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THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

THE INFLUENCE OF HAROLD LASKI ON THE BRITISH LABOUR GOVERNMENT, 1945-1951

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

BY

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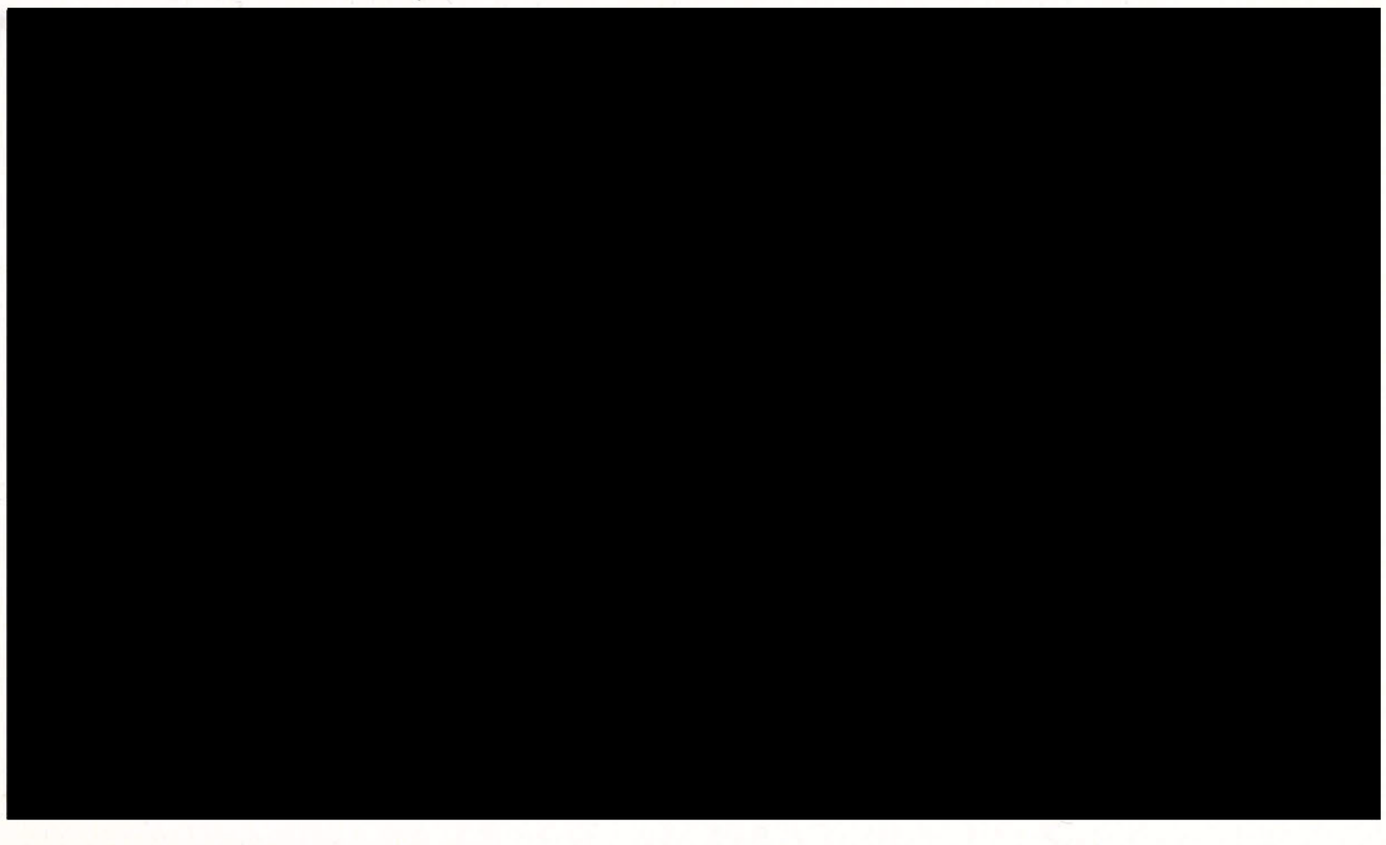
APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT

BY



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THE INFLUENCE OF HAROLD LASKI ON THE BRITISH LABOUR GOVERNMENT, 1945-1951

INTRODUCTION

Frequently a man not holding an office in the government will exercise a high degree of influence upon the decision of administration through the medium of his party position, public opinion, close association behind the scenes with the existing administration or due to a combination of those factors. It is the principal purpose of this thesis to indicate the manner and degree in which Harold Laski, noted teacher and scholar at the London School of Economics, who also held an important position in the British Labour Party for many years, culminating in his becoming Chairman of the Executive Committee in 1945, the year in which Attlee became the Labour Party Prime Minister in England, influenced the Labour Government from then until 1951.

Laski was not only one of the world's leading political scientists, but as a public speaker and writer, he had incisive wit, clarity, verbal capacity and dramatic appeal. Also, he was most outspoken concerning his views to the public. Among his close associates were many members of the Attlee Cabinet and of the Labour Party in Parliament.

At the same time there were factors repudiating any claim to his having exercised a high degree of influence upon the Labour Government. Primarily, he was leader of the minority or leftish faction of the party. Also, as a person, he was outspoken often to the extent of being tactless and, thus, alienated many of those he sought to influence. Once he rebuked Attlee in front of Labour Party colleagues. Twice he publicly placed Attlee in such politically awkward positions that it became necessary for Attlee to repudiate Laski's statements to the press.

The hypothesis of this thesis is that Mr. Laski did not exercise significant, specific influence, either of a positive or of a negative nature, upon the British Labour Government policies and actions between 1945-1951; but, in being one of the leaders of the opposition within the Labour Party, he strongly encouraged free expression of opinion within the party and the nation, prodded clearer statements of policy from the Government in regard to vital issues confronting Great Britain, and thus forced the Government into a more "Socialist" public posture. Certainly, he challenged the younger men in the Government to clarify and understand better their own political views. Thus, Laski was not only a remarkable teacher and sometimes an effective propagandist, but was also a "public leader," even if not a good politician in terms of personal success on attainment of specific policies.

Of course, the extent or degree to which a person can exercise influence upon any one person or upon any group of people is difficult to determine with scientific precision. In this study, reliance has had to be placed upon the differences in philosophical orientation and expectations of Mr. Attlee and Mr. Laski, upon the official actions of the British Labour Government, upon the opinions of people associated with the government, and upon the various books and articles written by writers who have minutely examined this period in retrospect. At various points the evidence is not only not definitive but becomes only indicative, perhaps even ambiguous. Still the general weight bears out the hypothesis.

Dr. John Paul Duncan, director of the thesis, is to be thanked for his patience, kindness, scholarly guidance, and perceptive clarification. This student has appreciated the honor of doing this thesis under his direction.

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[1] Kingsley Martin, Harold Laski, A Biographical Memoir (New York: The Viking Press, 1953), p. 13.

CHAPTER I

LASKI

A. Biography

Harold Laski was born in Manchester, England, June 30, 1893. He was the second son of Nathan and Sarah Laski. As the son of Jewish parents, he was brought up in the Jewish faith. As a child, he lived in Smedley House, Cheetham Hill, Manchester.

At an early age, he displayed extraordinary intellectual precocity. He wrote an article at the age of sixteen, "On the Scope of Eugenics," which was published in the Westminster Review.

> His contemporaries discovered early that he was a "romancer"; they wrote him off as a man of small physique who boasted of great things. His stories usually contained much more truth than anyone suspected."[1]

In 1911 he became a student at New College, Oxford. In that year he married Frida Kerry and repudiated Judaism. He repudiated Judaism because he no longer believed in its teachings, much to his family's regret. He became interested

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[1]Kingsley Martin, Harold Laski, A Biographical Memoir (New York: The Viking Press, 1953), p. 13.

in politics, and while in school, became a member of the Fabian Society.

Upon graduation, he went to Canada, where he lectured in history at McGill University. In 1916, he accepted a position at Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he remained until 1920.

While at Harvard, Laski was active in opposing the anti-Red drives which were taking place. This activity gained him notoriety and some enemies. However, two important lifetime friendships were a result of his stay there. He became an intimate friend of United States Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., and of Harvard Law Professor Felix Frankfurter, who later became a member of the Supreme Court.[2]

In 1920 Laski accepted a post at the London School of Economics. He was appointed a full professor of political science in 1925 and remained in this position until his death in 1950.

He held many positions of importance in educational and political circles. From 1921 to 1930, he served as vice-chairman of the British Institute of Adult Education. From 1922 to 1936, he was a member of the Executive Committee of the Fabian Society. Laski served on the Executive Committee of the Labour Party until his resignation in 1940, and held the post of chairman of the Executive Committee in 1945.

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[2]Herbert A. Donne, "Harold Joseph Laski," Colliers Encyclopedia, ed. William D. Halsey, Vol. XIV (1964), p. 329.

Laski was a most prolific writer, producing approximately thirty books and hundreds of scholarly articles and pamphlets. He was regarded as one of the great expounders of the socialist doctrine. He might also be considered an outstanding figure in the development of the British Labour Party.

There appear to be at least four "Laskis" in his writings. In the first period, he supported conditional anarchism and political pluralism, endearing him to liberals; the second period, he supported a non-Marxist democratic socialism; the third period was a general Marxist stage, and the fourth was a "pink" phase in relation to Marxism.

> The thread of consistency which runs through all the forms of Laski's ideas is his dislike of the British so-called "ruling class", his anti-traditionalism, his deep historical pessimism, discounting mutual social trust, and his expectation of a time of violence when reason would be silenced . . . he fell in with deeply anti-rationalist beliefs in which force plays the decisive role.[3]

While in the United States, his books expounded pluralist doctrines and criticized the omnicompetent state and its power of sovereignty over all other social groups and associations. Studies in the Problems of Sovereignty was published in 1917, Authority in the Modern State in 1919, and The Foundations of Sovereignty in 1921.

His most comprehensive treatment of political problems A Grammar of Politics, was published in 1925. In it, he abandoned pluralism and argued for a non-Marxist democratic socialism.

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[3]George Carlin, "Contemporary British Political Thought," The American Political Science Review, XLVI (September, 1952), p. 643.

Liberty in the Modern State was published in 1930.

From 1930 to World War II was Laski's Marxist socialist period. Democracy in Crisis was published in 1933. He expressed pessimism about the possibility of achieving socialism by democratic means. The views he expressed won him considerable hostility in the more conservative circles. In 1935, when The State in Theory and Practice was published, he stated that revolution or counterrevolution would probably mark the transition from capitalism to socialism.

During World War II and the Coalition Goverment, Laski came to believe that change in England could be achieved by consent and without revolution. In his writings and in talks with Labour Party leaders, he urged England to take advantage of the temporary unity of classes and parties and initiate far-reaching social and economic changes so that they might be accomplished in a peaceful fashion. He became discouraged when the end of the European war came and none of the changes he had felt necessary had been accomplished. Nevertheless, his own name continued to appear an important one in the socialist camp. In fact,

> Some foreigners tended to think that Laski was the real leader of the Labour Party and that because of his great knowledge and intellectual power, he was able to guide the actions of the official leaders, Attlee, Morrison, and Bevin.[4]

During the British election of 1945, conservative newspapers described Laski as a "deep-dyed red" and claimed that

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[4]Herbert A. Deane, The Political Ideas of Harold J. Laski (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), p. 3.

he dominated the Labour Party. Attlee and other party leaders sought to deny this claim to the voters. "Laski enjoyed no real power in the British L.P., as the executive committee's authority was restricted to discussion of problems; beyond making recommendations, it had little influence."[5]

The fact is Laski did influence both the voters and the leaders of the Labour Party to the degree this thesis demonstrates. He campaigned for the Labour Party widely and was well received everywhere.

As indicated above, Laski spoke and wrote freely as to his opinions in regard to affairs of government. On September 24, 1945, he called on the United States and Great Britain to withdraw recognition from the Franco regime in Spain. He did this as if he were himself a member of the Government. It was remarks such as this that caused Laski to become in conflict with Prime Minister Attlee.

From 1946 to 1950 was known roughly as Laski's "pink" Marxist period. He was devoted primarily to examining the problems arising from the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. The American Democracy was published in 1948.

Still, however much Laski may be remembered as largely another Marxist propagandist--albeit a scholarly one-- it is also true that throughout his scholarly writing and teaching of political theory, constant concern pervades his

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[5]"Harold Laski," Encyclopedia Britannica, Britannica Book of the Year, (1046), p. 428.

political thought over the years is an expression of a continuous effort at reconciling liberty and authority."[6]

Laski died on March 24, 1950, while campaigning vigorously for the British Labour Party in the forthcoming elections.

B. General Political Philosophy

1. Pluralistic Period

Beginning in 1914, Laski expounded pluralist doctrines and continued in this political vein through his stay in the United States. He strongly criticized the idea of an omnicompetent state and its sovereignty over all other social groups. He believed that the monistic state did not consider the needs of individual citizens. On the contrary, in his opinion, the pluralistic state did this as a result of sovereignty being divided in terms of function.

He believed that if supreme power was not concentrated at a single point in a state, coordination could be substituted for hierarchical structure. He saw the sovereign state as having no superior, with all other forms of social organization subject to its control. The word sovereignty or sovereign meant an authority beyond the reach of any other authority. Thus, the state existed beyond ethical justification and therein existed its danger.

Laski looked upon paternalism as a subtle form of poison. Furthermore, he felt that England suffered from

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[6]Carroll Hawkins, "Harold J.Laski: A Preliminary Analysis," Political Science Quarterly, LXV (1950), p. 391.

over-centralization and the fact that the government, for the most part, largely reflected the aptitudes and purposes of the middle or business class. Thus, the state was built upon a class structure in which the working class was not dominantly regarded.

> Nationalization might well solve the basic problem of property . . . .But that is in no real sense the root of the matter. What our general experience of nationalization suggests is its invariable tendency to the bureaucratic government of the industries concerned . . . . It implies a centralization which, while it may improve the material condition of the worker, does nothing to offer him a definite spiritual interest in his work. The only real satisfaction comes from an actual share in deliberation and in the determination of its results. We cannot, of course, govern industry by public meeting; but we cannot govern industry well until the thoughts and aspirations of its workers find a full place in its institutions.[7]

Thus, Laski recommended that the organization of industry, like politics, must relate itself to the concept of federalism. This would provide a balance of associations which would safeguard liberty from the overpowering effects of too much centralization.

> The secret of liberty is the division of power . . . . That political system in which a division of power is most securely maintained is a federal system; and indeed, there is a close connection between the idea of federalism and the idea of liberty.[8]

During this period, Laski warned repeatedly against the evils implied in a regime of state management of industry.

> For to surrender to government officials not merely political but also industrial administration is to create

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[7]Harold J. Laski, The Foundations of Sovereignty (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1921), pp. 82-83.

[8]Ibid.

> a bureaucracy more powerful than the world has ever seen. It is to apotheosise the potent vices of a government department. It is to make certain a kind of paternalism which, perhaps above all other systems, would prevent the advent of the kind of individual freedom we desire.[9]

He strongly criticized the Marxists and Fabians for advocating the nationalization of basic industries as the solution. He believed this solution to be too simplified. He did not conceive of the civil service as being either more merciful or efficient than the present system. He wrote, "No real attempt is anywhere made at the democratization of any industry owned or operated by the agencies of the state."[10]

Still, although Laski voiced antipathy to the idea of the nationalization of industry as the panacea of political and economic ills, he remained sufficiently the socialist so that when the idea of nationalizing the coal industry in 1919 became widely discussed, he favored it as not opposed to his thinking.[11]

Laski believed that the "new federalism" seemed the alternative to revolution. He admitted that the state would have to dictate to industry certain minimum terms of conduct. On the other hand, business had to be transformed into a federal representative type of system.

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[9]Harold J. Laski, Authority in the Modern State (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1919), p. 95.

[10]Laski, The Foundations of Sovereignty, p. 83.

[11]Deane, The Political Ideas of Harold J. Laski, p. 80.

Where the government itself was concerned, Laski recognized that it was erroneous to assume that the whole people can govern itself. The device of representation could not be avoided. But the small group of men who made decisions must be certain that those decisions expressed the general will of the majority. However, he recognized that the legislators often became caught up in the task of deciding between the popular will and the real popular need. Thus, Laski regarded the idea of popular sovereignty as one of the major problems in modern politics.

Historically, Laski found that especially since governments rested upon as well as wielded economic power, what they meant by "good" was primarily the preservation of their own interests. Therefore, decentralization was needed.

In addition, freedom of speech, right to a living wage, adequate education, a proper amount of leisure time, and power to combine for social effort were regarded by Laski as basic rights possessed by every man. If those rights were not provided by the state, then the state destroyed its right to govern.

In 1924, in a brochure on Karl Marx written for publication by the Fabian Society, Laski rejected Marxism as incompatible with democracy. He was suspicious of the state and believed men's rights to be more secure when voluntary associations and the state were equated.

"Laski's socialism before he accepted Marxism originated in a moral indignation against injustice."12 Also, it sprang from a "chronic fear of the state as an all-absorptive unity."13

2. Cause of Change

With the publication of A Grammar in Politics in 1925, Laski abandoned pluralism and began arguing for a non-Marxist democratic socialism. However, in 1930, Liberty in the Modern State was published, showing a much more pessimistic Laski who was beginning to question whether socialism could be achieved by democratic means. When Democracy in Crisis was published, the Marxist phase of his thinking appeared to begin.

Laski's moral indignation against injustice continued to be a basic element in this transition, along with the growing belief that change could not be accomplished peacefully but only by force. Where once he had rejected Fabianism as being too radical, he came to believe that it was not radical enough; that it assumed too much, e.g., it assumed the impartiality of the state when actually the state represented vested interests.

He came to believe that abdication of private property was the only road to economic sufficiency for all men. And

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12Hawkins, Political Science Quarterly, Vol. LXV, p. 379.

13Ibid., p. 391.

"he fell in with deeply anti-rationalist beliefs in which force plays the decisive role."[14]

> Laski's discussions of the proper extent of action by the state show the influence exerted upon him after his return to England in 1920 by the Fabians, especially Beatrice and Sidney Webb, and by his membership in the Labour Party, which had become one of the two major parties.[15]

Finally, "he attempted to marry liberalism to Marxism."[16] And "From a chronic fear of the state as an all-absorptive unity, Laski eventually went to the other extreme."[17]

In A Grammar of Politics, Laski argued that the interests of men as consumers could only be protected if an approximate economic equality existed in the community. This economic equality could only be brought about if the government controlled the production and distribution of wealth. It was up to the state to see that quality and quantity of goods and services met the total need of the community. Therefore, the state must have sufficient power to accomplish this end. In addition, the state was to be charged with the task of adjusting and shaping men's diverse needs into a general pattern which would provide maximum satisfaction to the largest number of citizens.

> Good is either social, or it is not good at all. If

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[14]Catlin, The American Political Science Review, XLVI, p. 643.

[15]Deane, The Political Ideas of Harold J. Laski, p. 82.

[16]Hawkins, Political Science Quarterly, Vol. LXV, p. 380.

[17]Ibid., p. 382.

> man is to live in community with his fellows it is a necessary condition of his life that, what he attains should, at least in the long run, involve benefit also to others.[18]

Laski's Liberty in the Modern State was first published in 1930 and republished in 1949 with a new introduction. The contrast in thinking between the initial publication and the new introduction displayed the changes in Laski's thinking.

