

BP 161.511 (327)

SOCIALISM IN THE SIXTIES



BRITAIN'S ROLE IN A CHANGING WORLD

KENNETH YOUNGER

TWO SHILLINGS

THE RT. HON. KENNETH YOUNGER is
Director-General of the Royal Institute of
International Affairs and was Minister of State
for Foreign Affairs from 1950-51.

FABIAN TRACT 327

THE FABIAN SOCIETY
11 Dartmouth Street, London, S.W.1

*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.*

July, 1960



Foreword

THIS pamphlet is based upon a Fabian Lecture given on 22nd March, 1960, as part of a series whose title was 'Forward to 1964'. I took the title as an invitation to consider future trends, rather than immediate current issues, while thinking of practical policies rather than of long term speculation.

The title of my lecture in the series was 'Britain's Rôle in a Changing World'. To a large extent the changing world, fast as it is changing, nevertheless leaves Britain's rôle unchanged, at least in the sense that we ought to go on in the 1960s doing many of the things that we ought to have been doing in the 1950s. How far we have in fact been doing the things we ought to do in the 1950s is another matter, but many of the factors in the international situation remain more or less constant.

There are, however, some quite new factors to which a new reaction is required. In particular there has been, towards the end of the 1950s, a notable evolution in the relations of the great powers, which opens up certain possibilities not evident a year or two ago. I have therefore concentrated upon the things which seem to me to be new rather than on those which have not really changed.

The lecture was delivered before the abortive Summit meeting in Paris. I have taken account of this by adding one or two paragraphs of comment. I have preferred, however, to leave my general assessment of Soviet policy unaltered, if only to emphasise my view that there is too great a tendency to switch from optimism to pessimism and back again with every change in the tone of Soviet speeches. At the time of writing such evidence as there is of a general shift in Soviet policy is in any case far from conclusive.

KENNETH YOUNGER

I. Introduction

IN international affairs the Labour movement is not handicapped by any written dogma. It has been pointed out that the old Fabians, for all the immense contribution they made to the thinking of the Labour movement, did not really deal with Foreign Policy.

The original volume of Fabian Essays scarcely referred to international policy as such, while, so far as the Party Constitution is concerned, apart from a rather obvious exhortation to co-operate with Labour and Socialist organisations abroad, the International sub-section of the famous Clause 4 could cheerfully be signed by the leaders of all three parties, so general is it in its terminology. The only thing that is at all significant about the International sub-section of Clause 4 is the omission from it of any hint that the drafters regarded considerations of power as coming into the question at all — unless one can say that a single phrase about support for the United Nations is enough to cover all the difficult problems of power in international affairs.

This omission may be to some extent symptomatic, in that it reflects the extreme distaste for power politics which often precludes the rational discussion of power within the Labour movement. At the present moment there is perhaps a special temptation for the Labour movement to underestimate the power factor, for the simple reason that the Labour Party is not at the moment charged with the handling of foreign affairs on behalf of Britain, and might therefore be tempted to content itself with enunciating aims and leaving its opponents to find the means of implementing them. Yet in international affairs, much more than in home affairs, where many of the elements of domestic problems are within the direct control of one's own government, means and ends are inseparably bound together. A statement of objectives, however desirable they may be, is not enough to make a foreign policy, unless the objectives can be shown to be within the realm of the possible, either immediately or at any rate within some more or less foreseeable future. Unless the Labour movement, while it is in opposition, keeps its objectives and its means of attaining them closely linked, it is not likely to succeed in convincing the public when it next makes its claim for a mandate to conduct the country's foreign relations.

It is no doubt true that the forms of power are changing very fast. The most obvious instance of this is that the appearance of weapons of mass destruction has greatly affected the practicability of using international war as the ultimate sanction of policy. The new weapons undoubtedly change things but the implications of the changes are still extremely obscure, and it is hard to feel confidence in anybody who claims to see in a quite simple way just what their effect is going to be. Whatever it is, nobody can seriously doubt that national power politics will still be operative in international affairs at least as far ahead as 1964, and indeed a good deal beyond that date. Any country or any party which wishes to be effective must therefore deal with this problem in its policy.

2. The Relations of the Great Powers

IN considering the changing relations of the Great Powers it is worth recalling something that Denis Healey wrote in his Fabian Essay published at the beginning of 1952.¹ He said this :

Too many minds are still dominated by the picture of two continental super states glowering at each other over a power vacuum in which Britain is the only strong state. The emergence of Germany, Japan, and China as independent powers has already changed that picture; within a few years Southern Africa, the Middle East, and Asia may also take the stage in their own right. Thus division of a world shaped almost exclusively by Anglo-Saxon policy is fading at the very moment when it seemed most likely to become reality. It is much more probable that the future will bring a return to a world of many powers in which decisions are made by the methods of traditional power politics

Looking back at that passage nearly nine years later it does not seem at all a bad prophecy, but there are some things, very naturally, which could not then be foreseen and some additions which have to be made.

