The atomic age: suicide, slavery or socialism?

Aaron Levenstein
the atomic age

SUICIDE...

SLAVERY OR

SOCIAL PLANNING?

by aaron levenstein
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LEAGUE FOR INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY, INC.
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The League for Industrial Democracy is happy to present the
following monograph by Mr. Levenstein, author and economic re-
searcher, as a thoughtful, stimulating and socially-visioned pamphlet.

Following the monograph of Mr. Levenstein will be found the text
of a Congressional Bill. The League prints this bill as one that incorpo-
rates many of the suggestions of Mr. Levenstein rather than as a mea-
ure on which the League for Industrial Democracy has officially passed.
We have split the atom; we must now unite the world.

Disaster has caught up with mankind, overtaking us as we attempted to move slowly toward progress. Now we must act quickly or all our earthly hopes will be wiped out forever in one vast cataclysm. By a strange paradox, the complicated discoveries of the scientific laboratory have reduced our problem to the simple, elementary choice of life or death. For men who refuse to share the new resources of atomic energy will share a common doom. The atomic bomb, coupled with the rocket principle and jet propulsion, can raze our planet and erase all life.

Have we built the great temple of mankind only as a sacrifice to the gods of chaos? Or can we pluck the greatest triumph of the human race from the most dangerous nettle that man has ever seized? The question is as dramatic and as simple as that.

When science smashed the atom it discovered for the first time the principle of annihilation. At the same time, by the very same principle, science has made it possible to transform nature into the servant of man, giving him food infinitely beyond the capacity of the human appetite, clothing far more abundant than he can wear, homes for all to fill our streets with palaces. We face a world of potential superlatives.
Which will man choose—Annihilation or Abundance?
The choice is his. It was a solemn day when the news came
that atomic fission had reduced Hiroshima to vapors and
radioactive ashes leaving little trace of the 80,000 dead.
Even the prospect that atomic energy was now in our hands
for service to civilization could not overshadow the awful
horror that was the first evidence of the new scientific
triumph.

At such a moment indecision is itself a choice. To do
nothing is to invite the disaster. To prevent the most colos-
sal tragedy in the history of the universe requires affirmative
action, a conscious exploration of what may lie ahead and
the timely initiation of measures to forestall it.
suicide

AN airplane takes off from a flying field, powered by jet propulsion. A small crew of five men are comfortable in its cabin. For a few hours the plane rides high over beautiful cloud formations, the sun sparkling and dancing on the sheep-like cumulus.

Over the inter-communication system, the pilot announces: “Target ahead.” It is a city—yours or mine, or perhaps the city of a people who speak a different tongue, some of whose sons are also at this moment in a plane very much like this, flying in the opposite direction but carrying a similar cargo. The road to destruction is a two-way street.

Now the plane is over the city. The bomb-bay opens, a voice says, “Bombs away”, but only a little parachute with a metallic burden drops out and sails slowly, gracefully towards the earth. The sun’s rays paint the parachute with a bright whiteness, catch the black sphere with sword-like, dangerous glints.

The plane speeds away, like a guilty man fleeing from the crime he has set in motion but which has not yet been realized. The deed is done now, and there is no way for the authors, even if they wanted, to halt the murder of a city. From the safety of great distance, the flyers look back. A ball of fire is climbing to the heavens like a hopeless prayer.
But all this is the first chapter in the story. This is only the elementary lesson of applied science. Soon the ingenuity of the scientist repeats with accelerated tempo the rapid evolution of the ordinary bomb which in the space of one war grew from a few hundred to many thousands of pounds, multiplying its deadliness. The first of the atomic bombs was equal to 20,000 tons of TNT—and atomic science is destined to advance. Not cities alone but states and provinces may become the victims of the single attack—and then whole countries. The ledger of the gods may show that total war fulfills its destiny in total destruction.

Today the gall of insecurity fills the heart of every well-informed man and woman. For we have reached a point in the development of the human race when any moment may be the last. The atomic bomb has made possible the sudden "sneak attack" in a new form. An enemy, intent on a blitzkrieg, need merely instruct his agents to carry out a simple program. In New York, a man checks a briefcase in the baggage room of the Pennsylvania Station, another in Grand Central Terminal; others plant their little seeds in Washington's Union Station, Chicago's LaSalle Street Station, San Francisco's Market Street Station, and so on across the nation. No radar can warn of the approaching havoc.

It is many months since the Second World War came to an end. On every hand there is already talk of the Third. Radio commentators, newspaper columnists, the man in the street, are all talking about the incidents and the issues from which the next war is expected to emerge—the Far East, the Near East, India, Manchuria, Iran, Indonesia, Korea, etc. Not just yet, of course—perhaps five years from now, perhaps ten. That is our one thread of hope. The years between now and doom are not many, but there they are, waiting for the act of wisdom which can avert the tragedy.

While America has been going through the gestures of
demobilization, the generals and the admirals have already begun to plan the maneuvers and stratagems of the next war. The demand is made for conscription, military appropriation bills run high, international spies continue to ferret out the plans of nations.

This is peace in the year one of the atomic age.

Now we are preparing for a war whose horrors out-monster all the infamies of past wars. How cruelly this war will be waged is known only to a few men, the 2,000-odd scientists who put together the atomic bomb. The testimony of all other witnesses can be disregarded. One by one these men of science have taken the stand before Congressional Committees. Let them speak for themselves.

Dr. Karl T. Compton, chairman of the National Academy of Science’s Committee on the Use of Uranium in War, tells of his visit to Hiroshima, against which he was advised “because there was nothing to see; and I said, ‘What about the odor of dead corpses?’ I had recently been through Corregidor, where the odor was pretty terrible. They said, ‘Corpses? There are no corpses. There is nothing. Within a radius of two kilometers, there is nothing.’ Beyond a three-mile radius, there was spotty destruction, where apparently there must have been focusing effects, where echoes from this blast from two different sources would meet, or something of that sort, and up to as much as ten miles there was some damage, but spotty. It was complete within three miles.”

