

Dark Age, did so by first hounding the Platonic tradition of scientific method, whether in science proper as was the case of "British empiricism" which gave us Jeremy Bentham and the "hedonistic calculus," liberalism and materialism, all based on the Newtonian assumption of self-evident "discrete objects" which, precisely as in Aristotle, "do not require the hypothesis of causality."

Now, this Whore of Babylon has assigned the task of final assault against civilization to the shock troops of the environmentalist movement, a mass disease very much resembling the host of Hell described by John Milton; anarchists, irrationalists, enemies of science, sodomists, pornographers, drug addicts, all united in their shrill opposition to the "tyranny of reason." What unites this arbitrary mass of irrational passion is the hostility to the principle of causality, a hostility given currency among so-called intellectual circles by Aristotle who replaces causality by the "middle term" and Newton who obscenely proclaims that he does not need to hypothesize the existence of causality!

Large portions of the world's present population, especially in the English-speaking world, have lost the ability to respond to the concept of causality. This was made possible because of the subversion of the concept which has preceded within the scientific milieu. Since the disappearance of the heirs of the Oratorian Order's Ecole Polytechnique and of the classical German mathematical physicists, no fundamental advances in human knowledge took place. Science became degraded into a handmaid of technology; technology became degraded into the handmaid of military advantage, and commercial profit by technetronic-based mass brainwashing and social engineering. Labor became merely an adjunct of this.

A thus self-degraded science, steeped in stagnation as in the Dark Age of the 14th century when Aristotelianism reigned in the Great Schools of Christendom, has lost the capacity to communicate efficient concepts of causality to the population at large. This causes degradations of outlook which the "Whore of Babylon," oligarchical Old Money moulds into environmentalist movements, rock-and-roll concerts, jacqueries, flagellant processions, sodomy and other forms of centralized, centrally-deployed outbreaks of anarchy. A moral outlook cannot subsist efficiently in a population if it is not nourished by an efficient principle of self-reflexive causality which is practiced by the scientists of society and their institutions.

It is there that the Aristotelian outlook must be assaulted and thus be disabled from erecting the mental barriers which would otherwise prevent a morally competent concept of human work, such as that which Pope John Paul II generously offers to humanity in *Laborem Exercens*.

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## Documentation

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# From the text of *Laborem Exercens*

*Below are further excerpts from the papal encyclical Laborem Exercens.*

Man is made to be in the visible universe an image and likeness of God himself, and he is placed in it in order to subdue the earth. From the beginning therefore he is called to work. Work is one of the characteristics that distinguish man from the rest of creatures, whose activity for sustaining their lives cannot be called work. Only man is capable of work, and only man works, at the same time by work occupying his existence on earth. Thus work bears a particular mark of man and humanity, the mark of a person operating within a community of persons. And this mark decides its interior characteristics; in a sense it constitutes its very nature. . . .

While in the present document we return to this question [of work] once more—without however any intention of touching on all the topics that concern it—this is not merely in order to gather together and repeat what is already contained in the church's teaching. It is rather in order to highlight—perhaps more than has been done before—the fact that human work is a key, probably the essential key, to the whole social question, if we try to see that question really from the point of view of man's good. And if the solution—or rather the gradual solution—of the social question, which keeps coming up and becomes ever more complex, must be sought in the direction of "making life more human," then the key, namely human work, acquires fundamental and decisive importance. . . .

In the modern period, from the beginning of the industrial age, the Christian truth about work had to oppose the various trends of materialistic and economic thought.

For certain supporters of such ideas, work was understood and treated as a sort of "merchandise" that the worker—especially the industrial worker—sells to the employer, who at the same time is the possessor of the capital, that is to say, of all the working tools and means that make production possible. This way of looking at work was widespread especially in the first half of the 19th century. Since then explicit expressions of this sort have almost disappeared and have given way to more

human ways of thinking about work and evaluating it. The interaction between the worker and the tools and means of production has given rise to the development of various forms of capitalism—parallel with various forms of collectivism—into which other socio-economic elements have entered as a consequence of new concrete circumstances, of the activity of workers' associations and public authorities, and of the emergence of large transnational enterprises. Nevertheless, the danger of treating work as a special kind of "merchandise" or as an impersonal "force" needed for production (the expression "workforce" is in fact in common use) always exists, especially when the whole way of looking at the question of economics is marked by the premises of materialistic economism. . . .

In all cases of this sort [a "one-sidedly materialistic civilization"—ed.], in every social situation of this type, there is a confusion or even a reversal of the order laid down from the beginning by the words of the Book of Genesis: Man is treated as an instrument of production, whereas he—he alone, independent of the work he does—ought to be treated as the effective subject of work

and its true maker and creator. Precisely this reversal of order, whatever the program or name under which it occurs, should rightly be called "capitalism"—in the sense more fully explained below. Everybody knows that capitalism has a definite historical meaning as a system, an economic and social system, opposed to "socialism" or "communism." But in light of the analysis of the fundamental reality of the whole economic process—first and foremost of the production structure that work is—it should be recognized that the error of early capitalism can be repeated wherever man is in a way treated on the same level as the whole complex of the material means of production, as an instrument and not in accordance with the true dignity of his work—that is to say, where he is not treated as subject and maker, and for this very reason as the true purpose of the whole process of production. . . .

