

The Challenge to Labour

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*Let the Labour movement
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HARRY POLLITT

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THE COMMUNIST PARTY

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RESOLUTIONS AND PROCEEDINGS

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THE CHALLENGE TO LABOUR

*The Political Report made to the Twenty-third National Congress
of the Communist Party by the General Secretary*

HARRY POLLITT

I

Introduction

The Twenty-third National Congress of the Communist Party meets in one of the most critical situations that the British people have ever had to face. Their whole future is now at stake. They have to face the possibility of a serious economic crisis, and the danger of an American-organised war in which atom and hydrogen bombs would wipe out millions of innocent people and destroy world civilisation.

The capitulation of Eden and the Tory Government to the plans of Dulles to involve Britain directly in the shameful imperialist war against the peoples of Indo-China, with the ultimate aim of war on People's China, has aroused the concern and anger of the British people. The resignation of Aneurin Bevan reflects the tremendous strength of the feeling for peace amongst Labour's rank and file, who are disgusted with the repeated Tory surrenders to American imperialism, which are fully supported by the right-wing Labour leaders.

We call on the British people to refuse to work or fight in any American-organised military intervention against any country in the world.

The Tory Government has now been in power since 1951, a fact which is a disgrace to the Labour movement, and a call for its complete defeat at the earliest moment.

This Tory Government of company directors, landlords and aristocrats has lined the pockets of its friends while picking the pockets of the poor.

In the Budgets of 1952 and 1953, a gift of £254 million was made to big business. Income tax for the rich was slashed, while the workers with families got nothing. The rate of interest was raised, and this increased the income of the rich who lend money by tens of millions a year.

Butler's 1954 Budget carries on this policy of concessions to the rich and lifts none of the burdens from the working people. To pay for the Tory war policy taxation is maintained at the highest level of any country in the world.

Not a penny is given to the old-age pensioners. No steps are

taken to reduce the prices paid by the housewives, although world prices are falling. Wage increases are resisted, and the application of equal pay once more postponed.

But a cash gift is given to big business in the form of an "investment allowance". The whole Tory policy of making the rich richer and the poor poorer is continued in this Budget.

The Tory Government handed back the nationalised road transport and steel industries to the capitalists, who picked up more millions for nothing in the take-over. Now the proposed rent increases under the new Rents Bill are intended to bring £80 million a year more to landlord friends, increasing the capital value of rent-controlled property by £1,000 million.

Never has capitalist robbery been so open and brutal as under Tory rule. Never have there been such a vaunting of wealth, such speculation and ruling-class greed as now. The Duke of Westminster dies and leaves a fortune, it is said, of anything up to £60 million. He leased Grosvenor Square to the Yanks for £1 million—a typical Tory profiteering patriot.

A financier buys Savoy Hotel shares and sells them a few weeks later for £200,000 profit. Out of its huge reserves, Courtaulds Ltd. make a gift of £24 million to its shareholders—a £1 bonus share for every £1 held. So Mr. Butler, Tory Chancellor, with £20,000 Courtaulds shares, is £20,000 in shares better off.

But for the workers, dearer food and less of it. The food subsidies have been slashed from £410 million to £220 million. For every 10 lb. of meat, sugar and butter consumed before the war, 7 lb. of meat, 8 lb. of sugar and 6 lb. of butter are consumed now. But the consumption of margarine, bread and potatoes has gone up—a typical commentary on what the Tories think should be the staple food of the working class.

Bad though the conditions of the wage earners are, the plight of the old-age pensioners beggars description. Every fifth pensioner, widow and unemployed man—1,148,000 in all—can only keep body and soul together by public assistance. The rest are either living with their families or eke out on money they saved over the years.

Rising prices, says Lord Beveridge, "have made social insurance benefits insufficient for subsistence even at the bare minimum assumed in the Beveridge Report" (*The Times*, November 9, 1953).

While the wine and money flow in the palaces, mansions and luxury hotels of the rich, in a way never seen for years, in the garrets and cellars the aged poor are dying of neglect.

Education is slashed, nurseries are closed down, and housing standards are lowered. Wage increases cannot be paid, but the Tories can find £1,776 million a year for war, a levy for death of 13s. 8d. a week on every man, woman and child in Britain.

The owners of rent, interest and profit take over £4,000 million a year out of the labour of the British people.

This is the levy of the rich on the poor—£80 a year on every man, woman and child in Britain. "The rich are ever-lastingly

plundering, debasing and brutalising the poor", said Bronterre O'Brien in 1833.

They're still at it 120 years later.

After all the so-called redistribution of incomes carried through by the Labour Government, half the wealth of England and Wales is still owned by 1 per cent of the population.

The proportion of income redistributed by social security has grown only from 4.5 per cent in 1938 to 5.4 per cent in 1952. And the talk is now of the crisis in the Welfare State.

The right-wing Labour leaders say that we have no longer a class society in Britain. This patent falsehood should be rammed down their throats. The rich are getting richer. In 1947 the capital value of the fortunes left on death was £656 million. In 1952 it was £841 million.

Tory Britain is a rich, class Britain, in which the rich have nothing but scorn for the poor—otherwise they would not dare to flaunt their luxurious way of living as they do.

Why is the Tory Government carrying out this wholesale offensive on the conditions of the people?

We are told it is because of Britain's desperate economic situation.

But the real truth about Britain's position is kept hidden from the people.

All these sacrifices from the people are in reality being exacted to pay for the cold war, for colonial wars, for maintaining military forces all over the world to hold down the peoples struggling for freedom. They are being exacted to pay for gigantic rearmament in order to fulfil Britain's obligations in the American-dominated Atlantic military alliance against the countries of Socialism and People's Democracy.

The Tory financiers and their right-wing Labour allies are struggling to maintain the crumbling fabric of British imperialism. This is the real key to their policy.

Britain's economy has been made dependent on Empire tribute. Therefore Britain's industry and agriculture have been weakened and fallen behind. And now in the consequent worsening economic situation they see as the only solution to increase Empire tribute. Colonial exploitation has been enormously increased during these recent years. The standards of the colonial peoples have been worsened. Hence the advance of their revolt. To meet this revolt the imperialists demand more armed forces, more guns and bombers. So the screw is turned on the working people in Britain to pay for the guns, to supply the armed forces, and to provide capital for export.

This policy is ruining Britain. It has tied Britain to American imperialism and dollar domination. It has led to the refusal of Molotov's proposals at the recent Berlin Conference for a European Security Pact that would guarantee a lasting peace. It has led to acceptance of the rearming of German militarism, and turned Britain into an American atom bomber base. If this path is continued, it means the economic, political and military destruction of Britain.

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The revolt against this whole policy is rising among all sections of the Labour movement and the whole people.

More and more people are realising that Britain at this moment holds the greatest opportunity to stride forward for peace, for national independence, and for a new policy of social and economic advance at home.

Britain's initiative for peace, for collective security in Europe in place of German rearmament, for East-West trade, and for negotiations of the Powers to ban atomic weapons and reduce armaments, could transform the world situation. It would rally support throughout Europe and Asia and all over the world, and isolate the war camp in the United States.

Only such a policy can open the way to solving Britain's home problems.

Our main concern at this Congress is to show how the working people can defeat the Tory Government so that Britain can advance to such a policy, and how the Labour movement can play the decisive role in bringing it about.

II

The People Fight Back

What is new in the political situation in Britain is that the people are now fighting back in a way that has not been seen for years. The workers are already starting to break through the paralysing grip of the right-wing Labour leaders.

First in importance is the great wages struggle, of greater significance than those between the two wars because the trade union movement, its resources, membership and degree of organisation, is much stronger.

The magnificent demonstrations of the engineering and shipyard workers culminating in the 24-hour national stoppage of December 2 will go down in history as marking a decisive turn to struggle on the part of the organised trade union movement.

Their lead was followed by the railwaymen. The British Railways Executive Committee contemptuously turned down the railwaymen's demand. A special tribunal, of which Sir Percy Mills, the engineering employers' Chairman, was a member, awarded an insulting 4s. The threat of a national strike followed—and in 72 hours the promise of more was forthcoming. The lesson of the railwaymen was put with bitterness and clarity by the *Daily Telegraph*, which wrote (December 17, 1953) that the Special Tribunal had "been over-ruled under a threat of force".

The militancy and unity of the electrical contracting workers, under the leadership of the Executive Committee of the Electrical Trades Union, showed the Government and the employers that the working class was determined to win wage advances, and helped to stimulate the movement of other organised workers

which defeated the resistance to wage increases and won all-round advances. As a result of their militancy and solidarity, the Electrical Trades Union won a great victory.

The significance of this growing movement is that after a period of almost 15 years of class collaboration it reasserted the fighting power of trade unionism.

This conception of a fighting trade unionism is the key to the whole future policy and role of the working class. When the workers feel that their trade unions and their leaders are behind them, they will go into action.

The secret of the success of the 24-hour stoppage on December 2 of the engineering and shipbuilding workers was their unity in action involving all the members of many different unions, men, women and young people, organised and unorganised.

This wages struggle of the workers in industry is already having a profound effect on the professional classes, including teachers, civil servants and local government officers. These, too, have seen their professional and living standards reduced. Many of them, for example large sections of the teachers, are demanding more effective and determined action both to win improvements and to protect their standards from encroachment. The strength of feeling has been strikingly demonstrated in the character of the movement for equal pay. These are only examples of developments which are of the greatest significance for the future of the British people, for they are evidence of the broad popular unity that can be built up on the basis of progressive economic and social demands.

Then we must note the magnificent movement of the Co-operative Guildswomen in securing 2¼ million signatures on the petition against food prices. It was a great achievement, and another example of what can be done when the workers' organisations use the power that is in their hands.

Now we see the developing battle on the rents, which was preceded by deputations to local councils in all parts of Britain against increased Council rents. Tenants' movements are being formed to struggle against the new Rents Bill. More than half the population will be affected—who can be brought into battle.

There have been important campaigns carried out on all the mass social issues and for peace by the National Assembly of Women, which have met with a remarkable response by women all over the country.

Then there was the fight for peace and East-West trade; the forcing of an armistice in Korea; the winning of the Labour movement, T.U.C. and Labour Party Conference for Great Power talks, and the opposition to the policy of rearming Western Germany, which so sharply divided the Parliamentary Labour Party.

The mass demand for East-West trade is now bursting through, coming up in discussions and demands in the factories, trade unions and employers' organisations and in Parliament.

The colonial peoples are also fighting back against the efforts of British imperialism. Do what they will in Africa, Malaya, the

West Indies, the imperialists cannot subdue the mighty movement for their national liberation and independence of the peoples of these countries.

All the bombs, terrorism, starvation, concentration camps and policies of deliberate murder cannot intimidate our colonial brothers and sisters. They are fighting back in an unconquerable spirit that has no parallel in world history, and they will ultimately succeed in winning their liberation from British imperialism.

The growing understanding of, and sympathy with the colonial peoples is another new and important development.

There was the new factor which emerged at the Margate Labour Party Conference, where the battle was led, not by the Bevanites, but an alliance of a growing number of unions with a progressive policy and the majority of the constituency Labour Parties—something which holds the key to the future development of the Labour Party.

But it has to be recognised that the mass movement of struggle is still developing unevenly, and there are many weaknesses to be overcome before we can be satisfied that the full strength of the working class is being brought into action.

The advances made by the Tories at many recent by-elections, the fact that the full meaning of the Rents Bill is not yet grasped, the lull in the wages movement immediately paltry increases are won, are all facts which we have to face and do far more to unite and organise the workers for the present and future class struggles in which they will have to take part.

III

The Economic Situation

The first signs of a new crisis in the capitalist world appeared in 1952 in the form of over-production of textiles and other consumer goods. During 1953 there was some recovery in the consumer goods trades, but recent developments, which were brought to a head when the Korean war was ended, show that the crisis has become deeply rooted throughout agriculture and industry, and in particular the basic industries.

Contrary to previous post-war tendencies, world prices of the basic commodities entering world trade declined almost without exception throughout 1953.

World production of crude oil began to fall in the latter months of 1953 as stocks rose, and steel production declined in all the principal capitalist countries except Britain.

Despite a recovery from 1952, the total value of world trade is still below 1951 and competition in export markets has become more severe.

All capitalist countries are becoming worried at the situation now unfolding itself in America. In the last few months in the U.S.A. production has steadily declined. According to the Index

published by the Federal Reserve Bank, production showed a decline of 10 per cent between November 1953 and January 1954.

"All major industry groups operated at lower levels than in November 1952, with the largest decline in plants that turn out consumer durable goods", stated *U.S. News and World Report* of January 15, 1954.

In February alone, unemployment in the U.S.A. reached a total of 3,671,000 which is 2 million more than in November 1953, and it must be remembered that American official figures conceal a great deal of unemployment. Short-time working has become the rule in many plants turning out cars and domestic goods; whole towns have become poverty-stricken as huge factories making farm machinery have been closed and thousands of railwaymen dismissed.

In agriculture in the U.S.A. there has been a vast over-production, and stocks worth no less than \$4,500 million are now held by the Government.

Already the acreage under cultivation with wheat, maize and cotton has been drastically cut down.

As a result of these developments, there has been a decline in earnings. Wages in November were running at an annual rate of \$1,800 million below October. Some measure of this figure—which points a moral for us—is that it is nearly four times the value of U.K. exports to America in the last twelve months. These reductions in earnings in the U.S.A., though in no sense of slump proportions, are bound to have a serious effect on British exports of whisky, luxury clothing, pottery and motor cars, and other items which can be easily discarded in times of difficulty.

More serious, however, is the slackening demand for the main dollar earners of the British Empire—rubber, non-ferrous metals, wool and jute.

If the American car industry cuts production by 10 per cent, which is the most optimistic forecast, it could cut imports from Malaya by as much as 50 per cent, for it is unlikely that the domestic industry will be called upon to make the first sacrifice.

