

tions for the well-being of mankind. Despite the lip service which he pays to the ideal of a free society, the tendency of his work is all against that. Men are not to be allowed to seek what employment they wish; they must not be permitted to become 'irregular and undisciplined'; they must not ask what price they please for their labour or the products of their labour; wages and prices must be fixed. They are not to be trusted to spend their incomes as they will; there can be no 'indiscriminate outlay'; the citizen must buy what the State thinks good for him. Under such conditions democracy ceases to exist. Decisions upon such matters cannot be made at the ballot box; they must of necessity be made by a bureaucracy, and such a bureaucracy in its nature is self-perpetuating and can be ousted by nothing short of revolution.

"The history of civilisation is of a gradual emancipation of men from many kinds of bondage, from actual slavery or serfdom, from tyranny and arbitrary power, from the fetters of out-worn customs, from the dogma of the priest. It has been a slow progress and there have been many set-backs, but the general direction is plain. Those epochs in human history which we most admire are those in which men were most free. It is the activities of free men that have given us what we most value.

"The evil influences which menace the world are those which would destroy freedom. If we are to avoid relapsing into another dark age, we must cherish what freedom now exists and nourish and expand it. A free society must be our first objective and out of that will come the freedom to employ ourselves as we will."

We compliment Messrs. Staples and Staples on this new publication, *The Problem of Employment—Beveridge Fails to Solve It—What Will?* and wish for it a wide sale. Distribution of the pamphlet is from Messrs. P. S. King and Staples, 14, Great Smith Street, London, S.W.1, where orders should be placed.

"A well employed and prosperous community can buy and consume, an ill employed cannot buy and consume. This is the solution of the whole matter; and the whole science of political economy has not one truth of half as much importance as this."—DANIEL WEBSTER.

The modern doctrine, according to Sir William Beveridge and Lord Keynes, is: Spend, no matter whether you have produced anything to consume or not; work, whether your work is productive or not; and you will inevitably be able to consume.

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Land values are rising steeply in Jamaica, the largest of the British West Indies, where recent discoveries of bauxite were found to be of first-class quality, says Reuter. Large properties are being sold to American and Canadian aluminium companies.—*Evening Standard*, November 17.

"WHY NOT TRUST THE TORIES?"

MR. ANEURIN BEVAN'S diatribe (*Why Not Trust the Tories?*—Gollancz, 2s. 6d.) against the Tory Party is an expansion of a very simple theme. It is that all Tory promises of social reform are deceitful and made without any intention of carrying them out. The reason is that any social reform means diminishing the power and property of Tories which they will stick to by hook or by crook.

No doubt there is truth in this. Men are not angels, in one political party or another. But it over simplifies the matter. It is not only lack of will to perform them that prevents political promises being fulfilled; it is often that in their nature they cannot be carried out, or cannot be carried out by the means proposed. Those who do not realise this are not necessarily dishonest; often they are merely ignorant. They may be just as sincere and just as mistaken as the believer in perpetual motion.

The implication of this book is that the promises of Labour and Communist and Commonwealth politicians should be accepted because they are all honest men. Alas, the difficulty of the elector in making up his mind for whom to vote is not to be solved so easily as this. The questions still remain: what is the objective to be reached, and what are the means proposed for reaching it. Here is the foundation of rational political decision. The question whether the political candidate is an honest man or not is only subsidiary.

The form of Mr. Bevan's book enables him to abstain from the more difficult task of stating a positive policy. Indeed, there is hardly an economic argument to be found anywhere. One exception is in a passage dealing with and condemning foreign investment. "The Chinese worker lives on a standard much lower than yours. Nevertheless, with the use of modern machinery he can be taught to produce the same goods as you, and they will be sold in the world market in competition with the ones you produce. Are you ready to accept the Tory logic of the world market and compete with the Chinese worker? At what point do you stop? When you have reached his level?" No doubt the Tories will thank Mr. Bevan for this passage, which is precisely the argument by which they have always supported tariffs. But the argument is, in fact, invalid, as every student of the economics of international trade since the time of Ricardo ought to know. It has, in any case, been disproved by long experience. If it were true, all idea of international comity would go by the board. Every nation which thought that there was some other country where wages were lower would become a closed community. Mr. Bevan would no longer eat rice because the Chinese or the Indians receive lower wages than the growers of English wheat or Scots oats. The ultimate results

would be the further impoverishment of both the Chinese and the British.

This example shows how the economic ideas of those who profess to be internationalists lead them to protectionist conclusions. In fact protection, or economic nationalism, as it is called, would never have reached the exorbitant heights it did prior to the war if the arguments of protectionists had not been agreeable to large bodies of working men. These are the electors whom Mr. Bevan is endeavouring to persuade not to trust the Tories. Can he succeed, if he is not able to provide them with reliable argument in the contrary direction?

Or take the burning question of housing to which Mr. Bevan quite rightly devotes considerable space. What contribution does he make towards its solution? He does draw attention to the high price of land, and gives some illustrations of increases in land values which have taken place during the war. The only conclusion which appears to emerge from his remarks is that the device of the 1939 standard of value for public purchase should be continued indefinitely. Nothing is said of our local rating system, of the burden which it imposes upon the occupiers of houses, and how it exempts unused and badly used land and so encourages speculation and high prices. It is easy to talk of a vast programme of public building of houses of improved types with greater amenities, but all that increases the rent and consequently the rates. If the rates are so heavy that the would-be tenants cannot afford to rent these houses, is the housing problem solved or approaching solution?

Certainly Mr. Bevan has written a clever diatribe against his political opponents. It may very well induce many of those who read it to distrust the Tories. But something more is needed. The electors must be given solid reasons for believing that they can trust another party to carry out needed reforms. Otherwise they may fall into the mood of distrusting all political parties. That way lies anarchy and ultimately dictatorship and the suppression of political democracy and of economic freedom.

Mr. Frank Bailey, Secretary of the N.U.R. Approved Society, has written to the United Committee: "I am extremely obliged to you for your letter enclosing most interesting pamphlets on the land question which I was endeavouring to obtain. The profiteering in land prior to the war, and during our times of adversity, has been a disgrace to the nation, and I look forward to your Committee conducting a great national educational campaign, when I shall be glad to render any assistance I can, as the land question so vitally affects the housing conditions of the people."

6d. LIGHT ON THE LAND QUESTION. A frank inquiry into the Land Value Policy.