It is certainly true that the world can no longer be shaped by Anglo-Saxon policy. Indeed this prophecy has been so amply fulfilled that I doubt whether anybody today would formulate it just in the way that Denis Healey did in 1952.

It is also true that there are some new states emerging and also some old states recovering their strength which had been sapped by the war, especially Germany, France, and Japan. All these carry rather more weight today than they did ten years ago, but when one considers their revival, it is important to notice also that the experience of the last decade has emphasised just as strongly the essential limitation on the ability of these former great powers ever to recover their earlier status. Indeed, the three that I have mentioned—Germany, France, and Japan—are in very much the same position as Britain, which is by now aware that her status as a great power has changed radically. We tend to talk as if this did not apply to Germany, but the essential limitations set to German power today are at least as striking as the extent of her recovery.

In Asia and Africa, despite the break-neck pace of political evolution on both those continents—Asia being now almost wholly independent and Africa moving fast along the same road—the full weight of these continents in international affairs is still very far from being exerted. Even the respect which is now paid internationally to the two greatest Asian powers, India and China, can be said to be due more to the power which they are expected to command later on than to their present rôle in international affairs. At the present moment the internal development of India and China has greater significance for the future than their current diplomacy, and it is probable that this situation, while slowly changing, will last for some years yet.

¹ *New Fabian Essays*, Turnstile Press, 1952.

China's potential is of course enormous and is already casting a long shadow before. Of all the other powers, the one that is the most conscious of China's coming significance is probably the Soviet Union, whose policies may be very greatly affected when China rises to her full stature. How soon this will occur is hard to say, but it will be in the course of the next quarter of a century. Partly owing to the ill-advised exclusion of the new China from the world diplomatic scene, she is developing her new power in exceptional isolation. This is very dangerous. Unfortunately, just as the situation was not of Britain's making, so it does not seem to be within her power to end it. The British record is not perfect, but she recognised the new China early on, and has fairly consistently said that China should be admitted to international gatherings. So far, however, Britain's advocacy has had extremely little effect.

In the last couple of years China has not been making things particularly easy for those who have been supporting her claim to recognition. Whatever else one may say about China's attitude over Tibet and over the Indian frontier, it squares oddly with some of the things she was saying at the Bandung Conference about Asian solidarity only a short time ago. There are, too, her divergences with the Soviet Union, which have come as far out into the open as divergences between any two Communist Powers are ever likely to do. These seem to be due to Chinese objections to almost any kind of relaxation of international tension at the present time, and they reveal an unaccommodating frame of mind with which we are likely to have to live for some years.

No doubt as China's power grows, her attitude may change, but at present she seems to be little interested in seeking international recognition, which she no doubt feels that she will soon be able to command by unquestioned power. One cannot altogether blame her for this, because it is ten years since she qualified to be internationally recognised and there has not been much progress.

Nevertheless, her attitude is a very awkward one. It is quite likely that if any progress were made towards agreement between the other great powers on disarmament, this might be the occasion when China would begin to assert herself, because an agreement on disarmament between the Western Powers and the Soviet Union would be almost meaningless unless China could be brought into it. She might therefore be in a position to dictate the terms on which she was prepared to co-operate. The Americans know very well that some day they will have to accept the fact of modern China, and it is foolish of them not to choose their own moment for doing so. If they leave it to the Chinese, the moment chosen is likely to be one that is extremely inconvenient for Washington.

Changing Soviet Policy

By contrast with the Chinese position, the Soviet Union's attitude has greatly mellowed. How this will affect her policy is still somewhat uncertain. She is still doing what she has always done in the past, that is, to keep at least two balls in the air at the same time. Take, for instance, her attitude to Berlin. No one could feel sure in advance what the Soviet policy on Berlin at the Summit Conference was going to be. It could be accommodat-

ing or it could be tough. It could even be very dangerous. As usual she kept all these possibilities open until the last minute.

In the event, as we now know, the Summit Conference failed to materialise. Although the ostensible reason for this was the incident of the United States spy-plane, one reason for Mr. Khrushchev's action may well have been his conviction that he was not in any case going to obtain any concessions over Berlin, and he may therefore have preferred to postpone discussion. In the meantime, his own policy towards Berlin remains as determinedly flexible as it was before.

Despite these uncertainties, and the renewed asperities accompanying the Summit fiasco, the Soviet posture in international affairs is still very different from the one associated with Stalin or Molotov, and it has already produced some promising effects in terms of a greater understanding on each side of the interests and motivation of the other.