The position is similar with the other materials, and since in the past three years both the American Government and capitalists have built up huge stocks of these materials which they now wish to reduce, the setback to foreign producers might be much greater than a halving of their exports.

If the American depression develops any further, the effect will not be confined only to the American market but will be felt in the South American markets; the Middle East markets now heavily dependent on oil revenue; the Australian market maintained by wool sales; and the Canadian market, propped up by American purchases of aluminium, nickel, iron ore, copper and wood-pulp and the flow of U.S. capital for direct investment.

In addition, we face the likelihood of the Americans imposing greater restrictions on the entry of foreign goods in competition with their own. The Randall Commission, set up to recommend

the general line of U.S. foreign economic policy, has presented its report, which is generally recognised as the greatest flop of the century.

The emasculated measures proposed could hardly bring in another dollar to Western Europe. But even these limited proposals face defeat and actual reversal in Congress. There is a prospect (which becomes more certain with every growth of American unemployment) that far more rigid measures may be in store.

This, then, is the situation which the British economy faces, and in particular its weakest sector—overseas trade.

The total volume of British exports has been no more than maintained at the 1952 level (a year of crisis in textiles and some other goods), and engineering exports have tended to decline. The improvement in the trade gap was entirely the result of reduced purchases and lower prices of imports—especially of industrial raw materials.

Export prices have fallen since 1952 in the face of foreign competition, but import prices have fallen further. This trend gives Britain an apparent advantage in the terms of trade, but for the future, lower prices for food and raw materials imports mean that the countries which produce them have less to spend on British exports.

A large part of the improvement in the gold and dollar reserves of the sterling area has been due to “once-for-all” expedients, with the result that in recent months the improvement has been at a slackening pace.

As regards industrial production, the official index glosses over the position of many basic industries. Metals, engineering and vehicles as a whole have fared worse than the average. Exports are tending to fall and order books are thinning.

Shipbuilding has remained active in the main yards, but the flow of new orders is said to have almost dried up, while in the smaller yards there has already been idle capacity. In this situation an improvement in steel-plate supply might well do no more than reduce the time required to work through existing order books.

Where the Tories were able to boast of improvement in Britain's position during 1953, it is attributable to the exploitation of the Empire—and particularly to the exploitation of the colonies, where fierce attacks have been made on the movements for colonial liberation.

This increase in colonial exploitation is illustrated in the nearly doubling of the colonial sterling balances from £670 million to £1,222 million during the three years from 1949 to 1952. This means that £552 million was drawn from the colonial peoples during these three years without any current return to them.

The improvement in the terms of trade; the improvement in the gold and dollar reserves, and the maintenance of the level of exports are all largely attributable to greater imperialist exploitation and privileged trading areas for British monopoly capitalism.

Hence the general struggle for markets in the capitalist world has resulted in the exposure of the fundamental contradictions amongst the imperialist Powers. In particular American imperialism has come into open conflict with its main rival—British imperialism. The disproportionate division of territory between the U.S. and Britain is the major source of imperialist conflict. An understanding of the historical development of the antagonism between British and American imperialism is now the prime necessity for the study of political and economic questions in the capitalist sectors of the world.

The British ruling class has been pulled in two opposite directions since the end of the war. On the one hand it has tried to line up behind American imperialism in a policy of hostility towards, and preparations for war against, the Soviet Union, People's China and the countries of People's Democracy. This has meant a policy of surrender to American domination of Britain, and betrayal of the independence of Britain. But at the same time the British ruling class finds that every surrender to American imperialism means the surrender of its own imperialist interests and therefore it endeavours to defend its own imperialist interests and resist the American encroachment. This means a policy full of contradictions and growing rifts and divisions even within the ranks of British reaction.

The struggle with U.S. imperialism has come to the surface over Imperial Preference, devaluation and convertibility of the £, the International Wheat Agreement, and the Anzus Pact, and the secrecy of British atom-bomb trials. Meanwhile, the Tories demand capital exports to the colonies and dominions on a greater scale than ever before.

Yet, because they are entangled in hopeless contradictions, the British imperialists vacillate in their antagonistic partnership with the U.S.A. and frequently concede vital points in the midst of their active struggle against U.S. imperialism. For example, they regard as inevitably necessary the counter-revolutionary alliance with the U.S., although that alliance means a surrender of independence to their main imperialist rival.

Similarly the same alliance means a waste of resources which the British imperialists could otherwise have available for investment in the Empire, yet we find Lyttelton inviting American capitalists to invest in colonial territories whilst asserting that British sovereignty will be maintained. Another consequence is that, in the midst of a fierce struggle for markets, Britain's trading possibilities are hampered by East-West trade bans dictated by America.

In this situation the British imperialists attempt to find a solution not only by the intensified exploitation of the colonies, but by forcing down living standards at home in order to expand markets and the export of capital and to build up the gold and dollar reserves. To this end the Tory Government has abolished controls; will have ended rationing by the middle of 1954; has strengthened the hands of the employers and landlords against the workers, and has shifted the burden of taxation still further

to the benefit of company profits and higher incomes generally.

The American bans and prohibitions on East-West trade do more than hamper the development of British trade with the countries of Socialism and People's Democracy. The same bans and prohibitions are applied to Japan, Western Germany and France, and the result is that all the industrial countries who so sorely need mutually beneficial trade with the Soviet Union, People's China and the countries of Eastern Europe are forced into the restricted capitalist market; each is brought into ever more bitter competition with the other; and all with the United States. The result of acceptance of such an American policy is economic suicide for Britain.

Yet we can see that "the inevitable sacrifices" which are demanded by British monopolists and right-wing Labour leaders alike would even strengthen America's hold on Britain and Britain's trade, since they are urged upon the workers in the context of the counter-revolutionary alliance and the "cold war."

IV

The Fight for Peace and National Independence

THE FIGHT FOR PEACE

The urgency of the fight for peace is underlined by the recent revelations of the terrible effects of the American hydrogen bomb tests in the Pacific which have shocked public opinion in Britain. They have brought home with renewed force the urgent need to fight for the banning of atom and hydrogen bombs, as the Soviet Union has repeatedly proposed.

The Dulles policy of "instant retaliation" means that the U.S. warmongers have the aim of dropping atom and hydrogen bombs on Russia and China on some flimsy pretext, and thus starting a third world war. Britain must resist this disastrous policy with all its strength, for it would result in catastrophe for our country and the world.

But instead of resisting, Churchill and the Tory Government have surrendered to the Americans in the most shameful way. Churchill in Parliament has defended the hydrogen bomb, refused to call on the Americans to stop their experiments, and shown the Tories to be completely regardless of the lives and future of the British people.

If ever anything underlined the need to get rid of the Tory Government at once, it is Churchill's humiliating exhibitions in Parliament in recent days.

The greatest responsibility also rests on the Labour movement to prevent the plans to rearm German militarism from being carried through. This is literally a life-and-death matter for the British people.

If arms are again placed in the hands of those responsible for the mass bombings, the atrocities, the slaughter and the gas-chambers of the Second World War, it will be a major step on the road to a Third World War.

The role of Britain is decisive in stopping this American-inspired plan. Tremendous opposition to it is being expressed in France, Italy and in West Germany itself. If Britain takes a stand against the rearmament of German militarism, it will be impossible for the American and West German reactionaries to carry it through.

This is why the volume of protest which has already begun to develop needs to be increased a hundredfold, so that every Member of Parliament, every trade union executive committee, and the leaders of the Labour Party and Co-operative movement are made aware of the determination of the British people to prevent this crime from being carried through.

The support of certain right-wing Labour leaders, such as Attlee and Morrison, for the policy of rearming West Germany is a betrayal of the Labour movement. It is not surprising that their action has already been repudiated by large numbers of Labour and trade union organisations.

The fight against the policy of rearming the ex-Nazis should be combined with the fight for the positive alternative to the war plans. At the Berlin Conference, Molotov put forward, on behalf of the Soviet Union, proposals for a European Collective Security Treaty which deserve the serious consideration and support of all who want peace.

The so-called "European Defence Community" is an alliance of six European States aimed at perpetuating the division of Europe and facilitating the aggressive plans of the United States' imperialists. The Soviet proposals for a European Collective Security Treaty would mean that all the nations of Europe would be banded together for their defence. An attack on one would be regarded as an attack on all. While further discussions on achieving German unity went on, both East and West Germany would be covered by the provisions of the Treaty.

These proposals would help end the division of Europe. They would lessen international tension. They would open the way to a solution of the German problem. Only those interested in maintaining tension and preparing war can refuse to discuss them.

When Eden rejected them out of hand at the Berlin Conference, he did not speak for the British people. The Labour movement must insist that new consideration is given to the Soviet proposals, for no nation would benefit more than our own if they were put into operation.

The Soviet Note of March 30, which stated that the Soviet Union is prepared to agree to United States participation in the Treaty, and would be prepared to consider joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, completely destroys the basis of the two main objections to the Soviet proposals made by the Western Powers at the Berlin Conference.

From this Congress we appeal to all who have suffered in two world wars, to those who lost loved ones, to those who remember the tortures inflicted on millions of innocent people in the Nazi concentration camps, to those who watched the children being evacuated and then went through the bombing of our cities, to all patriots and peace lovers whose dearest wish is that mankind shall never again have to go through these experiences: let us join together, irrespective of our differences on other questions, to prevent the revival of German militarism.

Let a great united campaign sweep the country from end to end, so that from every city, town and village, from every street, factory, pit and mill, the people's voice is heard.

Let us at the same time, in these days before the Geneva Conference on Far Eastern questions meets, intensify our pressure for a peaceful settlement in that great area of the world.

Public opinion forced an armistice in Korea, but American reaction refuses to conclude a real peace settlement there because further aggression is planned. We must fight to ensure that agreement is reached at Geneva on a Korean peace settlement. The campaign to end the war in Indo-China and all other wars now raging must be stepped up. It is high time to ensure that the People's Republic of China is admitted to the United Nations.

We welcome the wide and powerful expressions of opinion which are making themselves heard, especially in the Labour movement, in favour of a reduction in the period of conscription from two years. The young people who initiated this campaign, and who have won the support of millions of mothers, trade unionists and people of all political parties, deserve the help of all of us in their fight against a two-year conscription period which is imposed on American orders and for the purpose of oppressing the colonial peoples.

In 1953 the work and activity of the world peace movement achieved important victories for peace. The end of the fighting in Korea was a signal defeat for the warmongers, and one of the main factors which lessened international tension during the past year.

The Berlin Conference was a further success for the peace forces. The American reactionaries did not want to sit down at the conference table with the Soviet Union. The pressure of world public opinion forced them to do so and agreement was reached at the Conference on a number of questions, including the convening of the Geneva Conference.

The Western Powers' policy of "peace through strength", which is really a policy of building up huge armed forces for aggression, has suffered many setbacks.

But it would be fatal to be complacent about the present situation. On the contrary, the most urgent note of warning needs to be sounded, since the actions and words of the warmongers show that they are more determined than ever to push through their war plans.

This is the meaning of the American pressure for the rearming of West Germany, the Dulles speeches about the policy of

“ instant retaliation ”, and the pressure on the French to continue at all costs the war in Indo-China.

Those actions prove what has been so often stated in the past—that the greater the achievements of the peace forces, the more desperate and adventurist the warmongers become.

While the successes in the fight for peace should give us the greatest confidence in the possibility of preventing a third world war, we need to combat vigorously all tendencies to under-estimate the war danger or to think that the peace forces can now relax their efforts.

It was never more important than it is now to help build a powerful and wide organised peace movement in Britain, with the organised Labour movement as its core, and we Communists pledge from this Congress that we will make our full contribution to this end.

Since our last Congress there has been a big development in the fight for peace in the Labour movement. Scores of divisional Labour parties have called for a change in Labour's foreign policy. Important trade unions have made the same demand at their annual conferences, as have Co-operative organisations. The Trades Union Congress in 1953 itself demanded talks between the Great Powers.

Afraid of this growing movement, the right-wing leaders have tried to stifle it and prevent association with other bodies engaged in the fight for peace, by imposing bans and proscriptions and expelling Labour Party members who have taken part in the activities of the peace movement.

The opposition to this disruptive and splitting policy, which assists only the Tories and those who prepare war, is growing stronger every day. It is time that an end was put to all the bans and proscriptions, and unity brought about between all who want to prevent another war.

NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE

In every sphere of British economic, political and military affairs, the American grip on Britain has been tightened in the past two years.

There are more American bases in Britain than ever. Tens of millions of pounds of British money are being spent on providing these bases and aerodromes for the use of a foreign Power.

Hitherto only nations defeated in war have had to pay for the privilege of being occupied by the troops of the victor. Now our slavish and subservient rulers have voluntarily agreed to pay for the American occupation of Britain.

Britain's naval, air and land forces continue to be controlled by American generals and admirals. American politicians insult Britain every day and lay down the law as to what Britain's policy should be at home and abroad.

Although Britain is supposed to be an “ equal partner ” with the United States, statements of policy of the most far-reaching

importance are made by American statesmen without the slightest attempt to consult Britain.

No wonder that the feeling against this shameful and degrading position is mounting. All British people who love our country, value its independence, treasure its cultural heritage and want to prevent it being an American atom-bomb base in a future war, should join to demand that the American occupation of Britain is ended and that our country pursues an independent foreign policy of peace.

The antagonisms between the British and American imperialists continue to develop. But the decisive force in achieving our national independence is the working class, and only to the extent that it leads the struggle will victory be achieved.

But we cannot achieve our independence while we conduct brutal and barbarous wars against the colonial peoples, and deny them the independence which we wish for ourselves.

Never was it so clear as today that the British and colonial peoples have a common fight, for common interests, and against a common enemy.

