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A Socialist Foreign Policy

Decisions of Labour Party Conferences and declarations of labour leaders in the last few years add up to the elements of a Socialist foreign policy, set forth the purpose which that policy seeks to serve, and indicate the view of the world on which it rests.

To begin with the last: On July 23rd, 1957, Mr. Aneurin Bevan, speaking for the Shadow Cabinet in the House of Commons, pointed out that "there cannot be any differences about social systems so profound that we are prepared to run the risk of wiping out the whole of human society over them," and that "the (H) Bomb is no longer an instrument of diplomacy . . . It is not something with which one can influence the negotiations, because one cannot say 'Unless you agree, I will commit suicide.'"

Ordinary men and women are becoming impatient of all of us when we are dealing with this problem . . . The fact is that the ends which are served by national defence and the means adopted for defence are so far apart from each other today as to add up to no sense at all. No one believes that weapons which are weapons of mutual suicide are any longer means of national self-defence . . . That is how the ordinary man and woman look at it, and that is true of the Conservative rank and file as well as of the Socialist rank file. It just makes no sense.

On his return from the U.S.S.R. last September Mr. Bevan stated emphatically that the Soviet Union no more wanted war than we do, and in New York on October 28th he said that Communism was a social and ideological challenge, not a military threat; the alleged danger from Communist aggression was a myth.

These general views should be taken in conjunction with the view of the economic plight of this country adopted by Annual Conference at Blackpool in 1956, in a resolution that expressed alarm at the "crippling economic consequences of the present huge armament programme" and called for a "substantial reduction" in defence expenditure and our armed forces, and the introduction of measures for a planned economy capable of putting to productive work all those released from the armed forces and defence industries.

The 7% bank rate and the squabble between Thorneycroft and MacMillan as to whether the Welfare State shall suffer death by a thousands cuts or be decapitated at once, ram home this lesson. Mr. Peter Thorneycroft in his resignation speech of January 23rd, with commendable frankness, said our economic troubles were **due** to

attempting to keep up in the arms race and at the same time go on with the Welfare State.

It is impossible to stop inflation, i.e. hold down the cost of living and close the trade gap, or to end conscription, let alone carry out labour's glittering promises to expand the social services, provide higher pensions geared to the cost of living and a State superannuation scheme, municipalise rent-controlled houses and raise the standard of living - unless we cut the monstrous defence burden down to a half or a third of what it is today. That is an issue labour's leaders must have the courage and honesty to face. Hitherto the Right wing, which is determined to go on with the ruinous defence expenditure and does not share Mr. Bevan's views on the U.S.S.R. or nuclear weapons, has succeeded in making the Party evade this issue and ignore the Blackpool Conference resolutions. Labour's purpose in the world remains what it was when Mr. Attlee, as leader of the Opposition, told the House on March 14th, 1955, that

Essentially, we should try to bring together the United States and Soviet Russia, because the greatest danger in the world is the complete separation of those two great powers, and the fact that the U.S.S.R. fears the U.S.A., and the U.S.A. fears the U.S.S.R. - and fear is a bad counsellor.

There was an echo of that in Bevan's remark at Brighton that this country should exercise a "moderating and mitigating influence" on both Soviet and American policy.

Declarations of purpose merged into policy statements in the Morecambe Conference resolution of 1952, reaffirmed in the National Executive's resolution on Commonwealth and foreign policy adopted at the 1953 Margate Conference. These resolutions warned the Party "against the danger of supporting anti-working-class forces in international affairs"; declared that "we can best serve the cause of peace by sticking to our distinctive Socialist principles and refusing to subordinate them to American, Russian, or any other pressures"; deplored "the condemnation of the risings of the oppressed peoples as Soviet-inspired plots"; and pledged the Party strongly to oppose "any suggestion that the armaments now being built up to deter aggression should be employed to impose on any other country changes in Government or internal policies, or to vary by force existing treaties," and to resist "the use of our military strength as a means of enforcing territorial changes in Eastern Europe or elsewhere."

