

**Our  
Future**

**:**

**ABUNDANCE**

**OR**

**ANNIHILATION**

**?**

**LAWRENCE  
BENJAMIN**

OUR FUTURE:  
ABUNDANCE OR ANNIHILATION ?

**Our Future:**  
**ABUNDANCE**  
**OR**  
**ANNIHILATION**  
**?**

by  
**Lawrence Benjamin**

**PEOPLE'S PUBLISHING HOUSE, LTD.,**  
**New Delhi**

**Part I**

**THE TWO CONFLICTING "WAYS" TODAY  
OPERATING IN THE WORLD**

***January 1956***

**Price Rs. 4|8|-**

---

**Printed by D. P. Sinha at New Age Printing Press, 6/4, Asaf Ali Road,  
Delhi and published by him for People's Publishing House, Ltd.,  
New Delhi.**

**This book investigates :**

**THE TWO CONFLICTING “WAYS” TODAY  
OPERATING IN THE WORLD :**

**1. PLANNING FOR LIFE**

**2. PLANNING FOR DEATH**

**Part I**

**THE TWO CONFLICTING “WAYS” TODAY  
OPERATING IN THE WORLD**

**Part II**

**PLANNING FOR LIFE**

**Part III**

**PLANNING FOR DEATH**

## ERRATA

*p. 29, lines 12-14 should read :*

1929—1938 the Great Slump and pre-War period

1939—1945 the War period

1946—1949 the immediate post-War period

*p. 193, line 2 should read :*

it will be remembered, at Teheran at the end of . . . .



By the same author:

*Distribution in the Transition Stage to Socialism*  
with Foreword by Sir Stafford Cripps  
(Gollancz, 1934)

*The Position of the Middle-Class Worker in the  
Transition to Socialism*  
(The Labour Party, 1935)

*What Socialism will Really Mean to You*  
(The Labour Party, 1935)

## FOREWORD

This book was completed, more or less as it stands, at the end of 1953, and, on account of various delays, did not begin to go to press till the early summer of 1954. At that time the full industrial production figures for 1953 for all the countries considered in the book had not come in. So, in the various tables, rather than leave the figures for the last year given (from which the final results will be measured) with those of some countries in, some out, we decided to close our production tables with the year 1952, for which we then had the full figures. In certain places, where further figures became available before going to press, we have added the 1953 figures in foot-notes.

In any case, as far as these figures are concerned, the main aim of this book is not to provide the very latest stop-press production figures (how could any book do this for more than a few weeks after its publication at best?), but to explain *fundamental economic trends through a series of production figures*. For this purpose the addition of one or two years to the main stream of figures (provided these series of figures sufficiently demonstrate those fundamentals) will have only a secondary importance. Readers will, I know, end by understanding this fact. But it may help them also to have it pointed out beforehand.

Here is the appropriate place also to indicate that the writer of the book is a former member of the British Labour Party, who feels compelled to write as he does in the service of two super and over-riding patriotisms—truth and world peace.

Bombay, May 1954.

LAWRENCE BENJAMIN

*Later*

Just before the final publication of this work, there seems some prospect of a *lessening* of the 'cold war'. This lessening of the cold war by no means invalidates the necessity of this book. For it treats with the *reason* of the cold war and how to eliminate it altogether.

L. B.

# CONTENTS

## Part I

### THE TWO CONFLICTING "WAYS" TODAY OPERATING IN THE WORLD

#### Foreword

1. The Basic Problem of Our Time Indicated	1
2. The Main Table and Why it is Necessary	6
3. General Analysis of the Main Table	17
4. The Extreme Left of the Main Table : The U.S.A.—Capitalism in Operation	20
5. The Extreme Right of the Main Table : The U.S.S.R.—Socialism in Operation	22
6. The 1950-52 Extension of the Main Table	29

## Part II

### PLANNING FOR LIFE

1. The Soviet Union's Pioneering Five-Year Plans, Foreshadowing the Law of Socialist Economic Progress in its Early Stages	35
2. The Transition to Socialism in the Eastern European Countries After the War	44
3. The Economic Advances of the Eastern European Countries Under their Transition-to-Socialism Economies Since the War	47
4. The Eastern European Short-Term Plan on a Transition-to-Socialism Basis	57
5. The Eastern European Long-Term Plans on a Transition-to-Socialism Basis	61
6. The Bases of Socialist Planning	67
7. Explanation of the Transition-to-Socialism Chart of the Eastern European Countries	76
8. Special Features of the Socialist Transition in Poland	80
9. Special Features of the Socialist Transition in Hungary	86
10. Special Features of the Socialist Transition in Bulgaria	93

