

But the Gods, taking pity on mankind, born to work, laid down the succession of recurring Feasts to restore them from their fatigue, and gave them the Muses, and Apollo their leader, and Dionysus, as companions in their Feasts, so that nourishing themselves in festive companionship with the Gods, they should again stand upright and erect.

PLATO

Have leisure and know that I am God.

Psalm lxv, 11.



I

and iv

LET me begin with an objection, an objection of the kind which the scholastics called a *Videtur quod non*. Now of all times, in the post-war years is not the time to talk about leisure. We are, after all, busy building our house. Our hands are full and there is work for all. And surely, until our task is done and our house is rebuilt, the only thing that matters is to strain every nerve.

That is not an objection to be put lightly aside. And yet, whenever our task carries us beyond the maintenance of a bare existence and the satisfaction of our most pressing needs, once we are faced with reorganizing our intellectual and moral and spiritual assets—then, before discussing the problem in detail, a fresh start and new foundations call for a defence of leisure.

For assuming all too rashly, for the moment, that our new house is going to be built in the Western tradition—a thing so arguable that it might almost be said to be the decision which is hanging in the balance—it is essential to

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begin by reckoning with the fact that one of the foundations of Western culture is leisure. That much, at least, can be learnt from the first chapter of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. And even the history of the word attests the fact: for leisure in Greek is *skole*, and in Latin *scola*, the English 'school'. The word used to designate the place where we educate and teach is derived from a word which means 'leisure'. 'School' does not, properly speaking, mean school, but leisure.

The original conception of leisure, as it arose in the civilized world of Greece, has, however, become unrecognizable in the world of planned diligence and 'total labour'; and in order to gain a clear notion of leisure we must begin by setting aside the prejudice—our prejudice—that comes from overvaluing the sphere of work. In his well-known study of capitalism Max Weber¹ quotes the saying, that 'one does not work to live; one lives to work', which nowadays no one has much difficulty in understanding: it expresses the current opinion. We even find some difficulty in grasping that it reverses the order of things and stands them on their head.

But what ought we to say to the opposite view, to the view that 'we work in order to have leisure'? We should not hesitate to say that here indeed 'the world of topsyturvydom', the world that had been stood on its head, has been clearly expressed. To those who live in a world of nothing but work, in what we might call the world of 'total work', it presumably sounds immoral, as though directed at the very foundations of human society.

That maxim is not, however, an illustration invented for the sake of clarifying this thesis: it is a quotation from Aristotle; and the fact that it expresses the view of a cool-

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headed workaday realist (as he is supposed to have been) gives it all the more weight. Literally, the Greek says 'we are unleisurely in order to have leisure.'² 'To be unleisurely'—that is the word the Greeks used not only for the daily toil and moil of life, but for ordinary everyday work. Greek only has the negative, *a-scolia*, just as Latin has *neg-otium*.

The context of Aristotle's words, and his other statement (in the *Politics*) to the effect that leisure is the centre-point about which everything revolves,³ seems to indicate that he was saying something almost self-evident; and one can only suppose that the Greeks would not have understood our maxims about 'work for work's sake' at all. On the other hand it must be evident that we no longer understand their conception of leisure simply and directly.

This is perhaps the point at which to anticipate the objection: 'What does Aristotle honestly matter to us? We may admire the world of antiquity, but why should we feel under any obligation to it?'

Among other things, it might be pointed out in reply that the Christian and Western conception of the contemplative life is closely linked to the Aristotelian notion of leisure. It is also to be observed that this is the source of the distinction between the *artes liberales* and the *artes serviles*, the liberal arts and servile work. And to the further objection that this distinction only interests historians, one might reply that everyone is familiar with at any rate one half of the distinction, from the fact that we still speak of 'servile work' as unsuitable on Sundays and holidays. Though who nowadays stops to think that 'servile work' and 'liberal arts' are twin expressions, and form, one might almost say, the articulation of a joint, so that the one is

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hardly intelligible without the other? For it is barely possible to think of 'servile work' with any degree of accuracy without delimiting the sense with reference to the 'liberal arts'.

All this, and much besides, might be adduced to show that Aristotle is more than a name; though it is true that purely historical considerations are no basis for an obligation.

But the immediate purpose was really to make it plain that the value we set on work and on leisure is very far from being the same as that of the Greek and Roman world, or of the Middle Ages, for that matter—so very different that the men of the past would have been incapable of understanding the modern conception of work, just as we are unable to understand their notion of leisure simply and directly, without an effort of thought. The tremendous difference of point of view implied and our relative ignorance of the notion of leisure emerge more clearly if we examine the notion of work in its modern form, spreading, as it does, to cover and include the whole of human activity and even of human life; for then we shall realize to what an extent we tacitly acknowledge the claims that are made in the name of the 'worker'.

Here and in all that follows 'worker' must not be taken as defining an occupation, as in statistical works; it is *not* synonymous with 'proletarian'—although the fact that the words are interchangeable is significant. On the contrary, 'worker' will be used in an anthropological sense; it implies a whole conception of 'man'. Ernst Niekisch was using the word 'worker' in this sense when he spoke of the 'worker' as an 'imperial figure';⁴ and Ernst Jünger⁵ uses the same term to outline the ideal image that, according

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to him, has already begun to mould the man of the future.

A new and changing conception of the nature of man, a new and changing conception of the very meaning of human existence—that is what comes to light in the claims expressed in the modern notion of 'work' and 'worker'. These great subterranean changes in our scale of values, and in the meaning of value, are never easy to detect and lay bare, and they can certainly not be seen at a glance. And if we are to succeed in our purpose and uncover this great change, an historical treatment of the subject will be altogether inadequate; it becomes necessary to dig down to the roots of the problem and so base our conclusions on a philosophical and theological conception of man.



II

'INTELLECTUAL work' and 'intellectual worker' are the signposts indicating the last stretch of the historical journey, an historical journey in the course of which the modern ideal of work was defined in its final and extreme form—for the terms are relatively modern.

Intellectual activity used always to be considered a privileged sphere, and from the standpoint of the manual worker specially, appeared to be a sphere in which one did not need to work. Within that sphere, the province of philosophy and of philosophical culture seemed furthest from the world of work. But nowadays the whole field of intellectual activity, not excepting the province of philosophical culture, has been overwhelmed by the modern ideal of work and is at the mercy of its totalitarian claims. That is the latest phase of the struggle for power, of the process whereby that 'imperial figure' the 'worker' seizes power. And this seizure of power reveals its challenge

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most clearly in the implicit claims underlying the notions of 'intellectual work' and 'intellectual worker'.

The last stretch of the road has one advantage from the point of the spectator: it sums up the whole historical movement once again in a single formula of the utmost concision and clarity. The real meaning of the ideal of the world of 'total work' reveals itself if one examines the inner structure of the concept 'intellectual work' and follows it down to its ultimate conclusions.

The concept of 'intellectual work' may be traced back and explored in terms of various historical sources. It implies, in the first place, a very definite view of the mode and manner of man's intellectual knowledge. What happens when we look at a rose? What do we do as we become aware of colour and form? Our soul is passive and receptive. We are, to be sure, awake and active, but our attention is not strained; we simply 'look'—in so far, that is, as we 'contemplate' it and are not already 'observing' it (for 'observing' implies that we are beginning to count, to measure and to weigh up). Observation is a tense activity; which is what Ernst Jünger meant when he called seeing an 'act of aggression'.¹ To contemplate, on the other hand, to 'look' in this sense, means to open one's eyes receptively to whatever offers itself to one's vision, and the things seen enter into us, so to speak, without calling for any effort or strain on our part to possess them. There can hardly be any doubt that that, or something like it, is the way we become sensorially aware of a thing.

But what of knowledge, the mind's spiritual knowledge? Is there such a thing as a purely receptive attitude of mind in which we become aware of immaterial reality and invisible relationships? Is there such a thing as pure 'in-

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tellectual contemplation'—to adopt the terminology of the schools? In antiquity the answer given was always yes; in modern philosophy, for the most part, the answer given is no.

Kant, for example, held knowledge to be exclusively 'discursive': that is to say, the opposite of intuitive. 'The reason cannot intuit anything.'² His opinion on this point has quite recently been called 'the most momentous dogmatic assumption of Kantian epistemology'.³ According to Kant man's knowledge is realized in the act of comparing, examining, relating, distinguishing, abstracting, deducing, demonstrating—all of which are forms of active intellectual effort. Knowledge, man's spiritual, intellectual knowledge (such is Kant's thesis) is activity, exclusively activity.

Working on that basis, Kant was bound to reach the view that knowing and philosophizing (philosophizing in particular, since it is furthest removed from purely physical awareness) must be regarded and understood as *work*. And lest there should be any doubt on the point he said so explicitly in an article written, in 1796, against the romantic, contemplative and intuitive philosophy of Jacobi, Schlosser and Stolberg.⁴ In philosophy, we read there, 'the law is that reason acquires its possessions through work.' The philosophy of the romantics is not genuine philosophy because it involves no work—a reproach that could, in some measure, be levelled at Plato himself, 'the father of enthusiasm in philosophy'; 'whereas,' he continues, with reverent agreement, 'the philosophy of Aristotle is work.' Opinions, he says, such as those of the romantics, the sense that philosophy was above 'work', have been responsible for 'the new, superior tone in philosophy': a pseudo-philosophy 'in which there is no need to work; one only has

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to attend to the oracle in one's breast and enjoy it, and so possess that wisdom whole and entire, which is the end of philosophy'—a pseudo-philosophy that thinks it can look down haughtily on the effort and work of the true philosopher. So much for Immanuel Kant.

