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Into the New Year

(see page 708)

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'Jobs for All'

A summing-up of the broadcast discussions on full employment

I—By DAVID WORSWICK
(Economist)

THINK of hungry people and idle hands. Not a few here and there, but millions. That is where we started these discussions on 'Jobs for All'. Now we are going to attempt to sum up. Let me begin by recounting as briefly as I can the essential economic argument. It starts from the simple statement that it is spending which creates employment. Personal spending on clothing makes jobs for shoppeers, wholesalers and workers in the clothing and textile trades. The spending of industrialists on private investment—that is to say, the building of factories, the installation of machinery, piling up of stocks of materials—makes jobs for builders, engineers, miners and so on. The spending of the government and local authorities on education, on housing, on health, on armaments, creates jobs for teachers, builders, doctors, union workers. The spending of overseas buyers on our exports takes work for those engaged in the export industries: equally, of course, our spending on imports gives employment to workers overseas and this must be subtracted from the total. If we add up all these items of expenditure: personal consumption; private investment in factories and equipment; public expenditure on housing, defence and social services; and the balance of foreign expenditure (*i.e.* exports minus imports)—add them all up and we shall know how much employment there will be. If the total expenditure is insufficient, then there will be unemployment.

What is needed, therefore, is a means of keeping up total spending at such a level that there are as many jobs as there are workers, a means of ensuring that we always take the goods out of the shops as fast as we can put them in. Someone said to me after the second discussion in the series: 'Well, it seems too easy: all you say is that everyone should be extravagant'. But that missed my point altogether.

We do not want to interfere in any way with the freedom of the individual person to spend or save his income as he pleases. What is required is an overall regulation of total expenditure, and this only the government can do. By using its powers to borrow and spend, and to tax, the government can increase and regulate total expenditure. It can do this either by claiming directly any resources of labour which would otherwise be idle, using those resources to produce things which the community needs—housing, schools, defence and so on; or, by changing the rates or the structure of taxes, it can raise the spending power of individuals and thus claim these idle resources to satisfy individual needs. I indicated two ways of regulating expenditure. The one is for the government to borrow and spend on the scale necessary to ensure full employment. This is called deficit finance. Some people would say that this is merely encouraging the government to be extravagant. Extravagance means being wasteful. And, for the nation as a whole, nothing is more wasteful than the unemployment of workers.

Deficit finance is therefore economical if it increases employment and output and so reduces the needless waste of unwanted idleness. It does, however, imply a rising national debt. Since the national debt is something we owe to ourselves, this, I argued, need not worry us unduly. However, it would be possible to combine jobs for all with orthodox finance if we brought about a certain redistribution of incomes from the savers to the spenders: one way I suggested would be to shift from taxes which fall on the consumption of the poor to taxes which fall partly or wholly on the savings of the higher income groups.

To the layman, public finance and monetary matters appear complicated and paradoxical. They make sense so long as we think always in terms of real things, of the production and consumption of food, houses, motor-cars, entertainment and leisure. But what about exports and imports? We tried to bring out in our discussions the fact that there can be two distinct attitudes to international trade. If a country has full employment, then it will tend to look at international trade—

'Poet's Christmas'

From the programme of poetry broadcast on Christmas Eve

The Christmas Tree

Put out the lights now!
Look at the tree, the rough tree dazzled
In oriole plumes of flame,
Tinselled with twinkling frost fire, tasselled
With stars and moons—the same
That yesterday hid in the spinney and had no fame
Till we put out the lights now.

Hard are the nights now:
The fields at moonrise turn to agate,
Shadows are cold as jet;
In dyke and furrow, in copse and faggot—
The frost's tooth is set;
And stars are the sparks whirled out by the north wind's fret
On the flinty nights now.

So feast your eyes now
On mimic star and moon-cold bauble:
Worlds may wither unseen,
But the Christmas tree is a tree of fable—
A phoenix in evergreen,
And the world cannot change or chill what its mysteries mean
To your hearts and eyes now.

The vision dies now
Candle by candle; the tree that embraced it
Returns to its own kind,
To be earthed again and weather as best it
May the frost and wind.
Children, it too had its hour—you will not mind
If it lives or dies now.

CECIL DAY LEWIS

The Return

We have been off on a long voyage, have we not?
Have done and seen much in that time, but have got

Little that you will prize, who are dancing now
In the silent town whose lights gleam back from our prow.

For you we have brought no pearls or gold, you will learn,
And the best we have brought for ourselves is our glad return.

We bless the estuary lying quiet in the dark,
We praise the power that is given us to steer our barque,

With the old delight, with the sense of a brief reprieve,
Up by the snowy docks on Christmas Eve.

And though you have turned from us, and have taken your release
From us and all thought of us, yet on this night of peace

Pause for a moment, put by your dance and song:
Take to us kindly, and we shall not stay long.

We shall dock the ship, and loose the dogs to roam
And across the fallen snow, shall come to our home.

The music will pause and you will hear our knock
On the door of our home. Open. We shall not mock

Anything you may do in this sacred place.
But look for a moment, and try to remember our face,

Remember on Christmas Eve, as you stand in the doorway there
And regard us as strangers, the forgotten love we bear,

And shall bear it always over the frozen snow
When the door is shut again, and once again we go,

The souls of the forgotten, for whom there is no repose
When the music begins again, and again the doors close,

For whom a thought of yours would come the length
Of a whole dark hemisphere to give us strength.

The souls of the forgotten: others reign in our stead,
But let us go with at least your blessing on our head,

Who year after year shall creep, forgotten lover and bride,
To your door and knock, and knock, at every Christmas-tide,

Who, lost and ever-rejected, turn from your door and weep,
And retrace our steps to the harbour, where it lies silent an

In a slumber of snow and starlight. This is the scene we know
And shall bear in our hearts for ever as worlds away we go:

The harbour, the town, the dancing: to which the soul returns,
Lost and ever-rejected, under a Star which burns

In the zenith over the mainmast. And again 'tis Christmas
And again in the snow and the Star's light, once again we are

HENRY I

Winter Landscape

Tonight the wind gnaws
with teeth of glass,
the jackdaw shivers
in caged branches of iron,
the stars have talons.

There is hunger in the mouth
of vole and badger,
silver agonies of breath
in the nostril of the fox,
ice on the rabbit's paw.

Tonight has no moon,
no food for the pilgrim;
the fruit tree is bare,
the rose bush a thorn
and the ground bitter with stones.

But the mole sleeps, and the hedgehog
lies curled in a womb of leaves,
the bean and the wheat-seed
hug their germs in the earth
and the stream moves under the ice.

Tonight there is no moon,
but a new star opens
like a silver trumpeter over the dead.
Tonight in a nest of ruins
the blessed babe is laid.

And the fir tree warms to a bloom of candles,
the child lights his lantern,
stares at his tinselled toy;
our hearts and hearths
smoulder with live ashes.

In the blood of our grief
the cold earth is suckled,
in our agony the womb
convulses its seed,
in the cry of anguish
the child's first breath is born.

LAURIE