

Work, Jobs, and Tasks in a Libertarian Socialist Society

Center for Especifismo Studies

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Work is specific to its objectives of production (i.e., farm work, barber work, healthcare work, etc.), and it can be large-scale or small scale.

Jobs can be organized in a number of ways, so one workers' council might be made up of [1] people who all have the same job and are responsible for the same tasks, while another workers' council might have [2] multiple jobs that group certain tasks together, and yet another workers' council might have [3] jobs defined on an individual basis, allowing its workers to take up the tasks that they want.

Since some tasks are inherently more stimulating and enjoyable than others, the inclusion of the gross, dirty, disgusting tasks in every job or the rotation of jobs is necessary to prevent the reestablishment of class hierarchies, ensuring that everyone takes their turn doing undesirable parts of the work.

Farm work in a city is different from farm work in a rural area, and farm work in your backyard is different from farmwork on a community scale (or on the scale necessary to distribute outside of the place where something is produced). On some farms, many workers might do the same jobs, and the tasks may vary by the season; or workers might divide the easier tasks from the harder ones, creating two jobs that the workers rotate through on a regular basis. Regardless of the organization of work, the same tasks must be done, and in all cases, it is the people doing this work who should determine the conditions of their own participation.

Service work, like cutting hair, could be a solo operation with a single job that includes every related task, and if they were isolated in their work, this kind of worker would need to be organized in a workers' council made up of other people whose jobs are organized similarly, including people from other sectors of the economy who are also individualized in their work. Still, some service workers would prefer to organize their work with others in a shared space where they could rotate tasks. In either case, some jobs may be made up of tasks that do not take long to learn and do not require a long-term commitment, so they could be done by workers who prefer to move around and don't want to be part of the same organization forever.

Healthcare work will always need high degrees of specialization, so these workers may be organized around specialty and/or around location, whether that is a workplace like a hospital or a broader geographic region. Because of the risk of hierarchies related to specialized fields, all

the jobs would need to include some of the harsh, unstimulating tasks necessary for the work. It would not be okay for some to do all the enjoyable parts of the work just because they require specialist training, so the most specialized workers would be required to do tasks related to training others and sharing their expertise.

Some people will want to do the same work for a long time, and others will get bored and want a change; some workers councils may organize long-term workers looking to specialize in a trade, and other councils might group together short-term workers that don't want to focus on only one kind of work. They might have a variety of skills that are applicable to lots of different jobs, including the ability (and desire) to do common tasks that are relevant to many kinds of work.

The organization of jobs in a certain workplace or within a certain sector of the economy will change and evolve over time because of technological developments, new federalist associations with other organizations, decisions made by the workers themselves, etc.

Some workers will have a strong preference for certain tasks and/or a strong distaste for other tasks; other workers may only be able to do certain tasks or only within certain parameters. This will encourage the unity of workers with common needs and preferences and will tend toward their affinity with workers whose lifestyles may also align with these workers' unique organization. When possible, this could lead to the federation of these specially tailored workers' councils with other organizations that are structured in a complementary way.

It is also possible to imagine workers' councils organizing to do a certain task that has been neglected in a specific locale or to complete a one-time task like delivering something or rebuilding a damaged piece of infrastructure after a storm.

In all these different situations, all workers would also be consumers and would be able to influence production based on that perspective as well. Consumers' councils could be organized around household, neighborhood, community or city, preference, need, etc. Distribution would be the link between workers' and consumers' councils, and we can imagine this being considered a job within some organizations and a specific kind of "distribution work" by others. Some consumers may organize to do the work of gathering for their own needs, creating a worker organization within the consumer organization, but some councils of consumers might prefer to coordinate with specialized distribution workers or with producers who distribute their own goods.

It is also conceivable that, in between whatever organizations are formed by workers and consumers, the social conditions will require other contextually specific organizations and councils to arise, such as supply centers, councils for travelling workers, schools, etc.

Finally, it is not only through the direct participation in councils that people will have political influence in the management of society. This will also occur through the daily interactions with each other because the people that we know, love, and care for will be able to factor into every collective decision that we make, and the surplus production of our labor will no longer go to the ruling class but instead to wherever in society that it is needed.

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In this text, these are the intended meanings of the following terms: — Work refers to the activities that go into producing stuff. — Jobs are the divisions of positions in the organization of work in the form of a grouping of tasks. — Tasks are the instances, repetitions, “baby steps” of work, meaning the specific activities that make up a job.

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