

Christianity is essentially a personal system. And we cannot believe that an individualistic capitalism is any more favourable to personality than is communism, whose anti-personalism, we might almost say, is borrowed from it.

The constructive work our own time demands from us is the building up of a social system which shall correspond to the eternal Christian truth of personality. Such a system no more exists in capitalism than in Communism or Fascism. It might be described as a *personal socialism*. It will allow to man creative liberty, but will effect its purpose nobly, without the vast yet narrow tyranny of Lenin.

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MACHINERY runs according to the laws of mechanics and not according to the moral law. This is not to say that the laws of mechanics are immoral, but simply that they are non-moral. Now the main principle of mechanical invention is the elimination of waste energy. Of two machines doing the same work, that is the better which costs less to run. This is the same as saying that the better machine is better designed for its purpose; for the purpose of machinery is to reduce the costs of production. The chief cost of production is human labour. Even the cost of materials is chiefly made up of the cost of human labour. Stone would be as cheap as dirt if it could be dug as easily. Petrol would be as cheap as water if it came down as rain. It is always labour which costs money. I leave out of consideration here the question of bank interest and interest on money borrowed. If interest is not in some way payment for effort it is usury, and as such an unjust charge, something for nothing, a thing to be abolished as a thing

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ruinous to society. It is labour which costs money and it is to save the cost of labour that machinery has been invented and its use spread throughout the world. Tools are not machines in the common sense of the word. A thing is a tool when it helps. A hammer helps a man to get a nail into a wall. A chisel helps a man to cut stone or wood.

Tools are simply extensions of men's hands. The human hand is a handle—a handle to hold tools. Machines do not help the workman; they displace him. That is their sole object. That is why the introduction of machinery dates from the dispossession of the workman. It was not until the majority of workmen ceased to be small independent master craftsmen, owning their own workshops, their own tools, and their work when done that it was possible to gather workmen into factories. It was not until the factory system had developed that the cost of labour figured as an item in the account books of men of business. When labour, beaten down to the starvation level, formed itself into unions for the regulation and increase of wages and established the notion of a minimum wage below which no workman could be employed, then a sharp spur was given to the masters and a great premium put upon the invention of machinery. They say machinery does away with the drudgery of human labour, and it is certain that the labour by which a daily newspaper was produced in the days of the hand-worked printing press was much more grinding than that of the skilled mechanics who mind the machines now used, but it was not with any idea of kindness to animals or the prevention of cruelty to children that machinery was introduced and developed. The sole object of machinery is to lower the costs of production. The costs of production are the costs of human labour. Machinery makes human labour less necessary. If it does not do that it is no good.

But machinery, unlike tools, is very costly to buy; it takes a lot of human labour to make it. Therefore, it can only be used by wealthy employers or companies of employers, and companies of employers can collect more capital for the purchase of machinery than even the wealthiest

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individual. Thus the conduct of manufacture tends to become more and more impersonal the more it becomes an affair of companies. And the more impersonal it becomes the more it becomes an affair conducted solely for the profits. One man or a few men may have a genuine interest in the thing manufactured, but a hundred or thousand shareholders are more interested in the profit accruing to them from the investment of their money than in the nature or quality of the thing produced. Who could wish it otherwise? It would be contrary to the nature of things if lack of personal control did not spell lack of interest in the work.

Machinery was not introduced to help the worker; nor was it introduced to improve the work done. Machinery does not exist to make things better; it does not, in fact, exist to make things at all. When we say machinery exists to make things more profitably we are speaking as holy innocents. What we are really meaning is that machinery exists to make the thing called profits. Things in the ordinary sense of the word, houses and tables and pins and ships and wireless sets, are made first of all in the mind. They are creatures of the imagination. When the imagination is that of a responsible workman (the person sometimes called an 'artist') the thing imagined is imagined as made of this material or that. But when the imagination is that of the man of business the thing imagined is only very vaguely associated with any particular material. Say the word chair to a worker in wood and he will see a wooden chair. Say wall to the harness maker and he will see fortifications of leather. Say chair to a chair merchant, and he will see perhaps five per cent. in High Wycombe as against six per cent. in Czecho Slovakia. Things to a man of business are made for sale—that is what they are for. Of course in his office and when he goes home at night he uses chairs to sit on, but as a producer of chairs he is really a producer of profits from the sale of chairs. Making profits not making chairs is his job. And the job of making profits is greatly assisted by the use of machinery because machinery reduces the cost of labour.

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This function of profit making is of course camouflaged in various ways. Thus during the great war of 1914-18 it was found possible to make munitions much faster by machinery than it had been possible in the time of Cromwell to make them by hand. War profiteers, therefore, wore the garb of patriotism. Again type-composition by means of the Monotype or Linotype machines makes it possible for books to be much more quickly and accurately produced than by hand-setting. So the spread of learning is assisted, and the manufacturers of these machines may regard themselves as benefactors. Again, without machine-fabrication it would not be possible for Messrs. Woolworth to sell fountain-pens for sixpence. Woolworth fountain-pens are not the best, but it is possible for every school-girl to have one, and thus a literate nation is encouraged. Again with the help of the machine called a locomotive it is possible to go from London to Birmingham more comfortably in two hours than in the eighteenth century it could be done in two days. Thus much valuable time is saved for the conduct of more profit-making, whereas formerly it was wasted in uncomfortable coaches and expensive hotels. Again, who would not regard as saviours of their people those who first made steamships to cross the English Channel?

