

# COMMUNIST POLICY FOR BRITAIN

## POLITICAL REPORT

*By HARRY POLLITT*

This Congress has a right to celebrate one of the greatest victories in the long struggle of the working class—the military victory over fascism, which is also a blow at the most powerful and reactionary enemies of the working class throughout the world.

This is why the end of the war has been followed immediately by renewed attempts on the part of capitalist reaction to preserve and foster the remnants of fascism and to weaken the alliance between Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union.

We can see these forces at work in the breakdown of the Council of Foreign Ministers, in the attempts to revise the Berlin decisions, in the attacks made by the British and American Governments on the new democratic régimes in Eastern Europe, in the maintenance of brutal dictatorship in Greece by using the armed forces of Britain, and above all, in the attempts of the British and American Governments to use the atomic bomb as a weapon in the struggle of the old capitalist world to maintain power at all costs, in face of the advancing might of the new world of democracy and Socialism.

Already the old imperialist rivalries are asserting themselves in sharper forms. Leading capitalists in the United States—which emerges from the war indisputably the strongest economic power in the capitalist world—have used the ending of Lend-Lease as a weapon against their British trade rivals so that they may be in a better position to secure their own domination in world markets and sweep aside the political restrictions imposed on them by British imperialism.

Meanwhile, the old British imperialist interests and imperialism everywhere are being undermined by the rising movements for colonial independence. They are meeting that threat, in alliance with their fellow imperialists in France, Holland and the United States, with the most open violence and oppression, particularly against the colonial peoples in Indonesia and Indo-China.



Against all these forces of reaction, the forces working for international co-operation and lasting peace have grown stronger. Today the glorious strength of the Socialist Soviet Union stands revealed to the whole world. In many European countries new democratic governments have emerged that will no longer be the pawns of rival imperialist powers but will become bastions of social progress and democracy. There has been a tremendous and splendid awakening of the colonial peoples. In Britain a Labour Government and a large number of Labour majorities in local Councils mean that reactionary forces have been turned out of many of their former strongholds.

The Communist Party and the working class will intensify their struggle for the unity of Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union in solving the urgent problems of peace. This great coalition has overcome the hostility of powerful reactionary forces in war. If the leadership and unity of the working class is still further strengthened, this great coalition can overcome all the existing opposition and be enabled to build a lasting peace, and secure new forms of international economic co-operation which will assist in organising full employment.

There is no doubt about the main problems which are going to demand the unity of the Labour and progressive movement in Britain: the guarantee of lasting peace; assistance in the speedy restoration of European economy; the quick demobilisation of our armed forces; a solution of the urgent coal and housing crises; the reorganisation of Britain's key industries; our help to the Colonial peoples to win their freedom from imperialist exploitation, and the winning of a better and fuller life for the working people of Britain.

The existence of a Labour Government provides opportunities for the working class to make its full contribution to the successful solution of these problems.

### **The Communist Party and the Labour Government**

We shall be able to define more clearly what the attitude of the Communist Party to the Labour Government should be, if we note the important differences which exist now, as compared to the situation when previous Labour Governments held office in 1924 and 1929.

First, previous Labour Governments were in a minority in Parliament. The plea of the minority position was presented as the justification for a policy of complete capitulation to the



capitalists; they were terrified to interfere with Capitalism, even to the extent of carrying out capitalism's own declared policy.

The present Labour Government has a clear Parliamentary majority and it is committed to a definite programme of important reforms, including a series of measures of nationalisation, which, while not yet the achievement of Socialism, will represent a big step forward for the working class. The fulfilment of this programme depends above all upon the mass pressure of the Labour movement, both to defeat the resistance of reaction, and to overcome the outlook of certain Labour leaders, who still look to the capitalists and not to the working class as the leading force in the nation.

Second, it can work in close alliance with the new Europe and, above all, with the Soviet Union.

The Labour movement wants its Government to be a new kind of Government, one that has decisively broken with imperialism. Only so will it be able to win strong and powerful allies in the Dominions, the new Europe, the U.S.S.R. and in the freed colonial countries, and retain the unstinted confidence and support of the working class of Britain. Only so can it strengthen its relations with the progressive forces in America and consolidate the lasting unity of the United Nations as a whole.

The Communist Party will put forward at all times the policy that it believes should be adopted at every stage of the struggle against capitalism, and will give its full support also to the Labour Government when it is fighting for carrying through its General Election policy.

The Communist Party will never hesitate to criticise firmly and strongly aspects of Labour Government policy which, either on home or foreign affairs, are not in the best interests of the working class and the nation. This criticism will strengthen the fight against the Tories and all who stand in the way of the policy the people voted for at the General Election being operated with the least possible delay.

The fight for the operation of Labour's policy demands the strongest activity and organisation inside and outside of Parliament, so that the whole political and industrial power of the organised working class and its allies can be brought into the struggle against capitalism.

The working class must be fully alive to the power and influence of the Tory Party and its supporters. They occupy the



key position in industry, finance, press and radio, and will not miss attempts either to water down Labour's policy or to sabotage it.

Just as the Tories call upon their allies in the ranks of the employers, bankers and landlords to organise opposition and pressure against the Labour Government, so must the Government organise its allies in the factories, trade unions, Co-operatives and in the Labour and Communist Parties to crush the Tory opposition.

The full achievement of the declared policy of the Labour Government will be an important advance for the working class. It will seriously weaken the power and influence of capitalism, and help clear the way for great strides forward for the winning of complete political power, thus enabling the working class to carry out its historic mission—the establishment of Socialism.

### **Our Policy After Crimea**

At this point it will be useful to deal with the character of the political mistakes we made in formulating certain aspects of our policy before and after the Crimea Conference.

Our fight for national and international unity during the war was correct; the fight for unity of all the progressive forces in the conditions of peace was also correct.

We were right when we made clear to our membership that we should recognise a new world situation where in the course of the struggle against fascism, the international co-operation of the capitalist and Socialist world had become a necessity if fascism was to be defeated.

We were correct in showing that such an alliance would lead not only to military victories, but to political victories which would strengthen the position of the working class the world over.

We had to fight against the defeatist school of thought which treated the victory over fascism and the alliance of capitalist countries with the Soviet Union as a mere incident and said the outcome would only be "the same as last time."

The Communist Parties in Europe were fighting along similar general lines of policy, and, like our own, were increasing their influence throughout the Labour and progressive movements, increasing their own membership and strengthening the entire Labour movement.

In the United States, however, proposals were put forward by



Earl Browder which assumed a basic change in the character of imperialism, denied its reactionary rôle, and held out a long-term perspective of harmonious capitalist development and class peace after the war, both for the United States and the world. It was from this analysis that the decision was taken to dissolve the Communist Party in the United States.

We defended our American comrades when they were attacked by the enemies of Communism in Britain, not because we agreed with them, but because we felt it to be our duty to defend a brother Party against the attacks of its enemies at a critical period in the political situation in the United States.

The line of Browder did exercise a limited influence in our Party, although in view of the statements of some comrades in our pre-Congress discussion that the Executive Committee of our Party succumbed to "Browderism," it is necessary to state publicly that we resisted definite attempts to import Browder's basic ideas into our Party by some of our own comrades.

