

Similarly, when Black took over the London *Telegraph*, he put Max Hastings in charge of what he called 'drowning the kittens', at which he was accomplished. Hastings boasted that most of the names he had marked during his train trip home 'were gone within six months'. One belonged to Margaret Thatcher's daughter, Carol, notwithstanding the Prime Minister's support for Black, and his admiration for

her.(68) Black wryly remarked that Hastings 'once correctly told our directors that "It would be too much to ask that Mrs Thatcher would see my firing of her daughter as an example of Thatcherism in action"'.(69)

If we have focused on the media billionaires, that is because of the significance of this industry in contemporary capitalism (they are what the railroad barons were to the nineteenth century) and precisely because the data about these men is more available. The exercise of political influence is perhaps more obvious for media magnates than for other men of the ruling class, because it is more direct and more public. Kerry Packer is Australia's richest man, and before he became a United States citizen, Rupert Murdoch was. Yet their political might is ubiquitously practised also behind the closed doors of the exclusive clubs, at the turf or the polo, at high society dinners, and in the other social locations we have glimpsed. The support of the Thatcher Government for crushing unions was of fundamentally the same in the British miners' strike as that which was given to Murdoch's corporation at 'fortress Wapping' and as that which was enthusiastically promised by Thatcher to Conrad Black in case it was needed at the Telegraph. In turn, Murdoch and Black both proved valuable (and in the former's case indispensable) with the support of their newspapers to Thatcher's hold on government. Says Black:

We owned serious newspapers and reported fairly, but went as far as we could in rational editorial argument in favour of the government. In the last *Sunday Telegraph* before the election ... most of our most powerful and elegant writers, fired every cannon we had in promotion of the government's cause. I had called Perry Worsthorne from Florida the week before, after he had virtually endorsed Labour, so colourless and convictionless did he find the Tories. I urged him to contemplate the full horror of a Labour win and he gamely responded in the last pre-election *Sunday Telegraph* with an endorsement of the government because it would not abolish fox hunting, an activity Perry did not participate in or even particularly approve but regarded as a worthwhile tradition.(70)

Conrad Black writes quite openly about his and Kerry Packer's exertions of power to convince politicians, even prime ministers, to further and safeguard their interests, or at least to avoid crossing them.(71) The quid pro quo is perhaps more obvious, however, in the case of media magnates.

Not every 'battle' with other magnates can be won. The competition is also at work importuning, cajoling, hectoring, threatening and blandishing politicians, and there are other political factors at work. The media ownership laws were nor to be altered in Australia for Conrad Black, though incoming Prime Minister Keating was apologetic. (72)

Class power is not a conspiracy. It is more a matter of living; it is about how these men live, whom they meet, what they say, what they can do. But it is also organised and routine and it happens in ruling-class men's spaces and in networks such as gentlemen's clubs and boardrooms. It is part and parcel of the work of being a ruling-class man.

## Time

Ruling-class men often say they work very long hours, and indeed many apparently do. That they do absolutely no domestic work means that both leisure and the pursuit of profit can occupy bigger slices of their life. Yet upon closer inspection, the daily lives of very rich men are not as clearly demarcated between work and leisure as those whose living is gained by wage labour.

Sir Frank Packer is said to have spent twenty hours a day on his business until he built it up, and wandered around the building late at night switching off lights. (73) Likewise Rupert Murdoch was reported to get by on four hours sleep a night, and said he worked seven days a week. (74) Bartoleme's study of 140 executives recorded their complaint that their jobs left too little time for family and other things, and some 'were indeed putting in a lot of hours'.(75) It took not only most of their time, but nearly all of their energy, so that they felt 'drained'. As one explained, 'A lot of executives are seduced by their jobs. They become fanatical about their jobs because they like the work and because their companies reward their fanaticism'. (76) Fairfax boss Stephen Mulholland, justifying to the 'troops' why cost-cutting would not include a reduction in his own salary, said, 'Executives just work very hard ... and we worry like hell. We don't sleep much and that's the sacrifice we make, in return for which we get paid great deals of money'. He, too had been 'seduced by a capitalist system'. 'I'm a victim', he said.(77)

But when one of Murdoch's biographers deems him a 'prototypical workaholic', it doesn't mean the same thing as someone who works very hard earning wages or conducting small business.

The livelihood of the tycoons themselves, unlike even the millionaire executives who manage the corporations they own and control, does not depend on their turning up to the office and directly occupying themselves with the affairs of their business. Surplus value will be extracted and capital will accumulate without them doing so, while functions of supervision, planning and so on will be performed by the executives and experts hired for the purpose. They work, then, because they enjoy it, are driven to it, addicted to it.