In 1930, Laski strongly defended the right of the individual to freedom of thought and expression. At the same time, he looked upon liberty as a social phenomenon.

> It is, I think, true to say that an individual abstracted from society and regarded as entitled to freedom outside its environment is devoid of meaning. . . . Our liberty has to be realized in a welter of competing and co-operating interests which achieve rational co-ordination only by something not unlike a miracle.[19]

Therefore, restraint upon the right of unfettered activity was necessary for society. On the other hand, the unity of the state itself was not an inherent thing. It, too, was a result of individual human acceptance for the achievement of fuller purpose.

> Obedience ought always to depend on the substance contained in the rules made by government. . . . Man is one among many, obstinately refusing reduction to unity . . . . If he surrenders his will to others, he surrenders his personality. If his will is set by the will

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[18] Harold J. Laski, A Grammar of Politics (London: G. Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1925), p. 24.

[19] Harold J. Laski, Liberty in the Modern State (New York: The Viking Press, 1949), p. 38.

> of others, he ceases to be master of himself. I cannot believe that a man no longer master of himself is in any real sense free.[20]

Thus, to Laski in this stage of his thought, "The more widespread the distribution of power in the state, the more decentralized its character, the more likely men are to be zealous for freedom."[21]

Without naming specific liberties, Laski said that liberty may be resolved into a system of liberties without which men cannot be free. The problem became one of knowing when a man should accept or refuse obedience to the law.

The new introduction of 1949 showed that he had reached the conclusion that the private and individual ownership of production was no longer compatible with democratic institutions. In fact, he believed that the whole problem of liberty hinged upon the issue of ownership of property. "Liberty," he said, "needs an expanding economy as its primary condition."[22] "Economic sufficiency and leisure for thought--these are the primary conditions of the free man."[23]

Just as "A loss of faith in the possibilities of democratic change was also partly responsible for Shaw's early admiration of Mussolini and the Webb's partial conversion to Stalinism in the middle thirties,"[24] Laski now accepted Marxism as his pessimism deepened in regard to the possibility

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[20] Ibid., (1930), p. 44. [21] Ibid., p. 61.

[22] Ibid., (1949), p. 4. [23] Ibid.

[24] A. A. Rogow, The Labour Government and British Industry, 1945-51 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1955), p. 175.

for liberty through interplay of individual interests.

In fact, for some years he had, like other Marxists, prophesied that a Labour Party victory would count for nothing if a large aggregation of private property were really at stake. He believed that the middle class leaders of labour would themselves betray the rank and file and that the Constitution would count for nothing. Capitalism would find ways of holding onto its power.

Thus, in The State in Theory and Practice, Laski declared that capitalism was in a period of decline, as indicated by the depression, and it would not recover. Only socialism could create an upward trend in production and the standard of living. Too, gradualism could not effect the necessary changes. "A change in the system of property relations . . . on the historical evidence we have, cannot be accomplished without a revolution."[25] With this, Laski accepted violence as one of the keys to change and Marxism, in particular, as the road to economic sufficiency.

3. Marxist Period

Beginning then in 1930, a change in Laski's thinking occurred. In fact, after the election in 1931, he commented that he was in agreement with the position taken by some of

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[25]Harold J. Laski, The State in Theory and Practice (New York: The Viking Press, 1935), p. 243.

the supporters of the Labour Party which was "tantamount to an insistence that if socialists wish to secure a state built upon the principles of their faith, they can only do so by revolutionary means."[26]

The Marxist period came fully into being with Democracy in Crisis in 1933. Here, he stated that violence, whether by revolution or counterrevolution, would probably mark the transition from capitalism to socialism. He applied Marxist theory to the circumstances in Britain and examined British institutions from a Marxist viewpoint. He attempted to prophesy how British institutions would stand further economic and political crises. Indeed, he appeared at times to believe that all social ills could be cured by Marxism.

After Democracy in Crisis, he proceeded increasingly to try to analyze all events by Marxist principles, although the central problem of politics in his thinking still remained the problem of authority versus liberty.

> Liberty needs an expanding economy as its primary condition; for where this obtains, men feel that they have hope, and hope is, perhaps the most vital condition for the respect of law . . . .Private advancement is genuinely related to public welfare . . . .It is when the economy of a society begins to contract that liberty is in danger . . . .Government . . . can succeed only if it discovers the way forward to new conditions of economic expansion . . . .If it fails, there are only two methods by which it may hope to maintain its authority. The one is by internal repression, and the other is external war.[27]

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[26]Harold Laski, "Some Implications of the Crisis," Political Quarterly, II (October-December, 1931), p. 466.

[27]Laski, Liberty in the Modern State, p. 4.

Laski believed capitalism to be capable of only limited expansion. Then it would contract. In his opinion, the age of expansion under capitalism was at an end. Because of this, it was incapable of providing the necessary security to the vast majority.

> The revival of faith in values among men means the creation of the conditions of expanding welfare. It means releasing the productive forces of society from the shackles by which they are now impeded.[28]

It was his opinion that liberty had reached the point where revolutionary reform was necessary. The ultimate foundation of society had to be changed. Over wide areas of the world, government by persuasion had given way to government by force in order to protect vested interests. Fascism was the outcome of contracting capitalism.

Laski used the term "negative" freedom to describe capitalism and "positive" freedom as descriptive of socialism. "Negative" freedom meant that modern technocracy had caused capitalism to become an outmoded form of government. Therefore, a new form of government was needed to cope with the economic needs of the people.

> English liberalism . . . has built a state in which freedom of speech and association, equality before the law, universal suffrage, compulsory education and religious liberty are postulates to which all parties give adherence.[29]

But England did not recognize any international

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[28] Harold Laski, Reflections on the Revolution in Our Time (New York: The Viking Press, 1943), p. 203.

[29] Laski, Parliamentary Government in England (New York: The Viking Press, 1947), p. 10.

institution as its superior; it was often coercive without the consent of the people; liberty and equality were merely theoretical when it came to the best interests of the worker; the necessary balance of associations within the state was missing; uniformity was served; society was based upon a class structure; the political personality of the average citizen was ineffective. "Above all there is a persistent note that resistance really cannot be permitted to those who would oppose the 'right' ideas concerning society's productive forces."[30] Consequently, Great Britain must add economic and social freedom to the classical freedoms already enjoyed.

Laski's central thesis was the existence in the West of a fundamental contradiction between the essence of capitalism and the essence of democracy. He believed the real source of this contradiction existed in the privilege arising out of the private ownership of the means of production. The day had passed when ownership of industry could be left in private hands. In fact, the only remedy for the ills of society was the "planned production of our economic resources for community consumption."[31]

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[30] Hawkins, Political Science Quarterly, LXV, p. 383.

[31] Laski, Liberty in the Modern State, p. 21.

Although he condemned states with one-party systems, he saw the two-party systems of Great Britain and the United States as being deliberately used against the masses. And he could see little to be gained in terms of territorial federation for capitalist nations, such as a Federated Western Europe. Capitalist structures in general had little left to offer their citizens.

He saw the government of Great Britain as one which was not impartial. Commanding a majority in the House of Commons did not mean that the substance of government would change. The pivotal positions in the judiciary, the civil service, the defence forces, the police were occupied by members of the governing class.

Defining the lines between the socialist and capitalist parties, he believed that both parties were avoiding the fundamental issue at stake, the property question. What would happen when the fundamental issue could no longer be avoided? What would happen when capitalism declined? Would socialism continue to compromise? Would, in fact, capitalism, in a time of crisis, permit the continued existence of a party believing in the socialization of vested property interests?

Laski also viewed the monarchy as a possible threat to the Labour Party, because the actual limits of royal power and how it would be used in a time of crisis remained in the twilight zone. He viewed the House of Lords as the reserve power of the Conservative party. However, he admitted, its

power was limited to review, which meant that it could delay a Socialist program from passage no longer than two years at the most.

"The House of Commons will always be able to do its work adequately so long as capitalism is able to satisfy the demands of the masses. It is . . . no longer able to satisfy them."[32] The traditional path by both parties in the House of Commons, that of tradition and compromise, would have to change. But it would be inviting "capitalists to cooperate in their own abdication."

He strongly criticized Attlee and the majority of the members of the Labour Party for naively believing that government in a capitalist state had the capacity of impartiality. Being non-Marxist, they believed that change was possible through achieving an electoral majority. They placated the opposition by stifling freedom in their own party through expelling some of the left wing in the 1930's and by refusing membership to Communists. They further placated the opposition by desiring to compensate property owners when property was to be nationalized.

Laski feared that a Labour government would adopt a policy of social reform and gradualism rather than a full-scale attack on capitalism. He did agree that the more vigor with which a socialist government acted, the more likely conservative forces would be to resort to violence. But to conciliate

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[32] Laski, Parliamentary Government in England, p. 181.

the opponents would lead to a disruption within the labour movement itself.[33] "There is no doubt that, whatever a Labour Cabinet may propose, an important section of Labour opinion expects from a Labour government a definite and direct march to socialism,"[34] Laski wrote.

He did agree that England's form of government did possess the capacity for peaceful change. But he had doubts as to whether peaceful change would be possible.

Laski believed that society ought to be set up along the lines of what he called "positive" freedom which arose out of a capacity for growth--the creation of new values. It included: economic security resulting from lack of class warfare; equality for all; national planning by the general consent, resulting from economic and social freedom; the right to franchise; law derived from all of the people without use of fear or favour; the individual left as uninhibited as possible in terms of thought; federalism set up in industry so that the majority controlled industry through unions, and selected representatives trained in the art of governing since all of the people cannot govern.

> Freedom is a function of "the security men feel about the foundations of the social order; and that security, in its turn, is a function of the capacity for economic expansion of that social order. . . . There is no effective freedom in a society if there are wide differences between citizens in their access to the good things of life.[35]

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[33]Deane, The Political Ideas of Harold J. Laski, p. 211.

[34]Laski, Parliamentary Government in England, p. 161.

[35]Deane, The Political Ideas of Harold J. Laski, p. 255.

Laski believed that in spite of the dictatorship in the Soviet Union, positive freedom there had been achieved for millions of men out of a sense of a capacity for growth. More opportunity for self-fulfillment of the individual existed there than in any of the capitalist societies.

Regardless of having a dictatorship, he argued that the Soviet Union was built upon the principle of planned production for community consumption. Despite income differences, there was no evidence of the reappearance of a class that lived by owning. The fear of unemployment was removed. The economy was in a constant state of expansion.

> The Soviet Union has been the pioneer of a new civilization. The conditions upon which it began the task of its building were of a magnitude unexampled in our experience.[36]
>
> The new Soviet Constitution may, with real peace, become an immense step forward.[37]

However, Laski admitted that in the classic sense, freedom did not exist in the Soviet Union. He regretted that there was no liberty to criticize the fundamentals of the regime. But the leaders had had to cope with gigantic problems which required a state of siege.

He equated the Soviet dictatorship in Stalin's hands as carrying on the Byzantine tradition of Czarism.[38] And, at times he expressed the belief that the range and intensity of

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[36] Laski, Liberty in the Modern State, p. 25.

[37] Ibid., p. 29.

[38] Laski, Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time, p. 89.

the dictatorship appeared to be less for the achievement of socialist ends than maintaining Stalin in power at all costs.[39]

Part of the problem he believed to exist in the fact that the Soviet Union was a one-party state, although this in itself did not keep it from being progressive. However, Laski said that the temptation to achieve progress by coercion rather than by persuasion was much greater in a one-party state, and it put liberty at a serious disadvantage.

Yet, it had to be remembered, he continued, that only the Communists in the Soviet Union had succeeded in bringing a socialist society into being. This success excused much. The success of the Soviet experiment was a continual threat to world capitalism, which resulted in the hostility shown by capitalist countries toward the Soviet Union. Simultaneously, this hostility was the cause of Russia's guarding itself from outside threats through secrecy, conspiracy and violence within and without.

Laski regarded world peace as being possible only when the capitalist threat was removed. This could be removed only by the capitalist countries becoming transformed into socialist societies. Then, he believed communist methods would become purified and the dictatorship would be discarded. Ultimately, however, European revolution was

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[39] Ibid., pp. 70-71.

unavoidable. Leadership would come from the Soviet Union, or, Laski hoped, even perhaps from England.[40]

As to how the transformation of the rest of the world was to be brought about, Laski was "trapped by his belief that thought is powerless to master its social environment . . . .He becomes the prophet, if not the advocate, of revolution and dictatorship as the inevitable road to the new socialist order."[41]

Thus, he often affirmed the view that the Labour government would come to power, would be challenged, and would have to suspend the constitution. He flatly predicted that violence would be initiated by the Conservative forces and that they would be the cause of revolutionary conflict.[42]

The right to counterrevolution existed in the fact that for a state to survive, it must assume that its life is worth preserving. Therefore, various associations within the state cannot have the liberty to overthrow the state. "No new social order has so far come into being without a violent birth."[43]

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[40]Ibid., p. 77.

[41]Deane, The Political Ideas of Harold J. Laski, p. 218.

[42]Harold J. Laski, Democracy in Crisis (Chapel Hill: Carolina Press, 1933), p. 33.

[43]Ibid., p. 213.

On the other hand, he appeared at times to hope for peaceful change. If the psychological strains of transforming the state did not prove to be more than representative democracy could bear, then, in his opinion, England might be the first nation to make a change without violence.[44]

More specifically, before World War II, Laski was virtually certain transformation could be achieved only by a violent revolution. During the war, when men held "the great ends of life in common," he believed that reorganization could take place by peaceful means. But the change had to be made before the war ended.[45]

The key points repeatedly emphasized by Laski were in regard to ownership of property, economic sufficiency and leisure for thought, the manner in which the transition to socialism would take place, the fundamental contradiction between capitalism and socialism, and liberty versus property. Production was the real source of privilege and liberty.[46] The "primary conditions" for man to achieve the good society were economic sufficiency and leisure for thought.[47] The "crucial problem" was whether transformation to socialism

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[44]Laski, Parliamentary Government in England, p. 14.

[45]Laski, Reflections on the Revolution of Our Times, p. 385.

[46]Laski, Parliamentary Government in England, p. 30; Laski, Liberty in the Modern State, p. 15.

[47]Laski, Liberty in the Modern State, p. 7.

could be accomplished by peaceful means.[48] His "central thesis" was the fundamental contradiction between capitalism and socialism.[49] The "central problem" was always liberty versus authority.[50]

In his specific interpretation, Laski was a Marxist with a number of differences.

"He did not . . . argue, as the Communists did, that it was necessary to build a small, disciplined revolutionary party which would assume the necessity of the civil war and a subsequent period of proletarian dictatorship."[51]

Because he believed fundamentally in individual liberty, and despite stating a contrary view at times, he sometimes expressed hope that the propertied class might be persuaded to accept socialism. Thus, he did not accept the view that the historical trend in regard to violent revolution was completely inevitable.

Also, Laski did not draw the orthodox Marxian conclusion that history is the story of inevitably conflicting classes.[52]

As a result, he continually exposed Communists' totalitarian morality and their conspiratorial tactics and organiza-

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[48]Dean, The Political Ideas of Harold J. Laski, p. 270.

[49]Ibid., pp. 268-69.

[50]Hawkins, Political Science Quarterly, LXV, p. 391.

[51]Martin, Harold Laski, p. 81.

[52]Catlin, The American Political Science Review, XLVI, pp. 643-44.

tion, and was never uncritical of Stalinist communism. As a result too, Laski gave unsparing sacrifice and devotion to the British Labour Party--as if it were indeed a workable device to bring about the new society. It is for these reasons that his relations to the party are of both intellectual, theoretical and practical importance.

CHAPTER II

THE BRITISH LABOUR PARTY

A. History

The Liberal Party was the immediate predecessor of the Labour Party. But even before 1900, the Trade Unions were becoming concerned with political action.

In the 1880's, the Social Democratic Foundation, founded by H. M. Hyndman, became prominant in the industrial struggles. The S. D. F. was based upon the teachings of Marx. It pioneered, but failed to create a mass movement.[53]

The Fabian Society was organized largely by members of the middle class. They worked in the field of ideas, trying to translate Socialism into terms of everyday life. They rejected a frontal attack.

Meanwhile, Keir Hardie organized the Independent Labour Party. It was made up of both the middle class and workers. The I. L. P. sought membership on the street corners, in mills, factories, mines, and trade unions, as well as in the universities, drawing-rooms, and business offices.

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[53] C. R. Attlee, The Labour Party in Perspective, (London: Victor Gallance, Ltd., 1937), p. 34.

> The S.D.F. by its ineptitude taught other Socialists 'what not to do.' The Fabian Society . . . 'remained peripheral and advisory and was at no time decisive' . . . . By far the most important . . . was the I.L.P., for it became the core of inspiration and leadership in the Labour Representative Committee.[54]

Practically, the Labour Party was a by-product of Trade Union activity. In 1900, the Labour Representation Committee was formed. It was composed of trade-union and socialist organizations, and was designed to sponsor independent labour candidates. The L. R. C. managed to get two men voted into Parliament in the general election of 1900.

In 1901, the Quinn v. Leathem case, in which judges declared boycotting by a union to be illegal, and the Taff Vale case in which trade unions were made liable for damages or injury caused by its agents, leaving the unions no protection for their funds, resulted in the unions turning to politics to answer their grievances.[55]

By 1903, only the miners' union remained outside the L. R. C. In the 1905 general election, there were three men elected to Parliament representing the L. R. C. In the next election, with the secret help of the Liberal Party as a result of an agreement between MacDonald and Gladstone, although MacDonald later denied that such an agreement existed, twenty-nine seats were won by the L. R. C. It was apparent

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[54] M. S. Wilkins, The Advent of the British L.P. by Philip P. Poirier (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), Political Science Journal, LXXIV (1959), 290.

[55] Wilkins, Political Science Journal, LXXIV (1959), p. 290.

that there was a new force to be reckoned with in Parliament.

"The Labour Party was the creation of the Trade Union movement, which joined with the Socialist movement to take action on the political field in order to supplement industrial action."[56]

It was the I. L. P. which acted as the effective force in turning the Trade Union movement from liberalism to socialism. The Trade Union movement assumed two aspects: the organization of wage-earners working within capitalism in order to defend its members from injustice and to gain for them advantages, and as an active opposition to the existing system of society which it sought to alter. Meanwhile, Socialism provided these people an ideal for which they could work, and acted as a recognition that parliamentary action was needed to supplement strike methods.

Up to World War I, it was uncertain as to whether this new third party would survive. The war acted as the turning point.

"The new Labour Party was formed on a very simple basis--that of the return of Labour members to Parliament."[57] The crucial time for the Labour Party was the general election of 1919.

The "new era" resulted in two major changes in the Labour Party: the Party became organized on a territorial basis with Socialism officially adopted as its aim, and in

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[56] Attlee, The Labour Party in Perspective, p. 62.

[57] Ibid., p. 40.

1918, the objectives of the party were set out in approximately the same form that they exist today.