The truth is that the Soviet Union in the last twelve months has joined the international Establishment, and is already beginning to show signs of acquiring some at least of the mental characteristics of established persons everywhere. The fact was signalled by Mr. Khrushchev's Washington visit, which was the outstanding diplomatic event of 1959. It is perhaps curious that one should say this, because nothing was settled on that visit. Indeed no real negotiations were even attempted, let alone concluded. There were certainly no concessions made on either side; nor were there any concessions made at the long-drawn-out Foreign Ministers' conference in Geneva, which had been taking place during the summer. On Mr. Khrushchev's visit, however, the two great powers recognised one another as equals for the first time and recognised too the disastrous results of their coming into conflict with one another. It may well be that a special reason for Mr. Khrushchev's wrath over the spy-plane incident was his sense that the American attitude to the violation of Soviet air-space was an affront to the new equality of status which he felt that he had secured for his country. Many passages in his post-Summit speeches suggest this train of thought.

A consequence of the new equality, perhaps only dimly sensed as yet, is the beginning of an awareness of a certain community of interest between Americans and Russians. If there is not yet a joint interest in world-wide stability—that would be going too far—there are signs of a common interest in keeping instability closely under control, and in ensuring that instability in any particular area, such as for instance Germany or the Middle East, does not reach the point where there is a serious danger of war.

The Economic Challenge

If this change of attitude were to be confirmed it might bring with it a major change in world affairs. It is occurring by reason of the altered balance of power, especially through the nuclear stalemate which, whatever the short-term fluctuations in military techniques, is something that applies to both sides. This development in the balance of power has been accompanied, perhaps not entirely fortuitously, by big internal changes in the Soviet Union. A wide range of consumer goods has begun to appear in the Russian shops, and this of course is only one outward sign of something more significant. The moment at which an economy, Communist

or otherwise, becomes capable by its productive successes of offering genuine consumers' choice to the whole of its population, is likely to be something of a turning point not only for the structure of the economy, which will probably alter in response to quite new demands, but still more for the spirit in which the nation's affairs are likely to be conducted.

One must be cautious about jumping to conclusions about the immediate effect of such changes upon foreign policy. On crucial issues, like Germany and Berlin, there has not as yet been any major change. We do not know yet whether there will be a change over disarmament, though there have been certain encouraging signs. We should, in any case, take Mr. Khrushchev seriously and not assume that he is merely making propaganda when he says, for instance, that in his view competition is going to be economic rather than military, and that he wants by some means or other to halt the arms race. He has an obvious interest in working for this. There is no reason to doubt that his frequently-professed confidence in the superiority of Communist economics is genuine, and he may well believe that, in his conflict with capitalism, he can win with far less risk in the economic field than he would ever be able to do on the field of battle.

In these circumstances one of the big questions we have to ask ourselves is 'Just how hostile is Mr. Khrushchev's conception of economic competition?' He has said again and again that there can be no co-existence in ideology, and this must surely mean that he envisages at any rate a measure of hostility rather than genuine, friendly co-operation.

He will not have overlooked the fact that a Communist economy can be used as a political weapon far more easily than can a free enterprise economy. The Soviet Union has increasing quantities of manufactured goods available for sale abroad, and can also with great advantage to herself buy food from abroad, because the production of food is the big failure in her own economy. It would pay her to buy the food products of many of the more backward countries and to sell them manufactures in return, and this gives her the capacity to intervene in world trade on terms which may be quite unconnected with the general level of world prices. It is rather ironical to reflect that her great failure, the inefficiency of her agriculture, may be an asset to her in this particular regard because it makes her economy complementary with just those countries to which, politically, she most wishes to sell her manufactured goods.

Effects on World Trade

The indications are that the Soviet Union strikes pretty hard commercial bargains, not only with the industrial countries of the West but also with under-developed countries. It nevertheless remains true that she has the ability, should she so desire, to dislocate world trade quite considerably by intervening on a non-commercial basis at chosen points and at chosen moments. This is not yet because of Soviet superiority over the productivity of the Western economy, but because her economy is by its nature more adaptable to specific political ends and she has fewer independent interests to consider.

The Soviet Union will from now on be in a position to intervene in international trade with the set purpose of disrupting it; but even if she

does not do that — and on the whole she shows little intention of doing so on any large scale — nevertheless by simply intervening in an ostensibly normal way to trade with countries which wish to trade with her, she might cause a good deal of trouble, because it would never be possible for the world to know whether she was selling subsidised products or not. Her system does not readily reveal that sort of thing. A free market system based on political democracy cannot quite match this flexibility.

This danger, such as it may be, could be kept within relatively narrow limits, firstly if Western efficiency were to be increased, which is mainly a question of securing a better rate of investment in many countries including our own; and secondly if a somewhat more rational system of priorities could be imposed on the productive systems of the great industrial powers. That this idea is no longer the prerogative of Socialist planners is shown by the fact that so conservative a character as Alan Dulles, brother of the late John Foster Dulles, and the head of the Central Intelligence Agency in the United States, recently emphasised to an audience of American business men the need for a more rational system of priorities in the use of American resources. He was of course propounding this as part of the Cold War policy — 'You have got to do this if you are to compete with the Russians'. Conservatives in all countries have traditionally been ready to accept a certain measure of planning and the imposition of some priorities upon industry for the sake of defence and the military machine, but it looks as if this attitude may now have to be extended to other fields if international rivalry becomes increasingly economic in character.

