

THE NEW TIMES

"Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free"

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"ECONOMICS FOR A CHRISTIAN WORLD"

The following article is part of a forthcoming booklet by Jeremy Lee, to be published shortly under the same title.

George Orwell, in his satire *"Animal Farm"* depicts a scene where the farmyard animals overthrow and expel the tyrannical human owner. Having done so, they plan an egalitarian society where "all animals are equal", where work and profit is shared for the benefit of all. A set of slogans is nailed to the barn wall, setting out "animal rights".

The pigs, however, led by the unpleasant Bonaparte and his off sider Squealer, gradually accumulate power, and finally produce a tyranny worse than the first.

The slogans on the barn wall are stealthily changed in the dead of night. The animals discover that "all animals are equal - - but some are more equal than others."

The workload increases and the profits diminish — except for the pig's share, which apparently needs enlarging "due to the enormous burdens of leadership."

George Orwell's picture of the animals plight continued: "... They were generally hungry, they slept on straw, they drank from the pool, they laboured in the fields; in winter they were troubled by the cold, and in summer by the flies. Sometimes the older ones among them racked their dim memories and tried to determine whether in the early days of the Rebellion, when Jones's expulsion was still recent, things had been better or worse than now. They could not remember. There was nothing with which they could compare their present lives: they had nothing to go upon except Squealer's lists of figures, which invariably demonstrated that everything was getting better and better."

The reverse also holds true. It is possible to obscure the natural abundance around us with figures and predictions so dismal that ordinary people are mesmerised with the premonition of disaster.

CHRISTIAN DILEMMA

Recently, a small group of concerned Christians met to discuss, with the most genuine concern, the fact that others in their community were finding it increasingly hard to make ends meet. In fact, it was revealed that a few did not have sufficient food for their families.

What could be done? It was agreed that, in a few cases there was lack of good management, and this was probably true.

The meeting generally concurred on a number of assumptions; that, the family being important, parents should be prepared to accept a modest, and even Spartan standard of living so that the mother could nurture and care for her children during their formative years; that the acceptance of any form of social security, even when out of work, was "ungodly", and not in keeping with the ideal of a proper church association; and that the "work ethic" was the first requirement of both a healthy community and a viable nation.

In all these contentions there is an element of truth; but is it really addressing the obvious "malaise" affecting nations, communities and families alike?

In the same city where this meeting was held, farmers were also debating just what to do with huge, unsaleable surpluses of wheat and dairy production. Both farming and business

associations were preoccupied with the ever-increasing bankruptcies and the problem of unemployment.

Currently, administrations round the world — and it is astonishing how stereotyped politics has become in all western nations — have devised a standard mix of "triumph and disaster":

"Yes, for the moment things are grim! But if we all tighten our belts, work harder and, above all, accept the latest financial 'nostrums' of the policy-makers, 'there's a light at the end of the tunnel' — (or 'round the corner', as the case may be).

It's an argument that appeals to the workaholic, or the corporate-builder, who has got where he as by "blood, sweat and tears". And there is a half-truth in it. It is undoubtedly true that there is nothing so demoralising as the idleness of despair, which has many young people in its grip. There is nothing, which builds character quicker than a "worthwhile job well done."

EXPORT OR PERISH

However, if you listen carefully, that is not what we're being asked to do. What economists and politicians really desire desperately is enough extra production, at a lower cost, to "under-cut" other nations' exports with our own. We have developed the idea into an economic religion. We never ask whether this extra production is needed, or is reaching those who really require it. We wouldn't really mind, in fact, if our exports never reached consumers at all, but were dumped into the sea instead — just so long as "credits" come back, which we could turn into "incomes" so that we can pay "debts" which would otherwise be unpayable, so that we can borrow more, in order to produce more exports.

That's not constructive diligence. It's a frenetic form of

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

We extend Christmas greetings to our readers and their families, trusting that they have a Holy and Happy Christmas and a New Year, which will prove fruitful in every way.

madness. Worse, it is idolatry. In the process, we are destroying soil, depleting natural resources, and crippling people. If that is what we call "capitalism", we'd better think again.

The socialist, having identified much of the obvious corruption in this way of doing things, opts for no private property, which means no freedom or enterprise ("free-enterprise") until he tries it. He very soon finds that surpluses turn into shortages so that consumers go hungry.

Is there a third way? Or, more properly, is there a right way? The Christian ought to be able to say "Yea and Amen." And there was a time in history when he had a reasonably clear understanding of the principles involved. We'd better look at basic premises.

Firstly, is it really true that we must increase efforts to produce more because there is a shortage of production?

Industry would answer with a resounding "No!" Apart from the fact that well under 50 percent of the work-force in each industrial nation is involved in the production of raw materials, foodstuffs and consumer goods — a figure which is dropping all the time — finding markets is still the hardest problem. The mountains of foodstuffs, minerals and oil, which clog the world's systems, have become something of a by-word. The truth is if we did not bury or destroy large amounts of it, we'd have even bigger problems than we now have! Currently buried in limestone caves in the U.S. are 181,000 tonnes of butter, 363,000 tonnes of cheese and 1.5 million tonnes of dried milk powder. The refrigeration costs \$60 million annually, and the pile is added to with \$275,000 worth of unsold dairy products every hour! In Europe another one million tonnes of cheese remains unsold, with 240,000 tonnes of butter. There are large stocks unsold in Australia and New Zealand, where producers hope that Americans and Europeans will keep their stocks in storage indefinitely — or the existing market structure will collapse even further.