Membership was primarily based upon affiliated trade unions, Socialist societies and constituency organizations. The enrolment of individual membership was permitted after 1918, although such membership remained periphery to the trade unions and the constituency organizations. The trade unions provided the party with the bulk of its membership, as well as the central part of its financial support. Each union retained the right to use its own method of selecting delegates to the annual conference, thus leaving the greatest possible autonomy in the respective participant units.

One major problem resulted from this type of structure. There was a possibility for considerable duplication of membership. A person could belong and be a paying member in a number of these units. It was difficult to estimate the true size of the party as a result of this "duplication or even triplication of membership." In 1937, Attlee estimated party membership at approximately two and one-half million.[58]

Economically, by 1920, wages were rising rapidly. Profits too reached extraordinary heights. However, when the miners' strike took place in 1920, a turning point in this illusory prosperity was beginning to be reached. The British economy fell into a state of depression.

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[58] Ibid., pp. 87-88.

Meanwhile, the Communist Party had been formed in England in 1920. The Lloyd George Coalition Government dealt "ferociously" with the Communists in the form of raiding houses and seizing their property.

> Prosecutions were begun and sentences secured, for nothing worse than class-war Socialist speeches . . . . Mounted police rode down the unemployed . . . .It was commonly said that in the winter of 1921 and 1922 the 'dole' saved Britain from revolution.[59]

Policies of the Left received fewer and fewer votes. Thus the Labour Party affirmed a policy of excluding Communists from the party. The new M.P.'s in Parliament selected the right wing Ramsay MacDonald as their leader. By the general election of 1929, Labour found itself the largest party in Parliament, although it did not have a clear majority.

Immediately, Prime Minister MacDonald's government had to face the economic depression, heralded by the Wall Street crash of 1929. The depression became severe, and prolonged. As a result of its inability to maneuver and take necessary remedial action, the Labour Party was severely defeated in the general election of 1931. "Thus, the labour movement from the onset of the crisis had to face several years of continuously and seriously adverse condition."[60]

Attlee, like Laski, strongly disapproved of MacDonald as Prime Minister. He believed that MacDonald had left much

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[59] G. D. H. Cole and Raymond Postgate, The British Common People, 1746-1938 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1939), p. 503.

[60] Ibid., pp. 529-30.

to be desired in the way of leadership.

> Mr. MacDonald had led the Party into an acceptance of gradualness and a frame of mind which tended to acquiesce in things as they are. The Party under his guidance laid too much stress on continuity and on the fundamental unity of society, to the neglect of its discordancies.[61]

Still, in spite of the crushing election defeat, there was no real split in the party. The only really important break was secession of the I. L. P. However, the break split up the I. L. P., with a minority of its members remaining with the Labour Party.

"During the 1930's, the intellectual left within the Labour Party was avowedly Marxist, or at least heavily influenced by Marx."[62]

In 1932, Sidney Webb, some of the former I. L. P. members, and others formed a Socialist League within the Labour Party. The purpose was to persuade the Labour Party to adopt a more militant policy both nationally and internationally.[63]

The Labour Party did for a time move toward the Left. However, the swing back to the Right soon came. This swing back could be credited to the industrial pacifism of trade union leaders and to events in Germany.[64]

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[61]Attlee, The Labour Party in Perspective, p. 59.

[62]Stanley Rothman, "British Labour's 'New Left,'" Political Science Quarterly, LXXVI (1931), 393-94.

[63]Martin, Harold Laski, pp. 92-93.

[64]Cole and Postgate, The British Common People, pp. 532-33.

> Hitler's advent to power in 1933 transformed the entire situation of world-Socialism . . . .The crushing of the . . . strongest working-class movement in the world outside Russia--produced immense repercussions.[65]

The British Labour movement came to the conclusion that Fascism was the inevitable response to Communism. They believed that if the workers were militant the result would be a rally to the reactionary side and would be the Labour Party's undoing. Labour had to repudiate Communism in all forms and adopt a moderate and gradualistic program.

A newly devised "Short Programme" was issued by the Labour Party in 1937. It had fewer points and was more committal. "But with this new program went a continuance of the war against the left wing."[66]

The Socialist League decided to act upon its own to bring about a "United Front." It joined a campaign with the I. L. P. and the Communist Party in an effort to bring about working-class unity. Also, in 1936 an Association of Constituency Labour Parties was formed by a number of local labour parties, headed by Sir Stafford Cripps. This group pledged to work for revision of the Labour Party's constitution. The Labour Party found this revolt more formidable than the United Front campaign.

The Labour Party Conference of 1937 accepted major constitutional changes in an effort to placate the local

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[65] *Ibid.*, p. 533.

[66] *Ibid.*, p. 536.

parties. On the promise of refraining from acting jointly with the Communists and the I. L. P., Stafford Cripps and Harold Laski were permitted to remain in the party and were elected to the party's executive committee. The members of the Socialist League were expelled and it was reaffirmed that the Communists were not permitted membership in the Labour Party. The Labour Party continued to try to steer a middle course between the Right and Left wings.

According to Rogow, the party was composed of,

> . . . extremists, moderates, and essentially liberal reformers, who may be united on specific policies but who will differ on theoretical approach. In this confusion of theory and practice, of ideas and interests, which is a feature of any Labour Party Conference, social policies are often mistaken as Socialism.[67]

Thus, too, politically, the Labour Party meant to establish a mass organization which would make, on the basis of intra-party democracy, decisions for parliamentary representatives to carry out. The Labour Party began in a manner normal for modern socialist parties. The fact that its practice came to resemble somewhat the Conservatives had much to do with the strength of parliamentary tradition.[68]

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[67]Rogow, The Labour Government and British Industry, p. 7.

[68]Leon D. Epstein, "British Mass Parties in Comparison with American Parties," Political Science Quarterly, LXXI (1956), 118.

B. The Left Wing of the Labour Party

Membership in the Left Wing of the Labour Party with which Laski was associated was peculiarly dependent upon the personal beliefs of the individual. There were dozens of groups and thousands of individuals in England who claimed such membership.

> There is an element of "fellow-traveling" in Left Wing thought, and some measure of Marxian doctrine. But British Socialism is unquestionably the least Marxist Socialist movement in Europe.[69]

Even as the meaning of Socialism in Britain was "far from clear" at times, the thinking of the Left then retained a marked degree of individualism. The basic area of Left Wing interest in the 1930's was, it is true, economic, for they mostly believed that economic change would automatically produce the "good society." However, they also contended that values were a matter of personal taste; that one could not prove that one value judgment was superior over another. Curiously, most of them did not conceive that the two views--economic versus intellectual--might conflict.

The Left Wing was generally convinced that the increasing class consciousness of the workers would result in Socialism. But many of them believed that there would be a counterrevolution before England could become socialist. However, regardless of what happened, in their opinion, capitalism

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[69] Eugene J. Meehan, The British Left Wing and Foreign Policy (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1960), p. 21.

was facing inevitable collapse. Meanwhile, they admired the Soviet Union as being essentially a socialist society, and saw Communism and Socialism as disagreeing only in regard to means.

> The British socialist movement is not in the least monolithic, but an aggregation of individuals and groups who are in broad agreement upon certain general principles, which are themselves very broad and vague, and who disagree fundamentally on many particular questions.[70]

This fundamental lack of unity and organization of the Left Wing group, plus the general hostility of some of the Trade Union leaders, resulted in the group not reaching the level of influence that might have been expected from so numerous and vocal a number of persons. When it came down to specific policies, there was seldom complete agreement; and when there was agreement, it often was not based on the same reasoning.

Nevertheless, a number of efforts were made to organize the Left Wing since the spokesmen and leaders of the group were aware of the need to organize. One attempt at organizing was the establishment of the Socialist League in 1931, which included a number of prominent figures in the Labour Party. This group tried to bring about unity with the British Communist Party. In 1937, the Labour Party warned the League to cease its activities in regard to a "United Front." Shortly after that, the Socialist League was disaffiliated from the Labour Party and Stafford Cripps, Aneurin Bevan, G. R. Strauss

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[70] Ibid., p. 34.

and others were expelled from the party.

Within the left, such disparate elements existed as the pacifists and the class-war enthusiasts. Attlee divided the pacifists into the "optimistic pacifists" who believed that "right is might and will prevail . . . that force can never accomplish anything good," and the "pessimistic pacifists" who held that the "horrors of war were so great and possible gains so small, that at any cost it must be avoided."[71]

At the other extreme, he grouped the class-war enthusiasts. One group was the "antithesis of pacifists" who believed that "Socialism will only be won by force." The "less extreme view" held " that all action within a country must be considered in terms of the class war."[72]

The sources of Leftist opinion could be grouped into three major areas: the Left Wing press, Left Wing spokesmen in Parliament, and the Left Wing outside of Parliament.

The Left Wing press included three weekly journals, a newspaper published on Sundays, and publishing agencies. Kingsley Martin edited a magazine, New Statesman. In 1946, it had a circulation of 83, 571. It acted as the primary vehicle of Left Wing opinion. In 1947, another journal, the Tribune, had a circulation of 40,000. Forward, a pacifistic journal, was characteristic of the propaganda of Labour in the early part of the 20th century. The newspaper, the

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[71]Attlee, The Labour Government in Perspective, p. 214.

[72]Ibid., p. 217.

Reynolds News, often received complaints from its supporters about its nonpolitical character. The Fabian Society and the National Peace Council which published tracts and books were "essentially propaganda societies." Their value was inestimable. They provided a channel for the expression of diverse views within the party. They were also a means for reaching "an influential public."73

Among the Leftists in Parliament, the M.P.'s could be divided into four categories: the Left Wing journalists, the ex-servicemen, the fellow travelers, and the pacifists of various types. The pacifists usually voted as a group, sometimes voting against the Labour Government. The fellow travelers, as the relationship with Russia worsened, received pressure to conform to party policy. Several lost their membership in the Labour Party in the 1940's.

Outside of Parliament, there were several nationally prominent figures identified with the left, such as Professor Harold Laski, Professor G. D. H. Cole of Oxford University and a number of writers. Most of these men were involved in varied professional activities and politics as such was only one facet of their efforts at leadership.

> These men are important, if only because of their close association with British education and the unquestioned influence they exerted on the younger generation of British Socialists who attended their lectures at the universities and elsewhere.[74]

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[73]Meehan, The British Left Wing and Foreign Policy, p. 22.

[74]Ibid., p. 31.

At the end of World War II, peace was the chief goal for most socialists. And peace to them meant the triumph of socialism. The Left Wing socialists generally held an assumption that Europe was going to become socialistic. If this happened, then the rest of the world would soon follow. Then the new world order would bring about the desired peace. The Leftists pursued their goal with vigour.

C. The Labour Party Program as Viewed by Attlee and the Party Conference Prior to 1945

> It is my faith that Britain will be true to her traditions, and that, despite the profound differences that separate the supporters of Socialism and Capitalism, the changes which are necessary will be brought about without bloodshed and violence. It is the genius of the British people to modify and adapt old institutions to new purposes.[75]

Such were the views expounded by Clement Attlee in 1937 as the leader of the Labour Party.

Even then, however, the objective of the Labour Party was to organize and maintain in Parliament a party representing the interests of the workers. The party objectives included working with other "kindred" organizations in harmony with the Constitution and Standing Orders of the Party, to make effective the political principles approved by the Party Conference, to emancipate the people socially and economically and provide full employment. To achieve for the workers "the full fruits of their industry" meant that ultimately

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[75]Attlee, The Labour Party in Perspective, p. 276.

common ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange must be brought about in the political arena. Basic to the movement was recognition of the need to cooperate with the Labour and Socialist organizations in Britain's dependencies and in other countries in the hope that a federation of nations might result. Thus, the leadership held generally to socialist tenets.

In organizing the Labour Party, the Party Conference, which met annually, was set up as the final authority. Primarily, its composition was of delegates of affiliated organizations such as the trade unions. The purpose was to make it impossible for private members to control the party. It was true that some of the representative delegates did come to the Conference bound by instructions, but the instructions varied according to the local groups, which left ample opportunity for decision making at the Conference.

The duties of the Conference included the making of specific proposals in regard to legislation, finances, or administrative reforms. All proposals included in the party decisions had to be adopted by a two-thirds majority vote. Thus, the Conference acted as a "parliament" to the movement, and as a constituent assembly retaining the capacity to alter its own constitution.

The Conference elected a National Executive Committee to carry out the decisions of the Conference, interpret policy, make decisions between conferences, and to carry on

the general administration of the party. The committee was composed of twenty-two members, with the Trade Unions holding twelve seats. Party grievances were discussed there. Atlee wrote, "A combination of a number of big Unions can . . . decide the composition of the entire Executive. Without the support of some of them no one can hope to be elected a member."[76]

The Executive Committee met once a month. It appointed a new chairman each year, using rotation for its selection process. The choice became the member with the longest period of service. The person who became chairman also served as chairman of the Party Conference. The head office was Transport House in London.

The National Executive Committee had to endorse each candidate running for public office. However, the committee seldom interfered with a candidate who had the necessary qualifications and responsible financial backing from a Trade Union, another affiliated body or local Labour Party. In some cases, the Executive could suggest names.

All candidates running for Parliament had to subscribe to the "standing orders" laid down by the Parliamentary Party. The purpose was to bind the new House of Commons members as nearly as possible to conform to the decisions of the majority. In this way, it was hoped that the party member in Parliament would represent the whole Labour Party and its principles and not just a segment of it. All members took part in

[77]Ibid., p. 109.

the decision making, and if a member could not vote with the majority opinion because of personal conviction, then he had the right to abstain.

At the beginning of each session of Parliament, the members elected an Executive made up of a leader, deputy-leader, and whips. The Executive met every day during the session, while the whole group met once a week. The leader in Parliament was also the leader of the Labour Party and ex officio member of the National Executive Committee.

Between the National Executive Committee and the Parliamentary Party organization there existed a close relationship. The National Committee usually contained a number of M.P.'s. Also, the National Executive had the right to attend Parliamentary Party meetings at the beginning of each session and take part in the discussion.

The National Executive Committee and the Executive Committee of the Parliamentary Party organization decided upon the final items to be used in the party's Manifesto which was issued prior to every general election. The Labour Party Conference set up the Party Program, and the two committees made the final selection from this.

Nevertheless, the Party Organization in Parliament insisted upon a measure of discretion as Attlee made clear, "Action in the House is a matter for the Parliamentary Party, the members of which decide on the application of Party

policy . . . in its own sphere, the Parliamentary Party is supreme."[77]

At the same time, the general aim of the party at all times presumably was to keep a concentration of power from falling into the hands of one man or a small group. Attlee said he considered the Labour Party as a party "where all important matters" were submitted "to the judgment of the rank and file."[78]

The Labour Party was also a member of the Labour and Socialist International. Its function was to make recommendations and to take decisions on policy which were binding only on those parties agreeing to them. The Labour and Socialist International functioned purely as "a consultative body for arranging joint action and correlating policy rather than a super-authority over the national parties."[79] Fourteen members made up an Executive Committee for the organization.

In terms of policy, the titular head of the party, Mr. Attlee, looked ahead in 1937 to the time when the Labour Party again would become responsible for governing England. He believed that the circumstances surrounding the taking of office would have much to do with modifications which might have to be made in the party program, at least temporarily. However, he said, "a Labour Government, having achieved power, will have no doubts as to the policy to be pursued."[80]

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[77] Ibid., p. 109.
[78] Ibid., p. 110.
[79] Ibid., p. 82.
[80] Ibid., p. 175.

Government planning concerning industry and agriculture and other areas would become the center of the program. To begin with, the industries to be immediately taken over by the government would include conversion of the Bank of England into a state institution, steps toward the nationalization of land, the taking over of transport, and the taking over of fuel and the coal industry. Compensation would be paid during the period of transition for ethical and practical reasons. Ultimately, however, the state would own almost all major property. Also, "Redressing the inequalities of wealth must be effected through taxation."[81]

In the area of foreign policy, Socialists all over the world were united in opposing militarism and imperialism. Social justice in international affairs must be made the basis for world peace.

During the '20's and '30's, the British Labour Party supported England's membership in the League of Nations, even though it considered the latter to be an organization largely of Capitalistic states. Their approval was based on the fact that the League embodied "a conception of a world society."

The Southport Conference of 1934 resulted in the Labour Party issuing a foreign policy statement on "War and Peace." In 1937, it reiterated this policy. Its emphasis was on the collective security possible in the League of Nations. It rejected the balance of power theory. The League

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[81] Ibid., p. 192.

was looked upon as a first step towards "a co-operative world commonwealth." It linked disarmament with collective security. If the Labour Party secured power "Labour's peace policy would be constructive - the building up of a world economic commonwealth of nations co-operating together but retaining their own distinctive policies and abstaining from interfering with each other's internal affairs."[62]

In 1937, Mr. Attlee was most concerned about England's responsibilities as leader of the British Commonwealth of Nations. It was the aim of the Party to see self government extended to all of the territories of the Empire, including India. But, to do so meant that responsible self-government must be brought about in those areas. There would be no gain to the people if England handed over these countries to local Capitalists who themselves would become exploiters of the people. The key to bringing about responsible self-government was viewed as being education.

The Labour Party stated it believed in the complete abolition of armed forces, but it was not in favour of disarmament by example. Also, although war was evil, the armed force would have to be used at times to avoid greater evils. Thus, "The defence of Great Britain, the British Commonwealth, and the British Empire against external attack is a duty of Government, whatever may be its political complexion."[63]

Mr. Attlee saw the future of the Labour Party as depend-

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[62] Ibid., p. 225.

[63] Ibid., p. 251.

ent upon its capacity to win power in the country, and then upon the way in which it used its power. "The Labour Party stands for such great changes in the economic and social structure that it cannot function successfully unless it obtains a majority which is prepared to put its principles into practice."[84]

Whereas the British Labour Party recognized the conflict between classes, it did not accept the class war theory as such as being valid. The reason was that in England there were not just two sharply contrasted classes of capitalists and wage-earners. Class consciousness existed but the middle class was broad and the social structure contained "many gradations" in between the very rich and the very poor. It was agreed upon generally within the Labour Party that inequities and injustice did exist on a class basis, but revolution was not looked upon as the answer to the problem.

The Majority of the Labour Party rejected the tactics of revolution and accepted the method of constitutional action. As long as the party had the power and hope of achieving goals by use of the ballot-box it believed it did not need to seek to do so by any other means. To try to force its will on the majority would be contrary to its basic beliefs about the nature of man and society. Thus, transformation should be possible by peaceful means. Nevertheless, the Labour Party now insisted that the right of revolution was essential to

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[84] Ibid., p. 123.

freedom. No true freedom existed without this right.

Despite the Labour Party's favorable attitude toward Russia, as a Socialist state, it remained outspoken and critical of Communist technique.

> In theory, the period of terrorism and dictatorship is transitory. In practice, it continues. However much the leaders of Soviet Russia desire to escape from it, they cannot . . . . In the totalitarian state a forcible rebellion is the only way to effect change.[85]

Thus, Attlee and the majority of the party rejected the demand for a United Front with the Communists. The beliefs of the Labour Party and the Communist Party concerning techniques of social change and procedure in government were too far apart to make union possible. The Communist Party was subject to the orders of the Comintern and could not act as a free agent. The Communists reduced all history to an economic formula, which the Labour Party majority rejected. The Communist Party did not believe in constitutional action and majority rule, and the Labour Party did. Attlee insisted,

> Avoiding both Fascism and Communism, this country, I believe, can afford to the world an example of how society can adapt itself to new conditions and base itself on new principles without breach of continuity and without violence and intolerance.[86]

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[85] Ibid., p. 116.

