

# Labour Review

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SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY  
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## Plain Speaking on War and Peace

*By G. Healy*

***A Criticism of "Labour's  
Foreign Policy"***

6d.

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## PLAIN SPEAKING ON WAR AND PEACE

*A Criticism of "Labour's Foreign Policy"*

By G. HEALY.

During June, several important declarations on war and peace came to the attention of the Labour movement.

In the middle of the month, Tory Minister of Defence, Field-Marshal Alexander, on his mission to Korea, told the sailors lined up on the carrier 'Ocean': "What you are doing is a rehearsal for World War III."

On June 19th, the General Secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen, J. B. Figgins, warned the annual conference of its Woman's Guild at Newport: "At this moment I am convinced we are on the brink of one of the greatest catastrophes the world has ever seen." For some time he had seen that the country was marching forward, rather than drifting, into a third world war. "It is not now going to be a question of years. It is a question of months. The task is enormous, but the forces at our disposal are immense," he said.

During the parliamentary debates on the Yalu River bombings, Aneurin Bevan called out to the Tory defenders of the raids on June 25: "If you want to go to war, why not say so?" In his speech the following day he repeated: "If there was no political solution in sight and a military solution was the only one left, then World War III was on our hands."

Meanwhile the statement on "Labour's Foreign Policy" unanimously adopted by the National Executive had been put before the party for discussion and for decision by the Annual Conference in September. What attitude does this official statement take toward the threat of a new world conflict?

## AN EXTRAORDINARY OMISSION

*"Labour's Foreign Policy" does not mention this imminent catastrophe at all!* To be sure, there is a section on "The Cold War." But this does nothing to indicate how very speedily and suddenly this could explode into a war of atomic intensity.

What a singular omission! If we should be told that the main purpose of the document was to bring forward those measures which can maintain peace, the answer is obvious. Peace cannot be achieved, or the war-makers fought, by disregarding the fundamental facts of world politics today.

But, as Aneurin Bevan's remarks in the Commons debates show, some Labour leaders are well aware of the peril. Indeed, every thinking person in Great Britain and the world over sees the war-clouds thickening overhead.

Are not U.S. generals, admirals, the Secretary of the Navy, politicians and businessmen openly advocating a "preventive war" against the U.S.S.R.? Can the bombings of the Yalu River power plants, when only one issue remained in the truce negotiations, be interpreted otherwise than as a deliberate provocation? It holds the danger, even if it was not inspired by the intention, of expanding the Korean action into an all-out attack upon China.

In the West diplomatic and military preparations are being stepped up by the hasty conclusion of the Bonn—"contract" with Adenauer's government and the integration of a revived Wehrmacht into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Here at home living costs are going up and living standards are being cut down by the exorbitant military budget which is Britain's contribution to the arms race.

The bulk of the working people of Britain, members and loyal supporters of the Labour Party, are opposed to participation in any new world war. They hate it and fear it. They realize that such a war will not be undertaken in their interests, but for the benefit of the wealthy, the munition makers, and all those reactionary forces in the wealthy class who detest Socialism, denounce Communism, and are enemies of the Labour movement.

This makes the failure of the N.E.C. to deal explicitly with the war question all the more unpardonable. Here is a life-and-death issue on which the Labour movement cannot remain silent. In fact, the war question should occupy the centre of discussion on foreign affairs. This article has been written to call attention to this neglect and help the Labour Left rectify it.

### WHO IS TO BLAME FOR THE WAR DRIVE ?

The sole reference in the National Executive statement to the causes of the extreme tension in international relations is the following: "Since 1945 the hope of peaceful partnership between nations, which would make disarmament possible, has been frustrated mainly by the Soviet Union's unco-operative policy." The fault is Moscow's they say. And if only the Kremlin leaders can be brought round to a more co-operative attitude (perhaps by building up and displaying more armed forces?), then all can be set right. Mildly, but unmistakably, the authors line up with the "Condemn Russia" school of Western politicians whose text-books are written in Washington.

We are not disposed to serve as defenders of the foreign or the domestic policies of Stalin's regime, which in our opinion do more harm than good to the interests of world labour and the Socialist movement, and repel instead of attract support for the Soviet Union from its natural allies within the international working class. But anyone who is not hypnotized by pro-imperialist propaganda and certainly anyone who tries to understand world developments in the light of Marxism has to reject the proposition that the Soviet Union is responsible for the drive toward war.

The authors of the N.E.C. document place the guilt on the wrong party. They should direct their accusations not toward Moscow, but toward Washington and Wall Street. The driving force behind the arms programme and the war drive is across the Atlantic, because there is the last stronghold of the capitalist system and the headquarters of world imperialism.

## CAPITALISM AND ITS WORLD WARS

For many decades Socialists have explained just how and why modern capitalism generates predatory wars at periodic intervals as a necessary consequence of the monopolist development of the profit system and the fierce competition among the big capitalist powers. Since 1914 these inter-imperialist conflicts have inflicted two terrible world wars upon us.

The projected world war must be viewed as the logical extension of these capitalist struggles. But a new war will not be a mere duplication of its predecessors. The relation of forces among the world powers and between the classes in society have shifted considerably as the result of world-shaking events connected with the first two wars.

What are some of the most important of these changes?

