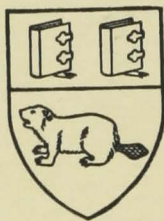
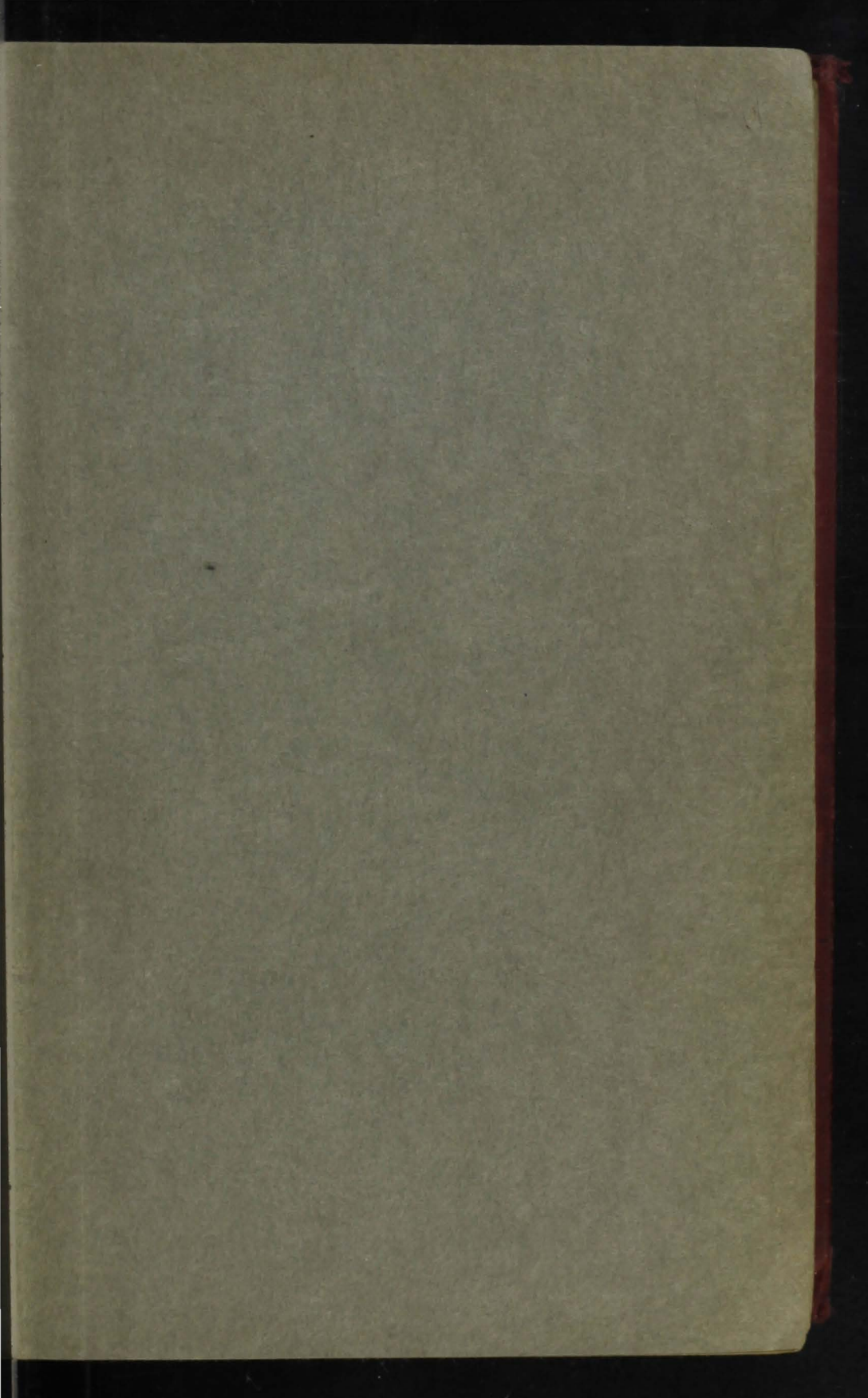