Finally, at Blackpool in 1956 and Brighton in 1957 the Party adopted foreign policy resolutions which called for (a) the abandonment of "practices and policies that undermine the purpose and authority of the United Nations" and for efforts to strengthen it so that it can

"assume its proper role of ensuring peace, collective security and respect for the rule of law throughout the world." (b) "A positive Socialist foreign policy" and "general discussions with the leaders of the U.S.S.R., China and the People's Democracies." In the Middle East this policy asks for agreement with the Soviet Union to co-operate in controlling the traffic in arms and giving economic and technical aid through the United Nations, and in the Far East for "the admission at once of the People's Republic of China to the Security Council as a necessary preliminary to the solution of Asian problems." In Europe Labour's policy demands the unification of Germany by democratic means in an all-European treaty "designed within the framework of the United Nations Charter," and accompanied by an agreement for the reduction, limitation and control of armaments and withdrawal of foreign forces from both West and East Germany. To this the Parliamentary leadership had added withdrawal of Soviet forces from Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, whereas the 1957 Trades Union Congress demanded the evacuation of the whole Continent by British and American forces and the withdrawal of Soviet forces to their own territory.

If the Labour Party means business with these Conference decisions and declarations by its leaders this is what it should do :

(1) Declare that since Communism is a social challenge and not a military threat, the standard of living of the British people is our first line of defence. We shall therefore give priority to maintaining the Welfare State and cut the defence burden as much as is necessary for this purpose, as well as insisting on our right to trade freely in everything but arms and munitions of war with the 35% of the human race under Communist rule. In proclaiming this policy we should attack the Tories for butchering the Welfare State in order to be a bad third in an arms race which is ruinous, senseless and suicidal. And we should stress the need for more trade with the expanding socialist economies immune from slumps, in view of the incipient American depression.

(2) Announce that as Socialists to whom democracy is an integral part of Socialism, we have no quarrel with the Communists for making social revolutions in countries where the way of reform did not exist, but detest the police state and dictatorial aspects of the Communist regimes. We believe that peace, trade and friendly contacts between our people and theirs will strengthen the forces inside those countries that are pressing for more national independence and broader international co-operation, and want to reform the Communist regimes from within so as to change them from revolutionary (or rather, post-revolutionary and bureaucratic) dictatorships into socialist democracies.

The Tories, on the other hand, want to defend the old order. As their record and present policies show, they are willing to welcome as allies for this purpose fascists, feudal despots, military dictators, any kind of black and bloody tyrant and enemy of democracy. They do not want to help the Communist regimes to reform themselves into Socialist democracies. They want to destroy them because they are Socialist.

Labour should expose and attack the Tories on this issue too. We should point out that they have tied themselves to cold war aims which make any negotiated settlement impossible and that are inconsistent with the Charter of the U.N., incompatible with peace, interventionist and aggressive. They have made this country the expendable base and themselves the tools of Mr. Dulles' tactics of brinkmanship, his strategy of 'massive retaliation' and his policy of 'anti-Communist liberation.'

(3) Explain that our policy is peaceful co-existence, not anti-Communist intervention, miscalled liberation. That means Labour rejects the incalculable risks of H-Bomb power politics that follow from assuming the Soviet Union wants war, and accepts the calculated risk of concluding agreements with the Soviet Union based on the Charter, which assumes that the permanent members of the Security Council (the U.S.A., U.S.S.R., U.K., France and! China) will always consider it a lesser evil to settle their differences by peaceful means than to risk going to war with each other. On this view the great powers have a common interest in preventing the outbreak of little wars in which they might become involved!, by dealing co-operatively rather than competitively with " threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression " (in the words of the Charter).