[86] Ibid., p. 275.

D. Wartime Differences Between Laski and Attlee

Despite his active membership in the Party and notwithstanding the foregoing position of the majority membership, Laski himself believed, until the beginning of World War II, that the only way the Labour Party would be able to take power in England would be by force; or if it did manage to take power by majority vote, the reaction to the Socialist program would create a militant response that would result in the necessity for the Labour Party taking over the government by force.

However, with the advent of World War II, Laski became hopeful that the transformation of capitalism to socialism might be accomplished through peaceful means. At first, he opposed the formation of a coalition government proposed by Churchill. When the coalition became an accomplished fact with Attlee's acceptance of the offer, Laski perceived possibilities for labour in such a coalition and began backing it strongly.[87]

In the Coalition Government, seven cabinet positions went to Labour out of the possible twenty-seven. Attlee became Lord Privy Seal and later Deputy to Churchill.

Also, seeing the world and England faced with the Nazi threat, Laski began defending the virtues of English democracy. He pointed out that in the 19th century, trade unions were illegal, a national system of education was lacking, workmen's

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[87]Deane, The Political Ideas of Harold Laski, p. 321.

compensation and public health services did not exist, factory legislation was extremely primitive. Since that time all of these conditions had been changed in behalf of labour under England's capitalist system. Political democracy in England had allowed the workers to build their unions, political parties and cooperative movements. He indicated a belief that all of the political parties in Britain now accepted the fact that a planned society was inescapable in the present phase of England's social development.

With a coalition government in power, he urged that the beginnings of a progran toward socialism be begun during the war, so that England would not be plagued with another depression at its end. Thus too, the workers, by such government action, would be assured that they could achieve their socialist aims by peaceful and democratic means. It would provide time for psychological readjustment to such great innovation. This might help avoid the conflict of possible counterrevolution.

"In the absence of such changes before the end of the war, the fruits of victory will have been thrown away."[88]

Laski also prophesied that if changes were not made before the end of the War, then the Party's leaders in the Coalition Goveranent would be compelled to fight for the transformation on the terms of the ruling class. In such event, England would then rapidly move to a situation of in-

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[88]Laski, Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time, p. 405.

tense class conflict and, inevitably, to violent revolution.[89]

Laski's program, which he believed must be enacted during the war, called for guarantees against mass unemployment at the war's end; measures to insure that the rebuilding of Britain would exclude the power of the ground-landlord and the speculative builder to profit from the results of air bombardment, including a public housing program; a remaking of the education and health services with the idea of full equality of opportunity. Such vital services as credit, coal and power, transport and munitions must be put under government ownership. And the state must assume control of imports and exports.[90]

Laski's political activities reached a new peak during the war years. He became a confidential adviser to Mr. Attlee during the first year of the Coalition Government. And, in effect, he became the leader of the Left Wing of the Labour Party.[91]

In an effort to have his program accepted and enacted, he carried on an extensive correspondence with many leaders in England and the United States. Also, he was prolific in the writing of articles and the making of speeches.

As the war continued, Laski became impatient with Attlee. He saw Attlee only irregularly after the spring of

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[89]Harold Laski, "An Age of Transition," Political Quarterly, XIV (April-June, 1943), p. 172.

[90]Martin, Harold Laski, p. 118.

[91]Deane, The Political Ideas of Harold Laski, p. 221.

1941. His fear became that Attlee would let the historic moment for change slip away.

Early in 1941, Laski suggested to Attlee in the presence of his colleagues that Atlee should give up the leadership of the Party and let someone have it who had more ability. He stated that he believed that Attlee lacked the drive and imagination that the job demanded. He excused himself for speaking with such candor by saying that he believed it was better to tell Attlee to his face rather than conspire behind his back like others in the Labour Party. Atlee's response to Laski was mild.

Not long after that, Attlee made the comment that, "I am sufficiently experienced in warfare to know that the frontal attack with a flourish of trumpets, heartening as it is, is not the best way to capture a position."[92]

The Conservatives naturally opposed Laski's view of how to win the war at home. Mr. Churchill, in response to one of Laski's letters, wrote to him on March 25, 1942, "It is entirely beyond my share of life and strength to deal with all the issues which your letter raises. In my view we ought to win the war first, and then, in a free country the issues of socialism and free enterprise can be fought out in a constitutional manner. I certainly should think it very undemocratic if anyone were to try to carry socialism during a party truce without a parliamentary majority . . . .I think it would be a pity to break up the national unity in the war, and that I

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[92]Martin, Harold Laski, p. 149.

believe is the opinion of the mass of the people."[93]

In 1942, Laski tried to commit the Labour Party Conference to a Resolution on a Planned Economic Democracy which he manouvered through the Executive Committee. However, the attempt was unsuccessful.

In 1943, Justice Frankfurter of the United States Supreme Court, a longtime friend of Laski's, wrote saying that he felt that Laski was damaging the Allied cause as well as his own reputation by continually criticising Churchill's leadership and by his advocacy of revolutionary changes during the war.

Near the end of 1943, it appeared that the worst of the war was over. Laski became pessimistic. Since nothing had been done during the war to lay the foundations of social and economic change, it appeared to him very likely that such changes would be brought about after the war by coercion rather than by consent.[94]

"It is unforgiveable that the very men who should be leading that revolution are devoting their main energies to preventing its accomplishment."[95]

Laski recommended that the Labour Party break up the Coalition cabinet unless the Conservatives agreed to support an immediate movement to socialism.

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[93] Ibid., p. 144.

[94] Laski, Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time, p. 159.

[95] Laski, Political Quarterly, XIV, p. 172.

The Labour Party leaders were not in agreement with Laski. They believed Labour had gone into opposition at that time. Churchill probably could have continued to govern anyway. And had Churchill been forced to hold a general election, they felt he would have won easily. If Labour proved unwilling to place the safety of the nation above its own beliefs, then the Conservatives would have had a powerful argument in the postwar election, possibly costing the Labour Party a victory at the polls.

On May 1, 1944, Attlee replied to one of Laski's letters. He tried to explain his position. In answering Laski's request that the coalition be broken and a general election sought, he replied that the Executive Committee of the Labour Party only a short time before had voted strongly for continuing the present government in power. However, he believed that Laski was right in insisting that thought and preparation should be made for the period following the war. But, Laski would have to accept the fact that the preparation could not be based entirely on socialist principles or entirely on capitalist principles. There would have to be a compromise, as both parties would have to work with the world and the country as it existed.

Laski had stressed as crucial the nationalization of the mines, the banks, and the railways. Attlee replied in agreement with Churchill, "we cannot get this until we have a House of Commons ready to pass the necessary legislation.

I doubt if we can effect this until we have a socialist majority, and for that we have to wait for a general election."[96]

Attlee concluded the letter by stressing that this did not mean that he felt the principles and program of the Labour Party should be dropped. He simply meant that the practical problems of government must be faced as they then existed. He assured Laski that he was firm in his socialist faith and had little value as a leader apart from the party which he served.

Later, looking back upon the war period and the Coalition Government, Winston Churchill wrote of Attlee, "In Clement Attlee I had a colleague of war experience long versed in the House of Commons. Our only differences in outlook were about Socialism, but these were swamped by a war soon to involve the almost complete subordination of the individual to the State. We worked with perfect ease and confidence during the whole period of the Government."[97]

It is clear that Laski believed that the leader of a true Labour Party would not earn such plaudits from a Conservative Prime Minister.

When the war ended, the Coalition Government was broken up. General elections were called for.

Just before the 1943 elections, Laski became disturbed by a statement made by Churchill to the press that he was inviting Attlee to accompany him to the Big Three

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[96]Martin, Harold Laski, p. 152.

[97]Winston Churchill, Their Finest Hour (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1949), p. 10.

Potsdam Conference because they thought so much alike on foreign policy matters. As new chairman of the Executive Committee of the Labour Party, Laski then made a statement to the press concerning what he thought should be Attlee's position in the matter. He stressed that Attlee should go to Potsdam only as an observer, and that the Labour Party could not be committed to any decisions arrived at during the Conference since the matters to be taken up there had not been debated either in the Party Executive or at any of the meetings of the Parliamentary Labour Party. He stated that the Labour Party had a foreign policy which would not be continuous with that of Conservative policy.

Laski was criticized both inside and outside of the Labour Party for this public statement of opinion. The Conservative Party used his statement in the election campaign in an effort to prove that Attlee was merely a tool in the hands of a non-Parliamentary body.

Attlee later said of this incidence, "Laski, whose political judgment was not very good, made a very indiscreet statement in which he suggested that I should go to Potsdam only as an observer. He issued this statement as chairman of the Executive, although he had no authority to do so. The chairman of the Executive does not make authoritative pronouncements of this kind."[98]

In answer to the incident, Churchill began a series

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[98]Attlee, As It Happened, p. 203.

of published letters to Attlee in an effort to lead the people to believe that Attlee was a mere tool in the hands of his own Party. Attlee replied to all of these letters in the press. Apparently the answers satisfied the voters. Attlee won the election. For the first time in its history the Labour Party came to power with a large majority.

And despite the political maneuvering of the campaign by Churchill and Laski's indiscreet statement, Laski received many invitations to speak on the Continent. Most of them he accepted. During the war he had become a prominent figure among European Socialists. And now, since he had become chairman of the Executive Committee, newspapers everywhere were anxious to print his views--views which were often beyond or contrary to the Parliamentary policy of the Labour Goverament.

Finally, in the summer of 1945, Attlee wrote to Laski informing him that:

> The constant flow of speeches from and interviews with you are embarrassing . . . .As Chairman of the Labour Party Executive, you hold an important office in the Party and the position is not well understood abroad. Your utterances are taken to express the views of the Government . . . .You have no right whatever to speak on behalf of the Government . . . .A period of silence on your part would be welcome.[99]

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[99]Martin, Harold Laski, pp. 172-73.

CHAPTER III

ACTIONS OF THE BRITISH LABOUR GOVERNMENT, 1945-1951, AND ATTEMPTS TO INFLUENCE THE GOVERNMENT BY LASKI AND THE LEFT WING OF THE LABOUR PARTY

In 1937, as Parliamentary leader of the Labour Party, Attlee stated that it should be anticipated that the circumstances surrounding the assumption of Labour leadership in England would act to manipulate the advocated program of the party, particularly in the early phases.

From 1942 to 1945, as noted, Attlee had served as Deputy Prime Minister in Churchill's Coalition Cabinet. Two important commitments resulted from this period: many Conservative members of the Cabinet became sympathetic to Attlee's domestic goals, and Attlee, in turn, became committed to many of the policy decisions of the Coalition Government.

As a result of the general election of 1945, Attlee assumed office as Prime Minister. Attlee and Ernest Bevin, Attlee's appointee for Foreign Secretary, replaced Churchill at the Potsdam Conference.

The Conference had been called by the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union to clarify and implement agreements reached at the Yalta Conference. The Potsdam

Conference concluded with plans for the occupation of Germany, but left the peace treaty with Germany pending. The Soviet Union had put in a bid for rights to the Neisse and Oder rivers in Germany. Also, they had argued for Soviet trusteeship of an Italian colony, which would provide Russia with a foothold in the Mediterranean. Great Britain and the United States did not concur with these demands for territorial acquisition and the Conference ended with these issues unsettled.

Attlee and Bevin concluded, as a result of the Conference, that the Soviet Union was out to get all it could in the way of territory and reparations, and that Communist modern imperialism might become a threat to the freedom of Europe and to Great Britain. Attlee wrote, "I thought that the Americans had an insufficient appreciation of this danger, and indeed of the whole European situation. . . . They were inclined to think of Russia and America as two big boys who could settle things amicably between them."[100]

Two facts emerged from the Conference that strongly influenced Attlee and Bevin in the months ahead: there was to be no speedy peace if the Soviet Union was bent on expansion, and the work of reconstruction in Great Britain would be hindered by having to make an appraisal of its resources and of the international positions it would have to hold.

The revelation to the public of the conflicts and

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[100] C. R. Attlee, As It Happened (New York: The Viking Press, 1954), p. 205.

and disagreements which occurred at Potsdam put Bevin at a disadvantage with the Left Wing of his own Party. Until the Potsdam Conference, for the sake of Allied unity, Churchill and Attlee had kept the frequently voiced desires for expansion of the Soviet Union mostly unpublicized. As the results of the Conference became public, the Leftists were inclined to hold Bevin guilty of maintaining Tory policies and of dividing Big Three unity.[101]

When Attlee returned to England, he was faced domestically with the problem of a depleted and exhausted economy, as the total economy had been geared to the war effort. Although he felt compelled to maintain many policies he did not like, and to go slowly in relation to many others, Attlee still did not believe that the electorate voted the Labour Party in office to patch up an old system. He intended, he later wrote, "to make something new."[102]

Attlee stated that his foreign policy would be based upon support for the United Nations and upon close working harmony with the United States and the Soviet Union. Still, he believed that foreign affairs was for the Foreign Secretary to handle, and he stated in advance that he would intervene only in exceptional circumstances.[103]

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[101] M. A. Fitzsimons, The Foreign Policy of the British Labour Government, 1945-51 (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1953), p. 30.

[102] Attlee, As It Happened, p. 230.

[103] Ibid.

Bevin's immediate program was for maintaining British positions and collective security. He wanted ". . . to create political conditions of such a character that armaments would become unnecessary and the United Nations would be made the basis of Britain's relationship with the world."[104]

The Left Wing had been jubilant over the Labour Party winning the election. Yet, they had little reason for allowing their expectations to run so high. The behavior of the Soviet Union had been hostile at Potsdam towards Great Britain; and at the United Nations, Russia was abusing the veto in the Security Council. Also, Bevin's open support of the foreign policy of Churchill's Coalition Government should have acted to warn them as to what to expect. He was noted for being hostile to Left Wing policies.[105]

The Leftists in general, however, expected "something new." They wanted Great Britain to become leader of a Socialist Europe, the relationship with the United States to lessen in importance, and for British imperialism to cease. They were, in fact, against the nation-state as such. They wanted British policy to be unaggressive and benevolent except in regard to capitalism or fascism.

G. D. H. Cole, one of the noted writers of the Leftist group, called for a "Western European Socialist Union" which

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[104]Fitzsimons, The Foreign Policy of the British Labour Government, 1945-51, p. 50.

[105]Meehan, The British Left Wing and Foreign Policy, p. 68.

would be directed against capitalism. He believed that the Labour Government should concentrate upon England's development and the strengthening of democratic Socialism in Western Europe. He admitted that when Socialist parties take over governments, international relations do continue as before, although he did not necessarily think this was the way it should be. This was the result of the fact that they consciously acted within the principle of continuity. Otherwise, they would have to repudiate all that happened before they took office as not binding. Most Socialist parties were not prepared for such revolutionary action.[106]

Laski himself often spoke against the nation-state as such. "We have entered upon an epoch in which it is daily more clear that the principle of national sovereignty has exhausted its usefulness."[107]

August 20, 1945, Bevin made his first appearance in the House of Commons as Foreign Secretary. It ended Left Wing hopes of a new direction in foreign policy. The policies of the Coalition Government were accepted with few changes, such as supporting the Greek Government which was controlled by the monarchy, and the leaving of the people of Spain to decide about their own government without English interference. Altogether, there were to be no major changes of policy--with the purposes of not jarring the Soviet Union

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[106]Fitzsimons, The Foreign Policy of the British Labour Government, 1945-51, p. 52.

[107]Laski, Liberty in the Modern State, p. 17.

or of acting overtly to aid Continental Socialists, who might turn Communist and upset the existing balance of power, or of upsetting the United States from whom Britain needed financial aid.[108]

To the leftists, continuity of British foreign policy meant breach with Russia, association with the United States, and maintenance of heavy military expenses.

> Bevin's acceptance of continuity . . . was made manifest during the first parliamentary debate on foreign policy when he assented to Anthony Eden's statement that in the Coalition Cabinet Bevin and he had never differed on any important issue of foreign policy.[109]

Bevin desired to build the program in the Middle East on a basis of mutual cooperation and promotion of social and economic well-being. There should be a partnership developed between Great Britain and Egypt.

In the Far East, Britain had considerable investments. Since England was so weak that it could not protect its interests by direct imperial control, then it must support the cause of Asian nationalism.

The Western European program, Bevin said, was to be a policy of cooperation. No one nation could dominate Europe. The balance of power tactics had to be discarded. Strength could be achieved only through cooperative recovery, leaving each nation free to evolve in its own way.

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[108]Meehan, The British Left Wing and Foreign Policy, p. 71.

[109]Fitzsimons, The Foreign Policy of the British Labour Government, 1945-51, p. 25.

Bevin stated, "I think the policy we have to follow so far as the dependent territories are concerned which are emerging into independence, is to nurse them, guide them, help them to change over as a going concern."[110]

Laski viewed these tenets as inconsistant and vague, and he consequently remained unimpressed with Attlee and Bevin. In a letter to his friend Felix Frankfurter, he wrote,

> Attlee is not a great P.M. . . . He is timid as well as shy, resentful about opposition, and more an admirable chairman than a leader. Bevin is quite pathological in my own view--vain, disastrously ungenerous, quite definitely anti-Semitic in a brutal way.[111]

Harold Laski became increasingly popular abroad, especially with the forces of European democracy on the Left. The Italian socialists regarded him as the chief representative of British socialism, which they regarded as one of the three main forces in the postwar world. He was invited to speak in all of the European countries, and he accepted most of the invitations. He was invited to write articles for various magazines all over the world. Many of these invitations were accepted. In some of these, he made some rather confident predictions as to Britain's future actions.

In an article for La Tribune Economique, Laski, without qualification, told his French readers that the British Government would drive Franco from power in Spain.[112] At

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[110] Great Britain Weekly Hansard, House of Commons, No. 5, February 21, 1946, Clmn. 1363.

[111] Martin, Harold Laski, p. 181.

[112] Meehan, The British Left Wing and Foreign Policy, p. 68.

another time, he stated that Greece would be aided in her search for an "ordered and democratic freedom."[113]

The Left Wing considered Spain a "test case" for Labour's foreign policy. When the Labour Party had been in opposition, it had attacked the Conservative Government for its policy of nonintervention in Spain. Now it appeared that the Labour Government was actually reversing its previous stand.

Laski, as Chairman of the Executive Committee of the British Labour Party, proclaimed to the National Congress of the French Socialist Party that the Labour Government would not uphold any regime that did not enjoy the support of the people. He said that Spain must be freed from the Franco regime, and, if necessary, the Labour Government would bring economic pressure to bear upon the situation.[114]

Mr. Bevin had made a statement of disapproval as to the Franco regime. But the National Executive Committee, the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, and the External Affairs Group of the Parliamentary Party went on record saying only that they "hoped" that the Labour Government would seek to restore democratic government in Spain.

France, the United States, and Great Britain ultimately did break off diplomatic recognition of Spain. But they

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[113] Elaine Windrich, British Labour's Foreign Policy (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1952), p. 174.