First is the indisputable supremacy of the United States, which emerged from the last war with overwhelming superiority in almost all fields—industrially, financially, diplomatically, militarily. But that is only one aspect of the situation.

Although the United States is far stronger, the other major capitalist countries are much weaker than before. The N.E.C. document itself acknowledges that "Britain has been weakened economically by two world wars." What has happened to Britain is only a small part of the damage suffered by the capitalist structure the world over.

From 1914 to 1952 the system of capitalism on a world scale has grown less stable and strong. It has lost its balance and is subjected to recurrent violent crises. Its leaders

are no longer very confident about its capacities to survive. Historically viewed, capitalism is a declining and disintegrating social order, reeling to its doom.

The task of the working class and the goal of its Socialist leadership is to recognize the complete hopelessness of this system and its infinite capacities for harm. We must do everything in our power to hasten the end of this bankrupt class society, which is such a menace to mankind.

Workers in other parts of the world have already taken immense steps forward along this line. Imperialism had to pay for its first world war with the Russian Revolution which eliminated capitalism and landlordism from one-sixth of the earth's surface. The Second World War helped make the Soviet Union the second world power and the first military machine in Europe and Asia. It also resulted in the destruction of capitalist property relations in Yugoslavia and the countries of Eastern Europe while the same process is now going on in China. The Second World War gave a mighty impetus to the movements for independence throughout the colonial world which have still further undermined imperialism.

The downfall of fascism, that terror-machine for suppressing organized labour and bolstering capitalist rule, released irrepressible forces of the working class throughout Europe headed by Communist or Socialist parties. A powerful labour and Socialist movement, embracing millions, appeared for the first time in defeated Japan. And here in Britain Labour came to power.

All these developments have further weakened and discredited capitalist rule. Except for North America, the peoples of the world no longer have much faith in its promises or its prospects.

Thus, an enfeebled capitalist structure today finds itself confronted with mighty anti-capitalist forces which are pressing forward against it and are increasingly determined to abolish it.

No matter what kind of leaderships they may have, these anti-capitalist forces are regarded by Big Business



and High Finance as an intolerable threat to their power, privileges, profits, and possessions. That is why the U.S. imperialists have been obliged to organize their offensive on a global scale in a massive effort to halt and hurl back the advancing legions of labour. This is the class origin of the ever-growing conflict, the social source of the ever-sharpening tensions, between world capitalism, organized and directed by imperialist America, and the non-capitalist sectors of the world which include the liberation movements in the colonies as well as the labour movements in the capitalist countries.

### THE MEANING OF THE COLD WAR

Some supporters of the present policy point to the might of America as evidence of the invincibility of capitalism, and lean upon it for that reason, regardless of the reactionary consequences. It would be foolish to underestimate the strength of the United States, but the extreme concentration of resources and excessive centralization of power in this one country is in itself a symptom of the decline and a source of grave weakness for international capitalism.

America's monopoly makes Europe and England weak, and their weakness in turn rebounds upon America. The United States is today the sole support of capitalism on a world basis. It has had to move into one country after another to keep capitalism from total collapse or save its rulers from the wrath of the people. As China proves, these efforts are not always successful.

Since the Cold War began, the United States has taken over Greece; has had to prop up French, Italian and British capitalism with loans and grants; dispatch arms to the French in Indo-China; and cap all this by direct armed intervention in Korea. America has become not only the banker and the boss, but the military policeman of world capitalism.

These political conditions and considerations have shaped the main lines of U.S. foreign policy since the end of the Second World War. They have been responsible

for the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Japanese Peace Pact, the Bonn Agreement, Korea and other measures of the Cold War. What is still worse, they are paving the way for the Third World War so breezily hailed by Defence Minister Alexander.

## ECONOMIC COMPULSIONS BEHIND THE WAR DRIVE

In addition to these political factors, the American capitalists are being propelled along the road to a new World War by pressures generated within their own economy. Over the past decade American industry has almost doubled its productive capacity. At the same time that inflation and taxes are cutting purchasing power at home, the world markets for its goods have become restricted and the outlets for its surplus capital reduced. The United States may be richer, but the rest of the world is much poorer and cannot get the currency to buy American goods. Our own dollar difficulties show that.

One zone after another has been closed off to American trade and investment in the post-war period. Trade with the Soviet-dominated countries has slowed down to a trickle. The anti-imperialist sentiments and the expropriations of foreign enterprises have made capitalist investments risky and unfavourable in many colonies.

These difficulties were not too serious so long as the post-war boom lasted. But no sooner had the pent-up demands been filled than they asserted themselves. In 1949 American business began to sink. This was the first threat of crisis. It was overcome by the Korean War. Yet even this boom has not sufficed to keep U.S. economy on an even keel. For the past year, signs of a new recession have appeared in the textile and other consumer-goods industries.

Since the close of the Second World War, American capitalism has been heading toward two equally distasteful alternatives: either a relapse into depression or going over to an arms economy. More and more it has had to step

up arms activity in order to avert economic decline. In 1949, 7 to 10 per cent. of the national product was in war goods. This was almost doubled after the Korean War.

