

For the INDIVIDUAL.  
For the MINORITY.  
For COUNTRY.  
UNDER GOD.

# VOICE

INTEGRITY  
FREEDOM  
RESPONSIBILITY

Vol. 2. No. 23.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1956.

6d. Fortnightly.

## The Machine and Liberation

The Bishop of Sheffield's recent statement, that industrial history shows that liberating machinery does not cause unemployment in the long run, is obviously quite correct. Industrial history indicates a fixed determination that machinery never should fulfil its purpose as a liberating agent from employment in materialistic production.

When an automatic plant can deliver a motor chassis frame, finished and complete every 10 seconds, and an electric lamp producing plant, itself produced with the aid of only 37 men in 6 weeks, can turn out 400 bulbs per minute, to mention only two instances—and these from statistics 20 years old—of what is taking place in every branch of industry, not forgetting agriculture with America's two years surplus of wheat, it must be obvious to the most muddle-headed economist that machinery *could* create that unemployment and leisure which the good Bishop sees no reason to regret, unless some drastic measures are taken to prevent its doing so.

More plant and factories, unrequited export drives, great public works like cyclopean dams, which can ruin and have, through insufficient knowledge, ruined great tracts of land and threatened the very sources of nature, more pulling down and building up, have helped; but these are not enough to keep up with the frantic drive for work. Large standing armies, armies of paid bureaucrats and technocrats take up the surplus with such complete success that often there is no one left to do the really useful jobs, from domestic workers—with emphasis upon the home and family—and agricultural labourers, to clergy labouring in Christ's vineyard; work obviously not considered of importance in the communistic planners' scheme of things.

"Although you may not require lathes and may have enough bread, the employees of the lathe-maker cannot get bread unless they make lathes; and so they make lathes to make shells to make war to get bread which is already available." So we may arrive at an indication of the causes of that feverish activity which extends into every sphere of life. It is not to produce sufficient goods; they are already available, but to earn enough money producing still more to buy a decreasing fraction of the total. Without this ever-increasing effort money cannot be had. And since it all comes through the industrial system, our reserves being drained away by taxes, all other activities are involved. The clergy for instance must spend their time collecting small coins sufficient to carry on by the usual fatuous expedients, while the things it is necessary to buy are there in unlimited quantities. They are consumed with cares that should not concern them, to the detriment of their real work and health and happiness. And so it is with other people. We are accused of being materialists, but there always has to be concentration on what is hard to come by; where it is easy it is scarcely considered. How wisely did St. Bernard say that "before bearing the sem-

blance of celestial man we must start by bearing that of terrestrial man," and St. Thomas, following a similar statement, "this is not to give precedence to the material but to ensure to the spiritual those grounds in which it can flourish." It may be noted in passing that money is easily available in apparently unlimited quantities for secular, and what I am afraid is often anti-Christian education, but not for the work of the Church. Surely "an enemy hath done this." Not that the Church should obtain it that way at the expense of her independence.

Individuals, like institutions, who are prepared to toe the line and do what is given them to do, without considering how useful, useless, or even harmful it may be, seem to be sure of their reward. Here is an aspect of morality that has scarcely been touched upon yet, but what morality can survive compulsion? Only independence can be completely proof against corruption. What would happen if all had a measure of it, as they had in the days of the common lands, and with it an increase of responsibility? But the slaves of the machine, or the controllers of it, since the machine itself would liberate, have been mobilised against their own interests as well as of those who have been dispossessed. If we could only understand and sympathise with each other's difficulties, knowing that our interests, though different, are interlocked, we should attack the problem at its roots instead of carping and criticising each other's "selfishness," which is only another aspect of Machiavellian divide and rule. There is an enemy in this too, and how can a church be militant without one. The first principle of tactics is to locate him; failure to do so may mean shooting friends and losing the battle in the end.

This orgy of material production then, to which all the world's efforts are turned, which is also responsible for the "rape of the earth," bad workmanship, and "go slow" methods in industry, which are really a means of eking out work, things we ignorantly if rightly, attack without knowledge of their deeper causes, is not so much a result of our much maligned materialism as the cause. We are urged to it, we are exhorted by all the power of advertisement to concentrate on material things, to make more trade, more money, more work. Only the most discriminating can resist the power of modern propaganda. If men were free to produce only the things they felt the need to produce, whether material goods or the finer goods of the spirit, we should see no doubt some surprising results. All the experience of the culture of Greece, of the Middle Ages in Europe and even the more civilised Isles of the East, where nature abundantly and with a minimum of effort supplies their simple wants, goes to show that with liberty and leisure culture and the arts of peace have flourished and war been reduced to defence against barbarism. While it must be admitted that our capacity to use such opportunity has reached a very low ebb, from which it would take some generations of a different kind of education to that we suffer from now to recover, it has been said with some truth that

## VOICE

A JOURNAL OF STRATEGY FOR PERSONAL,  
POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FREEDOM.