(4) Arrangements based on the Charter, assuming a Soviet will to peace, cannot co-exist with arrangements based on the balance of power, which assumes a Soviet will to war; bring China into partnership through the United Nations in settling Far Eastern problems, means scrapping S.E.A.T.O., which is the instrument of a policy of imposing Western views on S.E. Asia and treating China as a potential enemy. Co-operation with the Soviet Union in the Middle East on the basis of our common obligations in the Charter is impossible unless we abandon the policy, embodied in the Eisenhower Doctrine and Bagdad Pact, of trying to build up anti-Soviet alliances and bases in the Middle East and treating the Soviet Union as a negligible quantity and/or potential enemy. An all-European treaty' based on the Charter within which Germany would be unified outside the rival alliances and which would be accompanied by an agreement for the reduction and control of armaments, and the with-

drawal of foreign forces from Germany and her neighbours, would involve dismantling both N.A.T.O. and the Warsaw alliance.

(5) Labour should proclaim the fact that it is our over-riding, long-term purpose to make the principles, purposes and obligations of the Charter paramount in international relations, and we shall press for solutions of current problems on lines consistent with this ultimate object. That means we shall work out the 'modalities of transition,' the steps by which the relations between the great powers can be progressively moved over from the balance of power, expressed in a nuclear arms race and clashing cold war aims, to the Charter, by means of disarmament conventions and United Nations regional agreements that will progressively supersede and wind up the rival alliances.

Let us take Europe as an example. The first step in a European settlement is to reduce tension by agreement on some such relatively simple issue as keeping Germany and the neighbouring 'People's Democracies' free from nuclear weapons and bases. This should be accompanied by measures for a progressive thinning out and withdrawal of foreign forces in this area, with arrangements for inspection and supervision.

But even such modest measures of military disengagement and relaxing of tension would profoundly affect political issues such as the unification of Germany and the future of N.A.T.O. and of the Warsaw alliance. Thus we cannot take even this first step unless we are clear about the second and third, that is, the unification of Germany within an all-European treaty and the relation of that treaty to the rival alliances and to the Charter.

The Geneva Four Power Summit Conference in July 1955 failed to produce an acceptable basis of negotiation mainly because the policy of the Western powers attempted to combine the conflicting assumptions mentioned above : they admitted that as the H-Bomb has made war between them and the U.S.S.R. suicidal, they must accept joint obligations with the Soviet Union to keep the peace, settle their disputes and control the armaments of Germany and her neighbours, as a first step to a general disarmament convention. But they tried to combine this with maintaining their own alliance, i.e. N.A.T.O., and insisting that united Germany should be allowed to join it.

The Right wing leadership of the Labour Party has repeated this confusion and arrived at an almost equally contradictory and unworkable scheme, the so-called 'neutral' zone in Europe. As worked out in Mr. Dennis Healey's pamphlet this scheme never even mentions the United Nations; is inconsistent with the Charter; divides Europe up into the partially disarmed, controlled and 'guaranteed'

neutrals, Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary; and their guarantors, the great powers. The latter are, apparently, to guarantee the 'neutral zone' against violations by themselves and each other! How they are to do it is left unspecified, except that the Soviet forces are to retire to Soviet territory, but N.A.T.O. is to remain, so as to fire nuclear weapons at the Russians over the heads of the 'neutrals,' when in the view of the Western powers, acting as self-made judges and executioners, the Soviet Government have violated the zone.

As the sequel to 'disengagement' this really will not do. It does not go even as far as the Tories in 1955 in recognising the need for common obligations with the Soviet Government to keep the peace and control armaments in Europe. The idea of putting Germany and her eastern neighbours into a sort of diplomatic *purdah*, with the great powers combining the roles of rival suitors for their favours and collective guardians of the harem (and without even being deprived of nuclear weapons as used to be *de rigueur* with harem guards) is an ingenious but unreal attempt to reconcile the continued belief of the Labour Right in basing our relations with the Soviet Union on H-Bomb power politics despite the decision of the Party to base them on the United Nations Charter.