Our policy during the period of the anti-fascist war was quite clear. First, to subordinate everything to winning the war. Second, to ensure that the unity of the United Nations was as strong in peace as in war. Third, to end Tory domination at the General Election. Fourth, to secure the unity of the Labour and progressive movement in Britain, so that the General Election and the peace could be won in the interests of the people. Fifth, to strengthen the Communist Party as a vital means of securing these objectives.

It should be no matter for surprise that in a complex and changing situation we did make political mistakes in the practical application of our general line of policy.

It becomes clear, in the light of the Election results and the political developments that had taken place, that the proposal (put forward after the Crimea Conference) to form a Coalition Government, including the Tories, after the Election, was a political mistake.

It revealed an under-estimation of the growth of political consciousness in the working class and the professional and middle class sections of the nation. It exaggerated the degree of the differentiation in the Tory Party and the support for the Liberal Party in the country, and did not take fully into account how quickly the reactionary forces would resume their old political struggle against the working class and their own capitalist competitors.



Now the struggle for the fulfilment of the decisions of the Crimea Conference, on which the immediate future of world peace and social progress depend, must be carried out by the Labour Government. This will demand the fullest mobilisation of the mass pressure and leadership of the whole Labour movement, both against those in Government positions who seek to effect a revision of these decisions on the one hand, and the open opposition of the capitalist reactionary forces on the other hand.

But the mistakes we did make are infinitesimal compared with the great and lasting character of the contribution that the Communist Party made towards the winning of the war and the opening of a new epoch for the British people—our fight for increased production, for the opening of the Second Front, against Munichism, for the purging of the State machine from all pro-fascist elements, for increasing pay and pensions for men and women of the armed forces, for the solidarity of the British and Soviet people, for the ending of Tory domination in Parliament; and the practical work done in the General Election, not only in the constituencies which we fought, but in all others on behalf of the Labour Party. All these represent great political achievements, which played an important part in the development of that lasting political understanding which brought Labour to power, as the first steps towards even greater victories for the working class over capitalism and reaction in the years immediately ahead.

We will now turn to the question of what policy at home and abroad should be carried through to ensure a bright and happy future for the people of Britain. We do not propose to deal with every detail of this, because so many aspects of it are covered in other reports and resolutions.

### **BRITAIN'S FUTURE : HOME POLICY**

With the end of the war the blunt issue now is:—Will the resources of Britain continue to be used for capitalist profit or will they be used to meet the crying needs of the people at the expense of profit?

The British people now want to go forward to a new and better Britain. They have shown in the General and Municipal Elections their determination to secure this.

If today there is so much backwardness in the organisation and methods of production in many sections of British industry,



this is the fault of the class who have owned and controlled our industries and land in their own selfish interests. It is the fault of those who used the profit they made out of the labour of British workers, not to maintain and develop the productive resources of this country, but to exploit millions of labouring people in India, Africa and other parts of the world.

Today, the ownership and control of the means of production in Britain are still in the hands of this class. The problems of the economic revival of Britain, of the full use of Britain's human and material resources, are problems which this class can never solve.

The experience of the war has shown our great power of production, once our resources are fully used to serve and direct the interests of the nation. Our working class, administrators, technicians and scientists, with two hundred years of industrial experience behind them, have the skill, initiative and ability to solve all the technical difficulties in the way of raising the level of production in British industry and agriculture, and thus make possible a great step forward in the conditions of life for the British people.

This means the use of Britain's resources not only to give full employment but to ensure that the products of our industry and agriculture come more and more to the working people, raising their standard of living and their conditions of work, their health, their education and their enjoyment of leisure. Any conception of an economic revival that puts profit first, or one not directly based on a fuller life for the working people, will be fought. It is not only politically wrong but in present conditions can lead only to crisis and unemployment on a scale greater than Britain has ever known.

With the end of the war Britain faces acute economic problems. There are not only the pressing issues of reconversion but the special difficulties of the shrinking basis of British imperialist economy accentuated by the war and the sharp world trade antagonisms now opening up.

Never did a greater struggle against British capitalist interests confront the people. A vast pent-up demand for production and consumption goods exists in Britain and stricken Europe.

Labour's job is to produce an over-all economic plan going far beyond anything so far contemplated in the programme of the Labour Government.



The bold measures to reorganise and modernise our industry, transport and agriculture, as well as our foreign trade, must be carried through without wavering and with the utmost speed.

This calls for the nationalisation of the key industries of coal and power, steel and transport, and their re-equipment to increase their efficiency and provide the greatly increased output required. It means also the nationalisation of banks and land, and decisive changes in the whole of our financial policy.

It means driving forward for the modernisation of important industries left in private hands, and placing Government bulk orders for urgent social needs in order to guarantee continuous production with an assured market.

It means Government control of prices, raw materials, and essential supplies to safeguard the public interest and ensure priorities for the most urgent jobs.

It means solving the problem of obtaining the necessary foreign food and raw materials to get industry running on our own resources, and a policy, in co-operation with other United Nations, of international credit, trade and investment.

Given these bold steps to satisfy the people's great needs, rigorously fighting every effort of British capitalism to impede and destroy this programme, there is no reason why a high level of employment for the British people cannot be assured for the next three or four years and the Government placed in a strong position to combat the forces of economic crisis which will face us when the replacement boom is over. One of the most serious weaknesses of the Government is the lack of such a plan, and the entire Labour movement must fight for it now.

For the satisfying of the people's needs two essential features of such a plan must be (1) measures to increase wages decisively at the expense of profits; (2) the development of a progressive tax system and the bold and rapid carrying through of Labour's social programme.

We reject any theory that wages and living conditions for the working people can be raised only if and when a great increase in productivity has been attained. There is ample scope for increasing wages and social services now at the expense of profits. Indeed, as a result of the increasing productivity of labour and the rise in prices, profits have been increasing, relative to wages, over the last twenty years at least.



Again, we cannot accept any theory that our great social programme cannot be carried through or must be slowed down in any way because of export difficulties, or because United States imperialism will not be so kind to us if we take bold measures of social advance. Any difficulties arising from these causes, will be the most speedily overcome, the quicker we carry through the programme of revival for British industry which is inseparably linked with raising our standard of life.

## EXPORTS

On Britain's foreign trade position Labour must make a decisive choice. We are at the parting of the ways. The old imperialist basis of British economy, the imperial tribute from foreign and colonial investment, the exclusive shipping income, etc., covering our excess imports largely rested on our position as a colonial power. Labour must find a new policy, not try to re-establish the old against the will of the Colonial peoples, or a new trade war, which in view of Britain's backward industry, could only be carried out with a policy of wage reductions and slashing of home standards.

Labour must decisively reject the slogan of the imperialist financiers and their economists, "Export or Die." The British people are not prepared to allow their economic and social advance to be held back under the pretext that exports must be increased at all costs along the traditional capitalist lines.

Of course we need some imports, and we must export to pay for them. But if we try to solve the problems by an unbridled competitive drive at the cost of the workers, as the monopoly capitalists suggest, we shall soon find ourselves, not with higher imports and exports, but with an economic crisis.