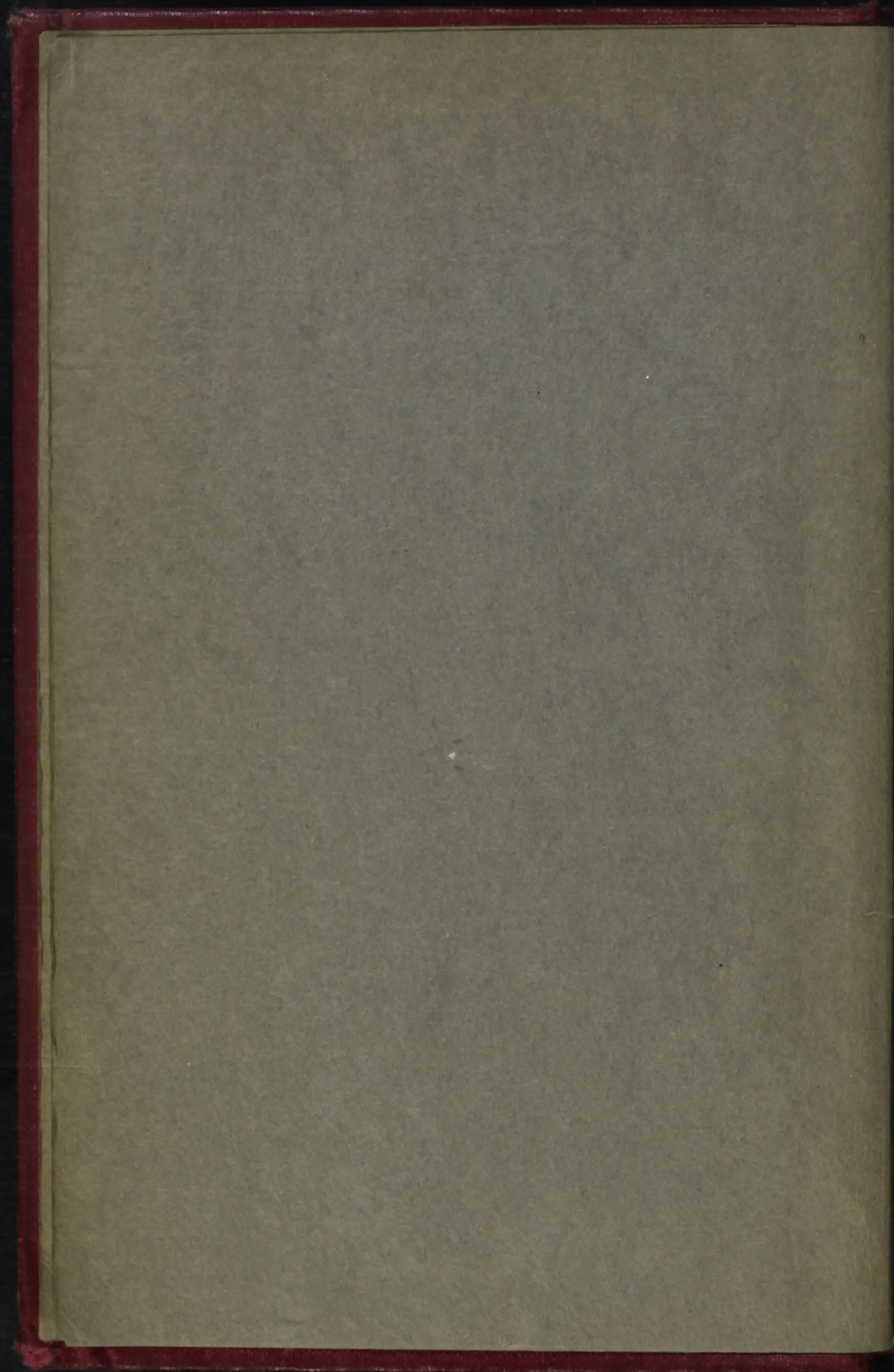
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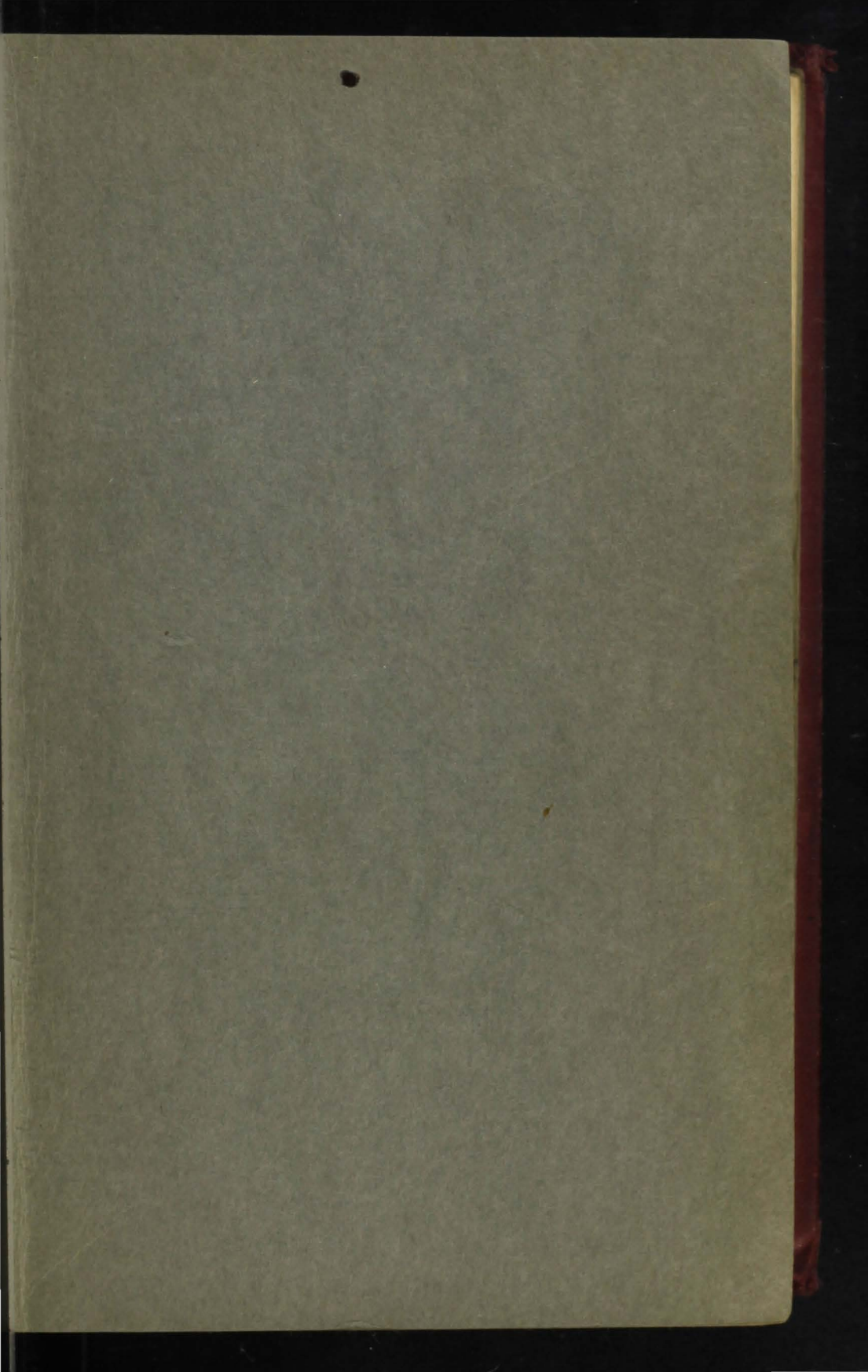
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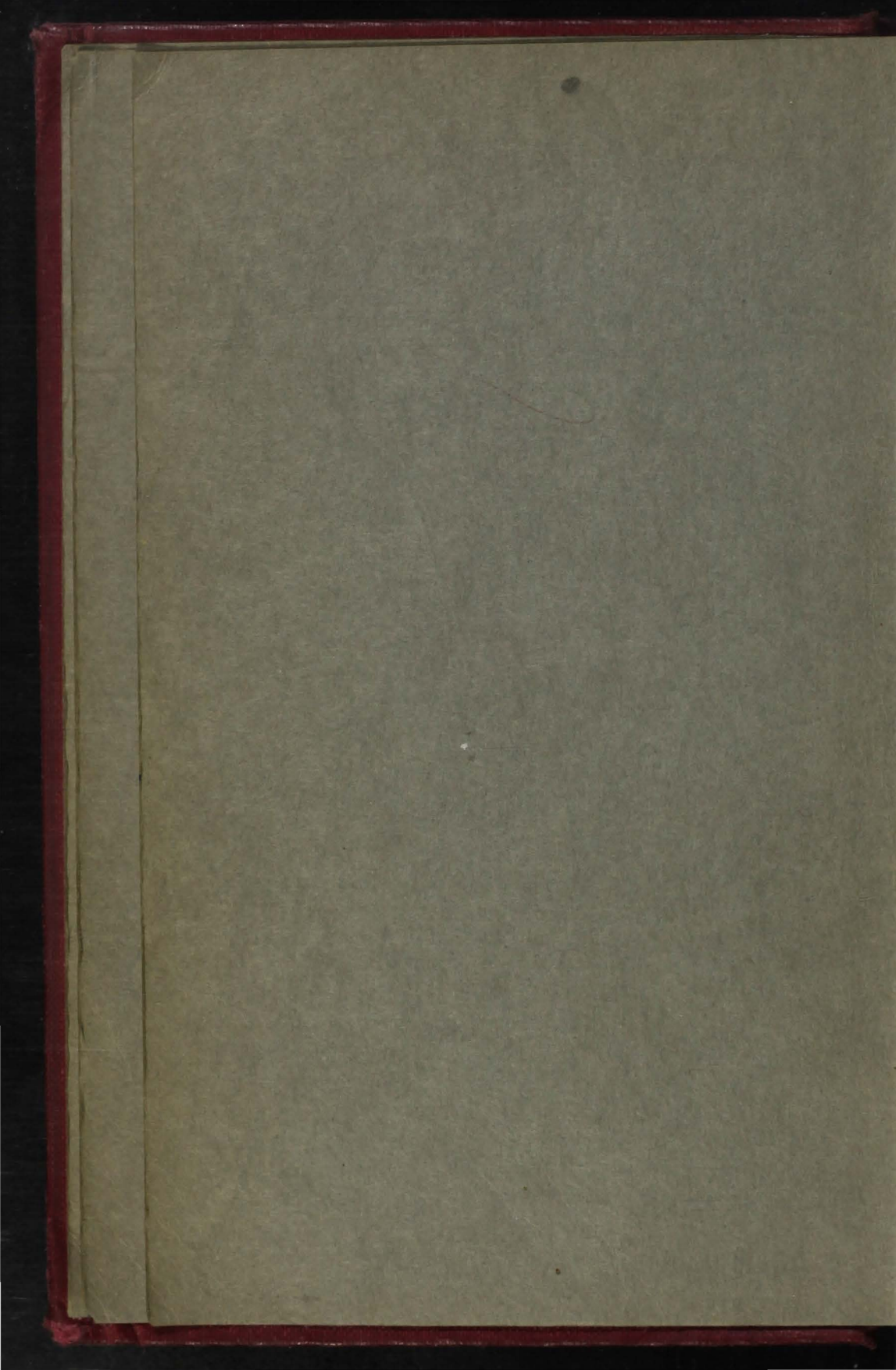


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SOCIALISM IN THE SIXTIES

THE SOCIALIST IMAGINATION

WAYLAND and ELIZABETH YOUNG



TWO SHILLINGS

8648/10/P

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FABIAN TRACT 326

THE FABIAN SOCIETY,
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July, 1960



I. A Definition

A LOT of socialist writing goes off at half-cock for lack of a definition of socialism, so let us cast caution to the winds and start with one. *Socialism is being, thinking and acting to the full measure of society, and not in partial groups.* The crucial word here, of course, is *society*. How big is society? This seems to us to be the crucial and very often omitted question at the foundation of all political thinking. We happen to be socialists who live in the London Borough of Paddington. We could thus be, think and act as Paddington socialists, as London socialists, as British socialists, as European socialists, or as world socialists. The boundary of political vision, the size of the conception of society, varies very much between individual and individual.

