

# After Southport

BY HARRY POLLITT

THE SOUTHPORT CONFERENCE of the Labour Party was held in the Garrick Theatre. Right above the heads of the National Executive Committee hung a huge slogan: "They Conquer Who Believe They Can." This is an admirable sentiment, but in view of the proceedings, decisions and leadership given at the Conference, it is necessary to consider seriously whether they were of a character that can really guarantee the fulfilment of this sentiment.

It was the first Labour Party Conference since October, 1937. In the intervening period the face of the world has changed, and in changing has led to an enormous strengthening of the military, economic, financial and strategical position of the fascist aggressors.

Austria, Czechoslovakia and Spain are now within the orbit of fascism. Holland, Switzerland, Poland and the Scandinavian countries are in a state of tension and alarm. In Britain, every vital problem arising out of poverty and unemployment is callously ignored, while at the same time there is a steady encroachment on the democratic rights and liberties of the people, and the people are menaced by the fear of war.

History and the whole future of the Labour movement and the British people had placed a heavy responsibility on leaders and delegates alike.

Never was there a time when there was such need for discussion and clarity, for a serious and careful examination of every suggestion and alternative policy. We are no longer living in the old carefree days when time was not important, when what is not settled this year can be held over to the next Conference. Every minute and hour counts if poverty is to be attacked, if constructive schemes for combating unemployment are to be worked out, if the Peace Front is to be established and the peoples of the world spared those horrors of war which have already affected one-fourth of the human race.

The eyes of the whole world were upon Southport, for British Labour is powerful enough, if it will exert its power, to make it impossible for Chamberlain to govern, and the defeat of Chamberlain is the main task facing the Labour movement.

It would be political blindness not to recognise that the Chamberlain Government still holds a strong position, but only because it faces a weak and divided Opposition which seems to be in such general agreement with the Government it is supposed to be fighting.

This has had the effect, especially since the supposed change in the policy of the Government, of helping to build up a feeling of increased confidence in the Government.

The result as a whole is seen in the absence of any organised and united fight against capitalism and the Government to improve the conditions of the workers, and reveals its political significance in every by-election which takes place.

The real significance of these by-elections is not so much who the people vote for, as the fact that in these critical times the majority of the people are not voting at all. The Labour Party has noted this fact, and promptly seeks to mislead the people by the creation of a mysterious being which it christens "Mr. Apathy." The impression is intended to be conveyed that people are not interested in politics and elections.

The real reason why people are not voting is that while basically they distrust the policy of the Chamberlain Government, they see no fighting alternative policy and leadership which can organise their *will to fight* for higher wages, control of rents, holidays with pay, extension of social services, and for the successful defence of peace and democracy; which can inspire them with confidence and is not afraid to place facts openly before them and show clearly what is to be done, and how.

This was the central problem before the Southport Conference. This is what the most active workers in the Labour movement expected the Conference to tackle. This is what the Conference Agenda revealed as the aim toward which the Local Labour Parties were striving. They are the active and thoughtful sections of the Movement that take the trouble to bring forward issues on the Agenda.

The failure of the leadership to show the way forward through working class unity and the People's Front, with no co-operation with the Chamberlain Government, was skilfully covered up by references to "Labour's Immediate Programme"; to "what the next Labour Government will do"; by loud boasts about "when we are in power." Those who used them did not for one second believe them to be immediately realisable. At bottom, it was an uneasy platform—uneasy because the more astute of the leaders were perfectly aware that the pretence they were making about "Socialism," "Power" and "the next Labour Government" was seen through by delegates who knew (as they know!) that everything done at Southport was only making these eminently desirable aims more difficult of future achievement.

The consequences of the Southport Conference to the Labour movement will be even more disastrous than those of the Edinburgh Conference in 1936 unless the whole Movement sets itself to help change the position; for the Southport Conference failed entirely to face up to the necessity to defeat the Chamberlain Government, and to plan the active policies and organisational measures which are necessary to win victory.

