

## POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION

was a time when the socialist was happy building dreams of Utopias. Like the economist in his ivory tower reading Robins, Hayek and Mises, he had lost touch with reality. The socialist had his escapist resolutions which he passed at every meeting and conference as an alternative to socialising any industry.

Professor Walker—see *From Economic Theory to Policy*—has brought the Economist out of the tower without sacrificing the purity of his theories; it becomes the socialist to see if he will cease to be a revolutionary and link with the economist in becoming a revolutionary.

## IX.

So far I have not used a socialist reference nor injected a socialist argument. I have been content to go along with the full employer, asking him questions, seeking out his opportunity, stirring him up to deal with his enemies, watching him move onwards in response to the demands of Everyman, quoting for him when he gets timid the doctrine of Disraeli. "We are Conservatives to preserve all that is good in our constitution and radicals to change all that is bad." But let's round the pragmatic approach off with two quotations—one carries us beyond where most of my fellow travellers (not always of their own choice) would be prepared to go, the other brings them on again with soothing but realistic compromises. Both are important, first, because they emphasise that there can be no new order—even by way of full employment—unless we are prepared to face important changes in the structure of society, but that once having accepted the need for changes in control and ownership there is no dogmatic simple method of doing this. In the restatement of his beliefs, *Fabian Socialism*, G. D. H.

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Cole writes: "In the economic field, as in a theatre of war, certain positions are of special strategical importance. The side which holds them, holds the key to the entire situation. In economics the key positions, as I see the matter, are the banking system, with its control over money and the supply of credit; the fuel and power industries, which largely determine the costs and location of other manufacturing processes; transport; and the heavy industries, which produce basic raw materials, durable capital goods, and also armaments or the semi-manufactures out of which armaments are made. Whoever controls these key positions is master of the industrial system. If these industries and services can be brought under democratic control, and so organised as to serve the public interest, it will be matter of secondary importance how other industries and services are owned or managed." Herbert Morrison said: "The sole test must be whether the public interest is served by such measures in particular cases or not. Some forms of economic activity would, like our postal and telegraphic communications, respond well to ownership and management by a Department of State. But the public concern in this form is certainly not a universal panacea. Rather it is likely to be exceptional. What, for instance, should we do with our natural monopolies; industries, which cannot be carried on properly at all except on a monopoly basis? It may be that instead of leaving them in private hands, tied down and hedged about by a tangle of statutory restrictions or bureaucratic checks, we should get better national service from them if we turned them into public corporations like the Central Electricity Board, the London Transport Board, or, in another sphere, the B.B.C.

"These are great basic industries on which national

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well being in peace, and safety in war, directly depend. We can't leave them alone in their monopolistic glory—we don't want to turn Britain into a corporative State and to adopt Fascism in its economic form. The answer may be anything from a public corporation to some form of management under a board of directors with a nationally nominated chairman. The thing that matters is to secure in these large-scale basic industries a due measure of public guidance and public accountability—and these are not things which can be left to chance. Neither the slogan of all-round nationalisation nor the slogan of all-round decontrol (even if one adds the saving clause 'after the transitional period') are, as such, the slightest use to the country."

Private enterprise would continue over a large field of business in both the worlds of Keynes and of Morrison, of the Fabian as well as the Liberal. The claims of rentier capital would be subject to euthanasia—as Keynes puts it; or to increasing control by taxation. To these ideas some of Keynes' followers have added the control a socialisation of industries in which there are strong monopoly elements—as would Herbert Morrison and the London Economist. The resulting picture exemplified by Meade in *An Introduction to Economic Analysis and Policy* is of a Fabian world in which large inequalities of wealth have been removed by redistributive taxation, no tribute is exacted by "unproductive" capital, employment is maintained at its maximum by public investment and monetary measures, social security is granted to all, exploitation of consumer and worker by monopolies is made impossible by social controls and by "sensible selective socialism" but a large field is left for independent firms and businesses. We will, however, fail if we do not set the particular plans adapted to the needs of particular industries or circumstances, into a

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Master Plan, a National Budget such as Stuart Chase has planned for America and Professor Walker has recommended for Australia. In an old cathedral Romanesque walls, Gothic pillars and Baroque decorations can exist side by side in unbroken peace; so also in society can different aims, methods and speeds be formed into a synthesis.

