

**SOCIALISM IN THE SIXTIES**



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**CAN  
LABOUR  
WIN?**

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**TWO SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE**

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FABIAN TRACT 324

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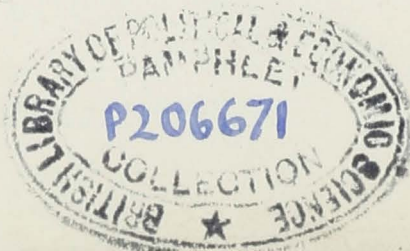
This pamphlet is based on a lecture given before  
a Fabian audience in London in April 1960

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THE FABIAN SOCIETY  
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May, 1960



# I. Introduction

I start with three assumptions. First, while British Socialists may differ about particular policy issues (for example, the exact form and extent of future public ownership), they would all subscribe to the following basic Socialist values:

(1) An over-riding concern with social welfare, and a determination to accord a first priority to the relief not merely of material poverty, but of social distress or misfortune from whatever cause.

(2) A much more equal distribution of wealth, and in particular a compression of that part of the total which derives from property income and inheritance.

(3) A socially 'classless' society, and in particular a non-élite system of education which offers equal opportunities to all children.

(4) The primacy of social over private interests, and an allocation of resources (notably in the fields of social investment and town and country planning) determined by the public need and not solely by profit considerations.

(5) The diffusion of economic power, and in particular a transfer of power from the large corporation (whether public or private) both to workers (either directly or through their Unions) and consumers (through the Co-operative Movement).

(6) Generally, the substitution of co-operative for competitive, and other-regarding for self-regarding, social and economic relations.

(7) In foreign affairs, the substitution of disarmament, international action and the rule of law for nationalism and power politics.

(8) Racial equality (both at home and abroad), the right of colonial peoples to freedom and self-government, and the duty of richer nations to give aid and support to poorer ones.

(9) An increase in the rate of economic growth, both for the sake of a higher standard of living and as a pre-condition of achieving other objectives.

(10) A belief, not merely in Parliamentary democracy, but in the rights and liberty of the individual as against the state, the police, private or public bureaucracy, and organised intolerance of any kind.

These ten values, or aspirations, constitute the basic principles of democratic Socialism. There may be legitimate disagreement about their precise interpretation, and about the exact means—the particular institutional changes or forms of economic organisation—through which they can best be realised in our society. But no one can call himself a Socialist who does not assent to the basic values.

## *Contrasting Ethics*

My second assumption is that Socialists who read this pamphlet are interested in realising these aims in practice: that is, they are concerned

with political achievement. Max Weber, in his essay *Politics as a Vocation*, distinguished between two ethics which may govern public conduct: the ethic of ultimate ends and the ethic of responsibility. He who follows the former has no interest in political power; for he takes no interest in, or responsibility for, the consequences of his actions—even when these fall on other people than himself. He is dedicated solely to an absolute end. His actions have a purely exemplary value; their only function is (in Weber's words) 'to rekindle the flame of pure intention'. Political tactics, reconciliation, compromise, an order of priorities, a choice between objectives—these have no place in his system.

An ethic of ultimate ends is naturally to be found most commonly amongst either messianic religious or chiliastic political groups. The Russian nihilist bent on assassination, or the anarcho-syndicalist fomenting a hopeless strike, cared nothing that their actions might lead to the shedding of innocent blood and further class repression. The Zimmerwald faction in the First World War, faced with the choice between peace without revolution and a continuation of the war, voted unhesitatingly for the latter. The pacifist in the 1930s, opposing rearmament and collective security, accepted no responsibility for the possible cost in terms of Nazi tyranny. Today, the nuclear disarmamentist who will vote for neither Party, or the socialist who would remain in opposition for thirty years rather than risk one tittle of his doctrinal purity, both abdicate all responsibility for the effects of their actions on British old-age pensioners or the inhabitants of Nyasaland.

Those who follow the ethic of responsibility, on the other hand, hold themselves accountable for the consequences of their actions. Lacking the moral pride which enables them to say that one single end transcends all others and justifies a total sacrifice, they accept the limitations of political action. They grapple with pragmatic questions of choice and priorities, and perceive the need for reconciliation and compromise. They behave like a Church, which recognises that the world is wicked and imperfect, but still believes that it can help a majority of people some way along the road: and not like a sect, concerned only with its exclusive membership and with the one millennial choice between salvation and damnation. They, too, have ethical standards, of equal value to those of the dedicated purists. But their aim is different—the best that can be achieved, consistently with their principles, under given circumstances. Unlike the chiliasts, therefore, they are concerned with political power; and it is to them alone that this essay is addressed.

### *Hunches versus Sociology*

My third assumption is that the study of voting behaviour and political attitudes—that is, political sociology—is a proper and appropriate study for the politician. There is a tendency in some quarters to despise, or even morally condemn, such studies. This attitude is based on a confusion. Most people would rightly think it despicable simply to ask the voters what they wanted most, and then to promise it regardless of party principles or previous policy. But this is not the object of a study such as this. Its

object is to discover first what deeper factors, other than short-term party programmes, determine voting behaviour; secondly, to see how the British political parties stand in relation to these factors; thirdly, to consider how the Labour Party might put itself into a better *rapport* with them.

None of this has anything to do with basic Party principles; it has little to do even with detailed Party policy. It is relevant rather to the way in which the Party presents itself and its policies to the public, to the tone and content of its propaganda, and generally to the impression which it makes on the voters. These are matters which any serious politician has to attend to; indeed, they are quite certain to be in the mind of the Party leadership whenever it decides questions of political education, propaganda, the conduct of elections, and the rest. In the past, such decisions have been based — without any suggestion of immorality — on the study of by-election trends, the reports of Party agents and the contents of post-bags; today we have in addition the evidence of public opinion polls and voting studies. I assume merely that it is better to base these decisions on information rather than on whim or hunch. The former involves no sacrifice of policy or principle as compared with the latter; it might be rather more effective.

## 2. False Optimism

**T**HE remainder of this pamphlet is about what Labour ought to do to buttress its declining position. The decline can hardly be disputed; the Party has now suffered a humiliation unprecedented in the annals of British democratic politics, namely, of losing seats at four successive General Elections.

Yet there are still people who refuse to take alarm. Pointing to the small overall swing between 1951 and 1959 — Labour's proportion of the poll dropped by only 5 per cent. — they argue that a comparatively minor shift in public opinion, such as might easily be induced by Tory errors or Labour luck or a swing of the pendulum, would be sufficient to tilt the balance back again; we need therefore only wait and watch and pray. In particular, many people are waiting expectantly for the depression which they believe to be inevitable, and which will sweep Labour back into office. Apart from its *naiveté* on economic grounds, such an attitude is surely hideously immoral. It implies not only that Labour is finished as a political force so long as Britain remains prosperous, but also a positive hope that the unemployed will re-appear so that Labour can climb back into power on their shoulders.