Apart from this, if Western trading practices could be better adapted to meeting the needs of some of the primary producing countries this would reduce the danger of Soviet competition. There is tremendous resistance, particularly among business men, to any suggestion that something should be done to stabilise the prices of primary commodities, which are often the only articles that under-developed countries have for export. One is always told that for a dozen different reasons this is impossible. If it is indeed impossible, that is too bad for us, because it is not going to be impossible for the Communists. They will be able, if they so wish, to offer long-term contracts and reasonably steady prices to countries in Asia, Africa, and elsewhere, and if we are going to say that our system cannot do the same, then that is an indication that our system is ill-adapted to modern needs.

3. Asia, Africa and the Commonwealth

IT would clearly be impossible to do more in this pamphlet than mention one or two of the issues which arise from the emergence of the Asian-African continents as active participants in world affairs.

So far as Britain is concerned the main fact calling for adjustments on her part is that direct British control, which in Asia virtually ended with the independence of Malaya in 1957, is likely to have ceased in Africa too by the end of the 1960s. Indeed, in much less time than that direct British responsibility may well have dwindled so as to cover only the Protectorates and some aspects of the affairs of Central Africa. The situation is not very different in the Middle East which, standing at the junction of Asia and Africa, has long been the scene of British intervention in various forms.

Prophecy about the future political shape of Africa is at present too speculative to be useful, but one assumption should surely be made, namely that all Africa except that part where European settlers still exercise control will wish to be militarily neutral in the present line-up of forces between East and West. This does not imply, any more than it does in Asia, an indifference to all aspects of Western political democracy. It does, however, mean that the Western powers cannot count on the use of African territories either for bases or for their strategic communications. It also means that African states cannot be expected to forego offers of economic assistance from the Soviet Union or her associates. In this field the West must expect to be judged on performance, in free competition with Communist states. It would be a good thing if aid to these areas could be taken out of the Cold War altogether, for instance by pooling aid through the United Nations, but when this proposition was put forward at the last General Assembly of the United Nations, it was flatly rejected by the Soviet representative.

Keeping the Peace

It is worth asking what his motives are likely to have been. In the first place, the Russians are no doubt aware of the competitive advantages that they may have in this matter. They may see it as more useful to themselves and to the Communist cause to give aid to under-developed countries entirely on their own and to let the Western world do what it can, rather than to engage on some co-operative venture through an internationally controlled organisation which would deprive them of some of the political advantages. It may also be that the remarks made by Khrushchev as he passed through south-eastern Asia about the imperialistic nature of Western aid may represent his genuine belief. Whatever the motives are, it does not seem that we are going to get co-operation from the Russians in this particular domain just yet. There is, however, no reason why we should allow ourselves to be deterred by this from adopting as high a degree of internationalisation of aid as is open to us within the non-Communist world.

The development of African independence cannot fail to affect Britain's rôle as a guardian of the peace in many areas far from the United Kingdom, a rôle which it has in the past been possible for her to play only because she disposed of a chain of bases around the world,

This is not to say that Britain should not equip herself to play a part in maintaining the peace in conjunction with others. In the present phase of international development there may clearly be a need from time to time for what are now called 'fire brigade' operations, and there are still only a few powers, of which Britain is one, capable of taking the necessary action. There will, however, be fewer and fewer occasions when Britain should take it upon herself to act alone or without some international backing.

There are still, it is true, some old treaty obligations, such as those assumed by Britain towards sheikhdoms in the Persian Gulf. These should not be crudely broken, any more than any other international obligation. Thought should, however, be given to the working out of dispositions for the security of the area, which reflect more accurately the contemporary interests and capabilities of Britain and other states, especially Asian states in that part of the world.

In handling Britain's relations with Asia and Africa, the Commonwealth can be a factor of importance. The fact that newly independent members of the Commonwealth, when they first begin to conduct their own foreign relations, have the support, often administrative as well as diplomatic, of a group of nations of widely varying outlook and interests provides a unique opportunity for promoting common attitudes and eliminating misunderstandings.

This Commonwealth connection, which is undoubtedly valued by members, should be fostered. It would, however, probably be unwise to attempt to formalise it by the creation of fresh Commonwealth institutions. There has never been enthusiasm for this among the member states, and at the present time any attempt to make the Commonwealth relationship more exclusive would endanger the whole concept, whose present non-exclusive character is one of its main attractions to Africans and Asians. In particular there is at present in Africa a keen desire for closer relations with one another, distinct from any associations which individual African countries may have with other continents. Formalisation of the Commonwealth tie would run counter to this desire, and if that happened it is not necessarily the Commonwealth tie that would survive.

