

THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND UNITY

By HARRY POLLITT

[The following article consists of extracts from the concluding speech delivered by Comrade Harry Pollitt at a recent meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Great Britain.]

I WANT to stress again the importance of emphasising the character of the turn we are going to make as a result of this Central Committee meeting, which has for us the objective of strengthening the Communist Party, making it an integral part of the Labour Movement, leading the fight for unity of action on the part of every section of the working-class movement, in every phase of the daily struggle against capitalism, fighting to transform the Labour Party from the basis of class collaboration, on to a class struggle basis, with the perspective through the whole of this activity finally of a united working-class party in this country.

All the changes we are making are done for one specific object—to make it easier for the members of the Labour Party and Trade Union Movement to establish the united front and come towards Communism. This cannot be emphasised too strongly. We have made many serious concessions in our efforts to achieve unity. But these have been done because we have been eager to win Labour Party and Trade Union members for a common policy and fight.

Our fight for affiliation is part of a policy which represents one of the most important means whereby we can achieve unity in action now, and in which we also help those thousands of men and women inside the Labour Movement who want to change the policy of the Labour Party. But we shall make a serious mistake if we do not ceaselessly link up the whole of our fight for the united front with our perspective of one united party. I can only think of my own experience since the 7th Congress of the Communist International last summer. It does not matter what you explain so far as the 7th Congress is concerned when you are unfolding the whole line, it is the final perspective of the one united party which rouses the audience to the greatest measure of enthusiasm.

It is not a question of a small Communist Party and a big numerical Labour Party. It is the political question of unity.

I think we have to remember that the Labour Party is based on the practice and policy of Social Democracy. Against that we must carry

on a political struggle. We do not and cannot fulfil the building of unity in action by any suggestion of recruiting for the Labour Party. This is not a question of time, it is a question of principle. There is a fundamental difference between the Communist Party becoming the champions of a fighting Trade Union Movement and recruiting into mass organisations of the working class, and the Communist Party recruiting to the Labour Party. We will do all in our power to win the Trade Union affiliations to the Labour Party. But there is a difference in making that part of our line to win allies that are consciously fighting for united action, and in recruiting for the Labour Party. My personal opinion is that this issue will not arise until there is a united Political Party in this country. Having once started to toy with this idea, it is just here that it becomes dangerous, for we shall, consciously or unconsciously, be feeding those who are already talking of the liquidation of the Communist Party, even though for ourselves that may be the farthest thought from our minds that it is possible to imagine.

When Comrade Bramley told us that some comrades had stated that the policy of the United Mineworkers of Scotland would be followed by the liquidation of the Communist Party, this is a statement that cannot be passed over, and the comrades who have made that statement have to get together in a special meeting. One of the Party leaders must talk to these comrades and show them where they are wrong. Because these comrades may have expressed what others may be thinking. It shows there is a lack of understanding between the rôle of the Party and the rôle of a Trade Union.

I am alarmed that in the course of this discussion there could have been revealed what I can only describe as a complacency towards the all too slow growth of the Communist Party.

It is a very serious situation, especially as it occurs at the very moment when the influence of the Party is undoubtedly growing. We must find, not one or two local reasons, but the political reason. There must be a political reason, and it is the tendency to submerge the class struggle line of the Communist Party in general united front and many times purely Labour Party propaganda which automatically produces this situation, that the recruiting for and building up of the Communist Party is regarded as a secondary thing to the question of the United Front.

Therefore, we must conduct a big campaign on the question of the rôle of the Communist Party. The last part of Comrade Dimitrov's Report at the Communist International's Seventh Congress, where he deals with the question of consolidating the Communist Party, is the culminating point of everything that that Congress stands for.

Comrades, in the struggle for the establishment of the united front the importance of the leading rôle of the Communist Party increases

extraordinarily. Only the Communist Party is at bottom the initiator, the organiser, and the driving force of the united front of the working class.

