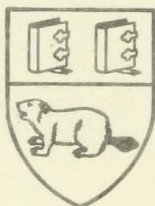
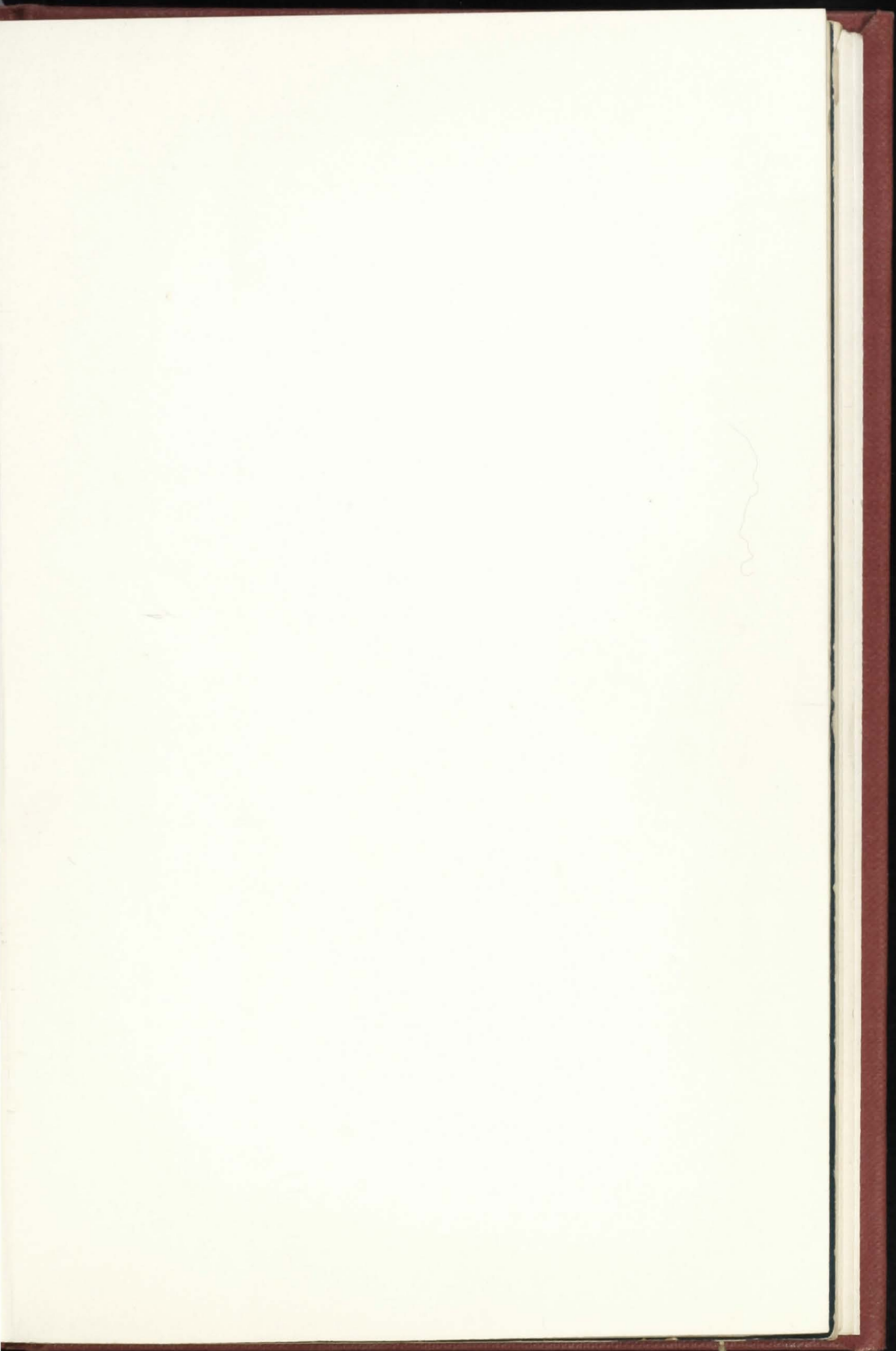
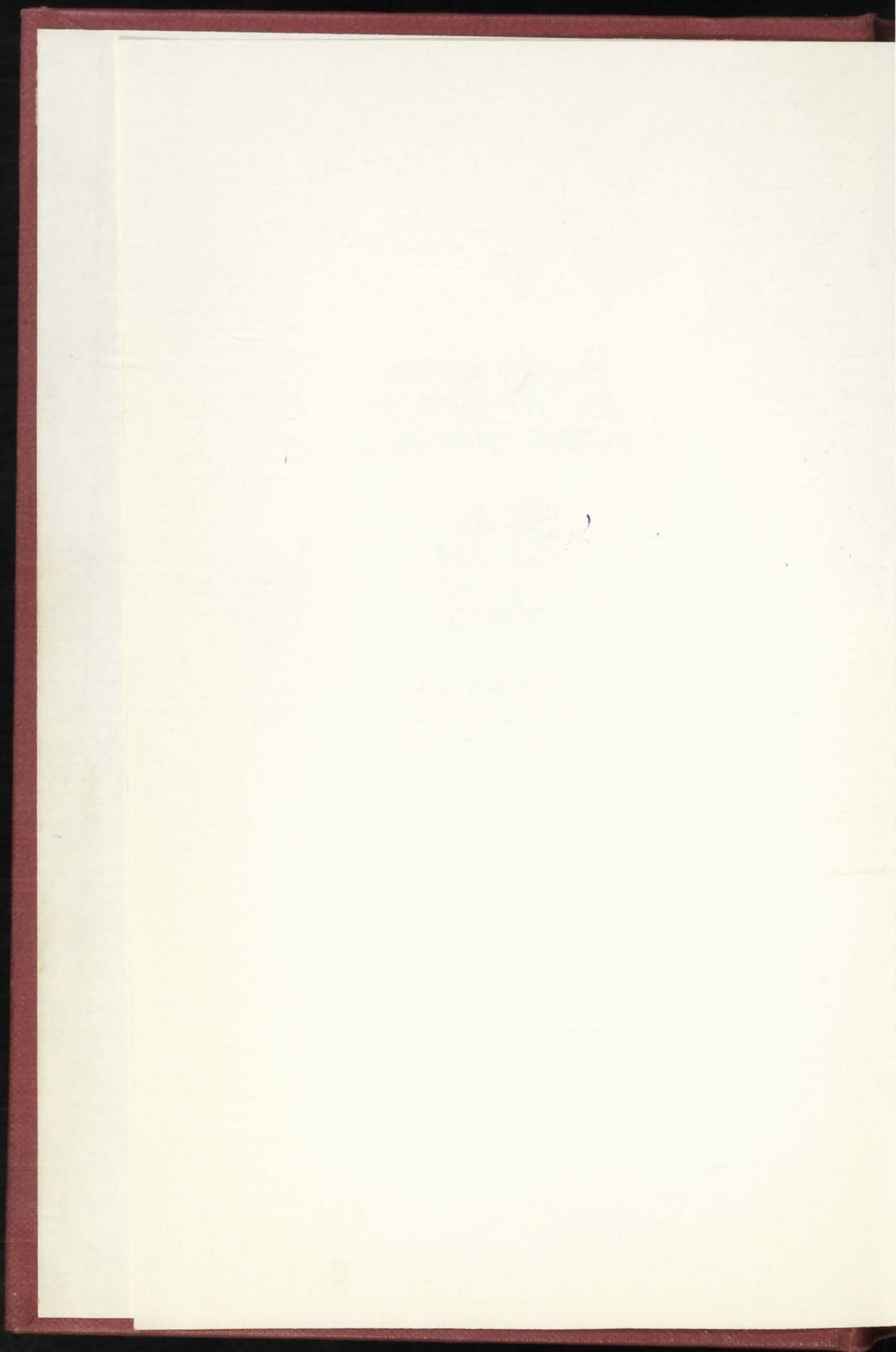