Cold War in Africa

One African development above all Britain must seek to prevent—the deepening of the conflict between white settlers and black Africans, with Britain and the West seeming to support the white settlers and the Communist states supporting the other side. Such a process, more than anything else, would bring Africa into the centre of the ideological struggle which has already split Europe and Asia. When South African nationalists complain that Mr. Macmillan's attitude to them is governed by his attitude to the Cold War, they are at least partly right, though they have no legitimate complaint on that score. Britain is quite right to see the racial situation in South and Central Africa in the context of world relationships and to make it clear to the racial extremists that, if they insist on forcing the racial issue, it is they who will turn out to be expendable.

4. Britain's International Rôle

IN considering Britain's rôle in this changing situation, the question arises of her ability to make herself effective on the world stage. By herself she is a strong, but nevertheless secondary, force. It took Suez to prove this to some people, but since Suez almost everybody recognises it. Therefore Britain must act, if she wishes to be effective, through international co-operation, on a wide scale through bodies like the United Nations, or more narrowly in limited groupings set up for limited purposes, but always internationally. No country has a deeper interest in the steady growth of international authority and in the sharing of the burdens of world power than Britain, because she has scattered interests all over the world, which she can no longer hope to protect by herself, and scattered areas of responsibility, especially in the Commonwealth, which she cannot possibly develop by herself.

Britain should therefore make herself a protagonist of international co-operation in all its forms and in every area of the world. If she can rouse herself to this task, she will find that she has a unique vantage point from which to promote effective action. In addition to her membership of various regional groupings, she is still the centre of a world-wide Commonwealth, and she is still probably the most influential ally of the United States. In addition to all this one should not underestimate the influence of an industrial nation of fifty million people, which is one of the world's biggest customers.

Britain's record in promoting international co-operation since the war has been by no means wholly bad, but what is needed is more consistency and drive. Too often we still show nostalgia for purely national policies in areas traditionally subject to British control. Apart from the Suez aberration, which one hopes is unrepeatable, one finds, for instance, undue slowness on the part of British officials to accept the internationalising of aid to British colonial areas, even when territories approach independence. The sorry history of the British attitude to the Cyprus base is a product of similar thinking, while from time to time United Kingdom representatives in the United Nations have shown a suspicion of any attempt to extend international authority, which has been short-sighted and damaging. Recent instances of this are the British attitude to the Secretary-General's proposals for the creation of a small international administrative service, and the British reservations made to her adherence to the Optional Clause of the Statute of the International Court.

It may be said that no real impact could be made even if a more consistently internationalist policy were pursued, but this pessimism is belied by the Canadian record during the years when Mr. Lester Pearson was in charge of Canada's foreign affairs. Canada is a less important power in most ways than we are, but by sheer consistency in her support for the use of United Nations machinery, for new techniques of international conciliation and for collective organisations of various kinds, including NATO, Canada came to have influence in Washington, in London, and on the

continent of Europe which was disproportionate to her national power. We are bigger than Canada, and if we were to act similarly our influence could be correspondingly greater.

Supporting the U.N.

What would be the institutional framework for a policy of this kind? We should recognise that a world order is going to be slow to build. It is going to be made up, initially, of many institutions, and of different alliances and groups. Of all these I would put the United Nations first as a concept which we ought to support, because it is, at least in theory though not quite in practice, world-wide. The difficulty with more limited groupings is that the more a few nations band themselves together for a particular purpose, the more they tend to separate themselves from others, a process which is not necessarily an advance in terms of world organisation.

The recent history of attempts at European unity provides an example of this. The Community of Six, appreciating the difficulty of cementing their precarious unity in the formative years, have undoubtedly found it useful to make something of a bogey of the other countries of Western Europe, especially Britain and, more recently, the European Free Trade Association. By contrast, the world-wide scope of the GATT may prove to be a factor in preventing serious economic division from arising in Europe.

While regional groupings are, no doubt, an essential element in the slow building of international co-operation, it is therefore important to avoid exclusiveness and to promote to the fullest practicable extent the development of the wider types of international institution.

5. The United Nations

THE authority of the United Nations is growing, has been growing for some years, and should be fostered. In the immediate future it has, however, clear limitations, in particular the limitation that it has never been able to bring the Charter's security provisions into effect. It is in the field of pacific settlement of disputes that immediate possibilities are greatest, for instance in the development of the use of a United Nations Force of which the Emergency Force in the Middle East would be a prototype. There is also a promising rôle for the use of U.N. institutions for disarmament and for economic co-operation.

It is not always remembered that the last two major crises in the Middle East were settled, if not by the United Nations, at least through the use of United Nations machinery. No one has suggested how we could have extricated ourselves from the Suez crisis or how the American fleet could have been got away from Lebanon in 1958 or the British troops from Jordan, if it had not been for the existence of United Nations techniques. On each of those occasions the Great Powers found, however reluctantly, that the introduction of an international agency was imperative, and indeed, had there been no United Nations in existence, it would have been necessary to invent something similar for the purpose.

