

# FABIAN SOCIETY

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## THE WAR ON THE HOME FRONT

by  
G. D. H. COLE

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# FABIAN SOCIETY AND WAR

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G. D. H. COLE

LONDON  
THE FABIAN SOCIETY  
11 Dartmouth Street S W 1

(772) 433192  
(772) 433192

**NOTE**

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# THE WAR

## ON THE

# HOME FRONT

*Inter arma silent leges.* The laws are silent amid the clash of arms. Surely there never was a falser statement. For, at any rate in these days, when war breaks out laws multiply at an alarming rate, and the ordinary citizen becomes much more conscious of his subjection to the 'law of the land' than, unless he is an habitual criminal, he ever needs to feel in times of peace. We are all potential criminals now, liable to find at any moment the hand of the law descending upon us because we have broken some war-time regulation of which, very likely, we have never heard. For despite the legal fiction, very convenient to administrators, that the citizen is always supposed to know the law, today not even the lawyers know it; and even the administrators are only finding out gradually the extent of the new powers which they have acquired. We can hardly glance at our newspapers of a morning without discovering some new duty, prohibition or injunction that has been laid upon us; and for every one we discover there are at least a dozen of which we remain, for the moment, mercifully ignorant because they have not yet begun to be enforced.

This proliferation of laws, orders and regulations is inevitable under the conditions of modern war, especially if it be waged against a totalitarian enemy. For nowadays war penetrates into every nook and cranny of men's lives: there is literally nobody who can go on unaffected by it. Conscription, which came in only in the third year of the last war, is today taken as a matter of course. The Government is already empowered to control civilian employment; and, even outside the factories, more people are being enrolled as air-raid wardens, fire-fighters, emergency policemen and so on than are being enlisted as soldiers. Already the entire population is being registered: ration books for food as well as petrol are on the way; evacuated populations and soldiers are being compulsorily billeted; private premises, as well as factories and public buildings, are being commandeered. By order, we are carrying around our publicly supplied gas masks, and learning the geography of air-raid shelters and first aid posts in the neighbourhood of our work and of our homes. By order, we are groping our way about in the dark, changing our habits so as to stay at home instead of going out at nights, and in general readjusting our ways of living to the conditions of a beleaguered country.

We are doing all this, on the whole, with very little grumbling but with a great deal of bewilderment. We are prepared to accept the fact that this war must interfere much more than any before it with the lives and habits of the civilian population, not only

because we are all now in the line of fire, but even more because wars are fought in these days fully as much by the civilians who make things as by the soldiers. But, in accepting the necessity of finding ourselves ordered about, we are bewildered because we are conscious of a contradiction between the imposed discipline to which we are being made subject and the democracy for which we are alleged to be waging war. We are asking ourselves—those of us who are at all in the habit of political speculation—whether it is possible to fight against an undemocratic and totalitarian enemy without becoming undemocratic and totalitarian ourselves.

### Democracy and the Disciplinarians

That war, and above all modern war on the grand scale, involves severe discipline, is plain to all. The individualist who asserts his right as a free citizen to illuminate his house during a black-out is evidently a public enemy. When each side in the war is endeavouring to blockade the other rationing is unavoidable, and the individualist who claims more than his share of what is going has to be suppressed. When mass armies have to be raised, conscription, provided that it is sensibly administered, is fairer than 'voluntary' service which employs economic pressure as one of its principal recruiting sergeants. In face of the pressure of military and civilian needs on the resources of production, it is indispensable to ensure that factory-owners shall make what is most needed and not merely what they are used to making or what would profit them most. It follows that labour too must be apportioned to the most urgent tasks, and that no one who can do anything useful has the right to loaf.

In all these and in many other respects, war sets up standards very different from those to which we have been accustomed. It restricts at many points—at how many we have not yet had time to realise—the traditional 'liberties of the subject'. Certain of these restrictions are fully in accord with what we Socialists have been advocating all along. We have insisted—it is, indeed, of the very essence of Socialism—that the resources of production and man-power ought to be applied to making what is most needed, and not in accordance with the dictates of the profit-motive. We have denied the right of a rich man to loaf upon his unearned income and, for that matter, the right of a poor man to loaf upon charity or public assistance. We have urged that bread for all should have precedence over cake for some; we have demanded the 'democratisation of the armed forces'; we have stood for 'planning' as against the chaos and wastefulness of private enterprise.

