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# Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"Force is as pitiless to the man who possesses it, or thinks he does, as it is to its victims; the second it crushes, the first it intoxicates."

—SIMONE WEIL

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Threepence

**IS IT REALLY THE ONLY WAY?**

## Bevanite Manifesto

THE publication last week of the pamphlet, *One Way Only*, was greeted with howls of outrage from the Conservative and Liberal press, non-committal remarks about "Labour's fundamental unity" from the *Daily Herald*, an embarrassing welcome from the *Daily Worker*, and cordial approval from the *New Statesman*.

The pamphlet, published by the *Tribune* is sub-titled "A Socialist Analysis of the Present World Crisis", and has a foreword by Aneurin Bevan, Harold Wilson and John Freeman, the three Ministers who resigned in protest against the provisions of the budget introduced by Mr. Gaitskell a few months ago. They lean over backwards in disclaiming any intention of impairing the "unity and strength of the Labour Movement". "The pamphlet is not intended to be a statement of policy for the Labour Party," they say, but if it is not intended as the manifesto of the Bevanite opposition at the forthcoming Scarborough Conference of the Labour Party, what on earth can it be?

The pamphlet argues, with a great deal of skill, for a re-affirmation of five principles, which are as follows:—

- (1) War is not inevitable, but will certainly become so if the rearmament race continues unabated. For that reason, a supreme effort must be made to negotiate a settlement with Russia in the next two years.
- (2) The under-privileged colonial peoples have a right to complete their social revolutions. It is the task of British Socialism to persuade our Western allies to assist those revolutions by economic and technical aid, instead of collaborating with counter-revolutionary forces in order to suppress them and so driving them into the arms of Soviet Russia.

(3) To this end, the military rearmament of the Atlantic Powers should be subordinated to a World Plan for Mutual Aid. Britain should urge the use for this over-riding purpose of a considerable part of labour and resources at present allocated to the combined rearmament programme; and we should give a lead by announcing our determination to do this with our own rearmament programme in the coming year.

(4) The degree of rearmament necessary to deter the Russians from military adventures should be financed not by inflation but under a system of Socialist controls designed to steady the cost of living, maintain the social services and prevent excessive profits and luxury spending.

(5) It is not only possible, but both desirable and necessary, to embark upon a fresh series of measures designed to carry us forward towards the establishment of a Socialist society in Britain.

It can be seen that here is a programme designed to appeal to the large number of Labour Party supporters who have with growing uneasiness witnessed the triumph of "realism" in the party's policy since the days of opposition and tub-thumping; in fact, like most of such documents, *One Way Only* has something for everybody. At the same time it has carefully avoided laying open its authors to the sort of criticism they are bound to meet, charges of disruption, fellow-travelling, pacifism and anti-Americanism.

The destructive criticism which the authors make is good. Their strongest point is in contrasting economic development in the West with the plight of the "underdeveloped areas" of the world, which, excluding those under Communist governments, comprise 750 million people, about a third of the world's population. "Almost all these peoples live on a diet twenty per cent. below what is considered necessary for health and efficiency. The fight for a bare minimum of food is unending and often unendurable. Over a large part of these areas one-half of the children born do not live past their sixth year; the expectation of life is one-half that now established in the developed areas." All Asia will receive this year from America one cent in economic aid for every \$300 spent on armaments.

But the very moderation of the pamphlet and the assumptions upon which it is based, should, it is to be hoped, prevent it from becoming the rallying point of the disillusioned Labour Party supporters

whose faith in the validity of political action has been shaken by experience. There has been a tendency among them to look back on the history of the movement asking the question "What went wrong?" and to see the answer in the adoption of the principal of political struggle and the rejection of the aim of workers' control. They thus concern themselves with fundamental issues which *One Way Only* ignores. If they let themselves become an instrument in Mr. Bevan's long-term campaign for power, they will only have their own short-sightedness to blame for the inevitable disillusionment.

*One Way Only* demands that Britain's three-year rearmament programme be reduced from £4,700 millions to £3,600 millions, the difference being spent on social services and aid to backward countries. Is this modest proposal the only alternative to what Messrs. Bevan, Wilson and Freeman describe as "mass suicide or mass-surrender"?