What is the basic explanation of this failure? It is to be found in the "Notes of the Month" written in the November, 1936, issue of the *LABOUR MONTHLY* immediately after the Edinburgh Conference:

The National Government can only perform its world reactionary rôle so long as it can count on the effective paralysis of opposition from the working class in Britain. More; as it advances closer into the war zone, it requires the positive support and collaboration of the Labour Movement. This is the key to the inner tactical policy of the National Government, which is directed towards winning the co-operation of the upper stratum of the trade unions and Labour organisations against the tendencies of working class opposition. And this is the key to the underlying issues of Edinburgh. Behind all the issues of Edinburgh lay the question of the relation of the Labour Movement to the National Government; whether the Labour Movement shall retreat into co-operation with the National Government in the gathering war situation, or whether it shall organise and lead a united working class and Popular Front of opposition to defeat the National Government. On the outcome of this fight depends the immediate future in Europe, and therewith the issue of war or peace.

These words are even more true to-day, for Government and Labour policy has become more and more entwined, not so much perhaps in speeches and votes, but, much more important, in deeds, in such actions as the defence of non-intervention, the fervent "god-speed" to Chamberlain when he set out for Munich, the unconditional participation in National Service, the complete absence of any organised fight, either inside or outside Parliament, for the demands of the workers on the home front.

The whole aim of the strategy of the Labour leaders at Southport was to cover up this reality, to create a fictitious picture of optimism, of "forward to victory." That was why they adopted the slogan "They Conquer Who Believe They Can"; why Bevin declared "We are nearer to power than ever before"; why Greenwood closed the Conference with the stirring call: "Soldiers! To your places!" That was why they attacked the Left for its alleged "defeatism," accused them of "wanting to water down Labour's principles," of undertaking "a desperate search for all kinds of doubtful allies."

No serious-minded Labour man or woman can afford to be taken in by this phrase-mongering. Our daily life is the ever-present proof that the actual position is entirely different. We Communists would be only too delighted if this were not so, for then there would be a different relation of class forces, permitting us to tackle different tasks. The realities of the situation are not to be grasped by the use of cheap easy catch-phrases about optimism and power, which are only irresponsible froth which it is nothing less than criminal for a serious political leadership to indulge in at such a moment.

Yes! We want victory. We want it now! We work night and day to bring it about. But are our forces ready? Are we prepared? Have we that clearness of policy, that confidence in the leadership, that boundless enthusiasm, that mass response which indicates both organised Labour and the masses of the people as yet outside the Labour movement responding to the call and streaming to Labour's banner?

Look at the by-election results, the falling membership of the Labour Party, its serious financial position, the opposition of the Trade Unions to paying increased affiliation fees, the widespread and openly expressed disgust with the *Daily Herald*, the half-filled meetings, the absence of life and activity in some of the local Labour Parties ! These are the real facts which all the grandiose " optimism " of speeches which strike no genuine note cannot wipe away. And to pretend that they do not exist and are not growing is to weaken any chances of a Labour victory.

What is, at bottom, responsible for these facts ? *It is the lack of fight against the National Government.* No worker wants to take part in shadow boxing; he wants to fight to win, to be able to give heavier blows than his class enemy can give; he wants the leadership and organisation of the fight to be sound, confident, and every trick, tactic and ounce of strength brought into the fight.

*It is the present pretence of fighting which gives the whole impression of insincerity and shadow boxing which is at the root of the crisis in the Labour Party to-day.*

The organisation of this fight is the test of political leadership to-day. Once it is organised, once the shadow boxing has ceased, then not only the organised workers, but the mass of the people will respond. How the people rallied round A. J. Cook in 1926; the fight against the U.A.B. Regulations and the Hoare-Laval Pact in 1935; the Unity Campaign in 1937; Aid for Spain 1936-39 ! It was a united fight in which the issues were clear, and the people knew clearly who they were fighting, and why.

Mass support is won, allies are won, on the basis of clearly defined aims and methods of struggle, and it is the responsibility of working class leaders who control the powerful mass organisations to give this leadership.

This the Southport Conference did not give. What it did was to reject unity and a fighting policy, and the result can do no other than strengthen Chamberlain.