Despite all the official protestations of peace, arms appropriations are absolutely necessary to keep American and world capitalism operating. But what must be the inevitable outcome of such a breakneck production of armaments? It cannot continue indefinitely—and yet it cannot slacken. The rest of the capitalist world cannot stand even a moderate drop in U.S. economic activity. A general slump there would push Europe and England to the wall.\*

In fact, the arms budget is being constantly accelerated. U.S. military expenditures are now at the rate of 52 billion dollars a year—and will be pushed up to 66.4 billions by the end of 1952.

As Aneurin Bevan himself pointed out in his recent book: "So much wealth is tied up in the war-machine that fears of universal deflation and consequent bankruptcies and unemployment will thrust us either into military action or the continuation of arms production on a self-defeating scale." This is precisely the danger. At a certain critical point in the rearmament drive, the mountain of weapons can no longer be piled up at the same pace. Then comes the hour of decision. The capitalist manufacture of arms inescapably ends in the use of those arms.

The N.E.C. statement says: "The Labour Party, as a democratic socialist organization, believes that international peace, like social peace, depends upon discovering and removing the causes of conflict between men." We have tried to show that the root causes of the developing

\* The Conservative M.P., Cyril Osborne, had this to say on the "menace of peace" in the "Times", May 7: "Peace in Korea could bring absolute chaos to the economy of the western world, and it is of the utmost urgency that thought should be given to the grave problems that peace would bring. But even without a Korean peace, the mere threat of a slackening in rearmament could bring disaster to world markets, because the difference between slump and boom is only the marginal 10 per cent., as was proved in 1948."

conflict come from the appetites and operations of the profit system. If this be so, the only way to remove these causes is to get rid of the capitalist system which produces them and the owners and rulers who profit from them.

These are the real motives and economic pressures behind the war drive. They explain the behaviour of Washington and provide the necessary framework for understanding its policies and aims.

## WASHINGTON'S FOREIGN POLICY—AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

It has been essential to dwell upon the real nature and the driving forces behind America's foreign policy in order to deal intelligently with the problems of Labour's foreign policy. For, sadly enough, the post-war Labour governments did not pursue either an independent or a Socialist course in world affairs. Its policy was so tightly interlinked with Washington's that it was difficult to distinguish the one from the other. Actually, the initiative on the foreign field was taken by the American State Department, while Whitehall, the Cabinet and Parliament trotted breathlessly behind. Tugging at the rope around its neck, the Labour government had to limit itself to occasional protests against the more reckless moves of the Washington policy-makers.

What is the fundamental programme of U.S. foreign policy today? It can be summarized in one phrase: *world domination*. And the imperialists will not hesitate to try to realize that goal by any means, including atomic assault.

By precipitating two world wars, German imperialism sought to reorganize the European continent under its heel. Imperialist America has grander ambitions: it is bent on subjugating the entire globe. The counter-revolutionary character of its actions and plans is determined by these objectives. The American monopolists and militarists are resolved to support capitalism wherever it is in danger; to expand it under their tutelage where they can; and to restore it where it has been overthrown.

This necessitates a three-pronged offensive on the world arena.

1. Contain, push back, and finally try to destroy directly the power of the Soviet Union, in order to eliminate its nationalized property and planned economy. This is the unavowed but underlying motive behind the frenzied anti-Sovietism emanating from across the seas. The Republican platform's call for an end to "neglect of the Far East" and the "negative, futile, immoral policy of containment" expresses this urge for more aggressive action against the U.S.S.R.

2. Subdue the colonial movements for independence, or at least keep them within limits agreeable to American interests. This explains their belligerence toward the Chinese and the Koreans and other peoples striving to escape imperialist control.

3. Curb and crush the mass movements headed by the Communists. At the same time browbeat the Socialist and Labour movements so that they do not make too great inroads upon the capitalist regime or its profits.

That is why Washington looks benevolently upon the restrictive anti-labour legislation of the Yoshida government in Japan, which the N.E.C. protests against. This is only an imitation of similar laws already enforced by the American witch-hunters. That is why most of official Washington views with suspicion and alarm any firm Socialist or anti-war tendencies in our own Labour Party.

By the very nature of its aims Washington groups around itself the worst upholders of reaction in all lands: capitalists, landlords, usurers and their despotic agents. Take a look at the company it keeps! Ex-Nazi generals, the Mikado and the Japanese monopolists; Franco, Chiang Kai Shek, Bao Dai, Syngman Rhee, and a dozen assorted dictators in Latin America.

On the other hand, all those affiliated with U.S. policy are willy-nilly committed to opposition and hostility to the U.S.S.R., to the countries of Eastern Europe, and to the peoples of Asia in revolt against their exploiters and oppressors. The N.E.C. statement says "close co-operation with the United States of America is vital to Britain." But the inescapable consequence of such collaboration on the for-

aign field is to line up with the retinue of reaction patronized by Washington and to become more and more alienated from the anti-capitalist forces.

“The ultimate aims of the Labour Party’s policy are peace, freedom, prosperity and social justice—not only for the British peoples, but for all the peoples of the world,” says the opening sentence of the N.E.C. statement. These are splendid words. But how can they be realized with such a crew? All these “ultimate aims of the Labour Party’s foreign policy” are incompatible with the *immediate aims* of Washington, which the measures in the document substantially support. And they are equally incompatible with the ultimate capitalist aims which are not peace but war; not freedom but extension of servitude; not prosperity but poverty; and not social justice but the perpetuation of inequality and oppression.