"Liberty consists in the freedom to choose or refuse  
one thing at a time."

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the first requirement in learning the use of leisure is to have it.

Release from the wholly unnecessary urge to produce can only come through the free distribution of surpluses after capital and labour have had their due. That part which is due to no human effort is obviously given, from the source of all life. There is no other realistic way of disposing of it. Otherwise it can only be concentrated and used for the purposes of power of which the individual is likely to disapprove. We have reached a point where we have to choose between a measure of liberation or complete suppression, with a society organised much on the lines of that of the bee, so much admired by puritan moralists, or alternatively that of the ant, incidentally transforming the earth into the hideous anthep it is rapidly becoming, with the moon and the planets in reserve as already visualised.

Perhaps the most visible effects of a change along the lines indicated would be a gradual slowing down of the tempo of life, a recovery of something of the peace and poise we have lost, certainly an easing up of that feverish activity which is so destructive to health and happiness, destroying to body and soul.

What is this life if full of care  
We have no time to stand and stare.

Activity is good, but poets, philosophers, theologians have always known and often said that contemplation is of a higher order. It leads at last to vision.

"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness," not as an airy abstraction but rightness "in minute particulars," as William Blake said, not mincing his words, for "the general good is the plea of the scoundrel and the hypocrite." Then, "all these things shall be added to you." Conversely and reversing the order, it seems likely that they will be subtracted from us. This rightness is what we are aiming at, and one of the most important aspects of it, at present seems to be a right approach to the matter of work, which lies at the very root of our problem. It indicates our failure to distinguish between means and ends, which St. Augustine and other great Christian philosophers have said is the source of all sin, bringing confusion as its automatic punishment. Work treated as an end in itself can only result in the kind of planned activities which caused and are causing such untold misery in Russia and are being forced by a false and un-Christian philosophy on all the rest of the world. The spate of books that are appearing however, by Peiper, Thibon, Daniel-Rops and others, are an encouraging sign of a new orientation of thought. H.W.

## "As for Thy Laws"

The subject of work is evidently occupying the minds of the Bishops, but nothing we have seen seems as important as the Bishop of Oxford's words nor anything so neatly comprehensive on one vital aspect as the statement of the Rev. A. R. Lintell (see page 4).

The Layman Publishing Co. has reprinted in pamphlet form a sermon by the then Bishop of Croydon (Bishop Designate of Coventry) entitled, *I Must Work*, which was broadcast from Croydon Parish Church on Industrial Sunday. Doubtless the Bishop's words have given guidance to the factory workers whom he was addressing. But he does not define work at all or suggest that some work might be unnecessary. We develop, he says, "in so far as and in proportion as we work." Apparently the well known hymn of George Herbert must be rewritten, and instead of the line

"Who sweeps a room, as for thy laws,  
"Makes that and the action fine"

we shall have to sing, "Who turns a screw. . . ."

But the poet's emphasis surely was on the words, *as for thy laws*. On the other hand, much industrial work is imposed on people as a condition of their eating, not because it needs to be done or is a service to others. The Bishop then says that the most miserable people in the world are "those with no work; the people in certain residential Hotels; the unemployed in the 1920's. . . . This world is not . . . an armchair existence for the satisfaction of spivs." We welcome episcopal thunder, but suggest that it might have more suitable and formidable objects. Some of the best "work" has been done when people were not paid for it; while a few people sitting in armchairs work extremely hard, not as spivs, but as centralisers of power. The misery of the unemployed was lack of money, because there was no screw for them to turn so that they should qualify for a "wage."

The Bishop of Chichester, as reported in the *Daily Mail*, preached on work during his Plough Sunday sermon in the Cathedral. The report is headed *Why Work?* He said that work was service to society and laid it down that work "which is relentless drudgery, which thwarts the worker's sense of craftsmanship" should be reduced to a minimum. This of course has happened, potentially, in our time: but as work for someone else is regarded as the only respectable qualification for the means of life, we do not benefit from man's inventiveness and, instead of the heritage being enjoyed, relentless drudgery must be discovered!

The Bishop further advises: "A boy, thinking about his future should seek work which is productive and fruitful, and not a mere juggling for coins." But most people are forced to think more and more about "the coins" due to the infamous activities ("work?") of those who devalue our currency and restrict our credit.