In fact, Labour might not climb back even then. Certainly the pendulum will, for one reason or another, eventually swing against the Conservatives. But on the basis of recent voting trends it seems more likely to swing towards the Liberals and abstainers than towards Labour. The real danger is a 1924-type situation, with the Conservatives in a minority, but still able to rule because the majority is split between Liberals and Labour.

The swing against Labour in recent elections, although quantitatively not large, must be taken seriously because it appears to reflect a long-run trend. Moreover, it seems to be causally related to certain underlying social and economic changes (discussed in the following pages) which not merely are irreversible, but are not yet even complete. The smallness of the swing shows only that voting habits, heavily influenced as they are by family tradition and past loyalties, react slowly to social change. We therefore face the serious danger that the swing will go still further as the underlying changes have their lagged effect on voting behaviour.

### *Unpredictable Voters*

Some people argue that whatever the long-run trend, each General Election is still wholly unpredictable, if only because of the large and possibly growing number of last-minutes 'floaters' or 'shifTERS' in the electorate. Certainly all voting studies testify to their existence. In Greenwich in 1950 22 per cent. of voters changed their minds in the eight weeks before polling day;<sup>1</sup> at Bristol N.E. in 1955 14 per cent. had not made up their

<sup>1</sup> Mark Benney, A. P. Gray and R. H. Pear, *How People Vote* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956), p.168.

minds by the time the campaign started;<sup>1</sup> and in the 1959 election, 12 per cent. of people in the whole country decided how to vote during the three weeks of the campaign.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, the identity of the last-minute 'shifters' and late deciders might seem to reinforce the element of unpredictability. They tend to be women rather than men. Contrary to the hopeful assumptions of the highbrow journals, they are less interested in politics and less exposed to propaganda than the average voter. And their doubts and vacillations are typically due to their being 'cross-pressured'; that is, their voting intention goes counter to that of their family, their friends, their religious group or their social class position. The last appears to be an especially potent factor; and it explains the heavy concentration of shifters in the upper-working and lower-middle classes where divergent social pressures might be expected to be strongest.

### *Underlying Stability*

But the impression of uncertainty is shown, on closer inspection, to be somewhat misleading. Most of the late deciders end by voting for the Party for which they voted previously, or for which they would naturally be expected to vote on the basis of income and occupation; and most of the 'shifters' are 'crystallisers', *i.e.* they shift not from one Party to another, but from 'doubtful' to their previous or 'natural' Party.<sup>3</sup> The actual swing between parties during an election is exceedingly small; direct conversions of this sort take place slowly and gradually during the years between elections.

Even between elections the net movements are small. Eighty per cent. of electors vote the same way all their lives.<sup>4</sup> This understates the changes which occur in the pattern of voting between elections, since the voting population is itself not constant, but continuously reinforced by new voters. If we analyse these changes, however, we find that by far the largest changes occur not between the major parties, but in and out of the 'third force' — Liberals and abstainers; moreover, although the gross changes are considerable, the net swing is small. Thus of the total gross swing in Bristol N.E. between 1951 and 1955, 55 per cent. consisted of 1955 abstentions by 1951 voters, 10 per cent. of votes by new over-21 voters, 15 per cent. of votes by 1951 abstainers, and 20 per cent. of changes from one major Party to another; and although 25 per cent. of all voters swung between the

<sup>1</sup> R. S. Milne and H. G. Mackenzie, *Marginal Seat* (Hansard Society, 1958), p.37.

<sup>2</sup> D. E. Butler and Richard Rose, *The British General Election of 1959* (Macmillan, 1960), p.200. The same is true in the U.S.; American studies show that 13 per cent. of the electorate changed their voting intention in the last two months of the 1940 Presidential Election, and 21 per cent. in the last two months of the 1948 campaign. (v. P. F. Lazarsfeld, B. Berelson and H. Gaudet, *The People's Choice* (New York, 1948), p.xi, and B. Berelson, P. F. Lazarsfeld and W. N. McPhee, *Voting* (Chicago, 1954), p.18).

<sup>3</sup> v. *The People's Choice*, Ch. VII, and *How People Vote*, Ch. II.

<sup>4</sup> According to British Institute of Public Opinion polls.

two elections, the net swing between the major parties was only 1.5 per cent.<sup>1</sup> We must conclude that ultimate voting behaviour is much more stable than appears on the surface, and in particular that if a net swing continues (like the present one) over a succession of General Elections, it represents not a series of fortuitous and haphazard spasms but a steady, consistent shift in national opinion. There is no comfort for the optimists here.

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<sup>1</sup> *Marginal Seat*, Ch. 4.



### 3. What Determines Voting?

**I**N order to interpret a long-run swing correctly, we must try to discover the fundamentals of voting behaviour. All voting studies agree that political attitudes are primarily correlated with social class position. Most middle-class people vote Conservative, most working-class people vote Labour. Even if we construct a more refined (for example, five-tier) index of social class, experience shows that the ratio of Labour to Conservative voters increases as we move down the scale. This is subject, however, to one important qualification. Where an individual's objective class position (as assessed by income or occupation) differs from his subjective position (as assessed by himself), the latter tends to correlate with his voting behaviour. Thus people normally vote for the Party which is identified with the social class to which they assign themselves.

There are, of course, exceptions to this general rule. It is known that about one-quarter of the middle class votes Labour and one-third of the working class votes Conservative.<sup>1</sup> The deviant middle-class voters are presumably an idealistic minority who put the general welfare above their own class interests. The deviant working-class voters are presumably either the 'deferential' voters, who cast a consciously *inverted* class vote for their social superiors, the élite, the upper class, those who are educated and successful and 'know how to run the country'; or else they are the newly prosperous skilled workers who have achieved an almost middle-class standard of income. In fact these latter are not necessarily an exception to the general rule; for it is precisely they who, by virtue of their new prosperity, may assign themselves subjectively to the middle class.

Nevertheless, it is obvious from the large number of deviants, and indeed from introspection, that social class, although the most important, is not the sole determinant of voting behaviour. What, then, are the other determinants? Contrary to what most politicians assume, the election campaign and the short-term manifestos normally do little to swing votes as between one Party and another; their purpose is rather to reinforce, crystallise and validate the voting intentions of people already wholly or half committed to one Party. There are, of course, exceptions, as when a sudden recession or international crisis creates a decisive last-minute issue. But generally voting changes between Parties occur as a long-drawn-out process between elections, and not as an abrupt decision during the campaign itself.