But no one knows more than the knowledge available to him, and knowledge depends on communications. Not having very good communications, no Western political philosopher from Aristotle to Rousseau ever thought about the world as a whole. Hegel had a shot at it, but could not digest the idea of China. Marx, who reaped the first fruits of the steam engine, did better; but he projected two experiences of his own to cover all the world—the class system of England, and the eschatology of Judaism. It seemed to us when we came to think of it—and this was quite a surprise—that Spengler was probably the first political philosopher who actually held in his hands and used the knowledge that not only is the world one, but the other bits of it are just as densely and truly *there* as our bit is, and cannot be tested against our bit for merit. This obscure German schoolmaster achieved a colossal break-through, and it is not surprising that he got a lot of things wrong or that a lot of people made a living for some years out of listing them. Nor is it surprising that the enormity of his discovery overwhelmed him and forced him back on a scared pessimism about his own bit, our bit, 'the West'. As regards consciousness of the whole world, mankind was like an inland child who has never seen the sea; when he does see it, he feels pretty small and helpless. Or again, mankind was, and still largely is, in that infant stage of consciousness when one part of the body seems more real than the rest.

But Spengler was not a socialist, and since communications are now good over virtually the whole face of the earth, socialism now requires that the body image should correspond with the universal body itself. In this pamphlet we shall be testing the recent performance and present position of the Labour Party against this conception of socialism. We shall argue that it has been too national and too economic in outlook, and not enough concerned with general politics in society as a whole, granted

that society is now the world. That is why we have taken general socialism as our theme; we mean by it to make a contrast with economic, or partial, socialism, which we consider no longer a sufficient view.

Let us now retreat to the local situation in which the Labour Party finds itself, which is one of doubt and disunity following on severe electoral defeat.

2. Socialism in Perspective

THE Labour Party is dead; long live the Labour Party. We mean by this that the Labour Party which did its job is dead, but that the British Left is very much alive and kicking. Let us glance briefly at the facts of any roughly two-party system. The Right governs so as to prevent worse befalling, and so as to mitigate the effects of unavoidable change and of new-fangled techniques. It will avoid changing anything which seems to work, even if it is not working well, and its more extreme members will suspect their radical opponents of blasphemy. During a spell of Right government, the Left will become increasingly aware that social improvement is technically possible, and therefore morally necessary. If the Right merely rejects this, it courts revolution, which is the worst that could befall; it often, therefore, steals a few of the Left's clothes.

The Left evaluates politics in terms of moral necessity. It looks for positive improvements, and seeks to harness and control the effects of change in such a way that benefits flow equitably from technical progress. Sir Isaiah Berlin has quoted Rousseau: 'The nature of things does not madden us; only ill-will does'. The Left makes it its business to distinguish ill-will from the nature of things, the remediable from the inevitable. The remediable increases in exact parallel with our techniques.

During a spell of Left government, the moral impetus slackens, the patient begins to tire of the remedial exercises which have in fact saved his health, and in time the Right comes back to power with an offer of recuperation and rest, of marking time and living off the hump.

The question whether a party is being a good Left at any particular time depends on what changes it agitates for and how it does so. It does not so much depend on the quality of its opposition to the Right government because, although this is important, it is in the last resort secondary, automatic; any opposition party would do it. It seems to us that the Labour Party has been a reasonably good opposition over the last nine years, but that it has failed to agitate for positive reforms which correspond to the needs of the day.

The opposing done by an opposition depends largely on what the government does in the first place; it is a matter of reaction. But the choice of platform to offer at election time is primary; it arises from and displays the social imagination of the party. Now social imagination is

historical in two ways. On the one hand it is itself the product of history, and on the other it is the standard by which history in process is judged. The original historical need for the Labour Party was so strong, the injustice which called it up was so obvious, and it yelled so lustily at birth for the abolition of that injustice and no other, that this is what still reverberates in all its thoughts. The Labour Party has always been economically oriented to the finger-tips; Labour itself is a term of economics. In taking that name the Party not only identified the people it was to fight for—the working class—it also identified the way it was going to fight for them—economically.

In the years after 1945 the Party put into effect the policies and ideas it had been formulating over the past half century. It did what it had been elected to do, and after six years the Right came back with its offer of recuperation and rest. (The fact that Labour could constitutionally have held on until 1955 is irrelevant; politically it could not hold on.) The Labour Party was sent away to discern the next thing to be done, the next social improvement which had become technically possible.

Much detailed thought and precise feeling in the Labour Party goes towards finding a solution to the problem of the submerged tenth, or indeed fifth; we think first of the work of Professor Titmuss and of Brian Abel-Smith and Peter Townsend. Many people in England are still too poor, and to live on national assistance is degrading and miserable. But a sense of proportion requires one to look further than this, to remember that fewer people are now in degrading poverty than ever before in this country, and that though to live on national assistance is a misfortune when the alternative is a job, yet it is fortunate when the alternative is no means of subsistence whatever. A watertight system of national assistance must of course be regarded as a stage on the route to an economy where there are regular and sufficiently paid jobs for all, but it is an advanced stage. The overwhelming majority of people in the world live in economies where there is neither regular employment nor national assistance.

Conservatism

The great economic problem today is a world-wide one, not a British one; the growing problem of the poor countries. In this matter the British working class is in the unfamiliar position of being among the haves, not the have-nots; and this position is not yet reflected in the thinking of the Labour Party.

This is by no means the only thing which reminds us that the conservative cast of mind, which is both perennial and necessary for a stable society, is not the monopoly of the present Conservative, or Tory, or capitalist party. When feudalism was giving way to capitalism, the capitalists were the progressives and the anti-capitalists were the conservatives. At present there is conservatism on both sides, obviously among the Tories, but less appropriately on the Left. It is equally conservative to say: 'What was good enough for my grand-dad is good enough for me', whether grand-dad was a Labour pioneer or a blood-stained mine-owner, a

tied labourer or a belted earl. A recent writer in the *New Left Review* is being highly conservative when he complains that the 'mixed economy bears no resemblance . . . to the kind of society which the Labour Party has always said it wanted to see come into being'. That 'has always said': there is the plummy insistence and repetition of true conservatism in that. Again: the mind—and there are several examples of it in the articulate bits of the Labour Movement—which regrets, for instance, that modern conservatism has more or less accepted the welfare state, is merely being nostalgic for the moral splendours of revolt of the 'thirties and before—and for the economic miseries that went with them. If a welfare state is a good thing, it is good even when a conservative government runs it. The Labour Party should be proud of having raised the whole nation to a higher level of social responsibility than before, not sigh for the barricades of yore.

When things are not intolerable, as they are not for the great majority of British people at the moment, you will always get a strong current of apolitical feeling, which means in practice vaguely conservative feeling. The Labour Party should understand this and not fret too much about it; it should realise that it is no good harrying people who feel fairly content, or trying to tempt them out with bits of cheese in the form of tax-free saucepans. The formula: 'there is one state of affairs, but there are many ways of changing it', sums up the difference between conservative and progressive, between Tory and Labour. A conservative party finds it easy to be unanimous about maintaining a 'state of affairs', since there is only one such thing at any moment. But unless the 'state of affairs' is obviously intolerable, and there is one single obvious remedy for it, neither of which conditions often prevails, a progressive party is bound to be a prey to disunity and to a dispersal of aims because 'there are many ways of changing it'.

