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The Socialist Road for Britain

COMMUNIST PARTY

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**Draft of a General Election Programme
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INTRODUCTION

Must Britain go down along the path of mass unemployment, subjection to America, and a new world war?

Or shall Britain go forward, in unity with the progressive peoples of the world, along the path of Socialist reconstruction to a future of secure employment, rising standards of living and lasting peace?

These are the real alternatives before the electors at the coming General Election.

Four years ago the working people of Britain rejected the Tories and their evil record of mass unemployment, derelict areas, poverty and war. They voted in a Labour Government with a large Parliamentary majority. They voted for a programme which promised far-reaching measures of social reform at the expense of the monopolies, improved conditions for the people, and peace and friendship with the Socialist Soviet Union and the democratic peoples of the world.

And now, after four years, what have we got?

A new economic crisis looms before us. On every side there is talk of the coming slump.

A new world war is threatened; armaments are being raised to record heights.

Britain is being dragged in the wake of an America ruled by millionaires, who aim at world domination and want to use our country as a pawn in their plans for war.

Tories and Labour Government Ministers tell the people that they must put up with worsened conditions, do without wage increases, and accept new sacrifices.

The Communist Party declares that the crisis which darkens the whole outlook in Britain today is not inevitable. It can be fought and overcome by the action of the people, but only through a policy which challenges the old monopoly interests, ends the dependence on American imperialism, and embarks on a radical programme of social reconstruction.

The Conservative Party, the Party of big business and enemies of the people, seeks to stage a come-back at this election. The Tories seek to take over the reins of power in order to carry through the most ruthless offensive against the people, as in the years between the wars.

In their election programme the Tories promise they will not cut social services or living standards. This is pure deception. They dare not tell the people their real policy. But that policy, which they have fought for in Parliament, through the big employers' organisations and in the House of Lords, is to slash expenditure on the social services, cut wages and reduce the taxes falling on the rich.

The British workers in 1921 and 1931 experienced the Tory way of dealing with economic crisis by putting all the burdens on the working people. It meant unemployment benefit cuts and household means test, cuts in pay for all in Government service, cuts in wages of industrial workers, under-nourishment of millions of children, and great industrial districts turned into distressed areas, all in order that the rich could remain wealthy and powerful.

The British people are not prepared to go through all this again, and they will not be deceived by the sugared promises of the Conservative election propaganda. Never again must the Tories be allowed to come to power in Britain.

But the Labour Government, under the leadership of Attlee, Bevin, Cripps and Morrison, offers no real alternative. These leaders have surrendered to the demands of the big monopolies, to the policies of Churchill and Toryism. These policies do not represent the wishes and aspirations of the mass of trade unionists, co-operators and members of the Labour Party.

After four years of Labour Government, class divisions are deeper than ever. Profits are higher than they have ever been. Wages lag behind the rising cost of living.

And the new Labour programme declares that the time has come to "consolidate", for the workers to call a halt in their fight for improved conditions. Instead of the aim of Socialism which inspired the pioneers, it puts forward the aim of a "mixed economy" of State capitalism and private capitalism, which leaves the exploitation of the workers unchanged, leads to a deeper slump and has nothing to do with Socialism.

The failure of the Labour Government is not the failure of Socialism. It is the failure of Tory policy in the leadership of the Labour movement. And because the Communist Party has consistently, in the interests of the working class, opposed this Tory policy, the Labour leadership has attacked Communists and tried to turn the workers against them.

To meet the crisis the Tories and official Labour are now united in backing the new capitalists' attack against the working class under the plea that costs of production must be lowered.

The fight needs to be waged against this attack and against the coalition of big business, the Tories, and right-wing Labour.

This fight needs to be waged equally in the industrial field and in the electoral field. We need to defeat the attempts to bring down wages and cut the social services. We need to send fighting representatives of the working people to Parliament.

The Communist Party's electoral programme is no mere programme of election promises. It is a programme of action before the election, in the election, and after the election. Only through active struggle against the capitalist class can the working class rally its strength for the final defeat of Toryism and advance to a Socialist Britain freed from exploitation, slump, and war.

This is the call that our Party makes to the working class and to all really progressive sections of the people. It is in order to voice this policy and rally support for it that we are putting forward our candidates in the coming General Election. Only through our policy can the interests of the working class be safeguarded, now and in the future. The magnificent record of the two existing Communist Members of Parliament, Wm. Gallacher and Phil Piratin, is the best proof of what a large number of Communist M.P.s. will be able to do. The greater the support which the working class in factory and street gives to our policy and our candidates, the stronger will be the left-wing fight throughout the Labour movement and inside the Parliamentary Labour Party. Members of working-class organisations should therefore make a fight within their organisations for the policy we put forward, and for the adoption of militant Labour candidates who pledge themselves to such a genuine working-class policy. Only through the development of this fight, which means loyalty to Socialist principle and not submission to Tory-minded leaders, will the way be cleared for a change of policy and for the formation of a new government that will fight for the interests of working people.

At the General Election, the Communist Party calls on all in the Labour movement to vote for Communist candidates wherever they are standing; for members of the Labour Independent group; and in other constituencies for Labour as against Tories and Liberals.

We are living in the age of the greatest social change in human history. All the material and technical means exist to ensure abundance and happiness for all. The working people must win political power to take over the means of production from the present owning class, and build up a Socialist Britain. This is the aim of the Communist Party.