#### *Social Change*

Over the long run, people's votes appear to be influenced, not only by social class background, but also by their general view of the society in

<sup>1</sup> To be more precise, 10 per cent. of the solid middle-class and 25 per cent. of the (non-manual) lower-middle-class vote Labour; 35 per cent. of the (manual) upper-working-class and 30 per cent. of the solid working-class vote Conservative. See Mark Abrams, 'Class Distinctions in Britain', *The Future of the Welfare State* (Conservative Political Centre, 1958). Cf. also John Bonham, *The Middle Class Vote* (Faber, 1954).

which they live. Does it broadly satisfy their aspirations? Does it offer a reasonable standard of living, the desired opportunities for advancement, a satisfying pattern of social relations, the right environmental background? Above all, is it changing markedly for the better or the worse? The factor of social change is often decisive. A miner, though his real income has increased considerably, may still take much the same view of the society as he did before the war; for his conditions of work, pattern of social relations and physical environment have changed comparatively little. A white-collar worker, on the other hand, who lives in a new house in a New Town, works in a new factory, and confronts a new and more fluid social situation, will, even though his income is the same as the miner's, be acutely conscious of social change; the society, to him, is utterly different from what it was before the war.

Against this background of social change, the Parties present themselves as having a certain 'image' or personality; and this is judged by each voter as either appropriate or inappropriate to his general view of the society.<sup>1</sup> The image is built up by the Party's words and actions and attitudes over a long period of time. It is a compound of separate elements. One of these is the basic class identification already referred to. In addition, each Party is associated on the one hand with certain issues (such as full employment or nationalisation or low taxation) which the voter considers to be of decisive importance to people like himself, and on the other hand with certain 'styles' or attitudes (such as patriotism or bureaucracy or extravagance) which either attract or repel him. These issues and attitudes become symbols or stereotypes which, together with the basic class identification, create a total Party image. They may be class-oriented, in which case they merely reinforce the factor of social class. But often they are not; and then they may explain the deviant voters discussed above.

### *Recent Party Images*

Until recently, the Labour Party has been identified in the minds of its supporters with full employment, fair shares, the Welfare State and the National Health Service, and in the minds of its opponents (since each voter has a hostile image of the opposing Party as well as a sympathetic image of his own) with nationalisation, austerity and controls. The Conservatives have been identified on the one hand with lower taxation, free enterprise and patriotism, and on the other hand with big business, unemployment and anti-Welfare-State. It is such issue- and attitude-orientations, together with the basic class image, which appear, far more than election campaigns or immediate policy issues, to determine the distribution of votes.

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of party images, see *Marginal Seat*, Ch. 9. The term is often imputed, by those who find it distasteful, to modern public relations experts. In fact it was first used by Graham Wallas in *Human Nature in Politics* (Constable, 1908), p.84.

## 4. Why The Trend Is Against Labour

THE image of the Labour Party, on all these counts, has become steadily less appropriate to changing social conditions; and this fundamentally explains the decline in the Labour vote over the last decade.

The inappropriateness is most obvious, and should be easiest to correct, in the field of issues and attitudes. On the one hand, some of Labour's most potent and sympathetic older issues, notably full employment and the Welfare State, have almost faded out of sight. The issues themselves of course remain of great importance. But after a decade of Conservative rule, during which both full employment and the Welfare State have broadly been maintained, they are no longer identified exclusively with the Labour Party; they are now taken for granted under either Party, and hence have lost their political significance. Political parties often pay a harsh penalty for their own successes.

At the same time Labour has preserved or acquired some increasingly unpopular images. One of the most conspicuous is 'nationalisation'. When people are asked by the Gallup Poll what they think the Labour Party stands for, 33 per cent. reply 'the working class, the underdog', and 17 per cent. reply 'nationalisation'; no other attribute elicits more than 3 per cent. of responses. The identification with nationalisation is, moreover, growing stronger; 6 per cent. of respondents gave this answer in 1951, 9 per cent. in 1955 and 17 per cent. in 1959. This close identification is without doubt a liability; for all polls show that a majority of the electorate (two-thirds or more, according to both the Gallup and *Socialist Commentary* polls), and indeed even of Labour voters, are opposed to further large-scale nationalisation.

Other unfavourable images are austerity, controls and inflation (relics of the immediate post-war years), intolerance and bureaucracy (partly a reflection of the behaviour of certain Labour Councils), and an endemic liability to Party splits and quarrels. (In September 1959 the Gallup poll showed that only 31 per cent. of people thought that the Labour Party was united, but 61 per cent. thought the Conservatives united). This last point may be a contributory factor in what is perhaps the most alarming development of all—the increasingly *uncertain* image of the Party; between 1951 and 1959 the proportion of those who said they did not know what the Party stood for rose from 14 to 25 per cent.

Labour also suffers from the growing unpopularity of the Trade Unions. Gallup polls show a steady 20-year decrease in the numbers of those who think the Trade Unions a 'good thing'; they further show that more people (43 per cent.) think the Unions have too much power than think that bankers and financiers have too much power (35 per cent.). Labour's other ally, the Co-operative Movement, by its failure in some parts of the country to keep pace with the multiples in the design, lay-out and appearance of its shops, also generates an unfavourable public image, some of which rubs off on to the Labour Party.

Several of these images combined in 1959 to lend extraordinary potency to the Conservative slogan: 'Don't Let Labour Ruin It'. Many voters undoubtedly felt, vaguely but strongly, that in the event of a Labour victory the current prosperity would be threatened by further unknown acts of nationalisation, a return to detailed controls, and a renewal of wage-inflation. As Mr. Bevan wrote just after the election, the swing was the product of 'contentment with Conservative prosperity, and apprehension that Labour would destroy it'. The apprehension seems to have affected even Labour's idealist middle-class vote, which, despite Suez, Hola and Nyasaland, declined proportionately more than Labour's working-class vote (though of course in absolute terms the decline in the latter was overwhelmingly more significant).

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 Meanwhile the Conservatives, enjoying the overwhelming advantage of having presided over the consumption-boom of the 1950s, succeeded above all in annexing (along with the Queen, the Union Jack and the Deity) the image of prosperity. At the same time, by accepting Labour's post-1945 reforms, they have dissipated much of the hostile image which existed in the minds of their opponents; and they are no longer indissolubly associated with unemployment and cuts in the social services. Generally, Conservative behaviour during the 1950s has gradually effaced the memories of the 1930s; in any case, the youngest one-third of voters in 1959 had no recollection of the Conservatives of pre-war days.