The philosophers of antiquity thought otherwise on this matter—though of course their view is very far from offering grounds of justification for those who take the easy path. The Greeks—Aristotle no less than Plato—as well as the great medieval thinkers, held that not only physical, sensuous perception, but equally man's spiritual and intellectual knowledge, included an element of pure, receptive contemplation, or as Heraclitus says, of 'listening to the essence of things'.⁵

The Middle Ages drew a distinction between the understanding as *ratio* and the understanding as *intellectus*. *Ratio* is the power of discursive, logical thought, of searching and of examination, of abstraction, of definition and drawing conclusions. *Intellectus*, on the other hand, is the name for the understanding in so far as it is the capacity of *simplex intuitus*, of that simple vision to which truth offers itself like a landscape to the eye. The faculty of mind, man's knowledge, is both these things in one, according to antiquity and the Middle Ages, simultaneously *ratio* and *intellectus*; and the process of knowing is the action of the two together. The mode of discursive thought is accompanied and impregnated by an effortless awareness, the contemplative vision of the *intellectus*, which is not active but passive, or rather receptive, the activity of the soul in which it conceives that which it sees.

It should, however, be added that even the philosophers of antiquity (which here and elsewhere always means the

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philosophers of Greece and the Middle Ages) looked upon the active effort of discursive thought as the properly human element in our knowledge; it is the *ratio*, they held, which is distinctively human; the *intellectus* they regarded as being already beyond the sphere allotted to man. And yet it belonged to man, though in one sense 'superhuman'; the 'purely human' by itself could not satiate man's powers of comprehension, for man, of his very nature, reaches out beyond the sphere of the 'human', touching on the order of pure spirits. 'Although the knowledge which is most characteristic of the human soul occurs in the mode of *ratio*, nevertheless there is in it a sort of participation in the simple knowledge which is proper to higher beings, of whom it is therefore said that they possess the faculty of spiritual vision.' That is how the matter is put by Aquinas in the *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*.⁶ It means to say that man participates in the angelic faculty of non-discursive vision, which is the capacity to apprehend the spiritual in the same manner that our eye apprehends light or our ear sound. Our knowledge in fact includes an element of non-activity, of purely receptive vision—though it is certainly not essentially human; it is, rather, the fulfilment of the highest promise in man, and thus, again, truly human (just as Aquinas calls the *vita contemplativa* 'non proprie humana sed superhumana',⁷ not really human but superhuman, although it is the noblest mode of human life).

The philosophical tradition of antiquity did, therefore, recognize the element of work in man's mode of knowledge as specifically human. For the use of the *ratio*, discursive thought, requires real hard work.

The simple vision of the *intellectus*, however, contemplation, is *not* work. If, as this philosophical tradition

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holds, man's spiritual knowledge is the fruit of *ratio* and *intellectus*; if the discursive element is fused with 'intellectual contemplation' and if, moreover, knowledge in philosophy, which is directed upon the whole of being, is to preserve the element of contemplation, then it is not enough to describe this knowledge as work, for that would be to omit something essential. Knowledge in general, and more especially philosophical knowledge, is certainly quite impossible without work, without the *labor improbus* of discursive thought. Nevertheless there is also that about it which, essentially, is not work.

The statement that 'knowledge is work'—because 'knowing' is activity, pure activity—has two aspects: it expresses a claim *on* man and a claim *by* man. If you want to know something then you must work; in philosophy 'the law is that reason acquires its possessions through work'⁸ that is the claim on man. But there is another, a subtler claim, not perhaps immediately visible, in the statement, the claim made by man: if to know is to work, then knowledge is the fruit of our own unaided effort and activity; then knowledge includes nothing which is not due to the effort of man, and there is nothing *gratuitous* about it, nothing 'in-spired', nothing 'given' about it.

To sum up: the essence of human cognition, on this view, is that it is exclusively an active, discursive labour of the *ratio*, the reason; and the notions 'intellectual work' and 'intellectual worker' acquire a quite special weight if we accept this point of view.

Look at the 'worker' and you will see that his face is marked by strain and tension, and these are even more pronounced in the case of the 'intellectual worker'. These are the marks of that perpetual activity (exclusive of all

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else) of which Goethe remarked that 'it ends in bankruptcy'.⁹ They are the revealing marks of the intellectual sclerosis that comes with not being able to receive or accept, of that hardening of the heart that refuses to suffer anything; and in their extreme form such tensions become vocal in the lunatic assertion 'every action has some meaning, even a crime; but to be passive is always senseless.'¹⁰

Now discursive thought and intellectual contemplation are not simply related to one another as activity to receptivity, or as tense effort to passive acceptance. They are also related to one another as toil and trouble on the one hand and effortless possession on the other. And this antithesis—toil and trouble on one side, effortless ease on the other—is the occasion of yet another reason for the special stress on the notion of 'intellectual work'. So that we must now consider, for a moment, a particular view of the criterion of the worth and worthlessness of human behaviour in general.

When Kant speaks of philosophizing as a 'herculean labour',¹¹ he does not simply mean that it is characteristic of philosophizing; he regards the labour involved as a justification of philosophy: philosophizing is genuine in so far as it is 'herculean labour'. And it is because, as he contemptuously remarks, 'intellectual contemplation' costs nobody anything that it is so very questionable. He expects nothing from 'intellectual contemplation' *because* it costs nothing, and because contemplation is effortless. But that is surely on the way (if not even closer) to the view that the *effort* of acquiring knowledge gives one the assurance of the material *truth* of the knowledge acquired.

And there, in turn, we are not so very far from the ethical notion that everything man does naturally and

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without effort is a falsification of true morality—for what we do by nature is done without effort. In Kant's view, indeed, the fact that man's natural bent is contrary to the moral law, belongs to the concept of moral law. It is normal and essential, on this view, that the good should be difficult, and that the effort of will required in forcing oneself to perform some action should become the yardstick of the moral good: the more difficult a thing, the higher it is in the order of goodness. Schiller's ironical couplet hits off the weakness of this point of view:

*Gerne dient'ich den Freunden, doch tu ich es leider
mit Neigung,
Und so wurmt es mir oft, dass ich nicht tugendhaft
bin.¹²
(How willingly I'd serve my friends, but alas, I do
so with pleasure,
And so I am often worried by the fact that I am not
virtuous.)*

Hard work, then, is what is good. That is not by any means a new view, and it was put forward by Antisthenes the Cynic,¹³ one of Plato's companions among those who grouped themselves round Socrates. Antisthenes is one of those surprisingly modern figures that occur here and there, and it is he who left us the first sketch of the 'worker', or more accurately, perhaps, who represents that figure. Antisthenes is not only the author of the phrase just quoted about hard work; he is also responsible for making Hercules the human ideal, because he performed superhuman labours¹⁴: an ideal that has retained (or has it re-acquired it?) a certain force from the days of Erasmus¹⁵ and Kant—who labelled philosophy with the heroic term

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'herculean'—down to those of Carlyle, the prophet of the religion of work¹⁶: You must work like Hercules. . . . Antisthenes the Cynic was a self-sufficient moralist, an autarchist, with no sense whatsoever of divine worship, even cracking Voltairian jokes about it¹⁷; he was insensible to the Muses and only liked poetry when it served to express moral truths¹⁸; and as for Eros, it evoked no reply in his heart: 'Best of all,' he remarked, 'I would like to exterminate Aphrodite.'¹⁹ A dry realist, he did not, of course, believe in immortality; the one thing that matters is to live 'an upright life' in this world.²⁰ It really looks as though all these traits had been gathered into one for the sake of providing an example in the abstract of the type 'worker' pure and undefiled.

'Hard work is what is good'? In the *Summa Theologica* we find St. Thomas propounding a contrary opinion: 'The essence of virtue consists in the good rather than in the difficult.'²¹ 'Not everything that is more difficult is necessarily more meritorious; it must be more difficult in such a way that it is at the same time good in a yet higher way.'²² The Middle Ages also said something about virtue that is no longer so readily understood—least of all by Kant's compatriots and disciples—they held that virtue meant: 'mastering our natural bent'. No; that is what Kant would have said, and we all of us find it quite easy to understand; what Aquinas says is that virtue makes us perfect by enabling us to *follow* our natural bent in the right way.²³ In fact, he says, the sublime achievements of moral goodness are characterized by effortlessness—because it is of their essence to spring from love.

