BRITAIN'S CRISIS OF EMPIRE

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R. PALME DUTT

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A NOTE ON "EMPIRE" AND "COMMONWEALTH"

In this book the British Empire is referred to as the British Empire.

During the past quarter of a century the practice has become increasingly prevalent in many quarters, official, semi-official and unofficial, to replace the term "British Empire" by the term "British Commonwealth of Nations" or "Commonwealth of Nations."

The newer formula is sometimes supposed to rest on a distinction between the "Commonwealth" of Britain with the Dominions and the "Empire" proper of the dependent colonial empire. On this basis the attempt is even made to offer the hybrid "Commonwealth and Empire."

Such a distinction, however, has no formal, legal or constitutional basis. In all legislation referring to the "Commonwealth" the reference includes both the Dominions and the subject colonies or protectorates.

Since the older term "Empire", in which Disraeli, Chamberlain and Kipling took pride, has begun to stink in the nostrils of mankind and become a term of abuse, a euphemism had to be found by the more mealy-mouthed apologists of imperialism.

As the leading authority on Imperial Constitutional Law, Professor W. I. Jennings, joint author of *The Constitutional Laws of the British Empire,* had occasion to explain in a letter to *The Times* on June 6, 1949:

> "'Empire' was associated with 'imperialism' which was the deadliest of the political sins. The use of 'Commonwealth' made political conditions slightly less difficult."

There is no distinction in fact between the "British Empire" and the "British Commonwealth of Nations" or "Commonwealth of Nations."

The latest authoritative pronouncement on this matter was made by the Prime Minister, Mr. Attlee, with reference to the London

Declaration of the Dominion Premiers' Conference, speaking in the House of Commons on May 2, 1949:

> "Terminology, if it is to be useful, keeps step with developments without becoming rigid or doctrinaire. All constitutional developments in the Commonwealth, the British Commonwealth, or the British Empire—I use the three terms deliberately—have been the subject of consultation between His Majesty's Governments, and there has been no agreement to adopt or to exclude the use of any one of these terms, nor any decision on the part of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom to do so. . . . Opinions differ in different parts of the British Empire and Commonwealth on this matter, and I think it better to allow people to use the expression they like best."

For the purpose of this book, accordingly, the British Empire is described as what it is—the British Empire.

CHAPTER I

CRISIS OF EMPIRE

"That England, that was wont to conquer others,
Hath made a shameful conquest of itself."
SHAKESPEARE.

FOUR YEARS after the end of the war the depth of the crisis which is holding Britain and Western Europe in its grip is beginning to compel wider recognition, and is defeating all attempts at concealment and complacency.

It is no mere temporary crisis of post-war unsettlement, to vanish as the war recedes and give place to a return to "normal." The old "normal," even in the weakened form in which it existed between the wars, has gone for ever; there is no return to it. The shallow error of misjudging the crisis as merely a temporary disturbance due to war was made already in all official circles after the first world war. The sequel proved its falsity. But after the first world war the disease had not yet gone so far; it was still possible for a short time to patch up a temporary precarious "recovery" with American dollars. This time the disease has gone deeper; the old superficial remedies no longer avail. The further the war recedes, and the more the fiasco of the Marshall Plan becomes manifest, the more inescapably the deeper crisis is laid bare.

The crisis of Britain and Western Europe is the crisis of the imperialist system, upon which the economy of these countries has been built up, and which is now approaching bankruptcy.

For decades Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, Holland and the associated Western European countries have maintained a privileged area of relatively superior economic conditions on the basis of the exploitation of hundreds of millions of colonial peasants and workers, from whom a large surplus of unpaid imports was drawn.

This pattern of imperialist power relations and world exploitation is breaking down. It can no longer be maintained or restored.

But the entire social-economic structure of these countries in the modern period, and the entire political structure of so-called

"Western democracy" and the imperialist labour movement, of Tory imperialism and liberal social-democratic reformism, have been built upon this basis. Imperialism has been the grand permanent assumption underlying equally Toryism and Labour Reformism, and finding expression in all the peculiar features of what is currently (and inaccurately) termed "Western civilisation," "Western democracy," the "Western labour movement" and the "Western way of life." With the crumbling of the foundations the whole superstructure is cracking. This is the dilemma to which neither Toryism nor Labourism, neither Fascism nor Social Democracy, neither Marshall nor Keynes, can provide an answer.

Dollar injections offer no remedy for this disease, since they do not touch the cause. On the contrary, they accelerate the disease, since they artificially promote and maintain the parasitic dependence which is its characteristic symptom, and prevent healthy recovery.

On all sides vast new schemes are put forward to expand, modernise and intensify Empire development as the grand key to the solution of Britain's economic problems. The Conservative Party Programme, *The Right Road for Britain,* proclaims:

> "The Conservative Party reaffirms the unity, strength and progress of the British Empire and Commonwealth as one of the supreme objects of statesmanship. It is vital to the defence of freedom and democracy and to the political life of the colonial peoples. We depend, too, for the maintenance of our own standard of life and of our own security here upon a united and vigorous Empire and Commonwealth system."

The Labour Party leaders, on the other hand, boast that they have "discovered the Empire," and replaced the negative Tory policy of neglect by a positive policy of Empire development. The Labour Party Programme *Labour Believes in Britain* denounces "the unfitness of the Tories to govern the colonies," and proclaims Labour's mission

> ". . . to open a new epoch in Commonwealth history by establishing a great partnership in planned enterprise."

At the Labour Party Conference in 1948 Mr. Bevin set out his plan for the solution of Britain's economic problem:

> "If we link the Commonwealth and the overseas territories which we are jointly responsible for to the skill, the ability and the productive capacity of the West, then we can solve our balance of payments problem and they can have a continuing rise in the standard of living for generations to come. That is British foreign policy."

All these dreams of grandiose new schemes for a modernised Empire, whether on the basis of new manœuvres and alliances with the most corrupt exploiting elements, as in India and the Middle East, or vast projects for the intensified colonial exploitation of Africa as the solution, are empty castles in the clouds. These latest schemes of the new imperialism are built on sand, and doomed to end in catastrophe, in face of the rising contradictions, the weakness of the old colonial powers, and the advance of the popular forces of revolt in all colonial countries without exception. As the experience of the ground nuts scheme in Africa or the war in Malaya have illustrated, the measures undertaken to carry out these schemes, so far from providing a solution for the crisis of the imperialist countries, intensify that crisis by adding new burdens and overstraining their already weakened economies.

The crisis of Empire cannot be sidestepped. The peoples of Britain and Western Europe are faced with the inescapable necessity to build their lives anew, and to carry through a radical reconstruction of their countries which shall break once and for all with the old rotten parasitic imperialist basis. Such a radical reconstruction can only be accomplished by destroying the power of the monopolies which are inseparably bound up with imperialism, and advancing to the basis of working class power and the building of socialism.

A new era of world history has opened. From Prague to Pekin a new world has come into being which has freed itself from the orbit of imperialism. One third of humanity, under the leadership of Communism, are building their countries anew, free from the domination of the exploiters and imperialism. This transformation spells doom to the old imperialist order in Britain and Western Europe. But it spells new hope and opportunity for the peoples of Britain and Western Europe, with the great rôle their productive skill, equipment, experience and organisation can play in building the new world, provided they respond to the opportunity and free themselves also from the shackles of imperialism. With every day that passes this choice between the path of hope and recovery and the path of despair grows more urgent. Britain and all the ancient countries of Western Europe, which once led the vanguard of world

historical development, are in danger of falling behind and sinking down to become rotting centres of chronic crisis and decay and enfeeblement, if decisive changes in their whole structure and policy are not made in time.

It is in vain that the fashionable current cant is spread today in official British utterances to declare that "imperialism" and "Empire" belong to the bad old past. This has become the modern apologia of the new imperialism. The British Empire is supposed to have been either "liquidated" by Sir Stafford Cripps or turned into a Universal Enlightenment and Self-Improvement Agency by the good offices of Mr. Herbert Morrison and Mr. John Strachey.

Such language confuses the decay of Empire with the end of Empire. These conventional modern disclaimers of "imperialism" are a tribute to the strength of anti-imperialist feeling. They are a recognition that the concept of Empire is no longer popular and can no longer be defended. They represent an attempt to juggle with the new techniques of imperialism in decay and present them as equivalent to the end of imperialism. But they are a very misleading guide to the real situation. The realities of Empire and colonial exploitation cannot be so easily exorcised by a few smooth phrases.

British imperialism is in extreme decay. But it is not yet finished. It is striving to adopt many new forms and techniques to meet new conditions, not in order to commit suicide or liquidate itself, but in order to continue to promote its age-old aims of extracting the super-profits of colonial exploitation. It has to retreat in places at the same time as it seeks to advance in others. The dying wild beast of imperialism has not become a lamb. On the contrary, the dying animal is often more desperate, ferocious, reckless, aggressive and bellicose. Witness of this is written from Greece to Malaya, from the Gold Coast to Transjordan, and from super-rearmament to the worship of the atom bomb as the supreme weapon of "civilisation."

The war in Malaya, Bevin's foreign policy, Strachey's ground nuts, Truman's Fourth Point, Indian arms for Burma, reinforcements for Hong Kong, the Atlantic Pact, Cripps' Budget—these are all strands of a single pattern.