We Communists advance our alternative programme, a Labour approach to Britain's special problems.

In the first place, our dependence on imports can be greatly reduced by the full use of our own resources, especially the development of our agricultural production.

Secondly, the plans for the drastic modernisation of our basic industries, coal, steel, transport, ship-building and cotton, will place Britain in a position where her chemicals, machinery and consumer goods can take a leading place on the world market. The products that are most in demand today overseas are especially those goods—machinery, locomotives, ships, lorries,



electrical equipment, chemicals and textiles—which Britain has the skilled workers to supply.

Thirdly, exports can no longer be left to the free-for-all scramble for profits by the capitalists. The Government must ensure the grouping and planning of export orders, having in mind the long-term needs and requirements of the purchasing countries.

Fourthly, exports in payment for the necessary imports can, in the long run, be secured only by developing the closest friendly relations with other countries, especially with the Soviet Union and the new progressive governments in Europe, fully operating the Bretton Woods Agreement, and granting to colonial countries the political freedom which is essential for their economic development and prosperity. In this way new forms of international economic co-operation can be established which will not only enable the productive resources of the world to be organised for the mutual benefit of all peoples, but also place the Labour and peoples' Governments throughout the world in a stronger position to fight the dangers of a new economic crisis in the capitalist countries.

## WAGES

For six years the industrial working class has rendered magnificent service to the nation. Now victory over fascism has been won, there is a natural desire that peace shall also bring its victories in the form of improved wages and working conditions, even though the workers fully understand that the transition from a war to a peace economy is no easy path and they are prepared to take this into account.

The ending of continuous overtime and reductions in relatively high wartime piece-work earnings and bonuses in some industries has brought the change sharply to the notice of the workers, while at the same time the employers are doing their utmost to force rates back to old levels which the workers will certainly not accept after their war experiences. Decisive improvements in wages and conditions are vital in all the low paid industries if the reconversion programme is ever to be carried through.

Our wages policy was formulated by our Congress last year. The essential points were the demand for an all-round increase and revised scales for each industry, based on a £4 10s. minimum,



equal pay for women, improved wages for age scales for young workers; combined with strict control of prices and the remission of taxation that bears heavily on the workers. We Communists will be the foremost champions in the fight to improve wages.

In reply to the employers' cry, "We can't afford it," we must point out that the proportion of the national production taken by interest and profit has risen each year during the war, and that higher wages will be a powerful stimulus to improve the technique and methods of industry and cut out the superfluous middlemen in practically every section of trade, as well as provide a steady and increasing market for the products of modern mass production.

In this connection, we call attention to the official report made in the United States that the general level of wages could be increased by 24 per cent without any increase in prices, and to President Truman's statement along those lines.

The Labour Government must at once state its national plan, both for production as a whole and with regard to wages. It should immediately implement the Trades Union Congress resolution on equal pay and call for the speedy presentation of the Report of the Royal Commission on Equal Pay.

#### **TRADE UNION POLICY**

We have also to note the new important role that the trade unions are called upon to play. Providing there is the closest consultation by the Government with the Trade Union Congress and the most sincere effort to obtain full co-operation of all its affiliated trade unions, the organised trade unionists can become the principal basis of Labour support against all the activities of the class enemy. They can be the guarantee, especially in industries that are to be nationalised or brought under a measure of State control and guidance, that the full co-operation of the workers through their shop stewards and trade unions is obtained and provide the means through which sabotage is defeated.

The Communist Party welcomes the growing mass movement among the workers in industry to improve their conditions, which can be a tremendous reserve of power and strength for realising the programme of the Labour Government itself.

The recent marches of the building trade workers in London and the strike of the dockers must, however, serve to warn the Labour Government and the trade unions of the urgent need



for the whole movement to face up to new problems associated with the wages and conditions of the workers. Increased wages, economic reorganisation and social progress are all bound up with each other, and this fact has to be recognised by the whole Labour movement and the Government.

There must be an immediate review of the whole procedure for settling disputes, for speeding up negotiations, and for cases referred to Arbitration Tribunals to be heard at the earliest possible moment. There is equal urgency in demanding a change in the composition of Arbitration Tribunals, so that they are not, as at present, biased in favour of the employers.

The Trades Union Congress might consider calling a special conference of trade union executive committees to consider what can be done to meet the needs of the workers in the new situation.

The Communist Party will campaign to assist the workers, men and women alike, to secure their just demands by every means of mass pressure, winning the support of public opinion by careful and convincing explanations of their case, and helping to strengthen their organisations. It will defend the workers' right to strike, knowing full well that no strike ever takes place unless the sense of injustice and delay in meeting the workers' claim is exceptionally deep and no other course seems open to them. At the same time, the workers need to be on guard against allowing provocative tactics of the employers to split their own ranks.

The working class will demand that the Labour Government shall deal boldly and fearlessly with any attempts on the part of the employers either to reduce wages, worsen working conditions or close down factories as a means of embarrassing the Labour Government. The full power of the Government must be used, not only in defence of the workers' conditions and against those employers who seek to undermine working-class standards, but for those basic improvements in pay, shorter hours and longer holidays which are so closely bound up with the drive for full employment.

The Communist Party will urge the workers to make the fullest use of the trade union negotiating machinery so that there may be the same steady increase in production for the needs of the people that has been necessary in the production of the munitions of war.



The Communist Party believes that the organised workers have now developed such powerful trade union, factory and shop steward organisations that, in co-operation with the Labour Government, they can secure the workers' demands with the very minimum of industrial disturbances.

One word of warning, however. If the trade unions are to play their part many of them will have to overhaul their own organisations.

The executives of the unions, and active trade unionists, have now the responsibility, first of ensuring an active democratic life among the membership at work and in the trade union branches, second, of finding the way to ensure proper reporting and information to their members at every stage and consultations with them before all important decisions are taken. Events have also shown the importance of officials being elected by the membership and subject to re-election at frequent intervals, of annual policy conferences, of active district committees in all unions—otherwise a wedge may be driven by the capitalists between the higher officials and the membership and the unity of Government and Labour movement may be seriously undermined.

The Communist Party will as always do everything in its power to increase the membership of the trade unions, it will strive to ensure that every factory and office where its members are employed are one hundred per cent trade union; it pledges its members to set the personal example in their attendance at trade union branch meetings, in strengthening factory organisation, in working for the immediate fulfilment of the Trades Union Congress policy on Trade Union Unity, and in general, in making the trade union movement the fighting champion of the interests of the organised workers and their families.

Now we will turn to the question of what foreign policy Britain needs to pursue if it is to remain a first-class progressive Power in the world.

## **FOREIGN POLICY**

Shall Britain go forward in association with the new rising democratic forces of the world, along the path of international democratic political and economic co-operation on the basis of the joint leadership of Britain, the Soviet Union and the United



States, for the fulfilment of the decisions of the Crimea, San Francisco, Bretton Woods, Cairo and Berlin Conferences? Or will the old reactionary forces be allowed to influence the Labour Government? Will they drag British foreign policy back on to the old lines of imperialist rivalries, the balance of power, anti-democratic and anti-Soviet intrigue, the fostering of German reaction, support for a Western bloc, intensified trade war, and, as a result of all this, the outbreak of a new World War?