This fact, and the danger arising from it, has since been understood by those Labour leaders like Herbert Morrison, M.P., and John Marchbank, who after using all their power and influence to prevent the unity of all the Labour and democratic forces being achieved, who were in the forefront of the propaganda that " Labour can win on its own," now are compelled to go out of their way to win the support of Liberals and Tories.

These Labour leaders know that any split in the anti-Chamberlain vote, any rival candidates, will not bring about the defeat of the Chamberlain Government, but they still refuse to adopt policies and methods which could for a certainty organise the defeat of Chamberlain.

Can any genuine Labour man or woman remain unperturbed at the thought of Britain and its people subjected to another five years of

Chamberlain? For whatever manœuvres he is indulging in now—under pressure of mass opinion and revolt in his own Party—in connection with the Anglo-Soviet Pact, his basic line is a pro-fascist line, which is not changed by any agreement which he is compelled to conclude with the Soviet Union.

But the Southport Conference was not clear on this point. The utmost confusion was shown in the conflicting views expressed on the three main issues discussed.

Take first the resolution on Foreign Policy. The resolution correctly places in the forefront the need for a Pact of Mutual Assistance with the Soviet Union. It correctly criticises the past policy of the National Government and its abandonment of collective security. But the decisive issue for the present leadership of the fight against the National Government is missing, that is, the exposure of the present policy which the Government is pursuing under cover of an alleged return to collective security. Instead, official Labour expression solemnly claims that the Government has had now to adopt Labour's policy, thus giving the stamp of Labour approval to the Government's policy, and nullifying the effect of any abstract statement of correct principles.

The Government's whole conduct of the Anglo-Soviet negotiations, the original attempted exclusion of the Soviet Union, the protracted refusal of any Mutual Pact, and then the successive attempts to nullify any Mutual Pact by loopholes to make it ineffective, no less than the simultaneous positive steps of the Government, in respect of the Czech gold for Hitler, or approval of the retention of Italian arms in Spain, and moves for a deal over Danzig, sufficiently show where its real policy is tending—that the basic aims of Munich are not abandoned.

So far from leading the fight against this dangerous policy, the Labour Party leadership at Southport sought to cover it up and even to assist its extension.

Thus, Noel Baker, Labour's foreign "expert" made the statement: "Appeasement is not a policy, it is a dangerous pathological complaint." Such a statement can only encourage the illusion that Chamberlain is a weak old man who does not realise the implications of what he is doing. It glosses over the fact, which needs to be dragged out into the light of day that Chamberlain represents the British millionaire group which wants fascism as a bulwark against the working class, which looks with envy at the way in which German fascism has enabled the German industrialists and financiers to pile up wealth at the expense of the general mass of the people. Appeasement is a policy—a policy deliberately aimed at making fascism stronger. What effect can the "appeasing" of fascism by the handing over of £6,000,000 worth of Czech gold have, other than to strengthen it by enabling it to buy more materials for armament production?

But far more alarming than this even, was the intervention, in the debate, of Mr. Bevin.

Mr. Bevin spoke "to fill a gap in Labour's foreign policy."

Mr. Bevin's line is a direct continuation of the Munich policy. It was a try-out at Southport of the policy of the Cliveden Set and the pro-fascist Chamberlain Government. It was in line with the similar proposals made by Paul Faure, Secretary of the French Socialist Party at the Nantes Congress meeting during the same time as the Labour Party Conference, and everybody in France knows that Faure is the spokesman inside the French Socialist Party of the notorious Flandin.

It is indicative that the Nazi Press has not been slow to realise that the Bevin-Faure group gives fascism very considerable help, as witness the comments that were made on the Nantes and Southport Conferences.