The surrender of the national interests of Britain arises because of the whole policy of British imperialism, which seeks to maintain its grip on the Empire in face of the rising struggle of the colonial peoples by association with the stronger imperialism of the United States.

The price demanded by the American imperialists is that they should occupy Britain and themselves penetrate, economically, politically and militarily, into the countries of the British Empire.

The British people have been profoundly shocked by the revelations of cruelty and torture of Africans in Kenya, and by the barbarities perpetrated in Malaya. But these are not the actions of isolated individuals—they are in the very nature of the wars that are being waged against the colonial peoples. These are unjust wars, for which the British people are already paying a heavy price in lives and a reduction in their living standards. If we do not put an end to them, we shall pay an even heavier price in the future.

For no country more than ours needs the friendship of other peoples. Yet millions of enemies throughout Asia and Africa are being made by the appalling crimes of British imperialism.

There is no power on earth that can put down the peoples of Asia and Africa now fighting for their liberation, and the sooner that is understood the better. In their own interests, as well as in the interests of the peoples of the colonies, the British people should demand an immediate end to the wars in Malaya and Kenya, and cease-fire negotiations with the representatives of the Malayan and Kenya peoples. They should also demand an end to all attacks on democratic rights such as that launched against British Guiana by the Tory Government, the withdrawal of all British troops from all colonial and dependent countries, and the granting of independence to their peoples.

This policy would lay the foundation for a new fraternal relationship to be established between the British and the freed

colonial peoples, based on equal rights and mutual interests, whereby each could help the other in friendly and peaceful trade.

V

Unity Behind a Common Policy

We have touched upon certain examples of what can be achieved through united action in the immediate struggle against the employers, the Tory Government and the right-wing Labour leaders. We now suggest some of the aims which should act as the spur to develop such common action.

Home Policy

Higher wages, unemployment benefits, and old age, sick, industrial and war-disabled pensions; lower prices; more houses; educational advance and better health services. No increase in rents or rates.

An attack on the big monopolies through an extension of nationalisation.

National Independence

National independence of Britain from U.S. domination and an end to the American military occupation of this country.

No restrictions on Britain's right to trade with any country.

Solidarity with the peoples of Malaya, Kenya, British Guiana and all colonial peoples, and the withdrawal of British troops from all colonial and dependent countries.

Foreign Policy

A Korean Conference, with the participation of India and other Asian neutrals, that can ensure peace and a declaration that British troops will not fight again in Korea or against China.

Admission of China to the United Nations.

No arming of Nazis in Western Germany, but a Peace Conference now to bring about a united, peaceful, democratic Germany.

Support for Molotov's proposals for a European Security Pact.

An all-round reduction of armaments; a reduction of military service to 12 months; and prohibition of weapons of mass destruction.

Top-level talks between the Great Powers to ease international tension.

Let me amplify some of these points to show that they might form the basis upon which the united action of every section of the Labour, trade union and Co-operative movement can be secured.

WAGES STRUGGLE

I should here like to stress again the great need for every section of the workers with wage demands to take united action, to enforce their demands. Every trade union should declare its solidarity with all other unions in the wages struggle, through joint demonstrations, processions, financial donations and refusal to handle any work or goods where workers are involved in strike action.

It would be fatal if we did not recognise that this is only the beginning of the struggle, and that the Tories, the employers and the right-wing Labour leaders will do everything possible to disrupt, demoralise and defeat the wages movement. Above all, the Government and the employers aim to prevent a united wages movement, and will play off one section against the other as they did in the struggles against wage reductions during the period between the two world wars.

It is essential that new claims for wage increases should be made immediately because the recent wage advances that have been given are totally inadequate even on the fodder basis of the cost of living, and give nothing at all in recognition of the increased production which has taken place; neither do they help to raise the standard of living of the working class.

Such a policy is all the more necessary because prices continue to rise because of the policy of the Tory Government, and there is now also a danger of over-production, and new wage advances are needed also for these reasons.

I would also like to suggest that it is high time that a demand was made by every trade union for a shorter working week. Among the most important struggles which the trade unions have waged against the employers in the past, have been those for a shorter working week, but now such a demand almost seems to have been forgotten.

The workers require a drastic speed-up in negotiating machinery. All wage settlements should be retrospective to the date of application. Trade unionists should make it clear that they are finished with all this elaborate alleged "conciliation and negotiating machinery", whose real purpose is to conciliate the employers; and that they will in the future not hesitate to use all the power at their command speedily to enforce their demands.

The trade unions now engaged in the wages struggle should demand that the General Council should declare foursquare its endorsement of these demands.

An end has got to be made for ever to the shameful use of troops in industrial disputes. The Tories would never have dared to use troops if the Labour Government had not done so first.

The trade unions should make it clear to the Government beyond all shadow of doubt that they will oppose this practice by all means in their power, and proclaim beforehand that they will declare black any materials transported or produced by troops in disputes.

Parallel with the fight for increased wages must go the struggle to improve and extend the social insurance system—the old age

pensions, unemployment benefit, industrial injuries allowances, sickness allowances, war-disabled pensions, widows' pensions and children's allowances.

This is doubly important at the present moment as 1954 is the year when the first five-yearly review of benefits is to be made by the Minister of National Insurance.

The old-age pensioners, the widows and children have no trade unions. They cannot withhold their labour to force up pensions.

Whatever these pensioners may do themselves, the resources of the entire Labour movement should be mobilised for a mighty national campaign which will ensure that the five-yearly review of national health benefits results in a decent pension without a means test or increased contributions.

If the 9 million trade unionists, the 11 million co-operators, and the entire resources of the movement were rallied in this way, they could force up pensions and allowances.

As with wages and pensions, so with the Tory Rents Bill. Here is the greatest single opportunity for a united mass movement that has recently occurred.

The Labour movement must not doubt for one moment that the Tory Government can be forced to change its policy on this vital question. We recall the great demonstrations and actions against the Unemployment Act of 1934. The tramp of hundreds of thousands of feet in the Rhondda, Sheffield, Merseyside and Glasgow, together with the National Hunger Marches, forced the Tory Government then to withdraw Part II of the Act.

What was done in 1934 and 1935 can and must be done in 1954, and with the same methods. And remember, the forces of the Labour movement in our day are very much stronger than they were in 1934. Today, once more, let the slogan be "Withdraw This Bill".

It is one thing for masses of people to be temporarily confused and misled about the real meaning of this Bill, but it will be another when they begin to get notices served on them by their landlords increasing their rents.

Let us prepare now in each locality a great movement embracing the trade unions, trades councils, local Labour Parties, Communist Parties, Tenants' Associations, British Legion branches, and the men and women who live in the streets, to fight every inch of the way. If the people make full use of the local councils and the county courts to demand the certificates of disrepair and to challenge the claims of the landlords, and if each tenant is supported by strong organisation, then it will be impossible for the landlords to secure their loot.

But if this Bill is allowed to operate smoothly without such a challenge, it will be only the beginning of the end of all rent control. Moreover, council tenants must see that they are also concerned in the fight. The way to this Rents Bill was prepared by council rents being raised all over the country. If it is allowed to operate and rents of privately owned houses are raised, this will be followed by further increases in council rents.

The Tory Government, by removing control and reducing subsidies, has raised the price of food at a time when the cost of nearly all food imports was falling. As a result, immense profits are being made out of necessities of the people.

(Note: *Financial Times* figures show that 19 food companies reporting in 1954 increased their profits by almost £1 million over the £4 million made last year.)

The food subsidies on which the Tories propose still further drastic reductions should be restored to the level which operated before Churchill became Prime Minister; *control of retail prices of basic foods should be re-established, and all taxes on food should be abolished.*

Small farmers' and farm workers' purchasing power should be increased. There should be a firm system of guaranteed prices or increased subsidies to encourage an expansion of home food production. This need not result in high prices if a complete reorganisation of the machinery of distribution of agricultural commodities is carried out.

ARMAMENTS AND TAXES

With a real policy of peace it would be possible for armaments expenditure to be drastically reduced by at least £800 million. Part of this could be used to increase pensions and social service benefits.

Taxation falling on the mass of the people should be reduced by the abolition of purchase tax on essential goods, the increase in earned income allowances and children's allowances, the reduction of the crushing taxes on beer and spirits, tobacco and the repayment of post-war credits.

EAST-WEST TRADE

The vast extension of East-West trade is an issue bound up with the entire political situation at home and abroad.

If the working class in Britain, together with all the allies it can win to its support, can smash down all the barriers that now exist to developing East-West trade, it not only means jobs for the workers, it means securing an important political victory over the whole aggressive policy of the U.S.A., it makes a sincere contribution towards maintaining peace, and strengthens the fight to win our complete national independence from the present stranglehold of the U.S.A. upon British policy.

The Federation of British Industries last November issued a special report on the subject. Churlish and grudging though it was, accepting as it did the American restrictions, it nevertheless called for an expansion of this vital trade.

In January and February the delegation of British businessmen went to Moscow. Received with the greatest cordiality by the highest trade ministers of the U.S.S.R., Britain, through these businessmen, was offered a £400 million trade deal and annual trade rising to £300 million. This offer included £125 million

for British ships, £50 million for British electrical power plant, forging and pressing equipment, and machine tool contracts worth £35 million. The general level of trade proposed would give work to 200,000 British workers.

Here is the challenge to the British working class.

Work for 200,000 British workers, beneficial trade with the Soviet Union—or shrinking capitalist markets and sharing in an economic depression with the U.S.A.

The Chinese Vice-Minister for Foreign Trade told British businessmen in Peking last July:

“I believe that under normal conditions the volume of our trade can be considerable . . . our trade has a great future and can be very steady.”

Only at their peril can the British working class ignore the significance of the great possibilities which exist in the development and extension of East-West trade. For, rest assured, if Britain does not seize the great opportunities which have opened out for this, other countries will, to our detriment; and we should not be surprised, as the economic crisis develops in the U.S.A., to find its Government doing what it prevents ours from doing now.

FOR A NATIONAL ECONOMIC POLICY

These measures can greatly contribute to an effective national policy for combating the crisis, but more is needed.

Social service building—houses, schools, clinics, nurseries, youth colleges, health centres and hospitals—should be rapidly increased.

The re-equipment of Britain's basic industries—mining, electricity supply, gas, railways, road transport, iron and steel, civil aviation—must be undertaken on a large scale, and road transport and the steel industry again nationalised to permit this to be done with the greatest effect.

Nationalisation—on a different basis from that operated by the Labour Government—should be extended to the large firms in engineering, shipbuilding, chemicals, and to the banks, big insurance companies and the land of the large landowners.

The existing nationalised industries should be reorganised, the big capitalist elements removed and direct participation of the working class on the boards obtained. Interest charges paid in compensation to the old stockholders should be drastically reduced and be transferred to the national debt. The policy of favouring the privately owned industries by giving them cut-price coal, power and rail freights should cease.

The nationalised industries, relieved from the burden of excessive interest charges, must fix their prices at a level that will enable them to pay decent wages to the workers employed in them.

The issues for the united struggles are clear: the fight for wages and social standards; the fight to defeat the Tory Rent Bill; the fight for peace and East-West trade; solidarity with

the colonial peoples, and above all, the struggle to bring down the Tory Government.

These are the issues on which unity and united action can be developed.

The opportunities today for unity are endless, and they should be grasped.

First and foremost, let us build up unity in the workshop. Our Party factory branches should be ceaselessly propagating the idea of organisation and unity, showing the common aims, developing united action in every factory, locality and town. The trades councils can play an outstanding part in uniting and helping the struggles on all the immediate demands of the workers.

District committees of the trade unions, Confederation committees, constituency and local Labour parties can be won for united action on all the outstanding issues of the day.

The working class has the organisation and power to make its will felt if only that power and organisation is used.

Let us devote all our united energies to seeing it is used.

Working-class unity is also the means to build up a still wider unity, bringing together the middle class, the professional workers, shopkeepers and working farmers around the working class.

The main issues as outlined earlier in this report are affecting these sections as well as the working class.

The Tory Government, representing the great monopolies, has revealed itself as their common enemy.

The interest of such sections of the people in the struggle for peace and the influential part they can play are self-evident. These men and women are vitally affected by the crisis in education, health and child welfare which makes a mockery of the so-called Welfare State. The unity of interests here between them and the working class can form the basis for united action for common ends.

The problems of both spring from a common source—the imperialist and war policy. As the movement grows on each separate issue, the people as a whole will see the common enemy—big business and its Tory Party.

It is because we are in such a situation that the developing struggle will take place on this ever-broadening basis that we can confirm the correctness of our aim of a broad, popular alliance.

This alliance, built in struggle, will increasingly provide the possibility of winning a parliamentary majority and of establishing a People's Government.

Politically also this conception of unity between the working class and the forces of the Labour movement, with middle-class professional people, shopkeepers and small farmers, is a vital one. There can be no prospect of permanently isolating the Tories unless it is built up.

It is only by such developments also that the broad people's alliance can eventually emerge—an alliance which is indispensable for advance along the lines laid down in *The British Road to Socialism*.

VI

The Labour Party

Here we have the most serious political and industrial situation seen for years, and where do the Labour leaders stand?

In principle on all basic essentials of policy the position of the top right-wing leaders and the Tories is identical.

These leaders are not Socialists and they do not think as Socialists. At the root of all their policies is the proposal for the endless continuation of capitalism and imperialism.

This is why they support the Atlantic Alliance, the U.S. war bases, U.S. bans on East-West trade, the armaments programme, and colonial wars. This inevitably leads to their policy of wage restraint, increased production, class collaboration, the abandonment of nationalisation and the calls for working-class "sacrifices" outlined in the *Challenge to Britain* and the T.U.C. Interim Report on Public Ownership.

The Tories are able to cast up old policies which rout the right wing in its verbal fights in Parliament. In fact, the right-wing leaders oppose any real struggle against the Tories. They don't want power. Their feeble parliamentary opposition enables all Tory measures to go through.