And yet, now that 'planning', of a sort, is coming upon us with a rush, we do not feel happy about it. Nor are our misgivings out of place. For we are very conscious that the persons to whom

authority is being given to order us about are for the most part the very persons who, in the past, have denounced 'planning' most energetically, except when they could exact in its name some form of State assistance for their own profit-making enterprises. We know too that there are a great many persons in high places who value the power to plan the lives of the people, not because they can be so planned as to advance the common welfare, but because their augmented authority can be used for keeping the lower classes in order with a firm hand. In addition, we realise that planning for war is necessarily a very different matter from planning for peace, and that war is apt to throw to the top a mixed assortment of martinets, adventurers and *embusqués* who can by no means be relied upon to plan for the purposes for which the people has been persuaded to acquiesce in the increase of the State power.

If we Socialists and democrats are to uphold democracy in the present crisis, and to make 'planning for war' serve the purposes for which we have long been advocating 'planning for peace', we must at the outset do our best to clear away the confusions which are bound to beset our minds at the first onset of the new conditions. We have to think out the measures which are indispensable in order to preserve the foundations of democracy and secure the effectiveness of democratic criticism and control. We have to get our own clear ideas of the right way of organising war services so as to ensure both the fullest possible participation of democrats in their conduct and the easiest possible convertibility of them, when the war ends, into useful instruments of peace-time control and public service. While the war is going on, we have to do all we can to build foundations for a democratic Socialist system, and to fight against all tendencies that lead away from democratic Socialism.

### What is Socialism ?

As a first step towards this clear thinking, let us consider for a moment what we mean by 'Socialism'. Is 'National Socialism'—for that is Nazism's official title—Socialism, or is it not? If Socialism means merely the extension of State control over the resources of production, so that all the vital productive agencies, men and things alike, become instruments of the omnipotent State, then 'National Socialism' is Socialism, and we have no need to worry; for the world is rushing towards Socialism at a headlong pace. But I imagine that no Socialist will be able to find comfort thus easily. 'National Socialism' is not Socialism; for Socialism is a system of welfare, and Socialists want the social control of the means of production only because and in as far as such control is necessary in order to bring about the welfare of the whole people. The Nazis, on the other hand, do not give a

brass button for welfare. They want the State control of the instruments of production simply because such control is necessary in order to make the State strong for war and conquest.

Public control, or even full public ownership, of the means of production is not Socialism. It is simply an instrument which Socialists require to use in order to advance human welfare. It is an instrument which can be used equally for entirely different ends. The struggle between Socialism and Nazism is a struggle between two forces aiming at different objectives for the control of the economic instruments which must be in the hands of whichever of them is to prevail.

Accordingly, the mere fact that war conditions compel the State largely to supersede the methods of private enterprise and to assume vast powers over industry and property and over the lives of men is no evidence at all that we are making any advance in the direction of Socialism. It is evidence that we are getting away from the forms of capitalism to which we have been accustomed — forms that were already undergoing rapid changes in the direction of State regulation before the war. But, in getting away from *laissez-faire* capitalism we may be moving towards either Socialism or Nazism, towards either of two extreme opposites which have this only in common, that they are both possible next stages in the development of society, because they are both, up to a point, consistent with the technical conditions of the twentieth century.

It is of the profoundest importance that Socialists should understand what this means. *Laissez-faire* capitalism is obsolete: it no longer squares with the technical necessities of production. It engenders unemployment and crisis, because the motive of private profit is no longer sufficient to keep the wheels of industry in regular motion. It restricts production more and more, because it sees in scarcity the only hope of maintaining profits. It destroys competition, which used to be the means of keeping the resources of production at work, because the vast units which are now required for efficient manufacture inevitably find it more profitable to combine than to compete. The old kind of capitalism has been disappearing fast; and nothing on earth can possibly bring it back.

### **The Evitability of Socialism**

Socialists used to maintain that the collapse of this kind of capitalism would of necessity clear the road for Socialism. So in a sense it does, if Socialists are strong enough and able enough to seize their chance. But Socialism is not the only immediate solution that can be offered. Fascism, or Nazism, has shown itself to be, at any rate in the short run, a workable alternative.