This is the choice that is open to our country and the Labour Government. No one can watch the foreign policy at present being carried through by the Government without concern and alarm.

We of the Communist Party are convinced that the only secure and prosperous future for Britain lies along the path of alliance with the new world forces of democracy, social progress and Socialism. The alliance of the three great Powers is going through a critical testing time. The answering of the outstanding problems is vital if lasting peace is to be assured.

But let there be no illusions. If such a policy is to be successfully carried through, it demands resolute maintenance of the close partnership of the three decisive powers in the world—Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States of America—in the leadership of the United Nations as a whole.

This is why we must regard the role of Britain at the London Conference of Foreign Secretaries with such grave misgivings, why we must work for the ending of the present deadlock and demand immediate steps to re-establish closer co-operation between Britain and the Soviet Union.

Britain's future depends more upon the closest co-operation with the Soviet Union than on any other single factor in the international situation.

Such relations are not improved by any decisions indicating lack of trust in the Soviet Union or "cards upon the table" talk. The Soviet Union will never be blackmailed by the atomic bomb or anything else. What the Chamberlains and Hitlers failed to do no Anglo-American imperialist bloc will ever accomplish. The British people serves warning on the Government: it will never stand for such a bloc. Mr. Attlee would do well to note only one nation still possesses the atomic bomb secret—and it is not Britain. No country would suffer more than Britain if ever this deadly weapon were used. Outstanding differences between Britain and the Soviet Union must be solved.



The Soviet Union's foreign policy is designed to ensure that the peace that has been won at such a terrible cost shall be a lasting peace, that the political and moral destruction of fascism shall be attained, that never again shall Germany occupy a position in which it can menace world peace, that the war criminals shall be swiftly and justly punished, and Germany made to assist in the restoration of countries which the Nazis devastated, that the United Nations shall stand as strong and united in peace as they were in war, so that peace and prosperity shall become the fruits of victory for all who worked and fought for the defeat of fascism.

The Government is endangering the whole future of the people if it gives any countenance to the reactionary policies, either from the Right or the so-called "Left," which seek to revise the Crimea and Berlin decisions and aim at the restoration of German economic power and monopoly capitalism—with all its dangerous future war potential—and the preservation of the structure of imperialist Japan.

Who, that hopes we have seen the end of war, dare ignore the plain facts about the still remaining war potential of Germany? A number of facts are at hand to expose the pretence that German economy and industry are irrevocably destroyed, and that nothing but ruin stares the German nation in the face.

Senator Kilgore was appointed by the United States to investigate Germany's remaining capacity for organising future wars. Here is an extract from his report:—

"The Sub-Committee found that Germany's vast industrial potential remains undamaged by war and that she still has a world network of commercial relationships and economic, political and espionage outposts which she could mobilise for another war . . . . Germany is better prepared now to implement her plot for world conquest than she was at the end of World War I, and in defeat remains a major threat to world peace."

After the 1914-18 war the common people swore "Never Again." But it happened. British policy was not concerned with permanently crushing German militarism, but with fostering a German economic revival and building up German reaction as its weapon for attack upon the Soviet Union.

We must demand an end of British policy which places Nazis in administrative, economic and security organs in the British zone in Germany, while refusing to allow hundreds of German



anti-fascist refugees in Britain to return to Germany and play a vital part in the development of a new democratic Germany. We must resist the carefully organised propaganda that it is necessary to preserve the heavy industries of the Rhineland. We must demand that every facility be given for the development of free, anti-fascist trade unions and political parties and a prosperous agriculture and light industry as the basis of a peaceful German economy.

We must expose and fight those who so assiduously propagate the creation of a Western bloc. The real aim behind all such propaganda is a revival of the conception of the Four-Power Pact of Munich. The real aim is the division of Europe, and through this the revival of German imperialism as the bulwark against the advance of democracy and Socialism in Eastern Europe.

It is this concept of foreign policy which more than anything else is behind the recent de Gaulle crisis. It is to the eternal credit of the French Communists that they are fighting for a line which means the future peace of Europe.

This policy of the Western bloc creates misunderstanding and mistrust in the United States, for ultimately the Western bloc is also directed against that country. It destroys the whole principle of the collective security of peace. The formula of Western European solidarity as against co-operation with the Soviet Union and the new democratic Europe is the direct continuation of Hitler's policy of the "New Order in Europe."

The people did not fight this war to destroy the military power of fascism only, but to organise its political and moral defeat as well. Britain's name is stained by its present policy, especially towards Greece, Indonesia and Spain. The Labour movement has clearly demanded an end to the recognition of the Franco Government by a Labour Government. The people demand that the Greek anti-fascist movement shall not a day longer be suppressed by British bayonets.

It is also necessary to issue a sharp warning against present tendencies to treat Japan in the same way as Germany was treated in 1918; that is to say, to leave the old imperialist structure intact, and even to seek to use Japanese militarism as a buttress of "law and order" against the peoples of South-East Asia.

Liberty and democracy are no special privilege for the British people; they are for the peoples of all the Colonial countries as



well. Our British lads did not put on uniform to protect the profit-making interests of imperialist exploiters in Asia, whether British, Dutch, French or American. They did not join up to shoot down their own comrades of other lands, who for so many long years have put up such a magnificent fight for freedom from imperialism.

Freedom for the colonies is the other side of the demand for the destruction of the last vestiges of fascism in Europe. The propagandists for the Western bloc regard the retention of the imperialist stranglehold on the colonial territories as vital for their plan. It is not only a Western bloc but a bloc of empires.

We are responsible for giving every assistance to the national aspirations of all the Indian and Colonial peoples, and, at the particular moment, the peoples of South-East Asia. We must demand, and organise mass pressure to ensure, that the Labour Government shall not use the armed forces under its control, whether British or Indian, for the suppression of the rightful struggle of these peoples for their freedom and independence from imperialist oppression.

We warn the Labour movement that unless it compels the Government to change completely its present foreign policy, which is simply the continuation of the imperialist line of the Tory Party and the reactionary monopoly capitalists, there can be no fundamental social progress in Britain, and that the whole future of this country is in grave peril.

It is fitting that at this stage we should now take up some questions concerning democracy and Socialism.

## **DEMOCRACY AND SOCIALISM**

The question of democracy lies at the very heart of the international situation. Public attention has been focussed on it because since the end of the war attempts are being made to show that democracy exists only in Western Europe and America, and that in the Soviet Union and the Balkans there exist forms of government that are not democratic.

Alongside this type of propaganda another theory is also advanced—that there is a Western Socialism and an Eastern Socialism. The first is alleged to be Socialism based on democracy, and the second, Socialism based on dictatorship.

We believe it will not be long before we see how those responsible for the spread of these dangerous ideas begin to take



under their wing and most anti-democratic, anti-working-class elements in Europe in general and Germany in particular.