An even more fundamental change has occurred in relation to the basic class image of the two parties. The Labour Party, as we have seen, is associated more closely (to the extent of 33 per cent. of respondents) with 'the working class, the underdog' than with any other single attribute. The Conservatives, on the other hand, have a more classless image; in the Gallup poll only 17 per cent. now associate them with 'the rich, the upper class' (compared with 27 per cent. who did so in 1955), while another poll shows that more people think they stand 'for the nation as a whole' than think they stand for any particular class or group.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Decline of the Working Class*

The Labour Party owes its whole existence and historic growth to the working class; one cannot think of the one without the other. Yet today, ironically, this *unique* identification is a clear political liability, for the simple reason that the working class is steadily shrinking in size. Between 1951 and 1959, the number of middle-class workers increased by a million, and the number of manual wage-earners declined by half a million; consequently, the salariat rose from 30 per cent. to 34 per cent. of the population.<sup>2</sup> Given the class basis of most voting behaviour, one would

<sup>1</sup> See Mark Abrams, 'Why Labour Loses Elections', *Socialist Commentary*, May 1960.

<sup>2</sup> H. A. Turner, 'Labour's Diminishing Vote', *The Guardian*, 20.10.59. The numbers employed in 'Professional, Financial and Miscellaneous Services' plus 'National and Local Government' rose by 300,000; the number of 'staff' employees (as opposed to operatives) in manufacturing industry rose by 400,000; allowing for similar changes in transport, distribution, etc., this gives a total increase in white-collar or salaried workers of about one million.

naturally expect this movement (unless engulfed by a temporary crisis) to be reflected in a swing against the working-class Party (caused less by older Labour voters changing their Party than by new voters, who might previously have voted Labour, voting Liberal or Conservative instead); the more so since only a small minority of white-collar workers are organised in Trade Unions. It is significant that the actual swing during the 1950s was greatest in the South, where the expanding service trades are largely concentrated, and the Midlands, where the newer industries, with their exceptionally high ratio of staff to operatives, are developing most rapidly.

This up-grading of the labour force is certain to continue. The rise in manufacturing productivity, which permits greater output to be achieved with a smaller industrial work-force: the continued relative growth of the distributive and service trades: the spread of automation: the increase within large firms of research, merchandising, sales and office staff relative to the manual labour force — all these changes imply a continuing move away from a proletariat towards a salariat. In the United States, white-collar workers now exceed blue-collar workers in numbers; and Britain is moving in the same direction — as, indeed, are all advanced industrial countries.<sup>1</sup>

#### *New Patterns of Behaviour*

Other changes are occurring which alter people's views of the society in which they live, and so indirectly their views of the political parties. First, the standard of living has recently risen at an exceptional rate; average consumption per head, which scarcely moved between 1945 and 1951, rose by 20 per cent. between 1951 and 1959 — a rise as large as occurred in the whole of the inter-war period. Moreover the increased expenditure took a form which was especially significant for social attitudes. It was mainly devoted, not to the traditional working-class items such as beer, tobacco and entertainment, but to prestige-goods, hitherto the monopoly of the middle class, such as consumer durables, cars and foreign travel; and it was concentrated to a striking extent in the prosperous upper section of the working class.<sup>2</sup> Thus a consumption-pattern which tends to erase class distinctions has spread most rapidly in a group which was already near a class dividing-line.

Other factors are pushing in the same direction: the changing composition of the electorate, and the gradual decline of the traditionally class-conscious, older working-class age-groups relative to the more 'classless' or more middle-class younger voters; the decline of the strongly class-

<sup>1</sup> v. S. M. Lipset and R. Bendix, *Social Mobility in Industrial Society* (Heinemann, 1959).

<sup>2</sup> The more prosperous half of the working class (which constitutes one-third of the whole electorate) at least doubled its ownership of most durable consumer goods between 1956 and 1959. By the latter date, 85 per cent. of such households owned a TV set, 44 per cent. a washing machine, 44 per cent. a lawnmower, 32 per cent. a car, 16 per cent. a refrigerator, while 35 per cent. owned or were buying a house. (Mark Abrams, 'The Roots of Working Class Conservatism', *Encounter*, May 1960). These figures will all be much higher by 1964.

conscious older, basic industries; the housing migration from the urban slum areas, with their tenacious sense of class solidarity, into socially more fluid suburban estates and New Towns (between 1948 and 1958 one family in six moved into a new house or flat); the steady increase in the numbers (now one-third of the population) of those owning or buying their own home; the sudden upsurge of the unit trusts and the rapid spread of the banking habit; the culturally 'classless' influence, described by Mr. Hoggart, of TV and the women's magazines; and the growing tendency for leisure activities to centre round the home and the family rather than the Union branch, the chapel or the local Co-op.<sup>1</sup>

Again, as Butler and Rose point out, 'the ladder of opportunity has become more emphasised than the welfare net'. The ordinary voter's dependence on the state, and the traditional working-class reliance on collective bargaining, have both diminished. Nearly half the population is covered by private occupational pension schemes. During working life, the family real income now typically depends, not solely on the basic wage negotiated by the Union, but also on a series of individual choices which were not open under the old conditions of unemployment — about what job to take, how much overtime to work, whether the wife should go out to work, and so on. Again, the extension of educational opportunity, limited as it is, has increased social mobility by making it possible for more working-class children, by their individual efforts in winning grammar school or further education places, to aspire to a higher status and income in life; and many skilled workers are especially concerned that their children should better themselves in this manner. Such changes may be good or bad in their ultimate social effects; but they undoubtedly diffuse more widely the typically Conservative notion that economic progress depends on individual choice and effort, rather than on collective bargaining or state provision. As Daniel Bell has put it, we are seeing the gradual demise of the old idea that 'one doesn't rise out of one's class, one rises with it'.

#### *Effect on Voting*

These changes are tending, slowly and almost surreptitiously, to weaken the old, proletarian class-consciousness of at least the younger and more prosperous section of the workers. By subjecting them to opposing social pressures, they create an uncertainty as to class identity. People who would be objectively classified as working class in terms of occupation or family background have acquired a middle-class income and pattern of consumption, and sometimes a middle-class psychology. We have here a growing group of socially ambivalent, fluid, cross-pressured voters.

All voting studies show that cross-pressured voters are the most likely to abstain. This is therefore the probable explanation both of the large abstention by previous Labour voters in 1955 and of the marked rise in the Liberal vote in 1959 (since voting Liberal can be seen either as a form

<sup>1</sup> See Butler and Rose, *op. cit.*, Ch. II, for an excellent analysis of many of these trends.

of abstention — a non-political vote — or as a half-way stage in the journey from Labour to Conservative). But some of these voters, and notably those voting for the first time, evidently vote Conservative, either because they believe pragmatically that their interests are no longer identical with those of the old 'solid' working-class, or else psychologically to validate a self-placement in the middle class.