[114] Ibid., p. 177.

refused to interfere in Spain's internal affairs. It was, each said, up to the Spanish people to settle their own problem of government.

In regard to the Greek situation, British troops had liberated Greece from the Germans in 1944. The Communists attempted to take over in December, but failed. Pretense of cooperation between Greek leftist groups and the Greek Government ceased. Churchill's Government chose to work with the monarchists, and approved the decision of the Greek Government to hold elections before the plebiscite.

Bevin, believing that Greece was necessary for the defense of the Middle East against Communism, continued supporting the monarchy and Rightist forces. The Greek election of 1946 was boycotted by the Communists, resulting in a Royalist victory. A plebiscite recalled King George II to the throne. In 1947, the Communist leftists set up a rival government, but were shortly thereafter defeated through American economic and military assistance.

Great Britain's dependency on the United States did not cease with the advent of the Labour Government. During the War, Great Britain, in order to survive, had found it necessary to integrate its economy with that of the United States through the Lend-Lease Program. It had meant that supplies in large quantity were sent to England from the United States without immediate payment. Lend-lease was scheduled to stop when the War ended. In August, 1945, Japan

surrendered. An acute financial crisis developed in England. Immediate loans were negotiated from the United States and Canada. The heavy winter snows of 1946 and 1947, accompanied by an acute coal shortage, further weakened Britain's economy.

Attlee said he believed that "a society with gross inequalities of wealth and opportunity is fundamentally unhealthy." But he added, "We are not afraid of compromises and partial solutions. . . . We realized that the application of socialist principles in a country such as Britain, with a peculiar economic structure based on international trade, required great flexibility."[118]

As defense expenditure fell, taxation was increased. Greatly increased were direct taxes in the areas of higher incomes and inheritances. In the way of indirect taxation, a wide range of new protective duties were set up. The result was a reduction in the real value of higher incomes. The overall program, while not accomplishing far-reaching redistribution of income, did help alleviate extreme poverty. Basically there was not a great change in ownership or relative incomes, but general post-war recovery did begin to seep through and without extensive Socialist change, the economic situation of England began to improve, at least on the surface.

Meanwhile, in the spring of 1946, Winston Churchill gave a speech at Fulton, Missouri, in the presence of the President of the United States. He said that Soviet behavior

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[118]Attlee, As It Happened, p. 228.

posed a real threat to the Western nations. He proposed Anglo-American association and European Union based upon reconciliation of Germany and France. Churchill urged that the West retain its armaments until the United Nations became strong enough to ensure peace and security. He went on record as saying that the United States should retain at least temporary control of atomic weapons.

Left Wing reaction to this speech was formidable. It demanded that the Government repudiate the speech. Attlee refused to do so. Finally a motion of censure against Churchill was tabled by 105 Labour M.P.'s.

Harold Laski in an article in Forward, March 16, 1946, argued that Britain was not yet ready to choose between Russia and the United States. Churchill's statement could not be accepted, since he was a well-known "black reactionary."[116]

April 4, 1946, Laski, in Forward, said that the only explanation possible for Soviet fear of the West was the American refusal to share possession of atomic secrets with Russia.[117]

Harold Laski was Chairman of the 1946 Conference of the Labour Party at Bournemouth. Here he reiterated this charge, "No small part of the responsibility for Russian suspicions must be borne by those who have decided upon secrecy in rela-

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[116] Meehan, The British Left Wing and Foreign Policy, p. 85.

[117] Ibid., p. 87.

tion to the atomic bomb."[118] His opening speech also summed up the Left Wing attitude. "As a Socialist Party, we must regard it as a tragedy in which our responsibility is grave, that Spain is still crushed beneath the ugly tyranny of Franco . . . . What is true of Spain is also true of Greece."[119]

He appealed for England and the Soviet Union to be united in order to fight for attainment of a socialist world. He proposed that the West should disarm, unilaterally if necessary. It was his contention that if Britain should make a supreme effort to stop the drift toward war by seeking to mobilize the forces of peace all over the world, that the Soviet Union would cooperate. But if Russia refused to discuss peace on these terms, then the West would know where it stood.

The powerful national Union of General and Municipal Workers refused to accept this position on foreign affairs. It pledged "hearty" support for Ernest Bevin.

Bevin spoke to the Conference. The resolutions which he accepted were passed by the Conference and those he opposed were "roundly defeated" or were withdrawn. The Conference ended with Bevin and the Government being endorsed by the overwhelming majority of the Conference.[120]

Winding up the Conference, Laski made the comment,

> I thank my fellow members of the National Executive, who have looked at me during this past year with a

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[118] Ibid., p. 89. [119] Ibid. [120] Ibid., p. 92.

> combination of malevolence and charity that is unexampled in modern time. . . . The skeleton now goes back to the cupboard. The Socialist Gestapo now receives a new chief . . . . I go from the position in which the press has placed me back to the obscurity of the academic ivory tower where I dwell.[121]

The case of Laski v. Newark Advertiser Co. came up in the courts in late 1946. During the 1945 general election campaign when Laski had been traveling around the country on speaking tours for the Labour Party he had stopped over for a meeting in the Newark market square. He had been questioned about his views on revolution and had been described by the Newark Advertiser as having advocated violence. The Daily Express had picked up the story and amplified it with the headline, "Laski Unleashes Another General Election Broadside: Socialism Even If It Means Violence." The Daily Herald had carried a reply and denied the Express story, saying that Laski was planning to take legal action. The Labour Party rank and file displayed their confidence in Laski by collecting the large sum necessary to pay for the libel action.

The basis of Laski's case was that he had never advocated revolution by violence in any town including the Newark market place. The principal feature of the trial was the long cross-examination of Laski by Sir Patrick Hastings. Hastings compelled Laski to give complete answers full of modifications and conditions which made Laski sound long-winded and evasive. Passages were quoted from his books and articles. The jury reached the decision that the report in

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[121] Martin, Harold Laski, p. 178.

the Newark Advertiser was accurate and fair.

Laski wrote to Noel-Baker, new Chairman of the Labour Party, and offered to resign from the Executive Committee. Noel-Baker replied that, "this would be wrong in every way, and the P.M. with whom I have discussed it, agrees in this view."[122]

Meanwhile, the Left Wing of the Labour Party was increasingly dissatisfied as to the progress of Socialism at home and abroad. The socialist parties of Europe in 1946 showed disastrous failure at the polls. The Bournemouth Conference majority support for Bevin's foreign policy meant that England's Labour Party Government would not enact, in the Leftist's opinion, a socialistic foreign policy--which would assist these socialist parties on the continent.

Under the leadership of R. H. S. Crossman, Michael Foot and Ian Mikardo, the Leftists decided upon the desperate measure of challenging the Labour Government in the House of Commons. The purpose, however, was not to bring down the Government, but to force it to change its aims.

R. H. S. Crossman, spokesman for the group, expressed the hope that the Government would change its approach to international affairs and would encourage and collaborate with all "to secure full Socialist planning and control of the world's resources." For to do so was to provide a "Socialistic alternative" to American capitalism and Soviet Communism.[123]

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[122] Ibid., p. 168.

[123] Windrich, British Labour's Foreign Policy, p. 167; Meehan, The British Left Wing & Foreign Policy, p. 90.

Attlee spoke in the Government's defense before the vote was taken. He rejected the "neutralist" concept and denied that foreign policy could be Tory or Labour. He maintained that the Government was carrying out a socialist policy by working with social and economic organizations, and by encouraging the socialist movements in Austria, Germany, and Italy. The Government believed in supporting the United Nations and working for international organization in the interest of peace and prosperity for all peoples of the world. World planning, he said, was necessary for the achievement of peace by positive means.

The Labour "rebels" tried unsuccessfully to withdraw the amendment. When the vote was taken, the Amendment was rejected by 353 to 0, with most of the leftists abstaining. British policy remained unchanged.

In 1947, Great Britain did resume trade relations with Russia and the satellite countries. But, as Attlee said of this period, "As the friction with Russia increased, Britain naturally drew closer to the U.S. . . . Americans were also disillusioned with Soviet Russia. The two English-speaking countries began to see that their close cooperation was essential to world peace and prosperity."[124]

Laski's opinion of the Soviet Union had remained relatively unchanged over the years. He admitted that it was true that the "Classical Freedoms" did not exist in Russia. But

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[124]Attlee, As It Happened, p. 238.

he argued that the basic character of the Soviet Union was different from that of Hitler. "There is no evidence of the reappearance of a class that lives by owning . . . .The regime is built upon the principle of planned production for community consumption."[125]

To Laski, it seemed a terrible thing for a Labour Foreign Secretary to give up hope of cooperating with a nation that he felt had accomplished more than any nation since the French Revolution. Great Britain should find out the root causes of Russian hostility and remove them as far as was possible.

Laski suggested to Attlee in 1947 that he send a mission to Moscow to talk with Stalin. Attlee accepted his suggestion and sent such a mission composed of Laski and some of the other Labour leaders. Attlee did not appoint Laski to act as chairman.

The mission apparently achieved nothing. Shortly thereafter, the Soviet Union took over Czechoslovakia. But neither this act of aggression or the death of Jan Masaryk had any effect upon the thinking of Laski and the Left Wing.

> He [Masaryk] would not have died . . . if it had been possible to make Mr. Churchill understand how urgent it was to make genuine friendship with Soviet Russia . . . instead of thinking of our alliance with Russia as a temporary partnership. . . . He would not have died if America had grasped the vital fact that

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[125] Laski, Liberty in the Modern State, p. 27.

> to convince Soviet Russia that its fears were groundless was the indispensable condition of enduring peace.[126]

Laski believed that England should turn to the Soviet Union and turn away from the United States. To seek financial aid from the United States would result in the reactionaries in Congress stifling British Socialism. In fact, he did not believe that the capitalistic United States would aid socialistic Britain.

Attlee concluded that "perhaps the decisive event in establishing the new alignment was the Marshall Plan."[127]

General Marshall, in June, 1947, made a speech to the effect that the United States believed European recovery was the necessary first step for establishing world peace and prosperity. The United States wished to help financially in European recovery and the offer was open to all European countries including the Soviet Union.

Poland and Czechoslovakia at first accepted General Marshall's offer, then withdrew the acceptance under Soviet pressure.

In Attlee's opinion, "The withdrawal of these acceptances at the orders of the Kremlin . . . was, in fact, a declaration of the 'cold war'."[128]

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[126] Meehan, The British Left Wing and Foreign Policy, p. 136 (From Harold Laski, article in Forward, March 20, 1948.)

[127] Attlee, As It Happened, p. 238.

[128] Ibid.

Bevin spoke to the House of Commons about the Marshall offer. He stated that it was now apparent that it had not been Great Britain or the United States dividing Europe, but it had been the Soviet Union creating the difficulties.

Laski wrote Justice Frankfurter:

> I wish I could share Bevin's ardent faith in the Marshall offer, but I think it was done in the wrong way, that it was badly timed, and that it has been set in a perspective which opens ugly horizons. . . . It is not, I think, unfair to argue that the U. S. has made a peaceful counter-revolution since 1945 and that the men who made it are using their overwhelming economic superiority to force Europe and Asia into the pattern they approve. Believe me, that is going to mean civil war in Europe, perhaps before this winter is over, and that will lead on quite directly to the third world war.[129]

Interestingly, however, by early 1948, most of the Left Wing had come to accept England's need and acceptance of Marshall Aid, rejecting the Laski position.[130]

The Palestine issue created much division and confusion in the Labour Party Since Palestine still continued as a Mandate of Great Britain from the League of Nations. Jewish Zionists, even during the war, had been determined to build a Jewish state in Palestine. The Arab states opposed such a plan and wanted the Jews to remain a protected minority in Palestine. The Labour Party favored the Zionists, and Churchill's Coalition Cabinet supported the Arab League.

After the war, the Zionists were trying to make real their dream of a Jewish state. Bevin chose to continue the

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[129]Martin, Harold Laski, p. 190.

[130]Meehan, The British Left Wing and Foreign Policy, p. 133.

policy pursued by the Coalition Cabinet, as he expected the Arabs to win. It meant repudiating the dominant view in his own party.

Laski, reflecting the Zionist viewpoint, wrote in a letter to Justice Frankfurter: "I have had an angry and futile correspondence over it [Palestine] with Attlee; bitter recriminations with Bevin . . . Bevin has got to a stage of anti-Semitism that is fantastic."[131]

In 1947, Great Britain, unable to bring about an acceptable solution to the Palestine controversy, turned the problem over to the United Nations. The United Nations then decided on a plan of partition. Bevin would not agree to the plan of partition unless both the Jews and the Arabs found it acceptable. The Arabs refused to accept the United Nation's solution.

The Executive Committee of the Labour Party issued a majority report favoring the Zionist movement and partition.

> The Prime Minister, however, denounced the majority report as fantastic, complaining that to accept it would be to repudiate Bevin . . . Bevin had "staked his reputation" on solving the Palestine problem.[132]

One of the International Labour Party subcommittees of the Labour Socialist International recommended to the British Labour Party Executive Committee that the Government be urged to accept the National Executive Committee's majority report. Attlee ignored the recommendation.

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[131] Martin, Harold Laski, p. 205.

[132] Ibid.

Finally, Great Britain, unable to bring about a solution to the situation, gave up and pulled its troops out, leaving the issue to be settled according to the United Nations' Partition Plan which meant leaving the Jews and Arabs to fight it out.

Immediately, upon British withdrawal in 1948, the State of Israel was then proclaimed by the Zionists. War began between the Arabs and Israel. In 1949, United Nations mediation was accepted by both sides. The Arabs had lost the war and had increased Israel's holdings by one-half.

However, Laski was bitter about the manner in which Bevin had handled the Palestine affair, despite the Israeli victory and creation of Israel.

> In spite of the strong support he received from Mr. Attlee . . . the house had no real doubt that Mr. Bevin's policy was indefensible; and large-scale abstentions from its own side brought the immense Labour majority down to 80. . . . This virtual defeat compelled a change in policy.[133]

The British Government officially extended recognition to Israel in 1950. The Left Wing, meanwhile, continued to struggle to define the meaning of a socialist foreign policy. Laski continued to affirm his faith that such a foreign policy could promote a federal world order.[134]

Late in 1946, the Fabian International Research group

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[133]Harold Laski, Reflections on the Constitution (New York: The Viking Press, 1951), p. 35.

[134]Harold Laski, "Socialism as Internationalism," Fabian Research Series, No. 132 (London, 1949).

began an inquiry into setting up a Socialist foreign policy for Great Britain. The result was a pamphlet entitled "Foreign Policy: The Labour Party's Dilemma" by Leonard Woolf. It contained an introduction by Laski and a critical note by W. N. Ewer, diplomatic correspondent of the Labour Party paper, The Daily Herald. It was unusual in that all three of the writers were in disagreement with one another.

Woolf concluded that British foreign policy for the next few years would have to be peace and collective security. Britain must avoid power politics and be impartial but not neutral. Woolf recognized that such measures were not necessarily Socialistic.

Laski maintained that there was such a thing as a Socialist foreign policy. However, he did not say what such a policy was. Ewer affirmed the fact that he believed cooperation with the United States was necessary at the present time, and that since the world was engaged in power politics, Great Britain could not turn its back upon the situation.[135]

Prime Minister Attlee became concerned at the divisive effects the discussion of the Government's foreign policy was having upon the Labour Party. For four months, British Cabinet ministers made the rounds in England explaining the Government's foreign policy to private Labour Party meetings.

The 46th Labour Party Conference held at Margate in

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[135] Leonard Woolf, "Foreign Policy: The Labour Party's Dilemma," Fabian Research Series, No. 121 (London, 1947), pp. 3, 7-9, 13.

May, 1947, became a battleground over foreign policy. The Left Wing was very bitter and Bevin was angry over the uprising the "rebels" had staged in Parliament.

Bevin revieved his policy. He claimed that the charge that the Government was carrying on its foreign policy in the Conservative tradition was not true. The Conservatives, sought a permanent and exclusive Anglo-American alliance expressly directed against the Soviet Union, while Labour was accepting common action with the United States only where there existed a common interest. This action did not exclude the possibility of similar collaboration with Russia. The Labour Government had fought against the nations dividing into spheres of influence. It had fought for a united, independent Europe.[136]

He condemned the "rebels" in general and Zilliacus in particular. Bevin concluded by suggesting to the Conference the type of response they should make to the various resolutions. His suggestions were accepted to the letter by the powerful union bloc. Proof of party unity came when a card vote of 4,007,000 to 234,000 rejected a foreign-policy manifesto by the Leftists.

After the Conference, the Left Wing voiced its dissatisfaction in its own press. Bevin "was accused of lack of principle, of undemocratic practices, of using the emotional

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[136] Windrich, British Labour's Foreign Policy, p. 189.

appeals of the trade union movement to drown free discussion."[137]

In 1947 and 1948, Laski led two Labour delegations to Bevin, protesting his foreign policy. Laski took this manner of action because he could not win majority support from the Executive Committee.[138]

The blockade of Berlin was set up by the Soviet Union in June, 1948. This Berlin Blockade became a turning point in regard to Western hostility toward Russia. In England, it united all but the Left Wing in support of Bevin's foreign policy regarding the Soviet Union.

Meanwhile, with the help of the Marshall Plan, Britain supported a program of social welfare. Industrial production advanced steadily and exports for the first quarter of 1949 amounted to 156% of the 1938 level. Full employment was realized to the point that there was a scarcity of labour. This acted slightly to increase the real wages, helping to bring about a balance in financial power.

The trade volume was satisfactory, but its direction was wrong. In the sterling area, Britain was not selling enough goods to the dollar area to pay for dollar imports. The Government decided upon a policy of devaluation. It was announced in 1949 that the pound was devalued from $4.03 to $2.80.

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[137] Meehan, The British Left Wing and Foreign Policy, p. 114.

[138] Martin, Harold Laski, p. 206.

The devaluation was received with bitterness in Europe. England had not consulted with the other countries as to its intentions. However, in an attempt to placate them, Britain reduced trade barriers, removed many import quotas, and abolished permits on many types of goods. All of these actions helped to bring about a better balance in financial power in England.

Laski increasingly began to insist that both the United States and the Soviet Union were equally guilty and equally responsible for the current international tension. Despite a certain disillusionment with Russia, he could never quite accept the Marshall Plan.

"The barbaric ruthlessness of the Russian leaders has been at least as evil as the immaturity and incoherence with which America has displayed its overwhelming power."[139]

It was true that the mixing of British and American affairs did entail some inconveniences and irritations for England. For example, the United States wanted England to stop its trade with Russia and the satellite countries. However, England continued to do as it thought best.

March, 1948, the Brussels Treaty was signed by Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxemburg. The objective of the Treaty was to provide military and other assistance in case of an armed attack in Western Europe.

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[139]Harold Laski, "Let's Start Over," The Nation, CLXVII, No. 27 (1948), p. 604.

The North Atlantic Pact, committing England to the defense of the North Atlantic Community, was given endorsement in Parliament by a vote of 333 to 6. The only opposition came from the Communists and from the Left Wing independents who had been expelled from the Labour Party.

Bevin asserted that the Pact was necessary because of the failure of the United Nations Security Council to guarantee peace. He believed that the Western nations were driven together as a matter of self-defense. He was hoping that strength might encourage the Soviet Union to live peacefully with the other nations. Bevin denied that the British approach to Europe had become largely military in the traditional mode of British diplomacy. Still, he argued, rearmament was necessary to prevent war.