To understand imperialism and the colonial problem, it is necessary to see past the empty hollow mellifluous abstract phrases of

King's Speeches and Ministers' broadcasts about "partnership" and "a sacred trust" and "a civilising mission" and "renunciation of the old ideas of imperialism" and "a progressive socialist colonial policy." It is necessary to see the concrete realities of the giant colonial trusts and combines, plantation owners, colonial penal laws, starvation conditions, pestilential slums, hundred per cent profits, concentration camps, terror and shooting.

It is necessary to see the hundreds of millions of colonial and dependent peoples, far outnumbering the peoples in the imperialist countries, not only as suffering and deprived of rights and exploited at the lowest level of humanity, but also as struggling and battling against inhuman conditions, rising to their feet and advancing with the inspiration of the goal of liberation, and mighty allies in the common struggle against capitalism and imperialism and for the victory of socialism throughout the world.

These questions of the colonial empire and the colonial peoples' struggle are no faraway questions for the people of Britain. They are at the heart of the problems of Britain's crisis. They are at the heart of the problems of Democracy in Britain and Socialism in Britain.

It is the purpose of this brief study of the Crisis of Empire to show:

1. that the British Empire continues to operate, also under the thin cloak of specious phrases now current, and beneath the cover of the new forms and techniques adopted, as a system of exploitation and oppression of hundreds of millions of colonial and dependent peoples in the interests of the big imperialist monopolies, and that all the Western imperialist statesmen's talk of "freedom" and "democracy" and "human rights" rests on this foundation of colonial slavery;

2. that this imperialist system is now in a stage of acute crisis, not owing to the benevolent altruism and self-liquidating activities of its rulers, but owing to the rising liberation struggle of the subject peoples, the increasing weakness and economic deterioration of the older colonial Powers in Western Europe, and the changing balance of world forces in favour of the democratic camp led by the Socialist Soviet Union at the expense of the imperialist camp;

3. that Britain's post-war crisis, expressed in the deficit of the

balance of payments and the failure of the Government's emergency measures to overcome this deficit, is essentially the crisis of this bankrupt collapsing imperialist system, and does not admit of solution within the imperialist framework;

4. that the Government's measures to maintain, shore up, restore and extend this imperialist system, whether in old or new forms, and an economic programme to solve the deficit by intensified colonial exploitation, are doomed to failure, and only have the effect of intensifying the crisis and increasing the deficit by the additional burdens of heavy Government overseas expenditure and military commitments abroad and rearmament and diversion of man-power from production at home;

5. that this policy of maintaining and extending the Empire basis of British economy is the main underlying ground of the Churchill-Bevin bipartisan foreign policy of aligning Britain with American imperialism, which has been justly criticised by progressive spokesmen as contrary to British national and democratic interests, and that the consequences of this imperialist foreign policy entail the increasing domination of American imperialism over Britain as well as over the British Empire, thereby further intensifying the crisis;

6. that the solution equally for the British people and for the colonial peoples lies through the complete ending of the colonial system, the radical reorganisation of economy on a non-imperialist basis, and the fullest development of productive resources and mutually beneficial economic relations of Britain and the former colonial countries on a basis of complete sovereign national equality, within the framework of increasing international economic co-operation of all democratic countries and the maintenance of peace.

CHAPTER II

BRITAIN AND EMPIRE

"All empires die of indigestion."
NAPOLEON.

HALF A CENTURY ago Joseph Chamberlain admonished Englishmen to "think imperially." English patriots were denounced as "Little Englanders." England was to be merely the base for the great cosmopolitan money-making interests whose aim was to extract millions from the goldfields of the Rand, the rubber of Malaya or the tin of Nigeria, while leaving the slums to rot in the East End, the fields of England to pass out of cultivation, the looms of Lancashire to become obsolete and great industrial areas of the North East, Scotland and Wales to become derelict. Today we are experiencing the outcome of this programme.

Britain's colonial system is older than British capitalism. But the Empire of today is mainly a modern growth, and the cult of Empire dates from the later years of the nineteenth century.

Already before the era of capitalism the feudal monarchy pursued its wars of territorial conquest in Ireland and Wales, and its predatory expeditions of extra-European aggression in the Middle East. Ireland, "the first English colony" (Engels), was reduced to colonial status before the era of capitalism, and after eight centuries has not yet fully thrown off that colonial status, so long as a satellite Government is maintained by British subsidies and military occupation in a corner of Ireland.

But the colonial system of Britain developed mainly in close association with the development of capitalism at each stage. The three principal stages of capitalist development—Merchant Capital, Industrial Capital and Finance-Capital—have seen corresponding stages of development of the colonial system.

Merchant Capital initiated and dominated the first period of large-scale overseas colonial expansion. This was the period of the "Merchant Adventurers," of freebooting and plundering expeditions, of the slave trade, of the establishment of trading stations, of privileged monopoly trading companies, of the conquest of newly discovered overseas territories, extermination of the

original inhabitants and establishment of colonial settlements by migration. The colonial system of capitalism before the Industrial Revolution, first under the Tudor and Stuart monarchies, then under Cromwell, the Restoration and the eighteenth century oligarchy of the earlier phase, sought to keep a tight hold on the colonies, regarding them as a direct source of wealth for the home country, through the importation of precious metals and colonial products, while sending the minimum of goods in exchange. This was the "old colonial system" which was denounced by the new school of economists of the rising forces of capitalist manufacture, represented by Adam Smith, ushering in the new era of industrial capital and laissez-faire. The "old colonial system" provided the main basis for the primary accumulation of capital which made possible the Industrial Revolution. Marx wrote:

> "The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signalised the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief momenta of primitive accumulation. . . .
>
> "The colonial system ripened, like a hothouse, trade and navigation . . . The treasures captured outside Europe by undisguised looting, enslavement and murder, floated back to the mother country and were there turned into capital." (Marx, *Capital*, I, ch. xxxi.)

The Industrial Revolution of the second half of the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century was thus prepared and stimulated on the basis of colonial spoliation, and especially the spoliation of India (see the present writer's *India To-day*, ch. v, §2 "India and the Industrial Revolution"). Britain became the workshop of the world. Raw materials were drawn from all over the world. The products of British machine industry dominated the markets of every country. British shipping, under the protection of the British Navy, dominated world trade. The old colonial monopoly developed to world industrial monopoly.

> "The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian nations, into civilisation. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians' intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate. . . . Just as it has made the country dependent on the towns, so it has made barbarian and semi-barbarian countries dependent on the civilised ones, nations of peasants on nations of bourgeois, the East on the West." (*Communist Manifesto.*)

Britain's nineteenth century world industrial monopoly brought in this way a new phase of the colonial system. On the one hand, in those territories, such as Canada and Australia, where settlers from Britain had established themselves on the basis of extermination of the original inhabitants, these now developed as offshoots of the British bourgeoisie, subsidiary to the British manufacturing centre, supplying raw materials and receiving British manufactured goods, but entering on the path of their own bourgeois economic development, eventually to become the virtually independent Dominions. On the other hand, in the conquered and enslaved colonial countries, such as India, the West Indies and the African colonies, where the British appeared as alien rulers and traders, the old basis of tribute and exploitation continued, but became subordinate to the new basis of relations, whereby the colonies served as sources of cheap raw materials, furnished either through the plantation system or by peasant labour under semi-starvation conditions, and as markets for British goods. The influx of British manufactured goods spread ruin among the native handicraft industries. The bones of the weavers, wrote the Governor-General of India in 1834, are bleaching the plains of India.

In this era of Britain's nineteenth century industrial supremacy the unchallenged domination of British machine industry appeared able to break down every obstacle in all countries, not only in countries directly ruled by Britain, but also in foreign countries independent of Britain. This superior economic power, which found its expression in the doctrines of laissez-faire and free trade, seemed so invincible to the new ruling class representatives of the British manufacturers that conceptions began to gain currency during the middle nineteenth century which dismissed the whole colonial system as a superfluous extravagance and an obsolete relic. Marx wrote of the Manchester school of Cobden and Bright:

> "The struggle of this Party against the old English institutions, products of a superannuated, an evanescent stage of social development, is resumed in the watchword: *Produce as cheap as you can, and do away with all the faux frais of production.* . . . The nation can produce and exchange without royalty; away with

> the Crown. The sinecures of the nobility, the House of Lords? *Faux frais* of production. The large standing army—*faux frais;* colonies —*faux frais*. . . . England can exploit foreign nations more cheaply while at peace with them." (Marx, *New York Tribune,* August 25, 1852.)

These new conceptions influenced also Toryism and official circles. Disraeli, in 1852, described " these wretched colonies " as " a millstone round our necks." Herman Merivale, Permanent Under-Secretary for the Colonies from 1848 to 1860, laid down the principle:

> " With the colonial trade thrown open and colonisation at an end, it is obvious that the leading motives which induced our ancestors to found and maintain a colonial empire no longer exist."

Another Colonial Office official, Sir Henry Taylor, in 1864 referred to the British possessions in America as " a sort of *damnosa haereditas* ". Similarly Bismarck wrote to Von Roon in 1868:

> "All the advantages claimed for the Mother Country are for the most part illusions. England is abandoning her colonial policy; she finds it too costly."

