

BUILD UNITY WHILE THERE
IS STILL TIME

HARRY POLLITT'S MESSAGE
TO THE LABOR PARTY
CONFERENCE

Daily Worker, London, Oct. 4, 1937

THE Labor Party Conference opens at Bournemouth today, at a time of unprecedented gravity in the international situation.

There will be no doubt that the agony and sacrifices of the Spanish

and Chinese peoples will find an echo in the hearts of all the delegates.

Fascist aggression has started two wars already. No longer are wars declared. They begin, and when begun, the fascist method is to slaughter defenseless women and children first.

A year ago at Edinburgh the Chairman of the Labor Party Conference said: "We stand for democracy. We stand for peace." But since that time both democracy and peace have been savagely attacked.

A year ago the Edinburgh Conference was deeply moved by the appeal of the Spanish delegation. Since that time Almeria and Guernica have burned themselves into the consciousness of all decent people.

And in these last days the horrors of Canton, Nanking, Shanghai, Chapei, have roused the British people as never before in our lifetime to an understanding of what fascism means.

But who knows where the fascists will strike next? Will it be at Prague? Will it be at Vienna? No one knows what new horrors for civilization have been planned in the recent meeting of the two fascist blackguards, Hitler and Mussolini.

Never was the responsibility of British labor so heavy and so serious. The peoples of China and Spain are building living walls with their bodies against fascism. The people of Germany and Italy fight despite illegality and terror, against fascism.

But the power of the British people, under the National Government, is being used not to second these efforts, but to thwart them.

The mass resentment in this country against Japanese brutality in China is largely spontaneous and, be-

cause it is not united under a common leadership, is not able as yet to enforce its demands.

The Labor Party Conference at Bournemouth can help to bring about unity and leadership among all the working class and progressive forces in Britain. . . .

The Tories are in high glee. They openly declare the Labor Opposition in Parliament to be weak and impotent.

They gloat over labor's stagnation in the by-elections and the fact that 50 per cent of the people are not voting.

They applaud the decision of the Labor Party Executive to strike off all unity resolutions from the conference agenda.

They rejoice in the decision to abstain from voting on the arms estimates in Parliament and in the rearmament decision of the Norwich T.U.C.

And up and down the country they are using these decisions against the Labor Party, as they did in Springburn and will do at Islington, knowing that they strengthen the National Government. . . .

When the unity campaign was started in January, Transport House circles scoffed at it: "Anybody could hold mass demonstrations." But the Labor Crusade has proved that the present leaders of the Labor Party cannot get a mass response to their appeal.

Why is this? It is because the workers and other democratic forces do not feel that the lead, policy, unifying and fighting spirit are present either in the official policy or among the leaders.

The workers are in doubt. They see no clear line. The progressive forces waiting and anxious to rally to a fighting policy against the National Government feel that labor at present is not presenting the real alternative they need.

This is why the government feels strong; why its foreign policy strengthens reaction and fascism; why 2,000,000 unemployed men and women are forgotten; why food prices rise and wages lag behind; why the Public Order Act is directed against the working class and not Mosley; why the Harworth fighters are in Lincoln prison.

This is why the bloody agony and sacrifice of Spain and China goes on.

We Communists sincerely believe that the Bournemouth Conference can give a lead that would dispel the present political stagnation, that would inspire great victories in the November elections, revitalize the whole labor and progressive movement, develop such power as could force changes in the policy of the National Government now, and help prepare the way for its defeat at a coming general election by returning a majority of labor and progressive members to Parliament.

But this can only be done on the basis of unity. Mr. Morrison, in *Forward*, has an article attacking the Communists and the united front. It is an article that is a rehash of the old, childish arguments that have been heard hundreds of times and exposed hundreds of times. It is an article not worthy of a man claiming to be a responsible leader. Although it needs to be pointed out that Mr.

Morrison's public utterances on this question do not always accord with his private statements.

We believe that, as the leader of Labor's Crusade, Mr. Morrison would do the movement a greater service by trying to probe why the Crusade is not the success he had hoped and worked for. He might also reflect why he and Messrs. Attlee, Greenwood and Shinwell, while being profoundly disturbed at some aspects of Labor Party policy, for example on rearmament, find themselves so powerless in fighting the extreme reactionaries in the Labor Party. . . .

We Communists believe the times are too serious for living in the past. It is the present that matters, not for Communists, but the whole labor movement and progressive people of Britain.

History will judge Mr. Morrison and Mr. Pollitt, not by what they said years ago, but by what they are doing now, when death stalks Spain and China and threatens the whole world. Others in the Labor Party believe that unity may have to be established if events take a turn for the worse. . . .

Have we to wait until conditions get worse? Until death is rained from the skies on the working class quarters of London, Newcastle, Sheffield, Glasgow?

We Communists say no! We hope the Bournemouth Conference will say no.

A united movement, sworn to unceasing struggle against the National Government, would not only ensure the ultimate defeat of that government; it would be ready to replace

it with a government supported by a united working class and all the progressive forces of the nation.

Such a government would transform the whole international situation and give a new hope and confidence to the smaller democratic powers, now weighed down by the fascist menace.

It would also advance unity in the whole international labor and peace movement, and would go far to make the world really safe for democracy.

In these fateful hours, when the specter of fascism and war is haunting the peace-loving peoples of all lands, may the Labor Party Conference, with unity as its watchword, set an example of courage and resolution that will ensure the democratic and peace forces throughout the world, and lead the British people forward, through the defense of progress, peace and democracy, to the final victory of socialism.