All over the world the peoples are advancing to the great aim of Socialism. In the Soviet Union the strength of victorious Socialism has made possible the triumphs of their post-war reconstruction, despite the terrible war destruction they had to suffer. In the new People's Democracies in Eastern Europe the landlords and capitalists are gone; the peoples are rebuilding their industry and agriculture for themselves, and no longer for a master class. In China the people have liberated their country from foreign imperialist domination. One-third of humanity is now following the leadership of Communism, and looking to the future with confidence and hope.

We in Britain also can look forward to the future with confidence and hope. But to achieve this great aim we must carry through radical changes to end the disastrous policies which have led to the present crisis.

Our programme demands:

1. **Effective measures to tackle the crisis at the expense of the big monopoly interests by cutting profits and prices, raising wages and standards of living, extending nationalisation, and reorganising foreign trade.**
2. **A drastic change of foreign policy to end dependence on American imperialism and bring Britain alongside the Socialist Soviet Union and the progressive peoples of the world, to ensure peace and national independence.**
3. **More money for the social services, housing, health, and education.**
4. **Wider democracy, not only in elections, but at work, in the forces and in local affairs.**
5. **Unity of all those in the Labour movement, Labour and Communist, who desire to conduct a real fight for these aims and for Socialism.**

I

FIGHT THE SLUMP

RAISE THE STANDARD OF LIVING

MAKE THE RICH PAY

Britain today faces a disastrous economic slump. The crisis now sweeping all the capitalist countries is likely to hit Britain even harder than that of 1931. The British people are threatened with unemployment, wage cutting, speed-up, and cuts in the social services.

Neither the Tories nor the Labour Government have any solution to offer. Both stand for the continuation of capitalism.

It is the working of the capitalist system itself which produces unemployment and crises, by piling up profits for the few while wages are kept down to the minimum. In their insatiable drive for profits, the big monopolists in every capitalist country keep down the wages and purchasing power of their own working class and are constantly driven to seek new markets abroad. This is the basic cause for the cut-throat competition, the sharp contradictions, and the increasing unemployment in the whole capitalist world.

No nation will suffer more than Britain from the effects of the capitalist world crisis. The war revealed the breakdown of the old monopoly position occupied by British imperialism; all the post-war developments have shown the hopelessness of all attempts to solve Britain's crisis by continuing an imperialist policy.

After four years of Labour rule, the wealth and economic power in Britain remains firmly in the hands of the capitalist class.

Despite all the talk about growing social equality, the rich were never better off. The tiny handful of capitalists, landlords, and coupon clippers in 1948 received £2,922 million after paying tax; this is four-fifths of the year's earnings, after tax, of the entire British working class.

While production has increased as a result of the workers' labour, no benefit from this increased production has come to the working class. As a result of the Government's wage-freezing policy all the benefit has gone to the employers.

Since 1947 wages have barely kept pace with the rising cost of

living brought about by increased prices and rising taxation of the necessities of life. Even workers on wages of £5 a week are denied an increase by the Government's compulsory arbitration system. The housewife finds it harder every week to make ends meet.

On the other side, rent, interest, and profit, after tax, have been almost doubled between 1938 and 1948. Taxes on the capitalists have been reduced, and their share of national production is greater now than it was in 1944. This is how the Labour Government's slogan "stabilisation of wages and profits" has worked out in practice.

The rise in production and profits, while wages are kept down, is speeding up the growth of unemployment in Britain. Goods are beginning to pile up in the shops because the workers cannot afford to buy.

The Labour Government has made Britain more dependent upon the U.S.A. and has carried out a rearmament and war policy which drastically undermines the basic economy of Britain.

Instead of making agreements to buy as much food and raw materials as possible from non-dollar countries, in exchange for British goods, the Government has let American big business, in return for dollars, dictate where and how British industry and trade is to be run.

Under American instructions it has carried out a "cold war" against the Soviet Union and its allies, who wanted to buy our exports and could have supplied us with the wheat, foodstuffs, raw materials, and timber we are now forced to buy from dollar sources.

To pay for these imports, desperate attempts are made to get British exports into the overstocked American market. But this effort cannot succeed; in fact, the American capitalists are now bursting into Britain's former markets, and ruthlessly cutting down their purchases from sterling areas.

As it becomes clear that the dollar export drive is failing, the Government backs the employers' appeals for harder work and less pay, in order to reduce costs for a cut-throat competition in world markets.

The Tories and the spokesmen of big business in Britain now openly gloat at the prospect of a slump, which they see as a means of still further reducing the standards of the workers and creating discontent with Labour so that Toryism can attempt a come-back at the General Election.

All that the Government is doing and planning to do can only intensify the factors making for slump, by still further cutting purchasing power at home and sharpening capitalist competition abroad.

IMPROVED WAGES AND WORKING CONDITIONS

The Communist Party declares that in order to fight poverty and combat the slump, a fundamental advance in working-class standards at the expense of the rich is the compelling need. It demands and will fight for:

1. **An end to the policy of wage freezing** which results in profits piling up from increased production while the workers have not the cash to buy the goods produced.
2. **An immediate all-round increase in wages.**
3. **Equal pay for equal work** for women in all industries, and in the first instance in Government employment.
4. **The immediate introduction of the forty-hour, five-day working week, and two weeks' holiday with pay for all workers.**
5. **End of compulsory arbitration**, and full freedom for the unions to enforce their just claims upon the employers.
6. **The Factories Act to be applied to non-factory employment**, particularly railways, and all industries and offices. Overhaul of factory legislation in the light of modern industrial developments, and extension of workers' inspection under control of the trade unions.
7. **Welfare in industry.** The extension of welfare codes to all industries and offices, covering canteens, hygiene, and travel facilities.