To some that is a crazy mixture of bits from different jig-saw puzzles—to me this digest justifies the belief that it is possible to co-ordinate the best in the policies of the bulk of progressive opinion in Britain, U.S.A., and Australia. The trouble with gradualism was that it was not inevitable—its weakness before the war was its Utopianism; much has happened to make possible assignment to Utopia.

So such an approach will satisfy neither the old time socialist nor the old world individualist. You may not call the result a new order—it's certainly nearest to that new order ever yet reached by industrial man—its symbol is the community centre.

### X.

Is it possible? Is it tyranny?

After we have answered the first question there will not be much left to say about the latter.

Account must be taken of the following developments in estimating the strength of the forces in Everyman's march, for if the new order be lost by an addition of differences it can be won by a multiplication of matters in agreement. I mention for consideration:

- (1) The modification—increasingly so—of the opposition against State control, intervention, ownership. Englishman Richard Lane has warned his

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colleagues against the belief that the "Tory Party stands in all circumstances and contingencies against the encroachment of the State into industry." As employers look at the problems confronting their own industry they use words which we can quote as evidence of agreement. "I visualise that it will be fully possible to institute Government controls at vital points of the national economy without in any way placing curtailments on freedom and initiative. But . . ."

Never mind the "but" for a moment. The words are taken from the Chairman's address to the Australian Paper Manufacturers' Ltd., Sir Norman E. Brookes.

S. Courtauld says: "The English genius for social evolution and for compromise can find a middle way, between pure individualism and pure socialism, which will bring the quickest attainable good to the nation. This road will shift progressively in a direction which will leave more and more vested interests out in the cold. Unless the men in possession are prepared to adapt themselves and compromise, there is no alternative to a complete socialist revolution." The Lord Nuffield Committee of employers and economists reported that the best means by which the State can make sure of a stable total volume of investment is to take over responsibility for a number of important industries. *The Economist* takes as its guiding test: "The general economist policy of the *Economist* is one of believing that the twentieth century can find room both for constructive experiments in the technique of collective organisation and also for the freedom and the dynamism of private enterprise. The essential is that both principles should be allowed to develop their positive merits and that neither of them should be used negatively as a brake upon the other."

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Once such a test is sincerely followed, the writer finds that he can have no theoretical objection to the processes of this talk. The issue of control versus no-control is a dead issue. The issue of State ownership or no State ownership is as dead as a bush of ring-barked trees, sacrificed to the desperate struggle of Australian individualists to survive the outback alone. "Socialism like inflation is not a thing which you either have or do not have like scarlet fever. It is a matter of degree. . . . It is silly to draw a line here in dogmatic fashion, saying: 'Thus far and no further,' and it is equally silly to brand as a 'Socialist' anyone who is open to reason about going further."

One modification I would make in the last statement—appearing (by the way) in a *Sydney Morning Herald* publication—it is that the issue is not one of degree but of speed, not of compromise but of direction. Purity of doctrine is not as important as recognition of the direction; the name of new society is not as vital as the speed. We can co-operate with anyone who realises, and direction and speed—especially the speed.

The dynamic approach of this talk has been emphasised partly to suggest the process of thought which carries it from one stage to another, and partly to reveal the possibilities of agreement among many conflicting points of view.

- (2) The quest for security includes the war-time employer, who has been satisfied with a limited but a guaranteed war-time expansion of his business but who is afraid at the prospects of peace time competition, who prefers limited profits to an interecine struggle, but who, while looking for guidance on markets, is willing to accept State control and planning.

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This attitude—held, I believe, widely by business men of the war generation—cannot be reconciled with the adventurous competitive drive of youthful capitalism; nor with the essentials of pure classical economic theory. The former wouldn't have understood it; the latter would—and does—talk about reviving the battle against Mercantilism in order to save the theory, providing the business is ready to go bankrupt on occasions. But the business man is not prepared to do that to-day. Everyman takes the dazed business man by the arm, hurries him on another stage to the new order, before he realises where he is going.

- (3) He will have as a companion his manager. James Burnham has coined a phrase, "The Managerial Revolution" to summarise the view that the manager by reason of the monopoly of skill possessed by him has reached the dominant position in society held previously by the feudal landowner and later the capitalist.