This short phase of fashionable anti-colonial theories did not prevent in practice the continuance of colonial aggression and conquest also through the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Warships and guns were still found useful to batter a way into markets. In 1840 the First Opium War, conducted in the name of the sacred right of the East India Company to poison the Chinese with opium (" foreign mud," as the Chinese called it), served to open China to trade, and extracted from the Chinese authorities as a punishment for their resistance to the blessings of opium the cession of Hong Kong—the " legal right " which Labour Ministers now claim as the justification for their military measures to endeavour to hold on to Hong Kong today. Cobden and Bright zealously supported the suppression of the Indian Mutiny in 1857. Aden was annexed in 1839; New Zealand in 1840; Natal in 1843; Sind in 1843; the Punjab by the Sikh campaigns of 1845 and 1848; Burma in 1852.

But it was the Great Depression of the eighteen-seventies, when for the first time Britain's export supremacy began to weaken before the advance of new industrial rivals, which ushered in the new phase of the extending export of capital and scramble for new

colonial acquisitions, preparing the way for the twentieth century era of imperialism.

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century Britain lost industrial supremacy, first to the United States, and then to Germany. In 1880 British steel output stood at 1.3 million tons, American at 1.2 million and German at 700,000. By 1900 American steel output had reached 10.2 million tons, German 6.4 million and British 4.9 million. By 1913 American steel output had reached 31.3 million tons, German 18.9 million, and British 7.7 million.

Britain still maintained the first position in the export of manufactured goods, but with a lessening proportion. Between 1880-84 and 1900-1904 British exports of manufactures increased 8 per cent, German 40 per cent, and American 230 per cent.

But in the sphere of the export of capital and colonial expansion Britain led the way.

Between 1884 and 1900 Britain acquired 3,700,000 square miles of new colonial territories. By 1914 the British Empire covered 12.7 million square miles, of which the United Kingdom represented 121,000 or less than one-hundredth part, the self-governing Dominions 7 million, and the colonial or dependent empire 5.6 million, or forty-six times the area of the United Kingdom. Thus the greater part of the dependent empire was acquired after 1884. The population totalled 431 millions, of which the White self-governing population of Britain and the Dominions totalled 60 millions, or under one-seventh. The imperialist world war of 1914-18 brought the further acquisition of one and a half million square miles. By the eve of the second world war the British Empire, protectorates and dependencies covered one-quarter of the earth's surface and one quarter of the world's population.

Between the 1850s and 1880 British capital invested abroad multiplied five times from £200 million to £1,000 million. By 1905 it had doubled again to reach £2,000 million. By 1913 it had doubled again, and reached close on £4,000 million. At the close of the century, in 1899, Sir Robert Giffen estimated the total profits from foreign trade at £18 million, and the total income from foreign investments at £90 million. By 1912 the income from foreign investments had reached £176 million, and by 1929 £250 million.

The era of industrial capital had given place to the era of

finance-capital. Britain had lost industrial supremacy to become the great usurer and colonial exploiter, sucking tribute from all over the world.

CHAPTER III

PRICE OF EMPIRE

"The thorns which I have reaped are of the tree
I planted; they have torn me, and I bleed.
I should have known what fruit would spring from such a seed."

BYRON.

ACROSS THREE-QUARTERS of a century of experience it is possible to see the outcome of the new imperialist system which was built up in the later decades of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century to replace Britain's lost industrial supremacy. The final harvest is being reaped in the present crisis; but the heavy cost was already making itself felt over the intervening years.

The new imperialist expansion was acclaimed by its sponsors as the solution to the dilemmas of British capitalism, after the breakdown of the mid-nineteenth century free-trade illusions of continuously advancing industrial and commercial supremacy and infinite unchecked progress.

With the loss of Britain's industrial world monopoly the possibilities of progressive capitalist development in Britain had reached exhaustion. The objective conditions had ripened for the advance to the socialist organisation of society as the only progressive path forward. Socialist agitation arose anew in Britain from the eighteen-eighties, with the formation of the Social Democratic Federation, which has now become the Communist Party. The modern labour movement derives from the work of the early socialist pioneers of the eighteen-eighties.

Already in 1885 Engels had shown how "the manufacturing monopoly of England is the pivot of the present social system in England," and that "with the breakdown of that monopoly the English working class will lose its privileged position" and "there will be Socialism again in England." The new challenge of socialism to the old class system was raising alarm in the hearts of the ruling class by the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

The champions of the new imperialism, Disraeli, Chamberlain and Rhodes, were consciously directing their efforts to meet and defeat the rising challenge of the working class and socialism.

Lenin has quoted the words of Cecil Rhodes in 1895:

> "I was in the East End of London yesterday and attended a meeting of the unemployed. I listened to the wild speeches, which were just a cry for 'bread,' 'bread,' 'bread,' and on my way home I pondered over the scene and I became more than ever convinced of the importance of imperialism. . . . My cherished idea is a solution for the social problem, i.e. in order to save the 40,000,000 inhabitants of the United Kingdom from a bloody civil war, we, colonial statesmen, must acquire new lands to settle the surplus population, to provide new markets for the goods produced by them in the factories and mines. The Empire, as I have always said, is a bread and butter question. If you want to avoid civil war, you must become imperialists."

Similarly Joseph Chamberlain in 1895, as soon as he became Colonial Secretary, defined his policy:

> "I regard many of our colonies as undeveloped estates, and estates which can never be developed without imperial assistance. . . . The policy of the Government will be to develop the resources of such colonies to the fullest extent; and it is only in such a policy of development that I can see any solution of those great social problems by which we are surrounded."

It might be a Labour Minister speaking, or the Fabian Colonial Bureau, whose language today exactly reproduces the language of the old Tory jingo buccaneer of half a century ago. Again in 1896 Chamberlain declared:

> "Today no one contests any longer the enormous advantages of a unified Empire, keeping for ourselves the benefit of trade which at the present time is actually a benefit to foreigners. Believe me, the loss of our domination would weigh first of all on the working classes of this country. We should see chronic misery let loose. England would no longer be able to feed her enormous population."

Thus the millionaire exploiters cynically present the Empire as the indispensable economic basis for saving the British working class from starvation (actually, from socialism). This is the continuous central theme of modern Tory imperialist "democracy," which has been taken over by Labour imperialism. In the same way Winston Churchill as Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1929 no less cynically proclaimed the imperialist basis of world tribute from overseas investment as the indispensable foundation for the maintenance of social services for the imperialist proletariat:

> "The income which we derive each year from commissions and services rendered to foreign countries is over £65 million. In addition, we have a steady revenue from foreign investments of close on £300 million a year. . . . That is the explanation of the source from which we are able to defray social services at a level incomparably higher than that of any European country or any country." (Winston Churchill, Budget speech, April 15, 1929.)

And again Lord Cranborne, as Dominions Secretary, in 1943 drove home the same moral:

> "Those who could not look beyond their personal interests should remember that their employment and standard of living depended mainly on the existence of the Empire." (*Daily Telegraph,* October 23, 1943.)

From this it is no far cry to Bevin's declaration of 1946:

> "I am not prepared to sacrifice the British Empire because I know that if the British Empire fell . . . it would mean the standard of life of our constituents would fall considerably." (Ernest Bevin, House of Commons, February 21, 1946.)

Such is the British imperialist economy which has been built up over the past three-quarters of a century to replace the lost industrial world monopoly. It is on this basis that the boasted modern imperialist "democracy" has been built, like the old Athenian slave-owning democracy, as a "democracy" of slave-owners of empire, ruling a majority of subject colonial peoples, and in practice holding subject also the masses in the metropolitan country.

What have been the consequences of this imperialist economy for the people?

For the colonial peoples it has meant a regime of plunder of their resources and labour, extraction of gigantic monopoly profits without return, degradation of their living conditions, and intensive exploitation and oppression, against which they are today in revolt.

But for the masses of the British people has the Empire brought the benefit which is claimed? On the contrary. The crumbs of a share in the spoils with which the imperialist exploiters seek to bribe the working class into acquiescence, and thus to hold off the advance of socialism, have been far outweighed by the consequent burdens, disorganisation of economy, arrest of progressive development, ruinous military exactions, colonial wars and imperialist wars, and deepening crisis and decay at home.

The imperialist economy of Britain is a parasitic economy. It is increasingly dependent on world tribute for its maintenance. By the eve of the first world war close on one-fifth of British imports were no longer paid for by exports of goods. By the eve of the

second world war close on two-fifths of British imports were no longer paid for by exports of goods. The imports surplus, or visible adverse balance of trade, rose from £30 million in 1855-59 to £134 million in 1913, to £302 million in 1938, and £438 million in 1947. This imports surplus was covered in the first phase of imperialist development by the overseas income from foreign investments, financial commissions and shipping. But in the later phase, as the home decay consequent on this parasitism developed further, even the overseas income could no longer cover the unpaid imports. A net deficit in the balance of payments began to appear in the later thirties on the eve of the second world war, reaching £70 million in 1938. This meant that, in place of the previous continuous accumulation of overseas capital, a process of *disaccumulation* had begun. The second world war, with its expenditure of one-quarter of overseas capital assets, enormously accelerated this process. The deficit on the balance of payments reached £380 million in 1946, and £630 million in 1947, and, after all the emergency measures since taken, remains a chronic unsolved dilemma of British capitalism today.

Thus the imperialist basis of economy, to which the fortunes and existence of the British people have been committed in the modern era, is an unsound, unstable, mortally sick basis, leading to chronic crisis.

The direction of capital investment and accumulation more and more overseas, to win the colossal super-profits of colonial exploitation, and consequent increasing parasitic dependence on overseas tribute, has led to the neglect and decay of home industry and agriculture. When dividends of one hundred per cent could be obtained from the exploitation of cheap colonial labour, there was no attraction to carry through technical re-equipment or modernisation of British industry or programmes of social development at home.