Nationalisation—Who Cares?

The Labour Party is at present in disarray and disunity not only for this reason but also because its central economic proposal—public ownership—was first devised as a cure for something which has now disappeared, namely, general poverty. Life in Britain now is economically intolerable for fewer people than ever before, and that is why the ownership debate raises so little interest or enthusiasm outside the Party. We ourselves have no special qualifications for saying anything about it, except that we share this lack of interest and enthusiasm, which Mark Abrams has shown¹ is widespread in the country. We are members of the Labour Party, and support it on very many grounds, but on nationalisation and Clause Four we are not only Don't-knows we are also Don't-cares, and we offer the following observations in the belief that they may indicate the sort of way several million other Don't-cares think about this thing.

¹ *Socialist Commentary*, May, 1960,

We suppose that no one in the Party could actually doubt that nationalisation is not an end but a means. If you hold that it is an end in itself you might just as well hold that B.O.A.C. ought not to be a concern for carrying people about by air, but a concern for owning, say, Vikings, and no other type of aircraft; a sort of national Viking-collection. But if nationalisation is a means, we must ask what end it is a means to. Let us say—to as good a life as possible for as many people as possible in a given state of technology. The next question we must ask is: is it a good means to this? To ask it is immediately to realise, or should be, that nobody knows. We have in this country nationalised concerns and private concerns; we have in the world the almost entirely nationalised economies of Russia and Eastern Europe and China, the mixed economies of Britain and France and Italy, and the almost entirely privately-owned economy of the U.S.A. But who knows which type of ownership, or what degree of nationalisation in an economy, produces precisely what results in what conditions?

The Labour Party was called into existence by the hideous poverty and oppression of the British working class in the nineteenth century; and the mainstream of socialist thought in that century (much of which, including the work of Marx himself, was based on the facts and figures of British industry) held that public ownership was the best remedy for the evils of that time. It was impossible then to test this view against experience, because there were no publicly owned enterprises or economies around to compare with the others. It is now possible, but it has not been done.

When ends are agreed, the discussion of means is no longer political, it is technical. The ends in this case are agreed within the Labour Party, but the discussion of means is being treated as if it were political. It seems to us that the only possible solution to the ownership wrangle will be a general agreement to demote the whole thing to the technical plane. There is so much concrete research and invention waiting to be done, so many types of public and semi-public ownership waiting to be investigated and tried, so much evidence in the world already about the efficacy of this and that different arrangement in different circumstances, that we can only feel the Party is failing the people it claims to represent by continuing to treat this matter as one of high political principle. Moreover, it looks increasingly as though the economic integration of groups of nations in customs unions, of which the first was the *Zollverein* of the German principalities in 1833, of which the second is the Six of Western Europe, and of which the third may be a group of African states, will outflank internal discussion in this or that nation of the relative merits of private and public ownership. The ownership pattern of industry in the future is more likely to be internationalisation than nationalisation; the Labour Party should wake up to this and begin to think about means of democratic control and worker participation for a steel industry united from Taranto to Kirkcaldy and for a super-grid linking Algeciras to Trondheim. Oil could provide a pilot scheme.

There should now be an end to brave words and a beginning to donkey work. The ownership question may be among the ten most urgent which face us, but it is not among the six most urgent, and it would be silly if our party came to pieces about something which is not even among the most urgent problems of 1960.

3. The Real Problems

NOW what are these six most urgent problems? We are not going to come up with a lot of lovely burning new issues which no one has ever thought of. The important issues were there in the Party's election programme, and most of the solutions propounded were good ones, but many people probably voted against us who would have agreed they were good ones if they had ever heard of them. They did not. It is a question of emphasis. You can pour out splendid policy papers replete with justice and sweetness, as we did; what the voter hears is not that but the shrill screams of exasperated politicians trying to drown their rivals' voices in the last week or two of the campaign. The loudest noise last autumn from our side was: 'You may never have had it so good, but by jingo you'd have it even better with us', which was a kind of competition in conservatism. The second loudest noise was the stage whispers of party stalwarts saying to each other: 'Yes, but is the *image* a good *seller*?' Only when you had attuned your ear to ignoring these could you hear all those splendid little booklets singing in constructive harmony.

This should be avoided next time, and the word *image* should be banned, belled, booked, candled and drummed clean out of the Labour vocabulary, and if possible out of the entire political vocabulary of this country. It would have been enough to lose us the election even if we had done nothing else wrong. The question: 'what image?' means no more and no less than: 'what lie?'. 'What image?' means: 'How do I want the elector to see me? What shall I get him to believe I am?' The politician who can think that, and many of our leaders did and still do think it, is not only a moral disgrace but an electoral handicap, and probably he can't even see that the two things go together—at any rate on the Left. The statesman does not think this sort of thing; that is for the film star and the photographer's model, the gossip column manipulator and the commercial promotion man. The statesman thinks—what is the best policy? He decides what is the best policy, he advocates it, and the electorate then elects him or rejects him according to its view of the policy he has chosen. The useful, electable, beneficial statesman does not have to think whether or not honesty is the best policy, he only has to think which of the honest policies is the best one. The empty-headed manipulator who asks 'what image?' has already ruled out all the honest policies in advance.

If we in the Party can conquer our neurotic compulsion to talk about what our grandfathers might have done and break ourselves of our naughty little habit of gazing in the mirror before we face the electorate, we shall have time to see that there are real problems which actually need to be solved.

Our own choices of what is a problem and what is not, as well as the kind of solutions we suggest below, are of course a product of our experience. Really the only justification we have for blasting off in this pamphlet at all is that we have travelled enough to see how much poverty there is, even in Europe, and to know that poverty in Britain, real poverty as many of our closest allies know it, does not exist. We have also seen nationalism at work in colonial territories in the course of liberation, and know the feel of terrorism. These experiences lead us to think that most of the real problems and dangers which face the British people and its parties come from beyond Dover.

As regards domestic affairs, we are just old enough to remember the feel of a depressed area (Whitehaven in 1939) and to understand the passion which the name Jarrow can infuse into the ownership debate and the general economic debate. On the other hand we are young enough to have been brought up on Louis Armstrong from infancy and to feel more or less in touch still with those teenagers who could just, if we had got away to a really flying start as soon as it was legal, be our own children; we are still young enough to feel neither sentimental about them nor intimidated by them. Five years ago we could not understand what made the greybeards tick. In five years time we shall be desperately fighting off some decadent new tendency coming up from a generation which seems to us to be entirely composed of juvenile delinquents.

Out of this experience, then, we identify six problems as being of immediate concern to the Labour Party. They are: (1) The texture of the economy and the profit motive; (2) Advertising; (3) Transport and Cities; (4) Class; (5) Colonies; and (6) The Bomb.

4. Money a Commodity

THERE is no substitute for money.

The big money in Britain now is made on tax-free capital profit; it is made by a class of people roughly called 'financiers' in the popular press word, or 'capitalists' in the Marxist word. They sometimes give their general managers some moderately big money on retirement, but by and large the really big rewards go to men who are working with money all their lives. Money is not only their reward, it is also their raw material.

There is, obviously, a close connection between the ability to understand and handle money, and a quite special love of it. It would be surprising if it were not so. We take it for granted that the violinist loves violins and the producer loves plays and the boatman loves boats. The financier, naturally and properly, loves money. But money is different in

kind since we all need some of it. The financier is the only man in our economy who is rewarded in the very substance of his daily work; equally he is the only man the substance of whose daily work is the general reward we all need some of. It is the error of wild capitalism to allow money to be treated by those who love it in the same way as other things can be treated by those who love them.