## CONTENTS

11. Special Features of the Socialist Transition	
in Rumania	98
12. Special Features of the Socialist Transition	
in Czechoslovakia	103
13. The Special Case of Eastern Germany	119
14. China Enters the Socialist-Transition Sphere	124
15. The Left and Middle of the Main Table :	
Economics of the Western World	129
16. Controlled Capitalism is not Socialism	134
17. Socialism—Planning for Life	142

## Part III

### PLANNING FOR DEATH

1. America—the Paradise Picture and the Reality	155
2. More Light on the American Way of Life	157
3. More Light on Pre-War America	179
4. More Light on Roosevelt and his Policy of Peace	189
5. More Light on the Atom Bomb and the	
End of the War in the East	208
6. Truman and his Policy and Strategy of	
American World Domination	213
7. The American Korean War Move	234
8. Eisenhower Enlarges Truman's Foreign Policy	250
9. Planning for Death—Its Roots :	
Diagnosis of Present-Day America	258
10. Conclusion : The Answer to the Basic Problem	
of our Time	269

## APPENDIX I

Speech Composed by President Roosevelt to be Delivered on Jefferson Day, April 13, 1945, the Day After his Death	277
--	-----

## APPENDIX II

Price Reductions carried out in the U.S.S.R. and the Eastern European Countries in 1953	280
--	-----

## APPENDIX III

Foot-Note to Indian Peace Policy, Page 228	281
--	-----

INDEX	283
-------	-----

MAIN TABLE	<i>at end</i>
------------	---------------

## TABLES AND CHARTS

Sample of League of Nations' index numbers of industrial production, 1929-38, for four countries . . .	7
League of Nations' and United Nations' index numbers of industrial production for the U.S.S.R., 1929-38 . . .	26
Advance in industrial production made by the U.S.S.R. during its First Five-Year Plan . . . . .	36
Advance in industrial production made by the U.S.S.R. during its First & Second Five-Year Plans . . . . .	37
Advance in industrial production made by the U.S.S.R. during its Third Five-Year Plan . . . . .	38
Advance in industrial production made by the U.S.S.R. during its Fourth (Post-War) Five-Year Plan . . . . .	39
Advance in industrial production made by the U.S.S.R. in the first two years of its Fifth Five-Year Plan . . . . .	40
The 1946-52 post-war advances in industrial production of the Eastern European countries, measured from 1937 . . . . .	48
Advance in industrial production of the Eastern European countries for the periods 1948-52 and 1949-52 . . . . .	50
Index numbers of industrial production of the countries in the Main Table for the year 1952, measured from the pre-war year, 1937 . . . . .	52
Index numbers of industrial production of the countries in the Main Table (plus Japan) for the year, 1952, measured from the post-war year, 1948 . . . . .	53
Index numbers of industrial production of the countries in the Main Table (plus Japan) for the years, 1948 and 1952, measured from the pre-war year, 1937 . . . . .	54
Contrasts in industrial productional rates of progress since the war, between the Socialist and capitalist worlds . . . . .	56

## TABLES AND CHARTS

Eastern European post-war Short-Term Plan results.	58-9
The original Six- and Five-Year Plan targets for the the countries of Eastern Europe. . . . .	62
Chart, showing the main Transition-to-Socialism events in the Eastern European countries in the 1944-49 period. . . . .	75
Proportional income distribution in Britain as between earned and unearned income for the years 1938 & 1946-49. . . . .	136
Numbers of U.S. millionaire income-receivers in the “prosperity” period, 1919-1929. . . . .	185
Price reductions carried out in the U.S.S.R. and the Eastern European countries in 1953. . . . .	280
Evolution in industrial production of most of the world’s main industrialised countries for the two- decade period, 1929-49, and also 1950-52 (Main Table)	<i>extensible page at end</i>

## 1.

### THE BASIC PROBLEM OF OUR TIME INDICATED

TAKE a look at the world today.