The tendency to overvalue hard work and the effort of doing something *difficult* is so deep-rooted that it even

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infects our notion of love. Why should it be that the average Christian regards loving one's enemy as the most exalted form of love? Principally because it offers an example of a natural bent heroically curbed; the exceptional difficulty, the impossibility one might almost say, of loving one's enemy constitutes the greatness of the love. And what does Aquinas say? 'It is not the difficulty of loving one's enemy that matters when the essence of the merit of doing so is concerned, excepting in so far as the perfection of love wipes out the difficulty. And therefore, if love were to be so perfect that the difficulty vanished altogether—it would be more meritorious still.'²⁴

And in the same way, the essence of knowledge does not consist in the effort for which it calls, but in grasping existing things and in unveiling reality. Moreover, just as the highest form of virtue knows nothing of 'difficulty', so too the highest form of knowledge comes to man like a gift—the sudden illumination, a stroke of genius, true contemplation; it comes effortlessly and without trouble. On one occasion St. Thomas speaks of contemplation and play in the same breath: 'because of the leisure that goes with contemplation' the divine wisdom itself, Holy Scripture says, is 'always at play, playing through the whole world' (Proverbs viii, 30 f.).²⁵

The highest forms of knowledge, on the other hand, may well be preceded by a great effort of thought, and perhaps this must be so (unless the knowledge in question were grace in the strict sense of the word); but in any case, the effort is not the cause; it is the condition. It is equally true that the effects so effortlessly produced by love presuppose no doubt an heroic moral struggle of the will. But the decisive thing is that virtue means the realiza-

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tion of the good; it may imply a previous moral effort, but it cannot be equated with moral effort. And similarly to know means to reach the reality of existing things; knowledge is not confined to effort of thought. It is more than 'intellectual work'.

This aspect too of 'intellectual work'—the exaggerated value which is put upon the 'difficult' simply because it is difficult—becomes evident in the accentuation of a particular trait in the look of the 'worker': the fixed, mask-like readiness to suffer *in vacuo*, without relation to anything. It is the absence of any connection with reality or real values that is distinctive. And it is because this readiness to suffer (which has been called the heart of discipline, of whatever kind)²⁶ never asks the question 'to what end' that it is utterly different from the Christian conception of sacrifice. The Christian conception of sacrifice is not concerned with the suffering involved *qua* suffering, it is not primarily concerned with the toil and the worry and with the difficulty, but with salvation, with the fullness of being, and thus ultimately with the fullness of happiness: 'The end and the norm of discipline is happiness'.²⁷

The inmost significance of the exaggerated value which is set upon hard work appears to be this: man seems to mistrust everything that is effortless; he can only enjoy, with a good conscience, what he has acquired with toil and trouble; he refuses to have anything as a gift.

We have only to think for a moment how much the Christian understanding of life depends upon the existence of 'Grace'; let us recall that the Holy Spirit of God is Himself called a 'gift'²⁸ in a special sense; that the great teachers of Christianity say that the premise of God's justice is His love²⁹; that everything gained and everything

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claimed follows upon something given, and comes after something gratuitous and unearned; that in the beginning there is always a gift—we have only to think of all this for a moment in order to see what a chasm separates the tradition of the Christian West and that other view.

In attempting to get to the source of the notion 'intellectual work', we have seen that it can be traced in the main to two principal themes: the first is the view which regards human knowledge as exclusively attributable to discursive thought; the second is the contention that the effort which knowledge requires is a criterion of its truth. There is, however, a third element, more important than either of the foregoing, and which appears to involve both of them. It is the social implication of 'intellectual work' that comes more fully to light in the expression 'intellectual worker'.

Work as it is understood in this phrase and context means the same thing as social service. 'Intellectual work' in this context would mean intellectual activity in so far as it is a social service, in so far as it is a contribution to the common need. But that is not all that is implied by the words 'intellectual work' and 'intellectual worker'. In the current usage of today what is further implied is respect for the 'working class'. What is really meant is roughly this: like the wage-earner, the manual worker and the proletarian, the educated man, the scholar, too, is a worker, in fact an 'intellectual worker', and he, too, is harnessed to the social system and takes his place in the division of labour; he is allotted his place and his function among the workers; he is a functionary in the world of 'total work'; he may be called a specialist, but he is a functionary. And that is what brings out the problem which really lies be-

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hind our question, in all its colours. That problem, it need hardly be said, is not just a theoretical one; it is the root problem with which we began our discussion: are we to build our house in the European tradition?

And yet the social aspect, as it concerns the relations of the strata of society and of its various groups, is only the foreground of the question; and to that we shall return. The real question is a metaphysical one. It is the old question of the rights and the meaning of the liberal arts. What are the liberal arts? In his commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, Aquinas gives this definition: 'Only those arts called liberal or free which are concerned with knowledge; those which are concerned with utilitarian ends that are attained through activity, however, are called servile.'³⁰ 'I know well,' Newman says, 'that knowledge may resolve itself into an art, and seminate in a mechanical process and in tangible fruit; but it may also fall back upon that Reason, which informs it, and resolve itself into Philosophy. For in one case it is called Useful Knowledge, in the other Liberal.'³¹ The liberal arts, then, include all forms of human activity which are an end in themselves; the servile arts are those which have an end beyond themselves, and more precisely an end which consists in a utilitarian result attainable in practice, a practicable result.

Put in this form the question will seem to many people an anachronism, and the very terms 'liberal arts' and 'servile arts' sound antiquated and meaningless. But translated into the terminology of the present day the question means precisely this: Is there a sphere of human activity, one might even say of human existence, that does not need to be justified by inclusion in a five-year plan and its technical organization? Is there such a thing, or not? The inner

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meaning of the concepts 'intellectual work' and 'intellectual worker' points to the answer 'No'. Man, from this point of view, is essentially a functionary, an official, even in the highest reaches of his activity.

Let us examine the question in terms of philosophy and philosophical education. For philosophy can be regarded as the freest of the liberal arts.* 'Knowledge is most truly free when it is philosophical knowledge', says Cardinal Newman.³² In a sense, too, philosophy has become the symbol for all the *artes liberales*; in German universities the 'Faculty of Arts' of the medieval university is nowadays called the 'Philosophical Faculty'.

Philosophy and its status, then, offers a valuable lead to the direction in which the answer to the question lies.

There can be no serious disagreement on the role of the natural sciences, of medicine, law, and economics in modern society. Within the functional nexus of the modern body social, characterized as it is by division of labour, these sciences have their clearly defined place. They therefore come under the heading of work in the social sense which we are discussing. It is in the nature of the sciences to be applicable to ends outside themselves. But there are also the 'pure' sciences practised in a philosophical manner, and to them our question applies in the same way, as it does to philosophy itself. When we say of a science that it is practised in a 'philosophical manner', we mean it is undertaken 'academically' in the original sense of the word (for 'academic' means 'philosophical' or it means nothing at all).

When, therefore, we discuss the place and justification of philosophy we are discussing no more nor less than the

* This question is treated at greater length on pp. 73 ff.

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place and justification of the university, of academic education itself in the true sense—that is, the sense in which it differs fundamentally from mere professional training and goes beyond such training in principle.

A functionary is trained. Training is defined as being concerned with some one side or aspect of man, with regard to some special subject. Education concerns the whole man; an educated man is a man with a point of view from which he takes in the whole world. Education concerns the whole man, man *capax universi*, capable of grasping the totality of existing things.

This implies nothing against training and nothing against the official. Of course specialized and professional work is *normal*, the normal way in which men play their part in the world; 'work' is the normal, the working day is the ordinary day. But the question is: whether the world, defined as the world of work, is exhaustively defined; can man develop to the full as a functionary and a 'worker' and nothing else; can a full human existence be contained within an exclusively workaday existence? Stated differently and translated back into our terms: is there such a thing as a liberal art? The doctrinaire planners of the world of 'total work' must answer 'No'. The worker's world, as Ernst Jünger puts it, is 'the denial of free scholarship and enquiry'.³³ In a consistently planned 'worker' State there is no room for philosophy because philosophy cannot serve other ends than its own or it ceases to be philosophy; nor can the sciences be carried on in a philosophical manner, which means to say that there can be no such thing as university (academic) education in the full sense of the word. And it is above all the expression 'intellectual worker' that epigrammatically confirms the fact that this

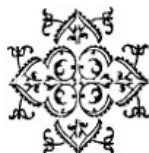
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is impossible. And that is why it is so alarmingly symptomatic that ordinary usage, and even university custom, allow the term 'intellectual worker' and sometimes permit 'brain worker'.

The ancients, however, maintained that there was a legitimate place for non-utilitarian modes of human activity, in other words liberal arts. The knowledge of the functionary is not the only knowledge; there is also 'the knowledge of a gentleman' (to use Newman's very happy formula in the *Idea of a University*, for the term *artes liberales*).

There is no need to waste words showing that not everything is useless which cannot be brought under the definition of the useful. And it is by no means unimportant for a nation and for the realization of the 'common good', that a place should be made for activity which is not 'useful work' in the sense of being utilitarian. 'I have never bothered or asked', Goethe said to Friedrich Soret in 1830, 'in what way I was useful to society as a whole; I contented myself with expressing what I recognized as good and true. That has certainly been useful in a wide circle; but that was not the aim; it was the necessary result.'³⁴

In the Middle Ages the same view prevailed. 'It is necessary for the perfection of human society', Aquinas writes, 'that there should be men who devote their lives to contemplation'³⁵—*nota bene*, necessary not only for the good of the individual who so devotes himself, but for the good of human society. No one thinking in terms of 'intellectual worker' could have said that.