(6) What Labour should work out - and take every opportunity to discuss with the leaders of the Communist Governments, as called for by the 1957 Brighton foreign policy resolution, moved by the N.U.M. and seconded by the A.E.U. - is a policy for European settlement embodying the following points :

(a) A treaty including all the European members of the United Nations, and also the Soviet Union, the United States and Britain, under Articles 52 and 53 of the Charter (which provide that regional agreements may be concluded by members of the U.N. but must be consistent with the terms of the Charter and, notably, leave it to the Security Council to take enforcement in case of threats to or breaches of the peace).

(b) Germany to be admitted to the United Nations and to this treaty, after unification by democratic means and on the basis of international recognition of her existing frontiers. The latter point means that Germans could make *irredentist* claims for the restoration of their 1937 frontiers, but they would have no case in law and if any attempt were made to press such claims by force or threats of force, Germany would become guilty of Charter-breaking aggression. Unification by 'democratic means' implies a compromise between the extreme Adenauer-Dulles position on the one hand of treating the East German Government as so much thin air, and unification as the 'liberation' or 'taking over' of the Soviet zone, with a free hand to

put the social clock back to pre-war capitalism and landlordism; and the Khrushchev demand that the East German regime be recognised as a sovereign Government on the same footing as that of Western Germany, and unification should take place by agreement between them, perhaps on the basis of a 'confederate' relationship which would leave it to the East Germans to decide whether or not they wanted to retain their socialist economy.

The Soviet Government probably has few illusions about how long the Ulbricht Government in East Germany would last if the Soviet troops were withdrawn. Its main concern is to arrange matters so that unification can take place without either civil war or counter-revolution. Above all, it does not want to release its hold on East Germany until it is sure the unification of Germany will take place within the framework of European arrangements which will ensure that it contributes to ending rather than exacerbating the divisions of Europe and promotes the cause of peaceful co-existence.

For the Soviet leaders really do want to end the cold war and the arms race by agreements between the powers, in the belief that this is in the interests of the Soviet State and (secondarily) of the spread of Communism by political and economic means (although the more peaceful co-existence develops, the readier they are to admit that the workers go forward to socialism by different paths in different countries, including Parliamentary and constitutional means). Marginally and doubtfully, they are even willing to concede that perhaps Social Democratic Parties might play a part in this progress, and Communists will not necessarily always and everywhere have a monopoly in the performing rights of Socialism! Tito and Polish Communists go very much further and simply do not believe that the workers of the highly developed industrial democracies will tread anything like the Russian path to Socialism.

Once the Western powers come to terms with the Soviet Government on the frontiers, and the European treaty and disarmament arrangements within which Germany is to be united, they will, it may safely be predicted, find the Russians ready to compromise and take elastic views about the stages and methods of German unification, how far this should be done by the decisions of the four powers and how far the Germans should be left to work out the details between themselves.

(c) The H.C.P. (High Contracting Parties) to the European Treaty who are permanent members of the Security Council would agree to work together in a European Committee of the latter, to deal with all disturbances of the peace in Europe. The European members of the United Nations would elect a contingent of say five other States from time to time. The four great powers would undertake to use

their joint influence to secure the inclusion of Germany in the five elected States with the right to be re-elected.

This Committee could take enforcement action only with the authorisation of the Security Council, but could well, profiting by the experience of the latter, make recommendations about disputes by, say, a two-thirds majority, and set up to assist it a standing conciliation commission of distinguished individuals, East-West and neutral in composition.

(d) The Committee should also, by the same voting procedure as in the Security Council, be in charge of the arrangements for the reduction, limitation and control of the armaments of Germany and her neighbours, provided for in a convention that would be an annexe to the Treaty, which would of course also provide that German forces should be withdrawn from and German territory denied to N.A.T.O. and the Warsaw alliance. The H.C.P. would undertake to work together in the United Nations to make this convention the starting point for a general and comprehensive disarmament treaty.