The needs of the Atlantic Community for more armed forces and armaments created new problems for England. To satisfy these quotas meant that productive energy and materials had to be diverted from the consumer and export goods to the arms manufacturers. Because Britain enjoyed full employment, it proved hard to get additional manpower for the army and expanded defense plants. The aimed for redistribution of income which had been promised by the Attlee government was challenged by the new needs.

Laski could no longer accept the decisions of the Labour Government and the National Executive Committee without protest. In the Executive Committee, he could do no

more than make proposals. When they came to a vote, he was hopelessly outnumbered. He was bound by their decisions. In order to speak freely, he resigned from the Executive Committee in February, 1949.[140]

A Council of Europe, made up of Belgium, Denmark, France, West Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Saar Territory, Sweden, and Turkey, was created in 1949. It was considered to be a first step toward a federation of European states. It consisted of a committee of ministers and a consultative body.

In January of 1949, Bevin made a speech before the Foreign Press Association in London. "I would regard it as a crowning event to establish European unity on a sound, definite, and progressive basis."

He claimed that his ultimate objective was "a practical organism in Europe in which we should cease to be English or French or other nationality, and would be Europeans, with an organization that would carry out a European policy in the face of new developments in the world."[141]

His remarks brought him difficulties from both the Labour Party and the Conservatives. As it turned out, Bevin actually favoured European integration only as long as it did not include a loss of British sovereignty.

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[140]Martin, Harold Laski, pp. 179-80.

[141]Fitzsimons, The Foreign Policy of the British Labour Government, 1945-51, pp. 99-100.

The Council of Europe had under consideration the Schuman Plan, which proposed that the coal, iron and steel industries of Germany, France, and Western Europe be placed under a supranational authority. France insisted on initial acceptance of supranational authority. The final British position was a cordial caution which expressed the hope that when the plan took shape, Britain would find it acceptable.

Attlee was on record as having said that "Europe must federate or perish." But he believed that to make such an idea practical was difficult indeed.

> Britain has never regarded itself as just a European power. Her interests are world-wide. She is the heart of a great Commonwealth. . . . We favoured every effort to effect greater European integration . . . but we could not enter into engagements to the full extent possible to the continental powers.[142]

In any event, it was doubtful that the Labour Government could have conceived of giving up sovereignty over national economic planning to a capitalist federation. Sufficient union for Great Britain both traditionally and in Labour Party thinking was military alliance, limited convertibility of currencies, and liberalization of trade.

Laski himself believed that "little is gained . . . by thinking in terms of territorial federation--of a U. S. of Europe, of a Federated Western Europe."[143]

With strong encouragement from the Left Wing, the National Executive Committee issued a pamphlet entitled,

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[142]Attlee, As It Happened, p. 242.

[143]Laski, Liberty in the Modern State, p. 18.

"European Unity." It expressed the impossibility of joining capitalist and socialist economies. The Labour Party's enemies and many Europeans seized upon this as an explanation of the Labour Goverament's unwillingness to participate in the Schuman Plan.

Sympathetic Conservative support for Bevin's foreign policy ceased with the publication of "European Unity." Conservatives did not disagree with Labour's policy principles, but protested the ineptitude of Labour's methods.

Churchill felt that the traditional British method of clouding the issue with negatives rather than outright disavowal had not been adequately handled. Attlee's policy towards the Schuman Plan made Britain's position too clear.

For the first time since 1945, the Conservatives pressed for a vote in the House of Commons. Shortly thereafter, Attlee called for a general election.

During the five years of the Labour Government, nationalizing legislation had included the Bank of England in 1945, the Housing Act of 1946, the Fuel and Power Act of 1946, National Health Insurance in 1946, the Town and Country Planning Act of 1948, and the Iron and Steel Act of 1950. Perhaps the two most important pieces of legislation were the Housing Act and the Town and Country Planning Act.

The Housing Act had provided subsidies to enable local authorities to build houses to let at reasonable rates. Special subsidies were provided to make houses available for

certain specified classes. During Attlee's Government, approximately one and one-half million homes were built.

The Town and Country Planning Act was a direct result of the Uthwatt Report which had been endorsed by the Coalition Government. It was passed to supplement the Housing Act and to provide an overriding control over the utilization of land. This made possible the coordination of planning throughout the country. It confirmed and enlarged the powers of the Central Land Board established in 1943.

In order to prevent too much centralization, it provided for plans to be drawn up by County or County Borough Councils, and the plans to be published locally in order to obtain public reaction before they were submitted to the central authorities for final approval. The idea was not to forbid, but to see that the right kind of development took place on the right kind of land.

The Board was empowered to decide which land would be in the development areas. Once designated, such land became subject to compulsory purchase by the Board if the owner could or would not develop it in accordance with the Act. Proper compensation was paid to those wishing to sell. Thus, some of the land belonging to large estates was purchased and redistributed to the people in this way.[144]

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[144]Keith C. Clark, "The British Labour Government's Town and Country Planning Act: A Study in Conflicting Liberalisms," Political Science Quarterly, Vol. LXVI (1951), pp. 87-103.

There was no opposition in the Labour Party regarding such nationalization legislation. Now the Conservatives tended to support some of the legislation the first three years. Much opposition was not encountered until the Iron and Steel Act.

Attlee commented that, "Members of the wartime government in opposition were . . . committed to support the broad principles of our social-reform legislation and had accepted full employment as an objective for any government.[145]

Laski viewed the legislation as moving in the right direction. However, he was skeptical that the achievements of the Attlee Government would be permanent unless based upon a "real" transference of power. He did not believe that the Attlee program went far enough nor deep enough.[146] He said,

> There is no remedy now for our ills save . . . the planned production of our economic resources for community consumption. This means . . . private ownership of the means of production must go with it . . . the class structure of society.[147]

In the area of foreign affairs, the Labour Government, over the five-year period, had nominally allowed Trans-Jordan in 1946 to become independent; also, India and Pakistan in 1947, Burma and Ceylon in 1948, Eire in 1949. India, Pakistan and Ceylon voted to remain in the Commonwealth.

At the end of the war, Great Britain did not feel it

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[145]Attlee, As It Happened, p. 231.

[146]Martin, Harold Laski, p. 172.

[147]Laski, Liberty in the Modern State, p. 23.

had the economic power to "bribe" or force the colonies to remain in the Commonwealth or under English sovereignty. At least temporarily, England had become a "paper tiger."

Attlee did not believe in maintaining the pretext of the British Empire having the necessary economic power. Churchill was very bitter about this. He fought to the last against India being given its freedom. However, many of the Conservatives were in agreement with Attlee and gave his colonial policy able and necessary support.

The problem in parting with the colonies, the Attlee Government discovered, was "not the unwillingness of Britain to part with power, but with arranging for the succession."[148] India illustrated well the difficulty of Britain "to part with power." Attlee was forced finally to set a deadline for India's freedom in order to get Indian leaders to unite long enough to prepare for assuming the leadership of their country.

Laski, a strong advocate of Indian freedom very much approved of Attlee's actions in regard to India. He said on innumerable platforms that Indian students could not be taught the doctrines of Mill and Milton and then be expected to accept second-class citizenship in their own country.

> When Mr. Attlee . . . took his great and brave decision about the future relations between Great Britain and India, he and his colleagues not only had behind them a generation of strong support from successive annual conferences of the Labour Party . . . but the National Executive.[149]

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[148] Attlee, As It Happened, p. 256.

[149] Laski, Reflections on the Constitution, p. 135.

On the issue of decolonialization Laski did not differ with the Party leadership. Thus, when the 1950 election campaign opened, the Labour Party claimed that in regard to foreign policy, it had enabled Britain to regain her position in the Western world and had won vast support in Asia and Africa. Britain had become a symbol of justice and social advancement. If the Labour Party retained power, it would continue to work realistically for peace by supporting the United Nations and the rule of law among nations, it would strive to put England financially on its feet and would join other countries in helping build more economic and social opportunities for all men, and it would work against poverty and unemployment both at home and abroad.

Still it admitted recovery at home was the basis for all other issues.[150] In this 1950 election campaign, however, the Labour Party kept the subject of nationalization to a minimum. Instead, full employment and social security received primary emphasis.

Aneurin Bevan made the official statement in the campaign in regard to nationalizing industries: "We have nationalized the industries we have pledged to nationalize and which were part of the folk lore of the Socialist movement for half a century."[151]

Nevertheless, Laski, still hopeful of further gains

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[150] Windrich, British Labour's Foreign Policy, pp. 194-95.

[151] Leon D. Epstein, "Socialism and the British Labour Party," Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 66 (1951), 559.

for Socialism, wrote to Attlee before the election:

> Those who gave you victory in 1945 have the same resolute determination now as then that the outcome of events will be the invigoration and refreshment of your power. There is a spiritual revolution in the making in this country, and the strength of which is mobilized behind your efforts.[152]

In the election results, the Labourite majority in the House of Commons was reduced from 146 to 7. Such a slender majority meant that the Government could not propose any new major controversial measures. Also, it meant that the Government had to be careful not to offend any minority within the Parliamentary Labour Party. This situation acted to paralyze the initiative of the Government.

Harold Laski, against the advice of his doctors, had taken a most active part in the election campaign. The activity proved to be too much. He died on March 24, 1950.

Korea was invaded in this same year of 1950. Great Britain had recognized the Communist Government in China in 1949 and, as a consequence, it also refused to recognize Syngman Rhee's authority beyond the thirty-eighth parallel. When the United States requested that the United Nations impose sanctions against China because of Korea, Britain found it necessary to reject this new proposal. However, it was finally agreed upon in the United Nations that China should be condemned for engaging in aggression in Korea. Conservatives and Labourites were in agreement that war against China was to be avoided.[153]

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[152] Martin, Harold Laski, p. 241.

[153] Fitzsimons, The Foreign Policy of the British Labour Government, 1945-51, pp. 137-45.

Britain also found itself in trouble with Egypt. This problem had begun before the ending of the War. Great Britain had signed the Suez Canal Treaty in 1936, which gave her government an important part of the stock in the Suez Canal Company and protected British garrisons on Egyptian territory. The treaty, however, was to terminate in 1968. During the War, Egypt began making demands for independence and withdrawal of British forces. When Bevin became Foreign Secretary, he made no conciliatory gestures such as offering Egypt financial aid partly due to England's own financial problems. Both countries needed the revenue from the Canal.

In 1949, the Wafd Party demanded the evacuation of the Canal Zone and the independence of the Nile Valley. The Egyptian Government also banned oil shipments through the Canal to the Haifa refinery in Israel. This caused Great Britain humiliation and expense. To retaliate, in 1950, Britain suspended its shipments of tanks and planes to Egypt. The British Government made one more effort at reaching a solution by offering to evacuate the Canal Zone within five years. The offer was rejected. The Egyptians withdrew the laborers from the bases, at the Canal and encouraged guerrilla warfare against the bases.

Finally, in October, 1951, Egypt unilaterally abrogated the Treaty, and open guerrilla warfare began.

Shortly after this, England's most profitable overseas investment, the oil refineries in Iran, became a major issue. The National Front of Dr. Mossadegh made the pronounce-

ment that nationalization was the cure for all of Iran's problems. Attlee replied firmly that the British would not give up their oil rights.[154] By 1951, the situation became impossible. Britain had little choice but to withdraw or use armed force. It withdrew.

The Conservative Party immediately called for a new national election, charging that the Labour Government had failed to gauge the temper of anti-imperialist nationalism in Iran and to deal with it in the best possible manner.

To further complicate Prime Minister Attlee's position, Aneurin Bevan and Harold Wilson resigned from the Cabinet to protest rearmament and Korea. Bevan's purpose was to try to gain leadership of the Labour Party. However, he did not succeed, although he did unite much of the Left Wing behind his effort.

In the General Election of October, 1951, the Labour Party was defeated. Attlee returned to the House of Commons as Leader of the Opposition. The actual depth of the enacted Labour Party program was then tested. Harold Laski had feared that the Labour Government had not brought about fundamental and enduring change in Britain. His fears proved to be justified under Churchill's Government. During the following months, some of the industries nationalized during the Labour Government were returned to private ownership by the Conservatives.

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[154] Ibid., pp. 165-73.

CHAPTER IV

VIEWS AS TO LASKI'S INFLUENCE

A. Questionnaire

A questionnaire was mailed to a number of former associates and those possibly familiar with events concerning Laski and that period. The questionnaire was mailed May 20, 1964. The letter stated that it was my desire to gather as much direct evidence on the subject as was possible from those who knew or were associated with Professor Laski.

More specifically, the questionnaire was sent to forty-three people and to Labour Party Headquarters at Transport House in London. In order to get a cross section of opinion, two lists were compiled. One contained the names of friends of Laski or people who had been closely associated with him in some way, and the other list was composed of people linked with Attlee.

Twenty-seven people replied to the letter. Only ten answered the questionnaire in full or in part. Seventeen sources declined to answer the questionnaire for a variety of reasons. Transport House was one of those. Seventeen did

not reply at all. Of the ten answering the questionnaire in full or in part, six were from Laski's list and four were from Attlee's. Some of those not answering the questionnaire did make pertinent comments of value in one way or another.

The Labour Party Headquarters at Transport House in London:

> I think that, since this department is not in a position to give a considered view on Laski's influence on the Labour Government, it would be more profitable for you to write to the individuals who were involved in the actual events. Lord Attlee and Lord Morrison of Lambeth are two people who spring to mind.

Letters and questionnaires were sent to Lord Attlee and Morrison. Neither replied.

Justice Felix Frankfurter of the United States Supreme Court replied,

> All that I could tell you I suspect you will find in Kingsley Martin's biography of Laski. . . . I turned over to Mr. Martin all of my correspondence with Laski and therefore anything relevant to your thesis must have been included in those letters.

Arthus Schlesinger, Jr., wrote,

> I really must confess a growing impatience with students across the country who seem to expect other people to do their work for them. Your own research--and not your public opinion polling--should produce the answers to your questions.

Professor Arthur V. Judges brought out that the questionnaire was "more susceptible to treatment as makers of opinion than the peremptory 'yes or no'" would allow.

Marghanita Laski, Harold Laski's niece, declined to answer because of not having "an authoritative basis" on which to answer.

Professor Joseph Burke, University of Melbourne, Australia, replied:

> I cannot quite answer the questions you have raised because my appointment as private secretary to Lord Attlee was a Civil Service, not a political one, and I am, therefore, bound by the obligation to treat all my wartime service as confidential. . . . My brother John was a student under Laski . . . and tells me that he was one of the most brilliant lecturers he had.

Dame Edith Summerskill and the Right Honorable G. R. Strauss declined to answer the questionnaire because of loyalty to both of the men involved. Professor Kingsley B. S. Smellie, London School of Economics, declined to answer on the basis of lack of information in that particular area, although he had known Laski well as teacher, friend, and colleague. Eight others sent regrets without additional comment.

The names of the ten who wholly or partly answered the questionnaire included: Right Honorable Philip Noel-Baker, M.P.; Right Honorable Christopher Mayhew, M.P.; J. B. S. Haldane, scientist, then in India; Professor Clarence Crane Brinton of Harvard University; Professor W. A. Robson, London School of Economics; Max Lerner of the New York Post; Right Honorable Kenneth G. Younger, M.P.; Right Honorable Emanuel Shinwell, M.P.; Professor R. T. McKenzie of the London School of Economics, and author of British Political Parties; Sir Julian Huxley, scientist. Two of the letters specified that they were to be considered confidential and to be used for background only.

One of the general questions asked was, "Do you think Laski had an appreciable influence on the British Labour Government, 1945-1951?" Six answered "no"; one answered "yes"; two answered that he had a little influence; and one gave no answer.

A more specific question was: "Did Laski exceed his authority while serving as chairman of the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party? (a) By his visits as guest speaker before the Socialist parties of various nations on the Continent?" Five answered "no"; none answered "yes"; one answered "probably"; and four gave no answer. "(b) By his statements to the British press?" Four answered "no"; none answered "yes"; five gave no answers; and one answered "a little in regard to Potsdam." "(c) By his prodding of the Executive Committee to influence Attlee's administration?" Four answered "no"; none answered "yes"' five gave no answers; and one said yes and no, "as an individual yes; as chairman, no."

A second specific question: "Was Attlee justified in publically disavowing Laski's influence and the influence of the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party in regard to his Labour Government's policies?" Seven answered "yes"; none answered "no"; and three gave no answer.

A third specific question was: "Was Ernest Bevin's foreign policy opposed not only to Laski's thinking, but also by the majority of the British Labour Party at that time?" Two answered "yes"; four answered "no"; one said in some ways;

and three gave no answer.

Still a fourth specific question was, "What was the point of major dissension between Laski and Attlee?"

Professor Robson said that "there was no 'point' of major dissension." He was inclined to think that there were several. He said:

> Attlee was a practical politician with an immense burden of responsibility and faced with great post-war problems. Laski was an intellectual with no personal responsibilities and with little practical sense. This was the basic cause of friction. Attlee resented Laski's attempts to force his pace . . . while Laski was probably resentful at Attlee having refused to offer him a position in his Government or as Ambassador to the U. S.

Right Honorable Kenneth Younger said:

> The point about Laski was that he was a Marxist, which none of the parliamentary leaders of the Party were. He tried to use his party machine to compel the parliamentary leaders to carry out Party policies, while the other leaders believed in the primacy of Parliament and were determined that once the Party was in office, its parliamentary representatives should decide on policy--The parliamentary representatives were on the side of Attlee and Bevin on this--probably two to one against Laski.

One person replied confidentially that the major point of dissension was "a different calculation about the Soviet Grand Design for world power."

Another confidentially brought out the fact that:

> Laski regarded himself as the man behind the throne; entitled to advise on policy, and considered that his views should be accepted. . . . Attlee objected; nobody outside the Cabinet had the right to determine policy of the Government. The Party Conference was to formulate principles; the Labour Government decides their application according to circumstances. . . . Laski sought to influence some members of the Cabinet; he may have met with some success, largely because of personal relations.

Four did not reply to the question.

A fifth specific question was: "What do you think was Laski's basic inadequacy while serving the British Labour Party, 1945-51?" Three people gave no answer.

Right Honorable Shinwell commented, "Who says Laski was inadequate? He served the Party well."

However, others disagreed with him.

"He had an extremely naive view of both the Party and of Socialism."

Professor Brinton said, "He was too far left--like Trotsky in 1924-1927."

Max Lerner felt that, "He intellectualized the issues in true Marxist dogma."

Professor Robson believed, "He had no sense of what was expedient or practical, as distinct from what was desirable."

Right Honorable Younger commented that, "He was too intellectual--academic. He had great influence with young intellectuals, but not much on machine politicians or on most of the trade union leaders."

Professor Haldane commented that:

> No book or article on Laski is meaningful if it ignores the fact that he was a chronic liar. . . . He made up statements about the immediate past. . . . It must have been a fatal handicap to him in politics, particularly in his dealings with Attlee.

A second general question was, "What do you think was Laski's major contribution?"

"(a) To the British people in his lifetime?"

Professor Robson answered, "He was a great teacher and a political thinker of permanent importance."