There have been other occasions when the arch-reactionary capitalist forces have made their fight against the advance of the working class under the banner of democracy. We are not surprised to see them once again encouraging certain Labour leaders to become the standard bearers of their cause.

It is of vital importance to the future prosperity and peace of Britain that the Labour Government should establish friendly and close relations with the new Governments of liberated Europe—with Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Hungary and Rumania. Skilled foreign journalists covering the elections in these countries have unanimously stated they are the first free and democratic elections that have ever taken place in the Balkans.

Those Governments, which are now being ostracised and opposed by the Labour Government on the ground that they are undemocratic, enjoy the support of the vast majority of the people in those countries. Already they have carried out great agrarian reforms, nationalised a number of industries, introduced radical democratic measures and brought their countries into good relations with their neighbours for the first time in history. These Governments are attacked, therefore, by those very interests who want to see the undisputed sway of landlords and capitalists established once again, and to use them once more as bases against the Soviet Union.

Of course, when the people win democratic rights after generations of savage repression, when they have seen the terrible crimes committed by the Nazis and Quislings, and when their country is half starving and devastated by war, then their democracy may appear surprisingly unanimous to those who have been sheltered. It may even appear to have some rather rough edges, especially to those who have never had to fight for democratic rights under a Nazi occupation or a native fascism, and who therefore think history should happen smoothly and tidily.

It is, therefore, necessary to say quite clearly that a country like Yugoslavia, which gives the land to the peasants to work it, is in many ways more democratic than one like Britain, where hundreds of thousands of acres belong to a few rich families.

Such a country as Yugoslavia, which locks up and shoots its fascists, is more democratic than one which lets them live and



plot in comfort in large country houses, where a Labour Government refuses to publish the names of Nazi supporters in Captain Ramsay's Red Book, or the names of highly-placed British supporters of Hitler found in the Nazi archives in Munich.

The test the workers apply to a democratic government today is. For whose benefit does it exist? For the people, or for their enemies?

There are people in Britain even now who regard any revolutionary movement with horror just because it means the destruction of the old forms of State and a new beginning with a new class in power.

They forget that our existing democratic rights are themselves based on a revolution in which by a long series of struggles, we got rid of feudal land-ownership, the Divine Right of Kings and the Star Chamber, and eventually won the right of trade union organisation and the right to vote. These things could not have been won without revolutionary struggle against the old type of State power.

British people who are really proud of their own democratic traditions should acclaim and support these new democratic movements in Eastern Europe, just as our early trade unionists and our intellectuals—Shelley, Wordsworth and William Blake—welcomed the great French Revolution when all the reactionaries in British society wanted to suppress it.

The advent of the Labour Government makes possible great advances in democracy in Britain. It is a democratic advance at this stage to nationalise certain industries with compensation for the capitalists. We Communists quite agree that it is an advance, but it is wrong to call it Socialism. If we compare it with the immense, bold planning of reconstruction in the Soviet Union, where all the national skill and ability will be used for the people's needs and nothing else, we shall understand that in the matter of democracy we are only at the very beginning of our road. The fact remains that no Labour Government in any part of the world has yet achieved Socialism, the abolition of the exploitation of man by man. Only in the Soviet Union under the leadership of the Communist Party has a classless society been achieved. That is the real difference between "Western" and "Eastern" Socialism.



All this does not mean that we deny the importance and value of democracy for the working class under capitalism. We believe it is a weapon of tremendous importance in the struggle to win a higher, a Socialist democracy, where the people not only vote but control and administer things.

Marx and Engels understood this when they led the fight for the industrial workers' vote in the 1860s. No one understood better than Lenin the restrictions of a Parliamentary democracy in a capitalist country. Yet Lenin argued tirelessly to convince the young British Communists that they must learn to use every democratic opening, not just dismiss Parliament as a talking shop, but use Parliamentary work to strengthen the Labour movement and advance their revolutionary movement for Socialism.

In returning a Labour Government and electing so many Labour majorities on the local Councils, the workers are fighting for an extension of democracy and a much more direct say in the running of affairs. They want to reach a new type of democracy in which the working class really rule, and not a democracy restricted by the power of wealth.

We know we shall have to face many conflicts with the reactionary forces to reach this position, but we are confident that the greatly increased confidence and ability of the working class will enable them to win.

The country will not be transformed by a stroke of the pen and then leaving it to the Civil Service and the police. The organised workers, the people as a whole, must understand what the plans are, what the difficulties are, and must be given the chance to use their skill and initiative to overcome them. The Labour Government must continually consult the people who elected it so that criticism and suggestions can be made and heeded in good time.

If the Labour Government is to carry out its policy, it will have to promote real democratic leadership and control in all the decisive positions of the State machine, in the Civil Service, Foreign Office and Armed Forces.

How can the Halifaxes and Leepers carry out a real democratic foreign policy? How can people who fundamentally believe in private enterprise carry out policies that involve the nationalisation of the mines and the Bank of England?

How can a diehard Tory like Sir John Anderson be allowed



to continue as the Labour Government's official in charge of atom bomb research?

How can a Labour Government be truly democratic when it refuses to grant democracy to the Colonial peoples?

The reorganisation of the State in a more democratic direction is necessary to consolidate the gains of the working class, and assist it in its future struggles against capitalism.

It is, however, also necessary to be clear as to what we mean by Socialism. For many Labour leaders, the idea of Socialism—Western Socialism if you like—is one which leaves untouched the fundamental question of abolishing the system of rent, interest and profit, the exploitation of man by man. It does not include the ownership of the means of production by the people or the liberation of the Colonial peoples. Their conception of Socialism is nationalisation with compensation. Profit is still to go to a privileged class. This goes along with a conception of "gradualism" in achieving socialist aims, which in practice leaves the capitalist class free to overthrow democracy before any fundamental changes are made. In their anxiety to secure a fair crack of the whip for the capitalist class, these super-democrats forget that the capitalists have always used their power to destroy democracy when it became dangerous to them. This is not of academic interest to the Labour movement, it is of vital importance.

It is this difference in outlook which explains why at various times in the past, and at the present time, sections of the capitalist class have given support to certain Labour leaders, believing that they could be used for the purposes of capitalism. They have no such hopes about the Communists, whose policy is based on the struggle against capitalism and who openly declare their final aim to be the establishment of a Socialist classless society, in which the exploitation of man by man for private gain is abolished, with all the changes that follow from this. We do not claim a monopoly of this aim. We believe it is shared by all the best workers in Labour's ranks, and it is their duty and ours to keep it ever before our movement.

### **THE COMMUNIST PARTY**

It was Marx and Engels who, one hundred years ago in the Communist Manifesto outlined the special part the Communists have to fulfil in the Labour movement. They wrote—

"The Communists have no interest separate and apart



from those of the proletariat as a whole. . . . The Communists are on the one hand, practically, the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all others; on the other hand, theoretically, they have over the great mass of the proletariat, the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement."

These founders of scientific Socialism were the foremost fighters of their time for the day to day demands of the people, but their distinctive contribution to the developing Labour movement was that they were able to demonstrate the common interests of the movement, sought to weld it into one united whole, and with their great theoretical understanding showed how this fight was part of, and had to be merged into, the struggle for Socialism.