And the price for this is being paid in the results of parliamentary by-elections.

Consider the great wages movement. Not a single right-wing Labour leader has uttered a word of support or encouragement. There has been more sympathetic discussion in the lobbies of the House of Commons about increased wages for judges than there has ever been about the wages of the workers by hand and brain who create all the nation's wealth.

Let every M.P. claiming to represent Labour in Parliament fight now for the workers' demands with the same determination as the trade unionists on the workshop floor, and may we be spared the shameful spectacle of ex-Labour Ministers falling over themselves to congratulate the Tory Minister of Labour for his handling of industrial disputes. Such persons have no place as parliamentary representatives of Labour, and new candidates with a class outlook should be selected to replace them.

How many of their actions spring to mind!

On food prices, the Labour fight is mere shadow-boxing. The Tories ask: Would you put back subsidies? The answer is silence. On rents: Do you oppose increases? Again silence.

On the second reading of the Rents Bill, the Labour leaders made it clear that they do not oppose increased rents, which is the central issue.

The General Council of the T.U.C. issues a statement that some increase in rent is necessary.

On the colonial issues, the Labour Party leaders had no real disagreement on British Guiana, but only on the method by

which the Tories did their dirty work: they joined in the attack on Jagan.

On Kenya—they agree with the war while deploring the “excesses” (and the Tories can jeer, “You introduced bombing in Malaya”). In Malaya, too, the Tories can point to the 7,500 arrested by the Labour Government.

The right-wing Labour leaders are as imperialist in their thinking and actions as the Tories: if it were not for their former imperialist policies and their present support, it would be impossible for the Tory Government to do what it is doing in Malaya, Kenya and British Guiana at the present time.

They refuse to make a demand for an immediate reduction in the conscription period to twelve months, despite the overwhelming desire for this in the Labour Party, trade unions, Co-operative organisations, among young people and among women for a cut in the call-up.

Although the last Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party Conference in 1953 called for opposition to German rearmament, the right-wing Labour leaders are now supporting rearmament in Western Germany.

It is this right-wing policy which has produced a crisis in the Labour Party and trade unions at a time when a united, bold, militant leadership was never more vital.

And it is with the background of fewer and fewer issues dividing Attlee and the Tories that it is time to recall the real traditions of Britain's Labour movement.

What were the basic ideas of the British Labour movement?

Common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange. How often has that phrase rung out on thousands of street corners when the Labour movement was being built?

The United Manifesto of English Socialists, issued in 1893 by a joint committee of the Social Democratic Federation and the Fabians, and signed by H. M. Hyndman, William Morris, Sydney Olivier, Harry Quelch, George Bernard Shaw and Sidney Webb, declared:—

“Our aim, one and all, is to obtain for the whole community, complete ownership and control of the means of transport, the means of manufacture, the mines and the land . . . to sweep away all distinctions of class, and eventually establish national and international Communism on a sound basis.”

“No programme was worthy of acceptance by the working class that stopped short of the abolition of private property in the means of production”, declared William Morris in 1891, and the 1918 programme of the Labour Party called for “common ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange.”

The right-wing Labour leaders long ago abandoned these historic aims and no amount of Strachey tripe about “Socialism being now a moral faith rather than a material one”, or Morrison eyewash about “Social responsibility” can hide the fact that they have sold out to capitalism.

The right-wing Labour leaders, and even some of those who pride themselves on being “left”, endeavour to hide their per-

icious policies from the working class by their pretence that they are "only in fact being realists". Many times they say they "would prefer to live under Socialism, but the fact must be recognised that right now we are living under capitalism and that the workers should not put forward demands upon the capitalists which will weaken the export drive, and perhaps lead to our losing markets and jobs, and having to put up with lower wages".

But to follow such advice means in practice asking the working class to give up the whole fight for better conditions and for the struggle to establish Socialism in Britain. It is quite true that as capitalism gets deeper into its crisis it will find it more difficult to grant even the most modest of the workers' demands without great class battles. But if the workers are to hold back because of this, then it can only lead to a repetition in a more aggravated form of what we experienced in 1931, when the right-wing leaders agreed to cuts in unemployment pay, social services and the means test so as "not to weaken capitalism".

Another argument of the right-wing Labour leaders is something like this: "Whatever the social system is, it won't alter the fact that Britain is a small country, technically backward as compared with the United States; that our people are not in the habit of working as hard as the Japanese or Germans, and under such conditions, how can we hang on to our existing markets in face of the terrific competition we now face in a shrinking world market?" Then they go on to say: "This problem would face us even under Socialism tomorrow. That is why we must have both higher and cheaper production, because this is the only way we can safeguard our present standards of living, let alone improve them".

What nonsense all this is. It is we Communists who are the realists. Why, if we had Socialism in Britain tomorrow, we would increase both production and consumption of the products produced by the working people immediately. We would cut the arms burden, get rid of capitalist rent, interest and profit, and all the restrictive production fetters imposed by the capitalists, and at the same time, by an entirely new kind of trade agreement, be able to find a market at home and abroad for all that Britain could produce.

We would develop East-West trade to its fullest extent; organise the fullest trade possibilities with the freed colonial peoples, and eliminate the existing competitive drive for a world market by developing a policy of mutual exchange of our products with those of other nations (and there are many of them) who would welcome with open arms such a change of policy in Britain.

The alleged "realism" of the right-wing Labour leaders is only the smoke-screen behind which they hide to oppose Socialism and support capitalism, to utter their foul slanders against the Soviet Union, People's China and the People's Democracies, and to support the bloody repressive policy of British imperialism.

The Labour Party was conceived by its founders as an alliance

of all Socialist and trade union organisations for the purpose of expressing "working-class opinions" in Parliament.

The 1899 Plymouth Trades Union Congress made clear that it was open to "all Co-operative, Socialistic, trade union and other working-class organisations".

When it was formed, Lenin saw it as "the first step of the really proletarian organisations of England to a class-conscious policy and to a Socialist Labour Party". He warned, however, that it would be wrong to imagine that separate Labour representation in Parliament was sufficient in itself in order to become completely independent of the bourgeoisie. The waging of consistent class struggle was the need.

From its very inception the Labour Party has had within it two conflicting forces—the right-wing leaders and supporters of imperialism, capitalism and class collaboration, and the Socialist organisations and the majority of the rank and file wishing to struggle against capitalism and advance on the road to Socialism. The history of the Labour Party is largely the history of that conflict.

From 1900 to 1920 it was an all-inclusive alliance of the working class, developing on the whole towards a Socialist policy—the aim of public ownership being put into the constitution in 1918. But in 1921 the right-wing leaders, in order to check the resistance of the working class to the attacks being made on its wages and working hours, and the development towards a class and Socialist outlook, refused the affiliation of the Communist Party, which had been founded through the coming together of the British Socialist Party (already affiliated to the Labour Party) and other Socialist groups. By this step, and further bans and exclusions since, the right-wing leaders have been able up till now to tie the Labour Party more and more securely to the coat-tails of capitalism.

We know what happened to MacDonald, Snowden, Thomas and Hodges, who were then the bitterest enemies of the Communist Party—they deserted to capitalism and the Tories.

Since 1931, the principal reformist leaders have carried forward the MacDonald and Thomas policy not only against Communists but against every militant and progressive trend in the Labour Party.

Today they attack the Bevanites and the leftward-moving workers in general. They condemn those who fight for peace and Socialism. They cripple the Labour Party with bans and proscriptions.

They say that we Communists are not loyal to the principles of the Labour movement, when in fact it is they who are introducing ideas foreign to the basic interests of the British working class and Socialism, while we remain loyal to the spirit of the Chartists, Keir Hardie, William Morris, Ben Tillett and Tom Mann.

In Britain today it is the Communist Party which in its pro-

gramme, *The British Road to Socialism*, is keeping high the banner of the pioneers.

There is no conflict between the Communist Party and the mass of the membership of the Labour Party. The conflict is between the leaders who have abandoned Socialism and the rank-and-file Labour Party members and the Communists who fight for Socialism. What, then, are the lessons?

These leaders, because they do not want to end capitalism and imperialism, and have no basic difference in policy from the Tories, would sooner smash the Labour movement than see it fight against capitalism and for Socialism. That is why, starting with the expulsion of the Communists, they are now bent on disrupting the whole Labour movement. The whole future of the Labour Party as a fighting, working-class force, therefore depends on the defeat of the policy of class collaboration and its advocates in the leadership, the re-establishment of the original federal basis of the Labour Party, and the removal of all bans and proscriptions. This will require the joint efforts of all militant workers organised in the Labour Party, Co-operative movement, trade unions and the Communist Party.

The present crisis in the Labour Party is not the result of rearmament or the electoral defeat of 1951. It has its roots deep in the whole history of the movement.

After six years of reformist Labour Government—the main political lesson of which is that reformist policies can neither solve the problems of the workers nor the problems of Britain—there are now new signs of a change. The rank and file in the Labour Party and trade unions are fighting for peace, Socialism and better conditions and better social services. We have shown how this is significant as a fight to decide the whole future of the Labour Party, whether it is to follow a militant policy or continue on the disastrous course of class collaboration and support for capitalism and imperialism.

We have given examples of the brave struggle of the workers for wages, but beyond that there is a definite trend to insist on a different attitude towards their leaders.

At the 1953 Douglas Trades Union Congress the policy for the ending of American domination, for friendship and trade with the Socialist world, and for social change, received two or three million votes, and at the Margate Labour Party Conference, $1\frac{3}{4}$ to 2 million votes.

The outstanding new feature of these very significant votes was the emergence of a powerful group of trade unions, including the engineers, electricians and railwaymen, in alliance with the majority of the constituency Labour parties.

And let there be no mistake: all these developments have been enormously influenced by the work and propaganda of the Communist Party and the *Daily Worker*.

Let us consider how best to strengthen this alliance of the rank and file, so that they can gain a majority in the Labour

Party and bring about still more changes in policy and leadership, and in the selection of both local and parliamentary candidates. This could be decisive not only in the Labour Party but in the trade union and Co-operative organisations.

Attention should be paid now in the trade unions and constituency Labour parties to the agenda for the next Labour Party Conference, to ensure resolutions that correspond to the interests of the working people, and guarantee the election of militant delegates who will fight for such progressive resolutions.

A serious fight should now be made so that all members of national executive committees of the Labour movement shall have the right to express minority opinions at their conferences. The delegates have the right to hear all sides of debates on important policy questions, and thus have freedom to decide who is right and who is wrong.

What is really required in regard to the Labour Party is not only that its trade union base should be strengthened. Enormous possibilities exist for increasing trade union affiliations to the Labour Party nationally and locally, both in the trade unions already affiliated and in those not yet affiliated. Some 89 unions are affiliated to the Labour Party, which is considerably smaller than the affiliations of these unions to the T.U.C. We must work to get every trade union affiliated to the Labour Party.

It is also vital to challenge and smash all the bans, purges and proscriptions coming from Transport House. Every such ban and purge is a gift to the Tories.

There is an increasing number of members of the Labour Party who now understand why the MacDonalds and Morrisons were so anxious to prevent either the Communist Party having the right to be affiliated to the Labour Party or any of its members being allowed to represent their trade unions at the Labour Party Conference. They know that it would have meant a very considerable strengthening of the left-wing militant forces fighting for a change of policy. The more unity in action develops and the working-class struggle develops the greater will be the possibility of smashing every obstacle which stands in the way of the unity of all Socialist forces in Britain.

The right-wing leaders accuse the Communists of disrupting and wishing to destroy the Labour Party.

We Communists welcome every development which will lead to a still stronger, all-embracing and united militant Labour Party, defeating the right-wing leaders and fighting for Socialism.

Far from disrupting the ranks of the working class, we Communists work with the aim of achieving one united working-class party in Britain based on the principles of Marxism.

VII

The Trade Union Movement

What is the policy of the right-wing trade union leadership? Like the Labour leaders in Parliament, they stand for class

collaboration with the employers—"No class struggle: no strikes".

This policy was already laid down by Ernest Bevin at the Trades Union Congress in 1936. It has developed since then and is now claimed as a modern doctrine, but class treachery is not any less class treachery by saying it is up to date.

When Lincoln Evans wrote:

"The task of industrial statesmanship is to try to reconcile what appears on the surface of it to be a conflict of interest."—(*British Labour Party*, Vol. II, p. 87.)

he is only repeating almost a century later what T. J. Dunning, the bookbinders' secretary, wrote regarding the employers and employed in 1860:

"It is of the highest importance that there should be a good understanding between them; that neither should offend or vex the other."

But even Dunning stood for working-class struggle.

It was in Britain first in the world that trade unions arose and became a mighty fighting weapon of the working class. By the thirties and forties of the last century they had already won great strength. Side by side with militant trade unionism there arose early a right-wing trend that tried to tie the unions to capitalism and to preach unity of employers and employed. But the whole lesson that stands out a mile from more than 160 years of rich trade union experience is that the unions become a force when they are based on struggle, that the interests of the working class are never secured through mere discussion and negotiations, that negotiation can be successful only in so far as the capitalists know that behind the working-class representatives stand trade union organisations prepared to fight with all methods up to and including strikes. This is the lesson of the early weavers' and miners' struggles, of the great struggles of the "New Unionism", and of the last wage battles of recent days. And the Tewsons and Deakins of today are turning against the whole long and rich history of militant trade unionism in Britain.

The classic historians of British trade unionism, the Webbs, defined a trade union as "a continuous association of wage earners for the purpose of maintaining or improving the conditions of their working lives".

When the old Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress was transformed into the General Council, the Council was charged to "promote common action by the trade union movement".

The General Council's first duty as laid down in the T.U.C. Rules and Standing Orders is that it shall keep a watch on all industrial movements, and shall where possible co-ordinate industrial action.