LOWER PRICES IN THE SHOPS

The high prices of the goods the housewife buys can and must be brought down. This can only be done by maintaining food subsidies and a determined attack on the excessive profits made by manufacturers, middlemen and big retail chains. It is no mystery where your money goes—in the last two years, while housewives have been more and more worried how to make ends meet, the profits of big shops and stores, clothing firms, and food combines have been an all-time record. The Labour Government has refused to tackle this scandal. Instead of the present prices fixed at levels approved by big business, we stand for much lower controlled prices that will cut into monopoly profits, and for the enforcement of penalties on profiteers who try to evade the law.

In this fight to secure lower prices, more comfort, and enjoyment for working-class families, the Co-operative Movement can be of the greatest assistance to the workers and can help to beat any sabotage by the private combines. The Labour Government, however, has ignored this and has treated the Co-operative Movement as if it were just another big business instead of a working-class organisation. The Co-operatives, which can play a vital part in the fight against high distributive costs and profits, should receive every help from the Government to extend their work into new fields, and taxes on private capital (such as profits tax) should not apply to them. Where nationalisation is applied to the capitalist side of any industry like flour milling or soap manufacture, there is no reason to interfere with the Co-operative factories.

TAXATION

As the economic difficulties increase, the cry goes up from the Tories and the Federation of British Industries for cuts in social services and food subsidies that benefit the workers, so that taxes on the rich can be further reduced. The Labour Government has gone far to carry out this policy. Even after deducting food subsidies, indirect taxes (such as purchase tax, beer, and tobacco duty) have increased in the last two years by £329 million or over £27 a year per family. At the same time taxes on interest and profit (income tax, profits tax, and so on) have been cut by £80 million, though profits are higher than ever.

Now the employers are demanding even bigger tax reductions for themselves, and more cuts in the social services.

A halt must be called to this betrayal. No more "economies" at the people's expense, but full development of the social services at the expense of the rich through the following measures:

1. **Food subsidies** should be maintained, and, where necessary, extended to keep down the cost of living.
2. **The purchase tax on all but luxury goods** should be abolished, and also all taxes on foodstuffs; and a drastic reduction made in the beer, tobacco, and entertainment taxes.
3. **A capital levy on all big fortunes in the country.**
4. **A sharp increase in the profits tax.**
5. **Stronger measures to detect tax evasion and greatly increased penalties for it.**
6. **A 50 per cent cut in interest to big holders of the National debt.**
7. **A drastic reduction in military expenditure.**

NATIONALISATION FOR THE PEOPLE—NOT FOR BIG BUSINESS

The British people need nationalisation of the main industries to help in fighting the slump. We cannot leave the great monopolists in a position to close down "unprofitable" steelworks, shipyards, or engineering works, and rob whole communities of their livelihood as they did in the slump of 1931. With trusted working-class representatives at the head of the nationalised industries, the power of the great trusts could be weakened, and these industries developed along the lines of maintaining employment, raising wages, lowering prices, and work on long-term trade agreements with countries willing to buy from Britain.

But nationalisation will bring no change unless it is extended to all basic industries and used to attack the power of big business. The kind of nationalisation preached and practised by the Right-wing Labour leaders does not in reality weaken the capitalist class. Only a handful of industries are nationalised, and these are run to provide profits for the former owners and cheap services for private profit-making industries.

This is not a means of fighting the slump; it is not a step towards Socialism. It means that the Government steps in to guarantee profits to big capitalists and to organise the exploitation of the workers on their behalf.

The capitalist owners of the nationalised mines, railways and power stations are not a penny worse off than they were before. They have been paid £2,884 million in compensation, and every year for all time the interest on this money amounts to well over £80 million—£15 million for mines, £32 million for railways, and so on. This has to be wrung out of the workers in these industries before any improvements are made in their wages or working conditions, or in prices to the general public, while the new capital required to put these industries in order adds new burdens of interest.

Neither the people as a whole nor the workers in these industries can afford to go on paying these huge compensation charges. The amount of compensation should be drastically cut, and should be paid out by instalments over a period of years, without any interest, since the payment of interest merely means continuing the exploitation of the workers.

HOW SHOULD NATIONALISED INDUSTRIES BE RUN?

The Labour Government's policy has been to appoint to the Boards of nationalised industries a majority of big business men—

the so-called "best brains" of monopoly capitalism—at very high salaries. The aim of these big capitalists is not to improve conditions for the workers or the consumers, but simply to wring out the compensation and provide cheap service for privately-owned firms. They have shown themselves bitterly hostile to the workers' claims for increased wages or for a democratic say in the running of their industry.

The controlling boards of the nationalised industries must be purged of the capitalists and those who have opposed nationalisation all their lives. Instead, they should be made up of workers and technicians, whose record shows that they believe in Socialism and can be trusted by the people.

The trade unions in the nationalised industries should be represented on the Nationalisation Boards by men who keep their connections with the unions, and who report back to the union members as to the operations of the Board. These trade union representatives should be subject to recall by the union if their work is not satisfactory, thus ensuring that they do not become mere placeholders, out of touch with the men on the job.

The workers, through their trade union organisation, must play a big part in drawing up and criticising the plans for the industry. They must have access to all information, and full rights and powers to put forward any changes. This is the way to prevent bureaucracy and red tape.

Without these practical changes, all the talk about "industrial democracy", about "new relations between workers and management", is only deceiving the workers.