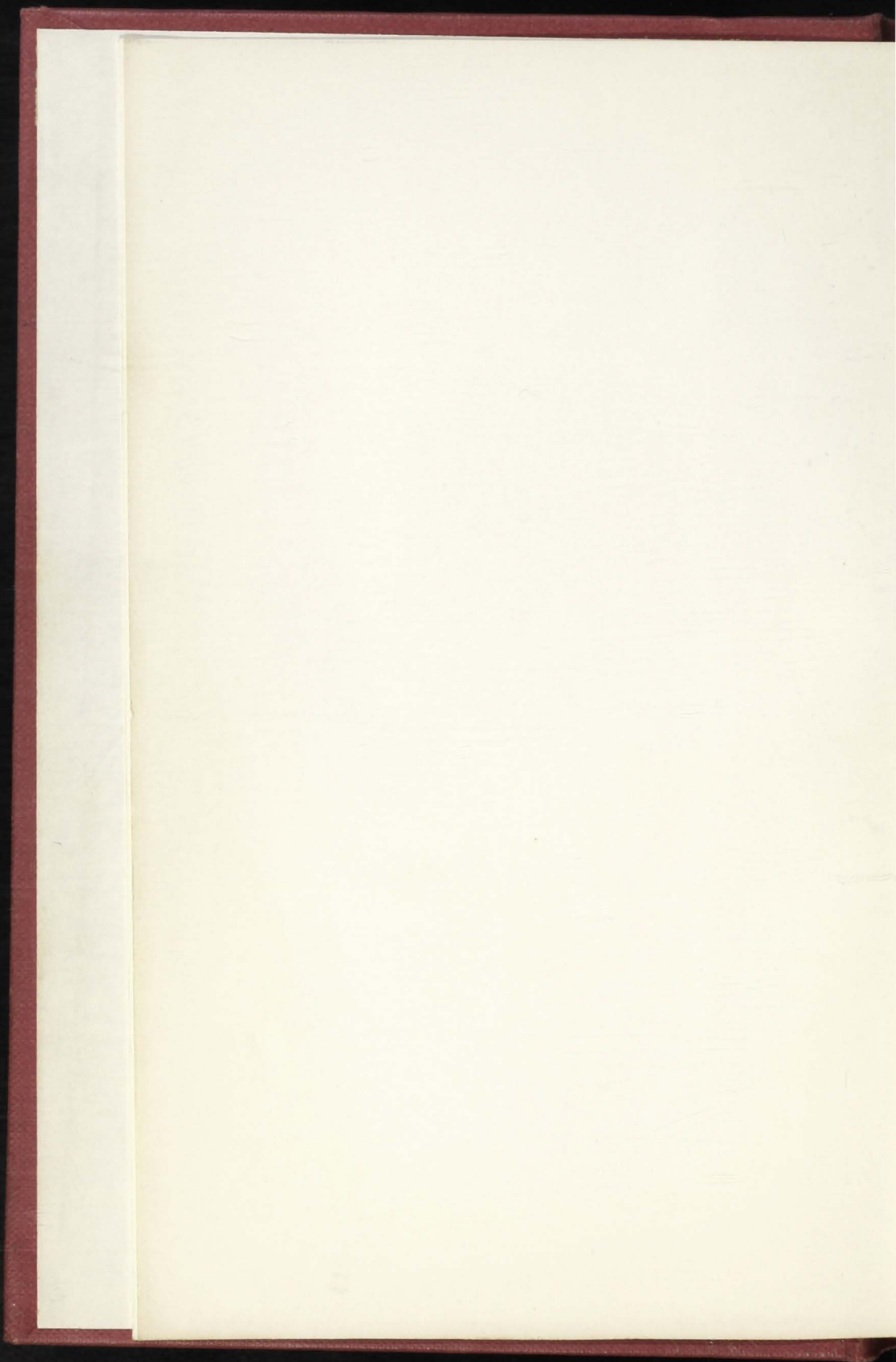
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“WHITHER SOCIALISM? —