That this is where the Labour loss was concentrated in 1959 is confirmed by all the available evidence. Amongst age-groups, the Gallup poll shows that the biggest loss was in the 21-30 age-group (and the only gain in the over-65 age-group). Amongst social groups, the biggest loss was in the prosperous working class — only 80 per cent. of this group who voted Labour in 1955 intended to do so again in 1959<sup>1</sup>; and the only gain was amongst the 'poor' (those living on pensions or national assistance). Amongst geographical areas, the most unexpected failure was in the New Towns; while almost the only gains were in the older areas of Scotland and the North.

New social forces are thus at work, gradually breaking down the old barriers between the working and middle classes, and slowly giving birth to new and more fluid social groupings. Unfortunately, Labour is ill-poised to take advantage of this process; and the new emergent voters are slowly turning to other and more adaptable parties. This does not mean that the Labour Party as it is today can never under any circumstances win another election. A party of the past may always win a single election, either through some sudden crisis or from a popular feeling that the governing Party has been in too long. But it hardly seems either wise or dignified to rely on such uncertainties — especially since, if the underlying trend continues, they may well reflect themselves not in a Labour victory, but in a stultifying swing towards the Liberals.

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Abrams, *loc. cit.* There was also a considerable loss in the middle class.

## 5. What Should Labour Do?

WE manifestly need to change the image of the Labour Party: in terms of issues, attitudes, and the underlying class identification. To say this is not, as is sometimes suggested, to advocate a cynical surrender of principle for the sake of electoral advantage. No one suggests that we should give up our African policy, or promise lavish tax-concessions, merely because these might be the popular things to do.<sup>1</sup> The discussion of party image has nothing to do with fundamental principle, and little to do even with policy decisions. Labour's class image, for example, is a matter neither of principle nor policy, but of past social history. The issue- and attitude-orientations, again, seldom raise policy questions of substance; they are rather a matter of style, presentation and propaganda, and there need be nothing immoral in seeking to change them. The object is to adapt the Party to social change and to give it a broader and more catholic base, so that it accurately represents the new, emerging society and not the society of a generation ago.

Adapting a party image is not, evidently, a simple or easy task. The image is deeply rooted in the past; it is the product equally of history, language, membership, party constitution, policy, style, and method of organisation. To change it will need a sustained effort of will and imagination on the part of the leadership.

First, we need to rid ourselves of the unfavourable issues and attitudes, which in any event do not accurately reflect the aspirations of the Party. One such issue, as was argued earlier, is 'nationalisation'. It is not concrete proposals to nationalise particular industries which do the damage, provided these are carefully argued and consistently propagated and not (like sugar and cement in 1950) tossed into the programme at the last minute with no convincing explanation. Nor is there any evidence that proposals for share-buying create alarm; with the rapid spread of superannuation schemes, people have become more accustomed to the idea that pension funds should be invested in equities.

### *The Nationalisation Bogey*

What is damaging is the appalling uncertainty as to what the Party really wants to nationalise, and the consequent vague threat which it is thought to offer to the whole of private industry. The uncertainty has two causes. The first is the utterly frivolous manner in which the National Executive has, over many years, chopped and changed its mind on the subject. Thus sugar and cement were in the programme in 1950, but not in 1955 or 1959; chemicals were on the list in 1955, but not in 1950 or 1959; while insurance, meat-wholesaling, machine tools, mining machinery, aircraft and heavy electrical engineering have all made transient appearances at different times.

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<sup>1</sup> I personally strongly disapproved of the tax-pledges made during the 1959 election.



(Only water has remained doggedly in every single programme.) Such a bizarre performance naturally suggests to the public that the Party either suffers from complete mental confusion on the matter, or else wants to nationalise any industry, without much caring which, out of doctrinaire attachment to a shibboleth.

The uncertainty was heavily reinforced, not only by the wording of Clause 4, but by the vaguely threatening references in *Industry and Society* to the 600 largest companies, and the hopelessly varying interpretations placed on these by different members of the N.E.C.<sup>1</sup> As a result, while it was easy for Labour candidates (though with little support from the Campaign Committee at Transport House, which scarcely mentioned these subjects in its propaganda) to argue the case for more public ownership in steel or road transport or for the Government purchase of shares, it was almost impossible to counter the widespread and damaging rumours that every large firm, however efficient—a chemical factory here, an engineering works there—was on the list for nationalisation.

The first need is to eliminate the vaguely threatening references; the 600 companies, it is to be hoped, will now disappear into the limbo. Secondly, the Party must make up its mind, clearly, unequivocally and well before the next Election, as to what its nationalisation policy is. The outlook here is not entirely hopeful; for strong differences exist within the Party, and the temptation (which may not have been wholly avoided over Clause 4) is always to paper them over by meaningless compromises. Such compromises can be exceedingly dangerous, since (as we saw with the 600 companies) they are differently interpreted by different people and hence cause complete uncertainty in the public mind. It may sometimes be better to fight things out to a definite conclusion, so that the public may know exactly where the Party stands; for, as Mr. Bevan once wrote, 'it is neither prudent, nor does it accord with our conception of the future, that all forms of private property should live under perpetual threat'.<sup>2</sup>

#### *Attitude to Affluence*

Next, the Party must rid itself of the image of being pro-austerity and anti-prosperity. To the extent that this is a hangover from the post-1945 period of rationing and controls, it will soon disappear of its own accord. Unfortunately, it is constantly being refurbished by Labour speakers, and notably by those moralists in the Party who repeatedly condemn the whole affluent society as rotten and evil. They fail to distinguish between the fact of affluence, which is to be welcomed unreservedly since it widens the range of choice and opportunity open to the average family, and certain

<sup>1</sup> Though in all other respects *Industry and Society* was a most able and intelligent document.

<sup>2</sup> *In Place of Fear* (Heinemann, 1952), p.118. A third requirement should be too obvious to mention: that the Party should also be clear about *how* it wants to nationalise more industries. It is no use saying, as many left-wing speakers now do, that the public corporation is a disastrous form of organisation, but (in the same sentence!) that nevertheless we still want to nationalise a lot more industries even though we have no clear idea of what is to replace it. 108

avoidable attributes of the society, such as the distribution of the affluence, the neglect of social spending, the vulgar commercialisation of culture, and so on. This confusion of the whole with the part creates a most harmful impression of hostility to economic progress, and allows the Tories to appropriate the sole kudos for being the party of prosperity. In consequence, they remain in power, and so frustrate all possibility of reforming the society; for, as Samuel Lubell once remarked, only God can create a tree, but only Government can create a park.

