

THIS UNEMPLOYMENT: DISASTER OR OPPORTUNITY?

*An Argument in Economic Philosophy
submitted to the Christian Social
Council by its Research Committee*

BY

V. A. DEMANT, B.LITT., B.Sc.

WITH A FOREWORD BY

THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER

STUDENT CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT PRESS
58 BLOOMSBURY STREET, LONDON, W.C.1

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First published September 1931

Printed in Great Britain

FOREWORD

THE Research Committee of the Christian Social Council does not provide ready-made convictions. It does attempt to provide material for the thought which, after consideration and discussion, leads to conviction. Accordingly, a book like this does not represent the considered opinion of the Council. Some, perhaps many, of its members may hold very different views. The same is true of the Research Committee itself. But by its very boldness and freshness such a book compels Christian men to face the stark facts of this unprecedented situation.

Nothing is more difficult than to disentangle the moral issues in the economic impasse in which the nations find themselves to-day. Certain aspects of the matter, vital from the Christian standpoint, are made plain in the chapters which follow. They may be summed up in one inclusive question: Can the moral and spiritual capacities of mankind control and direct the powers of scientific development and mechanical invention which dominate the present and which will presumably dominate the future?

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There seem to be two worlds involved: the world of finance and the world of industry. Finance pays the piper and calls the tune. But industry cannot play it. These two groups are not in accord. What is the meaning of this discord? And where is the cure?

We are being driven economically, to say nothing of politically, by harsh necessity to recognise the inter-dependence of nations. It seems that the choice will be between states united in free co-operation, not in strained economic rivalry, or a world-wide conflagration. Every nation does lip service to this ideal, but none dare act upon it.

Has the Christian Church the spiritual insight and energy to deal with these things? Both at home and in the world at large men need to shake themselves free from the shackles of out-worn economic conventions; to realise that a new age has dawned, to summon new powers of vision; above all, to realise that the first consideration is not the system but the human beings and the human issues involved in the system. What has the community of Christ to say to this? So far, in large measure, it has left the economic world to take care of itself, and men have drawn the natural conclusion (often proclaimed even by members of the Church) that in this domain religion is a trespasser. Yet it is certain that

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this very fact accounts in no small measure for the difficulties in which we are immersed.

The examination is being conducted on all sides by men of skill and experience. Valuable reports like Lord Macmillan's are forthcoming, and ought to be studied along with this book.

The fact remains, however, that specifically Christian thinking on these subjects on any adequate scale remains to be done, and the publication of this book, to which the author has obviously brought much thought and knowledge, should give a strong impetus to that enterprise.

THEODORE WINTON:

*Joint Chairman of the
Christian Social Council*

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THIS book has been written by me in consultation with the members of the Research Committee of the Christian Social Council. For all statements, interpretations and judgments therein I am alone responsible. The material is presented to the Council as an argument to which the Committee wishes to secure the attention of Christian people, and commits neither the Council nor its Research Committee to its conclusions. The Committee has thought it best to leave the book in this form as the work of a single writer with his own views, rather than deprive it of incisiveness by making it a mere description of various diagnoses. It is sponsored in the hope that as it stands its tendenciousness will provide a stimulus to Christian thought on the subject.

V. A. DEMANT

LONDON, *June* 1931

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