The reorganisation, according to the above principles, of industries already nationalised is imperative, and all future nationalisation must be based upon them. The worker in the nationalised industries must be able to see in his better wages and working conditions, in his shorter hours and longer holidays, in his greater say in management, the proof that nationalisation is for the benefit of the working class, and not just the old monopoly capitalism with a new label.

Moreover, nationalisation must be accompanied by re-equipment on a large scale and the full use of Britain's resources. The Government's failure to re-equip the nationalised industries, its cutting down on capital development, and failure to carry through large industrial projects in Development Areas, has been disastrous for the future of the industrial workers and the whole people.

NATIONALISATION MUST GO FURTHER

The Labour Government, to the satisfaction of its American supervisors, has called a halt to nationalisation of major industries.

The prospect it now holds out to the British people is that four-fifths of industry should remain in private hands, with the Labour Government acting as protector and friend to the private capitalists. We reject this as a betrayal of the British people. The trade unions directly concerned have made clear their demands for a great extension of nationalisation, which is imperative in the interests of the whole people.

WHAT SHOULD BE NATIONALISED

The following should be nationalised immediately: **THE LAND, BUILDING, BUILDING MATERIALS, SHIPPING, SHIP-BUILDING AND SHIP REPAIR, CHEMICALS, ENGINEERING, FOOD PROCESSING, THE JOINT STOCK BANKS and the INDUSTRIAL ASSURANCE COMPANIES.**

Building for the People

The building industry in all its branches—housing, social services, industrial and commercial buildings, roads and bridges—is vital to the welfare of the people.

Rents of new houses are terribly high, and wages and conditions for building workers are poor, because the building industry is run for the benefit of the monopolies and price rings in building materials (such as Associated Portland Cement, London Brick, Allied Ironfounders, Pilkingtons), for the profiteering master-builder and the landlord who can charge anything from £10,000 to £60,000 an acre for building land.

To secure speedier and cheaper building, large building concerns should be nationalised, and building work carried on in two principal forms: first, Local Authorities should set up Direct Labour Departments to build houses, hospitals and schools: second, a National Building Corporation should be founded to carry through mainly the heavy industrial and civil engineering contracts. The smallest building firms need not be nationalised, but would work with their local authorities on small construction and repair jobs.

To lower prices and rents further, the land and the production of the main building materials, such as cement, bricks, light castings and glass, must be nationalised.

A Modern Merchant Navy

Britain's shipping, shipbuilding and ship-repairing industries could contribute more than any others to paying for food and raw materials. Many new ships are still needed to repair wartime losses and to provide our seamen with decent living and working conditions.

Past experience shows, however, that at the first sign of a trade depression the privately owned shipping companies cease to place orders and cancel existing ones. Alternatively they will demand heavy Government subsidies as the price for continuing production.

The country can neither allow the shipping companies to blackmail the Government for subsidies, nor can it allow shipping and shipbuilding monopolies to plunge the great shipbuilding areas of the country into a profound depression, as they did before the 1930s.

Britain must own the Merchant Navy. The shipping industry must be nationalised and with it the shipbuilding and ship-repairing industries.

Chemical Industry

The chemical industry produces raw materials which are used in every one of Britain's manufacturing industries. It has immense potentialities, for we are only at the beginning of scientific discovery in this industry.

It is as basic as coal mining and transport, and in its heavy chemical section it is dominated by one of Britain's greatest combines—Imperial Chemical Industries Ltd., with its profit of £10 million a year. The people cannot allow such a key position to remain in private hands. The chemical industry and the allied oil refining industry must be nationalised.

Engineering

The engineering industry in all its branches is responsible for modernising home industry. It also exports more goods than any other British industry, and must continue to do so in ever-increasing measure if the country is to procure all the foreign-produced food and raw materials it needs. It is a scandal that the armament industry should continue to be run for private profit.

The engineering employers, led by the great Vickers combine, big motor firms like Austins and Nuffield, the "rings" in electrical equipment and textile machinery, have fought against any reorganisation of the industry for the people's needs. Already they are trying to meet the advancing crisis by cutting piece rates and sacking workers. The nationalisation of the big firms in the engineering and foundry industries is essential to increasing the power of the people to control their economic life.

Food Processing Industries

It is notorious that the food-processing industries are dominated by a handful of millionaire combines, which thrive on high prices, and some of which, like Tate & Lyle or the Lever soap and

margarine trust, also largely control the output of many colonial countries. The time has come to nationalise the big combines in flour-milling, sugar, soap and margarine production, so that prices of food to the housewife can be brought down.

Banking and Insurance

The nationalisation of the Bank of England is not enough. It is the joint stock banks which control the granting of loans to business firms, large and small, control the growth and expansion of trade, and help to build up great monopolies in industries.

The industrial insurance companies are not only institutions selling insurance (at greatly inflated costs) to working people, they are also great investment institutions, which often in the past have been more concerned to promote industrial developments in other countries in preference to their own. They have fought for and obtained a higher rate of interest, which increases the cost of housing and social services.

The nationalisation of the joint stock banks and the great insurance companies will prevent these powerful financial institutions from working against the welfare of the people.

AGRICULTURE

A tremendous increase in the output of British agriculture is fully possible and could greatly reduce the need for imported foods and help to solve balance of payments difficulties in the workers' interests. But in spite of this there is no real drive to make full use of our fertile soil for increased food production and to tackle the monopoly interests of landlords and middlemen who stand in the way.