Kerry Packer knows he can leave business to the editors, bankers, executives, managers and lawyers unless he wants to intervene. Siklos writes of Conrad Black's recollections of the Fairfax takeover Black planned with Packer and Malcolm Turnbull:

From Packer's standpoint, an investment of around A\$180 million wasn't a huge amount to fret over. 'Okay guys, we've now done the deal', Packer declared at one point. 'You go and fix it, and I'm going to go and play polo'. (78)

In a similar vein:

Miles phoned Packer, then on a polo trip in Argentina, privately to air his concern. All Packer knew was that he wanted a piece of Fairfax and if his partners didn't want Turnbull on the board, then so be it. 'Look, I'm sitting in Argentina, I'm trying to buy fucking horses', Packer replied. 'What do you want me to do about it?' (79)

Much of the 'work' of ruling-class men is optional, then, and some tycoons exercise the options to different extents - or at least to a less intensive timetable, for their working day is extremely flexible when they so choose. Conrad Black, for instance, might wake up at nine a.m., but he often stays in bed making telephone calls and reading newspapers. When he finally gets to his office, he 'spends most of his time thinking', he says.(80) His biographer Siklos sees this routine as learnt from his father. 'He too is not prone to prolonged exposure to his office, can spend umpteen hours each day on the telephone - particularly in the midst of a deal - and rises late, having often stayed up until the early morning working, socialising or reading'.(81) One of Conrad Black's senior executives, David Radler, when asked what would happen if a tragedy were to strike Black, replied, 'Well, it would be lighter on the payroll. We'd lose about four club memberships ... Absolutely nothing would happen, okay? I mean ... not one aspect of business will be affected by the demise of the ownership'.(82)

'Rupert's a man who's always thrilled with a new challenge', the *Times* quoted Howard Rubenstein as saying of Murdoch. (83) Speaking in 1986 of his takeover of the *Herald and Weekly Times Ltd*, which was then Australia's biggest newspaper conglomerate and had been lost by his father in 1952, Rupert Murdoch conceded to the *New York Times* 'It's the challenge of the game ... It gives me a great thrill, and it would be very wrong to deny that it is emotional'.(84) Fellow media magnate Conrad Black wrote of Murdoch, 'Neither money nor influence seeming to weigh as heavily as the artistry of corporate building, the agility of buying and selling, the exhilaration of the tightrope walk over the debt mountain'.(85) One of Murdoch's associates, speaking off the record, explained for Tuccille Murdoch's motivation for taking over the unprofitable London *Times*:

I think he was getting bored at the time ... He was well established in the US, he had that big success in Australia with the television and ... well, what was there to do? Go down to the stone and write more headlines, fire some editors, drive everybody crazy with questions about the cost of newsprint: He's a terrible fidget. When he doesn't have a deal to do, he travels around and checks up on his people, gives them fits until lie leaves.(86)

Vere Rothermere elaborated on what this sort of drive meant for him:

I don't 'have' to do it, not financially I have to do it for my family pride and for my enormous interest in the newspapers. I want to do it but I don't 'have' to do it. You 'have' to do it because you haven't got any money! And that makes a big difference with your wife because she knows you're doing it to be successful, to make money, to do things for your children, to advance yourselves. I don't have to advance myself. If I gave up tomorrow and went to live in Jamaica it wouldn't make the slightest difference to me financially and [my wife] can't understand why I have to do it. She thinks I've lost interest in her or have got a beautiful secretary, she doesn't understand that it's the biggest thing in my life to succeed.(87)

Work, for such ruling-class men, is very much like a game. Siklos writes of Black: 'His business dealings are complex chess games, Usually multi-layered, rarely without conflict'. (88) Black 'has tried his hand at most sports and games of skill. In his view, none can compare in challenge or excitement with big business, and none requires more skill or better timing'.(89) Conrad Black's older brother Montegu was

confronted by his wife's exasperation: 'I really don't understand what all of this is about. What is it worth? We live in the same house. The kids have always gone to private school. What's the benefit?' He replied, 'It's a monopoly game. It's a lot of fun'.(90) Conrad, talking about his public statements, told Siklos, 'Most of what goes on is a bit of a game ... You've got to enjoy the game' (91)

The link between the corporate player as a 'general' and ruling-class business as a game of chess is a fairly obvious one. The image of work as a game, including chess, has been mentioned above. But the depiction of what ruling-class men do as risk-taking, gaming and gambling sometimes is more reality than metaphor. Murdoch 'loved to gamble on foreign exchange markets', according to Shawcross, who attributes to the influence of Murdoch's grandfather Rupert Greene, the fact that 'gambling ... had always been part of both Murdoch's leisure and working life'. He 'contains within his character an extraordinary gambling instinct'.(92) Indeed, Murdoch and Sangster went into partnership with a 'far more seasoned gambler', Kerry Packer, to form Lotto Management Services.(93)

Douglas Brass, Murdoch's late father's friend and employee, whom he coopted as editorial director of *News Ltd*, wrote in *The Australian*, 'in those terrible hours and days, when we realised our predicament, Rupert showed some of the steel, the gambler's recklessness and the foresight that have since grown to such immense maturity on the world stage'.(94)

Here is Black talking about Murdoch:

He's a plunger by nature, you know, both financially and otherwise, and he falls in love with places and industries ... He's much more peripatetic and much more courageous than I am. I wouldn't roll the dice like that. As a friend of mine in New York says, 'He's the only guy I know who'll bet a billion dollars of borrowed money to make a point'.(95)