III

THE 'worker', it has been seen, in our brief analysis of that significant figure, is characterized by three principal traits: an extreme tension of the powers of action, a readiness to suffer *in vacuo* unrelated to anything, and complete absorption in the social organism, itself rationally planned to utilitarian ends. Leisure, from this point of view, appears as something wholly fortuitous and strange, without rhyme or reason, and, morally speaking, unseemly: another word for laziness, idleness and sloth. At the zenith of the Middle Ages, on the contrary, it was held that sloth and restlessness, 'leisurelessness', the incapacity to enjoy leisure, were all closely connected; sloth was held to be the source of restlessness, and the ultimate cause of 'work for work's sake'. It may well seem paradoxical to maintain that the restlessness at the bottom of a fanatical and suicidal activity should come from the lack of will to action; a surprising thought, that we shall only be able to decipher with effort. But it is a worth-while effort, and

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we should do well to pause for a moment to enquire into the philosophy of life attached to the word *acedia*.¹

In the first place *acedia* does not signify the 'idleness' we envisage when we speak of idleness as 'the root of all vice'. Idleness, in the medieval view, means that a man renounces the claim implicit in his human dignity. In a word, he does not want to be as God wants him to be, and that ultimately means that he does not wish to be what he really, fundamentally, *is*. *Acedia* is the 'despair from weakness' which Kierkegaard analysed as the 'despairing refusal to be oneself'.² Metaphysically and theologically, the notion of *acedia* means that a man does not, in the last resort, give the consent of his will to his own being; that beneath the dynamic activity of his existence, he is still not at one with himself; that, as the Middle Ages expressed it, sadness overwhelms him when he is confronted with the divine goodness immanent in himself (that sadness which is the *tristitia saeculi* of Holy Scripture).³

And then we are told that the opposite of this metaphysical and theological notion is the notion 'hard-working', industrious, in the context of economic life! For *acedia* has, in fact, been interpreted as though it had something to do with the economic ethos of the Middle Ages. Sombart, for example, treats it as though it were the fault of the lazy stay-at-home as compared with the industrious worker⁴—though Max Scheler criticized his view.⁵ And some of Sombart's successors even go so far as to translate *acedia* as 'stick-in-the-mud'—as well say 'lack of business enterprise' or even 'lack of salesmanship'.⁶ All this, however, is less painful than the eager attempt of the apologist to make Christian teaching square with a passing fashion, which in this case involves interpreting the

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Church's view of work in terms of modern activism—with the result that *vivere secundum actum est quando exercet quis opera vitae in actu*⁷ is actually translated as 'life in actu consists in this, that one is busy and occupied with practical affairs'⁸ . . . as if Aquinas did not hold that contemplation was an *opus vitae*!

No, the contrary of *acedia* is not the spirit of work in the sense of the work of every day, of earning one's living; it is man's happy and cheerful affirmation of his own being, his acquiescence in the world and in God—which is to say love. Love that certainly brings a particular freshness and readiness to work along with it, but that no one with the least experience could conceivably confuse with the tense activity of the fanatical 'worker'.

Who would guess, unless he were expressly told so, that Aquinas regarded *acedia* as a sin against the third commandment? He was in fact so far from considering idleness as the opposite of the ethos of work that he simply interprets it as an offence against the commandment in which we are called upon to have 'the peace of the mind in God'.⁹

But what has all this, one might well ask, to do with the question? *Acedia* was reckoned among the *vitia capitalia*, as one of the seven capital or cardinal sins, for they were not called 'capital' because of the best-known rendering of *caput*; *caput* certainly means 'head', but it also means 'source' or 'spring'—and that is the meaning in this case. They are sins from which other faults follow 'naturally', one is tempted to say, as from a source. Idleness—and this is how we get back to the question—idleness, according to traditional teaching, is the source of many faults and among others of that deep-seated lack of calm which makes leisure impossible. Among other faults, certainly,

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and one of the children of *acedia*, is despair, which amounts to saying that despair and the incapacity for leisure are twins—a revealing thought that explains, among other things, the hidden meaning of that very questionable saying, 'work and don't despair'.

Idleness, in the old sense of the word, so far from being synonymous with leisure, is more nearly the inner prerequisite which renders leisure impossible: it might be described as the utter absence of leisure, or the very opposite of leisure. Leisure is only possible when a man is at one with himself, when he acquiesces in his own being, whereas the essence of *acedia* is the refusal to acquiesce in one's own being. Idleness and the incapacity for leisure correspond with one another. Leisure is the contrary of both.

Leisure, it must be clearly understood, is a mental and spiritual attitude—it is not simply the result of external factors, it is not the inevitable result of spare time, a holiday, a week-end or a vacation. It is, in the first place, an attitude of mind, a condition of the soul, and as such utterly contrary to the ideal of 'worker' in each and every one of the three aspects under which it was analysed: work as activity, as toil, as a social function.

Compared with the exclusive ideal of work as activity, leisure implies (in the first place) an attitude of non-activity, of inward calm, of silence; it means not being 'busy', but letting things happen.

Leisure is a form of silence, of that silence which is the prerequisite of the apprehension of reality: only the silent hear and those who do not remain silent do not hear. Silence, as it is used in this context, does not mean 'dumbness' or 'noiselessness'; it means more nearly that the soul's power to 'answer' to the reality of the world is left undis-

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turbed. For leisure is a receptive attitude of mind, a contemplative attitude, and it is not only the occasion but also the capacity for steeping oneself in the whole of creation.

Furthermore there is also a certain serenity in leisure. That serenity springs precisely from our inability to understand, from our recognition of the mysterious nature of the universe; it springs from the courage of deep confidence, so that we are content to let things take their course; and there is something about it which Konrad Weiss, the poet, called 'confidence in the fragmentariness of life and history'. In the same entry in his Journal he refers to the characteristically precise style and thought of Ernst Jünger, with his fanaticism for the truth¹⁰—Jünger, who really seems to tear the mystery out of a thing, coldly and boldly, and then lay it out, neatly dissected, all ready to view. His passion for tidy formulae 'is surely the very reverse of contemplative, and yet there is something idle in it, idleness concealed within the sublime exactitude of thought—as opposed to the true idleness which lets God and the world and things go, and gives them time . . . !'

Leisure is not the attitude of mind of those who actively intervene, but of those who are open to everything; not of those who grab and grab hold, but of those who leave the reins loose and who are free and easy themselves—almost like a man falling asleep, for one can only fall asleep by 'letting oneself go'. Sleeplessness and the incapacity for leisure are really related to one another in a special sense, and a man at leisure is not unlike a man asleep. Heraclitus the Obscure observed of men who were asleep that they too 'were busy and active in the happenings of the world'.¹¹ When we really let our minds rest contemplatively on a rose in bud, on a child at play, on a divine mystery, we are rested and quickened as though by a

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dreamless sleep. Or as the Book of Job says 'God giveth songs in the night' (Job xxxv, 10). Moreover, it has always been a pious belief that God sends his good gifts and his blessings in sleep. And in the same way his great, imperishable intuitions visit a man in his moments of leisure. It is in these silent and receptive moments that the soul of man is sometimes visited by an awareness of what holds the world together:

was die Welt

Im innersten zusammenhält

only for a moment perhaps, and the lightning vision of his intuition has to be recaptured and rediscovered in hard work.

Compared with the exclusive ideal of work as toil, leisure appears (*secondly*) in its character as an attitude of contemplative 'celebration', a word that, properly understood, goes to the very heart of what we mean by leisure. Leisure is possible only on the premise that man consents to his own true nature and abides in concord with the meaning of the universe (whereas idleness, as we have said, is the refusal of such consent). Leisure draws its vitality from affirmation. It is not the same as non-activity, nor is it identical with tranquillity; it is not even the same as inward tranquillity. Rather, it is like the tranquil silence of lovers, which draws its strength from concord.

In his fragment on *Leisure* Hölderlin writes:

*I stand in the peaceful mowing
Like a loving elm tree, while sweetly life plays
And twines around me like vines and clusters
of grapes.*

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And we may read in the first chapter of Genesis that God 'ended his work which he had made' and 'behold, it was very good'. In leisure man, too, celebrates the end of his work by allowing his inner eye to dwell for a while upon the reality of the Creation. He looks and he affirms: it is good.

Now the highest form of affirmation is the feast; among its characteristics, Karl Kerényi tells us, is 'the union of tranquillity, contemplation, and intensity of life'.¹² To hold a celebration means to affirm the basic meaningfulness of the universe and a sense of oneness with it, of inclusion within it. In celebrating, in holding feasts upon occasion, man experiences the world in an aspect other than the everyday one.

The feast is the origin of leisure, and the inward and ever-present meaning of leisure. And because leisure is thus by its nature a celebration, it is more than effortless; it is the direct opposite of effort.