The anti-prosperity image is fed from another source. Many Labour speakers decry the present prosperity as 'bogus' or 'phoney', alleging that it must either collapse under the excessive weight of hire-purchase debt or be engulfed in an inevitable slump. There is no warrant for either of these views. Consumer debt per head of population is three times as high in the U.S. as in Britain, and half as high again as a proportion of personal income; yet the system has not collapsed, and prosperity continues to increase. And despite the certainty of occasional minor recessions, something approaching full employment will be maintained in Britain — if only because the Conservatives know that a failure here would lead to certain defeat at the polls. Without doubt, the prosperity is badly distributed, as railwaymen and pensioners well know; and without doubt our economic performance, in terms of growth and investment, is pitifully poor by international standards. But the fact that the prosperity could be greater does not make it any the less real; and to be always nagging at it is simply to give the impression of disliking and resenting it.

### *Internal Dissensions*

Labour must also cease displaying itself as a party incessantly split and distracted by wrangles. This is not to advocate more expulsions and tighter discipline; there is too much organised intolerance in the Movement already. No one wishes to stifle debate or suppress disagreement; indeed, the amount of disagreement in the Labour Party is no more than is proper to a party which spans the varying opinions of half the electorate. The Conservatives have at least as much internal dissension; we need think only of the old Suez group, the resignations first of Lord Salisbury and later of Mr. Thorneycroft and his two lieutenants, the utterly varying defence policies of Mr. Head, Mr. Sandys and Mr. Watkinson, the revolt of the *laissez-faire* group led by Lord Hinchingbrooke and Mr. Nabarro, and so on. But (with a few unimportant exceptions) they conduct their debates in a generally less raucous and neurotic manner — with less malice and hatred, less group intrigue, fewer personal attacks, a greater loyalty to the party, and above all a more vivid sense of the watching audience outside and the possible electoral repercussions of their actions. No doubt people on the Left tend inevitably to be more passionate and doctrinal. Nevertheless, Labour must try, as a matter of urgency, to achieve some of the self-control which comes so naturally to our opponents.

Self-control is not, however, the same thing as ambiguous compromise. The Party is often as docile in its ultimate settlement of disputes as it is

violent in their conduct. As in the case of nationalisation, already mentioned, there is a tendency to seek a settlement in a compromise formula which means all things to all men. In consequence, Labour seems to speak with two, or even a babel of, voices; and fewer and fewer voters, as the Gallup poll demonstrates, have a clear idea of what the Party stands for. This impression of ambiguity and schizophrenia is highly damaging. Whilst we should, therefore, conduct our disputes in a more temperate and even comradely tone of voice, we should also seek to bring them to a more definite conclusion, and to let the country know precisely where we stand.

Other sections of the Labour Movement must also attend to their reputations. The behaviour of some Labour-controlled Councils is already, happily, the subject of anxious study. The Co-operative Movement could do much to dispel the old-fashioned and middle-aged air which hangs about us all if, by implementing the main recommendations of its own Independent Commission of Enquiry, it turned from stagnation to expansion and became (as a minority of its member-societies already are) a pioneer in the field of quality, design, retail standards, and up-to-date service to the consumer.

### *The Trade Unions*

Lastly, the Trade Unions might look to their public image, for their own sake even more than for that of the Party. At present, this is suffering mainly because the Movement gives no firm lead on the issues which are currently troubling the public. Everyone realises how jealously individual Unions guard their sovereignty, and how markedly this inhibits strong national leadership. There is, nevertheless, a widespread impression that such leadership, despite the efforts of a few outstanding Unions and individuals, is weaker now than it was in the days of Citrine; it is certainly weaker than in almost any other major industrial country. The Movement will not recover its previous high esteem until it can take, and substantially enforce, a clear, national view on such problems as the E.T.U., unofficial strikes, demarcation disputes, the rights of the individual member, sending to Coventry, and so on. If it fails to act, and remains semi-ossified from however understandable a cause, one thing is certain: a Tory Government will eventually act for it by setting up a Royal Commission.

The Unions would also greatly broaden their appeal if they set themselves more actively to organise the white-collar workers, of whom only a small proportion are now in membership. In addition, they must surely overcome their present almost total neglect of public relations. Big business spends large sums on prestige advertising, public relations departments, and free enterprise propaganda generally. Meanwhile the Unions employ no public relations officers; they take no professional account of the requirements of television; they spend virtually nothing on advertising; and most Union magazines are unreadable and unread. They neither can nor should attempt to compete with business expenditure in this field. But quite small expenditures, wisely laid out, would bring a substantial return. It is more important, certainly, to get the underlying image right. But as

organisations ultimately concerned with power and bargaining strength, the Unions cannot afford to ignore such a potent source of power as modern publicity and public relations techniques.

### *Creating a New Image*

It is more rewarding, however, to ask how Labour can develop new favourable images to replace the old ones such as full employment and the Welfare State. We must be clear as to exactly what the problem is. It is not, on the one hand, a question of starting now to draw up new and detailed policy statements; apart from the risk that they will be out-of-date by the time of the next Election, such programmes have little electoral significance. They may well be useful internally to the Party, and even provide valuable blueprints for future Labour Ministers. But their impact on the country (as we learned painfully from the experience of the twelve policy documents so carefully prepared between 1956 and 1959) is negligible. On the other hand, it would be fatal to do nothing now, and to wait passively until a few weeks prior to the next Election before trying to dazzle the country with brilliant last-minute policies. Most people decide how to vote long before an election; and last-minute policies, besides being justly suspect, are seldom effective. They appear too late to sink into the consciousness of the electorate or to become identified with the party which initiates them. (The last-minute Labour policies on peace in 1951 and youth in 1959 are good examples). To 'annex' an issue to the point where it becomes part of a party image requires a long, slow process of continuous propaganda.

What is required is to select a limited number of vital issues, stemming from the basic Socialist principles summarised earlier, and to propagate these insistently and purposefully for the whole period between now and the next Election. A rag-bag of policies, however excellent they may be individually, is not sufficient; a clear order of priorities is essential. Once the issues are selected, it is not enough to stage an occasional Parliamentary debate or party political broadcast; they must form the consistent theme of Labour propaganda, month after month and year after year, until they become indissolubly associated with the Party in the public mind.

### *Critical Issues*

They must, naturally enough, be topical issues. One cannot (unless the Tories decide to commit suicide) resuscitate an old issue such as full employment. On the other hand, the issue must have been on the political stage for long enough to have become familiar and controversial. To adopt the terminology of Lazarsfeld and his colleagues,<sup>1</sup> we can envisage 'a political gateway' through which an endless succession of social proposals has passed, is passing and will pass. Some issues are already past the gateway; they have become accomplished facts and passed out of the realm of controversy. Others are not yet in the gateway; they have not become visible to the general public or matters of popular concern. The

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<sup>1</sup> *Voting*, Ch. 9.

crucial ones are those actually in the gateway, being currently debated and decided, 'in the phase of precarious balance between acceptance and rejection . . . . There occurs a critical phase in the decision process when the left or welcoming party has already accepted the innovation but the right or resisting party is still opposed. The result . . . is a sharp partisan disagreement'.<sup>1</sup>

Pensions and superannuation provided an excellent example of such an issue in 1959; and its success from the Labour point of view may be gauged from the fact (depressing as this is on all other counts) that the only age and income groups which swung towards Labour were the over-65s and the 'poor' (those dependent on pensions, national assistance and casual earnings).