The Greeks were able to live as they did owing to slavery. And they considered that Leisure was the positive to be sought. The end of work is leisure, said Aristotle, and their word for leisure, *SCHOLE*, is still honourably preserved in our words School and Scholar. What we should call employment they called "Unleisure." Their positive, Leisure, has become our negative, Unemployment; while their negative, Unleisure, has been perverted into the positive object of

our society, Employment, and we should be enjoying much more service from the harnessing of energy than ever a Greek enjoyed from his slaves. Until this crooked thinking is straightened out, modern man will not be the heir of those who were able to use leisure to the material, spiritual and cultural benefit of mankind, but he will inherit the degraded life of the slaves. H.S.

### Automation—Bane or Blessing?

by J. HYATT.

Even the confidence born of the Christian hope does not so arm us that all the strange possibilities of our time leave us entirely without dread, but it is our responsibility to urge that those things which may be thought of with hope, should be seen with their hopeful potentialities and not as dark, confusing mysteries.

More than one new reader has told us that *Voice* would be of more benefit to the over-worked members of the clergy if it were written in what they call 'simpler' terms. With great respect, we suggest that here there may be some confusion between the 'simple' and the 'familiar.' Perhaps our friends may like to see a translation of the main part of an article from the Quebec fortnightly paper *Vers Demain*, in which the unfamiliar is put as simply as possible. This may well be read in the setting of the first paragraph of an article in *The Times* for January 25, 1956, entitled, "Impact of Automation in the United States—Forecast of Benefits and Problems," which reads thus:—

"While Russia has just appointed a Minister of Automation—to hasten the introduction of these processes—the United States Congress has recently taken formal cognizance for the first time of 'this important post-war trend.' It has had a committee studying the impact of 'so-called automation' on employment; it is concerned not to hasten its advance, of which it feels assured, but to prepare for any untoward effects of rapid advance." It may be remarked here that while the *immediate* concern of the United States is employment for wages and the *immediate* concern of Russia is *production*, the *ultimate* objectives of their economies may be alike and not in contrast with one another.

The *Vers Demain* article, of November 15, 1955, using the simplest of terms, treats of one of the profounder aspects of the subject, and does not, in our view, technical issues apart, over-simplify the issue. Our translation is as follows:—

"Automation is more and more talked of. . . . Industrialists study its advantages. Sociologists are anxious about its effects on the only present source of income of the majority of wage-earners.

"Automation is the introduction of automatic techniques into productive procedure. Not only the introduction of machines to work in the place of men but the introduction of automatic controls to guide the functioning of the machines without the aid of operators. . . . The whole mechanical process is assured automatically with a precision which surpasses anything one can expect from the most competent workmen.

"What kind of reception should be given to this second industrial revolution?"

"If products are what are required from industry, automation will supply them, as well as or better than mechanical production which still calls for the co-operation of manpower. But if what is required is work, employment, clearly automation will not favour this, since by its mere definition it tends to eliminate the need for workers.

"Would it not be possible to gain from this elimination a liberation, an enrichment of the life of men, of all men?"

The writer then quotes in full the text of a letter written in answer to an editorial which appeared in *L'Action Catholique*, as follows:—

" . . . Automation . . . is the result of the constant effort of man to perfect his means of production while freeing himself as much as possible from drudgery. This effort is praiseworthy, since it has as its end the greater well-being of man, in which human beings, freeing themselves gradually from servitude, find their true direction towards full development. For this reason I am very much surprised to learn that certain men are anxious about automation. Ought one to fear what is a benefit to humanity? . . . In point of fact, they say, will not automation bring about large-scale unemployment? How is full-employment to be maintained? Employment is not an end but a means. If man has enough genius to discover methods which free him from painful and often sub-human tasks, why refuse or fear this means?"

"Daniel-Rops writes in one of his works (*Par delà notre nuit*, pages 62 and 63): 'The machine is in itself a liberating factor, since by its very existence it tends to lighten the yoke of *Thou shalt earn thy bread by the sweat of thy brow!*' and later he says: 'By lifting from the living being the load of exhausting tasks, it opens up new space for the disinterested activity of the mind.' In other words, man, freed from drudgery by the advent of the machine, has the benefit of wider leisure, thanks to which he can more truly become a man in the intellectual and moral sense. To my mind, therefore, to wish to maintain full-employment in spite of liberating machinery, is a crime.

"The problem to be solved is not then how to maintain full employment, but rather how to maintain *the right to life*" (*'le droit à la vie'*; '*la vie*' incorporates *life, a living, a livelihood*),—"the right to a full life, even without 'employment,' even for those workers who have become unemployed through technical progress." The letter-writer quoted by *Vers Demain* then refers to a previous article in *L'Action Catholique* in which the same writer had said that so long as the right to *life (la vie)* had not been dissociated from the right to work, the advent of more and more perfect industrial techniques would be translated into poverty and humiliation for the mass of workers who were displaced and replaced. "The right to life ought to be recognised in itself; it ought to be disconnected from the obligation of taking part in production." (Ultimately, work which is chosen under no economic necessity is that which is of true value; although saintly and heroic qualities may be developed in any circumstances, it is for us to point out that all which can free man to make his own choice—and especially that great choice which decides his whole way of life—is to be sought, if we have the courage to seek it, and not to be feared lest it should be misused.)