Of course we have not got wild capitalism in this country now, nor have they even in the United States; but in this one respect at least it does seem to be getting wilder. The glorification of the business-man which is the effect of the present government's capital profits, expense account and pension fund policies is 'wildening' our capitalism. It is not that the state is weakening; it still has perfect control, whenever it feels like exercising it. What is happening is that the control is being deliberately relaxed at certain chosen points by the operation within a strong and efficient state of the values of money-handlers and money-lovers. Colman Prentis and Varley have not strengthened the Conservative Party half as much as the Conservative Party have strengthened Colman Prentis and Varley and all that they stand for. When Macmillan got his way about a cease-fire in Egypt, he did not strengthen sterling half as much as he strengthened the belief that money is more important than a few hundred lives (of another colour).

Building Up Big Business

This appearance of money and business values within the state itself enriches the financier as such and makes him more powerful in our society, but it also enriches and makes more powerful the financial executives within each industry and each concern. To be 'an executive' is a very grand thing among unthinking Americans, and it is beginning to go that way here too. But the executive is not the most important man in a concern, nor the cleverest, nor the most necessary; all he is is the most central. Everything that goes on has to be paid for, therefore he has to know everything that goes on; that is all. Some of the reasons why England is a boring and timid little country just now come from this glorification of the business executive at the expense of the people who are actually making and doing. (The other reasons come from our education system, of which more below.) Since the business executive is by definition somebody who is good at handling money—or at least better at handling money than he is at anything else—he will have this same love of it that we discussed above, and will consequently examine all the ideas which come up from the other side of the house to see if they will make a nice lot of money. If the engineers and chemists tell the executive that they can make unbreakable plates at the same price, they may be thinking of the capacity and labour which will be released by the new process to do something new and necessary, or beneficial, or even just interesting. The executive on the other hand will see nothing but decreased sales and profits. Anything which strengthens the financial, executive-business-man strand in our national dialogue at the expense of the scientific, engineering, design, and planning

strands, strengthens means at the expense of ends, and impoverishes life.

Now the Conservative Government is impoverishing life in this way by deliberately building up the business man, and the Labour Party ought to offer to enrich it by deliberately building up the scientist, the designer, the engineer, the technician, the teacher, the artist, the craftsman, the machine-minder. The financial reward for handling money should be no greater than that for handling anything else. Once this principle were enshrined in our fiscal system it would cut the 'financier' down to his proper scale, not only by reducing the attractions of the trade but also by beginning to reshape our whole feeling about money, so as to cut money itself down to its proper scale. The 'financier' (using this word always to cover also the financial executive in industry, *etc.*) would then be on a par with the violinist and the boatman; he would be paid for his services like anyone else. Money, which in fact is something quite unlike violins and boats, might begin to go more where it was needed, and less where it can be induced to go by those who especially love it. The Party must look ahead to strong and positive means of cherishing *think, arrange, design and make*, and of lopping *salt, gain and nett*.

In the meantime it is good that a capital gains tax, an end to expense accounts rackets and a reassertion of state welfare and insurance are generally accepted in the Party. Among other disadvantages the expense account racket has a quite directly disruptive effect on the family system. It gives a man a double economic standard, the higher part of which he associates with his business friends and his mistress, or the women who might become his mistress, and the lower with his wife and children. Steak and burgundy at the restaurant or the boardroom lunch, shepherd's pie and washing-up at home. This might interest some of the women we are so worried about having lost at the General Election. Mr. Heathcoat Amory's budget made a good beginning with loss farming; the Labour Party must go further.

5. The Containment of Advertising

ADVERTISING is quite a special issue, since the values concerned are fairly and squarely protected by the sort of defence mechanism Freud wrote about. If you want light on drug addiction, you don't ask the junkies. And when it comes to advertising, we're all junkies some of the time, and some of us are all the time. More is spent by industry on advertising than on research. More is spent on packaging than on education.¹ But the very nature of advertising is such as to prevent you being able to understand it. If we are told day in day out that Thisso is better—not than Thatto, which is illegal, but just *better*—some of us get to believe that it means something. Not many, just some.

But there is something worse than that; almost all of us get to accept

¹ Ralph Samuel, *Where? Five Views on Labour's Future* (Fabian Tract 320).

it as quite a reasonable thing that we should be told this at all. If we protest against the statement: 'Thisso is better', we get the reaction: 'You mean it *isn't* really better? How interesting! Can you prove it? What's wrong with Thisso?' Nothing whatever is wrong with Thisso. Thisso is probably a perfectly good product; does what it claims to and doesn't hurt your hands. 'Well then, what are you fussing about?' What we're fussing about is that the matter should be brought to our notice at all at such enormous expense in money and talent. Let us not hear of Thisso until we go to the shop to buy a detergent, or whatever it may be, and then let the shopkeeper inform us that there is a new product called Thisso which is good for nylon and terylene, while there is another one called Thatto which is good for tarpaulin and sail-cloth. At the very most, let us have announcements of fact, of relevant fact, in the press and on the TV, that Thisso has been launched and is designed for nylon and terylene, and even perhaps that Thisso is still on the market and is still designed for nylon and terylene.

Open Conspiracy

The purpose of advertising in this country, and a thousand times more so in America, which we should study, is no longer to help people to choose what they want, which is to encourage a useful sale, beneficial to manufacturer and consumer alike: it is now concerned almost entirely with manipulating people to buy what the manufacturer wants to sell, and the more successful it gets, the more unscrupulous and expansionist does the manufacturer become. It is an open conspiracy to boost nothing, a bombinating vacuum of flurry in which the salesman is always right. Before the war, the American poet E. E. Cummings wrote: 'A salesman is an it which stinks excuse'. He doesn't stink excuse any more; he stinks moral reproof. ('*Why aren't you keeping up with the Joneses?*')

The defenders of advertising are fond of saying that it promotes production and familiarises people with good new things which they would not otherwise hear of. But on the other side is the fact that it distorts the market system on which we still rely, and for which there appears to be no substitute. It reduces the ability of the price mechanism to reveal real needs. Would we consumers really rather have pretty packages than more schools?

Moreover, a rising standard of living produces an uncertainty and a hunger for knowledge about what to do with the new goods and new services which have suddenly come within reach. The conservative journalist Peregrine Worsthorne has a striking image about this; he sees the forest of television aerials as a forest of hands upstretched for advice and help. This hunger for knowledge the advertisers deliberately feed with a stone. They use it for their own profit, thereby corrupting as soon as it is born the freedom and the pleasure which, if only it was left alone, the British working class could build for itself now that it has got its nose away from the grindstone for the first time in history. It would be the natural rôle of the press and the television to counter this corruption by telling the

newly comfortable to choose for themselves and let the advertisers go boil their heads, but by the neatest refinement of all they can't, since the advertisers control them too. (Though some of them, especially, perhaps, the mass-circulation women's magazines, have quite a good try sometimes.) It is not easy to see what the Labour Party can do about this particular aspect as opposed to the general view we discuss below. But one thing it can do. It can remember that butter is better than margarine, fresh food than tinned, a tree than a hoarding, clean air than foul, Lasdun's cluster blocks in Bethnal Green than the *Financial Times* building, Neville Shute (although he ran away from it) than Ian Fleming, *Roots* than *And Suddenly it's Spring, etc., etc.* Remember, and then cherish the independence of people to disagree if they want to.

Extremes of Plenty

But the advertising situation looks even worse if you raise the sights to include the whole world. In America the advertisers are now beginning their campaign to induce everybody to 'be a three-car family'. To fly from Miami, where there are many three-car families, so that it is the advertiser's goal, over a part of South America called the Gran Chaco, which is empty, is a very strange experience. The Gran Chaco is very big, several hundreds of thousands of square miles, and quite empty. Plenty of vegetation. What keeps it empty is that though there are people in South America, they do not have the tractors they would need to start cultivating it. It does not seem necessary or desirable that Britain should become like Miami while those South Americans are still waiting for their tractors. (Or indeed while those refugees are still waiting to get into South America.) But to buy tractors for South Americans costs money. Is there any money around in the world? Well, up there in Northern Europe there's a little country called Britain which spends X pounds a year on educating its children. It also spends X pounds a year on advertising, so as to get like Miami. These British advertising men must be very strong, like robber barons, living in castles, with private armies? Well no, not really. They obey the law. Then there is no law? No law. Then perhaps the radical and socialist opposition is proposing some law? Well no; not, in fact.