BUTTER MOUNTAINS

In America, 40 million tonnes of wheat lie unsold from last year's harvest — and huge international wheat stocks have brought prices tumbling down, while production costs are climbing.

In January 1985 Europe had the following food mountains in stock, with no prospects of selling them at cost — let alone a profit:

Butter	943,000 tonnes
Skim Milk Powder	605,000 "
Beef	660,000 "
Wheat	15 million tonnes
Barley	2.1 " "
Rapeseed	62,000 tonnes
Olive Oil	116,000 "
Sugar	214,000 "
Dried Fruit	20,000 "
Wine	15 million hi.

By November 1986, the butter mountain was 1.5 million tonnes, and the wheat mountain 16 million tonnes.

EEC officials are already destroying large quantities of food to prop up prices. One press report (January 19, 1985) said:

"The Europeans dump on the trash heaps every minute 866 lbs. of apples, 41 cauliflowers, 1648 lbs. of lemons, 1358 lbs. of oranges, 438 lbs. of peaches, 755 lbs. of tomatoes and 46 lbs. of pears..."

Is it possible that archaeologists in the next century, digging to discover how we lived in the 1980s, will record:

"This was a period in history without parallel. Productive "know-how" was more advanced than ever

recorded before. Huge machines ploughed and mined at a speed past comprehension. Automation had reached the point where factories required few humans. The potential to feed, clothe and house their people was unsurpassed.

Yet their religion was inexplicable. While many starved, mountains of food were buried in the ground where it eventually fossilized, or was destroyed. Their vehicles, appliances and even houses were made to break down, so that there was an ever-expanding market for further production. They destroyed their soil, polluted their rivers and seas, plundered their forests and squandered their energy and minerals. They sacrificed their heritage to fulfill the demands of their leaders for "more production." All this was sacrificed on the altar of their God, who was called Mammon....

One part of this world rejected this religion, and opted for another, where no one could labour for himself, could own nothing, and was therefore denied profit in any form. In contrast to the first, their production was primitive and their options few. Their God was called Marx.

Finally the people of Mammon became so frenzied that they sent the people of Marx the weapons they needed to wage war. The Mammonites fed the armies of the Marxists who, armed with the Mammonite weapons, finally crushed their suppliers. Victorious though they were, they could not feed themselves in victory. And thus all perished— save a remnant...?"

HUMAN GREED

The Marxist claims that capitalist behaviour is the result of human greed, which in turn is the inevitable outcome of any free society.

Yet free societies have not always behaved in this way. Furthermore, the Christian, whose faith requires both order and freedom, is definitely required to provide a lead in a new direction. He could profit from re-examination of his own history.

He has two things in his favour. Firstly, there is the evidence — and the scriptural authority — to show that his Creator has provided an environment more than adequately stocked with the capital of physical abundance. Only those who have never had anything to do with production could possibly doubt the potential in this capital. Any farmer will tell you that, with artificial restrictions lifted and proper rules of husbandry applied, the farming and arable areas of the world could carry many times the existing population of the planet. There would be surpluses and more to conserve for droughts, floods and fires.

Any engineer could tell you that, if industry was provided with the incentives for maximum production of raw materials and manufactured goods, this world could double or triple the existing tremendous production in a two or three year period. We are going at half speed in boom times, and about a half of that during recessions. What is more, automation has ensured that the human component of production is dropping by the year.

Most physicists can tell you that we are now in a position to shift away from fossil fuels in the field of energy into costless use of solar-power in various forms — hydrogen, electricity or steam. The magnetic motor is a reality. If we could break through the existing energy monopolies with a real desire to uncover and make available the means for low-cost, de-centralised energy units for travel, light industry, farming and home use, there is no doubt we could do so in a reasonably short time.

Somewhere there is a key for a turnaround out of darkness into light. That key lies in the use, or misuse, of money.

THE EVIDENCE OF HISTORY

For about 500 years in European history what money that existed was circulated without usury. What results were obtained? It was certainly no golden age; conditions were often harsh; roads were poor, medicine primitive, mechanisation was unthought of. There were few books and fewer readers.

But in some areas they were ahead of us today. The houses and churches they built are often still standing. The constitutions they devised we still regard with awe; Magna Carta was one example.

What, then, did they believe?

The attitude to work was governed by three philosophical legacies: firstly, that it was a condition of men decreed by God as a result of "the fall" in the Garden of Eden, and was hence a punishment — the "curse of Adam". If it was not something to be shunned, neither was it to be embraced. The Englishman or European of the period would have looked incredulously at the U.N. and Soviet constitutions, where the "curse of Adam" has been turned into a basic right — "the right to work". Rather was work regarded as the "drudge" side of human activity, which should be accomplished in as short a time and as speedily as possible in order to release him into leisure. But leisure must not be confused with the idleness, which the modern use of the word tends to conjure up. It was, in reality, another form of work — but this time consisting of what a man *wanted* to do, rather than what he *had* to do. Human effort was often just as intense during leisure as during work, but there was a joy to it — the joy of self-chosen goals and accomplishments, creativity and achievement. The result was that the drudge side of life (work) was reduced as far as possible consistent with basic security; and leisure (voluntary effort) was expanded into as wide a part as could be allowed. There was certainly no boredom, nor were parents assailed with the modern catch-cry of materially satiated youth "what shall I *do*?" The reason was that leisure activity was shaped by a practically inclined spiritual ethos.