The structure of the present-day situation is deeply marked by many conflicts caused by man, and the technological means produced by human work play a primary role in it. We should also consider here the prospect of worldwide catastrophe in the case of a nuclear war,

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## Commentary

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### **'The Pope ought to study sociology'**

Hans Küng, theologian disciplined by the Vatican who dissents on such questions as abortion, contraception, infallibility, celibacy, and ordination of women, made the following public comment on the encyclical: "I still have not read it at all; I consider it unimportant. It was written for Poles". . . . When pressed, he recommends an article by his fellow Catholic schismatic Franz Alt in the West German weekly *Der Spiegel*. Alt angrily asks why the Pope does not indict industrial society for its pollution of the environment, alienation of human beings, and unemployment. According to Alt, the principle of mankind's exercising dominion over the earth is transformed through industrialization into "making earth into a garbage heap."

The economic adviser to Italian Socialist Party chief Bettino Craxi, Francesco Forte, one of the most energetic spokesmen in Italy for the Global 2000 depopulation policy, states that the encyclical lacks relevance to the modern world because it is based on

"the old conceptions of capitalism and socialism." Professor Federico Mancini, Craxi's adviser on judicial matters and a longtime Fulbright Commission spokesman on Italian politics, is beside himself because the encyclical "denies the social conflict" and the role of confrontation in fostering social and governmental progress. Had the Pope acquainted himself with the great bourgeois sociologists, according to Mancini, he would be better attuned to the reality of our era.

The Italian news magazine *Espresso*, owned by Count Ciriaco De Mita and controlled by the Socialist Party, deplores the encyclical for failing to "attain the level of understanding of Rolf Dahrendorf, the famous sociologist and director of the London School of Economics. . . ."

Most curious was the reaction of the British press, which has been talking for a long time about an "ecumenical understanding" between the Catholic and Anglican Churches. Ten days after the publication of *Laborem Exercens*, not a single commentary had yet appeared in the British press. An indirect response was published in the London *Financial Times* on Sept. 17 under the headline "The Actual Cause of High Interest Rates," expostulating that a favoring of capital at labor's expense is the only possibility for improving the economic situation—extending all due respect to the Marxist class-struggle theory.

which would have almost unimaginable possibilities of destruction. In view of this situation we must first of all recall a principle that has always been taught by the church: the principle of the priority of labor over capital. This principle directly concerns the process of production: In this process labor is always a primary efficient cause, while capital, the whole collection of means of production, remains a mere instrument or instrumental cause. This principle is an evident truth that emerges from the whole of man's historical experience. . . .

Further consideration of this question should confirm our conviction of the priority of human labor over what in the course of time we have grown accustomed to calling capital. Since the concept of capital includes not only the natural resources placed at man's disposal, but also the whole collection of means by which man appropriates natural resources and transforms them in accordance with his needs (and thus in a sense humanizes them), it must immediately be noted that all these means are the result of the historical heritage of human labor. All means of production, from the most primitive to the ultramodern ones—it is man that has gradually developed them: man's experience and intellect. In this way there have appeared not only the simplest instruments for cultivating the earth, but also through adequate progress in science and technology the more modern and complex ones: machines, factories, laboratories and computers. Thus everything that is at the service of work, everything that in the present state of technology constitutes its ever more highly perfected "instrument," is the result of work. . . .

In the light of the above truth we see clearly, first of all, that capital cannot be separated from labor; in no way can labor be opposed to capital or capital to labor, and still less can the actual people behind these concepts be opposed to each other, as will be explained later. A labor system can be right, in the sense of being in conformity with the very essence of the issue and in the sense of being intrinsically true and also morally legitimate, if in its very basis it overcomes the opposition between labor and capital through an effort at being shaped in accordance with the principle put forward above: the principle of the substantial and real priority of labor, of the subjectivity of human labor and its effective participation in the whole production process, independent of the nature of the services provided by the worker.

Opposition between labor and capital does not spring from the structure of the production process or from the structure of the economic process. . . .

The break occurred in such a way that labor was separated from capital and set in opposition to it, and capital was set in opposition to labor, as though they were two impersonal forces, two production factors juxtaposed in the same "economistic" perspective. This way

of stating the issue contained a fundamental error, what we can call the error of economism, that of considering human labor solely according to its economic purpose. This fundamental error of thought can and must be called an error of materialism, in that economism directly or indirectly includes a conviction of the primacy and superiority of the material, and directly or indirectly places the spiritual and the personal (man's activity, moral values and such matters) in a position of subordination to material reality. . . .

However, within the framework of the present consideration, it seems that economism had a decisive importance for the fundamental issue of human work, in particular for the separation of labor and capital and for setting them up in opposition as two production factors viewed in the above-mentioned economistic perspective; and it seems that economism influenced this non-humanistic way of stating the issue before the materialist philosophical system did. Nevertheless it is obvious that materialism, including its dialectical form, is incapable of providing sufficient and definitive bases for thinking about human work, in order that the primacy of man over the capital instrument, the primacy of the person over things, may find in it adequate and irrefutable confirmation and support. . . .

Furthermore, in the church's teaching, ownership has never been understood in a way that could constitute grounds for social conflict in labor. As mentioned above, property is acquired first of all through work in order that it may serve work. This concerns in a special way ownership of the means of production. Isolating these means as a separate property in order to set it up in the form of "capital" in opposition to "labor"—and even to practice exploitation of labor—is contrary to the very nature of these means and their possession. They cannot be possessed against labor, they cannot even be possessed for possession's sake, because the only legitimate title to their possession—whether in the form of private ownership or in the form of public or collective ownership—is that they should serve labor and thus by serving labor that they should make possible the achievement of the first principle of this order, namely the universal destination of goods and the right to common use of them. . . .

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*These excerpts were taken from the complete text of the English translation released by the Vatican, as published in the Sept. 24, 1981 issue of Origins, a publication of the U.S. National Council of Catholic Bishops. The lack of traditional capitalization is in the original, as is the lack of italic emphasis. The Vatican Polyglot Press edition, published by St. Paul Editions, contains both.*