The Labour Party should tackle the advertising racket with a careful general plan, instead of leaving it to a few solitary crusaders like Christopher Mayhew and Francis Noel Baker and *Which?*¹ magazine; the lone crusader can never keep things boiling, and what's a party for if not to back up the solitary trail-blazers when they happen to be right according to the party's own values, to have seen further, sooner?

¹ We hope to found shortly a sister-magazine, *Who?* It will do for people in the news what *Which?* is doing for products in the ads. As J. Walter Thompson has trembled, so let Hickey quail.

To permit the free operation of a whole industry devoted to increasing consumption among the satisfied while others are still starving is against all humanity and decency, and these, if socialism is any good, are what socialism is for. Before Americans become three-car families, or the British middle classes become two-car families, even before the British working classes become one-car families, the Brazilians, Bolivians and Paraguayans—not to mention the Indians, Basutos, Pakistanis, Sicilians and so on for half a page—should become one-spade families. If the answer to the vicious nonsense of advertising seemed to be a thumping tax, then the higher it was the more would Britain be able to sink in the capital development of poor countries.

A determined assault on advertising and advertising values in Britain would of course turn our press and our television upside down. At present the size of our great national newspapers depends from week to week on what the advertisers feel like; not on how much news there is, or what the editors want to say about it. More and more papers are succumbing to the temptation of the special supplement, which is editorial matter provided to suit the convenience of advertisers. *The Times* succumbed long since. We are well aware that the sort of reforms we have in mind would put the price of newspapers up several times over, and would annihilate I.T.V. We are not equipped to say what should be done about this; we only enter a plea to the Labour Party to accept that advertising must be contained and rolled back, and that the setting up of a full scale enquiry not into whether this should be done, but into how it can be done, should be adopted as Party policy. Consequent legislation need not necessarily wait on electoral victory; enough Conservatives might support it even now.

6. Transport and Cities

WE have our first motor road (as opposed to ironed-out coach roads) a quarter of a century after Italy, and dear old Italy is really not a landmark of enlightened industrialism. Germany and France of course are way ahead of either of us, and a complete network of motor roads was in action in America long before the war. Our railway system is the slowest and dirtiest and most unreliable in the industrial West, which forces traffic on to the roads. Our canals, having been carefully handed over to the only people in the country to have an interest in seeing them decay (the railways) have decayed. Our cities spread inexorably, two stories high, into the odd square inch of green countryside which is left to us. Even our satellite towns we build at a population density which seems designed to minimise the impact of infectious diseases rather than to make a community. West of London, you have to go forty miles before you come to open country. London itself is being slowly Losangelised because conservative freedom cannot find, or allow to be found, the capital to build the three or four new tube lines which are needed to bring the system even up to the standard of Paris. London is turning into a city where it is

easy to earn enough to have a car, but where you can't go anywhere in it because of the traffic, can't get out when you get there because of the parking restrictions, and wouldn't want to get out if you could because everything worth seeing or working in has been pulled down.

The centres of our big cities are being turned into jumbles of square-footage office blocks because the prestige speculators who build them don't know or care what happens in them; they just get the rent. Most commercial building in Britain now is vandalism for the sake of cretinism. There are good architects here, as good and as many as in other countries. Some of them are employed on public and university buildings, but too many go grey with waiting, or emigrate. It is not as though there were anything new about this. Since the Middle Ages, most of the good building in our cities has been in the public sector. What Wren did for Charles II and Nash for George IV will not be done by Sir ———, A.B.C.D., E.F.G.H., I.J., for Messrs. ——— and ——— and the ——— Insurance Company. The new Shell building in London is not known to the world except as the site of the only Trotskyist strike of recent years.

How many Labour leaders ever see the *Architectural Review*? How many, in particular, read in it Sir William Holford's account of Costa's design for the new capital of Brazil, which is perhaps the greatest achievement of the human spirit in this generation? Or Reyner Banham's series of articles *1960*? How many on the other hand look at the regular 'outrage' section in it, conducted by Ian Nairn?

Town planning and architecture and road designing are not æsthetic matters; they too are money and production, and it is only lack of imagination which prevents this being obvious. A planned city centre with adequate transport services costs X million. This is terrible. In health and production-time and beds in mental hospitals the rush hour jams cost—well, they obviously cost something, but it can't be put into exact money terms, so no one can be sure how it compares with X. Therefore they cost nothing. No action.

The Labour Party should have a national plan for cities and transport based not on rents and economies now, but on health and productivity for the next five generations, and it should take the powers to execute it, and that means central, not local, powers. As a beginning: a group of capitalists has announced a plan for a monorail to London Airport, but nothing has come of it. Where is Labour's plan for a monorail that might actually get built?

7. Except the Richer Classes

WE are the most class-ridden country in Europe, and, with the exception of India, of all the countries included in the average educated Englishman's knowledge of the world. We should not rupture ourselves trying to put this right; it is not a great evil when compared with starvation or

war, but it is an evil, and we should try a little. The Labour Party has good plans to bridge the gap between the lower middle class and the working class; the comprehensive school is a worth-while experiment in this direction. But this is not the gap that hurts. The gap that hurts, that produces the host of tiny and often ridiculous insults and coldness and misapprehensions and resentments, and also the absurd and mischievous ambitions, is the gap between upper and lower middle class. Here the Labour Party has no plan whatever. It is content, has with a fat sigh of lazy relief declared itself content in a policy statement, that entry to the best schools academically should depend not on ability to benefit from them, but on money.

There is a perfectly simple economic vicious circle at work here, and the simpler the more easily breakable. Schoolmasters are human, and, Burnham being too low anyhow, prefer Burnham plus X to Burnham. They will compete for it, and the better ones will get it. Those who get it (and the smaller classes) will be able to get 70 per cent. of their pupils into Oxford and Cambridge. Parents like their children to be equipped for Oxford and Cambridge, and will pay more for a 70 per cent. chance than for a two per cent. chance at a good grammar school. Thus the public schools can afford to pay Burnham plus X. This is what really goes on, and too much talk about the moral and historical splendours of Eton or Charterhouse obscures the issue. You could turn Eton into a comprehensive school to-morrow, but unless you tackle the question of teachers' pay, the teachers will leave and you will have a collection of Nissen huts somewhere else which will actually *be* Eton, while Henry VI's chapel and all that will *be* simply the South Slough Comp.

Comprehensive Education

The historical and moral splendours of Oxford and Cambridge are another matter, and we are inclined to think the state must tread much more warily with universities than it need with schools. Professor Michael Oakeshott has an unforgettable phrase which, though he is not an authority one should often quote in a Fabian pamphlet, we cannot escape here: 'A university is not a dinghy that it can be joggled about to catch every passing breath of wind'. No, universities make states and parties and politicians, not the other way round; they should, if anything is, be allowed something of the sacred cow. But here too it is important to hold fast to the truth of the matter, which is that Oxford and Cambridge are the men who teach and research there, they are not towers or courts. It may be better to leave them where they are with their endowments and their port, which they like, but at least we should know what we're doing. If we do continue to allow Oxford and Cambridge their pre-eminence, we must make very sure that it is rationally fed with talent, and that means reform of the *whole* school system, not just the state sector of it.

Somehow or other those especially gifted teachers have got to be put together with the children best fitted for their teaching, and those children have got to be kept in touch with the rest, so that they don't go making

each other's lives miserable for silly reasons later on. It looks like a real comprehensive system, an inclusive one, one with confidence enough in itself to bring in *all* the young human beings concerned, not just all of them except the richer classes. Once again, socialism to the full measure of society. This need not appal us; as with the roads, America and France have been doing it for years, and though it's easy to find objections to American and French civilisation, it's hard to pin them on what their educational systems have in common.