Our proposals are designed to ensure a great and rapid increase in meat, dairy and egg production, as well as in crops for direct human consumption, and raise conditions in agriculture to the level of those in other skilled industries: the wages and conditions of farm workers and the amenities of life in the village lag behind those in other industries and the towns, and prevent the increase in the labour force that a real expansion in production will demand.

1. **The Land:** Nationalisation of land, with security of tenure for all efficient farmers, and a national plan for greatly increased capital investment.
2. **Food Production:** Vigorous drive for full use of our land—(a) renewed plough-up campaign to reduce permanent grass to 5-6 million acres, and increase the tillage area; (b) improvement of hill and rough grazings; (c) better use of grass

by grass drying and silage making; (d) rapid expansion in livestock production.

3. **Wages and Conditions:** Substantial increase in wages. Improved overtime rates. A day off a week for all farm workers. Forty-four-hour week as a step to the forty-hour week, without loss of earnings. Improved training facilities. Wages and conditions to be rapidly brought up to the level of other skilled industries.
4. **Tied Cottages:** Abolition of the Tied Cottage system.
5. **Prices:** Reduced food prices to the public by reduction of excessive profits of middlemen, and drastic reduction in the number of middlemen, with State aid for co-operative marketing. Fair prices for all farmers, with adjustments to help the small producers.
6. **The Small Farmers:** Measures to help the small farmers, including cheap credits and the encouragement of co-operation in production and distribution as well as purchase of equipment.
7. **Rural Life:** Speed-up in the building of houses in the rural areas. Special measures to provide the villages with modern conveniences, piped water, sewerage, electricity, better transport, health services, community centres and facilities for the youth.

The above measures will help to make Britain independent of America and greatly increase the supply of home-produced food. Along with a correct import policy, they will ensure a diet in every respect better than the gloomy promises of the Government, while improving conditions of life for country people.

THE PLANNING OF FOREIGN TRADE

The crisis in Britain's balance of payments can only be solved by a complete change in Government policy for foreign trade.

The present policy—a cut-throat export drive, aimed particularly at the dollar markets and other capitalist markets which are already in the grip of the slump, and cold-shouldering Eastern Europe—means economic suicide. It can lead only to further cuts in imports, at the expense of the people's food and living standards. These cuts in their turn restrict international trade and lessen the demand for British exports.

So long as this policy continues, the prospect for the workers is a series of attacks by the employers on their wages and conditions in an endeavour to "cut costs", a rapid rise in unemployment, and growing economic and political dependence on America.

To maintain living standards in Britain means abandoning the cold war against the Soviet Union, the New Democracies and China, and breaking the fetters on British trade imposed by the U.S.A. under the Marshall Plan. It means building up long-term trade agreements guaranteeing supplies for Britain and markets for its industries.

Britain should not only buy the supplies already existing in overseas countries. It should advance to those countries credits to buy tractors, machinery, etc., in Britain which would enable them to produce more food and materials for our use, and would guarantee export markets for our goods for years ahead.

In colonial countries, the present British Government policy of increasing economic exploitation for the benefit of British capitalism can never secure the full use of their resources for the benefit of colonial peoples, nor will it solve the trade problems of the British people. The whole plan is liable to collapse in a slump, and can lead only to further impoverishment of the colonial peoples, while the cost of maintaining imperialist rule by force is a heavy burden on the manpower and resources of Britain itself. Only on the basis of full economic and political independence will the way be opened for the colonial peoples to develop to the full the resources of their countries.

II FOR PEACE AND NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE

The drive to war is threatening Britain's whole future. Four years after the end of the last war, which brought so much suffering and destruction to the people of Britain and of all countries, a new war threatens. Armaments are being piled up on a scale never before equalled in peace-time.

The American General Staff openly calculate on using Britain as an atomic bomber base for a new world war against the advance of Socialism in Europe. The American atom bomber contingents are already established on British soil. By the Atlantic Pact Britain is tied in a sectional military power bloc, in violation of the United Nations Charter, under the control of American imperialism. Toryism and the Labour Government equally support this strategy, which would mean the destruction of Britain.

The Communist Party declares that a third world war is not inevitable. It can and must be prevented. Already one generation has seen two world wars, with their waste of human life, their filth and destruction, the terror and suffering inflicted on millions of helpless and innocent people. A new war, waged with atomic and bacterial weapons, would be even more horrible and destructive. But it can only be prevented by ending the policy which is leading to war.

The foreign policy of Mr. Bevin and the Labour Government is the foreign policy of Churchill and Toryism. It is the policy of Churchill's notorious Fulton speech in 1946, in which he called for an Anglo-American bloc against Socialist Russia. This policy is selling out Britain to American imperialism. In return for arms and dollars, British lads are to die for the aggressive aims of the American millionaires. It is a repudiation of every pledge of Labour's 1945 election programme, *Let Us Face the Future*, which promised friendship with Socialist Russia and with the working class in all countries. It ranges Britain with reaction all over the world to maintain a fascist dictatorship in Greece, bring the Nazi monopolists back to power in Western Germany, give economic support to Franco Spain, and wage colonial wars against the peoples of Eastern Asia. It is a violation of all the wartime treaties between

the Allies, reached at Teheran, Yalta, and Potsdam. It is a violation of the British-Soviet Treaty of Friendship. It is a violation of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Tories and Labour Government Ministers seek to defend this war policy by throwing the blame on Socialist Russia. They say that it is the policy of the Soviet Union which compels these war measures. But the facts prove the contrary.