Nevertheless, profit is the *raison d'être* of the machine, and if machinery were not profitable no amount of enthusiasm on the part of inventors or philanthropists would be sufficient to make any man of business invest his money in it.

Now we will assume for the purposes of this article that no one wants to abolish machinery. Let us even assume that it could not be done. Let us assume that the benefits of mechanical transport and mass production far outweigh any supposed disadvantages and that we have so completely destroyed the idea of craftsmanship and intellectual responsibility in the majority of workmen that a return to hand labour would be as impossible for the producer as it would be cruel to the consumer. There are now two questions to be considered. First there is the question: What is the proper development of machine-made things?

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Second: What is the proper politics for a machine-made world?

Machinery runs according to the laws of mechanics. Strange as it may seem, we are only now, after more than a hundred years of it, beginning to appreciate this fact. We are only now beginning to see that the styles of art (art embraces all making, and is not only the making of pictures and sculptures) which were the natural product of a hand labouring world are entirely unsuitable and, indeed impossible and therefore ridiculous, when imitated by men using machines. It is now clear to the leaders in architecture and factory production, and will soon be clear to the man in the street and the consumer of machine-made things, that in as much as one person cannot be held responsible for making anything, the thing called 'human personality' can no longer be expressed in things made. The thing called beauty is no longer a quality of workmanship as well as of design; it is now a quality of design alone. If a thing be well designed we may say some human being has so designed it and is responsible. If a thing be well made we must say it is because the machine used in its making was properly designed and the machine minders attentive and obedient, but we cannot hold any one of them responsible as a workman. If our 1932 Austin is a bad model we can find no workman who is responsible for its badness. There is none to be found. The consequences of these facts are now obvious, but they were not obvious until yesterday. All through the nineteenth century manufacturers and architects strove to do by machinery what their fathers and grandfathers had done by hand. They produced machine-made Gothic architecture and machine-made things of all sorts in imitation of hand-woodwork, hand metalwork and hand pottery. They even produced machine-made ornament and were proud to have invented machinery for stamping out imitation wood carving, and were pleased with the product. Men are mostly fools, and of course all this sort of thing is only foolishness even if it may all be traced back to the avarice, camouflaged as benevolence, of men of business. But it is a fool-

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ishness which is now seen as such. It is out of date. Plain things are now seen to be the only things rightly made by machinery and beauty in machine-made things is now seen to be a quality of functional design alone. The beauty of battleships and type-writing machines and machine-made chairs is not the product of the personal fancy, however well disciplined, of their makers; it is, like the beauty of bones and flowers, the product of a strict attention to the real necessities of the thing to be made and the purpose for which it is intended.

But there is no point in machinery, involving as it does large outlay of capital, unless large quantities of things can be turned out. There is no point in the installation of an elaborate and expensive machine to print one book or make one chair. Machines run according to the laws of mechanics and any kind of organization is a kind of machine. One mark of a healthy and vigorous organism is its vigorous excretion of what is inimical to it. Machine organization is no exception. What is foreign to the nature of mechanism and to the nature of machine industry will inevitably be cast out. Mechanization in so far as it is healthy and vigorous will inevitably discard the imitation humanity of Victorian factory goods. More and more clearly it is to be seen that the responsibility for the quality of industrial products is that of the designer, and more and more clearly is it to be seen that design for machine industry can only achieve beauty (that is to say the quality in things such that being seen they please) when it is strictly confined to functional necessity. And as things are made in larger and larger quantities this functionalism becomes more and more imperative. Standardization is a necessity of machine industry if the objects of mechanization are to be achieved. The perfection of the standard is, therefore, the main enthusiasm of industrial designers.

But though the things turned out tend to become in their own line better and better—so that the best factory-made clocks of to-day are much better and much better looking than the factory-made clocks of fifty years ago—and though the mind of the designer is fully occupied and his

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life a fully responsible one, the minds of the factory hands tend to become a kind of pulp and their lives to become a counterpart of the lives of mere bees or ants. Hence for the factory hand no interest is so urgent as that of wages. High pay and short hours which are the proper accompaniment of high responsibility have now become the necessity of workers from whom all responsibility has been taken away. Work means wages, and it means nothing else whatever. Let the wage be as high as possible and the hours as short.