Karl Megerle, diplomatic correspondent of the *Berliner Börsen Zeitung*, organ of the most reactionary circles of Nazi Germany, writes :

Interesting in these two Congresses, was the drive to point out that anti-fascism is not a policy and that one day its home and foreign consequences may spell ruin. Especially at the Nantes Congress, the Paul Faure group tried for the second time to get away from the anti-fascist obsession. It admitted that the economic policy of the totalitarian States certainly does not serve capitalism, that the Fuehrer's speech of April 28 expressed reasonable ideas, that Germany is driven to expand its economic structure and that the slogans "Fascism or War," "Slavery or Death," are just mischief-making. Maintenance of peace must be placed above everything else even at the cost of an agreement with the totalitarian States. There is always talk about armaments but never about negotiations with Hitler. Similar ideas were heard at Southport.

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We can also understand Trade Union Leader Bevin when he tries to prevent the Labour Party being dragged into a war for the London, Amsterdam and New York Stock Exchanges, because just as in 1914 it is not a question of democracy, freedom and justice but of Egypt, Irak and petrol. Only we don't believe that the Labour Party has any chance of coming to power as long as it pursues such a narrow foreign policy so contrary to its custom and interests that it no longer represents its own policy.

Herr Megerle concludes by calling on British and French Socialist leaders to take up the struggle against "Chauvinists, capitalists and Bolsheviks" which will give them the best platform on home and foreign policy.

The essence of Mr. Bevin's proposal is to "pool the great resources of the world" and offer Germany, Italy and Japan "a place in the sun." This sounds very statesmanlike and generous. Actually, it represents the formal introduction of Labour into the firm of Appeasement Ltd., with its particularly dangerous form of appeasement officially carried out on behalf of fascism by the Labour movement.

The colonial peoples are not so many bundles to be handed over from one ruling country to another without their acquiescence. The transfer of colonies from Britain or France to Germany or Italy will

not give the Colonial peoples any greater measure of freedom, but on the contrary more brutal oppression. Can we for one moment believe that such a transfer would satisfy the fascist rulers? Was Italy satisfied with the conquest of Abyssinia? No! Mussolini went on to Spain. Was Germany satisfied with the absorption of Austria and the Sudetenland? No! Hitler went on to annex the whole of Czechoslovakia and is now surveying Europe in preparation for pouncing on the next victim. The alleged "economic need" of colonies is not the need of the masses of the people in the fascist countries who in fact would suffer still more hardship through increased taxation for more armaments to "defend their colonies"; it is the desire of the very rich industrial and financial groupings who seek to increase their investments. The giving of "a place in the sun" to the fascist powers means strengthening their resources for war, just as giving them Austria and Czechoslovakia has strengthened them.

It is high time that the Labour leadership did pre-occupy itself more with the question of Colonies—not from the angle of appeasing fascism, but in order to lead the fight for a charter of rights for the Colonial peoples—adult suffrage, free education, freedom of speech, press and organisation, labour and social legislation—the fight against the cynical complacency expressed in Mr. Malcolm Macdonald's downright lying statement about the position of the people in Britain's colonies.

Now take the document on defence. This unquestionably represents a big advance. But again, words and deeds are two very different things.

The real test of the Labour leaders' attitude towards the democratisation of the Armed Forces is not what they say at Southport, but what they say outside the shipyards, aircraft factories, munition shops and in industry as a whole—what they do to spread Labour's policy *inside* the Armed Forces. Will they call mass meetings of the conscripted youth and the Territorials? Will they spread literature far and wide explaining their demands? Will they launch a broad campaign to popularise their policy? Or will they be content with a few speeches in Parliament and the production of a penny pamphlet? If ever there was an issue on which there must be no disparity between words and deeds, it is this issue of defence, for not only the present but the whole future advance towards Socialism and power is at stake.

Now take the question of the People's Front, with which is inseparably linked the Cripps Memorandum and the subsequent expulsion of Cripps and his most prominent supporters.

No genuine leader can feel very great satisfaction in a "victory" of this character, at a time when the dread of war permeates every home, when children are growing up in a "gas-mask" psychology.

It is true that, looking back over the campaign associated with the Cripps Memorandum, there was a weakness in that certain elements associated with it did tend to give the impression that preparations were being made for some kind of new party.

No support for such an idea, however, can be found in the writings or speeches of Sir Stafford Cripps himself.