This theory I am unable to discuss. (Its real position in my paper is later when I am dealing not with a managerial revolution but the bureaucratic embrace). It has this important element of truth for us. It emphasises the appreciation by many technical men that here are improving opportunities for them in government enterprises—that enterprise make dams, prevent soil erosion as fill and full as Manchester.

I see no reason why both the business man and his manager should not be left fields of private enterprise, providing that these are part of a national Master Plan, and providing that the test of judgment taken be not the rights of private enterprise but the winning of full employment, full production, full prosperity, equality and opportunity.

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- (4) What do the professional men say in this controversy? the educationalist, the architect, the town planner, the doctor, the engineer, the scientist?

I am busy reading their plans; and find that whenever any institute sets out to solve the problems of its own members, it wants to plan, demands State control, finds its conception of a new social order only in the opportunity to serve the people within a national plan.

These professional men for the first time since the Middle Ages are regarding their job as the production of masterpieces. They are stating that professional standards of conduct are possible only in a planned nation and a unified world. They are horrified at the war-time disclosures of business methods and theories as revealed in such books as *Business as Usual*, *The First Year of Defence*, by I. T. Stone, or *Technological Trends and National Policy*. They are tired of the limitations imposed by capitalism on their expansion. They are angry at the cities they have built. They are angry at the frustration of science. They are attacking laissez-faire in such works as those of Professor A. V. Hill: "Our public health services were organised mainly on the principle of trying to cure people when they were sick, our architecture on mending the pipes when they burst after a frost, our industry on paying people a dole when they were unemployed, our national defence on getting ready when a war had begun. It is obvious that, scientific planning and the planning of our national resources can make many of our problems unending. By designing our houses properly the pipes need never get frozen up, by proper attention to nutrition, to public health and physical education sickness can be largely avoided; by deliberate planning of public works, unem-

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ployment can be greatly reduced and the standard of living raised; by adopting a period of national service, universal for men and women alike, as the highest form of democracy we can avoid blundering unprepared again into war and can add a new dignity to our citizenship. Scientific planning and planning with the aid of science are what we look forward to; planning, however, in which any new order we arrive at is fitted to our traditional freedom."

They are attracted by the achievements of Russia. They write books with such titles as *The Social Function of Science*, by J. D. Bernal. They sit on Royal Commissions like Scott Barlow Uthwatt, which produce revolutionary conclusions about land. They have felt a new hope in the experience of the war.

The city architect of Coventry tired and covered with smoke turned for a moment from his fire-fighting to say: "This is where we will build a new city hall." The people of London held a Rebuilding Britain exhibition on the blitzed site of Oxford Street. The Mayor of Hull announced on the morning after a heavy raid that Professor Abercrombie had been called in to give advice on making Hull his main city. "When We Build Again" is the title of Birmingham's plan. . . .

Above all, such people want the opportunity of placing their skills at the service of their nation in peace as they have in war. They are the few pressure groups whose own interests are those of society; they believe in a new order because they can make new orders. The plans of such groups must be part of a Master Plan.

Just as individual medieval guilds found it necessary to be co-ordinated in a city, so professionals of to-day find their city is society and co-ordination is national planning.

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- (5) But it's not socialism as we visualised it in our text books—neither yours or mine. To achieve the new order a new attitude to socialism is required by the theoretical socialist in that he will need to harmonise his theories when in opposition with his practices in office; by the practical socialist in that he must use socialism as a guide to his practical measures.

It is still "socialism without doctrines." It is, nevertheless, democratic socialism or "planned democracy" in action—hitherto in slow action. The very fact that a political party, anxious to deal with the problems of Australia in a practical way, finds itself preparing the way for increasing social control indicates the strength of the case. It is as if a number of guerilla bands dealing with an enemy, judging their isolated and individual acts by their own resources, the lay of the land and the position of their enemies, find that more and more they are responding to a common plan and developing a united strategy.