And *thirdly*, leisure stands opposed to the exclusive ideal of work *qua* social function. A break in one's work, whether of an hour, a day or a week, is still part of the world of work. It is a link in the chain of utilitarian functions. The pause is made for the sake of work and in order to work, and a man is not only refreshed *from* work but *for* work. Leisure is an altogether different matter; it is no longer on the same plane; it runs at right angles to work—just as it could be said that intuition is not the prolongation or continuation, as it were, of the work of the *ratio*, but cuts right across it, vertically. *Ratio*, in point of fact, used to be compared to time, whereas *intellectus* was compared to eternity, to the eternal now.¹³ And therefore leisure does not exist for the sake of work—however much

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strength it may give a man to work; the point of leisure is not to be a restorative, a pick-me-up, whether mental or physical; and though it gives new strength, mentally and physically, and spiritually too, that is not the point.

Leisure, like contemplation, is of a higher order than the *vita activa* (although the active life is the proper human life in a more special sense). And order, in this sense, cannot be overturned or reversed. Thus, however true it may be that the man who says his nightly prayers sleeps the better for it, nevertheless no one could say his nightly prayers with that in mind. In the same way, no one who looks to leisure simply to restore his working powers will ever discover the fruit of leisure; he will never know the quickening that follows, almost as though from some deep sleep.

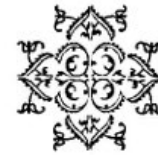
The point and the justification of leisure are not that the functionary should function faultlessly and without a breakdown, but that the functionary should continue to be a man—and that means that he should not be wholly absorbed in the clear-cut milieu of his strictly limited function; the point is also that he should retain the faculty of grasping the world as a whole and realizing his full potentialities as an entity meant to reach Wholeness.¹⁴

X Because Wholeness is what man strives for, the power to achieve leisure is one of the fundamental powers of the human soul. Like the gift for contemplative absorption in the things that are and like the capacity of the spirit to soar in festive celebration, the power to know leisure is the power to overstep the boundaries of the workaday world and reach out to superhuman, life-giving existential forces which refresh and renew us before we turn back to our daily work. Only in genuine leisure does a 'gate to free-

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dom' open. Through that gate man may escape from the 'restricted area' of that 'latent anxiety' which a keen observer has perceived to be the mark of the world of work, where 'work and unemployment are the two inescapable poles of existence'.¹⁵

In leisure—not of course exclusively in leisure, but always in leisure—the truly human values are saved and preserved *because* leisure is the means whereby the sphere of the 'specifically human' can, over and again, be left behind—not as a result of any violent effort to reach out, but as in an ecstasy (the ecstasy is indeed more 'difficult' than the most violent exertion, more 'difficult' because not invariably at our beck and call; a state of extreme tension is more easily induced than a state of relaxation and ease *although* the latter is effortless); the full enjoyment of leisure is hedged in by paradoxes of this kind, and it is itself a state at once very human and superhuman. Aristotle says of leisure, 'A man will live thus, not to the extent that he is a man, but to the extent that a divine principle dwells within him.'¹⁶



IV

IN THE foregoing sections leisure was tentatively defined and outlined in its ideal form. It now remains to consider the problem of realizing its 'hopes', of its latent powers of gaining acceptance, and its possible impetus in history. The practical problem involved might be stated thus: Is it possible, from now on, to maintain and defend, or even to reconquer, the right and claims of leisure, in face of the claims of 'total labour' that are invading every sphere of life? Leisure, it must be remembered, is not a Sunday afternoon idyll, but the preserve of freedom, of education and culture, and of that undiminished humanity which views the world as a whole. In other words, is it going to be possible to save men from becoming officials and functionaries and 'workers' to the exclusion of all else? Can that possibly be done, and if so in what circumstances? There is no doubt of one thing: the world of the 'worker' is taking shape with dynamic force—with such a

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velocity that, rightly or wrongly, one is tempted to speak of daemonic force in history.

The attempt to withstand this invasion has been made at a number of different points for some time past. It is even possible to lay down that certain forms of opposition are inadequate; for example the position—quite legitimate up to a point—called ‘art for art’s sake’ was an attempt to isolate the realm of art from the universal utilitarianism that seeks to turn everything in the world to some useful purpose. In our own day the real historical fronts still remain to some extent fluid, masked by backward-looking interim solutions. Among these are the return to ‘tradition’ pure and simple; an emphasis on our duty as the heirs of classical antiquity; the struggle to retain the classics in the schools and the ‘academic’ (philosophical) character of the universities—in a word *humanism*. Such are the designations of some of the positions from which a threatened and endangered body aspires to defend itself.

The question is whether these positions will be held and in fact whether they *can* be held. The problem is whether ‘Humanism’ is an adequate watchword—adequate, not simply as a psychologically good rallying cry, as an effective summons to battle, but as a conception metaphysically sound and therefore ultimately credible, in the sense of providing a genuine source of power capable of influencing the course of history. (‘Humanism’, it should here be observed, has recently made its appearance in Eastern Germany, where it has become the fashion to speak of economic materialism as ‘humanistic’; and in France, an atheistic existentialism also claims to be humanistic—neither usage, what is more, is entirely without justification!) The real question is therefore, whether an ap-

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peal to ‘humanism’ is adequate—in face of the totalitarian claims of the world of work.

Before we attempt an answer to this question, we must clear away a number of obvious misunderstandings, which have no doubt already arisen, by saying something about the social aspect of our problem. This is the reason for our

Excursus on the Proletariat and Deproletarianization

It has already been explained that the term ‘intellectual worker’ adds pointed expression to the claims of the world of work. But a modern German dictionary (Trübner’s) maintains, on the contrary, that the relatively modern terms ‘intellectual work’, ‘intellectual worker’ are valuable because ‘they do away with the age-old distinction, still further emphasized in modern times, between the manual worker and the educated man’.¹ Now, if that designation is *not* accepted, or at least only with reservations, it surely implies a certain conception of those social contrasts? The refusal to allow the validity of the term ‘intellectual worker’ certainly means one thing: it means that the common denominator ‘work’ and ‘worker’ is not considered a proper or a possible basis upon which to bridge the contrast of the classes of society. But does it not mean something more? Does it not mean that the gulf between an educated class which is free to pursue knowledge as an end in itself, and the proletarian who knows nothing beyond the spare time which is barely sufficient for him to renew his strength for his daily work—does it not mean logically, from our point of view, that this gulf is in fact necessarily deepened and widened, independently of

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whatever subjective views and intentions may be at work? This objection is not to be taken lightly.

Indeed, on one occasion Plato contrasts the figure of the philosopher with that of the *bánausos*, the common working man. Philosophers are those 'who have not grown up like serfs, but in quite different, not to say contrary, circumstances. Now this, O Theodorus, is the way of each one individually: the one whom you call a philosopher, is truly brought up in freedom and leisure, and goes unpunished though he seems simple and useless when it is a matter of menial offices, even though he should not, for instance, know how to tie up a parcel that has to be sent on, or how to prepare a tasty dish . . . ; the other way is the way of those who know, indeed, how to perform all these things well and smartly, but on the other hand do not even know how to wear their cloak like a gentleman, and still less how to prize the good life of gods and men in harmonious phrases.' This passage is to be found in Plato's *Theaetetus*.² It is to be noted that the Greek conception of the *bánausos* (the common working man), as might easily be shown from the above quotation from Plato, means not only an uneducated man, a man insensitive to poetry and art, and with no spiritual view of the world, but furthermore a man who lives by manual labour as distinguished from the man who owns sufficient property to dispose freely of his time. Here, once again, does it not appear as though our thesis implied a return to the Greek notion of the common working man and to the social and educational conceptions of the pre-Christian era? Certainly not! Yet is this not implicit in the refusal to accept the term 'work' (which, as has always been said, is supposed to be a term of praise) as applying to the *whole* sphere of man's intellectual and spiritual activity? On the contrary, in my

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opinion everything must be done, on the one hand, to obliterate a contrast of this kind between the classes, but on the other hand it is quite wrong, and indeed foolish, to attempt to achieve that aim by looking for social unity in what is (for the moment!) the purely terminological reduction of the educated stratum to proletarian level, instead of the real abolition of the proletariat. What do we mean, fundamentally, by the words 'proletariat', and 'deproletarianization'?—It will be as well, in attempting to answer the question and to define the terms, to leave firmly aside all discussion of the practicability of 'deproletarianizing', in order to answer the question purely 'theoretically' and from the point of view of the principles involved.

In the first place, a proletarian and a poor man are not the same. A man may be poor without being a proletarian: a beggar in medieval society was certainly not a proletarian. Equally, a proletarian is not necessarily poor: a mechanic, a 'specialist' or a 'technician' in a 'totalitarian work state' is certainly a proletarian. Secondly, this, though obvious, has to be said: the negative aspect of the notion 'proletariat', the thing to be got rid of, does not consist in the fact that it is a condition limited to a particular stratum of society; so that the negative aspect would disappear once *all* had become proletarians. 'Proletarianism' cannot obviously be overcome by making everyone proletarian.

What, then, is proletarianism? If the numerous sociological definitions and terms are reduced to a common denominator, the result might be expressed in the following terms: the proletarian is the man who is fettered to the process of work.

This still leaves the phrase 'process of work' vague and in need of clarification. It does not, of course, mean work

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in the ordinary sense: the never-ceasing activity of man. 'Process of work', here, means useful work in the sense already defined, of contributing to the general need, to the *bonum utile*. And so 'process of work' means the all-embracing process in which things are used for the sake of the public need. To be fettered to work means to be bound to this vast utilitarian process in which our needs are satisfied, and, what is more, tied to such an extent that the life of the working man is wholly consumed in it.