The inescapable fact is that Cripps *did want to fight and defeat Chamberlain now*. He did advance a policy which could enable this to be done, and no alternative policy was ever advanced by the Labour Party leaders. Instead, they took refuge in assertions that Cripps was "awkward," was "always making trouble," was "difficult to deal with," was "an individualist." This was all they could do, when they found themselves incapable of answering the fundamental truths contained in his Memorandum.

Southport has not killed the people's front. Let this be clearly understood. It is, in present conditions, the only policy which can guarantee to the people security to live in peace, can safeguard the democratic gains of the past and guarantee the future advance to Socialism.

Those who, like the *Daily Herald* leader writers, point so sneeringly to the so-called failure of the People's Front in France, Spain and Czechoslovakia, should have the elementary intelligence to remember two things; first, that its weakness in these countries was due almost entirely to the fact that a People's Front and Government have not been established in Britain, and secondly, that with all the weaknesses and mistakes of the People's Front in these countries, had it not been in existence the people of Britain would have already felt the effects of war on their bodies and in their homes.

The political aim of the People's Front still stands unchallenged—that in these days of fascist aggression, war, the destruction of democracy, culture and social progress, all those who seek, not to appease fascism, but to withstand and fight it, should come together in a common front to secure governments which give the guarantee that, on the basis of collective security abroad and social advance at home, peace and democracy may be preserved.

We unhesitatingly assert that in the conditions of to-day this is the best guarantee of winning Socialism in the future.

We understand the feelings of the older workers in the Labour Movement who grew up in the fight against the domination of Labour by the old Liberal Party, when it was the ruling party of capitalism; who fought a bitter struggle to secure the independence of Labour from the influence of Liberalism, and who now feel whenever the question of the People's Front is raised that it involves going back to the policies against which they fought.

But in fact, what we are fighting for is the real independence of Labour against those whose policy seeks to make Labour dependent upon the Chamberlain Government, which has replaced the old Liberal Party as the ruling party of monopoly capitalism.

It is independence of policy we want and have not yet really got. When we have real independence of policy as expressed in leading the

mass struggle against the Chamberlain Government and its policies, then allies will be welcome and we shall seek to win the co-operation of all sections of the democratic forces and their organisations alongside Labour in the fight against monopoly capital.

The importance of the present surviving fraction of the old Liberal Party is no longer that of a ruling party of capitalism, but as an electoral-parliamentary expression of the small middle-class section of the population.

The fact that within the Liberal and Tory Parties opposition to Chamberlain is growing is not something to bemoan but to welcome and seize upon to use to Labour's advantage. The fact that Churchill and Lloyd George who once tried to crush the Russian Revolution, now believe that Britain will be crushed if it cannot secure a Pact with the Soviet Union is not a sign of weakening on the part of the Soviet Union, but of its strength and power.

One of the most significant facts in Britain to-day is the political wakening of millions of people of no party at all to their first understanding that something is radically wrong with society as it is organised at the present time. They include large numbers of professional people, small farmers and small shopkeepers and their families, whose interests are not at all bound up with monopoly capital. They are alarmed that poverty and unemployment appears to be insoluble. They are disquieted that cultural advance has stopped in so many countries which formerly contributed so much in this respect. They hate and fear war, and so now they are seeking which way to turn, whose lead to follow, what they can do.

They are not yet convinced of the Socialist solution. They resent the patronising "take-us-or-leave-us" attitude of the Labour leaders. They want to get rid of Chamberlain. They want peace and friendship with all nations. They do not want phrase-mongering demagogy and speculation as to what will happen in the dim and distant future. *They want to know what it is practical to do now.*

It is this great force in Britain that the Labour Party refuses to organise, because it can only see Lloyd George and Sir Archibald Sinclair. And the fact that the Labour Party refuses to organise these forces on the ground that this means making "uncertain alliances," means "a revival of Liberal-Labourism," is only the cover for carrying forward the old ways of capitulation to capitalism, using new methods to suit present circumstances.

It is clear that before any permanent change can be effected in the whole policy and rôle of the Labour Party, the whole question of leadership needs to be given urgent consideration.