## THE LESSONS OF KOREA

Has not Korea confirmed these contentions? The Korean War is two years old—and not over yet. The Movement has a right to expect its leaders to review the record of British participation in this inexcusable war and draw the correct lessons from it. They do nothing of the sort.

Two years ago the Labour Party in office backed up U.S. intervention in Korea and sent British troops to fight alongside the American. Protests from the genuine Socialists among the left-wing went unheeded, and every effort was made to justify the official course of action. When the Chinese entered the war to protect their frontiers from MacArthur’s advance, the Labour Government agreed to brand China as “an aggressor” in the United Nations. Not until Truman hinted at dropping atom bombs did Mr. Attlee hurry to Washington to try and restrain the Pentagon.

From the first, the British people displayed little enthusiasm for the Korean adventure. Their opposition has mounted every month since. We have reached the point of revulsion with the massacre of the Koje Island prisoners, and are extremely apprehensive about the risks of world

war involved in the latest bombings of the Yalu River power stations. Labour may not be in office at the moment. But the least its representatives should do is speak out clearly and sharply against the whole dirty business in Korea.

But what do we find in the N.E.C. statement? It says, "The Labour Party is convinced that Britain and the other nations which support United Nations action in Korea and elsewhere, must have sufficient military strength to enable them to fulfil their international obligations under the United Nations." Labour's representatives should not have agreed to participation in the Korean War in the first place. The "fulfilment of these international obligations" have meant the leveling of Korea, support of Syngman Rhee who can no longer count on the support of his own former followers, hostility toward the New China, and indirect complicity in the attempts to bring Chiang kai-Shek back from Formosa through U.S. bayonets.

We maintain that the obligations of the Labour Party to its own members and to the Chinese and Korean workers who are fighting for the same things as we want or have, must take precedence over any obligations to the United Nations which is no more than a convenient cover for American aggression.

It does not appear that the authors of the N.E.C. document have learned anything from the Korean experience. But the Movement has learned just what is involved in being hitched to the war-chariot of Washington. It has also learned to admire the magnificent battle put up by the fighters for freedom in China and Korea. And we want an immediate end to the war in Korea and the British troops there brought home without delay.

Even if an armistice is concluded, the lesson of Korea must not be forgotten. For is not another Korea being prepared in Europe by the division of Germany and the arming of a new Wehrmacht? British Labour cannot afford to fall twice into the same trap.

## THE COLONIAL PROBLEM

Three sections of the N.E.C. statement are devoted to the colonial question in the Far East, the Middle East and Africa. Here the inconsistencies in Labour Party policy are all too apparent.

“The Labour Party recognizes that the peoples of Asia are engaged in a historic revolution against foreign exploitation and domestic poverty. It believes that co-operation between Asia and the Western world must be based on the right of the Asian peoples to govern themselves.

“The Labour Government recognized the Peking Government as the legal government of China and pressed frequently in the United Nations that the representative of the *de facto* government should occupy China’s seat. It is clearly a travesty that the delegate from the rump regime of Chiang Kai Shek should speak in the United Nations in the name of the Chinese people who have rejected him, and the Labour Party believes that there can be no lasting political settlement in the Far East which is not based on the recognition that the Peking Government is the effective government of China and, as such, should represent that country in the United Nations.”

We can endorse every single word of this statement. The question is: how do these words square with the actions and policies of the Labour Party leadership? If “the peoples of Asia are engaged in a historic revolution against foreign exploitation and domestic poverty,” does this not include the Koreans, the Malayans, and the Indo-Chinese? Then what is the Labour Party doing on the wrong side of that struggle?

How can you be against “the rump regime of Chiang Kai Shek” — and uphold the equally rump regimes of Syngman Rhee or Bao Dai?

How can you recognize the Peking Government and its right to recover Chinese territory, including Formosa, and still hold on to Hong-Kong?

The N.E.C. statement “opposes any measures which might weaken the democratic forces in Japan, and particu-



larly the trade unions." Don't they know that the Yoshida government signed its treaty with the U.S. against opposition from the Socialist Party and the trade unions? And that it is proceeding with repressive legislation against the labour movement because of its resistance to the remilitarisation of Japan under U.S. direction?

The recommendations put forward on the Far East are neither consistent nor correct. But they are most compromising in the case of Malaya. The N.E.C. says, "The Labour Party believes that terrorism in Malaya must be stamped out." We believe so too. But that would mean, not hunting heads among the revolutionary fighters there, but withdrawing General Templer and his troops and halting the Briggs Plan which has already uprooted half a million Malaysians and resettled them in stockades.

The N.E.C. says: "The revolution already gripping Asia is felt no less throughout the Middle East." One way to help this revolution would be to demand the withdrawal of the British troops, being used against it. Instead, it immediately goes on to say, "The Labour Party supports proposals for a defence pact in which the Middle Eastern countries would join as equals with Britain and her allies."

We recall a passage in Mr. Bevan's recent book when he told us "the underfed masses yearn for material aid: we send them guns." To be sure, the N.E.C. piously points out that "economic measures against poverty are no less necessary to Middle East defence than arms." But all its proposals are presented in the context of the military measures and methods so congenial to Washington.