As to what should become the critical issues between now and 1964, the Party has an immense range of choice; for there is so much that needs to be changed in Britain, if only we could get our priorities right and stop arguing about trivia. We want issues which are comprehensible to the public, and do not challenge the Tories on their own ground; 'economic stagnation', for example, failed as an issue on both these counts. We want issues which reflect the natural idealism of the younger generation and the socialist's moral objection to the present misuse of affluence, and yet are relevant to the legitimate needs and interests of ordinary families. We want issues which make not a narrow class or sectional appeal, but a wide, radical appeal to broad sections of the population, including the newly emerging social groups. Above all, we want issues which are relevant to the nineteen-sixties and not to the nineteen-thirties.

Every Socialist will make his own choice. But perhaps the issues which stand out most manifestly, apart from those already in the gateway, are:

1. The creation of genuine and equal educational opportunity.
2. Urban planning to save both towns and countryside.
3. Greater social investment to reduce the present unbalance between public and private spending.
4. Protection of the consumer against large-scale producing interests.
5. World disarmament and the control of nuclear weapons.

*Equalisation - the quality of public and private spending*

*affluence and public spending*

### *The Tories Move Left*

It will not be easy for Labour to annex these or any other issues, inasmuch as the Tories are becoming most adept at stepping smartly Left towards where Labour's clothes are lying. Ever since 1951, many Socialists have been impatiently waiting for them to move to the Right, and to reveal themselves in their 'true' colours as an unreformed pre-war party. They have waited, alas, in vain. Suez proved to be an aberration, going against the long-run trend; the Bow group has increasingly contributed to a new, progressive image; and even today, after a third election victory and with

<sup>1</sup> *ibid.*, p.212.

an enlarged majority, the tendency is still not noticeably to the Right. This does not of course mean that the Tories wholeheartedly embrace full Labour policies; but they often embrace just sufficient to avoid being sharply differentiated as the resisting, reactionary party.

Yet there are some grounds for qualified optimism. The most potent feature of the 1959 Conservative image, prosperity, may have lost much of its strength by 1964; it may be taken for granted as full employment is today, and hence cease to be a major political issue. More generally, there is some evidence that the class factor in politics is slowly declining in importance; if this is so, it may be easier than in the past to put new issues across to the electorate, and to establish the lines of party demarcation on issue-grounds rather than on basic grounds of class.

What, then, of Labour's existing class image? It is curious that this should be so completely a working-class image; for it was not always so. From the start, certainly, the working class has provided the basic strength, the fighting cadres and the ultimate dynamic of the Labour Movement. Without it, there would be no Party; and the victory of 1945 would never have occurred. Yet most of the great pioneers did not see the Party in terms of an exclusively working-class movement. They saw it rather as the Party of all the common people ranged against the minority of the rich, the privileged and the powerful. Theirs was not a one-class vision; it was a vision of all the people.

#### A 'National' Party

At any rate, under present circumstances one can state dogmatically that if Labour continues to be thought of as an essentially proletarian and one-class party, it faces the certainty of steady decline; for 'in a few years' time at least half the population will be middle class in occupation and a good deal more than that will be middle class in aspiration'.<sup>1</sup> *Any Socialist party must of course be based predominantly on the working class; but it should not be so uniquely and exclusively identified with it as positively to rebuff those who belong to another class.* To be so identified is not only imprudent, it also betrays a fundamental socialist principle; for a 'classless' society will never be achieved through a wholly class-oriented instrument. The object must be to present ourselves as a broadly-based, national, people's party.

This is largely a matter of the whole tone and content of our propaganda in the years ahead. But certain immediate, practical steps can also be taken. First, the Party Constitution should be altered in such a way as to give direct representation to the Parliamentary Party on the National Executive. The Executive at the moment is not perfectly representative of Labour support in the country; most of its members are either elected by a small minority of (say) 50,000 activists or (in effect) appointed by a few Trade Union leaders. The Parliamentary Party, being elected by 12 million Labour voters, is the most representative body in the Movement; it is also the most broadly based in terms of class and occupation.

<sup>1</sup> Abrams, *loc. cit.*

Secondly, major changes are needed at Transport House. The present staff is of high calibre, and performed brilliantly in the last election. But they are pathetically thin on the ground; in consequence, we are twenty years behind the Tories in the volume and quality of Party research, publicity, propaganda, servicing of M.Ps, and so on. A thorough overhaul is needed, which should lead to definite recommendations for more staff at higher salaries. A 'new look' at Transport House would contribute markedly to creating the image of a progressive, forward-looking Party.

Thirdly, the Parliamentary Party, although now broadly representative of all social classes, could be made more accurately so. This is certainly not a matter of selecting more middle-class candidates; on the contrary, we have too many Old Wykehamists already. The requirements are two-fold: first, for more young Trade Union M.Ps., drawn partly from the newer industries and occupations and representing the emergent social groups discussed above; secondly, for more young candidates generally — it is a depressing fact, for a party of change, that the average Labour candidate in 1959 was several years older than his Conservative counterpart.<sup>1</sup>

Fourthly, the new Socialist youth organisation could do much to give the Party a more classless air. It has, so far as one can judge, started on broadly the right lines. But it must have the enthusiastic support and attention of the leadership; for at present the Tories are regarded, more than Labour, as being the Party of youth.<sup>2</sup>

Fifthly, the Movement must finally grasp the nettle of the *Daily Herald*, which now succeeds neither in giving the active political support that (for example) *Reynolds News* regularly gives, nor (for its circulation is low and falling) in competing successfully with the other mass dailies. Experience abroad shows how hard it is to run a successful Socialist daily paper; nor is a layman competent to say exactly what should be done. But the need is desperate; and the Movement should at once appoint a small expert body to consider ways and means of converting the *Herald* into a newspaper at once politically progressive and commercially successful.

### *Better Publicity*

Lastly, public relations. This becomes important only if the underlying image has been improved. As Butler and Rose point out, Colman, Prentis and Varley could have done little for the Conservative image had not Lord Woolton and Mr. Butler, following the defeat of 1945, ruthlessly modernised and adapted every aspect of the Party. They laid the essential foundations, on which the public relations experts later built so well.