VALUES IN A CHANGING CIVILISATION”

R. H. S. CROSSMAN, M.P.



SOCIALIST VALUES

IN A

CHANGING CIVILISATION



FIFTH IN THE SERIES OF

FABIAN AUTUMN

LECTURES, 1950

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- 2. SOCIALISM AND THE STUDY OF MAN**
AUSTEN ALBU, M.P.
- 3. DOES SOCIALISM NEED RELIGION ?**
REV. JOHN GROSER
- 4. LESSONS OF SCIENCE**
DR. J. BRONOWSKI
- 5. SOCIALIST VALUES IN A CHANGING
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R. H. S. CROSSMAN, M.P.

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SOCIALIST VALUES IN A CHANGING CIVILISATION

Fabian Autumn Lecture, 17th November, 1950

FOREWORD

THE LECTURES from which this pamphlet arises had as part of their general title, "Whither Socialism?" R. H. S. Crossman's aim in this final lecture, therefore, was to assess the significance for socialism's future particularly of the new trends in thinking which the earlier speakers had shown.

This leads him on to his own statement of the practical values to which socialism must pay attention in the coming years if, on the foundations laid in the first years of office, the socialist society is really to be built.

R(P)

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NOTE.—This pamphlet, like all publications of the Fabian Society, represents not the collective view of the Society but only the view of the individual who prepared it. The responsibility of the Society is limited to approving the publications which it issues as worthy of consideration within the Labour Movement.

May, 1951.

SOCIALIST VALUES IN A CHANGING CIVILISATION

R. H. S. CROSSMAN, M.P.

The pattern of Socialist values

IT IS A difficult thing to sum up this series of Fabian Lectures. When I was thinking about the way in which I could do so, I turned to the advertisement which, no doubt, attracted you all here, and meditated on the difference between the Fabian Lectures of this year and the Fabian Lectures of, shall we say, 1889, out of which Fabian Essays grew, and it struck me that here was the point of departure for this last lecture. Who, in 1889, would have designed a series of lectures on Values in a Changing World? Everybody knew what people wanted. There was no doubt in the mind of the Liberal or the Socialist of the values which everybody should and did have. The greatest good of the greatest number was the simple, final ultimate. All you had to do was to operate Bentham's felicific calculus and by a neat piece of ratiocination deduce, from this simple formula, whether you should build houses or cinemas—to take Nye Bevan's own example from the first Lecture. Values were unquestioned, it was all a problem of means. The job of the Fabians was simple—to abolish poverty and raise the standard of living. At that time it was not appreciated either that the standard of living was an Anglo-Saxon invention, or that economics was in its infancy as a social science.

Now, I think it is very striking that in this series of lectures only one of your lecturers has adopted the respectable Fabian point of view; only Professor Bronowski—a mathematician and a technologist—has dared to say in 1950 that the material and the ethical are two facets of the same force. Not one of the other lecturers put that point of view. Take the extreme opposite to Bronowski—Father Groser. He argued that you cannot have socialism without Christianity. He did not mean by Christianity keeping the Festival of Britain from having a fun-fair on Sundays. He meant that you cannot have socialism without believing in a transcendent God. He summed it up in the following words: "It is my contention that no society can be healthy or growing healthily unless it acknowledges an authority beyond itself. The recognition of such an authority is unlikely, if not impossible, without belief in a transcendent God."

I am sure that in 1889, or in 1909, or even in 1929, such a statement

would have sounded quite incredibly old-fashioned to a Fabian audience. But, to-day, it is a question which every serious-minded politician has to ask himself. Can you have democratic socialism without some form of organised religion to ensure that the pattern of values (which a few intellectuals can assume for purely rationalist reasons) is accepted by the rest of society? If you do away with religion, do you not fall into the modern secular religions which impose a tyranny far more barbarous even than that of the Inquisition? That is the problem in 1950, which the agnostic, such as myself, is bound to face. I have put it to myself often this way. I can be a humanist in the first generation of rebellion against organised religion, but how can my children have the same humanist conviction when I have given them no pattern to rebel against? What happens to the second generation of agnostics?

That brings me to the very remarkable lecture of Austen Albu. Approaching this problem of the pattern of values from a completely different point of view—that of the modern sociologist—Austen Albu really reached a conclusion not very different from that of Father Groser; that the real pattern of values has little to do with Bentham's economic man. If you assume man to be an economic creature, activated mainly by motives of rational self-interest, then you can achieve no democratic socialist society at all. Albu gave you in his lecture instance after instance to show that those who assume the *economic* nature of man are not only distorting the actual well-known facts of psychology, psychiatry and sociology: they are also stating something immoral.