This was in part due to the two next legacies, left to the people of the Middle Ages by Greece and Rome. Both had been preoccupied with the virtues or deficiencies of work and leisure, and had concluded that, of the two, leisure was the more important and ennobling. Aristotle had said, (Politics, Vol. 9, p.465c) "That in a well-ordered state the citizens should have leisure and not have to provide for their daily wants is generally acknowledged." Aristotle divided occupations into the liberal and illiberal; only the former were thought suitable for the citizens. In the second category he placed not only "the life of mechanics or tradesmen, for such a life is ignoble and inimical to virtue," but also "all paid employments" (pp.533b, 465c)

SCRIPTURAL FLAVOURING

The citizens of the Middle Ages never went so far, and tempered the hedonistic side of Greece and Rome with a scriptural flavouring. Leisure was not only to be pleasurable, but also creative. The Apostle Paul praised diligence, but was careful to equate the proper purpose for it. He exhorted Christians to work with their hands so that they would "lack for nothing" (1 Thess. 4. 11-12) and so that they would have something "to give to him that needeth" (Eph. 4:28). His oft-quoted dictum "If any would not work neither should he eat" (11 Thess. 3:10) was not meant in praise of work but in condemnation of freeloading. Men generally took his words as simple social justice and kept their hands to the plough. But they looked up from the plough now and again, and sighed when they beheld the fowls of the air, which "sow not, neither do they reap" (Matt. 6:26) and the lilies of the field, which "toil not, neither do they spin" (Matt. 6:28).

Had they pursued the matter — and perhaps they did — they would have seen that the "fowls of the air" still had to build their nests and gather food. But no one would have equated

this natural activity with "work". Because God had provided the means for nest building and food-gathering, the subsequent activity of the "fowls of the air" had a joy and innocence about it that did not equate with the sense of drudgery which man suffered in performing the same function. If he followed the analogy Jesus was making, he would have seen that the same joy could result from the same activity if it was performed as part of a pursuit of "the Kingdom of God". "Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.... shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? seek ye first the Kingdom and all these things shall be added unto you ..." (Matt. 6: 30-33).

The Middle Ages had a growing realisation that this promise was not "pie in the sky". There was, contrary to general belief, a great deal of leisure time. Thorold Rogers, Professor of Political Economy in the middle 1800s at Oxford University wrote: ". . . At that time (i.e. the Middle Ages) a labourer could provide all the necessities for his family for a year by working 14 weeks.. ."

Lord Leverhume, a prominent figure in the Industrial Partnership Movement of the 18th Century, wrote: "The men of the 15th Century were very well paid..."

The European historian Sombart, in his study of agricultural conditions in Central Europe in the 14th Century ". . . found hundreds of communities which averaged from 160 to 180 holidays a year ..."

THE LAWS OF ENGLAND

Fortescue, appointed Lord High Chancellor by Henry VI, in his book "*Le Laudibus Legum Anglicae*" (Praise the Laws of England") said:

" . . . The King cannot alter the laws, or make new ones, without the express consent of the whole people in parliament assembled. Every inhabitant is at his liberty fully to use and enjoy whatever his farm produceth, the fruits of the earth, the increase of his flocks and the like. All the improvements he makes, whether by his own proper industry, or of those he retains in his service, are his own, to use and enjoy without the let, interruption or denial of any. If he be in any wise injured, or oppressed, he shall have his amends and satisfaction against the party offending. Hence it is the inhabitants are rich in gold, unless at certain times upon a religious score, and by way of doing penance. They are fed in great abundance with all sorts of flesh and fish, of which they have plenty everywhere; they are clothed throughout with good woollens; their bedding and other furniture in their houses are of wool, and that in great score. They are also well provided with all sorts of household goods and necessary implements for husbandry. Everyone, according to his rank, hath all things which conduce to make life easy and happy..."

Obviously, there was a spiritual emphasis to life, which is lacking today. Cobbett, in his "*History of the Reformation*", records that often 100,000 pilgrims at a time journeyed to Canterbury. As Geoffrey Chaucer described it:

As specially from every shires ende
Of Engelonde to Canterbury they wende,
The holy blissful martyr for to seeke
That them hath holpen whan that they were seeks."

There was a church to every four square miles throughout England, and 35 magnificent Gothic cathedrals, built through private donations and a large measure of voluntary effort.

Theatre and music played a large part in community life, culminating with Shakespeare and his Globe theatre at Stratford-on-Avon in the 1500s.

It was a period where the English village developed — without town planners, building inspectors or enforced construction standards. Apart from the small yeoman farms, each village

had its "Common", where villagers could graze their geese and cows. The destruction of the Commons later in history produced a strong reaction, summed up in the oft-quoted verse:

"The law proscribes 'gainst thief or felon
Who steals the goose from off the Common;
But lets the greater villain loose
Who steals the Common from the goose!"