Labour can never afford an expenditure on public relations comparable to that of the Conservatives in recent years. But this is not an argument for altogether neglecting them. It is too late to maintain an ideological objection to these techniques; for the Party has been using them for years past. It sponsors Party broadcasts and television programmes; it indulges

<sup>1</sup> Butler and Rose, *op. cit.*, p.125.

<sup>2</sup> See *Socialist Commentary*, May 1960.

in press and poster advertising; it publishes many varieties of propaganda literature. The ideological question is therefore settled; all that is at issue is the efficiency of the expenditure. At the moment the Party, though it still communicates effectively with the active constituency worker, is failing badly to communicate with the average voter; and this is one of the reasons for the growing gulf between the two. If money is to be spent on TV, posters and advertising, it is no more immoral, and rather more sensible, to spend it wisely. One of the first tasks of the leadership should therefore be to institute a thorough investigation into the Party's methods and organisation of public relations, which now appear most amateur and old-fashioned compared with those of the Tories. Shortage of money will always be an inhibiting factor; but the money available could be spent more professionally and effectively than it is today.<sup>1</sup>

If, by these and other methods, the Party can divest itself of its sectional, one-class image, it need not be fatally injured by the social and economic changes described above. As economic class conflict grows less violent with the rise in living standards, and class divisions become increasingly blurred at the edges, the voters may make a less automatic assessment of where their political interests lie. Instead of voting instinctively in accordance with class-identification, they will tend to make a more reasoned, pragmatic judgment of issues, programmes and the presumed ability of the two parties; so voting behaviour becomes more fluid and open to rational persuasion.<sup>2</sup>

### *The Challenge of Rising Standards*

At the same time, economic factors may become less important and status factors more important. On the one hand, the new, rising classes may begin to feel that their social status is disproportionately low as compared with their new economic status. They may resent, more than in the old days of material poverty, the differences in educational opportunity, the growing non-pecuniary privileges of management, the persistence of an aristocratic upper class, differences in accent, and so on. They may then be more receptive to a radical party of the Left, provided that its appeal is sufficiently broadly based. Moreover, as material standards rise, people want increasingly to identify themselves with estimable social traits and attitudes — with 'intelligence', 'being for all the country', 'caring about the national interest'; and they vote for the party which seems best to exemplify these traits.<sup>3</sup>

We may find, moreover, that as material pressures ease and the problem of subsistence fades away, people become more sensitive to moral and intellectual issues. 'In spite of all that is said', wrote Matthew Arnold, 'about the brutalising influence of our passionate material progress, it seems to me indisputable that this progress is likely, though not certain,

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<sup>1</sup> See Butler and Rose, *op. cit.*, Ch. III, for a full discussion of this point.

<sup>2</sup> The number of last-minute deciders has risen steadily over the last three elections.

<sup>3</sup> See Abrams, *loc. cit.*, for a perceptive discussion of this point.



to lead in the end to an apparition of intellectual life; and that man, after he has made himself perfectly comfortable and has now to determine what to do with himself next, may begin to remember that he has a mind, and that the mind may be made the source of great pleasure. I grant that it is mainly the privilege of faith, at present, to discern this end to our railways, our business, and our fortune-making; but we shall see if, here as elsewhere, faith is not in the end the true prophet'. The same may be true on the moral as well as the intellectual plane; and the Labour Party might then find that an ethical, idealistic appeal, such as a true Socialist party should always make, was more in tune with the temper of the country.<sup>1</sup>

### *The Way Forward*

At present, Labour is badly placed to take advantage of these trends, since its sectional one-class image positively repels the more fluid, less class-oriented new voter. But if it can acquire a broader appeal and a relatively classless image, it surely stands at least an equal chance with the Conservatives of winning his support. The Party is, one hopes, at least as capable of presenting him with a programme of relevant and forward-looking issues, and of presenting itself as a party which can be identified with intelligence and progress. It would obviously gain the more — though one would greatly prefer not to gain from this cause — if new status discontents begin to manifest themselves. And it should be the more capable, once people have lost their first entrancement with the world of material plenty, of making a humanitarian, non-materialist appeal. In other words, the scales today are weighted against the Labour Party so long as it preserves its one-class image. But if it can slough this image off, and present itself as a progressive, national, social-democratic Party, they might be positively weighted in its favour.

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<sup>1</sup> Public opinion polls already show, for example, that voters are becoming less interested in domestic economic issues and more interested in foreign policy and defence issues.

## 6. Conclusion

**W**ILL the Party make the necessary changes? At the moment, the women are not all perfectly hopeful. The National Executive gives little leadership; apparently exhausted by its six-hour wrangle over Clause 4, it seems to have relapsed into total passivity. There is no sign of the serious, purposeful inquest which should have followed the Election and called into question every aspect of the Party, however traditional and hallowed by time: the method of Party government, the constitutional relationships, the organisation of Transport House, as well as the more fundamental factors analysed in this pamphlet. There is no sign that a serious analysis is being made, with the help of outside experts, of the mass of survey material now available on recent voting trends.<sup>1</sup> Instead, the Party seems blanketed under an oppressive weight of conservatism and inertia. Few people are even alive to the need for change; certainly the leadership gives no hint of having a constructive programme of reform, or indeed a plan of any kind. The contrast with the Conservatives after 1945 is painfully depressing.

If the necessary changes are not made, the Labour vote will probably decline, unless some sudden crisis supervenes, by about 2 per cent. at each successive general election — approximately the rate at which the new emerging white-collar class is replacing the manual working class; and the pendulum, when it swings against the Tories, will swing towards the Liberals. Certainly it would be contemptible, even in the face of such a danger, to jettison any fundamental principle. But to refuse to change a slogan or established attitude or ancient shibboleth, merely because it is consecrated by time or possesses sentimental value, is equally unworthy of a progressive party. There is very, very little time if the task is to be achieved by 1964. It is a task in which all those, whether on the Left, Right or Centre of the Party, who want to see something of Socialism accomplished in their lifetime, should now actively co-operate.

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<sup>1</sup> We need to know, for example, which groups of women give the Conservatives their huge preponderance of votes amongst women, what combination of factors motivates the 'deferential' voter, what explains the divergent voting trends in 1959 as between Union members and non-Unionists, and so on indefinitely. Yet research into these matters is left entirely to the unco-ordinated efforts of outside volunteers. It should be undertaken, or at least initiated, by Transport House. But the will seems wholly lacking. The Conservative Central Office, by contrast, makes extensive use of survey material and polling organisations.

Social Conscience - Equity

National Pension scheme - job mobility, social equity.

Education - more money - parity. White collar appeal.

Consumer protection

Unskilled Job tenure - redundancy terms

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