

AUTOM ATION

What relationship does automation have to the rash of demonstrations? The relationship is concomitant. Never before has America been so fraught with duplicity as now; this is a deceptive age. Automation has produced a nation in which mechanized production promises an end of manual labor, a minimum of working hours and a maximum of leisure for aesthetics, entertainemnt, amusement, and recreation; automation promises the millenium. But science has proved to be the false Messiah. Never before has America been so rampantly plagued with discontent, revolt, crime, broken homes, juvenile delinquency, narcotic addiction, illness, and mental disease. Americans are being frustrated by fear and ignorance of the true values of beauty and elevation. And we must look within our nation for relief and solution. The world today is gripped by strife, injustice, corruption, and the fear of nuclear annihilation. This is a confused, chaotic world split in the throes of revolution; it is a world in which half of humanity is destitute with poverty, disease, and ignorance. The irony of automation is that in teaching man how to survive, it also threatens to erase all life from the earth. A cause has evolved which demands a reevaluation of the American philosophy in terms of How to Live! not hpw to survive.

Automation, in truth, is not technological mechanization of the human powers and virtues. It is man's endeavor to eliminate human fallacy. As mere technological mechanization, it becomes an awesome spectre. As a way of life, as a dynamic ideal which transcends the machine and its operation, automation dispels inequity, bias, prejudice, and economic insecurity.

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There are those caucasians who observe that a traditional way of life is being destroyed by automation; and a resultant feeling of irrational fear overcomes reason. Automation is not a threat to the Negroes' economic stability; but this fear, among the whites, of automation has become the threat which has intensified old racial restrictions and exclusions which have made the Negroes' economic status unstable, along with that of other minority groups. In the North, the protest is economic; in the South, it is primarily social. In North and South alike, automation means a higher standard of living; but automation also demands equitable returns for the dollar spent, thereby affording an ultimate common ground for both economic and social protest.

In a democracy, such as ours, based on individualism and free enterprise, the prospects of an atheistic materialistic automation are suicidal. A system of automation that embraces and inculcates freedom of choice, human dignity, and integrity, and one that relegates all machines to the function of implements of perfectibility is the American dream. Negroes would demonstrate the realization of this dream.