Sir Julian Huxley commented, "All I know about him is his remarkable influence on many generations of students at the London School of Economics."

Professor Brixton, Professor Haldane, Max Lerner, and Professor McKenzie brought forward the thought that he was a "political theorist . . . helped the break with India to be less"; he was important in "constitutional and other studies"; "he was a great teacher above all else"; " he was a great teacher."

Right Honorable Younger said that his influence had been felt by a whole generation of intellectuals before and during World War II.

Professor Shinwell believed Laski's major contribution to be the fact that he "helped to maintain freedom of opinion."

The Right Honorable Noel-Baker believed, "Laski was an excellent University teacher. . . . He rendered real service by the stand which he took over freedom from India."

One person did not reply to the question.

"(b) To the British Labour Party while he served in its ranks?"

Three did not answer the question.

Right Honorable Younger felt that, "He provided a

focus for Left wing opinion outside the Communist Party, and so helped to keep most of the Left in the Labour Party."

Right Honorable Shinwell commented, "A valuable propagandist and writer." Another, "Through his propagandist activities (pre 1945), he no doubt converted many thousands to Labour's cause."

"He was sometimes--though by no means always--an effective speaker in Labour Party constituency meetings. His Chairmanship of the Labour Party National Executive Committee was not in any way distinguished."

Professor Robson felt that he was important for "inspiring younger men." Of importance too was "his grasp of principle, his fighting spirit, and his . . . faith in Socialism."

"(c) To the Attlee Administration, 1945-51?"

To this question, four made no reply. Six commented that Laski had contributed from nothing to very little. The sprinkle of comments said: "not much," "little influence," "almost nothing," "didn't amount to much."

Professor Shinwell said, "None, but he was useful to some members."

Right Honorable Younger replied, "Almost none. . . . My remarks may be . . . colored by the fact that I knew Laski only after 1945, and this was, in my view his least effective and influential period."

To conclude the questionnaire, the comment was made:

"Please add anything you feel might be pertinent to this subject."

Six people added nothing.

Right Honorable Christopher commented:

> The ascendancy of the Parliamentary Labour Party over the Labour Conference and the Executive Committee has since been fully demonstrated by the great Party controversy on unilateral nuclear disarmament.

Professor Brinton repeated that he thought it important, the comparison of Laski with Trotsky. He considered them both to have great intelligence and no tact.

Right Honorable Younger believed that, "Laski . . . Labour got into power--was facing practical day to day problems of government, he became relatively insignificant."

It is evident that all of the people who answered the letter and the questionnaire had a very high regard for Harold Laski and for his many and varied abilities. Also, it is evident that there is some disagreement as to Laski's actual accomplishments. However, the beginning hypothesis of the thesis is upheld--that Laski did not directly have much influence upon the British Labour Government of 1945-1951.

B. General Summary

As it was stated in the Introduction of this thesis:

> The hypothesis of this thesis is that Mr. Laski did not directly exercise significant influence, either of a positive or negative nature, upon the British Labour Government policies and actions between 1945-1951. But, in being one of the leaders of the opposition within the Labour Party, he strongly encouraged free expression of opinion within the

Party and the Nation, and he prodded clearer statements of policy from the Government in regard to vital issues confronting Great Britain. Thus, Laski was not only a remarkable teacher and sometimes an effective propagandist, he was also a "public leader" even if not a good politician.

Again, it must be stated that it is relatively impossible to determine with scientific precision the influence a person has on an empire or state. In this case, reliance has had to be placed upon the orientation and expectations of Prime Minister Attlee and Professor Laski, upon the official actions of the British Labour Government, upon opinions expressed by people who were associated with the Government at that particular time, and upon the opinions of writers who have examined this period in retrospect. The general material available upon this subject is extensive, and to do justice to the subject would require another ten years. But specific material showing Laski's influence is cursory and often vague.

The difficulties involved in assessing the influence or impact of a person or even a group of persons was demonstrated in regard to Margaret Cole's book, The Story of Fabian Socialism.[155]

Philip Poirier said of the book,

> The study is weakest in assessing the impact of Fabianism on English society. It is, to be sure, a formidable task to analyze what was unique about this brand of socialism

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[155] (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961).

and to measure what distinct contribution it made to actual reform[156]

Poirier believed that "no really satisfactory assessment of Fabian influence on the climate of opinion and on the course of legislation in Britain"[157] was possible until a great deal more study had been done over the whole area. He concluded that her study was the best available on the subject.

By way of concluding this thesis, it is the opinion of this writer that the evidence shows Laski did not directly have an appreciable influence on the British Labour Government, 1945-1951. This was found to be true for several reasons.

The evidence indicates that organization of the Labour Party itself held Laski's influence to a minimum. Even as Chairman of the National Executive Committee in 1945-1946, Laski's influence was limited in the Party Conference by the conservative trade unions who supported Attlee, and it was limited in regard to the parliamentary party. As events proved, the parliamentary leader was the dominant figure in the Party, particularly when the Labour Party became the governing party in England. And Attlee confirmed this fact by taking it upon himself to define explicitly the function of the Executive

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[156]Philip P. Poirier, Review of The Story of Fabian Socialism by Margaret Cole, Political Science Quarterly, LXXVII (1962), 440.

[157]Ibid.

Chairman in relation to the leader of the Labour Party, limiting the former. Attlee in his capacity could limit Laski in his capacity, but the reverse proved not possible.

Laski's influence on the Labour Government also was limited by the fact that Laski was a leader of the Leftist minority in the Party. The Left Wing itself proved to have little influence on the Labour Government's specific policy making decisions. One important reason for this was the Left Wing's lack of unity, and another was the Conservative Trade Union influence. There were also other reasons such as need of the Labour Party to win the middle class voters in the elections, etc. Laski's influence might have been much greater if the general influence of the Left Wing had itself been greater.

Attlee's actions as Prime Minister did much to lessen Laski's influence. Attlee pulled out of Parliament and into his Cabinet a number of the major Leftist leaders who might have caused him difficulties. Thus, the Left Wing strength in the House of Commons was weakened.

Laski's theories did not seem to the Party leaders to apply to England's situation. He was often too dogmatic in regard to economic determinism, and now and then he appeared to be confused concerning authority and liberty. As a result, sometimes his own intellectual arguments limited the effectiveness of his frequent political pronouncements.

Also, Laski's influence upon the Government might have proved stronger had the Labour Party had a more clearly defined program. Thus, Laski's influence was less strong because Attlee and his Cabinet acted to define the program in a somewhat pragmatic way in day-to-day situations.

Crucial to Laski's influence upon Attlee and ultimately the Labour Government, was the fact that Laski was often tactless in his utterances, alienating many of those he chose to influence. Shortly before and after Attlee became Prime Minister, Laski twice placed Attlee in awkward public positions, forcing Attlee to publicly repudiate Laski's influence. Laski also once rebuked Prime Minister Attlee in front of Labour Party collegues.

These factors are, in the opinion of this writer, the basic reasons Laski did not greatly influence the Labour Government under Attlee. However, there is no doubt that Laski both tried and thought he had the capacity to be a powerful figure in influencing the Government.

In regard to the major events which actually took place during the Attlee Administration, Laski was in agreement with the achievement of full employment, the nationalization of some of the basic industries, the freeing of the colonies by Great Britain, England's trading with the U. S. S. R. and the satellite countries, Attlee's stand against England's joining the Schumann Plan, and Britain's recognition of Communist China.

Laski was in disagreement with Attlee over Attlee's accompanying Churchill to Potsdam, the choice of Ernest Bevin as Foreign Secretary, Britain's breach with Russia, the Marshall Plan and Britain's close association with the United States, the rearmament program in regard to the Atlantic Community and Korea, and England's failure to take over Socialist leadership in Europe. Laski and Attlee disagreed over Laski's usage of his influence abroad, Churchill's Fulton, Missouri, speech, atomic bomb development and secrecy. The Palestine situation was a major issue of disagreement. Laski also was against the Atlantic Community and the Brussels Treaty.

Laski and Left Wing expectations had been to have no breach with Russia, to free the colonies, no close association with the United States, against maintenance of heavy military expenditure, and to have Britain as a real socialist state and Socialist leader in Europe.

At the 1946 Labour Party Conference at Bournemouth and the 1947 Conference at Margate, Laski and the Left Wing discovered themselves in the minority in regard to their attempt to influence the conferences to bring about a change in the foreign policy being carried out by the Attlee Government. The majority upheld the Government. The Left Wing revolt in Parliament, a singular attempt, was quickly crushed. Laski's delegations of protest to Bevin accomplished little if anything, directly or specifically.

Notable changes of policy by the Labour Government, contrary to the Labour Party Conferences prior to 1945 and contrary to the Parliamentary Party when in Opposition, were those concerning Spain, Greece, and Palestine. The Labour Government reversed its policy and did not support British action against Franco in Spain, it supported the monarchy in Greece, and it uphold the Arabs concerning Palestine. In regard to Palestine, the Labour Government did not accept and follow a majority recommendation of the National Executive Committee to support the Zionists rather than the Arabs.

Even in 1937, Attlee had stated that,

> Action in the House is a matter for the Parliamentary Party, the members of which decide on the application of Party policy. The Labour Party Executive is the body to interpret policy between conferences, but in its own sphere the Parliamentary Party is supreme.[158]

Attlee noted that in the old Liberal Party and in the Conservative Party far more power was conceded to the Leader. "The final authority of the Labour Party is the Party Conference."[159]

> The machinery of the Labour Party provides for the ventilation of grievances and the alteration of policy or tactics in accordance with the will of the members. criticisms can be made openly and replies to them.[160]

Laski, on his part, strongly criticized the Labour Government and its system of procedural response to suggestions and criticism, saying that it had been harder to deal

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[158]Attlee, The Labour Party in Perspective, p. 100.

[159]Ibid., p. 92. [160]Ibid., p. 110.

with than Churchill's Government.[161] He found that many of the Labour delegations that visited various members of Attlee's Cabinet met with somewhat frigid receptions.[162]

Professor Epstein's judgment is in accord with Laski's rather than Attlee's in this matter.

> Often credence has been given to Labour's own claim that its mass organization is the policy-maker. The great merit in recent studies is to demonstrate the similarity . . . of the roles assigned by Conservatives and by Labour to their external parties. In fact, Labour's mass organization is only slightly less clearly subordinate than is that of the Conservatives.[163]

Professor Allan Potter, on the other hand, disagrees with this view:

> The parliamentary group is allowed a great deal of discretion in determining when and how to implement the decisions of the Party Conference, but basically the M.P. is pledged to the decisions of the Conference, not to the policies of the parliamentary group or leaders. The purpose of the strict discipline of the Labour Party . . . is to ensure that no group of individuals, particularly the parliamentary leaders becomes more important than "the movement" as a whole.[164]

The Manchester Guardian Weekly made the statement in 1949 that, "The Labour Party Conference has never yet opposed a Labour Government on any important aspect of policy."[165]

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[161] Laski, Reflections on the Constitution, p. 130.

[162] Ibid., p. 82

[163] Epstein, Political Science Quarterly, Vol. LXXI (1956), 108.

[164] Allen Potter, "British Party Organization," Political Science Quarterly, Vol. LXVI (1951), 77.

[165] Manchester Guardian Weekly, June 9, 1949, p. 8.

In Laski's opinion, the Prime Minister broke up insurgent groups by offering the leaders a place in the Cabinet, and he handled persistent critics by asking the National Executive Committee to put pressure on them, ranging from a semi-official hint to actual expulsion from the Party.[166]

Attlee had said in 1937, "The leader of the Party in the House is also the Leader of the Party in the Country."[167]

At that time, he made clear that, in his opinion, the National Executive carried out the policy, made decisions between Conferences, and carried on the general administration of the Party. It did not make decisions for the Parliamentary Party. This view he carried out in his Administration.[168]

Laski commented rather bitterly,

> The Party leaders, when in office, take the view very strongly that their responsibility is to Parliament as the Government, and not to members of the Labour Party . . . . The peculiar composition of the Party's National Executive makes it, on all matters of doctrine, an instrument of the leaders in office which is incapable of effective independence.[169]

He condemned the trade unions for using their power to assure obedience from their membership. As a result, only on the rarest occasions would an appeal from the Executive Committee to the annual conference be successful if it went against the Labour Government for the overwhelming voting

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[166] Laski, Reflections on the Constitution, p. 79.

[167] Attlee, The Labour Party in Perspective, p. 111

[168] Ibid., p. 95.

[169] Laski, Reflections on the Constitution, p. 81.

power of the Conference was in the trade unions.

"The trade-union leaders will go a long way with a Labour Government," he said, "for their loyalty to 'our Government' is strong."[170]

"But," says Professor Potter in disagreement with Laski, "there is a point beyond which they will not go, and a Leader of a Labour Government who insists, as Ramsay MacDonald insisted, on going beyond that point no longer remains Leader of a Labour Government."[171]

Professor Epstein wrote in 1956 that Labour and Conservative practices in regard to their methods of avoiding responsibility to the mass membership were now much the same. This, he said, was the result of the strength of British parliamentary tradition and of Labour's experience as a responsible governing party, although Labour's leaders, unlike the Conservative leaders, did have to contend with the "antithetical tradition of intra-party democracy," which was the basis upon which the Labour Party was founded.[172]

Ultimately, the primary responsibility of both parties was to the electorate. The leadership in Parliament was the place where this responsibility was actively carried out. It remained true that the Labour Party leadership, unlike the

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[170] Potter, Political Science Quarterly, Vol. LXVI (1951), pp. 80-81.

[171] Ibid.

[172] Epstein, Political Science Quarterly, Vol. LXXI (1956), pp. 118-118.

Conservatives, could secure majority support in the Labour conference without having the support of rank-and-file activists.

The Potsdam issue raised openly by Laski forced Attlee to point out publicly that parliamentary leadership consulted with the Executive, but that no instructions did emerge or could emerge from such consultations. The National Executive mostly reflected the policies of the Parliamentary Party.

"Since 1945, even among critics of the Labour Party, the charge of external dictation has not seriously been raised."[173]

Laski tried to prove the same thing for different reasons. He believed that the Parliamentary Party was not carrying out its stated mission when it did not carry out party conference decisions in its functions as the governing party. He charged that, even within the Parliamentary group itself, one man, the Prime Minister, tended to tell the group what to do and the private member had little actual opportunity to express his opinion.

> The whole structure is really an elaborate facade behind which little that is effective really takes place. . . . A direct challenge . . . carries penalties with it which it is not easy to ask an ambitious young member to accept.[174]

Since some members of the Labour Cabinet had seemed to be most uncooperative in regard to visiting deputations

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[173] Ibid., p. 117.

[174] Laski, Reflections on the Constitution, p. 70.

of Labour Party members, Laski suggested that the best safeguard was making the Cabinet collectively responsible for the decisions made by its members. Also, it would act to set a necessary limit to the power of the Prime Minister.[175]

In order to assure the cooperation of future Foreign Secretaries, Laski recommended that the House of Commons create an advisory committee having the power to summon before it the Secretary of State.[176]

It is interesting to note that before the Labour Party took over the Government in 1945, Laski had been satisfied with the Cabinet system under the then existing political circumstances. And he had believed that if the Prime Minister were less powerful, it was doubtful that he would be able to maintain himself in office.[177]

Laski considered that there was no coordination between the Parliamentary Party and the National Executive Committee. He claimed this to be the cause of the Parliamentary Party being so rigid in its authoritative role of active leader. He recommended regular monthly meetings between the two groups in order to discuss matters of joint interest and to increase the influence of the Executive Committee in government policy making.[178]

As stated generally above, Laski's influence on the

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[175]Ibid., p. 113. [176]Ibid., p. 87.

[177]Laski, Parliamentary Government in England, p. 258.

[178]Laski, Reflections on the Constitution, p. 81.

Labour Government was limited by the fact that he was one of the leaders of a minority group within the Labour Party that had little influence upon the Labour Government. There were several specific reasons why the Leftists had such little influence upon the Labour Party.

To begin with, in the pragmatic tradition the tenets of British Socialism were far from clear. And the Left Wing ideology was taken from British Socialism. Despite its "firm support" for collectivist theories, the Left, thus, remained the "most individualistic element" in the Labour Party--diverse in its views.

> The lack of unity is little more than an open manifestation of the very real differences of opinion that divide the Left Wing into tiny splinters on any particular issue. . . . There has seldom been complete agreement on a specific policy, and even then . . . agreement was not based on the same reasoning.[179]

Lack of unity and organization and hostility from some of the powerful trade unions helped to reduce its influence. The fact that the Left Wing was part of a broader group inhibited it from becoming an organized body of opinion. Also, the fact that it was attached to the "bourgeois" freedoms made it unlikely that the Left would acquiesce to authoritarian international and Leftist control.[180]

As a substitute for stated tenets, popular cant often became infallible dogma and was used to prove Left Wing argu-

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[179]Meehan, The British Left Wing and Foreign Policy, p. 31.

[180]Ibid., p. 174.

ments. Thus, a certain consistency or rigidity of argument developed in support of collectivist theories despite the diversity of views. On the other hand, regardless of the actions of the Soviet Union, support seldom faltered in their behalf. As a result of this unwillingness to compromise in argument or about Russia, the Leftists were forced further and further into an unreal view of international affairs and into a minority position relative to the domestic program. This rigidity acted to minimize their influence upon the Labour Government.[181]

As Professor Meehan has said, "The actual influence of the Left Wing . . . hardly reached the level that might be expected."[182]

Still it has been argued that, "While the influence of the Left on policy-making within the Labour Party was relatively limited, their intellectual prestige was great."[183]

A notable fact was that members of the Left Wing who were elevated to high office almost always deviated from their previously held views. An example was Attlee who had been rather close to the Left Wing in the 1930's.

During the Attlee administration, many people of varied political views had much to say about the probable reaction

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[181] Ibid., p. 177.

[182] Rothman, Political Science Quarterly, Vol. LXXVI (1961), 304.

[183] Meehan, The British Left Wing and Foreign Policy, p. 31.

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to the program being carried out by the Socialist Government. Laski, it may be recalled, had predicted that if the Labour Party took office and tried to make changes of a socialistic nature, there was possibility of a counterrevolution.

However, Professor Arnold Rogow brought out the fact in his book that, "There was some talk of violent resistance . . . . But such sentiments were in no sense typical of British business opinion."[184]

One example of such talk was a speech made by J. Gibson Jarvis, Chairman of the United Dominions Trust, Ltd. He believed that if the Socialists continued in power and pursued their present course, that "the country would rise up against them." He affirmed that he believed in constitutional methods, but he also believed that if "reckless" and "incompetent" people were running the country, then rebellion was the only course possible in order to save the country.[185]

Thus, Attlee had to contend with both the pacifism and class-warfare thinking of the Leftists in the Labour Party, and the political threat of extreme Right Wingers.

The real goal of the cause was for the British Socialism to overthrow the capitalist system in England and substitute a socialist state. They hoped that this could be done by peaceful means. And, as peace was their international

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[184]Rogow, The Labour Government and British Industry, 1945-51, p. 179.

[185]Ibid., p. 179, n. 1.

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goal, many of them could not reconcile themselves to rearmament,[186] or to less than what was in their opinion wholehearted Socialism.