Nothing more strikingly reveals the stagnancy in Transport House than the manner in which nominations for the Executive Committee of the Labour Party are obtained and the method of voting.

Here is the leadership of what ought to be the most powerful working-

class organisation in the country, a leadership carefully selected on the basis of the best brains, experience and capacity for leadership that can be found. This is especially so to-day when, with all due respect to the problems tackled by the old pioneers, they are nothing compared to the complicated and difficult problems which face the movement to-day.

It is absolutely essential that before the next Labour Party Conference those members of Trade Union Executives who sincerely want to strengthen the Labour Party leadership should seriously study this problem and put forward for the Labour Party Executive new, virile personalities with political interest and understanding. This question should also be raised by the District Committees and Branches in those Unions—there are not many of them unfortunately—whose rules allow such matters to be discussed by the rank-and-file.

#### *What is to be done*

We suggest that the first thing that needs to be done by the whole Labour movement now is to create the will to fight, the will to unite all who want to fight the Chamberlain Government, and lay the certain basis for its defeat in any coming general election; to organise a gigantic political awakening throughout the Labour movement, a feeling of real confidence and strength that can lead to a revival of every form of mass activity and end once and for all the present backward slide that will certainly bring us to the same position as German Social Democracy brought the German people, unless it is checked.

The heart of the Labour movement is sound and anxious for the fight. It will at once respond to a lead, but it must be the kind of lead and policy which is in accord with the demands of the situation and the immediate needs of the masses. It must be a lead which not only advances the daily struggle against capitalism and the Chamberlain Government, but at the same time lays the basis for the advance towards the conquest of power and the establishment of Socialism.

But the entire future advance towards power and Socialism depends upon what is done *now* in this situation of such unparalleled gravity and urgency.

Once the full strength and power of Labour in its political parties, Trade Unions and Co-operative movement is exerted, a new government can come to power in Britain; but the full strength of Labour can only be exerted when it is united in one gigantic combination that unhesitatingly goes into action against Chamberlain and capitalism as a whole.

The policy to be worked out should be one that attracts every section of the population which is anxious to bring about improvements in social conditions, and to safeguard democracy and peace.

The Immediate Programme of the Labour Party contains many points which, if worked out more concretely in relation to the present situation, can serve as the basis for organising the mass action of the

workers. We suggest that at the present moment, the main concentration has to be on such types of demands as the following :

- (1) The Trade Unions should lead a united fight of all the trade unionists to secure wage increases, holidays with pay, shorter hours, and collective agreements to cover every factory and industry, with compulsory recognition by all employers of the trade unions and their right to be recognised as the negotiating body of the organised workers. Especially is this question of economic demands urgent in the mining, textile, railway and agricultural industries. The Labour Party should take full part in such a campaign, pledging its full support in the carrying through of all necessary legislation to improve the conditions of the industrial workers.
- (2) The adoption of a large-scale national plan of economic development, involving re-housing, new hospitals, schools, clinics, water supply, re-afforestation, credits and mechanical aid for agriculture, land drainage and reclamation, re-equipment of backward industries, new roads, up-to-date methods of sanitation and lighting in every working class area. The construction of deep shelters for the civil population as protection against any potential air raids. The whole of this work to be carried out on the basis of trade union rates and conditions. Alongside this, the Government should be forced to organise the setting up of new industries and factories in the distressed areas.
- (3) A campaign for the abolition of the Means Test needs to be placed in the forefront of Labour's fighting programme, for as the unemployed are being absorbed in some areas, the wages they begin to earn are immediately taken into account to throw off benefit other members of their households still unemployed.
- (4) No one can defend the scandal of the present scales for the Old Age Pensions; there must be an increase, for no one can justify the existing rates in a country which is spending £2,000 a minute on rearmament.
- (5) A planned development of our national agricultural resources, to ensure a better life for the country workers and security for the farmers; guaranteed prices for farm products based on the cost of production; control of the profits made by middlemen, manufacturers and combines, in order to protect the interests of agriculture and prevent profiteering in food at the expense of the working people.
- (6) The mass strikes now taking place all over the country reveal the fact that the Rent question is now right in the forefront of all the vital domestic issues. The Labour Party and Trade Unions should at once co-ordinate and lead all these movements against exorbitant Rents, and ceaselessly campaign for the restoration and extension of Rent Control measures, the scaling down of municipal rents with larger State grants, and the protection of those workers who have been compelled to enter into contracts for the purchase of houses.
- (7) An end must be made to profit-making out of the nation's needs, and in this connection there should be a revival on a large scale of the demand for the nationalisation of the arms industry.
- (8) The position of the young people should now receive the utmost attention from the adult Labour movement. Never were the problems of the youth recognised as they are to-day, thanks to the un-