(5) The academic answer to that argument is no longer as certain as it was. New titles of books appear: *The Illusion of Economic Stability*—Dr. Eli Ginzberg; *Capitalism in Crises*, by Professor James Harvey Rogers; *An Economic Programme for American Democracy*, by Seven Harvard and Tufts Economists. Economists are on the defensive. "Economic Theory," said Barbara Wootton, "produces a monstrous brood of hypotheses, such as might well claim some Malthus of the speculative world." Once against the collectivist came the arguments of von Mises, Hayek and Robbins. Hayek escaped into his Utopia by emptying all social content out of economics; Mises dropped a passage from his German version in order to complete his attack on col-

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lectivism; both selected a test of the success of economics proving that collectivism could not function within their definition of economics, although Soviet Russia without guidance of the market was proving that collective planning was capable of raising standards of living, controlling the balance between consumption and investment and discovering their incentives in labour relations. Then, classical economists became socialists—even communists—and set about answering the theoretical arguments against socialism. H. D. Dickinson, in *Economics of Socialism*, Paul Sweezy in *The Theory of Capitalist Development*, and Maurice Dobb were on the side of the socialists; R. L. Hall in *The Economic System in a Socialist State*, supported Mises and his Austrian colleagues. Keynes learned to treat Marx with respect. Joan Robinson in "An Essay on Marxian Economics," says: "In general, the nightmare quality of Marx's thought gives it, in this bedevilled age, an air of greater reality than the genial complacency of the orthodox academics. Yet he, at the same time, is more encouraging than they, for he realises hope as well as fear from Pandora's box, while they preach only of gloomy doctrine that all is for the best of all possible worlds." W. H. Hutt, perturbed by the challenge of the collectivists, but hag haunted by his teachings against collectivism, warned by the possibilities of economic collapse, produced his Heath Robinson scheme, "Plan for Reconstruction", as progressive in its attack on restructive practice as it is naive in its political understanding; as significant in its hopeless alternative to social control as it is tolerant in its willingness to let even the planner have a place. Professor Erich Roll calls the development "The Decline of Liberal Economics."

So weakened were classical economists by the attack by Keynes and the Socialists that a new classical eco-

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nomist, Professor Schumpeter, more in sorrow than anger, delivered the final blow.

"This is verified by the very characteristic manner in which particular capitalist interests and the bourgeoisie as a whole behave when facing direct attack. They talk and plead—or hire people to do it for them; they snatch at every chance of compromise; they are ready to give in; they never put up a fight under the flag of their own ideals and interests—in this country there was no real resistance anywhere against the imposition of crushing financial burdens during the last decade or against labour legislation incompatible with the effective management of society. Now, the reader will surely know by this time, I am far from over-estimating the political power of either big business or the bourgeoisie in general. Moreover, I am prepared to make large allowances for cowardice. But still, means of defence were not entirely lacking as yet, and history is full of examples of the success of small groups who, believing in their cause, were resolved to stand by their guns. The only explanation for the weakness we observe is that the bourgeois order no longer makes any sense to the bourgeoisie itself and that, when all is said and nothing is done, it does not really care."

Marx prophesied the withering away of the capitalist State. Socialists hoped for its death—it is more likely to rot. And that means disaster for all unless we institute our own alternative—the journey to democratic planning; socialism by consent; science camouflaged to suit the prejudices of Everyman.

All this is part of the fluidity of doctrine and politics to-day. An English millionaire founds a new socialist political party; semi-rural constituencies return socialist candidates in Britain; the *Economist* is more pro-



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gressive than the *New Statesman*, and the *Sydney Morning Herald* more revolutionary than the *Tribune*. E. H. Carr lays down social reform as a condition of peace. The *Financial News* of London repudiates editorially the policy report of the Bankers' Association of America: "This report may be called the Bourbon Plan on the evidence it offers of the inability of its authors to learn anything or to forget anything. . . . According to the spokesmen of the American bankers, all that is needed to bring a happy post-war world is rigidly stable currencies free from any exchange restriction and the way to achieve this idle state of affairs is by the elimination of all forms of government intervention and the termination of deficit financing through the strict balancing of budgets. . . . One is inclined to rub one's eyes to make sure one is not dreaming. Is it really possible that well informed and thoughtful people should allow themselves to be so blinded to realities by their belief in hard money at all costs. Have they failed to learn anything from their own pre-war experience?" The *Financial News* of London or the Bankers' Association? The London *Economist* or the British Secretary for the Treasury?

Backwards or forwards?

To what?

Back to the deeply rooted determination of Everyman—"Unemployment never again?"

Or forward to planning?