To be tied in this way may be the result of various causes. The cause may be lack of property: everyone who is a propertyless wage-earner is a proletarian, everyone 'who owns nothing but his power to work',³ and who is consequently compelled to sell his capacity to work, is a proletarian. But to be tied to work may also be caused by coercion in a totalitarian state; in such a state everyone, whether propertied or unpropertied, is a proletarian because he is bound by the orders of others 'to the necessities of an absolute economic process of production',⁴ by outside forces, which means that he is entirely subject to economic forces.

In the third place, to be tied to the process of work may be ultimately due to the inner impoverishment of the individual: in this context everyone whose life is completely filled by his work (in the special sense of the word work) is a proletarian because his life has shrunk inwardly, and contracted, with the result that he can no longer act significantly outside his work, and perhaps can no longer even conceive of such a thing.

Finally, all these different forms of proletarianism, particularly the last two, mutually attract one another and in so doing intensify each other. The 'total work' State needs

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the spiritually impoverished, one-track mind of the 'functionary'; and he, in his turn, is naturally inclined to find complete satisfaction in his 'service' and thereby achieves the illusion of a life fulfilled, which he acknowledges and willingly accepts.

This inner constraint, the inner chains which fetter us to 'work', prompts a further question: 'proletarianism', thus understood, is perhaps a symptomatic state of mind common to *all* levels of society and by no means confined to the 'proletariat', to the 'worker', a *general* symptom that is merely found isolated in unusually acute form in the proletariat; so that it might be asked whether we are not all of us proletarians and all of us, consequently, ripe and ready to fall into the hands of some collective labour State and be at its disposal as functionaries—even though explicitly of the contrary political opinion. In that case, spiritual immunization against the seductive appeal and the power of totalitarian forms must, surely, be sought and hoped for at a much deeper level of thought than on the level of purely political considerations.⁵

In this context the distinction between the liberal and the servile arts acquires a fresh significance. In antiquity and the Middle Ages, the essence of the *artes serviles* was held to consist in their being directed, as St. Thomas says, 'to the satisfaction of a need through activity'. 'Proletarianism' would then mean the limitation of existence and activity to the sphere of the *artes serviles*—whether this limitation were occasioned by lack of property, State compulsion, or spiritual impoverishment. By the same token, 'deproletarianizing' would mean: enlarging the scope of life beyond the confines of merely useful servile work, and widening the sphere of servile work to the ad-

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vantage of the liberal arts; and this process, once again, can only be carried out by combining three things: by giving the wage-earner the opportunity to save and acquire property, by limiting the power of the state, and by overcoming the inner impoverishment of the individual.

The phrase 'servile work' strikes contemporary ears as extremely offensive—that is well known. Nevertheless, it would be a dangerous procedure to attempt to deny the 'servility' of work. By setting up the fiction that work does not 'serve' primarily for some purpose outside itself, we accomplish precisely the opposite of what we intended or pretended to accomplish. By no means do we 'liberate' or 'rehabilitate' the labouring man. Instead, we establish precisely that inhuman state characteristic of labour under totalitarianism: the ultimate tying of the worker to production. For the process of production itself is understood and proclaimed as the activity which gives meaning to human existence.

Genuine deproletarianization, which must not be confounded with the struggle against poverty (there is no need to waste words on the vital importance of *that*)—genuine deproletarianization assumes that the distinction between the *artes liberales* and the *artes serviles* is a meaningful one, i.e., it must be recognized that there is a real distinction between useful activity on the one hand, the sense and purpose of which is not in itself, and on the other hand the liberal arts which cannot be put at the disposal of useful ends. And it is entirely consistent that those who stand for the 'proletarianizing' of everyone, should deny all meaning to the distinction and try to prove that it has no basis in reality.

To take an example: the distinction between the liberal

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arts and the servile arts runs parallel with the terms: honorarium and wage. Properly speaking, the liberal arts receive an honorarium, while servile work receives a wage. The concept of honorarium implies that an incommensurability exists between performance and recompense, and that the performance cannot 'really' be recompensed. Wages, on the other hand (in the extreme sense in which they differ from an honorarium), are intended as payment for the specific work performed, without consideration of the needs of the worker. It is significant that those members of the intelligentsia who are imbued with 'working class' ideals refuse to recognize this distinction between honorarium and wages. To their minds, only wages exist. In a sort of manifesto on the situation of the writer in society today,⁶ in which literature is proclaimed a 'social function', Jean-Paul Sartre announces that the writer, who has in the past so seldom 'established a relation between his work and its material recompense', must learn to regard himself as 'a worker who receives the reward of his effort'. There, the incommensurability between the achievement and the reward, as it is implied and expressed in an 'honorarium', is declared non-existent even in the fields of philosophy and poetry which are, on the contrary, simply 'intellectual work'. By contrast a social doctrine steeped in the tradition of Christian Europe would not only hold firmly to the distinction between an honorarium and a wage, it would not only hesitate to regard every reward as a wage; it would go further and would even maintain that there is no such thing as a recompense for a thing done which did not retain in some degree the character (whether much or little) of an honorarium, for even 'servile' work cannot be entirely equated with the

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material recompense because it is a 'human' action, so that it always retains something incommensurable with the recompense—just like the liberal arts.

And so it comes about, paradoxical though it may seem, that the proletarian dictator Stalin should say: 'The worker must be paid according to the work done and not according to his needs,'⁷ and that the Encyclical 'Quadragesimo anno' which has for one of its principal aims the 'deproletarianizing' of the masses, should assert that 'in the first place the worker has the right to a wage sufficient to support himself and his family.'⁸ On the one hand, there is an attempt to restrict and even to extirpate the liberal arts: it is alleged that only useful, 'paying' work makes sense; on the other hand, there is an attempt to extend the character of 'liberal art' deep down into every human action, even the humblest servile work. The former aims at making all men into proletarians, the latter at 'deproletarianizing' the masses.

There is, however, a fact which from the vantage-point we have now reached must be strikingly clear and significant, and it is this: whereas the 'total work' State declares all un-useful work 'undesirable', and even expropriates free time in the service of work, there is one Institution in the world which forbids useful activity, and servile work, on particular days, and in this way prepares, as it were, a sphere for a non-proletarian existence.

Thus one of the first socialists, P. J. Proudhon (whom Marx dismissed as a 'petit bourgeois')⁹ was not so far wrong in beginning his work with a pamphlet on the celebration of Sunday, the social significance of which he expresses in the following words: 'On one day in the week servants regained the dignity of human beings, and stood again on a level with their masters.'¹⁰ And in the intro-

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duction to his little book, Proudhon gets very near to the heart of the matter when he says, 'Discussion about work and wages, organization and industry, which is so rife at present ought, it seems to me, to start with the study of a law which would have as its basis a theory of rest.'¹¹ It is true that the full meaning of this 'theory of rest' is not open to one who, like Proudhon, examines it exclusively 'from the point of view of public health, morality, the family and social conditions.' And here is something to be examined more closely.

Let us begin by summing up what has already been said in this excursus: If the essence of 'proletarian' is the fact of being fettered to the process of work, then the central problem of liberating men from this condition lies in making a whole field of significant activity available and open to the working man—of activity which is *not* 'work'; in other words: in making the sphere of real leisure available to him.

This end cannot be attained by purely political measures and by widening and, in that sense, 'freeing' the life of the individual economically. Although this would entail much that is necessary, the essential would still be wanting. The provision of an external opportunity for leisure is not enough; it can only be fruitful if the man himself is capable of leisure and can, as we say, 'occupy his leisure', or (as the Greeks still more clearly say) *skolen agein*, 'work his leisure' (this usage brings out very clearly the by no means 'leisurely' character of leisure).

'That is the principal point: with what kind of activity is man to occupy his leisure'¹²—who would suspect that that was a sentence taken from a book more than two thousand years old, none other than the *Politics* of Aristotle?



V

WHAT, then, ultimately makes leisure inwardly possible and, at the same time, what is its fundamental justification?

In posing this question we are asking again: can the realm of leisure be saved and its foundations upheld by an appeal to humanism? On closer inspection it will be seen that 'humanism', understood as a mere appeal to a *humanum*, does not serve.

The soul of leisure, it can be said, lies in 'celebration'. Celebration is the point at which the three elements of leisure come to a focus: relaxation, effortlessness, and the superiority of 'active leisure' to all functions.