It is interesting to find the sociologist and the East-end parson in agreement that what used to be one of the basic socialist assumptions (that one should treat man as an economic creature), may be one of the causes of our present troubles and our present uncertainties. But you might say to me, "Well, an East-end parson and a backbencher who dabbles in sociology, what do they matter?" Well, then, listen to the Minister of Health. This is what Aneurin Bevan said to you in his first lecture of this series, speaking after five years of actual experience of socialist administration. "A decision to select between a number of different alternatives, no matter how prosaic these alternatives may be, is a moral choice. Even if you have to decide between building a cinema or a house, it is a decision in the pattern of your values, and such a decision on the deployment of the national resources elevates"—a typical Aneurin phrase—"the authority of principle as against the principle of authority." He went on to say: "That we are doing this" (he meant "we" as a Labour Government) "that is the revolution." We are no longer leaving these decisions to blind chance, to the laws of supply and demand, margins of utility, or whatever you call them. Mankind is making an open choice between values. That is the real significance of the planned economy. In it you are reaching a new kind of authoritarian society, the authority of moral purpose, freely undertaken." So we find the Minister of Health, the sociologist and the Christian parson in agreement that the issue of moral values is the major issue of democratic socialism.

The fallacy of Economic Man

I want to start where the lecturers before me left off, by analysing rather more fully this new spiritual revulsion against economic materialism and scientific socialism. What were the delusions about the nature of man and the job of the politician which have brought us to the pass of 1950? I suggest that there are three delusions which can be grouped under the words "economic materialism." The first, as mentioned already in Austen Albu's lecture, is the delusion that for political purposes man should be treated primarily as an economic animal: that the Socialist can safely assume that, if he treats the community as a collection of individual consumers of material goods and distributes the goods equally among these atomised consumers, he will have achieved a society of free and equal men.

I, too, regard this as a simplification and a delusion, and I think we can already find in the experience of the Labour Government that many of our difficulties are due to our making this *simpliste* assumption about human nature. I have been very interested to observe the reports of the Anglo-American Productivity Committees. Some seem to be based on the assumption that if, in the atmosphere of American free enterprise—an atmosphere in which intense competition and social pressure to achieve wealth is the dominant force—certain incentives have been successful, they could be safely transplanted into Britain and increase production here. Surely, such a belief is an economic over-simplification. It is very dangerous to assume that the economic incentives of a competitive society will necessarily increase the production of a society which has always believed far more in team work, in collaboration, and in the many other values beyond the acquisition of more wealth and a larger motor car than your neighbour. When I meet a miner from my constituency and he tells me how he really will not work the extra shift at the week-end because he likes work in the open-air, I think he is expressing a spiritual value, and I cannot blankly say to myself, "My job as a Socialist is to make him want more money more than he wants his leisure in the open air." Surely, I have to recognise him as a more civilised creature because he wants that leisure in the open air. Surely, as a Socialist, I have to say, "Well, it may be we have got in the short run to get our production up, but let's know what we're doing. Let's know we're violating a priceless value of British life in trying to cajole him and bribe him with incentives to give up the spiritual value of appreciating the countryside and leisure, and not caring so much about money."

Let me give you another example. We have nationalised gas and electricity, and I believe it is unchallengeable that, in the long run, strictly in terms of the cheapness of production and distribution of electricity, it will pay us to have nationalised; but it is also true that in Coventry we had an electricity concern of our own. We had our municipal Socialism; we had built it up for ourselves. A socialist should recognise that in destroying municipal socialism he is destroying a value. If he saw how valuable municipal socialism was and, despite that, decided to

nationalise, I accept his case. It is when he does not understand what he has destroyed that I begin to feel he is treating us as economic atoms and not as people who loved their responsibility for their own electricity concern and were proud of it. I wish that in nationalising we had taken more trouble to preserve the local units of self-government and responsibility built up by previous generations of socialists or believers in municipal enterprise. I do not say that what was done was wrong; I only say that we ought to have seen here a conflict of socialist values and to have appreciated that the traditions of British social democracy are based on the voluntary organisation. From the time of Cromwell's soldiers on, the spirit of British democracy has been the spirit of men and women grouping themselves together voluntarily in order to achieve certain noble ends. Whether you are getting penal reform, or getting changes of the Corn Laws or organising in trade unions or co-ops., the essence of British democracy is this voluntary, spontaneous organisation from below. Should we not recognise that this spontaneous organisation may be so valuable that it is worth losing a good deal of so-called efficiency in order to preserve it?

I emphasise this point in order to underline Austen Albu's attack on the academic economists. He was not attacking them for being academic or economists; he was attacking politicians for taking them too seriously, for believing that they know all sorts of things which they do not know. Austen Albu remarks: "Economics remains isolated, based largely on deductive reasoning and, as a consequence, is almost useless in the solution of current problems. It is alarming that, at a time when we are more and more trying to control the economic conditions of our existence, the branch of learning" (and he adds, "I cannot call it a science") "which should contribute most to our understanding should be taught as a philosophic exercise, and that its students should not be encouraged to go out into the field they are supposed to be studying, and by observation and analysis test the hypotheses from which their elaborate theories, and even more elaborate mathematical equations and curves, are deduced. Few, even of our socialist economists, recognise the futility of policies developed on no stronger basis of knowledge of human behaviour than those which satisfied Jeremy Bentham."

Even though I do not follow every word that Albu said, I think I know what he means. If Governments take their policy from the abstract economic or statistical calculations of economists, without collating those calculations with many other discoveries about human nature, they will produce an abstract and distorted result. This is one of the conclusions we must come to as socialists to-day, that economics must be reinforced by other social sciences, more modern studies of non-economic aspects of human behaviour.

It is a delusion to believe that a socialist politician, provided he understood economics, would understand how to run a planned economy. We now know that he has got to understand a great deal more than economics, and be prepared to sacrifice what the economist can prove to him to be efficiency for the sake of non-economic values.

The fallacy of 'inherence'

The second delusion I am going to refer to is the delusion of "inherent contradictions." Many Fabians who refused to accept Marxism were nevertheless convinced that Socialism was bound to come because Capitalism was bound to collapse. I regard this as pure superstition. It is not based on any science or scientific study of how Capitalism has evolved since Marx wrote "Das Kapital"; but on an apocalyptic conviction that we are to be the inheritors "after the deluge."