So horrible is this device that the official Army report by Dr. Henry DeWolf Smyth of Princeton describes the feelings of the scientists themselves in these words: “Initially many scientists could and did hope that some principle would emerge which would prove that atomic bombs were inherently impossible.” Science was disappointed by its own success.
And now these same scientists solemnly warn us that there is no way of countering the deadly potency of our Frankenstein monster. Says Dr. J. R. Oppenheimer, one of the outstanding atomic scientists, "There are no specific counter measures for atomic bombs. This is nonsense. There never will be."

The first impulse of the human being is to turn from that fact in complete panic. Dr. Harold C. Urey, who spent years on the problem of splitting the atom, tells us in a few brief words what we face from now on: "A world of vast fear and apprehension will be our lot and that of our children."

Must it be? Have we explored all the alternatives? Destiny does not permit us the luxury of what Professor Sidney Hook has called "fin du mondeisme"— end of the worldism. We have no choice but to continue the long march. Surely the ingenuity of man has not been exhausted by this latest stroke of his inventiveness. A species that could conquer the land, the sea, the air and now the atom must still be possessed of sufficient intelligence to answer this vast new challenge. The scientist of the cyclotron must now give way to the social scientist who can take up the baton in the relay race against catastrophe.

The organization which has published this pamphlet believes that it has the answer. For years it has been studying this problem because it believed all along that man was capable of world-destroying war. A desperate mankind, haunted by the monster of its own creation, now has no choice but to listen.

Here is the kernel of our thought: We cannot erase the atom bomb from the minds of men. Even if we were to destroy the blueprints of the Army engineers, raze Oak Ridge, Tenn., to the ground, hypnotize the atomic scientists into amnesia, others would rediscover the dread prin-
ciples. But if we cannot neutralize the bomb itself, then we must immobilize the forces that can hurl the bomb and eliminate the motivations that inspire its use. In that course lies our only hope.

At the moment, much unconstructive thinking is being done on the idea of keeping the bomb a secret. Only a brass-hat mind can be secure in the thought that we have merely to frustrate the designs of spying enemy agents, and the bomb will remain ours alone. Some legislation presented before Congress is based on the idea that if we keep the whole business locked in the files of the War Department, we shall remain the exclusive possessors of the bomb and thus be immune to its perilous power. But even the military doesn’t believe that.

Major General Leslie R. Groves, who was in command of the whole atomic project, doesn’t really believe it, despite the fact that he has been the most persistent advocate of secret, military control, which in the last analysis means General Groves’ control. For he himself has admitted that “the only thing that would preserve security would be to lock everybody up (who worked on the bomb), and when they decided to leave to shoot them and be done with it. That is the only way you could have perfect security.”

He admits what every scientist says: “We are ahead at the present time. It will take the other countries a number of years to catch up.” It is for wise action by the United States in these few years that we plead.

The suggestion has been made that the bomb be turned over immediately to the United Nations Organization and thus disposed of. As things stand now, it is hard to believe that this simple transfer of title will make the world breathe easier. For the United Nations Organization today is still a mere forum for nations. Any one of five nations can halt a decision by UNO on the issues that are most
likely to lead to war. The only effect of handing over the bomb to UNO now would be to remove it from the possession of one potential marauder and place it in the hands of several. In your local community, you do not solve the problem of the armed outlaw by permitting every individual to carry a revolver.

Coupled with that suggestion is the idea that UNO would police the nations to see that they were not manufacturing atomic bombs. The policing is not only desirable but necessary. But, unfortunately, UNO as presently constituted is only a feeble crutch to lean on. At the moment it cannot receive or wrest the consent of every nation to regular inspection of plants and mines. Today there are vast areas throughout the world which are closed to newspapermen. If correspondents are not free to roam through the villages of Russia for the purpose of reporting what they see in the streets, would a Committee of International Inspectors be authorized to wander at will in search of evidence that atomic bombs are being unlawfully manufactured?

Inspection is not the final answer. It is only an acceptable make-shift in this first decade of the atomic age, while the manufacture of the bombs still requires a gigantic industrial machine, a whole city of workers, a tremendous quantity of uranium or thorium, a labyrinth of factories. But continued “progress” will mean simplification and the use of more common elements that cannot be policed so easily. Dr. Oppenheimer reports that “atomic weapons ten or twenty years from now will be very cheap industrially and economically. It may take a while before this is a fact, but it is going to be a fact.”

Yet we have no other choice at the moment. We must grasp the one advantage of time that we have now and institute this partial measure for the defense of the human race: the machinery for international inspection must be
inaugurated at once.

To be effective in restraining atomic war, international organization must not permit the exercise of a veto power by any nation. It is this failing in the UNO which threatens the welfare of all nations. The United States must therefore take the initiative. The fact that the bomb is in our possession gives us primary responsibility—and gives us the persuasiveness of our strength. That strength has made us at the same time the object of envy and of fear. We can eliminate both by taking the lead in a world movement toward peace.

Since the problem is one affecting all nations, we must act in concert with the rest of the world. Unfortunately, even partisan advocates of UNO recognize it, in large part, as a sounding board for individual nationalisms with the most powerful nations sounding off the loudest. Here may be found representatives of Russia speaking not for the world, but for the expanding imperialism of that country; or of Great Britain, speaking for the defensive imperialism of England; or of America, speaking not for the United Nations but for American capitalism. At times a larger world point of view is taken but only a genuine international federation of nations is big enough to handle the atomic bomb.