The problem set by the technical changes of the twentieth century is in essence that of keeping the instruments of production regularly at work so as to enable the people to earn a living. Socialism solves this problem by abolishing the restrictive power of the profit-seeker, and by planning production directly for the service of the people's needs. That is the perfect solution ; for it makes an end of ' involuntary unemployment ' by removing all restrictions on the use of the instruments of production except the preference of the people for leisure over increased material supplies. It is the only perfect solution ; but it is not the only way in which the immediate problem can be met. For if the State is prepared to enrol in the armed forces or to set to work making implements of war every factor of production which the private capitalist is not ready to employ, the problem of unemployment can be dealt with, albeit only at the cost of impoverishment for the people. The Nazis have in fact handled the problem in this way ; and those who prophesied the speedy collapse of their system from financial causes have been deceived. For the resources of financial manipulation in the hands of a despotically organised State are much greater than used to be commonly supposed ; and the Nazis have also shown, on the grand scale, that it is practicable to eke out the resources of domestic production by armed brigandage—if only one is armed more heavily than the owners of the things one covets.

It may be objected that this Nazi solution is not a permanent solution like Socialism, but only a self-destructive expedient because (a) there are limits to what can be secured by brigandage and (b) the people will not stand for ever being impoverished in the cause of military glory. But a solution that is impermanent in its nature may nevertheless last long enough to tear civilisation in pieces—for those in control of a brigand State will surely resort to war sooner than admit defeat without it. And, as for popular revolt, what chance has the people in these days against tanks and machine-gunning aeroplanes, unless indeed the men who work these instruments of death desert to the popular side ? The days of the barricades are over, as well as the days of *laissez-faire* capitalism. Modern great States are proof against popular revolution as long as they can command the loyalty of a small picked force of privileged warriors to man their aeroplanes and their tanks.

### **Industrial Fascism—**

These considerations are of importance not only in estimating the prospects of revolution in Nazi Germany, but also in estimating the outlook on our own home front. For Great Britain too is fast building up a great mechanised army, with tanks and aeroplanes as its principal weapons ; and Great Britain, in establishing

the war-time 'controls' of industry and man-power, is using methods for the most part very like those which exist in Germany, though at the present stage in much less stringent ways.

How else, indeed, can Great Britain wage war under the conditions which exist? This country is under a Conservative Government, pledged up to the hilt to the defence of capitalist interests. If these interests can no longer be defended by the methods of *laissez-faire*, or even by the moderate expedients of State authorisation of capitalist monopoly adopted in recent years, how else can they be defended than by the adoption of Nazi methods? For British capitalism, the economic policy of Nazism is the obvious response to the conditions of actual war.

What does this mean in practice? It means, as it has meant in Germany, that the capitalist groups accept the claim of the State to determine what they shall produce, and that the State, for its part, guarantees them in the possession of their property and the receipt of regular dividends and interest and, wherever it supersedes their private activities, appoints them to carry on the same activities as servants of the State. The capitalists promise to deliver the goods; and the State promises to ensure their supplies of materials and labour, and to protect them against indiscipline on the part of their workers, including any attempt to make the shortage of labour an occasion for demanding improved conditions. To a great extent, this was what happened in the last war, subject to many frictions and inefficiencies in the course of gradual transition to the new system, and also to considerable and to some extent successful kicking against the pricks by the Trade Unions and by such unofficial agencies as the shop stewards' movement. In 1914 we were all tiros in matters of this sort. The State begins today, not merely where it left off in 1918, but with the more recent lessons of Nazi economic organisation plainly in view.

### —And How to Avoid it

But for one thing, it would be inevitable that war should lead Great Britain a long way in the direction, not of Socialism, but of its direct opposite—the totalitarian State run by a despotic and militaristic hierarchy with the support of the capitalist classes. The one thing that can prevent this is the strength in this country of democratic movements and of the traditions of tolerance and political liberty. If these forces can be kept organised under a leadership which sees and thinks clearly, it is practicable, not merely to prevent Great Britain from being spiritually conquered by Nazism in the course of the military conflict, but even to ensure that the foundations of democracy shall be made stronger, and the prospects of Socialism more favourable, as a result of the

transformation of society which is bound to occur as the war proceeds.