### 'Charm of the English Countryside'

"W.D. PROPERTY. Consecrated Ground. Keep Out", said a characteristically tacit notice; and an eight-foot-high barbed wire fence surrounded the little churchyard. Imber Church appeared to be undamaged, but the rest of the village is in a shocking state. The gaping cottages bear the scars of street-fighting; cartridge-cases and expended thunder-flashes litter the filthy floor of what was once the drawing-room of Imber Court.

On the rolling uplands round the village the guns have reduced the belts of trees to sparse, bare, splintered palisades, which look, because they suggest 1914-18, old-fashioned and which seem, because they are on the wrong side of the Channel, out of place. Tank-tracks make wayward, criss-cross patterns on what must be one of the biggest areas of ungrazed pastureland this side of Mongolia. The village is a sad sight, but it is the rabbits who lent it a touch of the macabre. Gross thistles, man-high nettles and elm-suckers swamp the gardens, mask the ground-floor windows and do their best to engulf all Imber (population, until it was evacuated in 1943, about 200); and under cover of this jungle growth the rabbits have taken the place over.

—Peter Fleming in *The Sunday Times*, 15/7/51.

## Warships in the Red Sea

THE British Empire faces trouble both in the Red Sea and in the Persian Gulf—right across trade and defence communications with India and the Far East. As a result, warships are sent to the troubled waters.

This kind of news seems simple enough and natural enough to-day, and it excites little comment. But to a Labour Party supporter of forty years ago it would have been a cause for indignation. And if such a man knew that his own party formed the government that sent the warships, he would have been completely dismayed.

### Pacifism and Anti-Imperialism

For in those days the Labour Party was affiliated to the Second International, and as such was committed to opposition to war and to armaments, and against Imperialism. Socialism was then represented as something radically different from capitalism—a way of life, a mode of brotherhood and equality between nations and races, an abjuring of methods of sabre-rattling and the big stick, as well as providing a different method of economy.

This older view of socialism persisted even between the wars with such figures as Lansbury, and there is something of it in some of the adherents of Bevan, though they are less naive. It was the remnants of this tradition which attacked Ernest Bevan and demanded a "socialist foreign policy". Behind this rather incoherent attack, lay something of the outlook of the older socialists, who were disturbed by the post-war events in Greece and by Bevan's acceptance of the dictum that "there must be continuity in foreign policy".

### Victory of Practical Men

Significantly, all this opposition has died down, easily defeated by practical reasons for meeting foreign exigencies in the normal way. There is something almost absurd in such demands to-day, and if a Labour member were to attack the sending of warships to the Red Sea and the

Persian Gulf, he would receive little support, or even attention from his own party.

However, there must be elderly members of the Labour Party who remember the bitter analyses which used to be made for propaganda purposes of "the politics of oil", and the manoeuvres and machinations of the oil barons. Such long memories may have twinges when they see Herbert Morrison advising the Anglo-Iranian Company, and insisting that the Government have a proper interest in promoting its welfare.

We doubt if they would to-day be more than passing twinges, however, and more recent adherents of the Labour Party are probably quite unconscious of anything amiss, so completely have they accepted the rôle of the party in power. For the government which administers the British Empire must carry out certain safeguards, must protect British interests . . . must therefore make full use of the Navy and the other Services in their traditional work in "maintaining the life-lines of the Empire".

### Fulfilment of Anarchist Criticism

Fifty and sixty years ago, the anarchists attacked the reformist and parliamentary socialists for their insistence that the important thing was to seize the State power. As anarchists foresaw, the result could only be that the wielders of power would change, not that they would wield it to bring about socialism as a new way of life. The present day Tsarism of the Russian Social Democratic Party illustrates the same general trend.

To-day we see the fulfilment of those anarchist criticisms. True, they have not come as "betrayals" of the ideas and ideals of socialism", though that is how a pre-1914 Labour Party member would view them. Such critics have, however, moved with the times and what would have seemed a betrayal forty years ago, is to-day seen only as practical politics.