In specific terms, this then is what we must do. The Government of the United States must offer to make available its atomic knowledge to an international agency which recognizes the equal rights of all nations, peoples, races, creeds and colors. UNO can conceivably become that. But whether it be UNO or some other international organization, these must be our conditions:

There must be an absolute right of free access for inspection purposes. There must be no secrets, no "wall of China", no "iron curtain" at boundaries, no censorship of the press
or of free speech. Unless the truth about industrial activities is universally known, there can be no security. Any plant or factory that can manufacture atomic bombs or can be converted to such manufacture must be a gold fish bowl so that the world can look in at all times.

This is a sound *temporary* measure only because science has not yet progressed to the point where the atom bomb can be manufactured in a cellar by a handful of technicians. When that time comes, we *must* have reached a development in world organization that will be strong enough to take care of the would-be secret offender.

But even this preliminary is a hard one to attain. It means that Congressman Rankin and Senator Bilbo will have to permit "foreigners" to poke their nose freely into American business activity. Similarly, it means that we will have the right to pry into domestic Russian affairs. The autocrats on both sides will oppose this step, because they consider truth their worst enemy. But if they have their way, no alternative remains but universal disaster.

In no sense, however, would free inspection be a final guarantee that death will not come fluttering out of the skies or be planted as a time bomb in the heart of our cities. Remember that inspection is only the first feeble step on the hard road we must now travel.

The next step must be a mutual undertaking by all the nations to outlaw the use of atomic energy and all other weapons that destroy civilians as well as combatants in war. Few people have stopped to think that UNO has exacted no such commitment from its members. Already the armament race is under way. Russia has demobilized only a small portion of its armies—some reports declare that it still keeps 6,000,000 men under arms. Both England and the United States are demobilizing reluctantly, as slowly as the popular will permits. In the United States,
the Administration presses vigorously for peacetime conscription. One would have imagined that the first proposition on the UNO's agenda would have been a resolution outlawing conscription from the face of the earth.

Of course, we will not get unilateral disarmament. Each nation will argue that it needs a shield if its neighbor has a sword, or a ploughshare that can be beaten into a sword. That is why the United States must demand universal disarmament action, enforced by the right of inspection open to all nations and to the international organization.

Here, too, resistance will be encountered, but it can be overcome by the will to peace which stirs the common people everywhere. At the moment, Russia is trying to encircle its expanded borders with puppet states, as if a few additional kilometers will protect Moscow from the atomic bomb carried by the jet plane or the rocket. Imperialists in the United States clamor for the retention of Japanese islands as bases for future military operations. As if that will make San Francisco safer from vaporization in this new, atomic age!

We have come to recognize that the world rolls toward war on tank-treads or through the clouds on wings because of the fears we have of each other. But that is only part of the story. We must learn to fear war more than we fear each other. The United States, in offering atomic energy to the Brotherhood of Nations, must agree to participate jointly in non-military measures for the common protection if any nation should refuse to join in the peace alliance. It will not be necessary to wait for all the nations to ratify this new constitution of man's hopes, any more than it was necessary for the Constitution of the United States to await unanimity before it became effective.

This is the only possible half-way house. A simple alliance between Britain and the United States, such as
Churchill has proposed, is not only an inadequate substitute for such international agreement but it may itself be the cause of war. A two-nation alliance, aimed at Russia, may cause her to move more slowly in her expansionist drive but only until such time as she has acquired additional allies—perhaps Germany revived, or Japan restored, or even an accumulation of small states, federated under the Soviet aegis. Perhaps we will have gained more time—but every moment of that time will be charged with dread. The condemned man will have won a stay of execution, but not a pardon.

America must move rapidly, must be the motivating force, toward a world government in which all nations will be invited to participate. If Russia or any other power decides to remain aloof, we must still proceed to an ultimate federation of nations, our parliament of the world. We will not be able to wait until such time as all see eye to eye, but we will have to act immediately for a preponderance of peace-hungry peoples in every climate and on every continent.

Again, we must recognize that even with the successful establishment of such political world institutions, we would not have solved the problem of war completely. These are only the first steps, for there is much to be done. After we have established the policy of mutual and free inspection, after we have formally outlawed the military use of atomic energy, after we have joined all willing nations in an alliance for peaceful and final settlement of disputes, after we have welded even a two-thirds majority, perhaps even a unanimous world, into a real parliament of man, we will still face hard tasks. We will not solve the problem

**Note**—Since this pamphlet was written, the State Department's Committee on Atomic Energy has forwarded a heartening report to Congress. The fact that fissionable material can be partially denatured—that is, demilitarized—is of first rate importance in controlling the military use of atomic energy and can at least slow up any future aggressor.
of conflict between nations by a mechanism which merely handles disputes after they arise. The only lasting solution is to eliminate the causes of conflict.

The history of our own United States illustrates this truth. The colonies set up a loose confederation, then a central republic—but that did not prevent a civil war, the bloodiest struggle in this hemisphere. Similarly, it would be useless to build a world government and eliminate international war, only to produce a civil war between the member nations. The United States could survive its civil war, but in the atomic age any international organization will not survive even one civil war between its member-states. Nor will the world.

Just as surely as our civil war was a conflict between rival economic interests, so too a world alliance must forestall economic rivalry between its members. Of greater importance than the proper machinery for handling disputes is the reorganization of the world to eliminate the reasons for disputes—the hunger for raw materials, the desire to solve unemployment through the planned economy of war mobilization, the race for foreign markets, the feeding of one people by snatching the bread from the mouths of others. There are also, of course, struggles for national prestige and power and conflicts over race and religion, but these also have economic implications.

One wit has said that the history of mankind can be written under the title, "From Adam to Atom." Not yet. We can escape that summary of the desperate struggles man has waged with nature and with himself if we can find the solution to our economic difficulties. Ironically, the selfsame atom bomb that has brought us to the edge of the abyss has given us hope of a Promised Land beyond. For in the atom, we have also the answer to hunger and human wants.
THAT little atom, invisible to the eye, beyond the reach of the most powerful microscope man has devised, is destined to become the titan of our economic life. The industrial revolution was a feeble change in our way of life compared with the atomic revolution that has just begun.