Meanwhile, the extreme Right Wing Conservatives had Coln Brogan as spokesman.

> The Labour Party's plan is to control things and not men. . . . They have gone more than half-way to totalitarianism. . . . The Socialist leaders had themselves to be corrupted by Marxism before they corrupted their followers. . . . The Labour Party has torn the fabric of national unity. . . . It has taught Britons to believe that other britons are their implacable enemies.[187]

Brogan did admit that the electorate were showing a "very disconcerting mood." They insisted on voting for the Labour Party. Apparently, he believed, the electorate were afraid that if a non-Socialist Government came to power there would be mass unemployment.[188]

Meanwhile, the Right Wing of the Labour Party was most pleased with the manner in which Attlee's Government proceeded. They insisted upon gradualism and the democratic processes. Thus, they argued that the achievements already obtained would be extended toward a socialist Britain. Equality and social welfare were seen as the highest priority goals of government. Other economic arrangements than nationalization would be the instruments by which these goals

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[186] Meehan, The British Left Wing and Foreign Policy, p. 34.

[187] Coln Brogan, Our New Masters (London: Hollis & Carter, 1947), p. 219-22.

[188] Ibid., p. 221.

were to be achieved.[189]

Actually, as stated above, the meaning of Socialism in Great Britain was far from clear. In theory, it was directed primarily toward internal problems. It was to correct the injustices that Socialism conceived as flowing from the excesses of capitalism. This left Prime Minister Attlee much leeway to interpret day-to-day activities in the light of practical politics. It also meant that his Government was roundly criticized by varied Labour Party groups as not having achieved socialistic goals either abroad or at home.

Laski insisted that, "The Labour Party was trying to transform a profoundly bourgeois society . . . into a socialist society, with foundations not less secure than those it seeks to renovate."[190]

Opinion varies concerning whether Attlee's Government succeeded in its domestic and foreign program to change the foundations of society in England.

In Professor Elaine Windrich's opinion, Attlee's Government did maintain a continuity of the aims and principles of the Labour Party's foreign policy program, and did not maintain a continuity of Churchill's program. The Labour Party Government had always opposed secret diplomacy, the balance

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[189]Kurt L. Shell, Review of "The Future of Socialism, by C. A. R. Crosland, Political Science Quarterly, Vol. LXXIII (1958), p. 128.

[190]Harold Laski, "The Road to Recovery," Efficiency in Government (London: Fabian Society Lectures, 1945), p. 50.

of power, militarism and imperialism. It had uphold as the Opposition party open diplomacy, international cooperation, collective security, arbitration, rule of law in international relations, self-determination of nations. Its objectives had remained the same as they had been as an Opposition party: the achievement of peace and security.[191]

Disagreeing, Professor Matthew Fitzsimons has pointed out that the foreign policy statements of the Labour Party and the foreign policy of the Labour Government were not at all the same. The foreign policy of the Labour Government was a continuation of Churchill's foreign policy.

"The continuity of British foreign policy prevailed because British interests remined the same and the suspicion of state for state survived."[192]

The result, in Dr. Fitzsimons opinion, was that on all issues of foreign policy, it was difficult to find a major issue upon which the Conservative and Labour leaders disagreed.

Professor Windrich brought out that the Labour Government applied the fundamental principles of Socialism to international affairs by "establishing Socialism on a firm basis at home, by encouraging Socialism abroad, and by aiming at the extension of international planning and cooperation."[193]

Any discrepancy occurring between the theoretical basis of Socialism and the practical application were a result

[192]Fitzsimons, The Foreign Policy of the British Labour Government, 1945-51, p. 179.

[193]Windrich, British Labour's Foreign Policy, p. 256.

of the fact that in foreign affairs, a government does not have the same "immediate" power to apply its principles as it has in domestic affairs.

Professor Fitzsimons, disagreeing with Windrich, believed that if a discrepancy existed between the foreign policy of the Labour Party in Opposition and its policy on the assumption of power, it was because the Opposition's program was largely formulated by the Labour Party's National Executive Committee and Conference. Whereas, when the Labour Government foreign policy was formulated, Bevin consulted with the Foreign Office staff and the Cabinet. After that, the Parliamentary Party was consulted, and it could not openly oppose Bevin without overturning the Government.[194]

Professor Windrich admitted that on certain issues, such as France and Spain, the Labour Government had not applied socialist principles. But, she added,

> In such instances, the conditions which normally limit any government's determination in foreign policy--the inheritance of previous commitments and the necessity of concurrence from other foreign powers--go a long way toward explaining the policies adopted by the Labour Government.[195]

She believed that the Labour Government's primary interest was building a successful socialist experiment at home so that Great Britain could become a counterattraction to the United States and the Soviet Union.

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[194]Fitzsimons, The Foreign Policy of the British Labour Government, 1945-51, p. 24.

[195]Windrich, British Labour's Foreign Policy, p. 258.

But, in many people's minds, there was a question as to whether the foundations of English society had been truly transformed and made secure towards becoming a socialistic society, certainly, Laski and the Left questioned this.

In retrospect, Professor Rothman brought out that both the revisionists and the Conservatives felt that the Labour Government had failed to achieve "traditional socialist categories." The failure was not a result of attempting too little, but of merely grafting reforms on to the capitalist structure. The bases of society had not been transformed by the Labour Government.[196]

Professor Rogow agreed that the Government had fallen short of its stated goals. The result had been the creation of a mixed economy with the means of production still largely under private ownership. He found that the Labour Government had made only limited use of central planning. It had delegated important planning decisions to a variety of organizations, both Government and non-Government. Furthermore, much of the planning had been negative in that controls over the economy were passed which were designed to restrain or prohibit certain activities, rather than promote and foster them.[197]

He did not believe that the Government had had as

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[196]Rothman, Political Science Quarterly, Vol. LXXVI (1961), 397-98.

[197]Rogow, The Labour Government and British Industry, 1945-51, pp. 182-83.

objective the radical reshaping of British society of a nature that would have tested the political foundations of the Nation. He predicted that the chief obstacle of the future of Socialism in England would be the Welfare State which it had helped to create. However, he concluded,

> It would be unfair . . . to suggest that the Labour Party betrayed either its hopes or its promises. In the first place, the "gradualist" approach to social change, which was first identified with Fabian Socialism, has long been a central conception of Party doctrine. . . . The lack of theory was to some extent responsible for incomplete results.[198]

Harold Laski had strongly believed that the Labour Party needed a more decisive and clear theoretical program. In his many years with the Party, he tried, in his speeches and writings, to sum up what he believed should be the objectives for a realistic socialist program in England. In addition, he hoped to play a decisive role in that effort.

Thus, in 1920, he had written to Holmes of his decision to leave Harvard and go to the London School of Economics. He stated, "It brings some very real political influence within my grasp."[199]

After his return to England, over a period of thirty-five years, he wrote approximately thirty books and sixty pamphlets and hundreds of articles; he became very active in the Labour Party, advising its leaders, serving on the National Executive Committee, and as its Chairman in 1945-1946; he

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[198] Ibid., pp. 6-7.

[199] Deane, The Political Ideas of Harold J. Laski, p. 336.

became a teacher and political theorist of world renown, and a political propagandist of great repute.

It has been said that some of Laski's adherents,

> . . . may claim that he should not be judged as a political theorist. . . . Laski considered himself primarily as a theorist and . . . it was in the field of political thought that he made his greatest impact upon students and scholars the world over.[200]

At the same time, in the opinion of many people, he managed to become "one of the most controversial figures in the academic and political world of the twentieth century."[201]

As a person, Laski was often tactless. Politically, this created many problems for him with Attlee and others. As a result of the Potsdam incident, in which Laski informed the press that Attlee would only go to the Conference as an observer, Attlee came to the conclusion that Laski's political judgment "was not very good." A chairman of the Executive Committee should not make statements of that kind to the press.[202]

After this incidence, and Laski's many speeches on the continent, Attlee seemed disinclined to turn to Laski for advice. At various times, however, in regard to particular issues, this did not deter Laski from continuing to write

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[200] Carroll Hawkins, Review of The Political Ideas of Harold J. Laski, by Herbert A. Deane, Political Science Quarterly, Vol. LXX (1955), 604.

[201] Hawkins, Political Science Quarterly, Vol. LXV (1950), p. 604.

[202] Attlee, As It Happened, p. 203.

Attlee expressing his opinions.

Meanwhile, Laski received no thanks from the Kremlin for his pro-Soviet and Left Wing views. The Russians denounced Laski for his "anti-Soviet propaganda." Pravda commented that he specialized in "proving the advantages of bourgeois democracy over Soviet Socialist democracy."[203]

The Soviet Union disliked the fact that Laski stated at times that the revolution could take place peacefully and without a dictatorship, and that there was the possibility of non-Communist Socialism. Also, Laski, after the War, had advised European Socialists to cooperate with the Communists but never to fuse with them. Finally, they were angered by his attempts to organize the Socialists in Western countries into a bloc.

Before World War II, Laski had believed that violent revolution was the only method of transition to Socialism. During the War, as pointed out above, he came to believe that peaceful transition might be possible. After the War, he deplored gradualism as traitorous to the Labour Party ideal. Still, by 1948, after observing the Labour Government, he came to the conclusion that the transition could take place without revolution.

Also, by 1948, Laski changed his opinion in regard to keeping the Communists out of the Labour Party. Up until then, he had supported the acceptance of their membership.

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[203]Martin, Harold Laski, A Biographical Memoir, p. 104.

He decided that the Labour Party and the Communists did not share at all the same thinking in regard to England's system of parliamentary democracy. Having them in the Labour Party might be harmful to the Party in regard to the electorate.

Regardless of this fact, in his later years, he remained a "Menshevik" in outlook. He continued to believe that all social ills could be cured by Marxism.[204]

Professor Deane, a noted authority on Laski in the United States, believed that, "His Marxism enabled him to give glib answers to any problem about which he was asked to write or speak, and the answers fell into a monotonously simple pattern."[205]

Thus, to many critics Laski's world seemed divided between Capitalism as the source of evil, and Socialism as the source of good. With this simple formula, he tried to provide the answers to a wide range of complex political and social problems.

For this reason, Deane claimed that an extended analysis of Laski's economic discussions were unrewarding. They were vague, incapable of precise interpretation; some were inaccurate; some were unsupported by necessary evidence.[206]

Laski's chronic attachment to contradictory and confusing views, his penchant for rhetoric, his periodic

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[204]Catlin, The American Political Science Review, Vol. XLVI (September, 1952), 644.

[205]Deane, The Political Ideas of Harold J. Laski, p. 338.

[206]Ibid., p. 194.

> apologetics for communist totalitarianism, his affinity for dogma have long been known to those who have "lived a little" with their subject.[207]

Professor Martin, first a student of Laski's and then his friend and teaching colleague, in his well-known and authoritative analysis of Laski's writings, complained that, "He wrote too much, repeated himself too often, neglected those periods of lonely thought out of which creative ideas spring, and so was less effective than he could have been.[208]

In summary, Doune commented that Laski "never achieved the distinction as a political scientist or as a scholar in the field of political philosophy that was promised by the erudition and brilliance of his early essays."[209]

He believed that Laski had spread his intellectual energies too thin. It resulted in Laski's longer works having a tendency to be repetitious and poorly organized. Laski attempted to cope with too wide a range of subjects. By being unwilling to limit himself, he sacrificed "depth of insight" and "careful scholarship."

Martin agreed that, "Academically he did not fulfill the promise of the brilliant historical and legal work of his Harvard Law Review days."[210]

The reason for this, he believed, was that Laski's

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[207]Hawkins, Political Science Quarterly, Vol. LXX (1955), 603.

[208]Martin, Harold Laski, p. 247.

[209]Doune, The Political Ideas of Harold J. Laski, p. 334.

[210]Martin, Harold Laski, p. 246.

scholarship became overwhelmed by the political urgencies of the day. Also, Laski did hold the view expressed by Marx that a philosopher's task is to change society and not merely to interpret it.

Still, both Martin and Deane agreed that Laski did succeed at being both a scholar and a political thinker. But, they were not of the opinion that his contributions were of great significance.

Deane suggested that no one caught up to a great extent in the workings of a modern political party could hope to make a significant contribution to scholarship.[211]

Martin, commenting upon the significance of Laski as a political leader wrote:

> A man who wishes to lead a revolutionary movement, or . . . to redirect a party's policy, must change the balance of power within the party, must make it to the interest of its leaders to change their minds, or of their followers to change their leaders. That involves working with other men in a team, taking the knocks and rewards of party politics, and inevitably to some extent loosing the type of respect and influence which is paid to the scholar and teacher.[212]

Deane commented that after 1945, Laski wrote little that indicated he was developing new ideas. His last major work, The American Democracy, which was published in 1945, was outdated, appearing as if it were even a quarter of a century after its time.

However, Deane admitted to the fact that, "Throughout

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[211] Deane, The Political Ideas of Harold J. Laski, p. 338.

[212] Martin, Harold Laski, p. 240.

his life the ultimate ideals that Laski cherished remained the same, and he pursued them with zeal and unusual selflessness."[213]

Also, he commented,

> Some of the ablest young minds in England and America were profoundly influenced by him . . . He spoke to the questions that were uppermost in their own minds . . . . He talked in language that was intelligible to them . . . he was willing to communicate to them the meaning that he found in life, and that he was confident that men could create a better society if they determined to do so.[214]

Martin saw teaching as having had first place in Laski's life. He cared about the issues and brought them alive to his students. He argued with them on a basis of equality and respect. He did not pretend to be impartial, but told the students what he thought and helped them to see the difficulties in his position. He had "a genius" for teaching.[215]

> But a few men in our day gave themselves to completely to the struggle to solve the perennial dilemma, which in those times is reflected in the relationship of liberalism to collectivism. One may also hazard the guess that few men in this century will provide so stimulating a challenge to thought upon this problem.[216]

In conclusion, although Laski did not have significant influence upon the leaders and the policies of the

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[213]Deane, The Political Ideas of Harold J. Laski, p. 339.

[214]Ibid., p. 344.

[215]Martin, Harold Laski, p. 250.

[216]Hawkins, Political Science Quarterly, LXV (1950), 250.

Labour Government in 1945-1951 in specific instances, he was important in helping to preserve freedom of opinion at several rather crucial times. He lived and acted upon the belief that the critical spirit must not be discouraged, even when it was less than helpful. Perhaps, above all else, this would be his choice for an epitaph.

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Questionnaire

Attlee, Earl Clement Richard--did not reply.

Bacon, Alice M.--did not reply.

Berdahl, Prof. Arthur Clarence--did not reply.

Brinton, Prof. Clarence Crane--answered letter and questionnaire.

Burke, Joseph T. A.--answered letter. Did not answer questionnaire.

Butler, Right Honorable Richard A.--did not reply.

Caine, Sir Sydney--did not reply.

Canfield, Cass--did not reply.

Churchill, Right Honorable Sir Winston--Secretary replied that Sir Churchill did not answer questionnaires of that type.

Frankfurter, Mr. Justice Felix--answered letter. Did not answer questionnaire.

Ginsberg, Prof. Morris--did not reply.

Greenwood, Right Honorable Anthony--did not reply.

Gunston, Sir Derck--did not reply.

Haldane, John Burdon Sanderson--answered the letter and the questionnaire.

Henderson, Right Honorable Arthur--answered the letter, but not the questionnaire.

Herbert, Sir Alan--did not reply.

Huxley, Sir Julian--answered the letter and answered part of the questionnaire.

Judges, Prof. Arthur V.--answered letter. Did not answer questionnaire.

Laski, Marghanita--answered letter. Did not answer questionnaire.

Lawson, Baron John James--did not reply.

Lerner, Max--answered the letter and the questionnaire.

Lippman, Walter--answered the letter but not the questionnaire.

McKenzie, Prof. Robert Trelford--answered the letter. Confidentially answered the questionnaire.

Mayhew, Right Honorable Christopher P.--answered the letter and the questionnaire.

Menon, V. K. Krishna--did not reply.

Menzies, Prime Minister Robert--Secretary answered the letter. Questionnaire unanswered.

Morrison, Lord Herbert Stanley--did not reply.

Moyle, Right Honorable Arthur--answered the letter, not the questionnaire.

Murrow, Edward R.--did not reply.

Nehru, Shri Jawaharial--He died shortly after the questionnaire arrived there. His secretary answered the letter for him.

Neuberger, Senator Maurine B.--answered the letter. Declined to answer the questionnaire.

Noel-Baker, Right Honorable Philip--answered the letter. Confidentially answered the questionnaire.

Pound, Prof. Roscoe--His secretary answered the letter for him, but the questionnaire remained unanswered.

Robson, Prof. W. A.--answered the letter and the questionnaire.

Russell, Earl Bertrand--His secretary answered the letter. He declined to answer the questionnaire.

Schlesinger, Dr. Arthur, Jr.,--answered letter. Did not answer questionnaire.

Shinwell, Right Honorable Emanuel--answered the letter and the questionnaire.

Smellie, Prof. Kingsley B. S.--answered letter. Did not answer questionnaire.

Strauss, Right Honorable George R.--answered letter. Did not answer questionnaire.

Summerskill, Baroness Edith.--answered letter. Did not answer questionnaire.

Transport House, Labour Party Headquarters--answered letter. Did not answer questionnaire.

Truman, President Harry S.--did not reply.

Wigg, Right Honorable George Edward C.--did not answer.

Younger, Right Honorable Kenneth G.--answered the letter and questionnaire.

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Norman, Oklahoma 73069

May 21, 1964

Dear Sir:

I am hopefully writing an article for publication entitled, "The Influence of Harold Laski on the British Labor Government, 1945-51." It is my desire to gather as much pertinent information as possible from those who knew or were associated with Professor Laski. Needless to say, your help in answering the enclosed questionnaire would add an authenticity to the paper not otherwise possible.

Enclosed is a stamped envelope. Immediate response would be most appreciated.

Thanking you for your help in this matter,

Sincerely,

Rosemary Thompson

QUESTIONNAIRE

Subject: The Influence of Harold Laski on the British Labor Government, 1945-51.

Basis desired for answers to the questions: Your opinion.

Question I.

1. Do you think Laski had an appreciable influence on the British Labor Government, 1945-51?
Answer yes or no _____

Question II.

1. Did Laski exceed his authority while serving as Chairman of the Executive Council for the Labor Party:
   a. By his visits as guest speaker before the Socialist parties of various nations on the Continent? Yes or no _____
   b. By his statements to the British press? Yes or no _____
   c. By his prodding of the Executive Council to influence Attlee's Administration? Yes or no ___
2. Was Attlee justified in publically disavowing Laski's influence and the influence of the Executive Council of the Labor Party on his Labor Government's policies? Yes or no _____
3. Was Ernest Bevin's foreign policy opposed not only to Laski's thinking, but also to the majority of the British Labor Party at that time? Yes or no _____
4. What was the point of major dissension between Laski and Attlee?

Question III.

1. What do you think was Laski's basic inadequacy while serving the British Labor Party, 1945-51?
2. What do you think were Laski's major contributions:
   a. To the British people in his lifetime?
   b. To the British Labor Party while he served in its ranks?
   c. To the Attlee Administration, 1945-51?

Please add anything you feel might be pertinent to this subject. Thank you.

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