But if celebration is the core of leisure, then leisure can only be made possible and justifiable on the same basis as the celebration of a feast. *That basis is divine worship.*

The meaning of celebration, we have said, is man's affirmation of the universe and his experiencing the world in an aspect other than its everyday one. Now we cannot

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conceive a more intense affirmation of the world than 'praise of God', praise of the Creator of this very world. This statement is generally received with a discomfort formed of many elements—I have often witnessed that. But its truth is irrefutable. The most festive feast it is possible to celebrate is divine worship. And there is no feast which does not draw its vitality from worship and that has not become a feast by virtue of its origin in worship. There is no such thing as a feast 'without Gods'—whether it be a carnival or a marriage. That is not a demand, nor a requirement; it does not mean that that is how things ought to be. Rather, it is meant as a simple statement of fact: however dim the recollection of the association may have become in men's minds, a feast 'without Gods', and unrelated to worship, is quite simply unknown. It is true that ever since the French Revolution attempts have repeatedly been made to manufacture feast days and holidays that have no connection with divine worship, or are sometimes even opposed to it: 'Brutus days', or even that hybrid 'Labour Day'. In point of fact the stress and strain of giving them some kind of festal appearance is one of the very best proofs of the significance of divine worship for a feast; and nothing illustrates so clearly that festivity is only possible where divine worship is still a vital act—and nothing shows this so clearly as a comparison between a living and deeply traditional feast day, with its roots in divine worship, and one of those rootless celebrations, carefully and unspontaneously prepared beforehand, and as artificial as a maypole.

Certainly we must ask whether the great epoch of artificial feasts is not still to come. Perhaps we should be preparing ourselves for it. Might we not expect the forces of society, or in the extreme case the holders of political

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power, to lavish tremendous effort on specious arrangements for the sake of artificially engendering a sham festivity—an illusory, semi-opaque semblance of 'holidays' which, however, would be devoid of that true and ultimate affirmation of the world which is the essence of the festive. Such holidays, moreover, are in fact based on suppression of such affirmation; they derive their dangerous seductiveness precisely from that.

What is true of celebration is true of leisure: its possibility, its ultimate justification derive from its roots in divine worship. That is not a conceptual abstraction, but the simple truth as may be seen from the history of religion. What does a 'day of rest' mean in the Bible, and for that matter in Greece and Rome? To rest from work means that time is reserved for divine worship: certain days and times are set aside and transferred to 'the exclusive property of the Gods'.¹

Divine worship means the same thing where time is concerned, as the temple where space is concerned. 'Temple' means (as may be seen from the original sense of the word): that a particular piece of ground is specially reserved, and marked off from the remainder of the land which is used either for agriculture or for habitation. And this plot of land is transferred to the estate of the Gods, it is neither lived on, nor cultivated. And similarly in divine worship a certain definite space of *time* is set aside from working hours and days, a limited time, specially marked off—and like the space allotted to the temple, is not *used*, is withdrawn from all merely utilitarian ends. Every seventh day is such a period of time. It is the 'feast time', and it arises in this way, in no other.

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There can be no such thing in the world of 'total labour' as space which is not used *on principle*; no such thing as a plot of ground, or a period of time withdrawn from use. There is in fact no *room* in the world of 'total labour' either for divine worship, or for a feast: because the 'worker's' world, the world of 'labour', rests solely upon the principle of rational utilization. A 'feast day' in that world is either a pause in the midst of work (and for the sake of work, of course), or in the case of 'Labour Day', or whatever feast days of the world of 'work' may be called, it is the very principle of work that is being celebrated—once again, work stops for the sake of work, and the feast is subordinated to 'work'. There can of course be games, *circenses*, circuses—but who would think of describing that kind of mass entertainment as festal?

It simply cannot be otherwise: the world of 'work' and of the 'worker' is a poor, impoverished world, be it ever so rich in material goods; for on an exclusively utilitarian basis, on the basis, that is, of the world of 'work', genuine wealth, wealth which implies overflowing into superfluities, into unnecessaries, is just not possible. Wherever the superfluous makes its appearance it is immediately subjected to the rationalist, utilitarian principle of the world of work. And, as the traditional Russian saying puts it: work does not make one rich, but round-shouldered.

On the other hand, divine worship, of its very nature, creates a sphere of real wealth and superfluity, even in the midst of the direst material want—because sacrifice is the living heart of worship. And what does sacrifice mean? It means a voluntary offering freely given. It definitely does not involve utility, is in fact absolutely antithetic to utility. Thus, the act of worship creates a store of real wealth

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which cannot be consumed by the workaday world. It sets up an area where calculation is thrown to the winds and goods are deliberately squandered, where usefulness is forgotten and generosity reigns. Such wastefulness is, we repeat, true wealth: the wealth of the feast time. And only in this feast time can leisure unfold and come to fruition.

Separated from the sphere of divine worship, of the cult of the divine, and from the power it radiates, leisure is as impossible as the celebration of a feast. Cut off from the worship of the divine, leisure becomes laziness and work inhuman.

That is the origin or source of all sham forms of leisure with their strong family resemblance to want of leisure and to sloth (in its old metaphysical and theological sense). The vacancy left by absence of worship is filled by mere killing of time and by boredom, which is directly related to inability to enjoy leisure; for one can only be bored if the spiritual power to be leisurely has been lost. There is an entry in Baudelaire's *Journal Intime* that is fearful in the precision of its cynicism: 'One must work, if not from taste then at least from despair. For, to reduce everything to a single truth: work is less boring than pleasure.'

And the counterpart to that is the fact that if real leisure is deprived of the support of genuine feast days and holy-days, work itself becomes inhuman: whether endured brutishly or 'heroically' work is naked toil and effort without hope—it can only be compared to the labours of Sisyphus, that mythical symbol of the 'worker' chained to his function, never pausing in his work, and never gathering any fruit from his labours.

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In its extreme form the passion for work, naturally blind to every form of divine worship and often inimical to it, turns abruptly into its contrary, and work becomes a cult, becomes a religion. To work means to pray, Carlyle wrote, and he went on to say that fundamentally all genuine work is religion, and any religion that is not work ought to be left to Brahmins and dancing dervishes. Could anyone really pretend that that exotic nineteenth-century opinion was merely *bizarre* and not much more nearly a charter for the world of 'total work'—that is on the way to becoming our world?

The celebration of divine worship, then, is the deepest of the springs by which leisure is fed and continues to be vital—though it must be remembered that leisure embraces everything which, without being *merely* useful, is an essential part of a full human existence.

In a period when divine worship is deeply felt and unites the whole social body and is, moreover, acknowledged as valid by all or nearly all, it might (perhaps) not be quite so necessary to discuss the foundation of leisure explicitly; and in so far as it was necessary to justify leisure in such periods it might (perhaps) be enough to dwell upon the purely humanistic arguments. But at a time when the nature of culture is no longer even understood, at a time when 'the world of work' claims to include the whole field of human existence, and to be co-terminous with it, it is necessary to go back to fundamentals in order to re-discover the ultimate justification of leisure.

An appeal to antiquity in the name of learning merely is virtually meaningless in times such as these; it is powerless against the enormous *pressure*, internal as well as external, of 'the world of work'. An appeal to Plato is no longer

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any good—unless one goes to the very roots of Plato (for we are concerned with roots, not with precedents, 'influences'). Nor is it any use emphasizing that the traditions of philosophy go back to Plato's Academy, unless at the same time one accepts the religious character of the original 'academy'; for Plato's Academy was a genuine religious association in which, for example, one of the members was explicitly appointed to prepare the sacrifice. Perhaps the reason why 'purely academic' has sunk to mean something sterile, pointless and unreal is *because* the *schola* has lost its roots in religion and in divine worship. And so, instead of reality we get a world of make-believe, of intellectual *trompe l'œil*, and cultural tricks and traps and jokes, with here and there a 'temple of the Muses' and a 'holy of holies'. Goethe certainly seems to have thought as much when he referred to the classicism of his day, in an astonishing phrase, declaring all the '*inventa* of antiquity' to be '*matters of faith*' which are now '*fantastically copied out of pure fantasy*'.²

To repeat: today it is quite futile to defend the sphere of leisure in the last ditch but one. The sphere of leisure, it has already been said, is no less than the sphere of culture in so far as that word means everything that lies beyond the utilitarian world. Culture lives on religion through divine worship. And when culture itself is endangered, and leisure is called in question, there is only one thing to be done: to go back to the first and original source.

Such is, moreover, the meaning of the marvellous quotation from Plato placed at the beginning of this essay. The origin of the arts in worship, and of leisure derived from its celebration, is given in the form of a magnificent

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mythical image: man attains his true form and his upright attitude 'in festive companionship with the Gods'.

But what—someone may well ask—are we *to do* about it?

Well, the considerations put forward in this essay were not designed to give advice and draw up a line of action; they were meant to make men think. Their aim has been to throw a little light on a problem which seems to me very important and very urgent, and is all too easily lost to sight among the immediate tasks in hand.

The object of this essay, then, is not to provide an immediate, practical guide to action. Nevertheless, there is one hope which ought, in conclusion, to be set down clearly—the fact is that in this sphere the decisive result is not to be achieved through action but can only be hoped for as dispensation. Our effort has been to regain some space for true leisure, to bring back a fundamentally right possession of leisure, 'active leisure'. The true difficulty in this often desperate effort is due to the fact that the ultimate root of leisure is not susceptible to the human will. Absolute affirmation of the universe cannot, strictly speaking, be based upon a voluntary resolve. Above all it cannot be 'done' for the sake of a purpose lying outside itself. There are things which we cannot do 'in order to . . .' or 'so that . . .'. Either we do them not at all or we do them because they are meaningful in themselves. No doubt physicians are right in saying that lack of leisure makes for illness. But just as certainly it is impossible to attempt to engage in leisure for health's sake. Such a reversal of the meaningful order of things is more than just unseemly; it simply cannot be done. Leisure cannot be achieved at all when it is sought as a means to an end, even

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though that end be 'the salvation of Western civilization'. Celebration of God in worship cannot be done unless it is done for its own sake. That most sublime form of affirmation of the world as a whole is the fountainhead of leisure.