To begin with, in this country the tradition of parliamentary government is very strong. It could not be avoided that, in the first days of the war, the Cabinet should be given very nearly a blank cheque to pass through any emergency measures that it had ready, with but the barest minimum of parliamentary scrutiny or independent criticism. To obstruct at that stage even ill-conceived measures or unreasonable demands for power was politically impossible for any group which supported the war—as almost the whole nation did. But it would be not patriotism but the deepest disservice to the democratic cause to continue hereafter to allow the Government a similar licence. It is the duty of Parliament—and, of course, especially of the Opposition—to scrutinise most carefully all future emergency legislation, and all rules and orders issued under the laws already passed, in order to ensure that they are both well designed in the national interest and so drafted as to interfere as little as possible with the liberties of ordinary people. Nor is this all. The problem is much less that of restricting the powers which the State is to be allowed to assume than that of giving the exercise of these powers, in every practicable instance, a democratic form. This must be done chiefly by such methods as these:—entrusting the administration of war-time services, wherever possible, to the popularly elected local government bodies rather than to bureaucratic ‘controllers’ responsible only to the central Government; pressing for the statutory establishment of democratic advisory bodies which must be consulted in advance when new policies or enlargements of State control are being considered; demanding that full use be made of the Cooperative movement in the working of war-time systems of rationing and consumers’ supply; ensuring general recognition of Trade Unionism both by the Government and by all firms working under government control; and, more generally, using every opportunity to get the ordinary citizen enlisted, not merely for obeying orders sent down to him from above, but for playing his part, in those small matters which add up to great ones, in the actual devising of policies and expedients for meeting emergencies as they arise.

### **Constructive Opposition**

This being the task of Parliament, it follows that it must continue to meet regularly and often, whatever difficulties may be alleged. It should meet preferably in London; but, if not there, it should meet somewhere often enough not merely to transact the Government’s business but to give the Opposition and the private member plenty of opportunities for constructive criticism and the ventilation of popular grievances. It is vital

to this task that there should be a strong Opposition, not for factious hostility to the Government's measures, but for the constant putting forward of democratic alternatives to undemocratic acts or proposals coming from the Government side. It would have been disastrous if the Labour Party had accepted Mr Chamberlain's invitation to be represented in the Government; for this would have meant either that the Labour Ministers would have ceased to represent the Labour Party—thus dangerously dividing its forces—or that the Opposition would have been unable to carry on its public duty of democratic criticism. The time may come when the Labour Party will have to form part of a Government pledged to a democratic conduct of the war and to the conclusion of a democratic peace. But, when that time comes, it will be the time for Mr Chamberlain and those who think with him to constitute His Majesty's Opposition. Under no circumstances can an inclusive Coalition be the right policy; for such a Coalition would mean inevitably a Government weakened by divided counsels, and it would also mean that constructive criticism of its misdeeds would be deprived of an indispensable means of concentrated expression.

The Labour Party, then, is right to remain in Opposition until its turn comes to assume the real control of affairs. This involves that the party machinery throughout the country must be kept at full strength, despite the declaration of an electoral truce. If the Party in Parliament is to offer constructive and democratic criticism, it must keep constantly in touch with every movement of democratic opinion throughout the country. The Local Labour Parties must hold regular meetings—not only general meetings of delegates and officials, but even more importantly ward meetings and small gatherings for the continual discussion of events. There must be provided satisfactory channels for continually passing on what is being said and done in these little meetings to the national leaders and to groups in other places. There must be the closest possible touch between the party members and supporters and their representatives on town councils and other public bodies, or on the numerous emergency committees and agencies that will be set up for the conduct of war-time services. It is a vital part of the Labour Party's task in this crisis to help to create a ferment of democratic discussion, and to ensure that its local groups are everywhere well informed and encouraged to be active in building democracy in their own towns, streets, factories and housing estates.