- remitting work of the various youth organisations. The Youth Charter adopted by the Trades Union Congress is one that can no longer be allowed to remain a dead letter; life, action and enthusiasm must be put into the fight for its achievement.
- (9) The fulfilment of all these demands will of course take money, but the people have now set before their eyes the fact that there *is* money in Britain. In the last analysis it is, of course, true that the whole burden falls upon the workers, that is why the demand "Make the Rich Pay" must now be voiced as never before. The Nuffield class who make such advertisement of their wealth, acquired through the exploitation of the workers, can no longer be allowed to dictate how that wealth shall be spent; it is the responsibility of the people who create it to decide this and enforce it.
- (10) The defence policy of the Labour Party should be popularised far and wide—in the factories, the trade unions, in the armed forces, in Parliament, and the local and county councils. The workers in the armed forces must be made to feel they are not isolated from the Labour movement; their full political rights as well as their economic conditions and chances of promotion must be safeguarded. Contact should be kept with all the conscripts, literature sent them, lectures and educational studies arranged for them. Practical meaning should be given to all the talk about the democratisation of the armed forces and the various auxiliary organisations for civil defence.
- (11) The Air Raid Precaution plans must be based on the most effective basis, that gives the best defensive measures that scientific planning, construction and political direction can give. We suggest that the four main points in any such A.R.P. plans should have the following as their basis:
- (a) Completely bomb-proof and gas-proof shelters for all people in towns and large villages, including shelters in streets and railway stations. Splinter-proof protection for those in isolated houses.
  - (b) Planned evacuation and reception for children up to 14, for mothers of children up to two, for expectant mothers, the old, the sick, and the infirm. Survey of billets by teachers beforehand.
  - (c) A planned casualty and medical service, based on bomb-proof and gas-proof hospitals in towns, and properly protected base hospitals in the relatively safe zones of the country.
  - (d) Democratic control of the whole A.R.P. service built up round the Local Authorities.
- (12) In these days when so much is being said about the problems of the Colonies and the more equitable distribution of the raw materials and resources, we need to remember that our first and primary duty is to the peoples of the British Empire. We must boldly advance our plans for the granting of immediate democratic reforms to the colonial peoples, coupled with economic assistance to the least developed countries, and the granting to Ireland and India the full independence claimed by their people, and on which alone can be built a permanent mutual confidence and economic co-operation between the peoples of the British Empire.
- (13) The whole campaign for the building up of the Peace Front and the carrying through of Staff conversations, in the first place between the British, French and Soviet High Commands, must be intensified.

The building up of such an alliance also places serious responsibilities on the British people; these they will fulfil without question when they have a government they can trust, one that believes in social advance, in democracy and peace. Then they will be ready to organise the man power, the armaments and financial resources that are necessary to defend the peace of the world, alongside other democratic states.

How shall the campaign for the fulfilment of such a programme be carried out?

By the mobilisation of every resource of the Labour movement. By the organisation of the greatest series of mass demonstrations, conferences, leaflet and pamphlet distribution, use of the radio and cinema, utilisation of the willing service of every speaker, writer, singer, artist and dramatist the Movement can draw in. The whole country can be made to sit up and take notice. The Market Squares and Halls, the factory gates, the Trades Councils, can all be filled with enthusiastic workers eager and anxious to embark on Labour's greatest campaign.

The basis can be laid for certain victory at any General Election, the way prepared to avoid a split in the anti-Chamberlain vote all over the country.