Our hope is, in the first place, that the many signs *intra et extra muros* of a re-awakening of the feeling for worship and its significance should not prove deceptive and misleading. For, to recapitulate: no one need expect a genuine religious worship, a *cultus*, to arise on purely human foundations, on foundations made by man; it is of the very nature of religious worship that its origin lies in a divine ordinance, a fact which is moreover implied in the quotation from Plato already referred to. No doubt the feeling for what has been ordained and laid down may increase, or it may lose its vitality. And that is the point towards which our hopes are directed—and not, of course, to the revival of some antiquated cult; and still less towards the foundation of a new religion! From those who see no hope along these lines (and hopelessness along these lines, it must be conceded, could produce not a few grounds in its defence)—from those who see nothing worth hoping for here—we should certainly not expect to find confidence in the future. This is a matter about which it seems to me of the utmost importance to leave no doubt in their minds.

Worship is either something 'given', divine worship is fore-ordained—or it does not exist at all. There can be no question of founding a religion or instituting a religious *cultus*. And for the Christian there is, of course, no doubt in the matter: *post Christum* there is only one, true and final form of celebrating divine worship, the sacramental sacrifice of the Christian Church. And moreover I think

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that anyone enquiring into the facts of the case from an historical point of view (whether he is a Christian or not) would be unable to find any other worship whatsoever in the Europeanized world.

The Christian *cultus*, unlike any other, is at once a sacrifice and a sacrament.³ In so far as the Christian *cultus* is a *sacrifice* held in the midst of the creation which is affirmed by this sacrifice of the God-man—every day is a feast day; and in fact the liturgy knows only feast days, even working days being *feria*. In so far as the *cultus* is a *sacrament* it is celebrated in visible signs. And the full power of worship will only be felt if its sacramental character is realized in undiminished form, i.e. if the sign is fully visible. In leisure, as was said, man oversteps the frontiers of the everyday workaday world, not in external effort and strain, but as though lifted above it in ecstasy. That is the sense of the visibility of the sacrament: that man is 'carried away' by it, thrown into 'ecstasy'. Let no one imagine for a moment that that is a private and romantic interpretation. The Church has pointed to the meaning of the incarnation of the Logos in the self-same words: *ut dum visibiliter Deum cognoscimus, per hunc in invisibilium amorem rapiamur*, that we may be rapt into love of the invisible reality through the visibility of that first and ultimate sacrament: the Incarnation.

We therefore hope that this true sense of sacramental visibility may become so manifest in the celebration of the Christian *cultus* itself that in the performance of it man, 'who is born to work', may truly be 'transported' out of the weariness of daily labour into an unending holiday, carried away out of the straitness of the workaday world into the heart of the universe.

Notes

The quotation preceding the essay is from the *Laws* (653 C-d). The psalm is translated from the Septuagint; it begins with the word *σχολλάσατε*. It has been said by Joseph Bernhardt that this verse 'became an axiom of mystical epistemology'.

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¹ In his well-known study on capitalism and Protestant ethics, p. 171 (1934).

² *Nicomachean Ethics*.

³ *Politics*, 8, 3 (1337 b).

⁴ Ernst Nickisch, *Die dritte imperiale Figur* (1935).

⁵ Ernst Jünger, *Der Arbeiter. Herrschaft und Gestalt* (1932).

II

¹ *Blätter und Steine*, p. 202 (1934).

² Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. Ed. by R. Schmidt (Leipzig, 1944), p. 95.

³ Bernhard Jansen, *Die Geschichte der Erkenntnislehre in der neueren Philosophie*, p. 235 (1940).

⁴ "Von einem neuerdings erhobenen vornehmen Ton in der Philosophie." *Akademie-Ausgabe*, VIII, pp. 387-406.

⁵ Fragment 112 (Diels).

⁶ *Quaest. disp. de veritate*, 15, 1.

⁷ *Quaest. disp. de virtutibus cardinalibus*, 1.

⁸ Kant, loc. cit.

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⁹ *Maximen und Reflexionen*, No. 1415 (edition Günther Müller, 1943).

¹⁰ Hermann Rauschning, *Gespräche mit Hitler* (Zürich, 1940).

¹¹ Loc. cit., p. 390.

¹² Schiller, *Die Philosophen*.

¹³ Found in Diogenes Laertius, *The Lives and Opinions of Renowned Philosophers*, VI, Book I, Cap. 2.

¹⁴ Ibid. One of Antisthenes's works bears the title *The Greater Hercules, or Of Power*.

¹⁵ Anton Gail has drawn my attention to the fact that in a portrait of Erasmus by Holbein (at Longford Castle) Erasmus's hands are resting on a book in which are to be read the words: 'Herakleou ponoi—Erasmii Roterodami'.

¹⁶ Carlyle, quoted by Robert Langewiesche.

¹⁷ Cf. Wilhelm Nestle: *Griechische Geistesgeschichte von Homer bis Lukian*, 1944, pp. 313 ff.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 314.

¹⁹ Quoted by Clement of Alexandria.

²⁰ Cf. Diogenes Laertius, VI, 1.5.

²¹ *Summa Theologica*, II, II, 123, 12 ad 2.

²² Ibid., II, II, 27, 8 ad 2.

²³ Ibid., II, II, 108, 2.

²⁴ *Quaest. disp. de caritate*, 8 ad 17.

²⁵ Commentary on *Proverbs*, 1, d. 2 (expositio tertus).

²⁶ Ernst Jünger, *Blätter und Steine*, p. 179.

²⁷ *Summa Theologica*, II, II, 141, 5 ad 1.

²⁸ *Summa Contra Gentes*, 4, 23; cf. also *Summa Theologica*, 1, 38, 2 ad 1.

²⁹ *Summa Theologica*, I, 21, 14.

³⁰ Commentary on the *Metaphysics*, I, 3.

³¹ Newman: *Idea of a University*, V, 6.

³² Ibid.

³³ *Blätter und Steine*, p. 176.

³⁴ Quoted in Eckermann's *Conversations*.

³⁵ Commentary on *Proverbs*.

III

¹ See Joseph Pieper, *Über die Hoffnung*, p. 55.

² *Sickness unto Death*, pp. 74 ff.

³ *Quaest. disp. de malo*, 11, 3.

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- ⁴ W. Sombart, *Der Bourgeois*, pp. 322, 313, 321 (1913).
⁵ Max Scheler, *Vom Umsturz der Werte*, Vol. II, p. 293 (1919).
⁶ Johannes Haessle, *Das Arbeitsethos der Kirche nach Thomas von Aquin und Leo XIII*, p. 31 (1923).
⁷ *De unitate intellectus*.
⁸ Johannes Haessle, loc. cit.
⁹ *Summa Theologica*, II, II, 35, 3 ad 1; *Quaest. disp. de malo*, II, 3 ad 2.
¹⁰ In the entry dated 12 Sept. 1939.
¹¹ Fragment 75 (Diels).
¹² Karl Kerényi, *Die antike Religion*, p. 66 (1940).
¹³ *Summa contra Gentes*, II, 96.
¹⁴ 'As God who made all things did not rest in those things . . . but rested in himself from the created works . . . so we too should learn not to regard the works as the goal, but to rest from the works in God himself, in whom our felicity lies. That is the reason that man is supposed to work for six days on his own works, but on the seventh day to rest and be free for the worship of God. But this resting has been pledged to the Christian not for a time, but for ever.' Aquinas, Commentary on the *Sentences*, 2 d. 15, 3, 3.
¹⁵ Richard Wright in *Die Umschau*, Vol. I, Heft 2, pp. 214-16.
¹⁶ *Nicomachean Ethics*, 10, 7 (1177b).

IV

- ¹ Trübner's *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (Berlin, 1939).
² *Theaetetus*, 175 f.
³ Pius XI, The Encyclical 'Quadragesimo anno'.
⁴ Ibid.
⁵ Although in writing *Thesen zur sozialen Politik* (first published in 1933). I expressly limited myself to the consideration of political questions, and was therefore aware of the limitations of a purely political view, I now regard the essay as requiring completion at many points. It is surely characteristic of the generation formed between the wars that they expected in general too much from unadulterated politics.
⁶ Published in the first number of *Les Temps Modernes*.
⁷ Stalin in a public statement made in 1933.
⁸ 'Quadragesimo anno', pp. 55 ff.
⁹ P. T. Proudhon, *Die Sonntagsfeier, aus dem Gesichtspunkt des öffentlichen Gesundheitswesens, der Moral, der Familien- und bürgerlichen Verhältnisse betrachtet* (Kassel, 1850).

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- ¹⁰ Ibid., p. 18.
¹¹ Ibid., p. vi.
¹² Aristotle, *Politics*, 8, 33 (1337 b).

V

- ¹ *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, 1942 Article "Arbeitsruhe".
² Goethe to Riemer, 26 March 1814.
³ *Summa Theologica*, III, 79, 5.