Will we tell him that we prefer unemployment to State control?

Only in books—in company meetings—not on public platforms or in election campaigns; no longer in economic text books. There we say "State control means loss of liberty" and say nothing about unemployment,

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hoping Everyman will temporarily forget the depression or that he develops lack of co-ordination of his faculties. . . .

### XI.

Is it a new order—or a new tyranny?

On the credit side is the abolition of unemployment; on the debit side an alteration in the position of liberty of some people.

Liberty or Security?

There are many people who are horrified at the choice—Walter Lippmann in the "Good Society" and Professor Wriston in "The Challenge to Freedom"—but the evil sisters are of their own invocation. There has never been such a choice—or there has always been the choice, which ever you like.

In the 20th century there cannot be liberty without security from war and from unemployment. People like Lippmann select their own type of freedom for their own people—and call it "freedom." Wriston selects freedom of enterprise but this was incompatible with freedom for millions of Americans. When a fifth freedom was unofficially added to the Atlantic Charter, the other four freedoms were imperilled. "Freedom to seek employment where they would" is being widely advertised by American business as its contribution to post-war promises, but it will fail as a popular appeal, even in America, if ten million workers seeking employment find the gates closed as they did in the Thirties. But we want to avoid that lesson again. There was never liberty for those who did not have security—there never will be, and all the twistings and hesitations of contemporary thinkers cannot avoid the fact that if the relationship between liberty and security is stated as a choice, then the problem cannot be solved.

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It is my thesis that since Everyman will have nothing to do with any system which does not give him economic security—that he will acquiesce in authoritarianism, try anarchy, slip into disintegration in his experiments in security, and therefore those who desire democracy and liberty have two responsibilities—one is to keep watchful against bureaucracy; the other is to give continuous attention to the problem of liberty. So I advance further the search for this new order.

There are two dangers which it is necessary to guard against. The first is to take a word like freedom—squeeze it dry, turn it into a bone to be pointed at anything we do not like; use it as a swear word to denounce our enemies. The second is to take another word, such as planning—roll it around the tongue, chew it incessantly, park it under the table to be produced whenever we need something soothing. Freedom and planning are not opposites but complementary.

If in the attack on bureaucracy, we so argue and so behave that we destroy instruments of achieving security (and I now add, prosperity), then we will not regain freedom, but lose the chance of reconciling freedom and planning. If, on the other hand, we push planning without at every stage being eternally vigilant, we will find that Everyman may forget temporarily, the evils of insecurity in an attack on bureaucracy, which in winning freedom from planning, will relapse into anarchy and authoritarianism. Yet, first place among the enemies of security (and freedom) therefore goes to those who attack bureaucrats as a method of avoiding the issues raised in this paper. The London *Economist* praises Mr. Herbert Morrison for the "crucial fight" against "one of the most dangerous threats to natural prosperity after the war, viz., the indiscriminate demand backed by the unequalled skill of those who make news and

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views in certain national newspapers that Government controls should be removed forthwith when the war ends." . . . They talk as if Socrates was a member of the Liberal Democratic Party and John Stuart Mill, a political correspondent in Canberra.

If they had the intellectual integrity to carry their arguments beyond their particular group of vested interests they would find that they end not in liberty—but in Bethemoth . . . the name applied by Hobbs to the Long Parliament in the 17th century and meaning the negation of the State, the reign of lawlessness and chaos, and so used significantly as the title of a German socialist's book on the structure and practice of national socialism.

Bureaucracy is independent of period, class, form of nation, political or economic organisation. Bureaucracy exists among large scale business enterprises as well as public corporations. Firms go bankrupt because of their bureaucracy, but this does not ensure freedom to the employees. Trusts dominate the lives of managers and wage employees, without providing freedom of choice for consumers. Bureaucrats are attacked to-day not primarily because they are bureaucratic but because they are necessary instruments of State control.

Men died for feudalism though free enterprise was the destined victor. Men can die for free enterprise though historically the choice is not between democratic free enterprise and socialism, but between chaos and the democratic planning. Don Quixote tilted at windmills and Cervantes produced the classic of disintegrating feudalism; if the social thinker persists in tilting at bureaucrats, he will leave only comic strips for the antiquarian of 2,000 A.D.