> " Resources were turned towards foreign investment rather than to the rebuilding of the dirty towns of Britain, simply because foreign investment seemed more remunerative." (J. H. Clapham, *Economic History of Modern Britain,* chap. III, p. 53.)

Agriculture was allowed to fall into decay. Between 1871-75 and 1939 the arable area of Britain fell from 18.2 million acres to 11.8 million, or a drop of one-third. The area under crops fell from 13.9 million to 8.3 million, or a drop of two-fifths. The area under wheat fell from 3.5 million to 1.7 million, or a drop of one-

half. This imperialist wrecking of British agriculture is costing a heavy price today, when desperate efforts have to be made to recover lost ground in order to grow needed food at home. But the get-rich-quick imperialists took no thought for the future.

British industry was allowed to fall behind. Britain, which had been the workshop of the world in the mid-nineteenth century, became more and more the home of obsolete equipment relative to the more advanced technical industrial level in America and Germany. Recent estimates have shown how the superiority of American industry is based on mechanical equipment, measured in terms of horse-power per worker, three times the British level. The coal industry, wrote Professor Clapham, became " worse than stagnant in efficiency since before 1900." Textiles have had to make do with machinery which has become notoriously more and more obsolete in the majority of factories. In the iron and steel industry Professor Clapham recorded that " there was no fundamental improvement in the blast-furnace and its accessories between 1886 and 1913." " The industry in Great Britain has lagged behind the rest of the world both absolutely and relatively " (Burnham and Hoskins, *Iron and Steel in Britain 1870-1930,* 1943, p. 70).

In the era between the two world wars this deterioration and decay of British industry and agriculture went forward at an accelerating pace. Coal production fell from 287 million tons in 1913 to 230 million in 1938; the number of pits was brought down from 3,267 in 1913 to 2,125 in 1938. In textiles between 1920 and 1935 fourteen million spindles were destroyed. One-third of British shipyards were closed down; between 1918 and 1938 British shipbuilding capacity was reduced from three million tons annually to two million tons. In agriculture between 1918 and 1939 over two million acres were allowed to pass out of cultivation, the decrease in arable land being over four million acres; and the proportion of the cultivable land under crops fell from 38 per cent in 1918 to 28 per cent by 1939. In 1936 Sir George Stapleton, the leading agricultural scientist, stated that there were about 16¼ million acres of land in a more or less neglected condition, and most of it absolutely derelict; while every single acre of this enormous area, representing two-fifths of the land surface of England and Wales, was capable of radical improvement. Former leading industrial areas became derelict areas.

While the basic industries and agriculture thus passed into decay in the imperialist era, the secondary and luxury industries and services, appropriate to a parasitic rentier economy, swelled and boomed. Between the decade 1904-13 and the five-year period 1924-28, capital issues for the basic industries fell by half from £41.7 million to £21.4 million, while those for breweries more than doubled, from £6 million to £15 million, and those for hotels, theatres, etc., nearly trebled from £7.1 million to £20.4 million. The proportion of the population engaged in production in the basic industries fell from 23 per cent in 1851 to 13.6 per cent in 1929; the numbers engaged in commercial and financial operations, distribution, office employment and all manner of "services" rose continuously, thus giving rise to the legend of the "new middle class" as a sign of rising prosperity. By 1937 this degeneration had reached such a pitch that the *Economist* (20.11.37) could describe "foreign investment" as "the nation's greatest single industry."

This growth of parasitism and relative weakening of the productive working class in industry had its harmful consequences also on the development of the labour movement. Marx and Engels had already shown in the nineteenth century the connection between Britain's world monopoly and colonial empire and the corruption of the upper section of the working class, stifling the original revolutionary impulse of Chartism and leading to the retarded and distorted development of the labour movement. Lenin carried forward this lesson in the early twentieth century:

> "In Great Britain the tendency of imperialism to divide the workers, to encourage opportunism among them and to cause temporary decay in the working class movement, revealed itself much earlier than the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries; for two important distinguishing features of imperialism were observed in Great Britain in the middle of the nineteenth century, viz., vast colonial possessions and a monopolist position in the world market. Marx and Engels systematically traced this relation between opportunism in the labour movement and the imperialist feature of British capitalism for several decades." (Lenin, *Imperialism.*)

This development of labour imperialism, tying the workers to alliance with capitalist policies, and delaying the advance to socialism, has been further demonstrated with the two MacDonald

Labour Governments between the wars and the Third Labour Government and the Attlee-Bevin-Cripps policies since 1945.

Above all, the ruinous cost of imperialist policy was shown in the growing burden of armaments and war. British arms expenditure rose from £24 million in 1875 to £40 million in 1897, or nearly double. Already in 1879 the Liberal statesman, Sir M. E. Grant Duff, in his letter to the Empress Frederick on his interview with Marx, quoted the new armaments race as in his view the main revolutionary menace to the stability of the existing social regime:

> "But supposing, I said, the rulers of Europe came to an understanding amongst themselves for a reduction of armaments which might greatly relieve the burden on the people, what would become of the Revolution which you expect it one day to bring about?"
>
> "Ah, was his answer, they can't do that. All sorts of fears and jealousies will make that impossible. The burden will grow worse and worse as science advances; for the improvements in the art of destruction will keep pace with the advance, and every year more and more will have to be devoted to costly engines of war. It is a vicious circle—there is no escape from it."

The Victorian Liberal Minister drew the conclusion that the revolutionary predictions of Marxism were

> "too dreamy to be dangerous, except just in so far as the situation with its mad expenditure on armaments is obviously and undoubtedly dangerous. If, however, within the next decade the rulers of Europe have not found means of dealing with this evil without any warning from attempted revolution, I for one, shall despair of the future of humanity at least on this Continent." (Sir M. E. Grant Duff's letter to the Empress Frederick, February 1, 1879, published in the *Times Literary Supplement,* July 15, 1949.)

But the arms expenditure which horrified the Liberal Minister of the Victorian era would appear "trifling" by modern standards. The armaments race went on. The total which had been doubled between 1879 and 1897, doubled again to reach £86 million in 1913. By 1929 it reached £115 million. By 1938 it had doubled again and reached £263 million. Even this figure was trebled again by 1949, with the present total of £760 million (excluding Supplementary Estimates, which are likely to bring it to £800 million), or more than thirty times the level in money figures of the opening of the era of imperialist expansion in 1875, nineteen times the level on the eve of the Boer War, nine times the level on the eve of the

first world war, six times the level of twenty years ago, and three times the level on the eve of the second world war. And in October 1949 Sir Stafford Cripps announced the prospect of a further "appreciable increase" in arms expenditure "as a result of obligations under the Atlantic Pact and Western Union".

Britain's ceaseless colonial wars throughout the imperialist era, including the South African War at the opening of the century, culminated in the heavy destruction and price in blood of two world wars, with the consequent crippling of Britain's economy. Yet frantic preparations are now pressed forward for a third world war, for which the impoverished British economy is being driven to pile up armaments to new record heights.

Thus the balance sheet of imperialism, however profitable for the big monopolists, has been disastrous for the mass of the people.

This is the modern imperialist system of British economy, with the whole social-political structure of imperialist "democracy" built upon it, which has now entered into deepening crisis and is approaching collapse.

CHAPTER IV

CRISIS OF THE COLONIAL SYSTEM

"The moment a mutiny is but threatened which shall be no mere mutiny, but the expression of a universal feeling of nationality, all hope is at an end, as all desire ought to be at an end, of preserving our Empire."

J. R. SEELEY, *The Expansion of England*, 1883

IN THE SUMMER of 1949 the British Government organised a Colonial Exhibition in London. The Colonial Exhibition sought to present an idyllic picture of backward peoples advancing to civilisation under the fostering care of British rule, happily producing the goods required for the British Home, and enjoying the benefits of extending health provision, education and rising welfare while they are being gradually prepared for self-government. It gave no hint of the scores of millions of pounds of profits extracted by the big monopolies from the starvation and exploitation of the people. It gave no hint of wages as low as 1s. 9d. a week, the crowding on the reserves, the ruin of the peasantry, the squalor of the slums, the horrors of the plantation system, indentured labour and forced labour, and the thinly-veiled slavery of the colour bar. Above all, it gave no hint of the rising struggle and revolt of the colonial peoples and the brutal methods of police and military repression used to hold them down. In short, it gave as truthful a picture of conditions in Britain's Colonial Empire as a Nazi Exhibition of Welfare Work in Occupied Europe.

On the other hand, when the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Creech Jones, presented his report on the Colonial Empire to the representatives of the slave-owners in the British Parliament on July 20, 1949, he placed especial emphasis on the measures being taken to strengthen and intensify police repression against colonial revolt, utilising the example of Malaya:

> "I was asked about internal security. With the 'cold war' and the livening of political conscience in many countries since 1945, this has become an important question. We have gone into the organisation of the police forces and internal security arrangements in almost every colony. The lessons that we have learned, and those that we are learning day by day in the 'cold war' in

Malaya are being studied, so far as they can be, in all colonial territories."

The freedom struggle and revolt of the colonial peoples against their oppression has developed continuously with the colonial empire. The pages of colonial history are littered with colonial wars and the barbarous repression of popular revolt. But it is only in the modern era, as the conditions have ripened, first with the development of the colonial bourgeoisie, and then with the development of the colonial working class, that this spontaneous popular revolt has been able to advance to the stage of powerful national liberation movements, capable of uniting and organising the entire people, in association with the working class in the imperialist countries and with the first victories of the socialist revolution, to challenge the foundations of their oppressors' rule, and march forward to victory over imperialism.