(e) The European Treaty could further include an undertaking by the H.C.P. progressively to withdraw all foreign forces and scrap all foreign bases on the territories of Germany and her neighbours in East and West, accompanied by arrangements for inspection and supervision, again under the authority of the European Committee of the Security Council. These political and military arrangements, and particularly the withdrawal of Germany from the rival alliances and of foreign forces from the Continent, would take the military stuffing out of N.A.T.O. and the Warsaw alliance, and put in their place all-European arrangements implementing the obligations of the Charter.

(g) To complete the job a special clause in the European Treaty would provide that so long as the Treaty remained in force the H.C.P. renounced the right to act on their collective defence obligations under any other treaty without the authorisation of the Security Council. This would leave the right of individual self-defence against military attack untouched, but end the practice whereby the 'collective self-defence' reservation in Article 57 of the Charter has been used as a loophole through which the permanent members of the Security Council have returned to the balance of power and discarded the Charter in their mutual relations. It would also mean the military obligations of N.A.T.O., the Bagdad Pact and S.E.A.T.O. (as well as the Warsaw alliance) becoming a dead letter, which is as it should be, because they are based on assuming the need to defend ourselves against a Soviet attack, whereas in the European Treaty and the Charter we assume that we and the U.S.S.R. have a common interest in collectively defending the world against war breaking out

by accident because the great powers attempt to deal with some local disturbance competitively instead of co-operatively.

We can proceed on the balance of power assumption — which postulates the inevitability of war because it does in the end make war inevitable — or the Charter assumption, on which alone it is possible to organise peace and make international war even more unlikely than civil war. But we really cannot proceed on both assumptions at once, and Labour — although the fact has so far not been accepted or even understood by some of its leaders — has wisely rejected the former and accepted the latter.

(h) Last but not least, the European Treaty would give the Economic Commission for Europe of the United Nations the power to co-ordinate the work of the international economic organisations that have grown up in East and West Europe and to promote international trade, investment and economic development schemes in Europe.

This re-invigorated Economic Commission, with greater power and resources, would help to knit together the whole of Europe and give the European countries a sense of common interests and purposes transcending ideological differences. Together with S.U.N.F.E.D. (Special United Nations Fund for Economic Development) it could take up the economic slack resulting from reduced war preparations. It would give a constructive and beneficent outlet for the energies and ambitions of re-united Germany and give her a positive and permanent part to play as a leading power in a Europe united and organised for peace. It would make it possible to give generous economic aid, on the basis of agreement between the Soviet Union and the West and without political strings, to the East European People's Democracies. This would strengthen all the forces within those regimes pressing for more national independence and internal democracy. It would cushion the transition from the present position to the situation after Soviet forces had been withdrawn. For it would diminish the explosive social discontent resulting from extreme economic hardship, which could otherwise be exploited by those who looked upon Soviet withdrawal as the signal for attempting a counter-revolutionary *Putsch*.

These are the lines of a European settlement that would work if applied. The various parts of this settlement are interdependent. Just how they would be related to each other and by what stages they would be realised would of course depend on the negotiations at the time between the Governments concerned. But the sooner Labour proclaims and popularises its determination to proceed on these lines, the more support it will get in public opinion not only here but abroad, not least in the United States, and the better the next Labour Government will find the ground prepared for it when it tackles the

job. And, of course, its Middle Eastern and Far Eastern policies would be similar in aims and methods to its European policies.

(7) Labour views and policies on these matters are close enough to those of the Soviet Union (and China) to bring them within 'hard bargaining distance' of agreement. Our bargaining power in Moscow will be increased in proportion as it increases in Washington. In both capitals, Britain under the Tories is regarded as a loyal, Soviet-fearing, satellite of the United States who can be relied upon to toe whatever line is laid down by Big Brother in Washington.

To dispel that impression Labour should announce that the next Labour Government will table its peace and disarmament proposals as the basis of negotiation for a summit conference and will not hesitate to negotiate with the Soviet Union on that basis even if the United States refuses. The agreement reached would then be reported to the U.N. General Assembly with a motion recommending it as a basis of settlement.

