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978-1-107-66709-9 - Men Without Work: A Report made to the Pilgrim Trust

With an Introduction by the Archbishop of York

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# MEN WITHOUT WORK

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WORK

*A Report made to the Pilgrim Trust*

WITH AN  
Introduction by the  
ARCHBISHOP OF YORK  
and a Preface by  
LORD MACMILLAN



CAMBRIDGE  
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
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## P R E F A C E

FROM the outset the Pilgrim Trustees have felt that they could not better give practical effect to the intentions of the generous founder of their Trust than by devoting a substantial part of the available income to the alleviation of the social consequences of the malady of unemployment which in these days so grievously afflicts the body politic. But, confronted as they have been with innumerable applications for assistance to schemes of all kinds designed to this end, the Trustees have sometimes had the misgivings which must assail all who have the privilege of distributing funds for philanthropic objects and they have been anxious to obtain the best guidance which would ensure that their grants really did good.

Consequently, recognising that a sound diagnosis is the essential prerequisite of sound treatment, the Trustees welcomed the suggestion that an investigation, sympathetic but thorough, should be made of all the symptoms, moral, social and economic, of unemployment and a critical survey undertaken of the modes of treatment hitherto devised. Here, in this volume, will be found the results of this investigation and survey. I do not hesitate to say that all students of social science will share the gratitude of the Trustees to those who have so competently fulfilled a task full of difficulty. While the Report has the objectivity appropriate to a piece of scientific research, it should never be forgotten that the inquiry was concerned with the actual experiences, too often the sufferings, of human beings and that the formal arrays of figures in the statistical tables which have been compiled relate to living men and women, not to abstractions. It is to the credit of the compilers of this volume that they have never lost sight of this human aspect of the problem.

We are all, statesmen, economists and ordinary citizens alike, puzzled by the intractable problem of unemployment and our bewilderment is apt to be increased rather than diminished by the constant output of writing on the subject. It is probably just

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because we are none of us, not even the most self-assured, quite certain in our own minds as to what should be done that we seek to salve our consciences and condone our inefficacy by the institution of innumerable committees and inquiries and the writing of innumerable reports. But this volume is not a contribution to the literature of escape. It is a manual of facts for the enlightenment and guidance of those who desire to address themselves to practical measures.

It is right to make it clear that the Pilgrim Trust is not responsible for the views expressed in these pages. The Trustees have neither directly nor indirectly sought to influence the investigators in the performance of their task and the Report is printed exactly as it was received. But, this disclaimer made, the Trustees believe that the Report, by its fresh, humane and independent treatment of its subject, makes a contribution of real value to the understanding of the conditions and the problems of the long unemployed in this country and as such my colleagues and I commend it to the study of our fellow citizens.

MACMILLAN

6 *February* 1938



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## INTRODUCTION

In 1933, when unemployment was still at its worst, I invited a group of people to consult with me about the problem. As a result of the consultations and enquiries which took place, the Committee which I had formed became convinced that there was need for a far more thorough investigation of the work that could be done by voluntary societies for the unemployed, an investigation which must inevitably involve an enquiry into the effects of unemployment and the real needs of the unemployed man. We found that the Pilgrim Trustees were also concerned that such an enquiry should be made, partly in order to aid them in a wise allocation of their funds, so far as these were used to finance pioneer enterprises.

They agreed therefore to finance such an enquiry and invited certain members of my Committee to be responsible for conducting it, together with one or two additional members nominated by the Pilgrim Trust. The Committee thus formed was composed of the following: the Bishop of Chichester, the Master of Balliol, Miss Iredale, Dr Thomas Jones, Sir Walter Moberly, Dr J. H. Oldham and Sir Edward Peacock, with myself as Chairman.

The Committee was fortunate in securing a capable band of investigators to carry out the enquiry. Throughout the enterprise, the secretary of my own former unemployment Committee, Miss Eleanora Iredale, has acted as Secretary to this Committee. She has been the initiator of all its activities, and also a member of the team. In addition to sharing the whole burden to the full, she devoted special attention to that part of the enquiry which relates to women's unemployment. The others who took part in the enquiry were Mr W. F. Oakeshott, Mr A. D. K. Owen, Dr H. W. Singer and, at a later stage, Dr Wagner. Mr Oakeshott, a master at Winchester College, was, on the initiative of the Headmaster, Mr S. Leeson, generously given a year's leave of absence, later extended to four terms. Mr Owen was Secretary of the Civics Section of Political and Economic Planning and Mr Israel Sieff, their Chairman, most kindly released him for this purpose. Dr Singer is an economist of

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## INTRODUCTION

Bonn and Cambridge Universities, and Dr Wagner a psychologist who took part in the well-known survey of unemployment carried out in Marienthal. One distinctive feature of the enquiry lies in the fact that, though the team included specialists, the whole team shared fully the work of the sample and the drafting of the Report.