The Communist Parties can ensure the mobilisation of the broadest masses of the toilers for a united struggle against fascism and the offensive of capital *only if they strengthen their own ranks in every respect*, if they develop their initiative, pursue a Marxist-Leninist policy, and apply correct, flexible tactics which take into account the concrete situation and alignment of class forces.—(Page 70, Dimitrov's Report, Price 2d.)

We have to conduct a considerable explanation of this, not only amongst our own members, but amongst those with whom we are in close contact, in united front activity.

Later on, Dimitrov says :

. . . . A successful struggle for the establishment of the united front imperatively demands constant struggle in our ranks against tendencies to *deprecate the rôle of the Party*, against *legalist illusions*, against reliance on *spontaneity and automatism*, both in the liquidation of fascism and in conducting the united front against the *slightest vacillation at the moment of determined action*.

“It is necessary,” Stalin teaches us, “that the Party be able to combine in its work the greatest adhesion to principle (not to be confused with sectarianism) with a maximum of contacts and connections with the masses (not to be confused with “tailism”), without which it is not only possible for the Party to teach the masses, but also to learn from them, not only to lead the masses and raise them to the level of the Party, but to listen to the voice of the masses and divine their sorest needs.” (Page 73.)

We have all to study this chapter again and again, and see in it the guiding line in the all-important task of building up and ever extending the united front through the strengthening and constant recruiting to the Communist Party.

Every Party organiser and every member of the Central Committee must be judged in the way we have built up the strength and influence of the Communist Party in the coming months. And the next Party Congress will have the opportunity of judging all of us upon how far we have learned from this Central Committee to overcome some of the weaknesses in our united front activity.

It is necessary now to plan for the Communist Party a recruiting campaign of a new type. Not just one or two big public meetings and letting it stop at that, but a campaign in which in addition to the general appeal for recruits, there is special concentration in the factories and trade union branches and all working-class organisations by leaflet and pamphlet, to get recruits on the basis of explaining the Communist Party in the way it is put in Dimitrov's Report. In this way we will not only be developing Communist Party education amongst non-Party members, but amongst our own members as well.

We must time and time again prove in deeds that the cause of unity *is the cause of the Communist Party*, and that this is best advanced, the more powerful the Communist Party becomes. The mighty united front movement goes from strength to strength in France because of the equally mighty growth in the French Communist Party. And when sometimes workers in the Labour Party ask us why we are so insistent in our efforts to organise such a mighty united front movement and Communist Party in Britain, we must proudly reply in the words of Dimitrov in concluding his historic report to the 7th Congress of the Communist International :

And we want all this because only in this way will the working class at the head of all the toilers, welded into a million strong revolutionary army, led by the Communist International and possessed of so great and wise a pilot as our leader, Comrade Stalin, be able to fulfil its historical mission with certainty—to sweep fascism off the face of the earth, and together with it, capitalism. (Page 80).

The Rapidly Rising Circulation

As shown by the fact that we are now printing *over 7,000 copies—a record for all time* in the history of the LABOUR MONTHLY—proves that there is now an *unequaled* opportunity for all readers to assist in speeding-up this rise still further. You can do this in the following ways :—

(a) Send us a list of friends you think would be interested to receive from us a specimen copy of a back number with a subscription form inside. (Please note that those lists already sent in have produced good results.)

(b) Approach your public library to take it or else the library of your trade union branch, co-operative, workers' club or party.

(c) Approach your newsagent yourself to display it more prominently, to take a display card (12 by 9 inches) supplied free by us, either to hang or to stand in his shop (specify which), or a current poster, or else send us his name and address for us to write him direct.

(d) Become an agent of the MONTHLY yourself by taking, on sale or return, 3 or more copies at our special rate of 4½d. per copy. Write us for further particulars.

(e) If you are already an agent send us an order for an extra supply *this month* and see whether you can get new regular readers.

Overseas we have secured a new agent who already in a month has obtained 80 new subscribers for 6 months or 1 year, and promises to get us very many more before March. Follow his example and co-operate with us to try and make it necessary to print over 8,000 before the summer.

IT CAN BE DONE