If this lesson sinks in, it should lead us to attempt to make these international agencies stronger, more readily accepted, and more ready to go into action when unexpected things happen. In this connection, do not let us waste the remarkable gifts of the present Secretary-General, Mr. Hammarskjöld. He has his critics, but that is mainly because at one time or another he has stood up to most of the leading powers. He is among the most remarkable diplomats seen in the last ten or twenty years. He has known just how far the United Nations machinery can be used effectively and just how far he can go in adding to the authority of the organisation. We ought to help him to leave a legacy to his successor, which will not be wholly dependent upon the personality of one man, but will be rooted in international acceptance.

The Uncommitted Vote

It is far too often said, both in the United States and in this country, that we cannot rely in important matters on the United Nations because we dare not be at the mercy of irresponsible majorities in the Assembly, increasingly composed of Afro-Asian powers. I believe this to be nonsense. This sort of thing has been said of most democratic parliaments in their infancy. In any case, few of the General Assembly's resolutions have been as irresponsible as is suggested. It is true that many of them have been ineffective because they could only be implemented with Great Power consent, which was not available; but far more often than is admitted, these votes have reflected the real division in the world between Haves and Have-nots. They express what the poorer countries want, but cannot yet persuade the richer countries to concede.

We must ask ourselves whether we wish to sharpen this division. Are we anxious to fight a new international class war by ignoring these votes at the United Nations? Ought we not rather to treat these votes with some respect, however inconvenient they may be, because they often represent the future?

Even in the present, these votes have one rôle which is sometimes overlooked. Not infrequently this large and growing group of uncommitted secondary powers in the United Nations exerts a moderating influence upon the all-too-crude rivalry of the Great Powers. To some extent they are beginning to fulfil the function which the floating voter is said to perform in our country. Because both sides are courting the floating vote, both are forced to moderate their policies. In the United Nations both sides in the Cold War are courting the floating vote of the uncommitted delegations which, so far from being always irresponsible, often have a stabilising influence.

6. Collective Defence

PROGRESSIVE opinion accepts international co-operation fairly readily when it is related to the United Nations. Support for the United Nations is, as it were, a part of every progressive's talking stock-in-trade. But try to apply the principle of loyal, consistent international co-operation to the realm of defence, and at once there is resistance.

One cannot expect people to love NATO, let alone to sing the NATO anthem. NATO is a disagreeable necessity. But if defence is a necessity, and so far all major parties in this country have agreed that it is, then surely it can only be collective defence. Uncollective defence is no defence at all.

So, unless you are prepared to do without defence, you must surely favour collective defence, and the more highly integrated it is, probably the cheaper and the more effective it will be. Clement Attlee once said that he could understand the pacifists who reject armed forces, but found it much harder to understand those who accept armed forces always on condition that they are not made effective. A great many people of this kind are vocal at the present time. These are people who are not pacifists, but say that to share the risks of alliance or to offer facilities in Britain to fellow members of NATO, be they Americans, or even more, Germans, is intolerable. This makes no sense and reflects an outdated and insular attitude. You are not called upon to like all your allies, but so long as they are your allies, you must be ready to share risks with them and to offer joint facilities to them. Indeed, whether you are afraid of a threat from the Soviet Union, or whether you are afraid of your allies, which is the case with some people, in either event you should grapple your ally to your soul with hoops of steel. Let those who do not want defence say so clearly. That is an attitude that can be respected. But those who profess to want defence, as the immense majority do, must apply to it the same principles of international solidarity as are applicable in other areas of policy.

7. Nuclear Weapons

THIS brings one to the vexed question of Britain's bomb, which is, of course, a national bomb. This question should be faced with humility, because everyone is groping for some solid basis of reasoning in a welter of speculation about the possible consequences of the invention of nuclear weapons. No doubt one way to deal with these weapons, as with all others, would be by general international disarmament. We do not, however, seem likely to get this quickly, and the failure of the Summit meeting may cause a setback to the faint hope of progress that was beginning to dawn. Therefore to say that we must have general international disarmament is not an adequate policy for preventing nuclear weapons from spreading in the meantime to a dozen or more countries.

We have a special responsibility here, because it is undeniable that our example in being the third power to make these weapons has played some part in the desire of other countries to do the same.

There is a strong argument for giving up the British bomb on grounds of its cost and ineffectiveness; that is to say, not as a measure of disarmament at all, but simply as a means of military rationalisation, an argument which has no moral content one way or the other.

It is, however, a very hard doctrine for a government which has weapons of this kind deliberately to give them up as a matter of military rationalisation, at a time when there is no immediate prospect of international agreement to prevent the spread of these weapons to an unlimited number of other countries. It is even harder to imagine any British government giving up the British bomb as a unilateral gesture to encourage disarmament by others. It is not obvious why governments which are not prepared to disarm in return for the advantage of comparable disarmament by their rivals should do so when their rivals' disarmament has already been secured without any price being paid.