When it comes to Africa, the N.E.C. does not even take a firm stand against Malan's white-supremacist government, which has bared its teeth at Labour Party protests against its treatment of the native population and fascist encroachments on democracy. In Africa it says, "Britain is both a colonial power with direct responsibility for the African peoples and an equal partner in the Commonwealth with the white government of South Africa."

Such a policy of carrying water on both shoulders will not make friends for British Labour in the colonial world.

It will only irritate the reactionaries while alienating our real friends and prospective allies among the peoples there.

### PATTERN OF WORLD WAR III

Korea has afforded a preview of what a third world war would be like. That country has not yet been "liberated"—but it has certainly been decimated. Over two millions of its inhabitants have been killed, maimed, or rendered homeless. All that without using A or H Bombs. Remember that Korea is about the same size as England.

The scale of the destructiveness of a third world war will be far greater than the second. But a third world war would differ from the second in many other important respects. The first two world wars began, and were fought to a finish, between two rival groups of imperialist powers, contending for the privilege of exploiting the weaker peoples and mastering the world.

The impending world war will be imperialist in leadership and objectives on only one side. Imperialist America is already embarked upon organizing and mobilizing a gigantic coalition of states to wage war upon the U.S.S.R. and the colonial freedom movements. Korea presented a preview of the probable alignment of forces in such a conflict. In one camp are imperialist America and its allies, cheered on by all the cohorts of reaction. In the other camp are the workers and peasants of the Far East fighting for their national unity and independence and for an end to their degradation. They have the sympathy of the oppressed on all continents and have secured aid from the Soviet Union.

Where does British Labour belong in such a contest? It is out of place with Churchill, Eisenhower, Franco, Syngman Rhee, Chiang Kai Shek. It must find its place in the camp of the international struggle for socialism along with all those other countries and peoples who have either rid themselves of capitalism or are fighting to do so.

From the working class point of view, there would be another crucial difference between a third world war and its predecessors. The outbreak of the first and second

world wars either took the labour movement off guard, or found it in a prostrate condition. By 1939 fascism had conquered large sections of the European working class.

Next time it will be different. The working people are alerted in advance to the meaning of such a war. On a world scale the anti-war forces in the anti-capitalist and the anti-imperialist camp are stronger than ever. The heroic resistance of the Chinese and Koreans which has amazed the world, and the reverses suffered by American arms, show what can happen to imperialism if it unleashes a new slaughter.

This war would be an admission of weakness by capitalism, not an expression of strength on its part. It would represent a last-ditch effort to push back the rising tide of anti-capitalist revolt by atom bombs and armed force, and testify to its incapacity to rule by peaceful means.

Many realistic observers have predicted that the peoples of Europe and Asia will not only fiercely resent a new world war but resist its instigators. It would very likely give the signal for new Resistance Movements, directed this time not against the fascists, but against the capitalist war-coalition. If the second world war provoked worker and peasant revolts in numerous countries, a third would call forth resistance on a broader scale throughout Europe and Asia. This most counter-revolutionary of world wars would engender the most revolutionary events in world history.

No one can foretell what the outcome of clashes between such gigantic forces would be, because that depends upon the developments of the struggle itself. But certain things are clear, so far as Britain is concerned.

What hope is there for England if imperialism should win and capitalism continues to rule over a ruined world? Two world wars have come close to bankrupting our country. A third would finish the job. This is apart from the colossal destruction caused by atom bombing.

Even some Conservatives understand that Britain could win nothing in such a war. Professor Arnold Toynbee

told us on his return from a visit to the United States that Britain's slogan must be "No Annihilation Without Representation." But what good is "representation" in the American Alliance, if it means "annihilation?"

But there is a future for Britain and it depends upon the Labour Movement to achieve it. It can do this only under two conditions. First, Labour must pursue the correct policies to prevent the outbreak of a new world war. Second, if, despite its efforts, war does come upon us, Labour must do its best to ensure that the world working class comes out the victor and Socialism emerges stronger and not weaker from the struggle.

Although international capitalism is equipped with powerful engines of destruction, it is a dying and a doomed system. Although Labour may suffer grievously from the mistakes and inadequacies of its leadership, it is the only creative force in our country and it has powerful allies in the working masses throughout the world. Another world war can destroy many things . . . but it can also be the tomb of capitalism.

## PROPOSED WAYS OF PREVENTING WAR

A third world war may be close at hand, but it is not yet upon us. Our immediate task is to take whatever measures we can to prevent its outbreak. What is to be done?

The main theme of the N.E.C. statement is that peace can be preserved by continuing and fortifying the American alliance. They write: "The Labour Party believes that close co-operation with the United States of America is vital to Britain and to the Commonwealth as a whole." This means full support to the N.A.T.O. The N.E.C. also favours a European army "within which German forces could serve," and insists that American and Canadian troops should also participate.

Can these be passed off as steps toward peace? Are we so naive as to believe that Washington is putting billions into a European Army to educate its conscripts in the

principles of equality and brotherhood? These divisions are designed as instruments of war, not of peace—and they are being formed precisely for use in the event of a third world war. In the Far East we have already seen what “close co-operation” with the United States of America involves. We don’t have to wait for even worse consequences to be demonstrated in a global war!

