



WORKS

"All the labour-saving machinery that has hitherto been invented has not lessened the toil of a single human being."

John Stuart Mill

One of the things that really troubles me about work is not so much the work itself, but the culture that surrounds it. Our society, our politics, our world is built upon the veneration and glorification of work. It's more intense in some places, especially those influenced by the Protestant work ethic, but it can be found all over the place. Conservatives may want right-to-work laws and liberals may want an end to employment discrimination, but the centrality of work, the unspoken idea that employment is a virtue, goes virtually unchallenged. This intense worship of work is even reflected in children's television.

Even many self-described socialists, who may more accurately be described as state capitalists, venerate work and the worker. In the Soviet Union, the Stakhanovite movement was supported and led by the so-called Communist Party to uplift the efforts of coal miner Alexey Stakhanov, and others like him, who continually raised the standards of productivity, and therefore the physical toil of other workers, through the country. Workerism, that is the ideology that encourages the acceptance of, and propaganda for wage labour, is endemic among so-called revolutionaries, who uphold the "virtues" of exploitation and alienation as a necessary and honourable sacrifice for the building of the state, the economy, and Capital. Workerism specifically often worships the idol of masculine manual labourers, who are said to be most productive, while denigrating service, office, and domestic workers, the latter of which are usually female.

This brings us to the work that isn't even seen as work. The unpaid and invisible care work relegated to the realm of women. Housework is just as feminist authors describe it: monotonous, repetitive, and fragmented, consisting of long hours at a pressurised pace, inescapable and in isolation from all others. Or consider those who, due to physical or mental disabilities, are unable to work, unable to access basic necessities, and are left to fall by the wayside. What kind of society discards those most in need of support?

State control is not the solution, nor is deregulation. Because either way, work is sapping us of our life force, it is stealing our time, and it is literally killing us. In fact, work kills most people, directly or indirectly. Millions of people are killed on the job around the world every year, millions of people are injured or disabled on the job every year, and millions of people are killed by occupational diseases they acquired on the job every year. Millions of people are killed by vehicles going to work, coming from work, or looking for work. Millions are killed by work-induced