In writing this section we have not forgotten about the apparent classlessness of very young people in our cities now, especially London, a classlessness well publicised in Colin MacInnes's recent novel, *Absolute Beginners*.¹ This is a true thing, there it is; they don't care a damn about class, and that is fine. In that respect it's almost like talking to some of those sane foreigners instead of crazy old us. It is just conceivable that the class thing should have settled itself; that, under the influence of jazz, which is the most beneficial and peaceful and life-giving craze to hit us this century, and of the consequent admiration of its negro inventors, and of the understanding of snobbery and oppression which follows on that—it is just conceivable that this generation should grow up *in the cities* permanently free of class barriers. But at the best it will only be in the cities, and the big ones at that, and in any case it's far more likely that when these young people come to be numbered among the 'taxpayers' (MacInnes classification) they will find the old rub still rubbing.

Meritocracy

Anybody who advocates reform of our educational system must take account of the dangers exposed with such sombre wit in Michael Young's book *The Rise of the Meritocracy*.² He shows that in abolishing the right of inherited wealth to buy an education academically superior to that which may be secured by talent alone, we run the risk of replacing hereditary caste with a more foolproof system based on the I.Q. of the individual. We may call up an élite, a 'meritocracy', which will on the one hand be without the restraints of a hereditary sense of its own purpose in society and of the inefficiency of traditionalism, and on the other will cream off the natural leaders of the working class in each generation, thus leaving it without spokesmen.

Only if we have a comprehensive schools system which comprehends all the children instead of only most, and if we can steel ourselves to pay the best teachers more *within* the comprehensive school, can the sting go out of this danger. All children whatsoever would then remain together up to the school leaving age, and all those who stay on at school would remain together up to eighteen. After that, as we suggested above, a bit of the old inequality should come in and some should go to an unreformed Oxbridge while others go to Redbrick and Whitetile. A meritocracy might then arise, if in fact it arose anywhere, only as between the 'top' and

¹ MacGibbon and Kee, 1959.

² Thames and Hudson, 1958.

'bottom' of the university graduates. This would not matter so much, since within each trade or profession there is bound to be a meritocracy anyway. An Oxbridge lawyer may safely be a meritocrat compared with a Whitetile lawyer. That is because people go to universities for specialised training in this or that profession; they go there *as* lawyers. But they go to school in the first place simply as human beings, and that an Eton human being should be a meritocrat compared with a grammar school or modern school human being is quite another matter. Comprehensive education comes in at the human being stage.

But we do not share all Michael Young's fears, since there seems to us no reason why an Oxbridge graduate of working class origin should necessarily be incapable of being a leader of the working class and interpreting its wishes and frustrations to the nation as a whole. And in any case, the whole idea of the comprehensive system is to bring it about that there should no longer be isolated, feared, obscure, dangerous entities called 'the working class' or 'intellectuals'. We're a lot nearer a classless society now than we were a hundred years ago, or twenty, and that has been because of, not in spite of, the opening of education to talent. The almost animal fear of the working class which Raymond Williams has documented among the 'cultured' people in the last century, and the conquest of which backhandedly motivated George Orwell, has nearly vanished. What we have to do is hasten the day when the last person realises that everybody comes from somewhere, and somebody comes from everywhere, and that though this is interesting, it doesn't *matter*.

8. Colonial Policy

IN its attitude to the Colonies the Labour Party was entirely on the right lines at the election, and before it; there was just a lack of system. One may be fairly confident in practice that Labour would consummate the independence of our remaining colonies without settlers quite quickly, that Dr. Banda would not have been in prison under a Labour Government, but would be chairman of a legislative council with an African majority, that Makarios would have been Prime Minister of the Republic of Cyprus years ago and a thousand simple lives would have been saved, that Britain would not have voted with South Africa and France in the United Nations, *etc., etc.* But it should now be said clearly and systematically what our intentions are. The way of the world in colonial matters is tragically plain. South Africa is heading straight for war; the fact that the reactionaries are all on the spot, instead of being half on the spot and half in Europe, should not obscure the precedent of the wars of liberation in South America. Canning helped Bolivar then. What would be the attitude of a Labour Government to the South African Bolivar who will appear? Can Britain continue to sell arms to the Boers, whose paranoid bigotry negates our values, for use against the umpteenth demand for justice from an oppressed majority, none of whose predecessors has ever been known to fail?

And the Federation; will it be left to follow step for step in the wake of the Union? There is a temptation to laugh at the compulsive solemnity with which the conservative governments of England and France go through the knee-jerks of imprisoning the future ruler,¹ the thing is so obvious by now that one cannot even excuse the useless burden on the exchequer of feeding and housing these prisoners. But it is a temptation to be resisted, since the knee-jerk knocks in the teeth of innocent people.

And Aden and the Gulf Sheikdoms? What is the Labour plan? Are we to wait for the explosion there, or should we act carefully and at once if we got into power? What would we do about Malta? Ghana, Nigeria and the West Indies; do we applaud Conservative policy there with honest generosity? We should.

The Hierarchy of Civilisations

Policy in this field, as in others, will 'come right' automatically if the underlying attitudes are consonant with surrounding reality. There is little that a party programme can do about affecting these attitudes, beyond a real blitz on school text books. The first hard fact to be realised is that white civilisation, whether Christian, 'post-Christian' like this country, or communist like post-Christian Russia, is not superior to the brown, black or yellow civilisations. There is really only one way to measure civilisations against one another, and that is by seeing how many people get killed in each because their neighbours disapprove of them. (In affirming the numerical-humanist canon of culture-judgment, we implicitly condemn the alternatives. In shorthand: the absolutist religious canon is condemned by the multiplicity of faiths claiming universal validity and a monopoly of truth. The æsthetic canon is condemned by the one-sidedness of the evidence taken into account. A gallery full of Aztec artefacts cannot be balanced by the screams of the human sacrifice, nor will the tourist at the Pyramids hear the whip fall.)

Until the last hundred years, all the civilisations we know about scored roughly equal in this regard. They all tolerated the large scale butchery of people in war, and they all tolerated the small scale butchery of people by fanaticism. (Inquisitions, witchcraft, hanging, suttee, human sacrifice, infanticide.) Within the last hundred years some parts of the white world have caught themselves up sharply about the small scale butchery and have also enforced the cessation of some such practices in parts of the non-white world. But at the same time other parts of the white world (Nazi Germany, Russia in the 'thirties) have reverted to deliberately exterminating defenceless minorities, as at the time of the Albigensian Crusade.

¹ The following leaders have been imprisoned or exiled by British, Dutch or French governments:

King Mohammed V of Morocco, Presidents Bourguiba of Tunisia, De Valera of Ireland, Nkrumah of Ghana, Sukarno of Indonesia, and Makarios, President Elect of Cyprus. Prime Ministers Nehru of India, Aung San and U Nu of Burma; and Dr. Jagan, Minister of Industry and Trade in British Guiana,

Even more striking than this, the white world in general has raised the large scale butchery of war to a gigantic scale. The white peoples are now accustomed to butchering each other with greater nescience and in far greater numbers than ever the black, brown or yellow peoples were, and are even toying with the idea of wiping themselves and everyone else out altogether. One cannot possibly claim any superiority of white over the others in the hydrogen age, and to avoid admitting an inferiority one would have to work pretty hard to make the most of those peaceful techniques of medicine and production.

Justice is Indivisible

This being so, it must be squarely admitted that literacy and technical proficiency give no more right to rule than whiteness does. The white man may properly go on governing the dark where he is invited to, but he must be sure his invitation is renewed, and monthly at that. He must above all be clear that his white civilisation cannot be 'defended' in this or that territory containing a dark majority, because the essential principle of white civilisation is that justice is equal for all men, and the 'threat' against which he is tempted to 'defend' his civilisation is no more than a demand that this principle should be applied. A civilisation is not like money, that the more I have of it the less you do; it is more like knowledge. The more I have of it, the more you do too, because we keep talking to each other. Most of all, perhaps, it is like running water; if you dam it, it will still be water, but it won't run. If you begin to 'defend' it against a demand for a share in it from the majority, you disfigure it. It will stagnate and breed the mosquitoes of violence. All a civilisation in a multiracial territory can do, and not lose its title, is make its contribution and dissolve into the composite stream of the mixed civilisation which will in time, whatever happens, grow up among the mixed people of the territory.