All the evidence of the last fifty years is that Capitalism *can* be adapted and *can* survive. Indeed, I put it to you as a hypothesis that welfare capitalism in certain countries may last for a very long time; that under a Fair Deal in America you could evolve a form of planned welfare Capitalist economy which is not Socialism at all. Indeed, we have proved it here in the last five years. We have not got Socialism; we have got welfare Capitalism, planned on Heath Robinson lines. By so-called "British muddle-through," we have solved for the time being the inherent contradiction of Marx. I do not mean to say that the solution is a permanent one; I do not believe in permanency in history. All I am saying is we have got to give up belief in "inherency" as a scientific formula. There are no inherent contradictions in society, no indissoluble dilemmas. Human beings are very adaptable and skilful people, and Capitalists are no less skilful at adapting their systems than other human beings.

That brings me to an important conclusion. We used to have the feeling that we could logically prove that Socialism would work and Capitalism would not. Now all we can prove is that Socialism is more moral than Capitalism. Both may work; and actually there is no more reason to believe that democratic Socialism will work, because it is a more difficult system than Capitalism. So what we now assert is, "You ought to have Socialism because it is morally better than Capitalism." Because we are no longer able to depend on logic to prove that we are bound to come to power, we must rely on the morality of our fellow citizens; and we must persuade them to prefer our way of distributing the goods of society to another way which will work at least as well. That drives us back, therefore, to the simple ethical principles which, I think, have been neglected for the last thirty years.

The fallacy of inevitability

The third delusion I will call your attention to is the delusion of the inevitability of progress; a delusion which is deep in all of us. It takes two forms; that of the Liberal or the Socialist optimist, and that of the Marxist. You have the belief of H. G. Wells that, as society develops, as you get more refrigerators, as you get larger units, men would automatically get better and get freer. That was the prevailing philosophy of the first decade of this century, that the world was going to progress towards freedom, broadening down from precedent to precedent. Well, most people have given that delusion up. But when we gave it up, a lot of Socialists fell into another delusion. They said, "Great Scott, there

has been a crash; gradualism is out of date," and so we got Harold Laski's form of Marxism. Instead of gradualism, we had the inevitability of revolution, and after the revolution the classless society. Of course, the fire was just as silly as the frying-pan. The belief that you will gradually get better and better, the more large-scale organisation and the more material comforts you have, is no more silly than the belief that if you have savage dictatorship for a short time, you can smooth out all difficulties and emerge in a state of semi-religious anarchy called classless society.

Both doctrines were based on the same delusion—the major delusion of the nineteenth century that, if you got the economic system right, you could let politics look after themselves. The Manchester Liberals said: "Get the economics right and then you can have a minimum of government." The Marxists said: "Get the economics right by violent revolution, and then you need not worry what the rulers will be doing." Well, we now have started to worry what the Communists are doing and we have discovered that, after all, you can get the economics right and yet have more misery than before. To say that is not to be anti-Socialist. It is to say something every human being in the world now knows, that you can have all the property relations right and a totalitarian tyranny too.

The Political Revolution

The reason why the early Liberals and economists and Socialists and the Marxists all missed this was because they saw only one of the two revolutions of the nineteenth and twentieth century. They saw the Industrial Revolution; and wrote countless books about it. They did not see the Political Revolution which followed the Industrial Revolution. By the Political Revolution I mean something just as dramatic as the Industrial Revolution, but no books were written about it. I mean the revolution under which the power of coercing human beings, either by physical force or by thought control, expanded to a titanic degree. Marx was able to believe in the apocalyptic revolution followed by a classless society, because he did not see the State as the instrument of immense power, but merely as the Executive Committee of the bourgeoisie. We now know that the power of the State is not in the hands of any class. It is a power in itself, and once you hold that power, once you control the Army, once you control the instruments of coercion, and the instruments of thought control through mass communication, through radio and newspapers—once you control those you can have power greater than any Capitalist under the sun. This political revolution, under which the modern State evolved, went almost unnoticed by Socialists. We went on talking about economic power, and did not notice, until Burnham wrote about it, the growth of the managerial society, the separation of ownership from industrial power and, equally, the growth of a State apparatus which had a power of its own. The political revolution has meant that the prevailing form of State in the twentieth century must be totalitarian. You will always have a totalitarian State unless you do a great many energetic things to prevent it.

So, instead of believing that we are developing towards democracy by some law of nature, we must assume that we will develop towards totalitarianism unless we take constant and energetic steps to prevent it. Instead of saying we have got to hurry up and do some more centralisation, we had better realise that, whether we are there or not, the centralisation will go on: the increase in coercive power will go on, the increase in powers of thought control will go on, whatever government or whatever party is in power. The Great Leviathan has re-emerged after that flash in the pan of the nineteenth century when, for a few years, it seemed as though economics were more important than politics.

It is easy to see why Socialists thought that the nineteenth century had set a new standard of history. But now we look back and see it was a brief abnormal period when, for a few years, economics predominated, whereas for countless centuries before the State had held power over economics. We have now merely reverted in our century to the normal state of human beings, which is to be in constant danger of slavery.