In the well-developed and advanced capitalist societies such as those of the west of Europe, North America, and Australasia, the two principal social evils, from which the majority of people in those countries suffer, are:

- (1) Periodic Slump
- (2) Recurrent War.

In feudal countries and primitively developed capitalist societies, such as we have in the Middle East, India and Pakistan, South Eastern Asia, the East Indies, most of the States of South America, and in the colonies of Africa and the West Indies, the two main social evils, which burden the lives of the great masses of those peoples, are:

- (1) Perpetual Poverty
- (2) Recurrent War.

Slump conditions in the advanced capitalist countries throw the masses of the people in those countries, for the period of the slump's duration, into something of the condition of poverty which is perpetual amongst the masses of the peoples of feudal and primitive capitalist societies.

Are these respective conditions permanent for those respective peoples in both cases? Must perpetual poverty or, at

best, periodic poverty, together with recurrent war, continue forever to be the lot of the masses of the people who inhabit the two-thirds of the world indicated?

Is it inevitable that we must *always* have poverty with us? Is the periodic recurrency of war inevitable?

If so, with the mass-life-extinction weapons becoming ever more rapidly more perfected, what a poor outlook for the future of the human race! For the masses, periodic and perpetual poverty in peace and mass-slaughter in periodically recurrent war! What a jolly future for the people of the world to look forward to! A world with ultimately *no future* for the human race!

Is this all unalterable, inevitable?

As it is, there are millions of people who think all these three conditions inevitable. Millions in the feudalisms and primitive capitalisms think perpetual poverty inevitable. Millions in advanced capitalisms think that periodic poverty (i.e., slumps) are inevitable. And millions in both of these economies think that war is inevitable.

Happily for both us and them and our children, they are mistaken. Their surmise is erroneous. The truth is better than they think. None of these social evils is inevitable.

How do we know this?

Why, because the advanced capitalisms were formerly feudalisms and primitive capitalisms in which perpetual poverty was the rule. These feudalisms and primitive capitalisms raised themselves out of social and economic conditions in which the masses eked out their total lives in perpetual poverty, to another social and economic condition in which the descendants of the same former masses passed their lives in conditions of merely periodic poverty (i.e., slump conditions in which periods of poverty alternated with periods of a low state of sufficiency). That, at any rate, was an advance. It showed that, by changing the economy of the feudalisms and primitive capitalisms to that of advanced capitalism, overwhelming poverty for the masses, instead of being permanent, could be cut down to being periodic. Thus, under the changed economic conditions, a certain sufficiency at a low level could be arranged for the masses for periods in between the overwhelming poverty periods, which were now



periodic and not perpetual. This demonstrated that, by making certain social and economic transformations in the structures of the former societies, it was possible to stop poverty for the masses from being permanent, and to make it instead merely periodic—operating at times only. *And this, of course, proved at least that perpetual poverty for the masses was not and is not inevitable.*

Since this has been established, further proof has been forthcoming that periodic poverty for the masses is *also not inevitable*; that, instead of a society which, proceeds with periodic slumps (i.e., in which periodically, after a term of advance, production halts and goes backward), it is possible to have a society which proceeds *without slumps*, in which its production goes on *constantly increasing*. That is, a still further type of transformation of the social and economic structures of existing societies (whether feudal, primitive capitalist or advanced capitalist) has been found to produce this result. In societies having made this further transformation, both perpetual poverty and periodic poverty (with slumps) disappear and are replaced by a society *in which the standard of living for the masses constantly increases*. *This has proved that for the masses, not only perpetual poverty, but periodic poverty, in fact, poverty altogether, is no longer inevitable.*

And what about recurrent war? What about war being inevitable?

War is the culminating process of what happens in societies in which great wealth and great poverty dwell side by side. In this case production, instead of being distributed fairly evenly over, and nourishing, the whole social body, forms great clots and surfeits in parts of that body, while other portions are deprived of sufficient for nourishment. This eventually causes either the organism to break down internally or, in lieu of this, to run amuck—i.e., externalising its problem, it blames some other organism for its own ills, and is always planning to go and have a bash at "the foreign enemy".

Of course, we don't mean this here as a proof. Merely as an analogy. The roots of war, which are so closely allied to the roots of poverty, will be examined in fuller detail later.

Now let us review our previous findings.