### **Informed Opposition**

This matter of information is of very particular importance. Amid the blizzard of emergency laws, orders and regulations, even the keen local Socialist is nearly helpless unless he is given

continual guidance. Summaries, carefully edited with hints for democratic action, of all important administrative measures and regulations ought to be got promptly into the hands of every party officer and committee member, of every Labour representative on a local council or war-time administrative or advisory body—in short, of every active Labour worker. It is not enough to offer a service of this sort to those who are able and willing to pay a special subscription for it: at any rate in summary form, it ought to be supplied free of charge as an essential part of the Labour movement's war-time campaign. I should like to see the Labour Party Executive undertaking this responsibility without delay; and I am sure that if, for this purpose, they want the help of the Fabian Society, that help will be readily given.

Akin to this question of information and of regular discussion throughout the Labour movement is the question of education. I am speaking, for the moment, not of the school-children, who present another very important war-time problem, but of the grown-ups. Such bodies as the Workers' Educational Association and the National Council of Labour Colleges, so far from allowing the number of their classes to decline, ought greatly to increase their effort, of course adapting their methods and courses to the changed conditions of war-time life and interest. Regular classes extending over long periods, such as the three-year Tutorial Classes of the W E A, will inevitably have to face special difficulties at a time when there will be much calling up of men for war service, and much movement at short notice from place to place. But the experience of the last war showed that even long courses can be maintained under these conditions, and that there is likely to develop a keen appetite for widespread shorter courses on subjects closely related to the issues which are now uppermost in the minds of most intelligent people—the sort of settlement that is to come out of the war, the ways of living for which we are to prepare ourselves in the post-war world, the changed terms in which we have to consider every branch of knowledge and speculation at a time when every human value and purpose comes up for judgment, and all of us need sorely to take counsel with others in finding out how to adapt ourselves to the continual jolts and jars to which our habits and our preconceived notions are subject today. If, as we believe, we are fighting for cultural values, and not merely dog with dog, it is not the least form of national service to help those who are adrift from the moorings of habit to find new anchorage for their minds. To help men and women to think, to preserve them from hysteria and mental disease, is no unimportant sphere of service in the democratic cause.

Well-informed about what is happening, and afforded plenty of opportunities for education and for diversion, the keen local Socialist will be able to play his part in waging the war for democracy on the home front. This will be partly a matter of keeping always

in the forefront of popular discussions the question of the coming peace. With the memories of the Versailles Treaty in our minds, we shall have to be constantly on our guard against attempts to pervert democratic phraseology to serve undemocratic ends, against the endorsement of war objectives which are inconsistent with the conditions of a lasting peace, and against that creeping paralysis of the mind which may be induced by a continued diet of censored news and doctored opinion. The creation and maintenance of a sane and balanced view of war objectives and of the possible terms for a federated settlement in a reconstructed Europe is among the most urgent of the duties which fall upon us Socialists today. For the moment, there is not much sign of any attempt to play on the popular passions in order to vamp up enthusiasm. But even a few air-raids may make a dangerous difference in the public's mood, and lay it open to appeals which would have little influence at the present stage. The weapons which we Socialists possess for fighting against such appeals are those of reason and education; and we can afford to lose no time if we are to reach men's minds while they are still in a mood to listen to common sense.

### **Sense in Censorship**

If public opinion is to be kept well-instructed and sane under war conditions, it is indispensable that the press and the platform shall remain free. Censorship there must be, about military affairs; but we must look to the parliamentary Opposition and to the journalists as an organised profession to prevent this censorship from being extended from military to civil news, and to ensure absolutely that there shall be no successful attempt to censor the publication of opinions. All of us must be free to say what we think about the Government and its policies, about the working of emergency laws and regulations, about the mistakes of highly placed officials, and about every sort of popular grievance. A fully free press we cannot have while our leading newspapers continue to be owned by millionaires. But, even as they are, their freedom of uncensored expression of opinion is worth fighting for; and we shall have to fight also for the freedom of the reviews and journals of opinion, and for the little papers by means of which Socialists seek to evade the limitations of a mass-produced journalism involving huge capital outlays.

Nor is it less important to preserve the freedom of the spoken word. Evening meetings may be interfered with by the black-out in many places, but where this cannot be helped we must make more use of lunch-hour addresses, week-end gatherings and meetings held in mid-afternoon for those who are able to attend. We must tolerate no attempt to prevent the people from coming together to discuss. Where cinemas can open meetings can be held; and we must be on our guard especially to preserve the right of open-air meeting, so as to be able to come together even

in places where all the available halls have been commandeered. At this very moment democrats all over the country ought to be pressing energetically the demand that enough places of meeting shall be left available, and insisting that the effective freedom of public assembly and discussion are vital to the conduct of a democratic war.

