

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE1940-1941THE WAR.MEMORANDUM SUBMITTED BY THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE.

(Adopted by the Annual Party Conference by 2,430,000
votes to 19,000)

Since the Conference confirmed the decision of the Labour Party to enter the Government formed by Mr. Churchill heavy and grievous blows have been suffered at the hands of the Axis Powers. The over-running of the Low Countries, the fall of France, betrayed from within even more than defeated from without, the abject capitulation of Rumania, Hungary, and Bulgaria, are part of the price that has had to be paid for the policy of appeasement and the abandonment of Collective Security ever since 1931 in the face of determined opposition from the Labour Movement.

It is certain that the road we still have to travel will be long and hard. Yet Greece, by her courage and resolution, has renewed the most glorious traditions of her history. Once again she has been over-run by the hordes of the barbarians, but in no distant future she will surely rise again. So, too, will Yugoslavia, which, in the face of immense odds, determined on resistance rather than capitulation. Britain has maintained the mastery of the seas and prevented the enemy from achieving supremacy in the air.

All honour, and a debt too great ever to be repaid, is due to our heroic airmen, soldiers, and sailors, both of the Royal Navy and of the Merchant Service. All these gladly face death in order that we may live. So, too, with the great army of civilian workers in industry, including those of the A.R.P. Services. All these despite bombardment from the air, labour to supply our daily needs, to frustrate the enemy's attacks, and to establish our superiority in armaments. The United States, awakened by the insight of its great President to the dangers involved in a democratic defeat, is giving ever-growing moral and material aid, which in the end must prove decisive. Meanwhile, in the East, China continues her heroic struggle against the Oriental partner in the Anti-Comintern Pact.

There is every reason to believe that the endurance and determination of the British people, backed by the man-power and ~~resources~~ resources of the Commonwealth and Empire, will prevail against the forces of tyranny. As a Movement we offer our tribute of admiration to the men and women of the Allied Nations, who, despite unspeakable tortures and oppressions, still keep alive the flame of hope and freedom.

Nothing that has occurred in the year since the Conference last met has altered the judgement of our Movement on the purposes of the German and Italian Dictators. We reaffirm our determination to fight until Nazism and Fascism are overthrown. We shall insist upon the making of a Peace which restores freedom and independence to the conquered peoples. We shall demand the organisation of such international institutions and controls as will put it finally beyond the power of the Government of any country thereafter to embark upon aggression. The experience of these months has made it more, and not less, necessary to build by collective action decisive security against War as an instrument of national policy. In particular, the experience of massed population subjected to violent and repeated air bombardment, striking equally at men and women, and at

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old and young, has demonstrated beyond all possibility of contradiction how intolerable an institution is modern War and how completely it conflicts with all civilised progress and well-being.

We recognise, however, that it is not enough to deal with the symptoms of War. We must destroy in every land the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty. This paradox is incompatible with either true freedom or Social Democracy. It stimulates those evil ambitions which feed on insensate nationalism.

When this War is over we must recognise the fact that the world is now a single economic unit, that trade slumps, unemployment, and poverty are international problems, that science has given us the power, if we choose to use it, to lift to new and higher levels the workers' standards of life throughout the world. To this end we must have international economic planning. The Labour Movement reaffirms its conviction that there is no road to enduring Peace save by the growing acceptance of Socialist Principles. No Peace, therefore, which does not aim at a Socialist principles. No Peace, therefore, which does not aim at a Socialist reconstruction of international society can be accepted by the Labour Party as adequate to the sacrifices involved in the defeat of Nazi and Fascist aggression.

The world now looks to this country for leadership. Our nation and its Government must prove worthy of that great task. The British Labour Movement cannot accept the persistence of conditions, in any part of the British Empire or its mandated territories, which are inconsistent with the principles for which we stand. The time has passed when any interest, however powerful, can be permitted to stand in the way of the unhampered use of our national resources. Such use, combining equity and efficiency, can alone assure a speedy triumph.

Even now, when the Axis Powers have revealed their nature in all its barbarism and brutality, a few faint and unrepresentative voices hint at the possibility of a compromise Peace with the Dictators. We of the British Labour Movement are astonished that any such idea should anywhere be entertained. We declare once more that we can have no part, directly or indirectly, in a policy of accommodation, and that the necessary prelude to a just Peace is total victory. It would be folly, and a betrayal of those for whom we speak, to put any trust in a Peace to which Hitler and Mussolini were parties.

The Labour Party does not underestimate the difficulties that the coming Peace will bring. In the name of its members, it pledges all the resources Great Britain can bring to the common tasks of international reconstruction. In the name of freedom and security we accepted the challenge of Hitler and Mussolini. After victory is won we shall strive to make that freedom and security the basis of an ampler and richer life for all mankind. This must mean not only international economic planning but an international authority possessing many powers hitherto exercised by a competing anarchy of national sovereignties.

Beyond the gates of victory the vision of a new, more just, and happier world rises before our eyes. The British Labour Movement calls to its members and to the workers of every land to play their full part, each according to their opportunities, in achieving the triumph of our common Cause. We must march through victory to the International and Democratic Socialist Commonwealth.

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