The N.E.C. views the United Nations as the one organization which can “promote collective security and the peaceful settlement of disputes.” It is true that after World War II, many people turned toward the United Nations as the preserver of world peace, hoping it would do better than the ill-fated League of Nations. They have been sadly disillusioned by recent events. “Any attempt to make it the instrument of one military alliance against another would be disastrous,” says the N.E.C. But is that not exactly what has happened in the case of Korea, where the United States is fighting under the sanction of the United Nations?

The reluctance of the United Nations to satisfy, or even consider, the just claims and grievances of small and weak countries like Tunisia, has still further reinforced the opinion that the United Nations is dominated by the big capitalist powers and will do nothing to displease Washington. In any event, Korea has shown that the United Nations cannot be relied upon to preserve the peace and can even be used to justify imperialist aggression.

It must be remembered that the United Nations is composed of 47 capitalist and 5 non-capitalist countries. How can the interests of the toiling masses be protected by referring disputes to an association dominated by capitalist powers and dedicated to the preservation of the *status quo*? Would the trade unions get justice by bringing their claims to the Federation of British Industries for “impartial” arbitration?

The third means proposed to preserve peace is another conference of the Big Powers, through which a settlement can be negotiated with the Soviet Union and China.

There is nothing wrong with holding another meeting of the Big Four or the Big Five powers. But the question is: what will be discussed and what kind of decisions will be made? If the same sort of decisions are made there as came out of the secret conferences at Yalta, Teheran and Potsdam, they will do far more harm than good to the peoples and the peace of the world.

The conflict in Korea can be traced directly to the agreement between London, Washington and Moscow to split that country arbitrarily along the 38th parallel and occupy it. The present situation in Germany results from the decision of the Potsdam Conference to partition it. We believe that all the occupying forces of the foreign powers should withdraw from German soil and permit the German people themselves to decide their own fate.

The previous secret deals among the Big Powers have already sown seeds of dissension and conflict. Another one is more likely to increase than to remove them, if their diplomacy is conducted along the same lines and on the same basis.

## THE KREMLIN'S FOREIGN POLICY

This brings us to the Kremlin's role in world affairs and its relations to British Labour's foreign policy. Some spokesmen on the right are prone to dismiss criticism from the left with the bogey-phrase, "Communist-inspired." Although this epithet is no substitute for an argument, it will be well to meet it in advance.

At home it is possible to stand wholly on the side of the Transport and General Workers' Union against the Tory government and the employers, and yet be extremely critical of Mr. Arthur Deakin and his policy. Abroad, it is no less possible to be for the defence of the Soviet Union against all its imperialist enemies (Churchill and the bosses included) without supporting the policies of the Kremlin. Two kinds of people cannot understand or admit this distinction. One kind are the witch-hunters who identify every anti-imperialist position with allegiance to Moscow. The other are the leaders and followers of Stalinism

who blindly accept whatever comes from the Kremlin. The genuine Labour Lefts do not belong to either category.

We have said that British Labour ought to collaborate on the foreign field with all anti-capitalist sectors and all anti-war forces. Among them is certainly the Soviet Union. It would be hopelessly utopian and downright reactionary in the present line-up of world forces and the extreme tension in international relations to try and find some middle ground where neutralism can act as honest broker between the two contending class camps.

But it does not at all follow that British Labour must thereby attach itself bag and baggage to the Kremlin. Quite the contrary. The British Labour Movement must formulate and follow its own foreign policy which steers clear of the compromising diplomacy of Moscow.

We have already pointed out that the war-time deals Stalin made with Churchill, Roosevelt and Truman helped produce many of the evils of the post-war period. Russia's brutal treatment of Communist Yugoslavia is inexcusable. Its recent proposal to return to the Potsdam Treaty and revive the German army explicitly incorporating ex-Nazi officers and generals does not coincide with the desires of the German people.

These are only some of the instances where the Kremlin has deceived, disappointed and misled the working class. The Kremlin's foreign policy is not at all guided by considerations for the welfare of the international labour movement and its struggle for socialism, but rather by the narrow interests of the dictatorial bureaucracy headed by Stalin.

At the same time, the Soviet Union, as a state where nationalized property predominates, does not have the economic compulsions which are driving its capitalist antagonists toward aggression and war. Stalin is not at all bent on fomenting revolution on a world-scale, as the reactionaries would have us believe. If he had been plotting either world revolution or world war, Soviet armies would long since have occupied Europe and Asia.

What, then, does Stalin really want? He would like another deal with Washintgon to divide the world into spheres of influence—and then be left alone on that basis. This is the meaning of the Stalinist theory of “peaceful co-existence” between capitalism and the Communist countries, and would be the objective of his participation in a new Five-Power Conference. The trouble is that the U.S. imperialists cannot offer any acceptable terms for such a deal, for reasons we have already indicated. Thus it is not the aggressiveness of the Kremlin, but the belligerence of Washington that prevents a solution on such a basis from being realized.

The U.S.S.R. is an anti-capitalist country. The Kremlin is essentially interested in preventing the new world war. This coincides with the interests of the British people and provides a realistic basis for collaboration. But it will have to be conducted on equal as well as fraternal terms. Wherever the Kremlin acts in a manner injurious to the working class, the other sections of world labour have both the right and the duty to condemn its action.

