

**WORK
WON'T
LOVE
YOU
BACK**

**Further
Discussion
Questions**

How
Devotion to
Our Jobs Keeps
Us Exploited,
Exhausted, and
Alone

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1.** What work do you do? Is it paid or unpaid? Well paid or poorly paid? Is your work seen as work? Is it seen as a 'real job'?
- 2.** What has changed, as you've gotten older, about your ideas about work and fulfillment? Did you, as a child, have a "dream job" you wanted to do when you grew up? Do you do that job?
- 3.** What is the work ethic? What are the social and artistic critiques of the work ethic? What are the caring and creative work ethics?
- 4.** A central theme of the book is exploitation. What is it? How is it misunderstood? How is exploitation masked?
- 5.** Jaffe writes, "The working class is not a stable entity or a fixed category. It is, rather, a thing that changes as conditions change, as capitalism changes and produces new work ethics to match its demands." What is class composition? Why is it important to understand it as a process?
- 6.** In several chapters, Jaffe writes about the way that racism excluded some workers from labor protections or access to work. How does race affect the process of class composition?
- 7.** In the first section, the book discusses the family, domestic work, teaching, retail and nonprofits. Did the book change how you viewed any of these? Were you surprised by the inclusion of any of these?
- 8.** In the second section, the book discusses art, interns, academia, technology, and sports. Did the book change how you viewed any of these? Were you surprised by the inclusion of any of these?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS *continued*

- 9.** The stories in the book are often about people who were able to identify that they were being exploited despite the 'labor of love' myth, and then fight back collectively. Which of these stories resonated with you most?
- 10.** Was your work represented in one of the chapters? If so, what resonated most with you about that? If not, how do you see the book's themes playing out in your work?
- 11.** Have you been involved in an organizing campaign like any of the ones in the book? If not, have you been involved in any other workplace organizing? How was it different?
- 12.** The labor movement once made shorter working hours a central demand, yet that has faded. Why do you think that is? Do you think it's time to revive such a demand?
- 13.** Love is generally understood as women's work, whereas art is understood as men's. What struck you most in the book about how work is gendered and racialized? Do you see those dynamics playing out in your work?
- 14.** Was there something in a chapter that was about a different kind of work than the work that you do that resonated with you?
- 15.** At the end of the book, Jaffe connects the question of work to the climate crisis. How are our working lives connected to climate change? How do we think beyond the binary of "jobs vs. the environment"?
- 16.** The book talks about an older work ethic being replaced by the caring and creative work ethic. How does this clash help make sense of the deep generational divides we see currently in US and UK politics?