A JUST PRICE

G.N. Clark, in his history *"The Wealth of England from 1496 to 1760"* gives this picture of the price structure:

"... Conscious planning played a very modest part in the economy of this time. In the main the Church, the King and his servants, the municipalities, or the guilds used their limited power of social control, not to impose economic plans, but merely to prevent breaches of traditional rules and standards... There was a certain stock of economic ideas. They were good ideas, though they were simple and general. Like most systematic thought at the time, these ideas were a branch of a comprehensive interpretation of the whole universe. The Church was the custodian of this interpretation, although laymen wrote pamphlets on commercial policy. The main doctrines had to do with economic justice, the principles of fair dealing. There was the doctrine that in all transactions a just price ought to be paid. This might be explained so as to mean very little more than that a seller committed a sin if he took more than the correct price, the market price; but it was often explained so as to condemn something more than simple cheating. If it penetrated a little into economic analysis, it meant that the market price itself ought to be just, and that meant, roughly speaking, that it ought to depend on the cost of production and not on unfair competition or on the power of a monopolist. There was one special sphere in which the doctrine of a just price took a form very natural in a peasant society; in the sphere of finance it took the form of condemning usury. There were texts in Scripture and in Aristotle which seemed to mean that all loans should be made without interest; and this was the official theory...."

Indeed, Magna Carta had much to say about the evils of usury, and sought to protect the widow, the weak and the helpless from the moneylenders.

This was the period of feudalism: and feudalism produced injustices. The will-to-power lurked within the human psyche, just as it does today. But the law took this into account, and, on the whole, protected against political and economic monopoly far more than today. Beside the "feudalism" of the modern state the Middle Ages seems mild indeed. Tribute to the feudal lord involved no more than a twelfth part of human effort. Today the direct and indirect taxes of western nations take between 40 and 50 percent!

PRICES OF THE PERIOD

Prices of the period give some idea. The Precosium of Bishop Fleetwood gave this list of prices in the Middle Ages:

	£	s	d
A pair of shoes	0	0	4
Russet broadcloth, the yard	0	1	1
A stall-fed ox	1	4	0
A grass-fed ox	0	16	0
A fat sheep unshorn.....	0	1	8
A fat sheep shorn	0	1	2
A fat hog 2 yrs old.....	0	3	4
A fat goose.....	0	0	2½
Ale the gallon, by Proclamation . . .	0	0	1
Wheat, the Quarter	0	3	4
White wine, the gallon	0	0	6
Red wine.....	0	0	4

Thus it was that the fiery 19th-century historian William Cobbett, after visiting Winchester Cathedral and marveling at its beauty, told his son:

"... That building was made when there were no poor wretches in England called paupers; when there were no poor rates; when every labouring man in England was clothed in good woollen cloth; and when all had plenty of meat and bread and beer . . ." (Cobbett's *"Rural Rides"*)

Cost of production was measured in terms of consumption — the effort, and use of materials involved in making something new. Thus it stands to reason all invention, which saved effort — labour-saving techniques — led to lower prices. New ways to store and produce food, to make nails, make garments, to divide labour promised a gradual lowering of prices and a gradual increase of leisure beyond the large accumulation already existing.

With all its deficiencies, men called it "Merrye Englande".

All of this was to be overturned at the end of the 17th century with two momentous developments — firstly, the advent of the industrial revolution, with a potential for "labour saving" never dreamed of before; and secondly, the arrival of the Rothschilds and modern banking, with its legacy of personal and national debt, which we have already examined at length.

Onto the world's stage came the machine. Man discovered a means of production where solar energy — locked into fossil fuels — began to take over the "curse of Adam". Tumbling over each other a spate of new inventions competed in the bid for application. It was now possible for the visionary to raise questions never before asked. Would the day ever come when men need no longer toil behind a horse and plough? Was it possible that the pick and shovel would be replaced by machines in the mines? Could the machine replace the stagecoach and carriage? Was it conceivable that man's discovery of solar-powered mechanical advantage would remove the punishment with which Adam and Eve were cast forth from the Garden?

PROFOUND QUESTION

It raised a spiritual question of the most profound importance for the Church. If constant labour ("In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.. ."(Gen.3:19) was the punishment for sin, did redemption from sin through faith in Christ abrogate the punishment? Much of what Christ said suggested this possibility. "Come unto Me all ye that labour, and I will give you rest . . . Take no thought, saying "What shall we eat? or What shall we drink? or Wherewithal shall we be clothed?. . . for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. . ."

Now the implication of this teaching was *not* that men were no longer required to build or to husband. It was certainly not a requirement to sit back while food, clothing and shelter miraculously appeared.

Just as the fowls of the air had to build nests and find food, so man still had to bake bread and build cottages. The change was one of perception — that the basic ingredients of economics - - a Greek word meaning "housekeeping" - were provided by God through inheritance; and that its use for human needs was affected through the inheritance principle. The slavery of work was to be transformed into the liberation of creativity. There was only one way this transformation could take place — within the rules of a situation called the "Kingdom of God".

Considered in this context, much of Christ's teaching takes on a new meaning. He was intensely preoccupied with conveying the nature of this Kingdom. His parables — all drawn from economic situations — dealt with its nature. He exhorted his

disciples to preach the "gospel of the Kingdom".

Had the Church grasped the explosive nature of this gospel — and been able to ensure that the money system accurately reflected its nature — the turmoil of the last two centuries may have been avoided. The industrial revolution promised a new age — and, through man's intransigence, delivered an accumulation of disaster.