It was evident that a satisfactory estimate of the value of work undertaken among the unemployed must begin with a fairly exact account of the unemployed themselves. For what was good for those of one type might be useless for those of another. In this part of the undertaking our investigators received invaluable help from the officials of the Unemployment Assistance Board, and here I should like to interject a word of warm appreciation of the spirit displayed and the methods followed by the Board and very many of its officers in the discharge of what is essentially a great social service, but might easily appear to its own beneficiaries as a bureaucratic machine. Every effort is made to render its activities not only humane but human; and the results are beginning to be apparent. Most valuable help and advice were also given to us by the Ministry of Labour at Whitehall and in the local Exchanges.

While this enquiry into the question: Who are the unemployed? was taking place, there was always in mind the further question of the scope and effectiveness of voluntary work among them. This has now assumed such proportions that no work dealing with unemployment from a human standpoint could afford to neglect it, but for us it was obviously a matter of central importance. Any just appreciation of it, however, must be based on a knowledge of the types of local unemployment and of the needs which these create. The two questions are closely bound up with one another. Indeed the subject-matter of the Report is essentially a single whole and it is impossible to consider the effectiveness of any of the voluntary enterprises without first understanding the situation with which they are faced and the peculiar problems, physical, psychological and moral, to which unemployment gives rise.

The Report represents a new approach to the problems created by unemployment, and one which I am persuaded gets much

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closer to the real difficulties than a purely economic approach could have done. We have become accustomed to a high degree of unemployment and are inclined to be secure in the feeling, partly justified by the facts, that unemployment is “well in hand” so far as the authorities are concerned, and is not impairing seriously the prosperity of the country. The Report shows the existence of such a state of affairs that acquiescence in existing activities as a policy for the present cannot be tolerated, and as a policy for the future may be exceedingly dangerous. Again, prolonged unemployment must reduce those who are exposed to it to a common minimum level. This fact will affect the skilled man who has previously had a good wage differently from the man who has had nothing but casual or unskilled work and who may never have earned very much more than he now receives. If this is so, the appropriate method of helping them must almost inevitably be different. The Report shows that prolonged unemployment creates a number of difficulties which cannot be ignored. Because the issues raised are largely personal, they are easily understood. We can deal with them from a personal as well as an administrative point of view, and herein lies the importance of knowing and understanding the place and possibilities of voluntary effort in relation to the actual difficulties of the unemployed themselves.

The investigation had to be limited in scope if it was to be thorough and scientific. It was in fact limited to the effects of “long unemployment”, according to the accepted definition of that term, i.e. unemployment continued for more than a year. In this connexion it must be noted that the reduction of the number of the unemployed resulting from the improvement of trade does not bring with it anything like a proportionate reduction of “long unemployment”. Those who fell out of work recently, or who have been intermittently employed, are re-absorbed into industry as better times return; but this does not happen in at all the same degree with the “long unemployed”. Here it would seem that we are confronted with a problem new in character, at any rate on the scale which it exhibits now; it is not only a question of an economic burden to be carried by the country, but of a real danger of moral decay.

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I am convinced that the investigators have produced a piece of work as important as it is interesting. Much of it is novel, even to those most expert in the subject. And it is a genuinely human document, which being readable as well as scientific, may well win the attention of a large public. The Pilgrim Trust deserves the gratitude, not only of the Committee and of the investigators, but of all men of good will for making possible its publication.

The investigators have received valuable help in planning the enquiry, in consultation during its progress, in reading and commenting on the draft of the report and in many other ways from Sir William Beveridge, Mr Henry Brooke, Mr D. Caradog Jones, Professor A. M. Carr-Saunders, The Rev. Henry Carter, Mr John Dale, Mr Ronald Davison, Miss Dorothy Elliott, Dr R. D. Gillespie, Mr Claude Guillebaud, Professor N. F. Hall, Professor John Jewkes, Miss D. C. Keeling, Mr E. C. Lascelles, Dr Leishman, Mr Godfrey Lloyd, Miss Janet McCrindell, Mr S. H. Mackintosh, Dr J. J. Mallon, Dr Henry Mess, Mr S. Myers, Mr John Newsom, Mr William Noble, Mr E. C. Ramsbottom, Mr E. A. G. Robinson, Mr Wright Robinson, Mr B. Seebohm Rowntree, Sir Arthur Salter, Mrs J. L. Stocks, Mr F. D. Stuart, Professor R. H. Tawney, and Dr Brinley Thomas. None of these is of course committed in any way by what is said in the Report. Acknowledgement must also be made of the help received from many representatives of the National Council of Social Service. Not only have their headquarters given generous help, but the many contacts with their local representatives and with the Wardens of the Colleges for Adult Education were invaluable. It is impossible to mention by name the very many others who in the course of the enquiry gave valuable assistance and advice, but I should like to acknowledge the untiring secretarial help given by Miss Dorothy Calvert to Miss Iredale and her fellow investigators.

WILLIAM EBOR:

BISHOPTHORPE, YORK

3 February 1938