Of this managerial, totalitarian, twentieth century society, Russia, not the U.S.A., is the supreme example. In America, Christian and democratic moral principles are at least an obstacle to totalitarian power. In Russia, power was assumed by men who had no moral scruples against the use of it; on the contrary, they thought it morally righteous to destroy democracy in order to achieve the liberation of the masses from Capitalism. It was the ideology of Communism which justified the managerial revolution in Russia, by saying that the bourgeois democracy's moral scruples were things that had to be destroyed utterly by the pure-minded revolutionaries. So, by an irony of history, the liberative force of the Russian revolution has been transformed in the last twenty years, and so corrupted that Soviet Communism has become the supreme expression of twentieth century managerial totalitarianism, the supreme expression of the privileged society. The Communist élite is taught to believe that it must use the masses as a lever to bring it to power, and then destroy the working-class organisations overnight. Here is the political power state *in excelsis!*

You may think this is a somewhat pessimistic picture. But it is not pessimism to face the facts, and the world has often looked just as bad as it does to-day. Nor is it pessimism to admit that history is not on our side. If you want to be on the side of historical forces, you had better write to the Soviet Union and book a place in a concentration camp; then you will be on the side of history. For that is the way history will take us unless we can organise a social conscience strong enough to resist the natural tendency of mankind to acquiesce in servitude in exchange for security.

The real achievements of the first six years

Let me now seek to apply these lessons to the policy of the Labour Government. Since I am going to make some criticisms of what has happened in the last five years, I want first of all to say that we are still

unaware of the astonishing achievements of the last five years. We are too close to them to know how much has happened, and I suspect that the Tory politician is much more aware of them than we are, because he has had to change his spots to win his votes. Let me take the simplest instance first. The fact that we have a National Health Service operating to-day, that we have destroyed commercialism in the whole sector of life to do with health, that we are the first nation in the world to have done it: this is a very remarkable thing.

In 1935, if one talked of a National Health Service, people looked at you and said: "Quite a nice idea, but it will never happen; you'll never actually get your medicine free; never actually have a time when a Health Service is laid on in this way." What is important here is not merely the building of the Health Service—it is the change of atmosphere. Everyone now admits the principle that the community should provide this tremendous service to all on terms of equality.

That brings me to the second achievement—the recognition of human dignity. Security from dismissal and security from fear of old age are, I would say, the greatest achievements of the Labour Government. What do I mean by security from dismissal? I mean the positive, ethical value of full employment which is not, of course, simply that we all have jobs, but that we are no longer divided into two classes, one in work fearing it will lose its job, and one out of work jealous of the one who is in. Under full employment, the working class are enjoying some of the security which the professional and middle-classes have previously assumed as their privilege. There is a moral value in the fact that the agricultural labourer to-day can look at his farmer and say, "I don't much like conditions on your farm." Because there are four other jobs he can go to, he feels himself the equal in human terms of the farmer.

It is the same with old age: I suppose the greatest nightmare of the poor in this country was: "What happens when I grow old? Do I burden my children? Do we live in our little house until we can't even get up to cook a pot of tea, with nobody to look after us?" In this Year of Grace 1950, we have abolished the workhouse, and we are building old people's homes, or rather taking over the homes of the rich who can no longer afford them, with their tiled bathrooms, with their beautifully clipped hedges and their turf; and saying, "This, which used to belong to the Manager of the colliery, shall now be the place where twenty-six old people out of the slums shall die a happy death." That is a transformation, not only for old people, but for everybody who feared old age before. We are beginning to realise the principle that what the upper classes thought was a natural privilege should be the right of every member of the community.

These moral values are the real achievements of socialism in the last five years. These are the things which American students notice when they come here: the bearing of the people, the look of the children, how a working-class person walks about to-day, the way he feels about himself, and the contrast with the servility of only fifteen years ago. And

they are far more important, these changes of moral attitude, than any economic betterment we have achieved.

Well, those seem to me the achievements. We have not achieved a secure economy; we have got all sorts of things wrong. But we have begun to give the values to everybody which used to be the privilege of the upper classes and, as a result, we have presented ourselves with almost insuperable problems, because when everybody begins to claim as rights what the small group had as privileges, in a period when a country is very poor, problems of distribution become very acute. People's standards and sights have been raised in a way so that none of them can remember the sort of clothes their children wore twelve years ago, or even the sort of coats they could afford to buy for themselves. The Socialists' greatest achievement is that he has made the working-class in this country forget what it felt like to be afraid of unemployment, and so become full of the grievances which were previously the monopoly of a prosperous upper class.

Having done that, what next? It is here we come to our mental revolution, for I believe that the Labour Government finished its job sometime in 1948 or 1949; finished the job which the Fabians had laid down for it in the previous thirty years. All the obvious things have been done which were fought for and argued about. And yet, mysteriously enough, though we have carried out all these things, the ideal, the pattern of values, has not been achieved. We have done them, we have created the means to the good life which they all laid down and said, "If you do all these things, after that there'll be a classless society." Well, there isn't! Now, why? What is it we have left undone? More nationalisation? More centralisation? Or are there things that we did not think about? Are they the things which the economists did not think about? Are they the values, the values which the economists must, perforce, neglect in their abstract science? I am not going to suggest a programme. I am going to suggest three Copernican revolutions which every Socialist mind must perform.

Three Copernican Revolutions

The first Copernican revolution is to recognise that property no longer equals power, and that the wealthy are a relatively impotent class in this country. That is a great Copernican revolution. All the talk about "capturing the bastions of capitalism": and then nobody resisted! In this country, by changing the mental atmosphere, you have made it very embarrassing to be rich—beyond a certain point. I suggest to you that just as the dividend holders, or the person who owns shares, has no control of the company, so when we nationalise the companies, equally the people have no control. And the reason is the same. It is because the Managers control the company whether it is privately or publicly owned, and that has been going on for quite a long time. It is just about time we took it for granted in planning our programme; that this great issue of private or public ownership, once we had nationalised the basic industries, became a secondary issue. And I would suggest that Socialism's

next job is not to go on centralising any more power, but to distribute power and responsibility. Why does the railway worker feel disappointed with nationalisation? Because it has given him no responsibility. Why does everybody feel this sense of frustration? The change of ownership takes place, the flag goes up, and the management remains unchanged.