The British Labour movement is the product of a long and complicated history. Its strength has always been the recognition of the need to bring the great mass organisations, particularly the trade unions, into politics. But from the very beginning, the movement has been the scene of many internal political conflicts between those reflecting the limited ideas of their capitalist surroundings and those who sought to forge an independent working-class policy for transforming society. Many embittered battles had to be fought before even the Labour Party was formed.

The vital need for a core of clear Socialist thinkers and political workers to write and to give direction to the movement's work, and for organisations to train and develop such thinkers, was deeply felt; otherwise there would be no effective common policy overcoming sectional differences, there could be no way of advance from victory on a wider front and towards Socialism.

The Fabians, the S.D.F., the B.S.P. and the I.L.P. all tried in their various ways to supply this leadership, and bring the younger trade unionists to Socialist understanding. But the fatal weakness of all of them was their own lack of Marxist outlook. In seeking to organise the Labour Party, a class political movement of the workers, they tried to do so without the consistent scientific class theory and aim of Marxism.

It was Tom Mann, Arthur McManus, Thomas Bell, Albert Inkpin, and William Gallacher, M.P. and the organisations they



represented who in 1920, studying the experiences of the glorious Russian Revolution of November, 1917, took the initiative in forming a Communist Party in Britain. Experience had shown them that a Labour movement could achieve its Socialist aims only if the active Socialists in its ranks were organised into a disciplined Party, armed with a consistent working-class theory, enabling them to judge every event and struggle in relation to the ultimate aim of Socialism, strong enough to resist the corruption of Socialist ideas by the pressure of capitalism on certain Labour leaders, and the disorganising and confusing part this enables Social Democracy to play in the Labour movement.

The Communist Party has been, and is, the working-class organisation within the Labour movement which has brought to the front the common interests of the entire working class in Britain and the world. Because of its clear understanding of the "line of march," "the conditions and ultimate general results of the proletarian movement," it was able to relate every struggle for improvement of conditions to the aim of weakening the capitalist class and the advance to political power and Socialism.

It is facts like these which must be studied by many Labour workers, who understand that the working class must have good organisation, pay dues regularly, see that decisions are conscientiously carried out in a disciplined way, yet do not see the need for this revolutionary Marxist theory.

Never did the Labour movement so require this theory as it does today. Unless the movement is armed with this theory, unless there is the scientific understanding of the movement of history and politics based on the class struggle, the movement will never win through to victory, keeping its energy and enthusiasm and clear working-class line no matter how complicated the nature of the problems before it. Worse, the movement may easily become the tool of the capitalist class in its efforts to side-track and oppress the people. Unless it has a theory of its own, the movement becomes permeated with the theories of its opponents, the theories of the other side. You cannot, in practice, lead a movement without ideas, either the ideas of capitalism and imperialism or the ideas of Socialism. At this moment when Labour is in power events every day are showing this is the issue above all.

The Communist Party is a new type of Party, not only in its theory and general outlook, but also in its organisation and method of work. Seeing as its main task not only the struggles for



the immediate demands of the people but their development and combination into the general fight for Socialism, the Party seeks to advance the cause of the workers on every front.

It seeks to develop the working-class fight inside and outside Parliament. It does not and cannot rest content to be merely an electoral machine—it is active on all questions, inspiring mass campaigns, and actions, organising its members for this activity in the streets and towns, the factories, the offices and the pits.

Not by propaganda alone, but by dint of experience gained in the factory to increase wages, or in the streets against the landlords, the Communist Party has sought to advance the political understanding of the people and thus increase their confidence for the new stage of the fight.

It could do this only because it is an organised Party with local, district and national leadership. Its members work under the guidance of the Party, in an organised way—a leadership of the people, closely linked with the people and with every section of the movement. It increasingly brings to its ranks all that is best in the movement, men and women able to combine the work of all sections of the movement and direct their activities to the single goal of Socialism.

Today its tasks and responsibilities are greater than ever and we have sought to outline them in this Report.

The support behind the Labour Government would be immeasurably increased through a firmly united Labour movement. It is this fact which now makes the affiliation of the Communist Party to the Labour Party one of the most urgent questions. The chief political reason why the Communist Party should be affiliated to the Labour Party is that it is essential to strengthen the Labour Party and the Labour movement as a whole by the consistent class outlook of Marxism.

It is the recognition of this fact that has prompted some of the most important trade unions in Britain to support this policy. Added significance is given to this by the fact that these are precisely the trade unions which took the first step towards the creation of the Labour Party itself.

They now wish to see the Communist Party affiliated to the Labour Party because they know that the contribution it has made to the building up of workshop organisation, shop stewards and trade unionism as a whole can be repeated on the political field also.



It is also the desire of a large section of the middle class and of the Armed Forces who voted Labour at the General Election. They do not want to see the feuds and conflicts of the past carried forward in the new conditions, which demand the fullest unity of all sections of the workers' organisations.

To win the affiliation of the Communist Party to the Labour Party will be a hard fight, for just as capitalist reaction never gives up the struggle against the working class, so certain leaders of Social Democracy seem unable to give up their struggle against working-class unity and speedier developments towards Socialism.

But whereas these leaders receive the support of the capitalist class, the Communists receive the support of all the best, most sincere and forward-looking forces within the Labour movement. That is why we shall win in the end. In this respect the striking victories of the Communist Party in the recent Municipal Elections are an indication of a certain change in the political situation in Britain. These events and the experiences of the working class are bound to increase the influence and strength of the Party in Britain.

The tasks before the Party call for unprecedented activity on a mass scale. We have to unify the movement and inspire confidence in the strength of the working class and its allies. Obviously this can only be done by a Party which recruits to its ranks the best elements of the Labour movement and in every walk of life; a Party which gives them a lead in their day-to-day problems and helps them develop their own organisation; gives them the most thorough political education and training in schools, classes, discussion circles and meetings, in inspiring propaganda and in the daily experiences of the class struggle itself; a Party able to study and learn from the experiences of the whole Labour movement; one which can in a spirit of self-criticism correct its own mistakes; a Party which can work out an up-to-date strategy and tactics, which can help to strengthen the Labour movement and weaken big business and reaction. Such a Party is, and can only be, the Communist Party.

We will fight every tendency to dissolve the Communist Party, or submerge its independent Marxist role in the Labour movement as a whole, and we will equally fight those who see the Labour Party and the Labour Government as the main enemies, and not capitalism.



It was the Communist discipline, understanding and political training which enabled our brother parties under Hitler occupation in France, Yugoslavia, Norway and Italy to organise, despite fearful terror and mass executions, the tremendous movement of resistance to fascism and to win the respect and confidence of millions in these countries. That this confidence has been won is shown by the fact that the Communist Parties in France and Czechoslovakia are the strongest political parties, and that in every country in Europe which suffered under fascism the Communist Parties are playing an outstanding part in political life. We are confident that they will build a new Europe from the ashes of the old, a Europe that will march to Socialism. We are confident also that the German Communist Party, of whom so many thousands have perished in Dachau and Buchenwald, will play its honourable part in the difficult task of purging Germany of the economic, political and moral roots of fascism, laying the basis for a new democratic Germany.