Yet the anarchists and the socialists of forty years ago are right. All the century's agitation for socialism was not so that Morrison could send warships to the Red Sea. It is not socialism that should change, but the illusion of the socialists that the desirable society can be brought into being gradually and piecemeal by using the machinery of government. That illusion should give place to the recognition that the world cannot be changed without completely changing its basic structure—its economic foundations in money and markets, and profit and banking, and their social reflections in wage-work and administration from above with material gain as the incentive to work.

Such a concept may seem vague, impractical. Yet it is in harmony with the natural social aspirations of man. Sending warships to troubled waters is not.

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## Atomic Spying in Perspective

THE atmosphere of panic and suspicion engendered by treason trials in the Soviet Union and its satellite countries has often been commented upon in *Freedom*. In the West a similar phenomenon has been observable only in the trials for atomic espionage of such scientists as Nunn May and Klaus Fuchs (and the untried Bruno Pontecorvo) and such agents as Greenglass, Gold and the Rosenbergs. At the time of these trials, *Freedom* noted the atmosphere of hysteria which surrounded them: the trials are commented upon in the May issue of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, in an article entitled "Atomic Spy Trials: Heretical Afterthoughts", and the comments are of such interest that this article aims at presenting a summary of them.

The writer, Eugene Rabinowitch, is the editor of the *Bulletin*. He sets out to examine three widely-held propositions: (1) that without their spies the Soviet Union could never have challenged American atomic bomb supremacy, or hence threaten American cities with atomic bombs; (2) security measures for guarding atomic secrets have in the past been insufficient, more and better secrecy is needed in the future; (3) in view of the extreme damage inflicted by atomic spies, no penalty was too harsh for them and the death penalty inflicted on the Rosenbergs was fully deserved.

### What Russia Has Gained

Rabinowitch points out that the public is led to believe that without spies the Russians would never have had the atomic bomb at all. The perfidy of those who passed on information therefore becomes

limitless. This hysterical view has overwhelmed the educational campaign initiated by American scientists in 1945 under the slogan "There is no secret of the atomic bomb." "Those who always 'knew' that the Soviet scientists could not build an atomic bomb by themselves, but only 'steal' it from America, felt themselves vindicated."

In contrast to this hysteria, the recently published report of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy more soberly estimates that atomic spying has advanced the Soviet Union by "at least eighteen months". Rabinowitch points out that this figure is necessarily a guess: "Nobody can say with certainty whether the speed-up was by one year and a half, rather than by one year or two years." But his main point is that there is all the difference between saying that without the activity of spies the Russians would have no bomb (as the public are led to believe) and advancing their project by one or two years.

### Real Factors in Atomic Progress

He goes on to point out that "one must not forget that the development from scratch, of the supposedly most important secret of the American project—the mechanisms of the atomic bombs employed in Hiroshima and Nagasaki—was the result of less than a year of intensive work at Los Alamos. According to the Senate testimony of Admiral Parsons, the principles of these mechanisms were clearly established within a very short time after the beginning of this

work . . ." And he points out that in this field of internal ballistics the Russians have more experience than America and possessed a number of first-class specialists.

The bottlenecks in atomic bomb production have not in fact been "in the establishment of basic facts or the blue-printing of technical solutions, but in the actual construction of the large production plants. There is no reason to assume that the same was not true of the Soviet progress as well. This means that the speed of this progress probably was determined by factors on which spying had but little, if any influence—except possibly, by inducing their earlier initiation."

On this last point, he points out that the important factor is not whether the U.S.A. had so many years start, or whether that start has been reduced by spies, or even on the ingenuity of Soviet engineers:

"The most important (factor) may well be whether convenient supplies of raw material for the production of nuclear explosive in the area dominated by the Soviet Union equal those available to American and British projects. From this point of view, the most fateful step, which has permitted the Soviet Union to achieve its present atomic strength, was not the betrayal of our secrets by May, Fuchs and Greenglass, but the decision of American political and military leaders in 1945 to give to the Soviet Union control over the parts of Czechoslovakia and Germany in which important uranium ore deposits were known to exist. These