Black describes his own acquisition of the *Telegraph* as 'the greatest gamble I had taken'.(96) 'To some degree, I bought into the *Telegraph* because I was betting in industrial relations matters on Mrs Thatcher and Mr Murdoch as much as on myself, and they proved not to be bad people to bet on'.(97) He later writes, 'I thought that South African newspapers, properly marked down in price to allow for political risk, could be worth a modest bet'.(98) He sees all of his capital accumulation in these terms:

I was like the man who went to the horse races and kept winning, parlaying up his initial two-dollar bet by re-enlisting and winning in each subsequent race. Apart from years of effort and personal credibility, I was not gambling more than my original \$500 in 1966 on the Argus Project.(99)

The notion of building and ruling a business 'empire' is taken for granted in everyday language and ruling-class men often see the nature of their work as akin to statesmanship and warfare. Their accounts of what they do are full of such metaphors. According to Siklos, 'Conrad [Black] will often draw analogies to something Napoleon did in one of his battles'.(100) Following the stymieing of their Fairfax takeover, Kerry Packer is reported by Black as saying, 'A good general must know when to attack and when to retreat and this is the time to retreat'.(101)

From this perspective, it follows that profits and wealth are generated through the skill and intelligent risk-taking of the top player; that generals and not soldiers win wars. In fact, Black actually pronounced that 'one of the great myths of the newspaper industry [is] that you need journalists to produce a newspaper'.(102) It is not surprising, then, that the people whose wage-labour actually generates profit for these 'captains of industry' are regarded with contempt. Conrad Black has repeatedly offered the low opinion of journalists, here quoted by Siklos: 'Many journalists and most of the more talented ones ... are happy to chronicle the doings and sayings of others, but a significant number, including many of the most acidulous and misanthropic are, in my experience, inexpressibly envious of many of the subjects of their attention'.(103) (Presumably he excluded his second wife, journalist Barbara Amiel, from this assessment.)

As a young man Black had written a submission to the Senate Committee on Mass Media chaired by Keith Davey, which opined:

My experience with journalists authorises me to record that a very large number of them are ignorant, lazy, opinionated, intellectually dishonest and inadequately supervised. The so-called 'profession' is heavily cluttered with abrasive youngsters who substitute what they call 'commitment' for insight, and, to a lesser extent, with aged hacks toiling through a miasma of mounting decrepitude. Alcoholism is endemic in both groups. (104)

Murdoch also 'has a low regard for journalists, particularly those who regard themselves as "writers". (105) Davis writes of ruling-class disdain when describing the Royal Enclosure at Ascot. 'To get into the Enclosure one has to secure permission, well in advance of the meeting, from Her Majesty's representative. Up until the early 1960s people who had been through the divorce courts were banned; so were journalists and members of other unsuitable trades and professions'.(106)

Conrad Black wrote of investigative journalists as 'a sniggering mass of jackals'.(107) In his autobiography he identified with 'Jimmy Goldsmith when he broke a journalists' strike at *L'Express* in Paris in 1981, by summoning all the employees and when a production worker expressed support of him, replied: "Of course, my good man, because you have red blood in your veins. These journalists have only pus in theirs". (108)

## **Conclusion**

The time of ruling-class men is not always clearly divided between work and leisure. Yet they are keenly aware that the labour time of their workers means money for them, and they resent and resist the intrusion of anything approaching 'leisure' into the work time of these inferior beings. For tycoon businessmen, work often resembles leisure, and leisure pursuits resemble work. At dinner parties or in the boardroom, relations with their peers are instrumental. Close friendship is rare; alignments of mutual interest and ruling-class solidarity occasionally punctuate the prevailing ruthless competitiveness which prohibits trust. At play, as at work, the competitiveness, manipulation, control and the excitement of apparent risk is what obsesses ruling-class men; without it they are bored and lack purpose. The work of these men is characterised by obsessive, competitive individualism, spurred by a keen sense of their superiority, and ceaseless acquisitiveness reinforced by their

feelings of deservedness. It involves the habitual exercise of power expressed in hierarchy, bullying, manipulation and determination to win. They are detached from, and ruthless towards almost everybody.

The lack of distinction between work and leisure means that ruling-class men rarely 'retire'. When could they, how could they, stop ruling? Towards the ends of their lives, they become obsessed with the passing on of their empires, usually to family and mostly to sons. Many become involved in leaving monuments to themselves - acts often interpreted (as they would wish) as generosity, altruism or civic-mindedness, qualities altogether out of keeping with the way they have lived their lives. Those from whom the power and control over massive wealth has been passed on, find themselves devoid of friendship, trust, loyalty or love outside of their commodified travesties: they often die lonely and dejected, ruing the meaninglessness of their ceaseless pursuit of profit. George Black's last words to his son Conrad, before he crashed through the balustrade of a staircase and fell to his death, were 'Life is hell, most people are bastards and everything is bullshit'. (109)

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