The scientists have told us enough about the atom to indicate that we are in for a new era in our race with famine, disease, poverty, even death. The secret of our long struggle for economic survival has been the biblical dictate: "By the sweat of thy brow shalt thou earn thy bread." That was a poetic way of saying that only by expending energy can we hope to feed, clothe and house ourselves. And even then, those who expended the most energy were not always, nor even often, the best fed, the best clothed, and the best housed.

Now the atom holds out to us the greatest conceivable potential reservoir of energy. For decades the scientists knew that this storehouse of power lay locked in the intricate structure of the atom. In 1945 they discovered the key by which it can be opened. The story of how it was done begins with the work of Prof. Albert Einstein, then a German scientist, later a refugee from his homeland because he was a Jew, and now an American citizen.
It was some forty years ago that Prof. Einstein, working out his famous theory of relativity, evolved a mathematical equation indicating how much energy could be released if the atom were split. It was pure theory—but theories sometimes become realities. Not until the war did any government become interested in Einstein’s equation—and then all governments became concerned. They had not bothered to build costly laboratories and factories for the purpose of releasing atomic energy to banish poverty from the earth. Only when destruction was the goal did governments summon the scientists, place at their command unlimited sums of money and instruct them to proceed with their experiments. What we have never done to destroy cancer or famine, we undertook to do for the destruction of men.

Now the laboratories—Hiroshima and Nagasaki—have confirmed the Einstein formula: the amount of energy released by nuclear fission, if fully utilized, is equal to the mass multiplied by the square of the speed of light (180,000 miles per second). A gasping world watched two cities disappear under the impact of this equation.

But there was more to Einstein’s theoretical discovery than a process for disintegrating cities. In fact, Einstein had not thought in those terms at all. The significance of atomic energy, it seemed to him, lay in its productive power. As William L. Laurence, who saw the bomb explode both in New Mexico and Nagasaki, has written:

“If this energy (described in Einstein’s equation) could be fully utilized it would take only twenty-two pounds of matter to supply all the electrical power requirements of the United States for a year.

“One-third of a gram of water would yield enough heat to turn 1,000 tons of water into steam.
“One gram of water would raise a load of a million tons to the top of a mountain six miles high.
“A breath of air would operate a powerful airplane continuously for a year.
“A handful of snow would heat a large apartment house for a year.
“The pasteboard in a small railroad ticket would run a heavy passenger train several times around the world.

True, this is no literal picture of tomorrow, but it is suggestive of the future.

This is the kind of world on whose threshold we stand—a world in which no country need think of itself as over-populated, in which no soil is too poor to feed its husbandmen, in which no urban citizen is condemned to slum-dwelling, in which no child would carry the grime of poverty on his face and soul.

But here we are halted by the problem which we as citizens of the atomic age have inherited from the primitive industrial revolution that ended in the desert of New Mexico. We must now expand our ability to consume what science has taught us to create. And that ability to consume must not be muzzled by an economic mandate: You shall not eat unless someone finds it “profitable” for you to eat.

We have been so frightened by the atomic bomb that we have not realized that nuclear fission presents us with a second great danger—economic servitude. Just as atomic energy in the hands of the war-maker is a menace to the very existence of this physical earth of ours, so too atomic energy in the hands of the private industrialist, the would-be profit-maker, is a menace to the economic life of the individual. The labor-saving devices of the industrial revolution—the machinery that now looks crude and primitive alongside the atom—were firmly vested in the hands of
private individuals inspired primarily by the profit motive. If the atom should pass into the same hands, what will become of employment for the millions whose physical energy can be dispensed with, now that the atom can take their place?

Look into the future through the eyes of yesterday’s coal baron, master of company towns and the lives of the people who inhabited them. We dare not permit the emergence now of an atom king, shaped in the pattern of the steel baron, the railway magnate, the auto czar. Under the Einstein equation, their power will have been magnified by the mass multiplied by the square of 180,000 miles per second.

Once more, we are saved only by the grace of time. It will be many years before atomic science is available for industry. While every scientist is positive that atomic energy is destined to come into industrial use, they are reluctant to say when. Dr. Leo Szilard, who invented the key method of producing plutonium for the bomb, says that “use of atomic power could be attained in three, four, or five years”, though he adds that we ought to proceed more slowly until some other element than plutonium can be utilized. Some are convinced that at the rate with which science has been able to move, the atomic age will be fully with us in the next two decades. A. C. King, who supervised the construction of Oak Ridge, sees the atomic age “in our lifetime”.

So revolutionary are the implications of atomic energy that some would like to see this Hercules strangled in its cradle—if that were possible. In fact, Congressional proposals lean heavily toward prohibiting scientists from making further investigations of the subject unless they have governmental approval. For the first time in our history we are confronted with the threat of government dictatorship
over the men of science. And that will happen if two objectives are put across: military control of atomic energy and prohibitions on free research.

In the many months that have passed since Hiroshima, Congress has been under constant bombardment from the Army to turn American science over to military domination. The leader in this drive is Maj. Gen. Leslie R. Groves, who was in command of the bomb’s development during the war. In effect, his policy of Army domination would make him the Atom King of America, the possessor of the nuclear secret and consequently the master of our lives. As a result, almost every physicist who has worked on the atom bomb has protested against Gen. Groves’ contemplated plans for putting science in a khaki straight-jacket.

On the other hand, we face the danger that atomic energy may be turned over to private industry for exploitation along the lines made so familiar by the public utilities and the monopoly industries. Prof. Einstein warned us in his own, gentle, scholarly way against this menace when he said: “Nor do I believe that the vast private corporations of the United States are suitable to the needs of these times. If a visitor should come to this country from another planet, would he not find it strange that in this country so much power is given to private corporations without their having commensurate responsibility?”