MECHANISED SLAVERY

The first machines put into practical use liberated no one. As the new mechanised looms were installed in the cotton mills of Lancashire and the Midlands, the value of hand labour was immediately debased. Many lost their jobs. Thus, the dominating problem of the ensuing 200 years was set in motion. England's production increased, while people began to starve. No method had been devised by which the benefit of the increased production could be passed to those whose labour the machine had replaced. Instead, the profits went exclusively to those who had financed the mechanisation. Money gained a new foothold in a realm where it had no business.

Those still in employment worked long hours for little more than the price of bread. There is a wealth of literature on the human misery, which resulted from the advent of the Industrial Revolution. The song of the machine was the Song of the Shirt.

The effects on social conditions kindled a political explosion. The first and most primitive reaction was to blame the machines themselves. The Luddites personified this attitude, but their pathetic attempt to smash the machines after breaking into the factories by night was unable to stem the flood of mechanisation.

The next development was far more ominous. Karl Marx spent long hours in the British Museum putting together a political credo which did not so much blame the machine as ownership of the machine — indeed all private ownership.

Marx was unable to conceive a potential benefit from mechanisation, even in the midst of the immediate human misery. He argued that "machinery is the surest means of lengthening the working day" and "machinery becomes in the hands of capital the objective means, systematically employed for squeezing out more labour in a given time. This is effected in two ways: by increasing the speed of the machinery, and by giving the workman more machinery to tend" (*Das Kapital*).

The machine eventually did away with some of the drudgery of labour — not all of it by any means — and raised the living standards of the industrialised countries. But there was a price in terms of social environment. It put people out of work long before it provided jobs for their children or grandchildren. It uprooted families, which had always lived in and around villages and installed them in tenement warrens near the factories; and the tenements and the factories alike ruined the beauty of cities and towns. Tied to the factory — the new tools of his trade bolted down to another man's floor — the workman was thrown into the street with all of his fellows and all of his neighbours when the machine's most marvellous achievement — over production shut down the factories and produced the recurrent conclusions of "boom" and "bust".

TEDIOUS REPETITION

It was not Marx, but his millionaire patron Hegel who, looking at the causes of unemployment, maintained that "the evil consists precisely in an excess of production and in the lack of a proportionate number of consumers who are themselves also producers," and that the evil was simply intensified by either the dole or subsidised productive employment. ". . . It hence becomes apparent that despite an excess of wealth civil society is

GOOD RESPONSE TO BASIC FUND

At this stage last year, the basic fund stood at \$25,000. This year we have received, or been pledged, approximately \$36,000. Our thanks and appreciation to all — still a minority of subscribers — who have contributed so far.

We urge all those who have not yet responded to make an urgent effort. The need and the demands on the League have never been greater. The coming year will undoubtedly be the most difficult and challenging we have ever faced.

Queensland and northern NSW contributions to Mr. Chas. Pinwill, State Director, The Conservative Bookshop, 461 Ann St., Brisbane, 4000. W.A. contributions to Heritage Bookshop, Box 7409, Cloisters Square, Perth, W.A. 6000. All other contributions to Box 1052 J, GPO, Melbourne, 3001.

not rich enough, i.e. its own resources are insufficient to check excessive poverty and the creation of a penurious rabble. . . ." (*Philosophy of Right*).

The hated machines wore out men — and women and children — faster than had primitive toil. The pre-machine worker had some control of his pace of work, while the machine worker's pace was controlled by the machine. The development of the mass assembly line provided the basis for the most materially abundant society ever known, but the nature of the work was deadly. It was impossible to persuade an assembly line worker — still less so a miner or power drill operator — that machinery had lightened man's lot. Even though muscle, in most trades, was replaced by machine, the character of the work was so completely tedious that the worker abhorred it.

Work became a stultifying affair, devoid of craftsmanship or creativity. It not only depersonalised the man, it tended to communicate its own imbecility to him. "What can be expected," Tocqueville asked in 1835, "of a man who has spent twenty years of his life in making heads for pins? . . . In proportion as the principle of the division of labour is more extensively applied, the workman becomes more weak, more narrow-minded, and more dependent...."

Hegel's analysis of the problem was reasonably accurate. The solution devised by Marx was disastrous, and did nothing to release man from his dependence on the machine for his income, but aimed instead to eliminate the incentive bestowed through private property by which the machine had, in the first place, been developed.

Had the Church offered another answer, compatible with its own Gospel, what subsequent misery might have been averted? Instead it preoccupied itself with treating casualties rather than mending causes. Marx — and the bankers — were given an open go.

NOT FACING THE QUESTION

The secular West, while rejecting Marxism, nevertheless did nothing to absolve the new problems posed by the advent of a third workforce — the machine. It merely attempted to adopt this new factor into the existing order, refusing to face the obvious corollary: If full employment was to be maintained in the machine age what was to be done with all the ensuing production? The wars and depressions of the 20th century are the grim result. Nations strive with nations — sometimes past the point of armed conflict — for export markets. Producers batter consumers with an advertising assault bordering on the insane. Consumers in turn, contrasting the incredible abundance around them with the perennial shortage of purchasing power, finally opt for the insidious new apple in a machine-age Eden — time-payment, the overdraft, usurious debt. Debt has, in fact, become a new form of

purchasing power with terrible social consequences — but without it, the system would have collapsed long ago.