From the point of view of the worker, what matters to-day is not this highly abstract question, who owns it, but "How much share in personal, human responsibility do I have?" Most of them do not want it, I agree, but the issue of democracy is whether you can distribute power and prevent the managerial society under us becoming a two-class society with, on top, the Civil Service, the Managers, the Trade Union leaders, the politicians—there is the new oligarchy on top—and underneath a mass of frustrated, unhappy people. Now that is what happens in the modern world, unless you take the most careful steps to prevent it. We should not be surprised, therefore, that, since we took very few steps to prevent it—apart from setting up things called Consumers' Councils and assuming they would not work, and so they did not—since we took very few steps, since we were all such good organisers, since we were concerned with getting things shipshape and efficient and not with getting them humanised, what the ordinary man meant by Socialism of the spirit, the pattern of values, did not occur at all in the new nationalised industries.

I suggest, therefore, that we ought to turn our attention to this question. Having got state ownership of certain monopolies, how do we humanise relations in those monopolies? The job of the socialist in the next ten years is not to centralise power any more—on the contrary it is to decentralise power whenever it is possible and spread it over the community in the widest possible way, so as to ensure that in all walks of life people feel that they have a power to decide something about themselves. That, surely, must be our aim, and if you agree with me that that is our aim, then look at our last two programmes and see how much of those programmes is about this subject. You will find very little at all.

Now, let me take the second mental revolution; it is about fair shares. Fair shares is one of the vital concepts of British Socialism. But I do not believe you will get fair shares by studying the cost-of-living index, and proving to the housewives that it really has not gone up when they all think it has. That is not fair shares; fair shares is not a statistical concept. Fair shares means feeling as a community that things are fairly distributed. There may be communities which feel things are fair, even when there are economic inequalities. Do not assume that sheer statistical, economical equalitarianism *feels fair*. It does not *feel* fair to a butcher's wife when miners come up in the social scale and earn more than she does. I am not saying you should not raise miners' wages, but do not imagine that *she* will feel it is fair. Fair shares means that people are feeling, roughly speaking, that they are getting what they deserve. That may be very remote from strict statistical equalitarianism; you will

find out what sort of fair shares you ought to have, not by studying economics, but by studying human beings, seeing what they really feel about it and about each other and about the people with whom they live.

All right, what are we going to do about it? We must break another delusion. We must break the delusion that it is our object as Socialists to show that nationalised industries can make a profit, and be as capitalistic as private enterprise. Any fool can make a profit by raising prices. I thought the point of nationalising was to enable us to distribute essential things in the way we thought was good for the community, and to stand the loss if it were necessary. We have now reached this fantastic situation. Here are the railways: they were bankrupt, they obviously needed a subsidy. We said, "We only subsidise private enterprise, we can't subsidise a nationalised industry." As a result, the farmer is subsidised, so that he can pay the agricultural worker a fair wage, and preach anti-Socialism to him, and we refuse to subsidise the railways on which we have imposed a gilt-edged investment as a first charge on their earnings, and we say, "You shan't be able to pay a fair wage to a railway worker because you are a nationalised industry." Taking a look round at the cost of living, I feel inclined to say, "Wouldn't it be a good thing if the first two tons of coal every household consumed from the nationalised coal mines should be halved in price? It would only cost £21,000,000 to do so and would give incalculable encouragement and might indeed give a little belief in the benefits of nationalisation." I am told, "You can't do that; we have to spend it all on the farmers, and the trampships and the fishing fleet. They are all private enterprise; they must have it." I honestly think we have got to make a Copernican revolution about this.

The third Copernican revolution is to see that the greatest problem immediately facing the Labour Government is, not the question of State ownership, nor even this question of industrial relations, but the question of wages and profits. Until we are prepared to recognise that we are bound to go back to free enterprise and jungle capitalism unless we have a wages policy and a profit policy planned by the Government and operated by somebody else, we can give up talking about a permanent Socialist system; for if you leave to *laissez-faire* this vital element, wages and profits, then the whole economic system is vitiated by free enterprise and competition, and you have no planning of the community. I suggest that one of the jobs Fabian Societies should undertake if they are concerned with achieving the second stage of Socialism is the socialisation of the Trade Union movement, and that will not be done except by an arduous process of creating a pressure from below. You will not get it from the top. After all, people do not destroy their own means of living! We all have vested interests; politicians do not want to reform the House of Commons; the T.U.C. does not want to reform the Trade Union Movement. The reform can only come through the creation of a public opinion among those concerned. It must be gradually carried through, not by an Act of Parliament; but through the creation of an atmosphere in which it must be done. That is the way all British changes

have come. First, the idea is launched by a voluntary organisation, and then we laggardly politicians and leaders at last come along and take all the credit for the work. The Fabian Society is a voluntary organisation in that sense of the term.

These three Copernican revolutions demand the recognition that education is quite important! It is complete nonsense to talk about equality of opportunity until you have equality of educational opportunity. Indeed, in the society in which we are now living educational privilege is rapidly becoming far more dangerous than economic privilege. It is almost more important what degree, diploma, or certificate you possess than whether you have got £50 in the bank! We are in danger of the segregation of classes by educational privilege and educational distinction. Let us recognise that under a Labour Government the number of children in privileged schools has been steadily increasing year by year. I am not going to go into the subject of how to deal with this, but I would suggest to our Society that of all the things we could do the job of showing the way to achieve equality in education, while maintaining quality, is something which Fabians should put their minds to. We live in the managerial society, and the only way to prevent the creation of a managerial élite is to achieve an educated democracy. If you do not have a very high general level of education, the managerial élite (no blame to it) will be corrupted by its segregation into a sense of superiority.