In the last analysis, atomic energy must be the property of no man, no group, no corporation. The slaves of the machine must not now become the slaves of the atom. Human freedom calls for the independence of the individual; liberty is impossible in a world where a handful own the instruments of production. The people must be the owners of atomic energy.

Anything else would be a repudiation of common sense. The discovery of the principle of nuclear fission was the
work of no one man but of a body of scientists who in turn
had inherited the knowledge of scientific generations gone
by. The dangerous work of constructing the bombs and
wringing the power out of the uranium pile was left to
thousands of workers who risked their lives by exposing
themselves to sudden explosion or radio-active injury. The
people of the United States—all of us—paid two billion
dollars for the research, the experimentation, the factories,
the raw materials.

It is a striking fact that this most important discovery
in the history of mankind was the result, not of free enter-
prise but of cooperative action under government aus-
pices. For many years we have been told that only a competitive
economic system, inspired by the profit motive, can stimu-
late the inventiveness of science. That myth was destroyed
forever in the New Mexico blast.

Henceforth, we need no longer listen to the plaintive
story of the industrialist that free enterprise is the only
creative economy, that only the lure of profit can bring
progress. Far from it. The humble scientist working in his
laboratory, in white jacket or in khaki uniform, is proof
of the human capacity to serve greater goals than those
written into the ledgers and balance sheets of corporations.

Even Senator Charles H. Tobey, a Republican and an
admirer of the profit system, declares: "Atomic energy
must never be allowed to become a money-making device.
This awesome power is a sacred trust placed in our hands.
It came from the government, which is the people. It be-
ongs to us all. It must never be allowed to pass into private
hands which might misuse it."

In the last analysis, free enterprise was unable to dis-
cover atomic energy. Neither morally nor legally can it
lay claim to property rights in the atom, nor to patent
rights in the methods by which the atom is split. Title to
the atom and the use of the atom must remain in the hands of the people, for the satisfaction of human wants here and abroad. The nation must be the owner—not the Generals or the industrialists. Atomic energy must remain in the hands of civilians, responsive to the democratic will and intent on using it for the welfare of all.

This liberation from the fears of economic privation can give us not only domestic security, but it can also lighten the road to international peace. For the same atom can solve the economic problems of our neighbors. The TVA’s and the Boulder Dams are destined for obsolescence; it may not be necessary beyond this generation to build TVA’s on the Danube. For the wealth-bearing atom is an illimitable storehouse of goods for all peoples, and none need live by extorting labor from his fellow-man or by asserting his racial claim to the resources of a limited earth. But this we shall have for ourselves and our children only if we escape the slavery which would come from a profit-motivated economy in the atomic age.
During the industrial revolution the pattern of our living was cut out for us by the machine, privately owned and privately operated. In the nuclear era, which began in the closing days of the war, our design for living will be written by whoever controls and operates the instruments of atomic production.

We can leave those instruments in the hands of the "entrepreneur", the private businessman, and follow the patterns of the dead past. It is not inconceivable. A board of directors can acquire by "purchase" the right to use atomic energy, just as boards of directors have acquired the right to water power, oil deposits, coal fields, iron ore, aluminum, railroad franchises, etc. Corporations can float stock issues and organize subsidiaries in which a few men control the policies of production—fixing wages and the conditions under which their employees work; they can stake out distribution—the areas where atomic power will be provided, the prices the industrial and home consumer will pay. In short, they can control our daily bread and our everyday lives.

That would be the traditional, the capitalist, way. What it meant in the recently ended age of the industrial revolution was once described by Prof. Einstein.
“What is a capitalist state?” he asked. “It is a state in which the principal means of production, such as the farm-lands, real estate in the cities, water, gas and electric works, transportation means, as well as the larger industrial enterprises, are the property of a minority of its citizens. Production is based upon profit of the owner rather than upon equal supply to the entire population of the necessities of existence. This propertied minority dominates the rest of the population in that it dictates the conditions of labor and, in its own interests, disposes of the opportunities of employment. This minority controls public opinion through its influence upon the schools, the press, and the government and legislation. The severity of this situation is sometimes softened, or at least veiled, by a democratic form of state which guarantees formal equality to all citizens.”

Now paint that picture in atom-red—and you have a portrait of the future, an era in which industrial dictatorship has tightened its grip a thousand-fold. That will be the result of the atom incorporated under the laws of the State of Delaware!

There is an alternative. The atom can be socialized. It can be made the property of the people of the United States, and through the internationalism of our world parliament the property of the people of the world.

What would that involve?

To begin with, Congress would have to take the initiative. It would have to set up an Atomic Energy Authority, whose very structure must be an affirmation of democracy. The members of that Authority must be as representative of the people as we can possibly make it. For example, the President would be empowered to appoint the Chairman, with the consent of the Senate. Public hearings preceding confirmation should make it possible for the people to
inquire into his qualifications, study his merits and indicate their approval or disapproval.

The other members would be the Secretaries of State, War, Interior, Commerce, and Labor—all of whom have duties directly affected by the atom—plus four public members. These would be selected by the President from a list of nominees submitted by organizations of scientists, physicians, unions, consumer and farm groups. Whenever the President saw fit, he could remove any of them. These men would be the instruments of government in the drive to make the United States an atomic democracy, serving the welfare of the people and contributing to the well-being of the world. They would be required to meet at least once a month and to report regularly once a year to Congress.

It would be their responsibility to stimulate further atomic research so that the nation's standard of living could be raised in keeping with the new power resources. A very important part of their job would be to study the economic consequences of introducing atomic principles in industry. In the past, as the laboratory has contributed technological advances to the factory, workers have simply been invited to look elsewhere for employment. For the first time, the nation can witness—in fact it must insist on—a planned transition from old to new methods of production for the purpose of minimizing the dislocation.