It is only a short step to grasp that once the owners of the machines become one with those who create and distribute money through — and only through — employment, they have in their hands the instrument for the most vicious feudal slavery ever devised by man.

The wanton evasion by the Christian Church in facing up to this dilemma has all but delivered humanity into the arms of the Communists. Perverted and dehumanising though it may be, Communism offers an answer — equality, even at ant-heap level, as a means of prohibiting the alleged exploitation of excellence. The natural superiority of merit is ruthlessly replaced by the dictatorship of the proletariat. Almost as Communism was born, the innate commonsense of the skilled artisan and the farmer perceived its folly. The old corn-law rhyme penetrated effortlessly to the heart of the proposition:

"What is a Communist? *One* who hath yearnings,
For equal division of unequal earnings.
Idler, or bungler, or both, he is willing
To fork out his penny and pocket your shilling."

Penetrating though it may have been, the artisan and farmer were both destined to be betrayed into the hands of the socialist revolution, not by any logical reality in its programme, but simply by the failure of his own priests and shepherds to point the way to the threshold of an enlightened alternative.

So, step-by-step, the skilled free enterprise producer had his life force squeezed from him by the remorseless onslaught of advancing technology. He was never permitted to employ his craft in the new arena of the leisure age. The cost-benefits which technology bestowed upon him were hidden and squandered beneath a levered and ever-increasing edifice of taxes and debt, used partly — and with increasing conditions — to sustain the lengthening queue of redundant casualties.

For a while the Church continued to bandage his wounds, even though it refused to defend him against his enemy. The soup kitchens and poorhouses of the Industrial Revolution were staffed by dedicated Christian workers. The General Booths and Lord Shaftsburys of the late 1800s did what they could to alleviate human suffering in the new age of plenty.

One hundred years later, as the Christian gospel retreated in the Western world, and the financial-cum-socialist revolution advanced, the issue of human welfare itself was simply dumped into the waiting hands of the State. The biggest sector of Western budgets today is "Welfare", competing with "Debt Service" — in an age of greater productive abundance than ever experienced before.

THE "LOST" MESSAGE

Why this numbing failure of the Christian church to welcome the super-abundance which God had placed before mankind?

Perhaps the answer is best described by Our Lord Himself. His disciples came to him one day, asking, "Why do you speak to the people in parables?" (Matt. 13:10)

He referred them to the words of Isaiah:

"You will ever be hearing but never understanding;
You will ever be seeing but never perceiving;
For this people's heart has become calloused, and
they hardly hear with their ears, and they have
closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with
their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their
hearts and turn, and I would heal them."

It has taken a Minister in the Hawke Socialist government to tell us what has happened, and pose a question which he,

apparently, dares not answer. Mr. Barry Jones, Minister for Science and Technology, wrote in *The Australian*, June 7—8, 1986:

" . . . There is a very deeply ingrained view in Australia, especially strong in the Labor Party, that manufacturing is our main employer, and that "work" is equivalent to "process work". This stereotype is now completely obsolete.

In Australia between 1964 and 1982, 2,060,000 new jobs were created, an unusually high rate of job creation. How many of those jobs were in manufacturing? You might be surprised to find that the contribution of manufacturing was negative; not one new job net was created during that period. The figure for manufacturing was minus 7.3 percent, an actual fall of 150,000 jobs. The traditional blue-collar worker is becoming an endangered species. .

. . . The long-term decline in manufacturing employment is characteristic of all technologically sophisticated nations and has been given the neutral description of the post-industrial effect. It has occurred for precisely the same reasons as the decline in farming employment — that few people, using new technology, can produce far more. Even in West Germany, with the world's highest proportion of manufacturing workers, (32.7 percent in 1982) numbers are falling. Sweden's figure is 22 percent. Canada's figure, like ours, is 17 percent. We mightn't like the reality of the long-term decline but we would be unwise to ignore it and hope it will go away..."

TRANSFORMING PARTIES

". . . According to the 1981 Census, " (Barry Jones went on,) "41 percent of the labour force in Australia was in what the OECD defines as "information-based" employment, 241 percent more than manufacturing. The figure for information-based work will certainly rise in the June 1986 Census. It includes public servants, postal and telecommunications workers, banking and insurance workers, teachers, clerks, computer operators, scientists, librarians, lawyers, politicians, trades-union officials, entertainers, journalists, writers, clergy, — and even traffic police, who essentially process information.

At the 1982 A.L.P. national conference, of 138 delegates and proxies, only one was currently a blue-collar worker, and 133 were employed in "information". By the 1984 national conference, as I predicted, the last blue-collar worker had disappeared and of 148 delegates and proxies, 143 were employed in this new sector. It has been around for 30 years, party policy recognises it (19a in 1948 platform) but we don't yet act on it or talk about it. .

In these circumstances, do you pick up the irony that the A.L.P.'s 1984 election advertisements on television so faithfully reproduced the traditional employment images of the past — steel works, farms, construction, cars and railways, heavy engineering and none of the present: few women (only in the clothing industry), no white-collar workers, and nobody in research and teaching?

. . . If routine process work is substantially reduced, what implications will this have for some of our social institutions...?

TO WHAT END?

". . . The increasing volume of literature," (Mr. Jones continued) "in the technology debate rarely shakes pro-

tagonists from their entrenched positions. Changes, when they occur, are like religious conversions. Faith is more important than reason, it seems.