It is up to British Labour to take the lead in foreign affairs, without allegiance to Washington and without subservience to Moscow. In this way our movement could break through the present deadlock in world politics and offer new hope to the workers and colonial peoples who are seeking a way to resist Wall Street’s aggression without falling into the clutches of the Kremlin and the parties under its control.

## THE COST OF A BAD FOREIGN POLICY

We have spoken so sharply about what is wrong with the N.E.C. statement because foreign policy involves more than our relations abroad. This is a life-and-death matter to every citizen because upon it hinges the fate of peace or war. It is no less a bread-and-butter question that affects every household today.

The huge arms-budget has already brought higher prices for food and fares and reduced rations from the Tory government. Military services get priority over social services and new bombers over new houses.



U.S. stockpiling for rearmament has shoved up world prices for raw materials so that British manufacturers cannot hold their own with foreign competition except by slashing the real wages of the industrial workers and speeding them up. Mr. Butler and the Bosses resist the wage-claims of the unions under pretext that the export-drive and the balance of payments cannot be upset.

The Cold War and American legislation restricts East-West trade and prevents textile and other industries from finding new markets. Finally, our youngsters continue to be conscripted to fight in Malaya and Korea and are groomed for slaughter in the projected war.

The British working class is already paying for the small wars going on and the big one in view. And they know from sad experience they will be called upon for still heavier sacrifices if a third war breaks loose.

If the opinion of our working people was polled, we are convinced they would agree that the price of the alliance with U.S. imperialism which forms the keystone of "Labour's Foreign Policy" is far too high—and is all at their expense. It is time to change this line and take a new course.

## AGAINST A BI-PARTISAN FOREIGN POLICY WITH THE TORIES

The N.E.C. statement not only proposes to continue the alliance with U.S. imperialism. It is also designed to accommodate itself as far as possible to Sir Anthony Eden's current foreign policy.\*

This effort at partnership with Tories in foreign affairs in the form of a bi-partisan policy is no more workable or beneficial for our party than a coalition on domestic affairs. It means a surrender on every decisive point to the Tories and a step-by-step yielding to the pressures of Washington

\* This was noted by the "Observer" on June 16: "The keynote of the document is a broad continuity of the policies inaugurated by Mr. Ernest Bevin. As the continuity is also maintained by Mr. Eden, the basis for national unity in foreign affairs remains intact."

behind them. This course would be suicidal for the Labour Party, which ought to assert the same independence in foreign policy as on domestic issues.

The N.E.C. statement represents a retreat on the part of those leaders who correctly criticized the late Labour Government's support of the arms programme. How does it happen that not the slightest whisper against the disastrous effects of the arms programme is to be found in it?

Such concessions to the right-wing leadership will never do. They disregard the overwhelming sentiments in the ranks of the party, the trade unions and the co-operative movement. These have shown in one vote after another and in scores of resolutions that they stand opposed to the arms programme and want a change in the old foreign policy. The N.E.C. statement does not coincide with their views or meet their demands in any essential respect.

We think that the sentiment of the party ranks will be to reject the N.E.C. statement out of hand. They will want to draft in its stead a very different programme firmly anchored in Socialist principles and consistently applying the concept of equality in relations with the colonial peoples.

The members during their discussions and the delegates at the September Conference will have to fulfil that task themselves. We simply propose to suggest certain principles and points which can help them work out a genuine Socialist line on the most pressing problems of foreign policy.

## FOR A SOCIALIST FOREIGN POLICY

### 1. *Break the Alliance With U.S. Imperialism*

The keystone of the present foreign policy structure is the alliance with the American imperialists. This has already saddled the rearmament load upon the workers, aligned our country with the most vicious agents of capitalist reaction, placed us in hostility to the Soviet, Chinese and colonial peoples, led to armed combat against the Koreans and the rebirth of militarism in Western Germany

and Japan. It holds the immediate peril of full-scale warfare with all the horrors of atomic bombardment.

British Labour must no longer be committed to the salvaging of a decaying capitalism abroad which it is pledged to eliminate at home. In place of further collaboration with the imperialist powers in the N.A.T.O., etc., urged by the N.E.C., British Labour should seek closer economic and political ties with anti-imperialist countries such as the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, China, and the colonial peoples. The movement toward Socialism in our own country must be fortified by co-operation with all anti-capitalist forces in other lands striving for similar aims.

## 2. *Open East-West Trade*

One of the first steps in that direction would be to open up trade with the East, now blockaded by the Cold War. The U.S. State Department threatens to cut aid to countries shipping strategic materials to the Soviet bloc (which now covers most commodities.) This is one more reason for getting disentangled from the American alliance.

Lancashire's textile mills, the clothing workshops of London, Leeds and Manchester, the boot and shoe factories of the Midlands are shutting down for lack of customers. Yet the Soviet Union, China and Eastern Europe offer huge potential markets for their products, as the recent Economic Conferences in Moscow and Peking indicate.

The two areas form natural economic supplements. England is a great industrial nation, importing raw materials and food; the agricultural countries of the East need our manufactures and machinery. If a broad five-year plan of trade could be worked out, such close economic collaboration would bring considerable mutual benefits. Our factories could operate full-time; our workers could have employment. They would produce useful goods, instead of being forced into arms jobs. The millions being wasted on armaments could be diverted to help finance this trade.