It is not Socialist Russia, but American imperialism which has established hundreds of military, naval, and air bases all over the world, thousands of miles from American shores. Not a single Soviet soldier is outside Soviet frontiers except in fulfilment of treaties agreed between the Allies. Anglo-American military forces are occupying countries in all parts of the world. The Soviet Union has proposed the immediate reduction of armaments of all the Great Powers by one-third. British and American representatives oppose this. The Soviet Union has pressed for the prohibition of the atom bomb, with international inspection and control. British and American representatives have blocked this proposal, and the United States is piling up atom bombs, which President Truman has declared he will use when he thinks fit, without reference to the United Nations. Socialism stands for peace, imperialism stands for war.

What are the consequences of the Churchill-Bevin foreign policy for Britain?

Firstly, it has disrupted the United Nations and replaced it by the Anglo-American war bloc of the Atlantic Pact—a sectional military alliance which is the opposite of collective security and in fact leads to war.

Secondly, Britain is involved in shameful and costly wars, as in Malaya, draining Britain's resources and throwing away British lives to maintain imperialist rule, with terror and concentration camps, against a people struggling to be free.

Thirdly, the consequent arms bill is bankrupting Britain's budget and leading to cuts in social legislation. The 1949 arms expenditure of £760 million is six times the figure of 1935-36, and, even allowing for the rise in prices, treble the 1935-36 level. One and a half million workers are absorbed in the armed services or war supply, and withdrawn from necessary production.

Fourthly, Britain is brought under American economic domination and military occupation. The Marshall Plan has placed an American economic stranglehold on Britain, with the consequent mounting dollar deficit and the threat of devaluation of the £, which will mean still higher prices in Britain. Government Ministers have to consult American officials in occupation of Britain on every

important issue of policy. Britain is being turned into an American colony.

Finally, Britain is being economically ruined by this policy. The imperialist war policy is the biggest single cause of Britain's present economic crisis. The greater part of the deficit in the balance of payments since the war is due to Government overseas military expenditure. No effort to increase production can cure this, so long as the increased production is misused for war purposes. Bevin's foreign policy has to be paid for by Cripps's budget of burdens on the workers. Housing is sacrificed for bombers.

We must end this suicidal policy. The first step to overcome Britain's crisis and check the menace of war is a drastic change in foreign policy. To achieve peace and international co-operation the following measures are essential:

End the War Policy—Strengthen the United Nations

The interests of peace require the repudiation of all sectional war blocs like the Brussels Pact and the Atlantic Pact, and a return to the United Nations Charter. Only this can make the British people safe against war.

Restore Britain's National Independence

We are opposed to the political and economic limitations imposed on Britain's freedom of action as a result of dependence on America. We demand the ending of the military occupation of Britain by American troops and bombers and the restoration of Britain's national independence.

British-Soviet Friendship

Co-operation of Britain and the Soviet Union is the indispensable basis for peace in Europe and the world. The British-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance should be honoured and not treated as a scrap of paper. Fulfilment of the British-Soviet Treaty would pave the way for a Four-Power Agreement on all outstanding issues, and the restoration of Four-Power co-operation, which can alone make the United Nations the effective instrument of world peace.

Reduction of Armaments

All-round reduction of armaments is essential for peace and economic recovery. If Britain were to unite with the Soviet Government in support of its proposals for immediate all-round reduction of the armaments of the Great Powers by one-third, we would ensure a majority for this in the United Nations, which the United States would be unable to resist. The atom bomb and similar criminal weapons of mass destruction should be immediately pro-

hibited and all existing stocks destroyed, with international inspection and control to secure fulfilment.

Bring the Troops Home

We call for an ending of the present colonial wars and armed intervention against other nations. Bring the troops home from Greece, Malaya, and the Middle East. In this way we can end the injustice to the peoples fighting for their freedom, and immediately reduce the numbers and cost of the armed forces.

Freedom for the Colonial Peoples

In place of colonial wars and suppression, the Communist Party stands for the independence of all colonial peoples. Peace in South-East Asia can only be established on the basis of the full right of the peoples of Malaya, Indonesia, Indo-China, and other territories where they are fighting for freedom, to determine their own future without interference, and the ending of the thinly veiled imperialist intervention which still goes on in India, Pakistan, Ceylon, and Burma. In the Middle East the unequal treaties which conceal domination and intervention in Iraq, Transjordan and Egypt should be ended and give place to recognition of real sovereign equality and the ending of military intervention. In Africa and all colonial territories under British rule the policy of the Communist Party equally upholds the rights of the people to determine their own future under governments of their own choosing based on parliaments elected by universal suffrage, and withdrawal of British armed forces and police. The liberation of the colonial peoples, and development of trade and economic co-operation with them on a basis of equality and mutual benefit, can assist to solve the economic problems equally for those peoples and ourselves.

Friendship with Chinese Democracy

The victory of the working people of China over reaction at home and foreign intervention is a great advance for the cause of human freedom. Britain's interests lie in the speediest establishment of close friendly economic and political relations with the new Government of Liberated China.

Germany and Japan

The restoration of a united, democratic, and peaceful Germany is essential for the peace of Europe. To partition Germany and establish a reactionary West-German State under control of the same big monopolies who placed Hitler in power, with the Ruhr as arsenal, is a plan for war. A democratic government of a united Germany, representative of all democratic parties, should be

immediately set up with provisions for effective disarmament and international Four-Power control of the Ruhr; a peace treaty should be concluded with such a German democratic government, and all occupation troops withdrawn within one year. Similarly a peace treaty should be concluded with a democratic disarmed Japan, and all troops of occupation withdrawn.