This is the advance which has gone enormously forward since the second world war.

In his Report to the Conference of Nine Communist Parties in September, 1947, A. A. Zhdanov said:

> "The sharpening of the crisis of the colonial system as the result of the second world war is seen in the mighty surge of the national liberation movement in the colonies and dependent countries, which threatens the rear of the capitalist system.
>
> "The colonial peoples refuse to live any longer in the old way, and the ruling classes of the metropolitan countries cannot rule them any longer in the old way. Attempts to suppress the national liberation movement by military force now encounter ever-increasing armed resistance from the colonial peoples, and lead to prolonged colonial wars, such as that of Holland in Indonesia and of France in Viet Nam."

The truth of this has been abundantly confirmed in the subsequent two years up to the present date, which have seen the wars in Malaya and Burma, the military defeat of British puppets in the Middle East, the mass strikes, demonstrations and unrest in Africa, and the immeasurable effects of the victory of Chinese Democracy.

It is only necessary to contrast the situation at the end of the first world war and at the end of the second world war to see the magnitude of the change, not only in quantity, but in quality, which has taken place.

The early forms of the modern national movements in the colonial countries outside Europe took shape during the later

decades of the nineteenth century in some of the more advanced countries, such as India, China and Egypt. These early stages of the organised national movement were led by the representatives of the emergent national bourgeoisie; oriented themselves towards the Western capitalist countries, as at that time the most advanced progressive countries, and the imitation of Western parliamentary institutions; and confined their appeal and range of organisation mainly to the limited circles of the educated classes, students, traders and lower middle class, without contact with the masses of the working class and peasantry. The effects of the first Russian Revolution of 1905 and of the Japanese victory in Asia led to the beginnings of change and a more militant movement, but only the beginnings.

Already by 1908 Lenin was able to write:

> "The class-conscious workers of Europe now have Asiatic comrades, and their numbers will grow by leaps and bounds." (Lenin, *Inflammable Material In World Politics,* 1908.)

And by 1913 he was writing of "Backward Europe and Progressive Asia," with special reference to the advance of the Chinese Revolution and the support of the European Powers for the reaction of Yuan Shih-kai (the precursor of the American support for Chiang Kai-shek in the recent period):

> "Advanced Europe is commanded by a bourgeoisie which supports everything backward. . . . A more striking example of this decay of the entire European bourgeoisie can scarcely be cited than the support it is lending to reaction in Asia on behalf of the selfish aims of the financial dealers and capitalist swindlers.
>
> "Everywhere in Asia a mighty democratic movement is growing, spreading and gaining strength. There the bourgeoisie is still siding with the people against reaction. Hundreds of millions of people are awakening to life, light and liberty." (Lenin, *Backward Europe and Progressive Asia,* 1913.)

The war of 1914 and the first victory of the world socialist revolution in Russia brought a transformation. The liberation of one-sixth of the world from imperialism gave a giant impetus to the movement against imperialism in all colonial countries. The Soviet State demonstrated for the first time the successful socialist solution of the national problem on the basis of the complete national freedom and equality, irrespective of race or colour, of advanced or backward cultural development, of all the nationalities and former colonial peoples oppressed under the old Tsarist

Empire. This exercised a profound influence on all colonial peoples. Henceforward the focus of the colonial revolution became, no longer the centres of the antiquated reactionary Western imperialist countries and their institutions of imperialist "democracy," but the new Socialist State which had abolished slavery and the colour bar. Lenin wrote:

> "While formerly prior to the epoch of world revolution movements for national liberation were a part of the general democratic movements; now, however, after the victory of the Soviet revolution in Russia and the opening of the period of world revolution the movement for national liberation is part of the world proletarian revolution."

The world revolutionary wave which followed the war of 1914-18 and the Russian Revolution swept through all the colonial countries. The former limited national movements were transformed to powerful mass movements which repeatedly stormed against the citadels of imperialism and were met with limitless repression. The colonial bourgeoisie, fearful of the mass advance, moved over to a two-faced vacillating rôle; and the dominant section moved towards compromise and counter-revolutionary alliance with imperialism against the masses. On the other hand, the colonial working class now reached independent political consciousness and organised strength, with the formation of Communist Parties and stable trade union organisation in the leading colonial countries, and entered on a leading rôle in the national revolutionary movement as the only consistent and uncompromising fighter to the end against imperialism. Nevertheless, the national bourgeoisie was still able to maintain control and delay liberation.

The world war of liberation against fascism powerfully accelerated the development of the colonial revolution. The rottenness of the old imperialist structure was demonstrated by the collapse of the old colonial empires in Asia before the Japanese advance. In a famous dispatch *The Times* Singapore correspondent wrote in 1942:

> "After nearly 120 years of British rule, the vast majority of Asiatics were not sufficiently interested in the continuance of this rule to take any steps to ensure its continuance. And if it is true that the government had no roots in the life of the people, it is equally true that the few thousand British residents who made their living out of the country—practically none of whom looked upon Malaya as being their home—were completely out of touch with the people. . . . British rule and culture and the small British community formed no more than a thin and brittle veneer." (*The Times,* February 18, 1942.)

The myth of the military invincibility of Western imperialism was shattered. Millions of colonial soldiers were drawn from their homes to fight for the freedom of enslaved European nations, and to awaken inevitably to the question why they should not fight also for the freedom of their own countries. Abandoned by their imperialist rulers without defence or means of defence before the Japanese occupation, the peoples of South-East Asia built up their own national resistance movements under Communist leadership to conduct a heroic guerrilla battle against the Japanese invaders. These national liberation movements fought for freedom, not only from Japanese domination, but from all imperialist domination, and they continued the fight for freedom when the returning European Powers at the close of the war sought to re-impose the colonial system.

In the Atlantic Charter, which was accepted as embodying the aims of the United Nations, the principle was laid down:

> "They respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live."

However hypocritical such a formulation might be in the mouths of the statesmen of the imperialist Powers, it was not without reason that this principle, embodying the aspirations of the peoples of the world fighting for freedom, was seized upon by the representatives of the colonial peoples to demand its application to their own countries. In vain the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, issued an official declaration on September 9, 1941, specifically excluding "India, Burma and other parts of the British Empire" from the operation of the Atlantic Charter, and explained:

> "At the Atlantic meeting we had in mind primarily the restoration of the sovereignty, self-government and national life of the states and nations of Europe now under the Nazi yoke."

It was significant of the already developing Anglo-American antagonism over the Empire that President Roosevelt, in his broadcast of February 22, 1942, tacitly repudiated Churchill's denial of September, 1941, and went out of his way to declare:

> "The Atlantic Charter applies, not only to the parts of the world that border the Atlantic, but to the whole world."

Above all, the inspiring example and demonstration of unshakable strength of the Socialist Soviet Union, which bore the

main brunt of the war and shattered nine-tenths of the Nazi forces to win the common victory over fascism; the rôle of the national liberation movements under Communist leadership in Europe; and the victory of the new People's Democracies in Eastern Europe emancipating their countries from the yoke of imperialism, all gave a powerful impetus to the new movements of liberation in the colonial countries.

Thus the outcome of the second world war has deepened and extended the revolt of the colonial peoples to a general crisis of the colonial system. New features have appeared which are without previous parallel even in the height of the revolutionary wave after the first world war. Some of the most important of these new features may be noted.

First, the victory of Chinese democracy against Chiang Kai-shek and Anglo-American imperialism has transformed the balance of world relations, and exercises the most powerful influence on the advance of the liberation struggle of the colonial peoples throughout Asia.

Second, new independent States have been constituted by former colonial peoples, fighting to maintain their independence against the armed assault of all the forces of imperialism, e.g., the Vietnam Republic and the Indonesian Republic. Note may also be taken of the successful military fight for the establishment of the independent State of Israel, though with partial imperialist assistance, against the British-armed and British-subsidised forces of Arab League reaction. In the Far East the North Korean Republic is the prelude to the liberation of Korea.

Third, in other colonial countries where independent States have not yet been formed, or where imperialism has sought to forestall the revolt by the formation of new puppet pseudo-independent States, the liberation movement has reached a new advanced level previously unknown, with the advance to armed struggle and full-scale wars of independence in Burma and Malaya, or to new forms of struggle as in the Telengana battles in India (peasant seizure of land and formation of people's committees over two thousand square miles, and heroic resistance to the armed forces of the imperialist satellites).

Fourth, the geographical range of the colonial liberation struggle has enormously extended, shown especially in the big advance in

Africa, as also in the West Indies.

Fifth, Communist Parties are now playing the leading rôle in the national movement in a whole series of countries.

All this amounts to a qualitative change in the whole character and stage of the colonial liberation movement.

The counter-measures which imperialism has adopted to endeavour to meet the new situation, to crush the colonial revolt and restore or maintain the colonial system, often through new forms or manœuvres of pseudo-independence, will be considered later.

CHAPTER V

CRISIS OF "WESTERN CIVILISATION"

"The so-called freedom of English citizens is based on the suppression of the colonies."
ENGELS, letter to Marx, May 23, 1856.

THE CRISIS OF the colonial system has not only transformed the situation in the colonial countries. It has also transformed the situation in the imperialist countries. The undermining of the colonial base of imperialism has produced its reflection in the deepening crisis of the metropolitan countries of imperialism, especially in Western Europe.