What worker would not rather produce textiles, shoes and machinery for peaceful exchange than death-dealing

instruments to blast their fellow-workers in these countries off the map to enrich a few monopolist "merchants of death." The development of East-West trade would not only head off unemployment and short-time at home. It would help raise the living standards of the masses in those countries who have thrown off the yoke of capitalism and are striving against great odds to build a better life for themselves along Socialist lines. Helping ourselves, we will help them and win their friendship in a common cause.

### 3. *Cut Out The Arms-Budget*

The present arms budget cripples the working class, squanders our national wealth, and menaces world peace. The Tories are using these arms, not to defend any just interests of the British people or the poor in other lands, but for imperialist aims. In place of destroying Malaya, Korea, etc., and blasting their inhabitants to bits, we should devote that money to improving life at home. Instead of bombs, airplanes and tanks, let us build homes for our families, more schools for our children, more medical facilities for our people.

### 4. *Grant Full Self-Government And Unconditional Freedom To All The Colonies*

"The Labour Party aims at removing all forms of discrimination between the peoples. It believes that men and women of every colour, creed and country have the same right to enjoy those freedoms which are necessary to the dignity of man. It believes that all forms of exploitation, whether economic, social or political, must be ended."

If this means what it says, then the Labour Party must announce as its immediate aim full self-government and emancipation for all the peoples now under British domination. The British imperialists entered, occupied and stay in the colonies to carry on "economic, social and political exploitation" there at the cost of untold misery and humiliation to the inhabitants of Africa and Asia. British Labour must prove by its *deeds* that it will reverse these policies and champion the coloured peoples who are rising to end all forms of foreign enslavement.

Colonial exploitation is enforced by racial discrimination. There is scarcely a Socialist, or even a Liberal, who has not been outraged by the exile of Seretse Khama, chief of the Bamangwato tribe, for marrying an English girl. They have been further disgusted by the cynical attempt to bribe him to renounce his position with the offer of an administrative post in the West Indies. The action against Khama, initiated by Mr. Gordon-Walker under the Labour Government in deference to the white supremacist Malan of South Africa, shows how deeply pro-imperialist practices have infected some parts of the Labour Party leadership.

The substitution of "colonial paternalism" and prolonged emancipation for immediate freedom will not suffice. The peoples there demand—and deserve—full freedom without delay. And if Labour does not offer and support it, they will fight for it regardless. But we must help, and not hinder, these fellow-fighters for freedom.

#### 5. *Withdraw All British Troops From Korea and Malaya*

If, as the N.E.C. document says, "the Labour Party recognizes that the peoples of Asia are engaged in a historic revolution against foreign exploitation and domestic poverty," then British boys in uniform must not be hurled against their just struggles in a hopeless endeavour to turn back the clock. Instead of calling for "support for the United Nations action in Korea," we should get them out of there at once.

#### 6. *Bring The Occupying Forces Home From Germany*

The N.E.C. rightly condemns the decision to rearm Western Germany without electoral consultation of the German people who should have the democratic right to decide such a question for themselves. To do so, they need to be rid of all foreign occupying forces, including our own.

In the House debate on this question, Mr. Attlee declared that the N.E.C. statement was merely an expression of opinion and he favoured German rearmament. This cannot be the position of the Party.

## 7. *Establish Peaceful and Friendly Relations With The New China And The Soviet Union*

Labour has more in common with revolutionary China which is combatting imperialism, capitalism and landlordism than with the American backers of Chiang Kai Shek who are opposed to the Mao Government. Labour must support the New China's demand for admission into the United Nations.

Socialists likewise have more in common with the Soviet peoples who are trying to uplift their planned economy than with the defenders of an outworn capitalism. We must work for peace and friendship with them.

## 8. *Let The British People Vote On The Question Of Peace Or War*

The N.E.C. says that the German people should hold elections before rearmament is undertaken. Why shouldn't this excellent idea be extended to England? We cannot permit the Tories to conspire with Washington to plunge our country into war without consultation or warning. For our elementary self-protection let the Labour movement demand that before England enters any new war, the matter shall be submitted to a referendum vote by the whole nation.

## THE ROAD TO PEACE

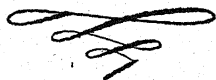
The most effective answer British Labour can make to the growing danger of a third world war would be its rapid progress in making Socialism a reality in Britain itself.

To clear the way for this, we must first bring the Tories down and put a new Labour Government in office. But a third Labour Government must not repeat the mistakes or imitate the hesitation of its predecessors. It will have to take bold and sweeping action to finish the job of putting the working class in complete power and making an end of capitalist property and production for profit.

A Labour Government which vigorously carried through Socialist principles at home and abroad would become a

beacon of hope to workers everywhere. It would stand out as a formidable barrier to the war plans of the Wall Street imperialists. Then, even if war should come, the workers in Britain would be in control of its political policy and economic life, and would not again become a pawn and a prey for capitalist interests.

War and the danger of war cannot be completely averted so long as capitalism prevails in major countries. The efforts of the working masses to replace that predatory power with their own is therefore identical with the anti-war struggle. Our most effective way of overcoming the war-makers here is to carry forward the struggle for socialism in Britain as an integral part of the world working class movement against capitalism. International Socialism holds out the only hope for peace.



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