The fight against bureaucracy is essential for the success of democratic socialism; it alone cannot save



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decomposition of capitalism. The fight can be won only by those seeking a new order.

Next place (among the enemies of security and freedom) goes to those who attempt to settle an argument concerning their own interests or desires by claiming that freedom is thereby in danger.

"Freedom to-day is a much abused term," says Zweig, in *Planning of Free Society*. "Of all the catchwords it seems to have the greatest market value. Even the dictators pretend to defend it."

There are no absolute tenets on freedom; there is no more important question to arise.

When the owners of houses in Edinburgh squares covenanted to prevent anyone altering the appearance of their own houses, they were restricting the liberty of anyone who wanted to assert the claim that a Scotsman's home was a castle, but they were enlarging the freedom of those who enjoyed beauty, supported town planning and put dignity above individual impudence.

The solution is to recognise that our attitude to freedom is only part of our general attitude to the society or nation in which we are living. Freedom is not a virtue standing apart from security, but with security, opportunity, prosperity, education, are parts of a way of living.

We give up freedom during war because our Australian way of life is endangered, but our attitude in war and in peace is too negative. We appeased the problem in peace by a disharmony of life that was as cruel, unjust, as it was philosophically absurd. We by-passed the problem in war by declaring that when peace returned, we would lift the controls and get back to pre-war freedom. There was no such real freedom then—there cannot be any new social order, if we return to the 19th century conception of either economics or freedom.

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Liberty is a recognition of necessity as much as the attainment of rights. Liberty is the selection of restraints and not a destruction of law and order. Liberty is self-discipline as well as self-government; a fulfillment of planning and not a pretence of laissez-faire. Liberty is a test of citizenship, a harmony between security and freedom.

Freedom is won as planning succeeds. Any decision is tentative only—any complaint against a particular plan is subject to conversion as security, prosperity and opportunity are won. Slum clearance was resisted by slum-happy people who were moved to garden cities, quickly to realise that life had been enriched and freedom widened as colour came into their cheeks, child mortality lowered, maternal mortality controlled.

There is one freedom that we must defend to the end—intellectual freedom. We cannot win a new order with discussions off the record.

I would wish that time had permitted me to illustrate these general arguments by the problems involved in rehousing our people. Freedom in slums is a farce and an insult; but building houses at the end of the war means either we perpetuate inequality or we continue controls; to build houses which will widen the freedom for thousands, we need to limit rights of those with money, with land and with building material; to redesign our cities so that they will recapture the ancient "sense of beauty and majesty, a harmony of life that the modern city has largely lost", we need to control the expansion of cities, introduce zoning, alter street routes, and fit design into a general pattern. There could have been no Canberra garden city without a plan and a control (I nearly added without bureaucrats!); there would have been only chaos in New York unless skyscrapers had been limited, and zoning guided

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by a Master Planning Authority; and the grand conception of a Fifty Years Plan for London requires controls, planners, bureaucrats. I turn over the pages of the Book of the London Plan, remember the excitement among people who attended the exhibition, recall the richness given to the word plan by the work of Professor Abercrombie as he designed his community centre, open spaces, new houses, emphasise that London to be restored needs plans, controls, bureaucrats, and argue again that progress here—as in many things—depends, not on a return to laissez-faire but an achievement, a democratic participation for an end recognised by all to be a worthy one—only then can freedom be won.

Green belts surrounding a city and limiting its growth do not strangle or regiment, but bring life-giving beauty, health and dignity. Good controls are like green belts—they guide so that they may create. They constitute the laws of civic health as necessary as legislation which built drains.

The first sneers at bureaucrats came from those who were opposed to building drains, educating the people, building houses for the masses, erecting railways. And so again, no railwayman objects to controls—he would feel lack of freedom without signals. These are not analogies, but simple lessons in political science and philosophy. Whenever any reform now recognised to be necessary was opposed, it was done in the name of liberty. If you like an idea you call it a plan; if you do not its bureaucracy—and as we have seen in this talk most anti-bureaucrats become planners when faced with a particular problem, or an aim, that concerns them. Yet we must fit their particular plans into a National Plan, so—isn't it time we stopped swearing and got down to the essence of our problem?

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Around the world run the hopes, the desires, the needs for a New Order, the century of the common man.