With unconcealed alarm the Western rulers have seen the rising tide of colonial revolt and liberation, advancing to triumph in Asia, and already stirring in Africa, and have recognised in its thunders the knell of doom for their imperialist system of parasitic economy and political corruption (mis-named "Western democracy" and "Western civilisation") in the countries of imperialism in Western Europe and America.

Under the title "Far Eastern Front" *The Times* editorial wrote on March 1, 1949:

> "The revolutionary movements in Eastern Asia as a whole—ranging from North China down to Indonesia and northward again to Malaya and the Burmese hills—are changing the world strategic and political map. The destinies of nearly a thousand million people are being shaped. With Communists either in the leadership or striving towards it, the challenge to Western security is at least as great as if Africa were in ferment."

With brutal frankness the same editorial proclaims the grand thesis: *"Eastern Asia is a main base of Western Europe"*—a curious sentiment from the standpoint of geography and democracy, but completely comprehensible from the standpoint of imperialist economy. On the lines of this thesis the organ of the British ruling class lays bare the materialist basis of the spiritual bonds of empire and the white man's burden with the reckless candour of the bandit suddenly faced with the prospect of the loss of his booty:

> "The disturbances in the Asian area . . . have put in peril the rich supplies of raw materials which this country, France and the Netherlands desperately need. From the half million tons of

> rubber which Malaya produced yearly before the war and the 60,000 tons of tin, and from the Burmese rice, minerals and timber, this country gathered a large part of the sterling area's dollar surplus. . . . For Holland, success or failure in reaching agreement in Indonesia, with its oil, rubber, tin and coffee, will determine whether or not she is to remain a Power."

When Sir Stafford Cripps used to boast (before the recent collapse) of the achievement of British exports in bringing down the dollar deficit, it is worth recalling that in 1948 Malayan tin and rubber still earned more American dollars than the total exports of the United Kingdom put together. Of course these regions could produce all this wealth, and eventually much more, under a free regime; but the share of the Western European countries would then have to be based on equal exchange (to the advantage of home productive development) and not on imperialist exploitation.

Similarly the *New York Times* in a message from its Geneva correspondent dated January 11, 1949, emphasised that colonial domination is the indispensable basis for Western European reconstruction:

> *"The high living standards of Europe are certainly to a degree dependent upon the availability of raw materials and cheap labour in Asia and Africa.* Although old-fashioned colonial imperialism is considered out-moded, a recovering Europe cannot do without sources of wealth menaced by the U.S.S.R.'s new drive for 'popular democracy.'"

Under the blows of experience, and in the shadow of their impending downfall, the pundits of Western "democracy" are learning to read Lenin's *Imperialism* backwards.

All the grandiloquent phrases about "Western civilisation in danger," "Western democracy," the "Western way of life," "Western spiritual values" and "the Christian heritage"—all these are only pseudonyms and aliases for Western capitalism and imperialism, which has its root and basis in the class system at home and the subjection and exploitation of the colonial peoples abroad. The Brussels Pact, the Atlantic Pact, "Western Union," the "Atlantic Community"—all these represent the bloc of the great *colony-owning powers* and their associates, the United States, Britain, France, Belgium, Holland, etc.

The outcome of the second world war has profoundly changed the relations of imperialism.

The area of imperialism has been restricted, with the disintegra-

tion of the former Japanese and Italian Empires, the eclipse of Germany as an independent imperialist Power, and the emancipation of the Eastern European democracies from the orbit of imperialism.

Within the diminished area of the remaining imperialist Powers of the United States and Western Europe the balance of relations has radically altered.

The old colonial Powers of Western Europe have been greatly weakened. This is shown in the continuing chronic crisis and failure of recovery, four years after the war, expressed directly in the heavy deficit on the balance of payments, of Britain and the countries of Western Europe. The initial illusions which sought to explain this crisis as a temporary result of war devastation and unsettlement have had to be abandoned. War devastation was, in fact, relatively lighter in the countries of Western Europe, and most heavy and crippling in the countries of Eastern Europe. Yet the survey of the European Economic Commission of the United Nations for 1948 demonstrated that it is Eastern Europe which has shown the most rapid recovery, without dollar aid, and Western Europe which continued in a situation of growing crisis and dependence on subsidies from outside.

The basic causes of the continuing crisis and failure of recovery of the countries of Western Europe have to be sought deeper, and cannot be separated from the crisis of the colonial system, on which their imperialist economies have been founded.

The crisis of Britain and Western Europe reflects the weakening of the old imperialist basis and loss of overseas tribute, and the failure to carry through the necessary changes to establish a new and healthy productive basis. This is shown very clearly in the following table from the Report of the Marshall Plan Committee on "European Economic Co-operation" in 1947, revealing the pre-war economic basis of the Western European countries.

PRE-WAR PROPORTION OF WORLD TRADE OF U.S.A. AND WESTERN EUROPE

	Pre-War Population (*millions*)	Percentage of World Trade, 1938	
		Imports	Exports
United States	131.7	8.1	13.2
16 Marshall countries	205.9	40.8	30.4

Here is the root of the bankruptcy of Western Europe. Before the war the Marshall countries of Western Europe took two-fifths of world imports and exported less than one-third of world exports. One-quarter of their imports were not paid for by exports of goods. In practice, the raw materials drawn from their colonial possessions were used, not only to supply directly their own requirements, but by sale to the United States and dollar countries to provide the exchange for the purchase of dollar goods for Western Europe. Hence the crisis of the colonial system, undermining the foundations of this corrupt, parasitic economy, brought at once a dollar crisis for Britain and Western Europe. The diminution of colonial tribute, and of the income from shipping and finance connected with it, appeared on the books, not as a shortage of colonial goods, but as a shortage of dollar goods or inability to pay for dollar goods. *The colonial crisis appeared in its superficial form as a dollar crisis.*

The Marshall Plan represented a plan to meet temporarily (at a price of economic dependence) the superficial form of this crisis —the dollar crisis. But it could not touch the real underlying factors—the colonial crisis.

Within the imperialist framework no solution could be found for this crisis. The collapse of foreign investment income can be illustrated from the following return for Britain. Despite the retention of £3,000 million foreign investments, or three-quarters of the pre-war total, the net income fell heavily.

FALL IN U.K. FOREIGN INVESTMENT INCOME, 1938-1948
(*£ million*)

Interest, Profits and Dividends—	1938	1948	Increase or Decrease
In	205	162	—43
Out	30	112	+82
Net	175	50	—125

While foreign investments still represented three-quarters of the pre-war total, net foreign investment income fell by five-sevenths. The bottom was falling out of the old parasitic imperialist economy.

All the attempts to restore or maintain the basis of the old colonial system only resulted in ruinous colonial wars and increased costs of colonial suppression and overseas military commitments,

which further strain the already weakened imperialist economy and add to the net deficit. This has been illustrated in the budgets and balance of payments of France (war in Vietnam), Holland (war in Indonesia), and Britain (war in Malaya, etc.).

Nor could the Marshall Plan offer a solution. Dollar subsidies could only conceal artificially for a short time the real deficit, but could not touch the real causes. On the contrary, they served in practice to intensify the disease by increasing the dependence on dollar supplies and delaying and even restricting or vetoing any attempt to find an alternative basis. Thus the Marshall Plan brought, not economic recovery, as advertised, but increased economic weakening of the Western European countries and dependence on United States imperialism.

For the further outcome of the second world war brought radical changes, not only in the colonial sphere, and in the relations of the colonial countries and imperialist countries, but in the relations of the remaining imperialist Powers of the United States and Western Europe.

The unequal development of imperialism has reached an extreme stage in the contrast between the situation of the United States and the rest of the imperialist world. While the war impoverished all other belligerent countries, United States capitalism, untouched by war destruction, accumulated gigantic profits and increased enormously its productive power. The United States has attained productive preponderance outweighing the rest of the capitalist world put together. The United States has attained strategic supremacy as against all the other capitalist Powers. On the other hand, the United States holds directly a relatively smaller area of colonial territories. The Western European Powers with their much weaker economic strength still hold the main colonial empires.

Thus the contradiction which was characteristic of the relations of advancing German imperialism and the rest of the imperialist world in the earlier twentieth century, giving rise to the first two world wars, is now carried forward to a much higher degree. The United States imperialist drive to world expansion is in consequence directed, not merely against the land of socialism and the countries emancipated from the yoke of imperialism, but also and immediately against the existing colonial empires and above all the British Empire.

Despite the active counter-revolutionary partnership of Britain and the United States, the Anglo-American antagonism remains the main antagonism of the imperialist world. It has shown itself markedly in the terms of the Loan Agreement, the conflicts over the Sterling Bloc and devaluation, Imperial Preference and the Havana Trade Agreement, the use of the weapon of the Marshall Plan to secure a hold on the strategic raw materials of the British Empire countries, and the advance of American oil interests at the expense of British oil interests in the Middle East.

At the same time the method of world expansion of American imperialism at the expense of the older colonial empires does not require armed conquest of these empires, but has followed the lines of subordination and penetration. The older colonial Powers are left in nominal possession of their empires, and have thus to do the dirty work of policing and administering and holding down the colonial peoples, while the United States monopolies more and more take the cream of the profits.