It is of particular importance that those parts of the programme which relate to municipal affairs—housing and rents, hospitals, schools, A.R.P. shelters, etc.—should be worked out locally and made the bases for a really popular campaign that can bring sensational Labour victories in the November municipal elections.

In the course of the campaign, forms of united action can be developed which will have lasting results in strengthening the whole Labour movement. Bonds of international solidarity can be forged in a new way, and international working class unity established.

This great aim will not only render the greatest service to the democratic people of all lands, it will provide the greatest impetus to the organisation of the mass opposition to the fascist dictators in their own countries, for the German and Italian peoples will no longer feel isolated and cut off; they will not be subject to the powerful propaganda alleging their encirclement for hostile aims, for they will know that this great campaign is aimed at defending them as well as ourselves.

The fight to achieve this line of policy being carried through now, seems to us to be the principal task of all those in the Labour movement who are anxious that Labour should fulfil its responsibilities to its own members and the British people.

But it cannot be done without the most persistent and painstaking campaigning inside the Movement, by a fight against defeatism; recognising that Southport has not settled all the big controversial issues of policy and that it is not true that nothing now remains but to accept the position after Southport "with good grace," and wait another three years before these issues can come up again for

discussion.

Such a standpoint can only lead to a worsening of the present disastrous position inside the Labour Party. Against this the sharpest possible fight within the Movement needs to take place, so that an immediate positive and practical line of struggle against capitalism and the Chamberlain Government can be carried out.

For the blunt truth is that on its present basis and policy the Labour Party cannot successfully organise the type of mass campaign which is now required. Every campaign it has attempted to organise during these last years proves this. The response from its own membership has not come, there has been no heart, no burning enthusiasm, no sustained drive, no confident leadership, inspiring, rousing and stimulating the whole drive forward.

The reason for this is to be found in the policy of suppression and exclusion of genuine sections of the working class movement from the Labour Party. The forces that could help to change the situation are deliberately excluded, because certain of the reactionary Labour leaders do not want struggle and fight, but passivity and co-operation with capitalism. It is this artificial separation of the working class forces that leads to the present paralysis in the Labour Party and prevents what campaigns it does organise from producing the desired results. This is why the fight for working class unity after Southport has to be taken up inside the Labour Party in a more vigorous way than ever before, why every form of local co-operation on the part of all working-class bodies has to be organised, so that the basis for the unity of all the forces of the Labour Movement on a national and international scale can be laid in the shortest possible time.

This is why the Communist Party expresses its readiness to throw all its strength, forces, organisers, speakers and press into any campaign the Labour Party will lead for the aims set out in this article, as the way forward in the present situation.

If this were done, there could be an immediate all-round strengthening of the Labour Party, Trade Union and Co-operative Movement; life and experience would prove that the work of the Communist Party is indispensable to any future growth of the Labour Party and it would be accepted as an affiliated organisation to the Labour Party.

With this would come a real drive for socialist understanding. For despite the formal acceptance of Socialism, neither the leadership nor the majority of the membership of the Labour Party is fully Socialist conscious, linking up the day-to-day struggle against capitalism with the drive towards the actual conquest of power.

If it were, there would be a very different situation in this country. In many respects the Labour Party is still Liberal-Labour in outlook, screened by formal independence of the Liberal and Tory Parties, but with a leadership which is not fully independent of capitalist policy.

The Southport Conference has only emphasised the urgent need

for a deep process of Socialist education and awakening to be carried through the Labour Party alongside such a campaign as we have suggested. The whole basis of capitalist society needs to be explained, our Socialist principles and solution popularised, the people urged to study and discuss, to become acquainted with the classic works of Marxism-Leninism, to study the history of the Soviet people.

Then we shall see such a political upsurge as Britain has never seen before. The whole Labour movement will take on a more serious, informed character; there will be an end to opportunism and reaction within the Movement; the defence of the present interests of the workers will be related to their future interests as well, and will in this way not only guarantee success in the daily struggle against capitalism, but lay the certain basis for the advance to Socialism.

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