Stopping the Spread

There is, however, a strong case in principle for the Non-Nuclear Club, which the Labour Party adopted some time ago, that is to say, for giving up the bomb on condition that everybody does likewise except the two great powers who had it before Britain. We ought to keep this offer open, even though there is justifiable scepticism about its being accepted by other potential nuclear powers. In addition to its value in preventing the further spread of nuclear weapons, it is something in which the Soviet Union and the United States seem to have a common interest — and as such it is to be encouraged as a contribution to a more stable world order.

The most immediate objective of our disarmament policy should be to avoid multiplying nuclear weapons, since this might make eventual agreement more difficult. That is why, at this stage at any rate, there should be caution about a European or a NATO bomb, that is to say, a bomb the control of which is collectively shared. If all else failed and it became clear that other countries would otherwise manufacture individual national deter-

rents, and that progress was being made towards international disarmament, then it might be that a collectivised European or NATO bomb might be less dangerous than the only available alternative. But we have not yet reached this stage, and since the proposal would mean an immediate increase in the distribution of nuclear weapons in Europe, it is not at present a timely proposal.

Whether changes in nuclear policy over the next few years will bring any significant financial relief to Britain cannot at present be foreseen. What is certain is that even if it were decided that Britain could not usefully contribute to the alliance by full participation in nuclear weapon development, she would have to maintain the level of her contribution in other ways or else see her influence further reduced.

The contribution called for might obviously include more conventional manpower, which could be raised only by some form of national service. This would be highly disagreeable to any British government, no matter what its complexion. There is, however, no escape from the proposition that a country which, for domestic reasons, is unwilling to contribute to joint defence in the manner which best promotes collective strength is bound to suffer correspondingly in its ability to influence joint policies.

8. The United States and Europe

IN all the changes that are going on, one of the constants is, as it has been ever since the end of the war, a close relationship with the United States. The relative diminution of the world power of the United States in the last two years does not really affect this.

For one thing, if Britain stood apart from the United States, she would be of little significance in negotiations with the Communist powers. As an influential ally of the United States, believed, usually rightly, to have influence in Washington, we carry considerable weight; separate we carry little. The reason for the interest of the world and of the Russians in Mr. Macmillan's visit to Moscow last year was that they saw him as a forerunner of the exchange which was later arranged between Eisenhower and Khrushchev. If the visit had had no significance for the American attitude, it is doubtful whether Mr. Khrushchev would have been very interested in the British Prime Minister.

Economically too the United States is as indispensable as ever, if only for the development of the under-developed territories. The United States is moreover at the present moment Britain's best single overseas customer.

It is also important to understand that the United States alliance is an essential aspect of our Commonwealth policy, because many Commonwealth countries are just as close now to the United States as they are to us. Canada's case is self-evident. Australia, ever since the fall of Singapore in 1942, has relied on the United States rather than on Britain for defence in any future war. The West Indies is now receiving large-scale financial assistance from the United States. The relationship between India and the United States has also been getting very much closer in recent months. It is therefore evident that any breach between Britain and the United States would pose agonising problems for many Commonwealth members. Suez should have been warning enough of this.

Britain's Future Status

It is as well to face the fact that the special importance of the United States to Britain will not necessarily continue to be matched by the allotting of a specially privileged position to Britain in the American scheme of things. Some of the advantages which have favoured Britain since the war are wasting assets, notably the relative impotence of major countries such as France, Germany, and Japan, the British lead in nuclear science, and the tradition of special intimacy established during the war among a generation now passing from the scene.

In future it must be assumed that Britain will enjoy in American eyes the status which her current contribution to joint efforts, military and civil, earns for her. This is not at all an unhealthy situation. It may indeed be beneficial if it brings home to Britain the truth that merely to claim great power status is futile, while if you show yourself a great power by your performance, the status is yours and to claim it is superfluous.

It has already been suggested that Britain's future should lie in member-

ship of widely based international organisations and probably of a considerable number of different groups, rather than in exclusive association with any one area. On this view it is impossible to join in the fashionable criticism of Britain's 'failure to lead' in Europe. Tactical mistakes were of course made, but it is a myth that the leadership of Europe was ever available to Britain except on condition of full political integration with Europe.

No post-war government has shown any sign of accepting this. Indeed the advocacy of integration becomes keener the further the advocate is from power and responsibility, and there is no sign that this is changing.

What is now being sought, and has always been sought with varying degrees of adroitness by sensible people in and out of government, is co-operation with Europe which is short of full integration. Today the rôle of Britain is certainly not to obstruct the limited integration of Europe which seems to be taking place slowly among the Six, but simply to try to prevent barriers from arising between them and the rest of Europe and the United States. In this objective Britain has many allies, some of whom are within the Six, for there are some members of the Six who are quite as anxious as Britain to keep the doors of trade open to the whole world. Moreover the degree of political integration which Europe itself is eventually going to accept is doubtful. There is therefore a good chance of a satisfactory working compromise. It would however be a grave error for a British government to pretend that the political objectives of Britain are the same as those of M. Monnet and the other devoted Europeans who have already achieved so much within the framework of the Six. The objectives are different but reconcilable by negotiation, provided that the desire to agree is mutual.