In this way a new structure of imperialism may be said to reveal itself after the second world war. The first tier or top of the pyramid is occupied by the United States. Then below it come the other colonial Powers, still exercising dominion over subject peoples, but themselves satellite to the United States as suzerain. At the bottom of the pyramid come the colonial and dependent peoples.

This represents, however, no stable equilibrium, but is continuously shaken and undermined by the advancing expansion of American imperialism, the partial weak resistance of the older colonial Powers, and the powerful upsurge of the struggle of the colonial peoples for liberation. This interplay of imperialist antagonisms, with the advancing aggression of American imperialism and the rising freedom struggle of the colonial peoples, constitutes the special character of the present crisis of the colonial system.

CHAPTER VI

AMERICA TAKES OVER THE BRITISH EMPIRE

> *"The British Empire is passing into history. The great pageant of British power, glory and grandeur which paraded over and dominated the world for more than two centuries is coming to an end. . . .*
>
> *"America is the natural heir to the legacy of power and world leadership so long held by the British Empire."*
>
> KARL VON WIEGAND, "Doyen of American Foreign Correspondents" in the Hearst Press, 1947.

IN NINETEEN hundred and thirteen Ambassador Page, United States Ambassador to Britain, wrote in a private letter to Secretary Houston about Britain's "unctuous rectitude in stealing continents. . . . I guess they really believe that the earth belongs to them" (*Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, 1925, Vol. I, p. 139). But he added in a subsequent letter to President Wilson:

> "The future of the world belongs to us. These English are spending their capital. . . . Now, what are we going to do with the leadership of the world presently when it clearly falls into our hands? And how can we use the British for the highest uses of democracy?"

That was thirty-six years ago, before the first world war. The United States had already displaced Britain's industrial supremacy. But Britain still held supremacy in world trade, the mercantile marine, international finance, overseas investment, naval armaments and colonial power. The United States was a net debtor country. The City was still the centre of world credit and financial operations. Sterling dominated international commerce and exchange.

The war of 1914-18 brought the first big change in this position. The United States monopolists, maintaining neutrality until the last stage, drew enormous profits from the belligerents, and intervened only in the final phase, with the minimum of losses, and with unexhausted forces to exercise a decisive voice in the settlement. The United States advanced to the position of a creditor country, and, following the Dawes Plan (an embryonic predecessor of the Marshall Plan), embarked on large-scale foreign investment. Britain was mortally stricken and entered into a period of chronic depression which continued from the winter of 1920 till the second world war.

By 1930 a foremost American publishing firm issued a book which received widespread attention on both sides of the Atlantic under the title *America Conquers Britain.* The author, Ludwell Denny, reached the conclusion:

> "We were Britain's colony once. She will be our colony before she is done: not in name, but in fact. Machines gave Britain power over the world. Now better machines are giving America power over the world and Britain. . . .
>
> "Of course, American world supremacy is rather horrible to think about. But American supremacy can hardly be worse than British and others gone before. . . .
>
> "What chance has Britain against America? Or what chance has the world?"

That was nineteen years ago. The onset of the world economic crisis which revealed the deep inner weakness of American capitalism behind all its arrogant claims of inevitable triumph, made these prophecies premature at the time. But today, when American Economic Administrators for Britain have their offices in London and the American General Staff its permanent bases, troops and bombers on British soil, these words have a topical ring.

The second world war brought a decisive change, when the United States, intervening once again as the last of the major belligerents, swept forward to world predominance. All the other belligerents suffered heavy losses in the war. Mr. Churchill has pointed out in the second volume of his history that the number of Americans killed in action in the war, totalling 322,188, fell below the level of 412,240 for the British Empire, just as the combined figures of both were barely one-tenth of Soviet losses. Other countries were devastated, overrun or blitzed. The United States was immune. Other countries emerged economically and financially impoverished and weakened. The American monopolists made gargantuan profits, totalling, according to official records, 52 billion dollars or £13,000 million, after taxation. They increased the productive power of their plant by one-half, and accumulated capital reserves of 85 billion dollars or £21,250 million. This vast expansion of accumulated capital and productive power sought outlet after the war and led to the drive for American world expansion which has been so marked a characteristic of the post-war years.

Already by 1940 (when, as Cordell Hull's Memoirs have now informed us, the State Department was drawing up plans for a

post-war world on the assumption of a defeated Britain), Virgil Jordan, President of the National Industrial Conference Board of the U.S.A., the principal organisation of American big capital, speaking to the Investment Bankers' Association of America on December 10, 1940, said:

> "Whatever the outcome of the war, America has embarked on a career of imperialism in world affairs and in every other aspect of her life. Even though by our aid England should emerge from this struggle without defeat, she will be so impoverished and crippled in prestige that it is improbable she will be able to resume or maintain the dominant position in world affairs which she has occupied so long. At best, England will become a junior partner in a new Anglo-Saxon imperialism, in which the economic resources and the military and naval strength of the United States will be the centre of gravity. . . . The sceptre passes to the United States." (*Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, New York, December 21, 1940.)

That was nine years ago.

In 1941 at the time of the Atlantic Charter meeting of Churchill and Roosevelt, the latter's son, Elliott Roosevelt, has recorded the sharp discussion on the future of the British Empire and colonial territories, which resulted in the British Prime Minister declaring:

> "Mr. President, I believe you are trying to do away with the British Empire. Every idea you entertain about the structure of the post-war world demonstrates it. But, in spite of that, in spite of that, we know that you constitute our only hope. And *you* know that *we* know it. *You* know that *we* know that without America the Empire won't stand." (Elliott Roosevelt, *As He Saw It*, 1946, p. 41.)

The relation of simultaneous antagonism and dependence here received classic expression.

These statements are worth recalling today in order to see present events in a broader perspective. Ambassador Page's private Note to Wilson was made before the first world war, before the Russian Revolution of 1917, before the Communist International, before there was a Communist Party anywhere in the world—before, that is, there was any possibility of covering up the aims of world domination with the subsequent camouflage of the Holy War of Western Civilisation against Bolshevism.

America Conquers Britain appeared before the second world war, before Hitler came to power, before the Anti-Comintern Pact, that is before the rulers of American policy had conceived the

inspiration of picking up the fallen mantle of the Anti-Comintern Pact to pursue corresponding aims.

Similarly the President of the National Industrial Conference Board of the United States proclaimed the aims of American "imperialism," and the relegation of Britain to a "junior partner," before America was involved in the war, and before the Soviet Union was involved in the war—that is, before there was any possibility of talking about the Russian menace or the "threats of Russian aggression" as a supposed reason for American aggressive measures throughout the world.

These statements, revealing a continuous line of policy developed with increasing precision over four decades should be helpful in restoring a sense of perspective in the midst of the wild and whirling storm of anti-Communist and anti-Soviet propaganda which is nowadays presented in many quarters as a substitute for a serious analysis of the world situation.

The transformation in the relative position of the United States and Britain before and after the second world war may be measured by the following indications.

By the end of the second world war American capital controlled 60 per cent of the productive capacity of the capitalist world and 73 per cent of its investment capacity.

In world trade Britain lost export markets during the war which were captured by American manufacturers. In 1938 the American share of world capital exports was 13.5 per cent to Britain's 10.3 per cent. By 1947 the American share had risen to 32.6 per cent, while Britain's share remained at 10.3 per cent.

British textile exports before the war amounted to 28 per cent of the world total against the American 4 per cent. By 1947 American textile exports amounted to 40 per cent of the world total, against the British 14 per cent.

In world shipping Britain lost heavily in tonnage during the war, while the United States leapt forward. Before the war the British mercantile marine totalled 18 million tons against the American 15 million. By 1947 American tonnage was 32.4 million to British 17.8 million.

No less significant was the passing of strategic power to the United States. With the surrender of economic trading and shipping supremacy to the United States went also the surrender of the old

traditional British sea power. Once upon a time the Navy League used to issue extensive literature to prove that Britain's command of the seas was the condition of Britain's survival. The Navy League survives, but not the command of the sea. During recent years the Navy League must have had to pulp a lot of literature. In the days before 1914 the Two Power Standard was the favourite slogan; the British Navy must equal the two next naval Powers combined; anything less was ruin. After the Washington Treaty of 1922 the One Power Standard became the motto; the British and American Navies were to be equal; in fact, Britain continued slightly in front. Now the Half Power Standard has become the new rule; whereas before the war the British Navy totalled 1.2 million tons and the American 1 million, in 1947 the British Navy totalled 1.5 million tons, and the American 3.8 million. Farewell "Rule Britannia."

On the other hand, if we examine the situation with regard to world colonial possessions we find a different picture.

At the end of the war the British Empire outside the United Kingdom (excluding the nominally independent countries in the British sphere, like Egypt and Iraq and the former Italian colonies administered by Britain) covered over 14 million square miles with a population of over 550 million. As against this, the American direct colonial possessions, including the Philippines, covered only 125,000 square miles and a population of 19 million.

The disparity between the powerful advancing American capitalism with limited world colonial possessions, and the weakening British imperialism, with vast world colonial possessions, and the consequent control of wide markets, trade routes, sources of raw materials and spheres of investment, is evident. This is the classic type of contradiction giving rise to imperialist antagonism.