It is a Communist understanding, discipline and political training which has enabled the Soviet Union, in less than thirty years, to emerge from a backward, illiterate, agricultural country, to a country of free and happy people and one of the two greatest powers in the world. The Soviet Union has been able to save mankind from Hitlerism, and to emerge from that fearful ordeal stronger and more united than before. The Soviet Union is the living example of what the common people can build, once they are freed from the fetters of capitalism, of the tremendous energy and creative power that Socialism can unleash in the "little man," the nameless millions who never get the chance in our society to show what they can do.

We here, by our activity, leadership, personal and collective efforts, must build up a great mass Communist Party. We are confident that the forces of democracy and Socialism are in the ascendent, and that the British Labour movement as a whole has the power to solve all the problems of peace in the interests of the common people, that it can rally to its support all the progressive sections of the nation. The Communist Party, in leading the struggle for a happy and prosperous Britain, is assured that this will still further strengthen workers' democracy and the mass movement for Socialism.



## REPLY TO DISCUSSION

By HARRY POLLITT

I have to say, on behalf of the Executive Committee, how much we valued both the pre-Congress discussion and the discussion that has taken place at this Congress, because it represents a collective effort at hammering out the correct policy for our Party in a most difficult and complicated situation.

We deliberately kept out of *World News and Views* for six weeks any contributions by Executive Committee members to Congress Discussion, because we did not want to give any appearance of attempting to damp down the discussion or, to use that much abused word in our Party circles, "give comrades a bashing."

Something has been said here, both in the contributions and in the amendments, about more democratic methods of procedure. Due note will be taken of that fact; but this Congress is being publicly reported, and I state the claim right now that the Communist Party is the most democratically run political organisation in the world. Its proceedings are fully reported both to the District Secretaries of our Party as a whole and in Reporting Back meetings in the Districts to the active circle of comrades in those particular areas.

Through the leads given in the *Daily Worker*, the Weekly Letters and the Political Letters, our ears may not be quite on the ground, but they are a lot lower than is the case of the other Parties. But we pledge that we will do whatever is possible to try to make further improvements on this.

On this question of Browder, I only want to make one or two points. When the Communist International was dissolved in 1942, we were all unanimously in support of that decision because of the political maturity of every section of the Communist Party. No one knew in this country anything about Foster's disagreement with Browder until the appearance of the Duclos article. That is a statement of fact. We expressed our disagreement with Browder's line and, in my opinion, correctly at that moment and in that situation. The American comrades were in profound disagreement with the policy of our Party. We refused to publish Browder's book in this country because we disagreed with its contents and the American comrades were made aware of that.

If you consider that it is Communist leadership, that we should tip you all off about circumstances of that description in the most difficult stages of winning the war against fascism, so far as I am concerned you have another think coming.



Browder's policy was endorsed in January, 1944. It was not criticised until April, 1945, by Comrade Duclos of the French Communist Party. And it may well be that the Party with a million members will have its views listened to with more respect than a Party of 50,000.

And finally, to those of you who are so worried about this problem, I must draw your attention to the fact that I have not yet seen any criticism of the Browder policy in any of the theoretical organs of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union—not an unimportant Party of the world!

Comrade McIlhone said yesterday that there are more ways of winning the peace than one. Absolutely true. And there are still more ways of losing it, and we have heard some of those ways expounded from this platform this morning. It is the thought of being anxious to avoid losing the peace that is dominating the thought of every Communist Party in Europe at this moment and explains why stronger Communist Parties than ours are fighting for a continuation of the National Front and avoiding splits in the Labour movement. It explains how they are seeking to utilise every differentiation in the ranks of the capitalist class; explains too, something else, why they are not ashamed to proclaim their pride in being French or Yugoslav and stand out as the champions of the best traditions of these countries, although we sometimes have so many hesitations of saying we are British, and make formulations about Bevin having led this country into disgrace.

It is that thought of winning the peace and not losing it, therefore, that needs now to dominate the thoughts of our Party. Especially those who so light-heartedly talk about strikes on the one hand, or exaggerate the influence of this Party on the other. And, comrades, when they expect criticism, let it be self-criticism. Comrade Bill Rowe said that our error disarmed the Communist Party and prevented it from assuming leadership at a critical period in the history of this country. If that is true, it is peculiar that not a single Branch in the Party noticed it. You were fighting for a correct political line of ending Tory domination, and you did it, and ought to be proud of it.

Please remember that we did consult the Party membership on the change of line; 7,850 members voted for the policy that was suggested by the Executive Committee, 278 were against it, and 556 were absentions. I looked over the reports of the Party discussion last night, and it was astonishing to find revealed how many of the 278 and 556 who abstained did so because they were opposed to the Communist Party reducing the number of its candidates in the General Election, and not to the policy of a Coalition Government after the General Election.



After the Paris Insurrection in the 1870s, Marx, who had some doubts about its wisdom, was the first to justify what he described as the historic initiative of the masses. What we ought to be triumphantly extolling, is not certain minor weaknesses, but the tremendous historical initiative of the masses. We are Marxists, comrades, and not magicians.

There is a basic reason why we were wrong in our estimation of the left swing in the Labour movement. And I believe I can give it to you in two minutes. It is not unrelated to the point legitimately made about ears being closer to the ground. I believe we failed to grasp this fact: that in the course of this war, which was brought to the doorsteps and homes of millions of people, in the air-raid shelters and in the cellars, in tubes and fire-watching parties, the working class, the professional and middle classes were quietly thinking to themselves, saying a word neither to their husbands, or wives, sons or brothers—but thinking to themselves. They were thinking, in our lifetime capitalism has only brought us poverty and unemployment, and now it has brought us this war. And on the other hand, they were thinking also of the miracles being performed by a Socialist country through its Red Army, in the fight to make this war the last war. That was what caused a basic political mental change in the outlook of millions and led them to take that historical initiative of which we had not taken due cognisance.

Comrades McIlhone and McEwen expressed certain dangers in their contributions that we need to guard against: first, an over-estimation of the disillusionment with the Labour Government; and secondly, seeing foreign policy as the only thing that the Labour Government is doing. And from it Bob McIlhone drew certain conclusions, or rather he didn't draw them but they drew themselves, which are not justified by events.

Nobody would be happier than I if I thought the influence of this Party was as great as McIlhone makes it out to be. But I refuse to deduce wrong policies as a result of a wrong estimation of the forces going to carry the policies through.

Look at the by-elections taking place. Are they revealing a disillusionment with the Labour Government on home and foreign policy? Of course they are not. The political instinct of the masses is too sound. Never again is it going to be driven into Tory reactionary channels by the reactionary policy of one or other of the Labour leaders.

Don't let us forget that the people of this country see nationalisation of the coal industry and the Bank of England and the reduction in income tax, as well as Greece and Indonesia, and we are making a great mistake if we don't grasp this.



Comrades complained that in the Political Letter of August 28, 1945, we did not go all out against the Labour Government on the grounds of its foreign policy.