Never was it more necessary that the General Council should fulfil its proper function. Never was it more important for the working class to have trade unions that fight for the declared

objects of the T.U.C., abandoned by the present dominant leaders, and about which so many splendid younger trade unionists know so little.

The Williamsons, the Lawthers and the Deakins have abandoned the classic conception of trade unionism. They would have had no trade unions to be secretaries of if it had not been for John Burns, Tom Mann, Ben Tillett and Will Thorne. And how did these pioneers develop trade unionism and lay the basis for its present power?

Through struggle—the match girls' strike, the Beckton gas battle, the dockers' strike of 1889—these were the famous actions which, in the words of Engels, caused “the entire avalanche to move”.

But these old pioneers went further than this: while organising the unskilled workers into the trade unions and leading their strike struggles, they were also tireless in their propaganda for Socialism and in making Socialists. Something that is never even attempted by the right-wing trade union leaders today.

These people even try to forget the demands contained in the Hull Trades Union Congress of 1924, and they certainly never make the slightest effort to make the younger members of the trade unions familiar with them.

The principal demands of this Charter were:—

Nationalisation; adequate participation of the workers in the control and management of industry; the 40-hour week; adequate unemployment benefit; proper and adequate pensions at 60; proper and adequate housing; a school-leaving age of 16.

One need only look at this programme to realise how appropriate it is for the working class today.

It is a scandal that this Charter of Trade Unionism is now regarded by the right-wing leaders as “impracticable” and “utopian”. This is not a criticism of the demands of the Charter but a reflection of how low these right-wing trade union leaders have sunk in betraying the present and future interests of their members.

It is shameful that, instead of the 40-hour week, we now have trade unionists working all the overtime possible to make ends meet.

We still have inadequate pensions at 65, and the Government is threatening to extend the age for the miserable pension to five years later than it is today. The school-leaving age remains at 15. The disgraceful level of unemployment benefit is a challenge to every trade unionist. Nationalisation in point of fact has been abandoned.

We have got to make this Charter known to all trade unionists today.

The war and the subsequent Labour Governments enormously quickened the development of State capitalism.

As well as capitalist nationalisation measures, there was established a whole network of State committees and collaboration between the State, the employers and certain trade union leaders for increased productivity, export, colonial development, rationalisation, productivity teams, development councils, armaments and militarism.

Here we must draw a distinction between the legitimate functions and interests of trade unionism and class collaboration against the real interests of trade unionism.

When *The Times* and other newspapers of big business talk about the new status of the trade unions to the effect that they are partners in the State, and the right-wing leaders talk about the new functions of trade unionism, what they really mean is that the trade unions should act as the junior partners in the administration of capitalism, outlawing strikes, sabotaging any struggle for wage increases and repudiating the necessity for further nationalisation and any advance to Socialism.

We Communists should fight with the militant Left who want to clear out all trade union leaders who want to work amicably with the Tories. The General Council should be compelled to give full material and moral support to wage demands. Any member who opposes these demands is not fit to sit on the General Council and should be replaced at the earliest opportunity by men and women who will fight for the workers' demands.

It is time to end any amicable working with the Tories.

By this I do not mean that we are not in full accord with the trade unions demanding full consultation on all labour legislation and conditions and hours of labour, and fighting to protect the interests of their members.

We are all for the trade unions demanding that the Government pay attention to their representatives. Indeed our complaint is that this Tory Government pays no attention to the legitimate demands of the T.U.C. and that the T.U.C. does all too little to use its power to make the Government toe the line.

When, for instance, the T.U.C. made a representation to the Tory Chancellor on food subsidies, the Chancellor not only ignored the Congress but slashed the subsidies in spite of them.

Among the duties of the General Council is a clause which states: "In order that the trade union movement may do everything that lies in its power to prevent future wars, the General Council in the event of a war threatening shall call a special Congress to decide on industrial action", such a Congress to be called, if possible, "before war is declared".

This signifies three things: First, that the trade union movement has a special responsibility in preserving peace; second, that it should use industrial action, if necessary, for this end; and third, that any action should be taken before war is declared.

Let the trade union movement act in the spirit of that rule now when peace is menaced, when the threat of war with hydrogen bombs hangs over us. Now is the time to call the Special Congress

to decide on the action to rally the trade union movement to prevent a new war.

This new situation, when millions of trade unionists are on the move, provides unique opportunities for strengthening the trade union movement and organising the unorganised. There are 9½ million trade unionists in Britain of whom just over 8 million are affiliated to the T.U.C. But there are 22 million workers most of whom could be trade unionists. This is a standing challenge to the trade union movement, and now is the time to take it up.

Even in industries noted for trade unionism there is still much to be done. There are over three-quarters of a million workers who could be won for membership of the engineering and ship-building trade unions. About half the workers in the building industry are still unorganised. A great new united and co-ordinated campaign to raise trade union membership to a new peak is overdue.

Especially is it necessary to win young people and women into membership of the trade unions, and to explain to them the functions and objects of trade unionism.

There are literally millions of young people just waiting to be asked, just as anxious to play their part in the trade unions as any of those boasting about their own long membership.

In case after case the young people and women have proved their readiness to fight. The deep feelings which exist among young people about their conditions of work, their blind-alley employment, their wages and the way they are taken advantage of because of their youth, alongside their concern about what the future holds for them, make it essential in the interests of the older trade unionists themselves that they should go all out to organise the young people into the trade unions.

The readiness of the women to fight for wages was shown in the recent demonstrations of the engineering and shipbuilding workers, in their struggle to win equal pay for equal work. The fact that the low wages of the men are forcing more and more women into industry to supplement the wages of their husbands is a further reason why they should be organised into the trade unions.

Would it be too much to set the sights at 12 or 15 million British trade unionists? Such numbers would represent an unparalleled power in the land, and put the fear of the working man into the Tories and the employers.

Along with this should go the strongest organisation of the workers' forces in the factories. The success of the great national 24-hour strike was a tribute to the shop stewards' organisation. This organisation needs strengthening.

In many trade unions the shop stewards have got the necessary standing and powers, recognised in agreements, to make them really effective. But in others their activities are frowned upon

and they tend to become only dues collectors, with nominal duties.

The fight should be waged for the shop stewards to have effective powers in every factory and industry. In addition, every factory should have its officially recognised, powerful and effective joint shop stewards' committee covering all trades. The practice of quarterly meetings of stewards should be extended. In these various ways workshop organisation could be officially built on a powerful and effective basis for the struggle ahead. The closest linking up of the shop stewards on a national basis in each industry would greatly strengthen the power of trade unionism.

Fighting trade unionism must be democratic trade unionism. It is no accident that the most militant trade unions are those with the most democratic structure, the unions without bans and proscriptions, the unions where the rank and file can exercise their rights in a broad, democratic fashion, and have the widest, healthiest trade union branch life and shop stewards' workshop organisation.

There should be an end to the position in any trade union where officials are appointed for life. Periodical elections to all leading positions in every union should be the demand. The maintenance of a black circular in certain trade unions is not only a denial of elementary democracy but in practice has reduced branch life in these unions to a low ebb and weakened the efficiency and capacity of the organisation. The ending of all restriction of democratic rights in the trade unions is essential not only for the unions concerned but for the future of the entire trade union movement.

There are still some trade unions which do not hold an annual or biennial policy-making conference. The time has come when every trade union without exception should have a regular policy-making conference so that the members can democratically decide policy.

Great advances have been made in trade union amalgamation, but still more could be done. A first step in this direction is to ensure the effective functioning for common aims of the 49 different confederations of unions which exist in the trade union movement. If these worked as united, fighting bodies, the benefits to all would be increasingly felt. In addition, however, effective joint work would open the way to possible new amalgamations which would greatly strengthen the power of trade unionism in the industries concerned.

Alongside all these efforts to unite and strengthen trade union organisation and membership at every level, the most serious attention needs to be paid to the work and strength of the local trades councils. These have long occupied a key and honoured position in uniting the activities of the local and district committees of trade unions who are affiliated to trades councils, and giving a united local expression to their rising demands on the issue of the day. They are also one of the most important organisations through which every trade union could increase its membership.

At times of serious crisis for the trade unionists as a whole, the reactionary trade union leaders make a dead set against the trades councils being able to influence the thoughts and actions of all the trade unions associated with them. We have seen it this last year in the disaffiliation of the historic London Trades Council from the Federation of Trades Councils associated with the Trades Union Congress. And there is not a single trade unionist in London who cannot now see the dire effects of such a policy as far as their immediate interests are concerned in such vital matters as the campaign against the Rents Bill and the raising of fares.

More attention should be paid to the work and organisation of all trades councils, so that they may carry out the functions for which they were founded, and not act just as rubber stamps for the reactionary policy of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress.

There is not a single British trade unionist who is seriously concerned with the future of the trade union movement who can deny the need to end the present split between the two trade union Internationals. The World Federation of Trade Unions has made repeated appeals to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions for joint action on the issues confronting the working class. The latest approach was an appeal for joint talks aimed at increasing wages, improving social services and ensuring world peace. It received no answer.

The major concern of the Third World Congress of the World Federation of Trade Unions, at which over 80 million workers from 79 countries were represented, was to overcome this split in the world trade union movement. The Congress Manifesto was a programme for higher wages, equal pay, social security, trade union rights and peace—a programme which concerns every British trade unionist.

The real obstacles to international trade union unity are those right-wing leaders, particularly in the British and U.S. trade union movements, who are today using the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions as an instrument in the cold war.

We welcome the efforts of those British trade unions which have so consistently fought for the restoration of international unity. We hope there will be a renewed effort this year to make this vital issue a central feature of every trade union conference.

With the problems opening before us, there is no working class in the world that needs trade union unity so much as ours. Let the trade union movement struggle as never before to make it a reality.

There has been great concern at the Japanese trade treaty. But what guarantee have we that the British and Japanese bosses will not use this for reducing the wages of both British and Japanese workers, except international trade union unity?

World unity is essential in order that we can help the splendid struggle of the trade unionists in colonial lands to help the Malayan workers resist their sixth wage cut, to help African

miners and others struggling against inhuman conditions.

The trade unions should take all the necessary steps now to stamp on the organised Tory Party activity within the unions.

In 1952 the executive of the Tory Party set up a special committee to organise trade union activity. The report of this body is secret, but a public version of it under the title *Conservative Trade Union Organisation* has been published by the Tory Party Central Office.

This report calls for the organisation of all Tory trade unionists in a divisional council of trade unionists in each constituency to be advised by the Tory constituency agent. Its disruptive wrecking work on behalf of Churchill, Butler and the Federation of British Industries is barely concealed under such smooth phrases as "to co-ordinate the work . . . to undertake particular tasks or operate in certain districts". These divisional committees are to be co-ordinated on a national scale, and these so-called trade unionists will have representation on the Tory Party National Executive, where they will sit, cheek by jowl, with the bosses and landlords who comprise the committee.

Here is the attempt of the bosses' party, the party of the monopolies, the opponents of trade unionism, to organise and direct the activities of their stooges and agents in the unions. They want to strengthen the class-collaboration poison—in the words of one Tory constituency circular—to "ensure happy relations between employer and employee", influence trade union elections in the interests of the bosses' yesmen, split the trade unions off from the Labour Party.

But what are the right-wing trade union leaders doing about this challenge? Nothing. In spite of the fact that these Tory activities have been officially raised with the T.U.C. by the Fire Brigades Union.

They dissolve the London Trades Council but do nothing about this employers' wrecking activity in the unions. Why? Because for many trade union leaders today their views of the function of trade unionism coincide with those of the employers.

Let us have trade union leaders who fight the real "enemy within", the real Trojan Horse, the real wreckers—the Tory Party—and an end to the attacks on trade unionists who carry out the fundamental principles of trade unionism.

This is all the more necessary because of the manner in which various inspired Tory organisations and their Government are busily peddling ideas about the need to abolish strikes and have compulsory arbitration, because of the "new state of civilisation which we have reached in Britain". That the old methods of struggle between the employers and those they employ are now out of date. And that the best way to prove this is by having some kind of alleged impartial body who will make the final decisions on all trade union or employers' claims. That there should be Government-organised "secret ballots" and special "impartial" tribunals to consider the whole implications of the economic system from time to time.

No trade unionist should be taken in by all this Tory clap-trap. As long as one man robs another of the full fruits of his labour, there will always be need of struggle against it. As long as a tiny handful of people take rent, interest and profit, while the vast majority of the population are in constant anxiety about living from one Friday night to the next, there will always be need for struggle in every conceivable form by the working class against the capitalist class.

So long as capitalism is in existence it can never evolve any institutions that are either "impartial" or truly "democratic", and the organised trade unionists in particular have to set the example in fighting the employers at every stage of the class struggle.

The Communist Party not only insists that all its members who are eligible for trade union membership must be in such trade unions; it also calls for every Communist trade unionist to set the personal example in the way they regularly attend their trade union branch meetings. Not only so, but they should go out of their way in trying to get as many of their workmates as they possibly can also to attend such meetings.

The greater the attendance at trade union branch meetings, the stronger the work in the factories can also develop, the more effective can the whole local Labour movement become, and an end could be put to many of the tactics both of the employers and right-wing trade union leaders in attempting to damp down the struggle to realise the historic functions of trade unionism, that of winning an ever-increasing standard of life, higher wages, shorter hours, and taking a leading part in all the affairs of the Labour movement as a whole.

VIII

The Co-operative Movement

The Co-operative movement, with its 11½ million members, is the largest section of the Labour movement.

It can play a great part in the fight to bring down the cost of living and has a vital role in the development of Socialism in Britain. As we have seen, the response to the Women's Guild campaign on the cost of living showed the whole country that when some section of the Co-operative movement goes into action on behalf of the people as consumers, it wins wide support. Unity with other organisations in the Labour movement grows out of such activity.

It spends thousands of pounds every year on educational and cultural activities among active members of the Labour movement.