The letter continues:—"Daniel-Rops demands the institution of a minimum sum for living guaranteed to each individual. Social Crediters demand the institution of a

regular dividend attached to the person and not to the job, which would allow primary needs to be satisfied. The two ideas are based on the same principle and have the same end in view . . . unemployment benefit smacks of 'charity' and makes a degraded being of the unemployed man. . . .

"If it is admitted that it is in his leisure that man can best find himself, and best work towards his full development, and that it is in leisure that he becomes a truly free man, a person in the full sense of the word—then to be determined to see that the workman is a fully-employed person, in spite of the advent of liberating machinery, is to refuse him the opportunity of becoming in the highest sense, a man."

### Employment as a Policy

Conspicuously during this century great progress has been made in the industrial arts. (The first War called for huge quantities of identical articles, and by the time it ended mass-production had come to stay.

When the mass-consumption of war was cut down to the more moderate demands of peace, mechanised industry had to pay off workers in large numbers. They demanded employment.)

During the Second War labour-saving devices were introduced in an even bigger way, and what is now called automation seems likely to decrease still further the necessity for labour. (The workers now demand *full* employment.)

The issue now confronting us all is whether the replacement of human labour by power production is good or bad. A decision has to be taken.

All political parties support full employment. (Millions of women have forsaken their homes for the factories, and more people are now employed than ever before.) The combination of the greatest-ever number of labourers operating the most-efficient-ever labour-saving devices is not without a certain grim humour, but what is to become of the mountain of goods?

The Americans have solved the problem by giving everything away to any one who will have it, even their enemies.

Sir Stafford Cripps forestalled the problem by devaluing the pound and giving away to foreigners more and more in exchange for less and less.

Mr. Butler, announcing that he was fighting inflation, raised prices even higher, thus ensuring that whoever did get the goods, Englishmen didn't.

We have now reached a stage when, if full employment is to be retained as a policy, automation will have to be forbidden. This is of course sabotage.

But if automation is a good thing, then full employment will have to be abandoned.

If we persist in trying to operate full employment and automation at once, then only war, which is sabotage in delirium tremens, will be able to dispose of the product.

There are unmistakable signs that the Third War is already cooking, and could be induced to boil over at any minute. Is full employment worth it?

J. BRUMMITT.

*The Liverpool Daily Post.*

The parts of this letter which are bracketed did not appear in the *Daily Post*. The title was altered to "Automation and Full Employment."

### Basic Points

1. The original fundamental right of man was to get some sort of a living for himself through free access to all the resources of nature about him.

2. Getting a living by hiring himself out to work for another was only a sound thing as long as it was better than doing it by direct action in the surrounding nature, upon which one could always fall back.

3. The situation in which man cannot fall back on free access to natural resources and can *only* live if his labour "happens to be necessary" to someone else is a state of degradation that is to be condemned.

4. It is clear that continuous "improvement in method," roughly equalling "invention" and "machinery" tends towards getting all the world's necessary work done easily in little time.

5. We are already therefore far advanced in the position where all men's full time labour cannot be "necessary to somebody else" who is obliged to "pay" for it. Wherefore, according to the usual social and economic thinking, an increasing number of persons are becoming redundant and will have no "wage value" on which to claim existence.

6. It is urgent *now* to get people to face up to the principles:

(a) that man has the right to exist for his own sake and not only if he is an economic necessity to somebody else.

(b) that the near future necessarily involves only small time "labour at the world's work," which can no longer be the basis on which people are "paid," and

(c) that there must be a frank recognition of lots of leisure and development of its profitable use.

A. R. LINTELL, Vicar of Quethiock.

### Correction

The final paragraph of Mrs. Geraldine Starkey's New Year Message should have read: "My word shall not return unto me void," it shall "accomplish that which I have spoken which I please;" but only if we help, are on His side. May he not withdraw, withdraw His aid from us? Then the reality of our fate would indeed be appalling, it would be the end of all things "for in Him we live and move and have our being."

### Impact

The recent printing by a London and a provincial newspaper (in curtailed form) of views expressed in this journal would suggest that some impact is being made.

### FUNDS URGENTLY NEEDED.

Contributions to The Treasurer, Christian Campaign For Freedom, Penrhyn Lodge, Gloucester Gate, London, N.W.1.

Published by K.R.P. Publications Ltd., at 11, Garfield Street, Belfast.  
Printed by J. Hayes & Co., Woolton, Liverpool.