Comrades, the Labour Government only came to power in the last days of July. Bevin made his speech in August. We made a formulation in that Political Letter regarding that speech, and it reads like this: "Mr. Bevin's speech does not correspond to what the masses voted for at the General Election. The fight against Tory reaction needs to be conducted on foreign policy no less than on home policy; otherwise the programme for full employment and social advance will be placed in jeopardy by a wrong foreign policy." I will defend that formulation in the circumstances under which it was written, anywhere and at any time.

Are we never going to learn? I have been in too many campaigns which had as their main motive *against*, and not sufficient with the main motive *for*, and comrades, especially the younger comrades, in this Congress would be well advised to assimilate that experience too.

Everything is not black in the realm of foreign affairs, despite what Bevin is attempting to do, because there are bigger things in England and other countries than Ernest Bevin.

The situation in Greece begins to change for the better. Bevin begins to squeal now that he is being let down. He is going to do a lot more squealing in the future, not because of wrong slogans, but because of the growth of the mass movement. The Greek situation is changing for the better because of the amazing strength of the Communist Party there, and because of the support this Party in this country is giving to the Communist Party of Greece.

Comrades must understand that one of our most vital duties is to avoid isolating ourselves from this movement. There is nothing easier in the world than to call people names. We have paid a heavy price as a result of it in the past and we must be prepared to avoid these political mistakes in the future. Our job is to develop a mass movement, not on the basis of one isolated aspect of a situation but on the basis of a constructive line as outlined in the Executive Committee report, given on this platform yesterday.

Comrades, please remember this fundamental fact: The working class have built up something in the course of this struggle against fascism that capitalism is never going to be able to destroy. I repeat the words I quoted at the 1944 Congress, the words of George Dimitrov in 1935:

"Fascism, which appears as the result of the decline of capitalism, in the long run acts as a factor of its further disintegration. Thus fascism,



which has undertaken to bury Marxism, the revolutionary movement of the working class, is, as a result of the dialectics of life and the class struggle, itself leading to the further development of those forces which are bound to serve as its grave-diggers, the grave-diggers of capitalism."

That is the historic process which is now taking place, intensified before our very eyes.

Our main fight, therefore, comrades, is not against the Labour Government, not against Bevin—our main fight is against capitalism and against the ideas of capitalists, ideas of particular members of the Labour movement and the Labour Government who are influenced by capitalism.

We also need to avoid the danger, because of an error in March, of intensifying the error as a result of a wrong understanding of the situation. What do I mean by this? Just this. You will regret a policy that does not take into account the fact that the capitalist class is not one reactionary mass. In other words, it is still part of the policy of the Labour movement of this country to seek for allies where it can find them. Our job is to know how to increase this differentiation.

I would like to read a quotation from a letter from Frederick Engels to Kautsky, which Kautsky suppressed and which did not become available till 1925, although written in 1891. Kautsky was criticising the German democratic party as being "one reactionary mass." Engels criticised this, and went on, to say that this formulation was

"False, because it expresses an historic tendency, genuine in itself, as an accomplished fact. . . .

"We have no right to represent a tendency, which is gradually being realised, as a fact already accomplished, and all the less so since in England, for example, this tendency will never be fulfilled as an absolute fact. When the upheaval comes here the bourgeoisie will still be ready for all sorts of partial reforms. Except that to cling on to the partial reform of a system already overthrown becomes sheer nonsense."

I am mentioning this because it is necessary to state here that there are important circles of capitalists in this country who are profoundly disturbed at the policy of the Labour Government in relation to the U.S.S.R. They see that while this country is becoming the home of anti-Soviet intrigue, the U.S.A. is getting all the trade orders from the U.S.S.R. We shall see how this pressure begins to exert itself, but it is part of our job to fan it, to intensify it.

On the question of industrial disputes, comrades, you must face the issue, as we presented it in the Report. We have nothing further to say in relation to this matter.



I am going to face you with the direct issue and I do not propose you shall get away with anything. You are either in favour of the line of the Report, or of the line that has been expounded here of mass strikes as the only way to realise the workers' demands. If the latter, I warn you, you are playing with fire that can help to lose the peace and reduce this country to ashes.

Nothing is easier in the present situation than strikes, and our comrades should be much more guarded. We should be ready to pay tribute to comrades like Scott and Horner and Hannington, who in their difficult and responsible positions are having to fight for the full utilisation of the machinery. You can get a strike in the coalfields tomorrow, if you want it. Will it advance the working-class movement of this country, or the perspective of our nation being a first-rate nation in the family of united nations? Do not make any analogies with the United States: the economic system and basis are entirely different.

On the dock strike, I took the view that if our Party had been compelled to stick its head out in difficult situations in the war and compel our comrades to be stigmatised as strike-breakers, we are not called upon to repeat that in the days of peace, but we would examine every dispute on its merits. The *Daily Worker* reported the facts. It is true we gave no lead for ten days, but that is no crime, because we considered that strike ill-advised. We knew the doubtful forces which were at work—not the Trotskyists, but the provocative tactics of the employers and the inter-union rivalry. We are concerned with reaping the harvest of our own work, and I pay my tribute to our docker comrades who fought last summer to get the Charter now before the employers, to become the official charter of the T. & G.W.U. If some of our comrades were in difficulties on the docksides, well, Communists are always in difficulties and we have to be prepared to face them and to stand up against them.

Let this Congress be clear. Our line was to advise the dockers to go back to work, to call for the intervention of the Government, a speed-up in the hearing of the case, the democratisation of the Dockers' Section of the T. & G.W.U., and for the recognition of the dockers' shop stewards as the A.E.U. recognise their shop stewards. It was a positive line and it needs fighting for; and because, comrades get chased in fighting for it—all right—it is not the first time and it won't be the last.

Do not be under any illusions. Supposing our Party had come out and supported the dockers' strike, would that have been enough? When this Party goes into action, it goes into action; and if it had been supporting the dockers' strike it would have had to call for sympathetic strike action of all transport workers



for an extension of that strike. Would that have done the dockers any good? We deny it.

On the plea that the £4 10s. is too low, I put it frankly to this Congress: I ask any trade union official here to deny what I now say, that if we could get that £4 10s. minimum it would be a blessing and a godsend to millions of workers, railwaymen, shipbuilders, agricultural workers, etc. Comrades, you can make it £5 or £10: demands and programmes are important, but what is more important still is the mobilisation of the working class to achieve their demands. The working class is a sensible class, and it has never organised to fight for what it conceives to be impossible.

My last word is this, in relation to building our Party, I want to sweep away all the alibis.

You can talk about objective and subjective factors as long as you like. You can talk about under-estimations and over-estimations as long as you like. But the fundamental reason why our Party does not grow is that you comrades do not want it to grow! That is the reason! The Party wants to be a narrow Party, it wants to be a Party of exclusive Marxists. It resents hundreds and thousands of new members coming into the Party. Yes, I apply this test to all of you. It is not how many members the other fellow makes for the Party: it is how many members you personally are making, all of us here. It is the welcome we extend to the comrades when they are in our ranks. I tell you, you have a policy provided in the report that will enable our Party to stand out as the champion of the British people, and of Britain, and put us on the political map.