Yet only a small proportion of the membership plays any active part in the auxiliary organisations or by attending members' business meetings. Thousands of trade unionists and Labour

Party members, proud of their activity in other fields, play no part in the work of the Co-operative movement.

Responsibility for this rests largely with those leaders of the Co-operative movement (in the Co-operative Union and the Co-operative Party) who are closely tied to the right-wing leaders of the Labour Party. They divide the movement and hold it back from really challenging the profit-making monopolies and the Tory Government.

The adoption of a real working-class policy by the Co-operative movement, which it was founded to secure, would completely change the situation, bring hundreds of thousands of members, and especially housewives, into organised working-class activity.

Such a policy would resist rising food prices not only by demanding price controls and subsidies, but by bringing down prices in the Co-operative shops; would help small farmers to build up Co-operative organisations and supply Co-operative trade; would assist small shop-keepers and win them for joint action against the monopolies; would make immediate proposals for international and Co-operative trade, particularly with China, the U.S.S.R., and the Co-operatives of the People's Democracies; and would work with the trade unions to establish higher standards of wages for Co-operative employees.

It would turn the far-reaching educational and cultural work of the Co-operative movement towards the aim of changing society and putting an end to exploitation, which was the purpose of the pioneers of the Co-operative movement to achieve.

It is the concern of all active members of the Labour movement to help to change the policy and outlook of the Co-operatives, to win them again as allies of the trade unions in wages struggles, strikes and political campaigns; and to build up their trade and organisation against that of monopoly capitalism.

IX

The Communist Party

I now want to speak about the Communist Party.

The Communist Party exists so that the working class shall achieve political power, abolish capitalism, and introduce a new social order. From this understanding comes our present policy and our methods, with its need for a united struggle for wages, peace, national independence and the advance towards Socialism.

Unless and until the Communist Party embraces within its ranks hundreds of thousands of members, so that its influence and leadership extends to the majority of the working class, Socialism will not come on to the order of the day as an immediate and practical possibility for Britain. The Communist Party is the most decisive requirement for ending capitalism and advancing along the road to Socialism.

The reformist leaders understand that well enough. That is why in their desire to maintain the capitalist system at all costs, they try to create the impression that the Communist Party is not a part of the Labour movement. We have seen how they have reinforced this wrecking conception with all kinds of bans and proscriptions directed not only against the Communists, but also against all left Labour workers and trade unionists.

Only a fool would underestimate the damage this wrecking activity has done. Without right-wing Labour disruption, the Tories would long ago have been finished as a political force in Britain. The right-wing Labour leaders are their indispensable prop on which their very existence depends.

But one thing they can never do; one thing which is beyond their powers, is to exclude the Communist Party from the British Labour movement. The Communist Party is, always has been, and always will be, an integral part of the British Labour movement. It arose out of the needs of the British working class, out of the needs of the British Labour movement. It would never have come into being if the British working class, its creator, had not required it.

At the turn of the century, history cried aloud for a Marxist Party. There was the development of Socialist propaganda bodies, there was also fighting on the immediate issues, but the weakness was that there was only one or the other. The Communist Party united Marxist theory and the practical mass action of the British workers.

Since the day of its foundation, its history is the history of the British Labour movement—the strikes and lock-outs of the twenties, the General Strike in 1926, the unemployed struggles of the thirties, the fight against the National Government, fascism and war, its record in the anti-fascist war and in defence of the people's standards after the war, and its ceaseless support for all the colonial peoples subject to British imperialism.

No record of these struggles which have moulded the British Labour movement can fail to record the fighting vanguard part played by the leaders and members of the Communist Party, and the *Workers' Weekly*, the *Sunday Worker* and the *Daily Worker*.

The Communist Party has been associated in comradeship with every left movement in the Labour Party since 1920—the Cook-Maxton campaign, the Bevan-Pollitt-Cripps campaign. Trade unionists who are members of the Communist Party have played an outstanding part in building and helping to shape the policies of the trade union movement, in formulating the aims and objects of the T.U.C. and in trade union amalgamation and recruitment.

Talk as they like, the history of the Labour movement is also the history of Communism in Britain. And throughout that history, there has always been a close identity of interests between the Communist Party and the rank and file of the Labour Party, trade unions and Co-operative movement.

In spite of all the efforts of the right wing, our position as an integral part of a united Labour movement has been strengthened. And the perspective with the developing mass struggle is that the left will grow and the right will be discredited.

The very developments we have referred to are showing the need of a more powerful Communist Party. Who can deny the contribution that the Communist Party has made and is making to the Labour movement in these stirring days?

The *Daily Worker*, for example, has stood out as the champion of every worker, every trade union, every Co-operative Guild and Divisional Labour Party, every Tenants' Committee, every Old Age Pensioners' Association, and every Peace Committee.

If the British working class had not formed its Communist Party, there would have been no *Daily Worker*. In making possible the *Daily Worker*, the Communist Party has performed an outstanding and indispensable service to the working class.

Ask any engineer, miner, railwayman or building worker—has your wages struggle been strengthened or weakened by the existence and activity of the Communist Party with its factory organisation, the Communists who have been democratically elected as shop stewards and to important leading positions in the trade unions?

The answer is obvious. And above all, our people have played their part because trade unionists who are members of the Communist Party have fought to re-establish the fighting principles of trade unionism against the policy of sell-out and co-operation with the boss.

We know, of course, that it is not only the Communists who have done this, but also Labour Party workers and other militant trade unionists and leaders. It has been a united struggle: that is the secret of its strength and authority. But it is precisely the Communists who have been the strongest fighters for unity, because of understanding the need to develop a *working-class outlook* and a *working-class unity*.

Who is it that is to the fore in developing the struggle on all fronts and connecting all the separate demands of the workers with the need to get the Tories out of power? The Communist Party.

At a moment when the right-wing is degrading the very word "Socialism", the Communist Party has in *The British Road to Socialism* charted the only real line of advance for the entire Labour and democratic movement.

Why is this? Can it be explained simply by the fact that individually the Communists are more devoted fighters in the interests of the working class than other workers?

No, it arises above all because the Communist Party is that consistent organised force based on the theories and practice of Marxism that challenges the entire aims and methods of right-wing social democracy.

The reformist leaders stand for the administration and continuance of capitalism. From this central fact flows their present

policy and methods—against mass action, against strikes, for class collaboration, the unions confined to wage negotiations by their leaders, and a polite parliamentary verbal opposition.

Tory measures are allowed to go through because they see Britain's political future as an endless vista of alternative Tory and Labour Governments, a game of Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

No one can look at events in Parliament since the general election in 1951 without realising that the working class needs Communist Members of Parliament. We ask every sincere member of the Labour Party: Wouldn't the position in Parliament be strengthened immeasurably if we had a group of Communist M.P.s? No one can deny that if we had a really democratic electoral system that would be the position.

The fact that we have no parliamentary representation is due not only to this but to weaknesses in our own work. We can have parliamentary representation within the limits of the present system if we overcome the grave weaknesses which exist in our electoral work and efforts. In effect, we have treated it as a sideline and succumbed to the allegations made in every election that we are being disloyal to Labour.

In September 1953 our Executive Committee laid down what needs to be done to bring about a change in this position. It is necessary that such a new approach should be carried out because the working class needs Communist representation in Parliament as soon as possible, not only to improve the general fight of the working people but to ensure that the next Labour Government will be completely different from previous Labour Governments.

It should be noted that the essential first step in achieving parliamentary representation is to win the election of many more Communist councillors, and from that point of view we look to the whole Party for an advance in our position in the local elections this year.

To link the immediate struggle of the working people with the central issue of defeating the Tories and advancing the working class to real political power is not only our aim but that of every working man or woman who stands for Socialism.

The great mass movement now in its initial stages will win victory precisely to the degree that the working class builds up and strengthens the Communist Party. We fight for this from the point of view of the present and future interests of the British working class. In building a much stronger Communist Party, the working class is forging its main weapon to achieve victory.

What must be understood by every member of the Communist Party, from the newest recruit to the foundation member, is that the progressive forces within the Labour movement can only become united and victorious if every member of the Communist Party goes out to win more members with whom they are in daily contact. Without such efforts the leftward-moving workers in the Labour Party, trade unions and Co-operative organisations can never themselves develop the strength necessary to achieve the victory for their own aims. Partial successes may be won

here and there, but the movement cannot of itself become strong enough to end the right-wing domination or advance, campaign for and win mass support for a real Socialist policy.

The building of unity on a scale big enough to break through and advance to a Socialist Britain requires a force capable of raising the political level of the working class out of each daily experience in the struggle.

Where there is a strong branch of the Communist Party, there the daily mass struggle and the unity of the workers is most successful and advances. There, too, the workers are enabled to see beyond the daily struggle to the need for Socialism. We Communists try to show the workers that it is not just a struggle for "a fair day's wage for a fair day's work" but "the abolition of the wages system", i.e., abolition of all exploitation and wage slavery.

It is our Socialist aim which links the daily struggle and the achievement of our ultimate Socialist objective. In this way we strengthen the character of the partial struggles themselves, help to give the working class more determination, raise its class consciousness so that the mass development towards Socialism is hastened.

What is holding things up is the painfully slow growth of the Party and the consequent limitation that is placed upon its ability to play this vanguard role.

For this we must, firstly, blame ourselves. We can win workers to our Party when we ourselves are convinced of its necessity, when we try hard enough, and when we remember that the growth of the Party is the most important requirement for unity and the successful daily struggle against capitalism. This was proved when in the three or four months following the Extended meeting of the Executive Committee in February 1953 the whole attention of the Party was focused on this question. Then, in a matter of three or four months, we made more new members to our Party than we had done for a long time.

But we did not learn enough from this great experience. Let us look a bit more closely at this problem. Many great campaigns and struggles have developed since our last Congress. Whatever the issue, our comrades are amongst the finest spokesmen and leaders of the workers. We have the ear of millions on many great issues of the day. Can anyone deny, for example, the outstanding part played by Communists in hundreds of factories and at all levels in the trade union movement, and through the medium of the *Daily Worker*, in the great campaign of 1953 by the engineering workers (to mention but one section)? There is no doubt that the workers are more and more appreciative of the role played by Communists as foremost fighters and leaders. Hence the trust reposed in so many of our comrades as shown by the election of or votes cast for Communists at all levels from shop stewards to general secretaries or presidents. As long as workers see only the immediate struggle or the interests of a particular union or section, they may see only the need for

Communists, but not yet for the Communist Party. It is only when we all work correctly that the workers advance from seeing us as a ginger group essential for a particular struggle, to seeing the Party as the means of uniting, developing and leading from immediate struggles to more important and decisive victories over capitalism.

Tens of thousands of new members flocked into the trade unions after December 2. But we have not yet recruited tens of thousands of these workers into the Party. What is the point here?

It is that we have not yet learned, despite years of bitter experience, that the working class does not spontaneously develop a political, Socialist consciousness out of separate or even out of a series of struggles and campaigns.

Let us ask ourselves honestly, "How boldly and how often have we posed before the engineers, or other sections, the biggest question of all—joining the Party?" When we talk about the independent role of our Party in the factories in the wages campaign, we do not of course mean that we have a series of independent wage demands. No, we show how best to fight for the trade union demand, but the independent role of the Party is to help the workers to see that the wage demand is only one part of the issues they have to solve. It is very good that the leading members of a factory branch are shop stewards and convenors, as is so often the case. But if they are not able to rally the workers politically, to bring them into the Party and thus advance a bit nearer to Socialism, then all their efforts as shop stewards will not produce the best permanent results.

The trouble is we get so immersed in the daily struggles that we forget one of the fundamental principles of Marxism—"that in defending the immediate interests of the working class we are safeguarding the ultimate future".

Just as the mass movement does not spontaneously develop "political consciousness", neither does the worker who is eventually brought into our Party automatically by himself develop further. The Communist Party does not only need to win thousands of new members: it needs to give a whole new concept of life to all the members who join. Every new member should receive a formal welcome by the branch, and the branch committee should immediately consider and discuss with him what personal contribution he can make to the work of the branch and the Party. Our branches have, above all, the duty of helping each new member gradually to acquire, understand and be able effectively to use the all-conquering ideas of Marxism.

It is not enough to say all this. We need from this Congress, in the more favourable conditions that exist today, to make a determined drive to enrol thousands of new members. I ask in the first place, that we carefully re-examine, in the light of all that we said at the last Congress and at the Extended E.C. meeting in February 1953, the work of our factory branches. Let every District carefully and systematically plan and carry

through, branch by branch, such a review, in order more effectively to help our branch comrades. Take for example our pit organisation. We have made some progress here, but this only underlines the need for a great increase in the number of miners in our Party and the extension of our pit branches, because the miners as a whole have to be won for a rejection of social democratic policies and to play their rightful part in the van of the mass struggle for economic advance and Socialism. What applies to the miners goes also for engineers, builders, busmen, dockers, railwaymen, steelworkers and other decisive sections of industrial workers.

Therefore, comrades, with all the force I can command, I ask you to put right in the forefront of the aims we set at this Congress that of winning new members for our Party and Young Communist League and new readers for the *Daily Worker* in the industrial enterprises of Britain.

This is the way forward.

This is what is needed for both the extension and development of the left movement in the Labour Party, trade union and Co-operative organisations and the Communist Party to isolate and defeat the right-wing Labour leaders and smash the Tories.

Let us have an approach by every Communist Party branch to each local Labour Party to discuss united action. If the closest friendly relations were developed between them it would greatly strengthen the trade union branches, trades councils and Co-operatives.

Allow me to say a word or two about what I consider to be the main weakness to eradicate in our Party activities, and why it is that we lose so many opportunities both for winning a greater mass support for our policy and increasing the membership of the Communist Party and winning new regular readers for the *Daily Worker*.

I am aware that we make many opportunist mistakes, but it is still deep-rooted sectarianism that is our principal weakness.