This brings us to the second question. What is the proper politics for a machine-made world? Remember we are assuming that machinery is not to be abolished, that its abolition is both undesirable and impossible. Machinery runs according to the laws of mechanics. Human beings run according to the moral law. These two things conflict with one another at every point, and in the end there is no doubt that humanity will win, but now, at this present time, we have chosen to run a machine world. The machine world is in the saddle, we accept it and rejoice in it. The moral law is in abeyance as far as work time is concerned. The workman, the 'hand,' is not a moral being. He is a tool. Incidentally his humanity, the dregs of humanity which remain to him in the factory, is a nuisance. We don't want human beings in the factory. Machinery is better. The whole enthusiasm of mechanical invention is towards the saving of human labour. Not the machine but the man is to be abolished. But it is the man in the factory not the man in the street who is the enemy. The man in the street is a friend; he is there to buy the goods. The whole problem is how to do away with human labour in production, and yet increase the number of consumers and their purchasing power. That is the real problem, its root and branch.

But such is the complexity of our past and the complexity of the half-baked muddle of the present that it is nearly impossible to throw off our conventional and traditional visions of ourselves. Romance fills our newspapers and our Houses of Parliament. Our books are nearly all

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romances and our conversation is an undifferentiated mass of fact and falsehood, rationality and nonsense. The words Liberal, Conservative and Labour are still taken to mean something real. Artist and craftsman, good workman, honest labour, kind employer, all the old fashioned designations still carry with them the collars and ties of their distant respectabilities. We still apply the epithets of morality to things whose real nature is now mechanical. 'Business is business,' the Victorian shop-keeper kept on saying, and was regarded as an immoral person by bishops and preachers. But he was right. You can't have industrialism and still pretend you have got the arts and crafts. You can't have international finance and still pretend that the King's head on a coin signifies that the King is the controller of the nation's money. If there is morality it is now for spare time—a hobby to be encouraged but nothing to do with work, nothing to do with business, nothing to do with industry.

Now what should be our politics? Suppose we answer Communism. What makes Communism seem the proper answer? What makes Communism seem to be the only just politics for the industrialism which we have so wholeheartedly embraced? We must look at the problem as objectively as possible. It is no use bringing to the discussion notions derived from pre-industrial conditions. We must not say I am a Liberal therefore such and such, or I am a Tory therefore so and so. We must look straight at the thing around us, the mechanization of industry, the separation of the notion of art from the notion of utility, the divorce of work from responsibility and of morals from trading, the division of men into owners of the means of production and proletarians, that is men who own nothing but their power to labour. That is our world. It is a world of power. What should be its politics?

It is obvious that the whole nation contributes to what the nation enjoys. We cannot say the masters alone made the benefits of industrialism, nor that the men alone made them. We cannot say the men are responsible and not the Women. We cannot say the adults are necessary but not

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the children. And if the whole nation contributes to the making of the thing the whole nation has rights of enjoyment. Thus it is with machinery and the benefits of machinery. Machinery was not made by the masters, nor even invented by them. Machines and the products of machines belong to every one, for all have contributed to their making. This is the difference between the Industrial State and one in which manufacture is conducted by the old methods of small-scale craftsmanship. In the industrial State it ceases to be possible for a man to say: I, John Smith, have made this thing or that. It is necessary to say we, the whole nation, have made it. The old notion of ownership must go the same way as the old notion of responsibility. We have destroyed the one, we cannot preserve the other. Communism inevitably follows Capitalism, not because Capitalism is a bad thing leading inevitably to a worse, but because Capitalism is a certain kind of thing leading inevitably to its fulfilment. Capitalism necessarily means the big and bigger organization of business and the great and greater development of machinery. These things mean the diminution of the personal intellectual responsibility of the workman and eventually its complete suppression by the use of more and more complex and efficient machines. The big business inevitably develops into the public service. The idea of public service for private profit inevitably becomes obsolete. The old-fashioned railway guard who is proud to reserve a seat for one of the directors is simply a charming survival of the days when all service was personal service. And more than anything else that state of affairs is hateful in which it rests with private individuals to determine whether millions shall work or starve. In former times if a master dismissed his man there was no question but that the man could immediately find another master or even set up for himself. Those times have gone. We have elected that they shall not return. The artist, the responsible workman, the man who makes things because he chooses so to do, and whose things when made are his things to keep or sell, is now an eccentric person, valued for his eccentricity, valued for the

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fact that he is a peculiar person whose peculiar personality **i**s stamped upon his work. He is no longer the ordinary workman. The ordinary workman is now the impersonal tool in the service of the whole community. Communism, the service of all by all for the good of all, is the only politics compatible with industrialism.

Is Communism compatible with Catholicism? The **q**uestion is an improper one. The question is: **I**s Catholicism compatible with the industrial development of Society? The answer is certainly : No. For at the root **o**f Catholicism **i**s the doctrine **o**f human responsibility, and that State **i**n which human responsibility is denied or diminished is a State in which Catholicism cannot flourish. Man **i**s man all the time, and not only in his spare time. In an industrial State, men, 'working men,' the majority are only fully responsible when they are not working. In such a State Catholicism returns to the Catacombs. Thence she will emerge when the orgasm of industrial triumph has spent itself.

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