

Ferdie J. Deering

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American Work Ethic Works Best

A MAGAZINE article takes another slap at the "work ethic" by describing "workaholicism" as "a singular sin" and an aberration of the good old American work ethic.

"Workaholics don't just like to work; they live to work," the writer asserts. He doesn't say anything about the millions who don't like to work and prefer to live in idleness.

It is admitted that those dedicated to their work are among the world's most productive people and they encourage others to work.

The truth is that the good old American work ethic is not an American creation and it is the only thing that works.

According to the Book of Genesis, man was created to live in a garden where everything was provided for his comfort and wellbeing. When the Devil persuaded man to disobey God, the Almighty declared: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the ground."

Generally, only those with wealth or power could live without working.

Our Great Society makes it possible for almost anyone to live in reasonable comfort without sweating very much.

The work ethic is a matter of concern in most countries. The Soviet Union has not lived up to its promises, largely because productivity per person is about half what it is in the United States.

A Russian worker testified in Washington hearings recently that his pay was cut because he worked faster and produced twice as many pump shafts as the other workers.

A western-style profit motive is being introduced into Communist China in an effort to boost production. By offering rewards to plant managers, farmers and workers according to what they do instead of just providing for their needs, the rulers seem to be recognizing that the work ethic will accomplish more than Marxism.

A Cuban party official recently was quoted as saying: "We have raised a generation of youths who don't have the habit of work. They

don't get to their jobs on time. They don't work hard. They have been on scholarships most of their lives and feel everything should be made easy for them."

No, that's not the United States. That's Communist Cuba.

Thinkers have propounded the idea that work is essential to self-respect and achievement is necessary for personal gratification. One writes: "To employ people to dig holes and fill them up again gives them pay but not self-respect; to help them to work significantly gives them self-respect, even if the work is unpaid."

Definitions of what constitutes work may vary. For some, playing golf might be work. For others, branding cattle may be fun.

Most women would disagree with the U.S. Bureau of the Census questionnaire for 1980. It does not include "homemaking" under its definition of work, even though it involves such tasks as cooking, washing clothes, cleaning house and raising a family.