Wherever there are white settlers, they must be helped to understand this. The Colonial Office has a fine record of protecting black against white. That was very necessary at first, and to a large extent it is still necessary. But it can't go on for ever, and socialists must look forward to the next phase, which will be to protect communications between the races from the isolationists, to build up the status of people of mixed race, and in general to smooth the passage towards the inevitable day when black and white are as freely inter-breeding in Africa as Norman and Saxon in England. When this day comes, white technical proficiency will be dispersed throughout the whole population horizontally by kinship, no longer only vertically by instruction. (When the white farmer's African brothers-in-law visit him, they will see how the tractor works.)

The Socialism of Brazil and Hawaii

Those, both in England and in Africa—and of course in the U.S.A.—who are alarmed by this prospect, seldom take account of the fact that it

is precisely what has been happening in Brazil for the last four hundred years. To make a case against miscegenation and the gradual diffusion of white 'blood' and civilisation into a brownish culture, one would have to establish objections to the present culture of Brazil. The white dominationists are hardly ever challenged about this, perhaps because we do not know much about Brazil ourselves. We should, because nothing has gone wrong there. Socialist writers and lecturers might give Russia, Poland and Yugoslavia a rest now and look not only at Brazil, but also at the Portugal which colonised it and interbred. Luso-Brazilian culture is as far as it could possibly be from economic socialism, but it has a racial socialism beyond compare. They might also look at Hawaii, where you see four or five 'racial stocks' inter-breeding in perfect harmony; it is the opposite side of America from Little Rock.

But the same socialist who will tell you for an hour about workers' control and public ownership in Eastern Europe—and tell you very well—will respond to the stimulus 'Hawaii' with the one word 'hula', and will almost certainly think they speak Spanish in Brazil. If we were not so blinded by the economic sense of the word socialism, we should quickly see that where you have a multiracial society with free miscegenation, there too you have socialism. The socialisms of Hawaii and Brazil have made as good a job of overcoming the racial barriers to freedom and justice as the socialisms of Poland and Yugoslavia have of overcoming the economic and class barriers.

A World Society

Socialism as we described it above, as the faculty to be, think and act socially, in a manner coterminous with society, can only reach its full stature when the word *society* expands to cover all mankind. It is only a historical fluke that the preceding sentence will put the reader in mind of Trotsky; any man who on attaining a consciousness of the whole world becomes a world revolutionary, was already a revolutionary. In the same way another man could become a world reactionary, or, like the missionaries, a world Christian or world Muslim or, like John Foster Dulles, a world American. To raise this or that political doctrine formed in one's own society to the measure of the world itself is simply to raise a small partiality to a large partiality. Socialism, as we understand it, is not primarily concerned to change the structure of society in this or that part of the world. It is concerned to be, think and act in a manner that takes account not only of the existence of other people all over the world, and of their interests, but also of the nature of their existence and their manner of pursuing their interests. Above all it will bear in mind what is likely to happen if such and such a course is taken. It will bear in mind the evidence that the oppressed revolt, that the attacked hit back, that the starving fester and pillage, that the exploited murmur, that the ignorant excite themselves. There is plenty of it.

9. The Bomb

ON many issues the Labour Party does bear the evidence in mind. A Labour Government, for instance, could never have bombed Port Said or walked so scrupulously blindfold into the divide-and-rule trap in Cyprus. But on the greatest issue of our time, the bomb, the Labour Party has fallen as far short of socialism as the Conservative Party has. This is a hard saying, and we must not content ourselves with a petulant 'there's nothing to choose between them'. The threat to all humanity from thermonuclear weapons is perfectly obvious to everybody in the world, and the logical nonsense of the 'great deterrent' is obvious to almost everybody. (We have recently heard the 'great deterrent' explained thus by one of those in charge of it: 'If it is ever used, our policy will have failed. But we must show continuous evidence of our determination to use it in defence of our vital interests'. In other words, we must show continuous evidence of our determination to cause our policy to fail. On the other hand there is increasing reason to believe that our more talented soldiers and airmen now share the popular view that a thermonuclear deterrent is logical nonsense.) The Conservative Government has no proposal to reduce the threat or correct the nonsense other than the disarmament negotiations which now have the remarkable record of fifteen years without a squeak to show for it. For them 'the nuclear dilemma' means how to get more and bigger weapons quicker. But under the pressure of a mass protest movement solidly based on common sense and justice, the Labour Party Executive has dissociated itself from Government policy far enough to hatch a half-hearted sort of non-nuclear club. Although this policy means Britain would not make nuclear weapons any more, it does not mean British forces would not possess them. The bombs and rockets held by British forces in Britain would be marked 'made in America' instead of 'made in Britain'. That is all. If the purpose of the policy is to free British industrial nuclear capacity for peaceful uses, the policy is a good one. But if its purpose is to reduce the threat of general annihilation by reducing the number of weapons in the world, or the number of countries where they are held, then it is not a policy at all, and to claim that this was its purpose would be fraudulent.

One of us has recently published a booklet about all this, and we do not want to go into it again at length.¹ But we do assert that the Labour Party went into the last election without a policy for averting the catastrophic ruin of humanity, and it seems likely that those who are aware humanity is in hourly danger of catastrophic ruin were disappointed by

¹ See: Wayland Young, *Strategy for Survival*, Penguin Books, 1959.

this. By next election time, they will be not only more disappointed but more numerous.

The international scene is changing so swiftly that it is impossible to suggest any definite disarmament policy for the Labour Party to fight the next election on. But if a good policy is to come up, it will have to come from a good mind, and we do not think that any mind which has ever accepted the logic of 'the great deterrent' can be called good. It will also have to be an imaginative policy, and we doubt that any leader who has shown no capacity to be appalled by nuclear weapons can have much imagination.

Putting Disarmament First

In domestic affairs, a party can have a hard and fast policy between elections, because if it is elected it can more or less guarantee to carry it out. In foreign affairs, this is not so. Its action there is circumscribed by that of foreign governments, and unilateral actions are something to be held in reserve against the possible failure of negotiations. The question of disarmament is beyond all comparison the most important that has ever faced mankind and, therefore, *a fortiori*, that has ever faced any political party. It would be a good plan, therefore, if British governments were to conduct themselves in disarmament negotiations in such a way as to put disarmament itself above all other considerations whatever. At present, these negotiations are torpedoed roughly alternately by the Russians and the Americans. When America made it inevitable that Russia should torpedo the last Summit meeting by sending an espionage flight and ordering a military alert because, as Mr. Gates said later, they knew the Russians were going to torpedo it, Mr. Macmillan came back and said the moral was that we must strengthen our defences. It always is. When Russia torpedoes disarmament, we blame Russia and strengthen our defences. When America torpedoes disarmament, we blame Russia and strengthen our defences. And since our defences are no defence but only a threat, the danger mounts without remission. The Labour Party should announce that at future disarmament negotiations it will subordinate everything, including the goodwill of the Pentagon, to achieving disarmament, and that if any power torpedoes the negotiations it will blame that power, whoever it is. This is the only true interpretation of putting disarmament first.

As with the less important questions we have been considering above, the policy will 'come right' if the underlying attitude is consonant with surrounding reality. Here above all there is need for a socialist policy as we have used the word; for a policy which rises to the full measure of the society we live in, namely, the world. Compared with the survival of mankind itself, nothing matters—nothing whatever. There is no government among the big powers which has yet shown itself aware of this fact, and it may be that the first generation of statesmen to grasp it, and to derive policy from it, will appear in the British Labour Party. It should look out for them.

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