

“Fichte on the Civic Duty to Work”



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In a liberal society, we tend to minimize the number of nonvoluntary civic duties that citizens incur. This is especially true in the case of work, which we tend to conceive of as a private choice irrelevant to our civic duties. With the help of the German philosopher J.G. Fichte, I argue in this talk that we should conceive of work as a civic duty, which changes the character of our judgments about which occupations to pursue (e.g. socially beneficial ones rather than lucrative ones). This civic duty, however, depends on certain background conditions in political society, that we have fair access to meaningful opportunities to work. Since these background conditions do not exist pervasively in modern societies, I conclude by arguing that modern states have a reciprocal duty to progressively realize these background conditions.

Friday, Feb 23rd
Agnes Arnold Hall - 210
1:00 – 3:00

Everyone is invited to continue discussion at *Axelrad* after the talk.