### **Industrial Democracy**

The war-time organisation of industry presents problems of a different kind, but calling for no less vigilance on our part. It is mainly for the Trade Unions to insist that military conscription and the 'control of employment' shall not be suffered to undermine their power to negotiate on behalf of the workers, and that the 'dilution' of labour and the substitution of women for men in the various industries shall be carried through both without damage to Trade Union standards and with an assurance of good wages and conditions for the new workers who are introduced. This, however, cannot be simply a matter of central consultation and agreement between the Government departments and the national Executives of the Trade Unions concerned. Now, as during the last war, it will be necessary for the workers to throw up their own delegates inside the factories and to secure recognition of their right to a say in the settlement of conditions in each particular establishment. If the Trade Unions profit by the lessons of the last war, they will arrange for the emergence of a shop stewards' movement, not in conflict with the official leadership, but in harmony with it and acting under its auspices. But they cannot do this effectively unless, like the Labour Party in the political sphere, they keep their independence and their freedom to criticise and to say no.

### **Defending the Consumer**

The war-time organisation of industry, it goes without saying, raises problems for the consumers fully as much as for the Trade Unions. In this field the Cooperative movement has a vitally important part to play. Private traders will doubtless try to use schemes of rationing so as to prevent the Cooperative Societies from recruiting new members, or continuing to increase their share of retail trade; and they may try to prevent the movement from getting a share of the available supplies proportionate even to its existing turnover. It will be of the greatest importance to counteract promptly any moves of this sort; for, in a situation of all-round scarcity, the existence of a strong and expanding Cooperative movement is the consumer's best safeguard against exploitation by the profit-maker. The battle for Cooperation will have to be fought both by the Labour Party in Parliament and by Labour and Cooperative representatives on local councils,

Food Committees, and other bodies responsible for registration and control ; and the struggle will have also to range over a wider field, so as to include the protection of the consumer against every exaction which threatens to raise the cost of living. Tenants' organisations, societies of house-owners and house-purchasers on the instalment plan, will find a greatly increased need for activity ; and community centres and social settlements of every kind will need to enlist themselves in the defence services for safeguarding the standard of living against the profiteer.

### **Evacuation and Industry**

There are other questions about which it is more difficult to speak at present because the outlook is too uncertain for the appropriate methods to be clearly foreseen. When the Government put into force its plans of mass-evacuation from the congested danger-zones of our great cities, it seems hardly to have thought out at all what was to happen in the event of a long war. Mothers, even if they have babies to protect, cannot be expected to remain away from their husbands for long ; and to suppose that they can reveals a total lack of understanding of working-class conditions of life. It is even very doubtful whether the arrangements for the billeting of school children can stand the strain of continuance for more than a short time. Certainly they cannot unless fully adequate arrangements are made in the 'reception areas' both for effective schooling and for emergency health services which will cost a great deal of money. Nor can the children who remain in the areas from which evacuation has occurred be left untaught.

If, as the Government now tells us to expect, we are in for a long war, we must either begin to plan for a different sort of evacuation or give evacuation up as a bad job, and send the children home again to take their chance. They will drift home without being sent, unless more permanent plans are made. But what sort of plans can be made? None, I think, short of beginning to evacuate the factories and the grown-ups as well as the children, so as to reunite families outside the congested areas, and set on foot a permanent movement towards the decentralisation of industry and the deflation of our inflated cities. It will be said that such a task is much too great to be even attempted in time of war. But to admit that we cannot do all is not to agree that we can do nothing ; and unless we do make some attempt it can hardly be long before all our schemes of evacuation begin hopelessly to break down.