Formerly, scientific improvements in production processes have primarily benefited the employer. The individual employees paid the price for the new advantages that industry enjoyed, in which the consumer may have shared a small part because of lower prices and more abundant supply. We dare not make the American worker carry the burdens of the atomic transition.

This task is hardly among the most difficult that would
be assigned to the Authority. It is possible to introduce labor-saving devices without condemning great numbers of workers to immediate penury. With the Authority at the helm, the atomic innovations could be brought into use only after careful planning to transfer the workers involved to new jobs. Economists have pointed out for a long time that new inventions make possible new employment, and that innovations in the long run need not mean joblessness. But there has never been a planned effort to move workers to the new job opportunities, nor has the rate of technological change been adjusted in the past to gear in with the shift of workers. This would be one of the primary responsibilities of the Atomic Energy Authority.

Similarly, the Authority would be responsible for keeping the nation informed as to the length of the needed workweek. With the atom powering our economy, it is obvious that men will have to work fewer hours to produce a greatly multiplied quantity of goods, luxuries as well as necessities. Part of the Authority’s time would be devoted to arranging for an equitable distribution of the work that is available to the working population. Instead of reducing the workforce by dismissals, the wise policy would be to reduce the workday. At the same time, wages will have to go up so that purchasing power can keep pace with the increased volume of goods poured out of the atom. Lowered production costs should mean higher wages and lower prices. Only an informed Authority can gather the data, anticipate the prospects, and budget the resources of production and the expenditure of labor power.

That is the budget we will have to balance—the budget of manpower and productive resources. It will require two types of activities. First, the Authority would have responsibility for developing and supervising the licensing of the industrial use of atomic energy, and the allocation
of materials, patents and atomic devices. The Authority would be given the right to acquire—by purchase or condemnation in accordance with the traditional practice—whatever plants, materials or patents are needed for the further development and expansion of atomic energy. We are well started in this direction, for the government already owns exclusively the basic secrets of atomic principles and processes. In short, the first assignment is to protect the people’s ownership of the atom.

The second assignment would be to assure the use of the atom in the interests of the people. Toward this end, the Authority would be empowered to enter into agreements for the industrial utilization of atomic energy. But precisely because we are confronted by the double danger of private monopolization on the one hand and bureaucratic monopolization on the other, every effort must be made to avoid the centralization of control over the distribution of atomic energy. The Authority must be instructed—and a watchful Congress must insist—that agreements be made promptly with municipalities, cooperative groups and other non-profit associations permitting them to use the new resources under federal franchise. These techniques are not alien to our history. The grant of a government franchise—whether in transportation, water power, or radio—is nothing new. Only this time, such grants must be made not for private profit but for the welfare of the people.

In addition, the Authority would have the right to set up public corporations, after the fashion of the Tennessee Valley Authority, but the contributions of the social scientist should be no more overlooked than the contribution of the physicist. The principles of democracy should be applied so that the boards of directors in such corporations would represent all who have a concern in their operation—specifically, the technician-manager, the worker (most
easily effected through the labor unions) and the public.

Here again, the tripartite structure is not an unfamiliar technique. During the war, the government set up agencies representing management, labor and public representatives. Only now, since there must be no private industrial ownership vested with an economic interest, the place of management must be filled not by an absentee-owner, but by the technician-manager, the functioning industrial engineer. As further safeguards against potential abuses, the stock of such corporation must be wholly owned by the United States and controlled by the Authority; and the regulations of the Authority must be subject to review by the elected representatives of the people, sitting in Congress.

In this way, we can reduce the dangers of bureaucratism. But a strong word of warning is essential. No simple machinery is enough to assure the survival of democracy. A bad mechanism is certain to keep us from our goal; but a good one can still fail—if the people are not alert to the need for keeping it on the right track. Only a citizenry that is awake to its own responsibilities can survive in this atomic age. Norman Cousins has told us in striking fashion that "Modern Man is Obsolete"—by which he means that pre-atomic man must grow up to the maturity required by the atomic age. The atom has created new responsibilities not only for your government—but for you!

The legislation we now adopt is important, terribly important. But no act of Congress can relieve you of the responsibility to act yourself. If you mean to make this world the abode of free men, you will have to keep alive in your own spirit the flaming torch of democracy. If you want the kind of world in which no man crowds his neighbor from the sidewalk, you must also build the kind of
world in which no man crowds his neighbor from the dinner table.

For the first time in man's long journey out of the dark cave in which he started, the bright sun awaits him. It will not take much now to send him scurrying back to the cave. But it will take an effort if he is to lift himself to new heights, an effort that each of us must make daily from now on. In the atomic age, every act of prejudice and exploitation is multiplied by the fact that we now possess the means to build greater horror chambers for those we dislike. And the converse is true: we have the potential to lift the oppressed to their feet without losing our own footing, to feed the hungry without forfeiting a morsel of our own.

If you want this brave new world, in which no man's hand need be raised against his brother, you can have it. The plans discussed in this pamphlet have been drawn up in legislative form and are now before Congress as H.R. 5230, known as the Celler Bill, after the Congressman who consented to introduce it. That bill is the minimum program for the atomic age. We cannot afford less.

You will be told that if this bill is passed, America will have started on the road to Socialism. To some, that will call up the fantasies conceived by canny propagandists. Of course, there will be some who fear the label of Socialism more than they fear the menace of the atomic bomb. To these, the reasoned words of Prof. Einstein should bring reassurance:

"I am convinced, on the whole, that in a state with a socialized economy, better prospects exist for the individual to attain that maximum of freedom consistent with the welfare of all society.