Although the divisions which exist in the Labour movement are the responsibility of the right-wing Labour leaders, there is no reason on earth why we should continue to make this job easier for them by our own wrong methods of approach and work.

It would do us all the good in the world if from time to time we realised that "we do not know it all", and that we are not some kind of superior persons who know better what the workers want than apparently they do themselves.

In all our activities, friendliness, personal association, and readiness to help can make all the difference in the world in winning conviction among large sections of the working class that what we are suggesting should be done, can be done, and in this way we increase the willingness to be associated with the members of the Communist Party in spite of all the bans of the right-wing Labour leaders.

We tend to underestimate the need "to be loyal to the Labour

Party". We do not go out of our way to try and show that we above all are loyal to the principles of the Labour movement, and that today it is not we but the leaders of the Labour Party who are disloyal to these Socialist principles.

To be loyal to Labour means we have nothing in common with the Tories. That we fight day in and day out to improve the working and living conditions of the working people. That we want better social security and not less. That we want full employment, producing the things necessary for a full, free and happy life. That we want all colonial peoples suffering under British imperialism to have the same democratic rights and freedom that we claim for ourselves. That we want to see Britain free, strong and independent, co-operating with every nation in the world and subservient to none. That, above all, we want a lasting peace, so that we can devote all our resources and skill to increasing the happiness and well-being of our people so that all together we can advance to the establishment of Socialism in Britain.

This is why in every campaign in which we Communists take part, while doing the maximum that is possible, it is done in a very modest manner; that we should encourage the frankest discussion on all policy questions and how they should be fought for. That when any difficulties or differences arise, we stop trying to lay down the law, but sincerely discuss what has gone wrong and what should be done to put it right.

We must prove by our methods of approach, contact and activity that we are not out to dominate, not out to form cliques to push through things that others disagree with. We are workers speaking and working with others like us. And it is high time that we stopped creating the impression that does so much to frighten other people from joining our Party, that we are some kind of human beings who never eat, sleep, play or dream—but somehow or other that we are inhuman people unlike in every respect those we are in daily contact with. For to be a true Communist is to be a man or woman of the people.

From this National Congress of the Communist Party we give this solemn pledge to every member of the Labour Party, the trade unions and the Co-operative movement—that we will work in the closest unity with them that is possible to secure, that their immediate demands and Socialist aspirations can be won.

We will place the full resources of our Party and of the *Daily Worker* alongside those of every section of the Labour movement desirous of defeating the policies of the employers, the Tory Government and the reactionary Labour leaders.

We will prove by the tireless activity and sacrifices of every member of the Communist Party that we have no other aims than to serve the present and future interests of the Labour movement. That the Communist Party is the most loyal and devoted working-class organisation in Britain to the fundamental principles which the Labour movement was founded to achieve—Socialism.

And we are confident that this appeal will find a speedy response throughout the factories, working-class areas, and all the organisations of the Labour Party, trade unions and Co-operative movement.

X

Onwards Towards Socialism

Today the Communist Party stands out as the standard-bearer of Socialism, the force that shows the working class how it can accomplish its historic mission, the establishment of Socialism.

While the right wing degrades the very word Socialism, while they advance their bankrupt programme for the preservation of capitalism and imperialism, an impossible task, the Communist Party boldly proclaims its aims. We quote from our Rules:

RULES OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

Aims

1. The aim of the Communist Party is to achieve a Socialist Britain in which the social ownership of the means of production and exchange shall replace the existing capitalist system and the exploitation of man by man. Socialism creates the conditions for the ultimate goal of Communism based on the principle—From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs.

Only a Socialist Britain, co-operating with all other peoples of the world in close, friendly, free and equal association will be able so to develop and plan the use of all Britain's material, productive and scientific resources, that every citizen will be guaranteed security, the right to work and leisure, a steadily rising standard of living, liberty, and equal opportunity to enjoy a full and happy life.

Today, moreover, the British working class has an enormous advantage over the pioneers. They had only the dream and the vision to inspire them; we have the splendid reality of Socialism advancing throughout the world. The most significant thing in world politics today is the existence of the U.S.S.R., People's China and the People's Democracies.

No longer can the leading capitalist statesmen of the world arbitrarily decide the destiny of nations.

Eight hundred million people are united in the strongest social system the world has ever seen, a mighty invincible bulwark for peace which, with the support of the masses of the people in the capitalist countries, will be able to impose peace upon the warmongers. They are welded together by a political and moral unity that no power on earth can disrupt or destroy.

In the capitalist world, above all in the United States, there is uncertainty about the future. The talk is of economic decline, slump and disorder. They hope to keep things going only by war production, and in each capitalist country, as we know to our cost in Britain, prices and profits go up, living standards for the masses go down.

But the keynote of the Soviet Union is confidence, the confidence of a social system which has abolished the fear of slump for ever. Here is a society whose aim is social good, a society devoted to advancing the living standards and cultural needs of the people. With the abolition of capitalist ownership, a mighty Socialist industry and agriculture has been built in the U.S.S.R.

The sights are set to guarantee nothing less than abundance to its 200 million people. In place of colonial wars and oppression which today are the keynote of the western capitalist world, the previous colonial peoples of the Tsar are free. All these new Socialist nations are advancing by leaps and bounds, united together in a fraternal equal Socialist union of nations—the U.S.S.R.

The hallmark of the relationship between the capitalist nations of the western world is mutual antagonism; the American alliance is an antagonistic alliance with Britain, France and its other satellite nations.

Between the U.S.S.R., China and the countries of People's Democracy there is a relationship of equal rights and friendly co-operation.

What a contrast !

And why is all this ? Because in October 1917 the Russian working class was led by Lenin and the Bolsheviki, a party pledged to abolish capitalism and to introduce Socialism and fundamental social change. If they had been led by men of the type of Attlee and Deakin, with a programme like *Challenge to Britain*, there would have been no U.S.S.R., but Russian capitalism dominated by the United States.

The U.S.S.R. is what it is today because it is Socialist; that is the secret of its strength and its victories.

Socialism means an end to capitalist profit and exploitation, taking the ownership and control of the factories, the pits, the land and the banks out of the hands of the capitalist minority, ending slumps and unemployment.

Capitalism restricts the consumption of the mass of the people while the productive power of society increases.

Because Socialism abolishes the capitalist profit system the workers' purchasing power will always keep pace with increases in production.

Socialism ends the gulf between poverty and plenty, and frees the creative energy of the people and the productive resources of the nation for a gigantic economic, social and cultural advance on the basis of a planned Socialist economy.

Socialism ends the arbitrary power of the capitalist employers, landlords and financiers, and gives the people democracy in every sphere of life and work.

Socialism brings freedom for the people, giving them security and full opportunities to develop, instead of being held back by

the poverty and insecurity of capitalism, which provides freedom only for the rich.

Today, in our age and in accordance with our tradition, problems and history, the Communist Party in *The British Road to Socialism* shows the way of advance.

This programme is not only the solution to the ever-mounting social problems within Britain. It is also the solution to the problems of the new relations which Britain must establish with the rest of the world.

The British Road to Socialism has three main, vital principles, and these are the key to the advance to Socialism in Britain.

First, our programme shows that the British people must also break the political power of the ruling class and transform capitalist democracy into a genuine people's democracy. The political power of the ruling class is rooted in its permanent control of the State, the army, the police, the judiciary, and the civil service, in the control of the newspapers, halls, the B.B.C., and other media of propaganda influence.

To destroy it requires the advancement of the working class and its allies to the key positions of authority in the State, transforming the Parliament, the State apparatus, and the legal system into a People's Parliament and a People's State.

It shows, secondly, how the British people, to solve their problems, must break the economic power of the ruling class. That economic power is rooted in the capitalist ownership of the factories, the land, the banks and the great insurance companies. To break that power, therefore, Socialist nationalisation, taking over the banks, the factories and the land for the people, is vital. Socialist nationalisation breaks all capitalist control, as well as eliminating capitalist ownership; without Socialist nationalisation there can be no Socialist economic planning, no advance of the productive forces, no solution of the social problems.

Thirdly, Britain is the centre of the world's greatest remaining colonial empire. There can be no social and political freedom in Britain without the ending of the colonial wars, the withdrawal of British troops and freedom for the colonial peoples.

It is the refusal to face this central fact which has held back the advance of the British workers to Socialism. Imperialism is not only a weapon of the British ruling class to hold down the colonial peoples but an instrument for maintaining the domination of capitalism over the British workers.

Our programme, therefore, advances the bold but necessary conception of replacing the colonial empire by a fraternal alliance of the freed colonial peoples and the socially free British people, an alliance which would promote mutually beneficial economic exchange and co-operation, and defend our common freedom against American imperialist aggression.

This is the way of advance; this is the guarantee that Britain could play a new, proud and truly independent role in world affairs, a force for peace and progress.

The greatest crime of the right-wing Labour leadership is that they seek to destroy confidence in our class.

Not only the old leaders, but some of the new, bright young men of the Labour movement who boast of their "intellectual attainments" but who have never been in working-class struggles in their lives. Hard work has never stained their old school ties and, to their shame, consideration of their personal careers helps them in betraying the principles of Socialism.

But we have confidence in our people.

Why do we want Socialism? We want Socialism not only to abolish capitalist profit and the exploitation of man by man—although rest assured it will do that.

We want it to show what our incomparable working class, our scientists and intellectuals could do with our country and its resources when once freed from the fetters of capitalism.

We want it to tear down the slums and rebuild the city beautiful. We want it to re-equip our industries and give our engineers and craftsmen—and there are none better in the world—the opportunity to pour out the goods for a happy, peaceful, creative life.

We want it to develop to the full all our sources of energy—coal, water, the tides, atomic energy—so that labour can be lightened, production increased and culture flourish.

We want Socialism so that our old people, in the twilight of their lives, can be honoured for what they have given to society, instead of being left to rot as at present.

We want it so that the women members of the community can play their full part in the creation of a new Socialist Britain on the basis of their complete economic, political and social emancipation.

We want it to give our youth its head to build and create for peace, instead of being trained to destroy in war.

We want it to bring every idle acre into smiling cultivation, so that Britain can blossom and flower in a way never yet seen.

And above all, we want it so that our great British working class, so proudly described by Marx as the "first-born sons of modern industry", which so often has led the working class of the world, takes its place once again in the van of the forces advancing to Socialism.

Can we do it?

Yes, we can, if we only use the power of our Labour movement as its founders intended it should be used.

That is what the Twenty-third National Congress of the Communist Party pledges itself to do all in its power to help to achieve.

REPLY TO THE DISCUSSION ON THE POLITICAL REPORT

JOHN GOLLAN

We welcome the fact that we have here delegates and fraternal messages from 39 Communist Parties in different parts of the world. This is a tribute to our Party which all of us warmly appreciate. And in particular we welcome the message which came from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

We will answer this message by redoubling our work to re-establish the fighting alliance between the Soviet people and the British people, because if our country and the Soviet Union stood together the peace of the world would be assured.

We have had an exceptionally good discussion in which 55 comrades took part. It was rich in experiences which must be examined. I doubt, however, if the full gravity of the situation at home and abroad has yet been fully grasped by the Congress. It is Britain, our country, which holds the key to economic prosperity and peace throughout the world.

The Dulles-Eden agreement to consider some kind of North Atlantic Treaty in the Far East, with particular application to intervention in the war in Indo-China, is the most serious move of recent years for the extension of war throughout the world. And the treachery of Mr. Attlee in relation to this particular event is as great as the treachery of the Labour leadership in relation to the rearmament of Western Germany.

This is the reason why we have the call of this Congress that the British people will never take part in any United States inspired intervention in Indo-China or anywhere else, and that call will be welcomed by the British people and the Labour movement. But each and every one of us has the heavy responsibility, in our various organisations, to make it a reality, in the same way as Pollitt and others stopped the intervention against the Soviet Union in its early days.

The Economic Situation

We have had sufficient warning from Mr. Butler, Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his Budget speech about the economic situation. Great production and export records were gained in 1953, but they were due to conditions which cannot be repeated this year. The Tories and the Labour right wing have no solution to meet the developing U.S. crisis—except the so-called solution of intensified export competition in a capitalist world market; for this they are asking the British working class to forgo their legitimate wage demands while prices are rising and standards are falling.

At this critical hour, our Party has the duty to speak for Britain, to advance the only policy and line of action which can not only solve the nation's problems, but can exert the influence of Britain

in world affairs for peace, and therefore secure a future for all. But the opportunities are as great as the problems are grave, and the criminal adventurism of U.S. policy is starting to move the people in a way which did not seem possible a year or two ago, resulting in the national and international movement against the H-bomb, the wide front developing against German rearmament, the recognition that East-West trade offers a positive alternative to the developing economic crisis.

No one would ever have thought that red gold would come to the rescue, with "orders from Moscow" the most popular thing in Britain today.

I want to recapitulate the main themes of Comrade Pollitt's Report, which advances a real national programme to solve the problems of the British people.

It is our responsibility to make that programme a living reality, to see that it is discussed and debated by every section of the Labour and progressive movement, because it provides the basis for the widest united movement that this country has ever seen.

The fight for wages and social conditions; the fight to defeat the Tory Rents Bill; the fight for peace and East-West trade; solidarity with the colonial peoples; and above all, the struggle to bring down the hated Tory Government—these are the issues on which united action can be developed.

The second point in Comrade Pollitt's Report is that at this moment of crisis in the Labour Party, at the root of which is the failure of the reformists to solve the problems of the British people, he restated the basic aims for which the Labour movement was established.

Thirdly, the Report shows the way to progress for militant policies in the Labour Party, in the strengthening and development of the alliance which showed itself at Margate between the Unions with progressive policies on the one hand, and the majority of the constituency Labour Parties on the other.