I raise this issue, not because I am certain of the answer, but because it indicates yet another group of problems about which we democrats will have to do a great deal of hard thinking. We shall be false to democracy if, in our eagerness to prevent a disastrous international settlement, we keep our eyes fixed on



the ends of the earth and pay no attention to the problem of reconstructing our own country. For good and for evil, war shakes people out of their habits. It makes them readier to accept change ; it makes possible larger social transformations than are politically feasible in normal times. Hardly anyone now expects that when this war is over it will be practicable to go back to the conditions of 1939, even if we wish to. Men expect great changes ; but they do not know in the least what sort of changes to expect.

### Status Quo Ante ?

Such a state of mind in men is one of infinite opportunity, as well as of danger. It may unloose terribly evil passions ; but it can also release generous impulses and act as a powerful stimulus to the constructive imagination. Evil, however, will have its way unless the forces making for good are organised and in possession of well-devised and practical plans. We have to ask ourselves now, not only what sort of European settlement we want at the end of the war, but also what sort of Great Britain we want.

London, for example ! Do we want to go on living, those of us who are Londoners, in so huge and misshapen a waste of buildings ? Or Manchester, or Glasgow, or any of a hundred other ugly and overcrowded tenements of profit-seeking industrialism ? Are we set on preserving them, and on building up again the ways of living of which they are the material symbols ? If not, we must begin now laying our plans for changing the face of Great Britain.

Or again, when the war is over, are we to acquiesce in all the State-controlled, State-planned industries of this country being handed back to the profit-makers as they were after 1918 ? Handed back in their previous condition they cannot be. Even in the last war State control left behind a legacy of trustification and monopoly ; and we can be certain that the 'controls' now being brought into operation will result in a much closer integration of capitalist interests. We, as Socialists, shall have no wish to perpetuate methods of war-time organisation which largely lead to the erection of capitalist monopoly into the accredited agent of State power. We want public control of a very different sort—a democratic control in the interests of the whole people, and in which producers and consumers will alike be given an effective voice. If we are to get that, we shall need not only to get political power into our own hands through a change of Government, but also to have ready our plans for transforming State controls operated through capitalist agencies into public corporations subject to efficient democratic criticism and supervision.

In this respect we are better equipped than in most ; for many of our plans for the public ownership and control of industry have already been competently made. What is wanting is not the plan, but popular understanding of it and of the case behind

it. Our task there is principally to criticise every perversion of war-time State control to serve capitalist interests, in such a way as to put forward our own proposals as the means of putting right the abuses which we expose. It will be surprising indeed, in view of what happened between 1914 and 1918, if we are not speedily provided with an abundance of ammunition for our attack.

### For Socialism and Democracy

Here, then, are plenty of tasks crying out to be done. But they will not get done, or even attempted, without careful organisation. There are, up and down the country, thousands of men and women who are eager to work on the home front/for Socialism and democracy; but these men and women cannot work effectively unless somebody is ready to give them a lead and to coordinate their efforts. This must be primarily the task of the Labour Party, which possesses the mass-membership and the network of local organisation. But, in its smaller way, the Fabian Society, on whose behalf I have written this tract, means to do what it can; and in its name I appeal to all those who want the things I have spoken of to be done, and are ready to help within the limits of their means and opportunities, to join the Society or, even without joining it, to lend it their aid. For we Fabians are at once democrats and Socialists: we believe that real Socialism involves real democracy, and that real democracy is impossible without Socialism. That faith makes us the more suspicious of bastard 'Socialisms', which deny democracy and set out to wield the machinery of the totalitarian State for such ends as national glory and aggrandisement, or for any end except the welfare of the common people. We are very conscious of the devastating perils of State control without democracy—very conscious that the development of modern technique not only centralises industrial power in the hands of great combines, but also vests the ultimate military power in any group that is able to wield the authority of the tank and the aeroplane. We Fabians contend that in this situation there is no way of preserving a shred of democracy except by making democracy all-embracing, and therewith bringing the Leviathan of modern industry and the Juggernaut of mechanised militarism within the orbit of its power. Unless we can achieve this, civilisation is undone; for the gangsters will not fail to tear it speedily to pieces. But the task, though formidable, is not beyond our powers: it demands clear thinking, determined action and the will to hold together even when we differ upon secondary issues. While men's minds are keyed up by suspense, the chance is ours to organise and re-direct the democratic forces. We must seize that chance while it is with us, or we shall deserve the fate which will surely be ours—and mankind's—if we allow Socialism and democracy to fail.

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