This is, I think, an issue of importance. When are we to begin talking about it in the party and the community? A taste for nostalgia and a preference for obsolescence will not support employment or dynamic social change, but there are more psychological roadblocks between us and generating informed community debate.

A final issue which we fail to examine is the likely future social impact arising from fundamentally contradictory trends: the sharp reduction of labour inputs in the productive process, most obvious in farming and manufacturing, but likely to take place in service employment as well, and the prolongation of life expectancy and especially of physical activity into the late 60s and early 70s?

We can be more certain of a long life span, but what of the working life? Should there be more or less? We can argue that it ought to be less, so that people can develop their personalities outside a work environment. *Others see work as the central factor in life, even more than the family, and far more than religion, think that if we live longer we should work more.*

Will there be more work or less as the use of sophisticated tools eliminates routine or repetitious work? If work does contract over all — *and I regard the question as absolutely open* — then what will fill the time-gap? To many people, perhaps even a majority, work is the most important factor in self-definition, even more than family life. Work in most OECD countries accounts for between one-sixth and one-seventh of a lifetime. If this proportion falls, what then? There is an urgent need to encourage people to develop a philosophy of "time-use value".

In the 19th century and the first two-thirds of the 20th century the aim of the labour movement generally was to reduce the amount of work — reduction of working lifetimes, working weeks, days and hours. Now, when we have the technological capacity to achieve just that, there has been a change in direction, and we now talk within the party and the trade unions of maintaining or even increasing total labour input. . . . It is clear that work is, for most people, not just a source of income. Work is not only a means to an end (security) but is increasingly becoming an end in itself — a certification of competence, of being wanted, of being a social group, helping people to avoid those nagging questions about time-use, self-setting of goals and boredom ("If we don't work, what would we do with ourselves?")

Is the question worth addressing? I would say yes. Does it have profound implications for education? Again, yes. Is it a major or minor issue? I would say major. Is it worth devoting major resources to its examination? I would again say yes. Is it being done? Except for the Commission for the Future, the answer is no. Temperamentally, perhaps even congenially, we find it difficult to face up to long-term issues. If this continues the consequences will be very serious for Australia. . . ." (End of article. Emphasis added).

MEPHISTOPHELEAN

The Commission for the Future, referred to by Mr. Jones is, however, a government instrumentality headed by Mr. Phillip Adams. Not only is Mr. Adams a member of the Fabian Society, but his company — Monahan, Dayman and Adams — depends largely on government contracts for its advertising business. We

can be forgiven, therefore, for doubting that Mr. Adams is likely to produce solutions which will deliver the citizen from the continuing escalation in state controls.

Yet the same Phillip Adams, who has a ready, if sometimes malign, wit and a way with words, caught the essence of our money-age in an article in *The Weekend Australian* (April 19-20, 1986). Was there a hint of Mephistophelean contempt in his column, which was headed - "MONEY - NO LONGER FILTHY BUT FASHIONABLE?"

"1. To the good news that "Jesus Saves" the graffitist adds "at the ANZ Bank". 2. The royalties from Abba's hit "Money, Money, Money" earns the Swedes more U.S. dollars than the sales of Saab and Volvo. 3. Robert Gottlieb, editor of *Business Review Weekly*, seems the only survivor of *The National*, the Titanic of ABC telecasts.

4. Young Australians now use electronic banking terminals with the same enthusiasm their parents showed for pokies. 5. People play the stock market instead of the piano. 6. Companies consume each other like so many corporate cannibals.

Add up the numbers and the answer is lucre. No longer filthy but fascinating, fashionable and fun. Once damned as the root of all evil, money is now the driving force of Western Society. Not just our stalled and turbo-charged economies, but the very stuff of our dreams and dramas. Money has replaced sex as the great aphrodisiac. Money has replaced marijuana as the most popular narcotic. Money has replaced the things you buy in shops as money, in itself and of itself, is now the thing that people want to acquire, to possess, to flaunt and to talk about.

Money, not Coke, is the real thing. Money is It. Soon people won't bother with conspicuous consumption or investment in art. They'll simply frame their bank statements or show visitors their share scrip.

This is not a denunciation of the dreaded dollar or a Savonarola sermon. It is an observation, not a judgment. Yet the phenomenon I'm describing is just a little frightening and makes you wonder whether Jeremiahs like financial writer Kenneth Davidson are right, that we're in the middle of a sort of fiscal feeding frenzy before the crash diet of global depression. . . .

Yet money, actual money (the readies, the folding stuff) has all but disappeared. Everything is now done on little bits of plastic which people flex between their fingers like miniature wobble boards. Should God want to update the Ten Commandments, they won't be handed down to Moses on clay tablets but on Gold Amex Cards. . . . While I haven't been to church for the past few Sundays, I suspect the little begging bowls with their green-baize lining, have now been replaced by those little machines that make an imprint. Or have they put electronic banking terminals into the confessionals?

"Forgive me father for I have sinned."

"Bankcard or Visa.. ?"

(end of article. Emphasis added).

This may be the future as seen by the Commission for the Future; but it has nothing to do with God's Kingdom on earth.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME

The key question to be faced is the distribution of income. If physical provision is increasingly the result of the inheritance principle, does this also apply to the distribution of income?

Prior to the industrial revolution, when all production was hand production, practically the only cost was that of labour.