Democracy in Colonial areas

Let me now turn briefly to external affairs, and ask myself how to apply these principles to our handling of the world outside. My first suggestion to you is this: give up the belief that democratic socialism is a universal panacea, or is likely to exist in the next hundred years in very many countries of the world. All our history has shown that this unique thing which has grown up in Scandinavia, in Britain, in parts of the Commonwealth—this Western Democracy, out of which you can get Socialism—is a growth based on hundreds of years of slow development. The idea that you can take this parliamentary system and impose it on a backward people—that, for instance, after a bloody war in Korea, you will set a pattern of democracy by holding elections—is insane. Yet it is a common-place of political speeches. We make things too easy for the Communists when we preach this simple formula. Our democracy has grown organically by movements coming up from below, developing their own ethos, struggling ahead through generations, gradually achieving power, civilising the community. That sort of pattern cannot be imposed from outside. Yet our programme for colonial peoples suggests that it could be. First of all give national self-determination, then introduce the parliamentary system and then supply American economic aid; and then, friends, we are resisting Communism! But everybody who studies conditions in these areas knows that the combination of those three remedies is not sufficient. I happen to know a bit about the Middle East; we introduced democracy there and the result

has been the preservation of such feudal privilege as exists in no other part of the world. The only country in the Middle East which is moving towards democracy is Turkey, because it had a dictatorship for thirty years, and not the democracy which we gave to Iraq and the rest of them.

Is there a lesson from that? Of course there is a lesson. We had dictatorships in our history in the period when we had rapidly to modernise our society. The modernisation of a backward people, the sudden bringing it out of the Middle Ages into the twentieth century, cannot always take place under the preliminary forms of the western world. It is a drastic, surgical process in which almost certainly dictatorial forms of government will often be used. In the second place, the issue in these backward areas is: Who is going to get hold of the intelligentsia? Those are the people who matter. If they are on our side, the State is on our side, because in such backward areas a few, very few, hundred people have virtual control. Communism understands that: it goes for the few hundred. What do we do? We bring them to the L.S.E., and let them as coloured people ask for lodgings in London, and then expect them to be fervent advocates of the western way of life. Every one of those people who is insulted goes back a potential agent of Communism. I often wonder whether, if we sent them to Camberley and trained them as soldiers, rather than as students of economics, they would not be likely to have the moral qualities which are required in the first instance of the élite of a backward State.

The other day somebody came back from West Africa and said, "I've just been looking at the problem of the Gold Coast. If we hand over to the Africans everything will depend on one thing, not on the Constitution, but on whether we can get 500 men who will run cocoa marketing while maintaining the present standards of financial integrity." Five hundred men with a pattern of morality—not with L.S.E. education—because the most important thing is that they should be honest. Moral integrity is what you must have as a basis of the State long before you get to the frills of high economic knowledge or voting. There is a lesson there.

Towards a philosophy of Cold War

My last point is that we have got to change our attitude to the Cold War. I would say that Socialists in this country can roughly be divided into two classes: those who, faced with the Cold War, join the anti-Communist crusade and try to exceed Mr. Churchill in their enthusiasm for a tough policy; and those who feel sick in their stomachs and say, "I can't take it, this is wrong; this isn't Socialism." So you have the half-hearted on the one side and the brutalised on the other. Is that an unfair picture?

The Cold War is the major factor of this century, and the first thing we have got to face is that Cold War is the natural state of human beings and civilisation consists in making human beings do something better than their natures. Let us not be depressed, therefore, at finding men in their natural state, particularly when our form of economy leads to huge

managerial society, the vast leviathan which struggles for existence and imposes unconditional surrender on its enemy. That *is* the world we live in!

How can we face that world as Socialists to-day? First of all, by recognising that though war is a destructive force, it has also in the last hundred years been an enormously creative force. Without two world wars very little of what we now know as the British Welfare State would exist. In each war the working class has made colossal advances, because in war they must be treated as (nearly) equal citizens. Moreover, each war has liberated and released masses of people in the backward areas for the first time, and out of wars have come revolution and change.

For heaven's sake, let us get out of our heads the theory that there is nothing creative in war. It destroys, but out of it come new forms—some good, some bad. I have just drawn up for my interest a sort of credit and debit of the Cold War since it really got going in 1947. It is not all debit. I know we have got MacArthurism in Asia and re-armament in Germany in the offing, and anti-Communist hysteria in the U.S.A. But Marshall Aid was a positive credit item of the Cold War; and the type of Western integration we are achieving is a response to a challenge, a good we could never have achieved without that challenge. Until a Socialist accepts that fact without feeling guilty, he will not have the real dynamic to save the world from the dangers which America, in her present state, inevitably imposes upon it. If one is half-hearted in wanting to defeat Communism, one is not going to be able to restrain the Americans. Our mission is to civilise the Cold War and, using the opportunities provided by it, to introduce, for instance, rationing and control of all raw materials in the non-Communist world and planning of food resources. These things can be achieved under the Cold War; and it is our job as Socialists to see that they are. The challenge from 1850 till 1920 was Capitalism. The working class started a hopeless struggle against Capitalism, and the experts in the middle classes said, "You can't do it without bloody revolution." "Yes, we'll civilise this struggle," said the working classes, "we're going to abolish class war by peaceful means." All Marxists, all the lecturers, said "Impossible," but the British working class did it. They achieved the impossible.

I can see no reason why, if we have the same faith in impossible causes, the same belief in moral values which the working class had in its long process of civilising British Capitalism, we should not civilise the Cold War, and out of it create a unified, non-Communist world.



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