9. Conclusion

THESE wide-ranging and necessarily superficial reflections suggest that Britain in the 1960s, while putting behind her the sort of Great Power status which she once enjoyed, should avoid any form of parochialism and should claim for herself by her consistent policies and her material contribution a major share in the building up of international co-operation and eventually world authority.

She should persistently seek to promote negotiation between the Western allies and the Soviet Union, basing herself upon a cautiously optimistic estimate of the long-term evolution of Soviet policy. The more united the Western Alliance remains, the better the chance of agreement with the Soviet Union. This is an attitude fully understood and respected, no doubt reluctantly, by Mr. Khrushchev.

Apart from this there is a need for a switching of priorities by the Western Powers from purely military to economic aspects of world affairs. Almost every statesman already pays lip service to this idea, but in practice the tax-payers of the Western world have still to be persuaded that money saved on military defence ought to be spent for public civilian purposes. This lesson has to be learned if there is to be any progress towards a more stable world order.

Such policies offer ample scope for the ability of statesmen and the idealism of political movements. They are, moreover, policies in which Britain, despite her relatively diminished international status, is perfectly capable of playing an effective part. They therefore offer an escape from the frustration felt by many who, realising that Britain can no longer play her old rôle in the world, despair of finding a satisfying alternative.

John Strachey wrote in his recent book, *The End of Empire*:¹ 'Having ceased to aspire to a world empire, we shall stagnate unless we find other purposes to satisfy our hearts . . . Nations which have known empire may simply break their hearts if they do not find another ideal'.

The Commonwealth may fulfil part of this need but it is not enough. For one thing, there are too many areas of the world where the Commonwealth ideal is too narrow, and where problems cannot be solved on a purely Commonwealth basis. The Commonwealth is an instrument well-fitted by its inter-continental scope and its racial composition to ease some of the strains which are bound to arise as the centuries-old predominance of the West meets the challenge of emerging forces in Asia and Africa. It should however be seen not as an end in itself but as an element in the larger concept of a world-wide system for the civilised regulation of relations between peoples, which is increasingly coming to be seen as the only sure bulwark of world peace.

¹ Gollancz, 1959.

SOCIALISM IN THE SIXTIES

You should also read

THE RACE AGAINST THE H-BOMB

by Denis Healey, M.P.

Tract No. 322 2/-

Other titles in this series —

SOCIALISM AND NATIONALISATION

by Hugh Gaitskell, M.P.

Tract No. 300, *reprinted* 3/-

CASUALTIES OF THE WELFARE STATE

by Audrey Harvey

Tract No. 321 2/6d.

THE IRRESPONSIBLE SOCIETY

by Richard M. Titmuss

Tract No. 323 2/6d

CAN LABOUR WIN ?

by Anthony Crosland, M.P.

Tract No. 324 2/6d.

LABOUR IN THE AFFLUENT SOCIETY

by R. H. S. Crossman, M.P.

Tract No. 325 2/6d.

THE SOCIALIST IMAGINATION

by Wayland and Elizabeth Young

Trace No. 326 2/-

MEMBERSHIP
of the Fabian Society

is open to all who are eligible for individual membership of the Labour Party. Other radicals and reformers sympathetic towards the aims of the Society may become Associates. Please write for further particulars to the General Secretary,

11, Dartmouth Street, London, S.W.1

(WHItchall 3077)

Fabian International Bureau

11 DARTMOUTH STREET LONDON SW1

The Fabian International Bureau

is an integral part of the Fabian Society. Its purpose is to foster through research and discussion, a serious and informed approach to international affairs within the Labour Movement.

Meetings

are regularly held in London at which British and overseas experts speak on current topics in the international field. Week-end residential schools and conferences are also held from time to time.

Recent Pamphlets include:

Disarmament — The Way Ahead, by Hugh Thomas	2s.
Commonwealth Future, by Lord Listowel	2s.
A Neutral Belt in Europe, by Denis Healey, M.P.	1s. 6d.
Aid for Development, by David Belloch	4s.
Gomulka's Poland, by Lucjan Blit	2s.
A United Nation Police Force?, by David Ennals	2s.
The Race Against the H-Bomb, by Denis Healey, M.P.	2s.
The Malayan Experiment, by John Lowe	4s.

The Bureau has also published, in conjunction with Hogarth Press, *Fabian International Essays* (18s.), edited by T. E. M. McKitterick and Kenneth Younger, M.P.

Subscription

to the Bureau is 15s. annually, which entitles members to receive free of charge *Fabian News* monthly and all pamphlets published by the Bureau. Full-time students and members of the ranks of H.M. Forces may subscribe at 7s. 6d. Members will be entitled to admission at meetings, schools and conferences at reduced rates. Fabian Society members who pay a full subscription of £3 receive all Bureau publications.