Only through a policy of peace and international co-operation can we eliminate the danger of war, create the conditions necessary to solve Britain's crisis, and carry through a successful programme of economic and social reconstruction for a better standard of living at home.

III

EXTEND THE SOCIAL SERVICES

The gains in the social services, won by many years of working-class struggle and effort—school meals, family allowances, raising of the school-leaving age, wider health services—were looked on by the workers as the foundation for a still greater advance. But today, even these gains are endangered by the policy of the Labour Government.

Legislation passed to establish a National Health Service, increase the school-leaving age and aid house building has not brought the benefits the people looked for, because these social services are starved of money and resources.

Advance in the social services has been blocked by the war policy. The Government in 1949 spent more on war preparations than it did on health, housing, labour, national insurance, pensions and grants to local authorities all put together.

The Tories have long demanded a reduction in social service spending. The American Marshall Plan line, which the Right-wing Labour leaders are now operating, requires Britain to impose "capital cuts" in the social services so that more can be spent on war preparations. Already the clock has been put back—the housing programme and school building have been cut, training colleges closed, social security benefits and pensions swamped by the rise in living costs.

In the 1949 Budget, Cripps called a halt to any further improvement in the social services, and even threatened a special tax for those who make use of the existing National Health Service. The way is already being prepared for a sweeping "economy drive" on 1931 lines.

HOUSING

Waiting lists are not growing shorter, but longer. At least two million houses are needed urgently. In 1948 the efforts of building workers and local authorities got 260,000 houses built, and the rate was rising; but as part of the capital cuts, the Government has now cut this down to a maximum of 200,000 houses a year (only three-fifths of the annual output before the war), and even for these the rents are extremely high.

An intolerable situation has now been reached where the building of working-class houses is sternly restricted, while expenditure on other types of building work is in practice almost unlimited.

We stand for a great house-building programme. In the first year it would be possible to build 400,000 houses at least, and the number should increase in succeeding years. Building and civil engineering work must be concentrated on housing, schools, hospitals, not wasted on the luxury trades.

The high costs and rents of new houses must be reduced by cutting prices and profits, reduction of interest rates on housing loans to 2 per cent, an increase in housing subsidies, and nationalisation of the land, the key building materials industries, and the larger firms in the building industry.

The rise in council rents must be stopped and all council houses brought under the Rents Restriction Act.

Private landlords must be compelled to keep the houses they let in good repair, and stronger powers given to local authorities to enforce this. We are completely opposed to the granting of public money to private landlords to modernise obsolete property; all such houses should be taken over for modernisation by the local authority, and let at rents the workers can afford.

EDUCATION

The old class system of one kind of education for children of well-to-do families and another for the workers still continues.

Children are not gaining the full benefit from the extra year at school because of shortage of staff and accommodation. Forty thousand primary school classes have over forty children. The Government, by cutting school building, is sinking any hope of practical improvement in the educational system, and postponing indefinitely the raising of the school-leaving age to 16.

We fight for a widespread programme of new schools, technical and county colleges, and for an agreed national system for education for apprentices under the Education Act. Larger grants for Secondary and University education are needed, with allowances for students. Two-year training colleges for teachers should be greatly extended.

Free meals, in properly staffed canteens, should be provided for every child attending school. Nursery schools and day nurseries for the under-fives, now completely banned by the capital cuts, must be started immediately.

HEALTH

The promised health centres, clinics and new hospitals have not been provided. Meanwhile, many hospital beds are unused for lack of staff; seriously sick people have to wait months to get into hospital, and lives are being lost every day as a result. All over the country there is an acute shortage of maternity hospitals, and it is estimated that 15,000 babies die every year whose lives could have been saved.

More hospitals, health centres and clinics must be provided in each area, more maternity hospitals built and relief of pain in childbirth provided for all mothers, not only for the well-to-do. Nurses' salaries and conditions must be improved to make the profession more attractive.

More must be done to attract doctors to working-class and rural areas where there is a shortage. The control of hospital management committees and regional boards should be made more democratic by the inclusion of trade union and working-class representatives in place of the local gentry and employers.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment benefits are far too low—26s. at the present level of prices buys much less than the pre-war benefit of 17s. did. They should be increased to £2 per week for all adult workers; £4 for a married couple; and benefits should be the same for men and women.

FAMILY ALLOWANCES

Family allowances should be raised to 8s. and the first child in the family should be included.

PENSIONS

All-round increases in pensions, to £2 for old age pensioners and £4 10s. for 100 per cent disablement (civilian or service), with corresponding increase for partial disablement. Increase in widows' pensions.

Further trade union and working-class representation on all bodies concerned with administering pensions and schemes for the disabled.

CONTRIBUTIONS

All National Insurance contributions to be tax free.

IV

A NEW FUTURE FOR YOUTH

There can be no advance to the building of a Socialist Britain without the enthusiastic participation and support of young people.

The Tories have been making a big drive to influence young people, most of whom do not remember what Tory policy did to the working class between the wars. The whole Labour movement has the responsibility of winning the young generation for the cause of peace and Socialism.

The Communist Party therefore advances the following demands for youth which must be fought for by the entire working class.