"The reason: In a soundly managed socialist society, everyone works for the satisfaction of common needs rather
than for the profit of a propertied minority. The problem of a more or less equal division of labor can, in my belief, be solved only in a planned economy, and not under a system of free enterprise where the industrialist is compelled to reduce the number of workers as far as possible and increase to the maximum the productivity of labor. Under those conditions, every invention of a labor-saving machine increases chronic unemployment. Out of this arises growing unemployment and economic insecurity which also means loss of freedom, insofar as freedom is affected by economic conditions.

"The socialization of the more important means of production is, however, still not socialism, even though it is a prerequisite of it. Part and parcel of socialism is also that concentrated power be effectively controlled by the citizenry, so that the planned economy benefits the entire people, so that the road be kept open for all—in accordance with their natural qualifications—to the most important posts. Only constant political struggle and vigilance can create that situation and maintain it.

"Therefore, conditions for the attainment of individual freedom for the majority are more favorable in a socialist state than in an economic system based upon private ownership."

To act along these lines has been made mandatory by the atomic bomb. Time is running out, and we must move quickly. While striving to make atomic energy the property of the people, we must strive to achieve social ownership and democratic, non-profit control of all our major industries.

The hopes of mankind are at stake. To prevent war and mankind's consequent destruction, we must solve the economic problems of nations, for the armament race goes hand in hand with the race for markets and raw materials.
In their folly, the nations may fight for oil in the Middle East, when there is at hand a fuel far richer in energy and requiring no territorial aggrandizement. If the United States, which was the first to hurl the atomic bomb, can take the lead in making the atom the most effective instrument in the arts of peace, it can open up for all the nations a golden epoch beyond the dreams of the most visionary.

Basically, we no longer have a choice. Between the realization of our deepest dread and the fulfilment of our highest hope, is there a genuine choice? The decision to follow the road to social responsibility is the only possibility before us.

Until now, Socialism, with its promise that all men would share in the potential goodness of the earth seemed like a desirable dream. The atom bomb has made it an urgent necessity. We can not delay.

We have split the atom; we must hasten to unite the world — in a cooperative commonwealth!
A BILL

To develop, conserve, and regulate the use of atomic energy, to promote and encourage such uses as may serve the economic welfare of the Nation, to prohibit its private exploitation, and to outlaw the military use of such energy through international compact.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

FINDINGS AND DECLARATION OF POLICY

SECTION 1. Research and experimentation in the field of nuclear fission has attained the stage at which the release of atomic energy on a large scale is practical. The proper development and utilization of such energy will advance the national welfare, secure the national defense, insure the national safety, and promote world peace, to an extent and by means which cannot now be measured. The misuse of such energy, by design or through ignorance, may inflict incalculable disaster upon the Nation, destroy the general welfare, imperil the national safety, and endanger world peace. In the highest national interest, and to protect the national existence, it is essential to develop fully the new strength and to promote the enrichment of the national life that can come from knowledge and practical use of this newly tapped source of energy. Accordingly, it is hereby declared to be the policy of the United States, (a) to encourage free research in the field of nuclear energy, and in other scientific fields employing
the results or methods of research in that field, and to further the practical application of such research; (b) to see that the United States is at all times fully advised as to the state of technical knowledge concerning atomic energy within and outside of its borders; and (c) to control all industrial or military utilization of atomic energy within the United States and, by agreement with other nations, in the world at large. The primary objectives of all action taken under this Act to fulfill the foregoing policy shall be the promotion of the national defense, the protection of the safety of the inhabitants of the United States, the promotion of world peace, the enrichment of the national life, the promotion of the general welfare, and the furtherance of the acquisition of knowledge concerning atomic energy.

THE ATOMIC ENERGY AUTHORITY

Sec. 2. (a) There is hereby established the Atomic Energy Authority (hereinafter called "the Authority"). The Board of Directors of the said Authority shall consist of a Chairman, who shall be appointed by the President by and with the consent of the Senate, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of War, the Secretary of the Navy, the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Labor, and four public members selected by the President from a roster of nominees submitted by organizations of scientists, physicians, labor unions, and philanthropic bodies, under such regulations as may be promulgated pursuant to section 4 of this Act. The Chairman of the Board and the public members thereof shall receive a compensation equal to that fixed by law for Cabinet officers. Members of the Board shall hold office at the pleasure of the President. Seven of the members of the Authority shall constitute a quorum.

(b) The Board of Directors of the Authority is author-
ized to appoint without regard to the Civil Service Act or the Classification Act an Administrator, a Deputy Administrator, and other officers and advisory boards, and to delegate to such officers, under such conditions and limitations as it may prescribe, any of the powers of the Authority.

(c) The Authority shall meet at least twelve times in each calendar year.

(d) The Authority shall make annual report of its activities to the Congress, with proposals for such amendatory and supplemental legislation as may appear desirable in the light of experience.

POWERS

SEC. 3. Subject to the limitations imposed by section 5 of this Act, and to such further conditions as may be imposed pursuant to section 7, the Authority is empowered and directed—

(a) To conduct and cause to be conducted experimentation, studies, and investigation, here and abroad, in the production and utilization of atomic energy and to analyze and forecast the economic and social consequences of the utilization of such energy; and to publish the results of such investigation and analysis, without regard to any statutory or administrative limitations on Government publications;

(b) To develop, control, supervise, and license the industrial use of atomic energy, and the incidental use of materials, patents, or apparatus under the control of the Authority, and to enter into agreements with municipal, cooperative, or other nonprofit associations for the industrial utilization of such energy under such conditions as will prevent exploitation of the consuming public or of labor employed in such project, guarantee priority of re-
employment rights to workers displaced from existing industries by the advance of technology, and otherwise safeguard the national welfare;

(c) To control all plants, materials, patents, or other property useful in the development and utilization of atomic energy which belong to the United States, and to regulate the importation and exportation of all such plants, materials, patents, or other property, public or private;