Fourthly, along with this, the Report has called upon all the members of the Labour movement to unite to smash all bans and proscriptions and purges, and for the re-establishment of unity of Labour, trade union, co-operative and Communist forces.

Fifthly, there is the crying need to end the class co-operation which has poisoned our movement for so many long years, and our appeal is for a fighting trade unionism, using all the resources and strength of trade unionism, as its founders intended.

And finally, Comrade Pollitt called for a leadership and a General Council of the T.U.C. really active as a fighting general staff of the working class, and a great recruitment campaign to extend the strength of the unions, build them up, strengthen the shop stewards, and carry forward further amalgamation of the trade union movement.

The Political Situation in Britain

What is the essence of the political situation in Britain at the moment? It is that we are witnessing the crisis and bankruptcy of the whole Anglo-American war alliance, and the very despera-

tion of the measures taken by America is the measure of the complete lack of popular support these policies have in any part of the world. And the Tory Government, because of its line, its colonial wars, its efforts to solve the crisis at the expense of the British and the colonial peoples, is becoming more and more exposed, and, therefore, is becoming more and more vulnerable.

That is the significance of the by-election results in East Edinburgh and Motherwell. This Tory Government can be brought down tomorrow if only the Labour movement were united and fighting on the correct policy, rallying the majority of the British people as they could be, and are waiting to be, rallied at this moment. It is our policy which in the present situation offers the basis for a rallying of the forces.

The real issue behind the difficulties and crises in the Labour moment is whether it is to emerge as a real independent force breaking with the Tories' imperialist policy, with the United States, and coming forward with militant popular policies to save Britain, save peace and advance to Socialism.

This was reflected in the Margate Labour Party Conference on the decisive issues and in the split over German rearmament.

Everyone in this Congress knows, and the Easter Conference results have clearly shown, that if an emergency conference of the Labour Party was called tomorrow that Conference would declare overwhelmingly against German rearmament and the line of John Foster Dulles.

The crisis has been shown in the resignation of Mr. Aneurin Bevan, which is something of the greatest possible importance. Members of the Labour Party, the trade union and co-operative movement need to, and do, treat this mounting crisis in the Labour Party with the utmost possible concern. It was the fear of war which led to the acute difficulties in the Parliamentary Labour Party, the subsequent repudiation of Attlee and Morrison on this vital issue by the majority of the local sections of the Labour Party, and finally the resignation of Bevan. Such a sequence of events has an extreme importance after the visit of Dulles to London and Paris, and after Eden has sold out to the U.S. both in relation to Indo-China and E.D.C.

But we are all convinced it cannot rest here, and the question is what is to be the next step? From this Congress of the Communist Party in all honesty and sincerity we issue this urgent appeal to all militant Labour, trade union and co-operative people, to fight for a change in policy today, leaders and rank and file alike. At this critical hour let every Labour organisation make its voice heard. Bearing in mind the rules of the Trades Union Congress on the duty of the Congress to be convened in a war emergency, surely that war emergency is now, and therefore we ask our Labour friends, we ask all trade unionists and sincere workers, to demand that the National Council of Labour call an emergency conference of all working-class organisations connected with the Labour movement, to let the Tory Government

know once and for all that the British people stand for peace and won't tolerate war. Such a decision would electrify the entire working-class movement not only here, but throughout the entire world.

Once again we remind our Labour friends of the remarks made by Comrade Pollitt, that there is an increasing number of members of the Labour Party who now understand why the MacDonalds and Morrisons were so anxious to prevent either the Communist Party having the right to be affiliated to the Labour Party or any of its members being allowed to represent their trade unions at the Labour Party Conference.

They know that it would have meant a very considerable strengthening of the left-wing militant forces fighting for a change of policy. The more unity in action develops and the working-class struggle develops the greater will be the possibility of smashing every obstacle which stands in the way of the unity of all Socialist forces in Britain.

Far from disrupting the ranks of the working class, we Communists work with the aim of achieving one united working-class party in Britain based on the principles of Marxism-Leninism.

And precisely at this moment of crisis and difficulty in the British Labour movement it is more than ever urgent that this point be brought out into the light of day.

The Party's Fight

We have had great experiences and developments in the struggle for peace. We have had similar developments and a mass struggle to defend living standards. And I think each and every one of us can confidently expect that much more will develop this year and next, as we are moving into a more critical economic situation, with a working class which I am convinced will refuse ever again to put up with the starvation and humiliation which was their lot in the crisis of the 1930s.

That movement could have been mightier still if all the demands had been united, and if the railwaymen, miners, engineers and others had stood shoulder to shoulder. It would not have been a question of 5 per cent. Each and every section would have won the full demand for which they were fighting. What is the perspective now? A new round of wage demands and the determination to use the full union strength and action to achieve them.

Now what about the relationship of all this to the building of the Party? Comrade Durkin asked for a reflection in the political field of the movement in the industrial field, and Comrade Hill of Sheffield raised the issue of the relationship between the industrial fight and the struggle for Socialism, and the building of the Party.

I would like to make three points on this. First, do not belittle the existing political expressions in the trade unions and among the industrial workers. We would have been nowhere on the major political issues—German rearmament, the hydrogen bomb, the Rents Bill and East-West trade—if it had not been

for the movement in the unions.

Secondly, the key to all the developments is to show how the wages demands and the cost of living are the direct outcome of the war policy, and that this war policy requires to be checked if we are to receive the full satisfaction of our demands. And just as East-West trade is an essential means for meeting the developing economic crisis, that East-West trade won't develop unless we are able to smash the American bans and preserve a better international atmosphere.

Thirdly, I would say there is no royal road to building the Party out of the mass movement. But I would also say this—that we will never build it until the Party appears in the factories as an all-round organisation, and above all, *as a political organisation*.

It is essential that we are to the fore in all the industrial battles and day-to-day problems—but also, comrades, never let us forget we are a political party; our aim is political power and the transformation of society, and unless we put that bold vision and hope before the industrial workers many of them will see no need for joining us, but just keep on with the trade union movement, the development of the shop stewards, and so on.

At this Congress we have had examples sufficient to show what happens in a factory when the comrades are not only active on industrial questions, but have pitched into the political battle full tilt. Within the factories, some of the great Manchester concerns and others, the workers truly see the role of the Party in life, and they themselves wish to associate with the Party as a result.

Then there is this argument which we meet everywhere—that it is quite enough to be on the left in the Labour Party, and it is not necessary to join the Communist Party. The experience of the left movements in the Labour Party over the years itself provides the refutation of that argument. We welcome as Communists every leftward movement in the Labour Party, and there have been many, many of them. And there will be many more of them in the years ahead. Always our Party in one way or another has been associated in comradeship in such movements in the Labour Party ever since it was founded. And that will continue to be so until the right wing is finally routed and Britain achieves its united working-class party.

But in itself the left wing within the Labour Party cannot achieve the transformation of that party on a militant, progressive line—if for no other reason than that this issue is decided at Labour Party congresses by the block votes of the great trade unions. And of course the significance of Margate was that several great trade unions are now associated with the majority of constituency Labour Parties in an effort to transform the Labour Party programme into a fighting, militant programme.

Here, comrades, I would like to recall the Margate Conference of the Labour Party of October 1926, because Comrade Pollitt wrote a pamphlet on that conference when he dealt with the

only way in which the politics of the Labour Party could be changed. He said:—

“It is clear that the forging of a new leadership has become a vital necessity. The working class can never win their struggle under the leadership of the middle-class liberals and the old school of trade union leaders who use the whole power and machinery of the working-class movement to stifle the rising tide of workers’ demands because they know they lead to class conflicts with the capitalists.

“This leadership cannot be achieved by mere agitation and propaganda. Much more is necessary. It will take years of steady, persistent organisation to replace the present leadership locally, in the districts and nationally by new genuine and honest working-class fighters. We must redouble our everyday work in the trade unions.

“In this work we confidently ask the support of all genuine left wingers.”

Look at the two Margates—the Margate of 1926 and the Margate of 1953—and you see a measure of 25 years’ work that the Communist Party in the trade union movement has done, and you see an indication of that triumphant militant Labour movement we will yet have.

The right wing, scared when they get into difficulty, start using the block vote; but now the prospect emerges that this block vote will be used in a progressive direction, and will send the right wingers scurrying for cover and shouting for all they are worth. Because, make no mistake about it, the majority of workers in every trade union want a progressive militant policy.

I put it to you, could such things have happened without the Communist Party working in the trade unions? This new mood developing amongst the trade unions and among hundreds of thousands of Labour workers is the result of our Party’s work.

And it is because of this that we have been asking our Labour Party friends to consider joining the Communist Party.

Building the Party

We have not been critical enough of the position of our membership and the serious responsibility that this places on every one of us. The continued stagnation in the membership of the Party and in the sales of the *Daily Worker* is our main problem at the moment, which must make us examine our work in the most searching self-critical way.

We cannot and dare not allow this situation to continue any longer. We had an Extended Executive Committee and we said sharp things, we made various projects. But that was a year ago, and the situation has not changed one iota since that Executive Committee. Therefore, in replying to the discussion, on behalf of the Executive Committee, I will be sharp and to the point. In two years time from now the Twenty-fourth Congress of the Party will assemble, and in all seriousness I suggest to you that you make a judgment of the new Executive by one yardstick only—how far it has built up the Party membership and overcome the fluctuation of the sales of the *Daily Worker*.

But that is only half the proposal. We suggest that the same test and yardstick should be applied to every district committee, branch committee, leading trade union comrade, shop steward,

and also factory worker.

How many comrades this week-end started with these words: "Things are easier, there is a changed attitude amongst the working class, the workers are listening to us." Because the workers are listening to us and things are changing so rapidly, they can be brought into the Party alongside us and become part of the active struggle. This has been said from the rostrum repeatedly. You have heard comrades saying how they have recruited. Tom Durkin said the new members have not the inhibitions of the old; the new ones come in and are determined to share their new joys with everyone. It is, they say, a perfectly natural thing to join the Party, and everyone else should do the same and that is the way they go out and get recruits.

We ask you to put that energy, verve and élan, which you put into so many aspects of Party work, also into the most important thing of all—extending the membership and building up the mass influence of the Communist Party. And just a couple of words about the Y.C.L. Weren't you proud of the lads and girls who came on to this platform? Let us help the Y.C.L., and it will pay dividends, because these young lads and girls are the future leaders of the Party. I would suggest in all seriousness that one of the reasons we are growing so slowly is that you cannot refresh the Party of 30,000 to 40,000 members from a Y.C.L. that has only got 3,000 members. If you had a Y.C.L. of 100,000 it would be providing that flow of new life which, with all due respect, is so necessary even in the Communist Party.

Just one word on women. Nobody will say that in our Congress there are enough women delegates. It is always a problem how to speak to and influence the women, and nobody can do it better than the women themselves, because nobody is so close to their problems. I was lost in admiration to hear the way so many of our women comrades put the issues in the Motherwell by-election campaign. You can learn a great deal from them on how to approach people in a real homely, simple and at the same time tremendously capable political fashion. It is of tremendous importance that we extend and build up our influence among the women.

And just one other critical remark. Apart from John Horner there was little or no reference to the colonial struggles, and I am afraid that this is no accident. We conduct campaigns on Malaya, Kenya, British Guiana and other colonial territories which are good, fighting campaigns, and we can be proud of them. But we still get the feeling that it is something we do *for* the colonial workers, instead of seeing it as a joint struggle of them and us against a common enemy. I am afraid, comrades, that at the moment they are giving us more assistance than we are giving them. We cannot hope to preserve peace, we cannot advance Socialism, without this fighting alliance of the colonial peoples and the British working class. The curse of imperialism is not only the crimes it commits against the colonial peoples, despicable though these are. It is also the crime it commits

against the British working class, because imperialism has been its greatest weapon in holding back the working class from the advance to Socialism. We therefore hope that the struggle of the colonial peoples will now become part and parcel of our everyday work.

Conclusion

We have had a great discussion. Now let us make this discussion the property of the whole British people. The press has not helped us much in this respect, but we are perfectly capable of helping ourselves. Whatever the weaknesses and difficulties in our work, we can be proud of what we have done. The Executive thanks you all, as you are the cream of the Party, the leaders responsible for this effort in every part of the country.

Now we are asking you for greater efforts still. And we are asking you with confidence, because we know what you are made of, we know what you represent. The keynote of this Congress is Comrade Pollitt's call that the great British working class, which has so often led the world, shall take its place in the van of the struggle for Socialism. We have the power to do so if, in Harry's words, the power of our Labour movement is used as its founders intended it should be used. Remember in all the struggles on wages and conditions our supreme aim is to make the working class of this country the ruling class.

We are a powerful and proud nation, rich in resources, rich in industrial skill. Think, comrades, of the mighty contribution our country could make to its people and the world, if only we get rid of the shackles of capitalist profit and exploitation. Have we this vision, are we inspired with this wider aim and purpose, or are we still hamstrung by the narrow limits of the immediate day-to-day struggle?

We have produced our programme, *The British Road to Socialism*, which has shown the road of advance to political power. It is a great, inspiring and fundamental document. Did you hear how many fraternal delegates and fraternal messages paid tribute to it? Are we perhaps drifting into a position where *The British Road to Socialism* is appreciated more by every brother party than it is appreciated by ourselves? Popularise it. Inspire the people with the noble aim of Communism, for no finer cause was ever embraced by mankind.

At a time when capitalism is fumbling and uncertain, when crises seems on the order of the day, our great Socialist societies go from strength to strength, and in the immortal words of Joseph Stalin, are achieving the finest aim ever put before mankind—they are ceaselessly raising the living standards of all members of society, bringing to the people the rich variety and comfort of a cultured life. It was this that Robert Burns had in mind when he wrote those powerful words: "It's coming yet for a' that."

Our cause is the people's cause. Our victory is certain. And you are the people who will yet establish Socialism here in Great Britain.