1. A forty-hour week and four weeks' annual holiday a year with pay, two weeks to be consecutive; higher wages; wage for age scales in every industry, and the rate for the job. Comprehensive training schemes for every industry; full opportunities for higher technical education to enable young workers to qualify for the highest positions in industry.
2. The overhauling of the Juvenile Employment Service to secure more representation locally and nationally for representatives of the Trade Union movement, Juvenile Employment Committees to be given more power and legal authority to stamp out blind alley employment by withdrawing or withholding youth labour where necessary.
3. Implement the Education Act by raising the school leaving age to sixteen, building County Colleges and making compulsory the release of all young workers under eighteen years of age for one day a week with pay, for technical and general training and education. The extension of the universities and the operation of the principle "Fit for entry—fit for aid" by the total abolition of fees and the free provision of adequate grants for all.
4. The provision of sports fields and facilities, recreation grounds and cultural facilities especially in crowded industrial centres and rural areas. Cheaper travel facilities for young people. Full access to the mountains and the countryside. State aid for the building and equipment of many more youth hostels.
5. Government grants to young couples on marriage to enable them to start a home.

6. The democratisation of the Service of Youth by ending the ban on the participation of the political youth organisations and the granting of freedom and facilities to democratically elected Councils of Youth in every area.

V

THE ARMED FORCES

In the interests of those in the armed forces and of the working people of Britain, the Communist Party puts forward the following programme for the Armed Forces:—

1. Prohibition by law of use of troops in industrial disputes.
2. Reduction of length of service from eighteen months to twelve.
3. Full citizenship rights for every serviceman, including the right to attend political meetings. Kings Rules and Regulations and Military Law to be replaced by a new and democratic code of soldiers duties and rights.
4. Higher basic pay and allowances for servicemen and the restoration of four full leave travel passes a year. Better canteen and welfare facilities and the provision of suits of clothes on demobilisation.

VI

DEMOCRACY IN BRITAIN

The Communist Party values all the democratic rights which the British working class has won in bitter struggles against the land-owners and the capitalists and their Tory and Liberal Parties. All the more, therefore, must it fight against the violation of these rights by the Tories and by the present Labour Government. It condemns the toleration of fascism, and the protection of public fascist activities by the police. It condemns the banning of working-class marches in London, especially on May Day, the traditional day when the working class reviews its forces and rallies them anew for the fight for peace and Socialism. It condemns the "purge" in the Civil Service.

It calls for united working-class activity against the Labour Government's repudiation of working-class democracy on these issues.

The policy of the Communist Party is to preserve and extend working-class democratic rights by the following measures:—

1. The banning of the fascist movement, whatever name it assumes, and legislation to make anti-Semitism, racial incitement, or discrimination a criminal offence.
2. Full rights for working-class marches and meetings and other forms of political activity, and no discrimination against working-class organisations in the letting of halls by public authorities or private owners.
3. Legal protection against victimisation of trade unionists and their representatives.
4. Full political rights for civil servants and those in the armed forces.
5. Proportional representation (the single transferable vote) in Parliamentary and Local elections, and the abolition of the £150 deposit for parliamentary candidates.
6. Votes for all on reaching the age of eighteen.
7. The abolition of the House of Lords.
8. End the policy of taking powers away from Local Authorities, and use local administration for nationally owned enterprises.

UNITY OF IRELAND

The position of Ireland has hindered the development of good relations between the people of Britain and of Ireland, and the British people must support the policy of ending partition without delay.

The existence of the frontier between the Six Counties and the rest of Ireland impedes economic and social development on both sides of this purely artificial border and is a burden to all sections of the Irish people in their efforts to maintain a separate Government. In the Six Counties of Northern Ireland reactionaries have established a special regime which denies elementary civil rights to the people. While paying lip-service to the British connection, these reactionaries try on every possible occasion to whittle down the progressive legislation passed in Britain before introducing it in Northern Ireland.

The people of Britain has no interest in perpetuating a regime born out of Tory imperialist hostility to the Irish people.

We must oppose the policy of the right-wing leaders of the Labour Party which seeks to perpetuate this disastrous division of Ireland and which places the vilest Tory reactionaries in power in Northern Ireland.

The British people should fight for the ending of partition and

the establishment of a united, democratic Ireland; in which Catholics and Protestants enjoy equal rights and work together for the prosperity of their country.

SCOTLAND AND WALES

It is essential that the Scots and Welsh be given self-government in their domestic affairs at the earliest possible moment.

The refusal of the Labour Party to honour its pledges on self-government has aroused justifiable indignation among the Scots and Welsh people, who are determined to fight against the danger of their countries returning to the depressed conditions of the inter-war period and who regard a national legislature as essential to their national development.

Scottish and Welsh parliaments should be set up, with power to deal with education, town planning, agriculture, land, trade and industry (other than foreign trade), transport, fuel, and broadcasting.

The people must fight for legislation on these proposals without delay.

CONCLUSION

Working men and women, young people and all who stand for peace and Socialism!

War can only be averted and the way opened to end the profit-making system through our united struggle against the exploiting class, its Tory Party and the reactionary Labour leaders who carry out a Tory policy. There is no other way forward.

The policy set out in the preceding pages is in the interests of all working people. We ask you to make it known, and to enlist the active support of your fellow-members in the Labour Party, Trade Union and Co-operative organisations in the fight for these aims. Urge your organisation and your representatives in the councils and in the House of Commons to join in the struggle, and insist on the adoption of those who are fighting for this policy as candidates for the General Election.

It is only through such a fighting movement that the disastrous policy of the Tories and of the Right-wing Labour leaders can be defeated, and the unity established of the militant Socialist workers in the factories, the streets, the trade unions and Co-operatives, the Labour and Communist Parties, in order to break the capitalist grip on Britain and pave the way for Socialism.

We ask you to support the Communist candidates, and yourself to come into the Communist Party in order to play your part in the struggle.