(d) To acquire, by purchase or condemnation, such plants, materials, patents, or other property not now owned by the United States as may be useful in the development and utilization of atomic energy: Provided, That compensation therefor, whether fixed by negotiation or by court decree, shall not exceed actual cost;

(e) To encourage, sponsor, and finance experimentation, studies, and investigation in the production, utilization, and control of atomic energy by nonprofit organizations under such conditions as may be prescribed in the interests of the national welfare;

(f) To employ necessary personnel: Provided, That not more than 10 per centum of the employees of the Authority may be employed without regard to any rules of the Civil Service Commission, or to the citizenship or residence of the employees; to bring into this country, without regard to immigration laws or State Department administrative requirements, such scientifically trained persons as it may desire to employ, together with members of their immediate families or other dependents; to select from the armed services of the United States persons of scientific training who may be useful in the work of the Authority and whose scientific abilities are not, in the judgment of the Authority and the person concerned,
being fully utilized by the armed services; and to utilize and direct the services of officers or employees of other Federal agencies with the consent of such agencies or with the approval of the President;

(g) To inspect all activities in the United States which have any bearing upon the production or utilization of atomic energy and, insofar as feasible, all such activities outside of the United States.

(h) To make and modify agreements, arrangements, and contracts (including where deemed advisable cost-plus-fixed-fee contracts but not cost-plus-a-percentage-of-cost contracts), upon such terms and conditions and in such manner as may be deemed necessary to facilitate the purposes of this Act, without regard to the provisions of law relating to the making, performance, amendment, or modification of contracts;

(i) To make advance, partial, and other payments in connection with contracts, loans, and grants of funds to any person on such terms and conditions as are deemed appropriate in the national interest;

(j) To bring suit in its own name, or in the name of the United States, in any court, State or Federal, of competent jurisdiction;

(k) To create or organize corporations, the stock of which shall be wholly owned by the United States and controlled by the Commission, to carry out the provisions of this Act;

(l) To expend such funds as may be appropriated by the Congress in any ways which, in the opinion of the Authority, are conducive to the accomplishment of the foregoing purposes;

(m) To delegate, apportion, or share in the exercise of any of the foregoing powers pursuant to agreement effected under section 7 of this Act.
CONGRESSIONAL CONTROL OF REGULATIONS

Sec. 4. The Authority shall have authority from time to time to make, amend, and rescind such regulations as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act. Such regulations shall be effective sixty days after transmission to the Congress unless the Congress has in the interim amended or nullified such regulations by appropriate legislation or has adjourned within thirty days after the submission of such regulations.

GUARANTIES OF SCIENTIFIC FREEDOM

Sec. 5. Nothing contained in this Act shall be construed to prohibit or impair, or to authorize the Authority to prohibit or impair, any of the following:

(a) Freedom of scientific research; that is, the right to study, investigate, and explore in any scientific domain.

(b) Freedom of scientific expression; that is, the right to comment on or discuss any scientific developments where the information upon which such comment or discussion is based is not obtained by dishonesty, violence, or stratagem or under pledges of secrecy or confidence.

(c) Freedom of access to scientific materials and apparatus; that is, the right to acquire or otherwise secure access to materials and apparatus not owned by the United States, under conditions which do not create serious dangers to public health and safety as defined by applicable local laws.

(d) Freedom of expatriation; that is, the right of any American citizen to depart from the United States or any area thereof, unless he has agreed not to do so as a condition of entering employment or securing confidential information, or to renounce his United States citizenship if he sees fit to do so.
PENALTIES

Sec. 6. Whoever (a) knowingly conceals from the Authority any activities having to do with the development or utilization of atomic energy, or (b) violates the terms of any license, contract of employment, or other agreement with the Authority or any agency or instrumentality thereof, shall be punished by imprisonment for not exceeding five years or a fine not exceeding $10,000, or both, and shall further forfeit to the United States any materials, apparatus, or other property used in the commission of the said offense.

INTERNATIONAL COMPACT

Sec. 7. Under the direction of the President, the Authority shall prepare and submit to the Congress for its approval the text of an agreement to be submitted to all other nations by the terms of which the United States would undertake to furnish to the United Nations Organization or to such other international agency as might be established for the purpose all available information concerning the production and utilization of atomic energy, on condition that all nations party to such agreement would agree as follows:

(1) To grant to each other or to a designated international agency free access to, and the right of inspection of, all plants, laboratories, and facilities of whatever kind relating to the development, manufacture, and production of armaments and munitions of war or to the production or utilization of atomic energy.

(2) To outlaw the future military use of atomic energy and all other means of warfare which by their nature are not susceptible of use that discriminates between combatant and noncombatant personnel.

(3) To participate jointly in nonmilitary measures for
common protection in the event that any nation refuses to enter or abide by such agreements after two-thirds of the nations of the earth and two-thirds of the population of the earth are bound by such agreements.

Funds

Sec. 8. (a) There is hereby authorized to be appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, such sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

(b) To the extent determined by the Authority to be necessary in carrying out its functions under this Act—

(1) the unexpended balances of appropriations, allocations, or other funds available for the use of the Manhattan Engineer District, Army Service Forces, and all records and all outstanding obligations thereof; and

(2) all property, real and personal (including all interests in or pertaining thereto), owned by the United States or any agency thereof and which is used in connection with the production or utilization of atomic energy, shall be transferred to the Authority for use in carrying out its functions in accordance with the provisions of this Act.

Separability

Sec. 9. If any provision of this Act, or the application of such provision to any person or circumstances, is held invalid, the remainder of this Act, and the application of such provision to persons or circumstances other than those to which it is held invalid, shall not be affected thereby.

Title

Sec. 10. This Act may be cited as the “Atomic Energy Act of 1946”.

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