Thus, money paid out to workers was a reasonable approximation of the price on the article produced. But as soon as the machine appeared the problem of income distribution appeared with it. As we have seen, at the time of the Luddites two things happened as the first machines were installed. The production of the mills increased and the wage bill of the factory dropped. An endemic income deficiency was set in motion, which could only become more acute with every technological advance. The ultimate dilemma can be seen in the penultimate mechanical evolution — the workerless factory. Already these are in existence. A number of factories exist in the West producing set-run items such as garments or engine-pistons, which are entirely automatic. There is no human worker on the factory floor!

If the only way in which income is distributed to consumers is through an employment system, who can buy the production of a factory system, which employs nobody? Any automation, which displaces workers, relegates them into poverty, even though national production is immeasurably increased. Industrial disruption is the logical result. Workers cling to factories and machines even when they are not needed. The overwhelming issue at every Trade Union conference is redundancy. The only solution so far is almost as demoralising as unemployment. Men sit idle alongside machines and draw their wages at the end of the week. Featherbedding is no longer incidental but endemic. Firemen can still be found on diesel and electric trains. Dockworkers still throng onto wharfs, even though containerisation has rendered the majority into "employed idleness". Governments are obsessed with creating jobs, even while automation creates unemployment. The greatest areas of 'masked' unemployment — the bureaucracies — are now de-humanising both those involved and those administered on a gigantic scale.

THE MACHINE'S WAGE

All this could have been avoided by recognition of the fact that the machine itself, as soon as it produced anything, now 'earned' a wage, which required distribution. Who to?

Obviously, to its owner and its creator. But it also owed a portion to those who had been displaced. And finally, a portion to all members of society whether employed or not. Automation has been able to produce far more than the human being whose place it has taken. Society should, therefore, be the beneficiary of an unearned increment whose source is really an inheritance, both of the physical capital provided by God, and of the accumulated knowledge from the past by which the automation of the present has developed. This is — or should be — a birthright rather than a "work-right". The industrial revolution should have been the starting point for a progressive and gradual change from the wage to the increment or dividend system. To envisage such a change it was neither necessary nor desirable to eliminate the private ownership by whose incentive such startling innovations had occurred. That which needed to be shared was not the *means* of production — the false, Marxist answer — so much as the *production itself*. Marx's argument depends solely on preserving the illusion that ownership of the means of production is synonymous with the distribution of income. The two should increasingly be separate functions.

The one step needed to realise the proper and right potential of the age of automation depends quite obviously on devising a new way to create and distribute money. As technology produces a growing stream of goods with less and less human effort, so the money system should have credited the community with sufficient income to pay for required production, cancelling it out of existence as those goods were consumed. In such a system of accounting debt would have no place.

THE 'WORK ETHIC' NO LONGER ENOUGH

The Christian church has two monumental questions to answer. To return to Barry Jones' question, it is no longer enough to accept the shift, as the result of technology, of an ever-increasing proportion of the work-force from the production of goods to "information" industries, which include, in Jones' words "public servants, postal and telecommunications workers, banking and insurance workers, teachers, clerks, computer operators, scientists, librarians, lawyers, politicians, trades union officials, entertainers, journalists, writers, clergy..."

Each of those may be, but is not necessarily an honourable profession. *It must be faced that the information industry is being increasingly geared to a State-controlled system of values and a socialised way of living.*

The banker can no longer salve his conscience in a Christian service on Sundays if he is practising — even as an employee — a highly discriminatory and vicious form of usury during the rest of the week. The Christian teacher can hardly be condoned for teaching secular humanism in a school curriculum, under the plea that he or she is "fully employed".

From the Christian perspective, the "work ethic" is no longer enough on its own; human effort must be both godly and creative. Who then, is to decide whether this is so? Most certainly not the State, and probably not the employer. It is definitely a matter for each individual to determine for himself, in conjunction with God's revelation and direction. It is this choice which the system is now geared up to crush.

It can no longer be said that any form of work is better than unemployment. The unemployed worker, fishing on the beach, may not be fulfilling God's intention or purpose for him; but he is doing infinitely less damage than a hard-working public servant designing an "Identity Card", or another State control.

What leads good Christians to commit themselves, uncomplainingly, to a lifetime of hard work in an anti-Christian activity? Obviously, an imperative need for an income; for today, an adequate income is "the licence to live".

This means a challenge to the masters of the existing money arrangements.

Their power depends on a maintenance of the debt system, where money is only lent into existence with interest; and on the maintenance of full employment, whether it is really needed or not.

Who will win this battle remains to be seen. The money-power transcends all other temporal powers. It controls Communism and Capitalism alike. The moneylender rules from Moscow to New York; from country to country; from farm to city; from employer to employee. He is the unseen ruler in the house, the state and the nation. There has been no real challenge to his rule since he was thrown out of the Temple 2,000 years ago. Today the love of his art is the new form of worship.

As we move towards some final conflagration, the Church must decide once and for all whether to remain silent, or whether to join battle. For over 200 years its eyes have been averted from the vision of what could be.

"What does the worker gain from his toil? I have seen the burden God has laid on men. He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end. I know that there is nothing better for men than to be happy and do good while they live. That everyone may eat and drink; and find satisfaction in all his toil — this is the gift of God."

(Eccl. 3; 9-13.)

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