I have outlined the search for a New Order and shown the differences between the extent of the desire to-day from the many attempts which failed; have stated the reasons why agreement is possible and why the opposition is strong also; have outlined a framework but have emphasised that the realistic approach—both politically for a nation and intellectually for an individual—is one of movement towards certain clear and basic ideas such as full employment, a guaranteed . . . educational opportunity. Given the enthusiasm of London's planners, the vision of the Danish Folk Schools, the determination of our community centre building, imagination of our soldier poets, and, above all, courage and confidence, then the people with different ideas can build them into a progressive unity. Given plans, which enable the community to see the unrolling of a democratic achievement, given projects which are both an earnest of what is to be achieved as well as a spur to increased and rounded activity, given a sense of urgency and a general agreement about direction, there is every possibility of many members from many groups in society being good companions in the forming of a new order.

The argument is Fabian in its aim, revolutionary in its speed, democratic in its method—Australian in its inspiration to remove the ills of our community. The tragedy of the Australian outback—gashed, devastated, scorched by its own patriots—requiring rebuilding as insistently as the bombed cities of Britain; the challenging of Australian emptiness; the impossibility of people hoping to survive, living on the edge of an inverted basin, like men clinging desperately to the raft of history; the frittering away of precious energy and well being in the slums of our cities; the eroding of men and coun-

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try alike; the emptiness of intellectual reinforcements throughout the rural areas—towns and villages without a library, without a civic centre, without a social synthesis:—These are the question marks in Australia to-day. To answer them needs courage; to resolve them is a glorious adventure for a united and understanding people. They are question marks, but they are also Everyman's road guides. So unashamedly I quote Blake as his aim to fight:

“Till we have built Jerusalem,  
In England's green and pleasant land.”

## DISCUSSION.

Mr. COLIN BADGER (Melbourne): I should like to know how the idea got abroad that economists are starry-eyed visionaries. The fact is that it is the economists who keep on talking about the hum-drum things. It is true that in the paper which has just been read, we were forwarded one or two glimpses of the delectable vision ahead, but we were immediately reminded that the camels needed food and water for their journey, and that the journey was a long and arduous one.

The non-planners, however, are always talking about the rewards of enterprise, and of the sacred nature of personal liberty, etc. They never deign to talk of things like housing and nutrition and national housewifery. It is they who deal in abstracts. They imply, much more so than do the economists, that the thing is really easy. All that is necessary is to take two steps back and one to the right, and all the goods and houses that we need will be showered upon us without our doing anything at all about it except to reap the rewards of energy and enterprise.

We are faced with the problem of finding out how we are to do what everybody knows we want to do, and what must, in fact, be done. It is so easy to visualise the ends for which

## A NEW SOCIAL ORDER

we are striving, and to reach general agreement in regard to them, but there are not enough of these economists to warn us that it will cost us something. We have to make a choice between present gains and future having. How are we to define our objectives? How are we in peace to get agreement about our objectives that we now have in war? I suggest that a penalty should be imposed upon those who deal in abstractions. They should be compelled to read through the whole of Adam Smith's book, *The Wealth of Nations*.

FATHER MURTAGH (Melbourne): Prof. Alan Nevins, of Columbia University, when visiting this country recently, expressed the opinion that Australia was tending to evolve a monolithic social structure. He might conclude from the paper read by Dr. Ross, and from the remarks of some of those who took part in the discussion, that these persons are themselves developing dangerously monolithic minds. I would not agree with him, because I think that these speakers are striving towards a new kind of society, and they cannot give it a name. I am going to be rash enough to give it a name. In the first place, this business of planning and controls is quite beside the point if we are set on a new social order. Order is defined by Aristotle—or was it Thomas Aquinas?—as the right adaptation of means to an end. If you are to adapt means to an end, that means planning and control. If you are going to adapt means to the attainment of a social order, that means planning and control. That is not the point with which we should concern ourselves. The important point is, who is to exercise the control and what will be the effect of it on the nature of man and his needs? All the writings of social and political philosophers recognise the existence of three different kinds of society—Atomic society, Monolithic society, and Organic society. Atomic society has been smashed. It was the product of the 19th Century Liberalism, and was identified with capitalism. Now it is finished, having gone out with the advent of the greatest war in history. Its opposite extreme is mono-