There is small doubt that we could get a two-thirds majority for that, and there would be a swelling wave of opinion in Europe and America urging the United States to come in on the basis of some face-saving formula during the General Assembly behind-the-scenes negotiations, before it was too late and she was isolated and branded in the eyes of the civilised world as the great obstacle to peace. It is almost inconceivable that any Administration would not turn reasonable under such pressure and faced with that prospect.

(8) But we should let it be known that in the last resort we would apply the principle that if the United States refuses to agree with us on how to make peace, we shall refuse to continue to be committed by the United States to going to war. That means we should deny the use of British territory to American forces, take our own troops out of Germany, and say we would act under the military obligations of N.A.T.O., S.E.A.T.O. and the Bagdad Pact only with the authorisation of the Security Council.

According to the Pentagon, the U.S. rocket and air arm would lose 80% of its striking power if denied the use of British and West European bases. There is little doubt that a politically effective demand would soon be generated in West Europe, including Western Germany, for following a bold and sustained British lead for peace on the lines suggested. And since the sputniks and the Soviet I.C.B.M.'s, the United States believe they need British territory as a base for their middle range ballistic missiles, against the Soviet attack which they fear but which Labour knows is a myth, or rather a capitalistic distortion of a social challenge into a military threat. That situation gives a Labour Government that knows its mind and has the courage of its socialist convictions, decisive military, as well as very great

moral and political, bargaining power.

(9) But if the next Labour Government is to take as tough a line as this, the Labour Party in opposition must explain the issues now and seek popular support and a mandate at the election not only to bargain realistically with the Soviet Union but to make a determined and tenacious fight for peace - against Dulles and the Pentagon and the vested interests in the arms race, but on the side of many millions in the United States. It is a fine thing that the Labour Party and T.U.C. are about to launch a nation-wide campaign putting forward Labour's peace and disarmament proposals, and opposing British-based U.S. planes carrying nuclear weapons on patrol, and announcing that we shall unilaterally suspend H-Bomb tests on coming into power.

But even the Liberals have come out for opposing the stationing of U.S. missile bases here and renouncing the manufacture of H-Bombs, labour leaders are ambiguous on the former point and negative on the second, because the Tory-minded Right wing are fighting a tough rear-guard action against the implications of the socialist foreign policy adopted by the Party.

(10) To show we mean business with our foreign policy the Party should declare flatly now that on coming into power we shall bade our peace proposals and invitations to a summit conference by declaring a moratorium in the Cold War, through ceasing to manufacture H-Bombs and forbidding the use of our territory for the flying of H-Bomb planes or launching of nuclear rockets. That would not wreck the U.S. alliance system, as Bevan suggested at Brighton. But it would suspend it, hang a question mark over its future, and serve notice that if the U.S.A. insisted on going on with Mr. Dulles' anti-Communist liberation, brinkmanship and massive retaliation, she would do so alone, for Labour Britain would put itself at the head of the nations of the world who do not make nuclear weapons and are desperately anxious for peaceful co-existence and an end to the nuclear suicide club before it blows humanity to smithereens.

The British people, who have for so long been leaders in the art of living in society, and who stood alone against Hitler, can and must stand alone again against the madness of fear and hatred, until they lead mankind toward sanity, toward a civilisation where our sudden command of unlimited power is used for the enrichment and not the destruction of life. But only Labour can give the national leadership for that great adventure, under leaders who are hard-headed and soft-hearted - not the other way around as at present - and dare to think and feel in world affairs as Socialists. Know, that is, that you cannot beat an idea with force but only with a better idea; believe that democratic Socialism is a better idea than either capitalism or

Communism; and have resolved that we democratic Socialists and the forces we represent in the world will keep the two ideologically muscle-bound giants from colliding to the destruction of humanity, until such time as our idea has permeated both camps and ended the quarrel between them.