This type of antagonism had given birth to the challenge of German imperialism to British imperialism in the early decades of the twentieth century, and found expression in two world wars. During the Nazi phase German imperialism concealed its aims of world aggression and expansion under the guise of leadership of Western Civilisation in the crusade against the "Eastern menace" of the Soviet Union and Communism. The protagonists of the Munich policy of "appeasement" swallowed avidly the Hitler-Goebbels bait of anti-Soviet propaganda. In the name of the

anti-Soviet crusade the Old Appeasers eagerly connived at and acclaimed the expansion of Hitler's power as a supposed "bulwark against Communism." They were ready to sacrifice immediate British interests to Hitler and Mussolini in the fond belief that the main offensive would be turned away from the British Empire and the blow would fall to the East.

Nevertheless, in the end the real imperialist antagonism defeated the Munich plans and revealed itself in war in 1939.

Today American imperialism similarly presents its drive to world expansion in terms of the leadership of "Western Civilisation" against the "menace" of the Soviet Union and Communism. Once again the New Appeasers in Britain rally in support, and readily sacrifice British interests to American domination in the sacred name of the anti-Communist crusade. But the real conflict of commercial and financial interests continually breaks through, and complicates the plans for a unified counter-revolutionary bloc.

The American drive to world expansion is in fact directed, not merely against the Soviet Union and the people's democracies of Eastern Europe, but also and immediately against the countries of the older and weaker colonial powers, and especially against the British Empire.

Already in 1928, Stalin characterised the Anglo-American antagonism as the key antagonism of the imperialist world.

> "Whether you take the question of oil, which is of decisive importance both for the development of capitalist production and for the purpose of war; or whether you take the question of markets, which are of prime importance for the life and development of world capitalism, for goods cannot be produced unless markets are secured for the sale of these goods; or whether you take the question of markets for the export of capital, which is the most characteristic feature of the stage of imperialism; or whether, finally, you take the question of routes leading to the markets for the sale of commodities and the markets for the sale of raw materials—all these fundamental problems drive towards the one fundamental problem, the struggle for world hegemony between England and America. America, that country of gigantic capitalist growth, wherever it turns . . . encounters obstacles in the shape of the strongholds already held by England." (Stalin, speech to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, July 30, 1928.)

Since the second world war this antagonism has developed to new intensity beneath all the forms of alliance and partnership.

The " cold war " of American imperialistic expansion against the Soviet Union is open and avowed. The " cold war " of American imperialist expansion against the British Empire is hidden and unavowed, but none the less real for being camouflaged behind the phrases of admiration and friendship.

The strategy of this offensive of American imperialism against the British Empire has developed through successive phases of the Loan Agreement, the Havana Trade Agreement, the Truman Doctrine, the campaign against Imperial Preference, the Marshall Plan, the enforcement of devaluation to break the sterling bloc, and President Truman's Fourth Point.

The abrupt ending of Lend-Lease after the conclusion of hostilities and lifting of controls, with the consequent boom inflation of American prices, intensified Britain's economic difficulties at the end of the war and prepared the way for acceptance of the Loan Agreement.

The Loan Agreement established the shackling restrictions of " non-discrimination," which hindered British attempts to seek freedom from dependence on dollar supplies or extend economic relations with Empire countries in order to diminish dollar dependence.

The Havana Trade Agreement and the insistent pressure for multilateral trading carried forward the offensive against Imperial Preference. This offensive was reinforced by the conditions imposed through the Marshall Plan.

The Truman Doctrine* expressed the American strategy to establish suzerainty in the Middle East, and proclaimed the new imperialist technique of establishing economic and political control over nominally independent countries through the supply of subsidies and armaments and the maintenance of docile governments on this basis.

The Marshall Plan further developed this expansionist and interventionist technique to the new stage of establishing direct economic organs of control in the metropolitan countries of Western Europe, and at the same time included special provisions for the supply of strategic raw materials from the colonies of the European powers to the United States.

* It is worth noting that the Truman Doctrine, which is today accepted as a canon of " Western civilisation," aroused sharp hostile comment at the time from British official expression. *The Times* found the Truman Doctrine " revolutionary " in " the blunt readiness it expresses to go ahead with a controversial American policy without preliminary Great Power agreement or discussion by the United Nations." The *Daily Herald*, the official organ of the Labour Government, found the declaration " grave," " disturbing " and " frightening," and went on to declare (15.3.47): " Our first reaction to President Truman's speech was one of uneasiness. Our second thoughts are no happier."

An indication of the extent to which this technique of indirect control of European governments had been carried by 1949 was provided by the statement of the well-known American foreign correspondent, John Gunther, author of *Inside Europe,* in his new series of articles " Inside Europe Today " in the *New York Herald-Tribune.*

> " It is my honest belief that if American aid were withdrawn from Greece the Greek Government could not survive ten days. Nor could the governments of France and Italy survive more than a few weeks or months." (John Gunther, *New York Herald Tribune*, February 3, 1949.)

Thus by 1949, in the view of this leading foreign correspondent of the most influential American newspaper, the Governments of Western Europe had become satellite Governments dependent on American support.

With the new dollar crisis of 1949, arising from the fiasco of the Marshall Plan, the offensive for devaluation was opened, directed to break the basis of the sterling bloc which is mainly the economic expression of the grouping of the countries of the British Empire.

The victory of this offensive, with the devaluation of the pound in September, 1949, represented the further triumph of the dollar as the dominant world currency of capitalism over the disinherited pound—that is, of American over British imperialism.

Finally, President Truman's Fourth Point Programme in his inaugural address of January, 1949, set out openly the aims of American world financial penetration and expansion in the colonial areas of the European powers.

> " We must embark on a bold new programme for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of undeveloped countries. . . . We should foster capital investment in areas needing development."

Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, pressed to explain more cor-

rectly the kind of areas in mind, gave one specific instance only —India. The subsequent visit of the Indian Premier, Nehru, to Washington in the autumn of 1949, and his triumphal reception throughout the United States, testified to the rapid advance of American penetration of India and the active schemes for the United States to displace British hegemony in the main base of the British Empire, India.

How far has this programme of American increasing penetration and absorption of the British Empire been carried out in practice? This question will require a more concrete examination of recent developments.

CHAPTER VII

THE NEW AMERICAN EMPIRE

"Every day makes it more certain that the United States must not only put herself at the head of the English-speaking people to win this war of which a free world is the prize but that, after having won the world, the United States must be prepared to run it. Therefore, to the extent that England grows weak, the United States must grow strong. As England's grasp on world power shrinks, American dominion must expand, and where England's dominance ends, American coercion must begin."

JOHN MACCORMACK, *America and World Mastery*, 1940.

THE EXTENT of American trade penetration into the countries of the British Empire is indicated in the following table:—

UNITED STATES EXPORTS TO BRITISH EMPIRE COUNTRIES
(*in millions of dollars*)

	1938	1947	% Increase
CANADA	489.1	2,012.0	310
INDIA	42.8	399.7	850
NEW ZEALAND	16.5	76.6	375
UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA	69.1	412.3	497
AUSTRALIA	61.5	234.7	283
BURMA	4.1	5.6	36
CEYLON	1.6	47.1	3,840
BRITISH MALAYA	10.0	65.5	555
HONG KONG	18.1	88.6	390
JAMAICA	5.9	23.8	303

Between 1939 and 1948 British exports to Canada rose in value less than three times, American four times; British exports to India rose four times, American seven times; British exports to Malaya less than three times, American eight times. In 1917 American iron and steel exports to the British Empire were over double those from Britain.

Even more important has been the advance of American financial penetration and capital investment in the British Empire. The total volume of American overseas capital investment (excluding Government grants) increased from 1.1 billion dollars in 1938 to 4.8 billion in 1947, or a more than fourfold increase. A large proportion of this new capital investment has gone into the countries of the British Empire. In Canada U.S. investments rose by

almost a billion dollars since 1939 to the figure of 5 billion by 1947, heavily outweighing British capital in Canada. In South Africa, through the American-Transvaal Investment Corporation, American capital " has acquired a substantial interest in more than 100 South African companies. . . . The importance of this needs no emphasis " (*The Times,* October 10, 1947). The orientation of the Malan semi-fascist Government against Britain and towards the United States has been marked. In Australia, out of sixty-six overseas companies with total new nominal capital of £A19 million engaged in new or additional production since the war in Australia, twenty-six had their headquarters in the United States. In India the increasing penetration of American capital was reported by the official organ of the British Export Trade Research Organisation, the *Betro Review,* in its issue for November, 1947:

> " The determination of American capital to enter the Indian market is becoming more and more obvious.
>
> " There has been a considerable influx of American technical experts into India. . . . Parallel to the Indo-British combines for manufacture in India, the Americans are also participating in joint Indo-American industrial production. . . . Americans seem to be associated with all the major development projects in the Indian Dominion."

In the Middle East the advance of the American oil companies and American strategic influence, relegating the former dominant British interests to second place, has been especially marked. By the beginning of 1949 the *Observer* (January 9, 1949) wrote:

> " The political landscape of the Middle East is no longer what it was in 1945 when our military planners regarded it as the key area of imperial defence. Since then, the United States and not Britain has become the Power on which the security of this important area mainly rests. . . . We have nothing to regret in this change of guard in the Middle East."

No less significant has been the American drive against the still surviving spheres of British monopoly in colonial raw materials—especially rubber and tin, the great "dollar-earners." American rubber plantations in Indonesia have increased from 100,000 acres before the war to 1,000,000 acres or one-ninth of the total rubber area. The American development of synthetic rubber and cutting down of purchases of natural rubber from British colonial sources has dealt a heavy blow to the economic structure of Malaya and Ceylon. Exports of rubber, tin, cocoa, diamonds and wool from

sterling sources to dollar areas were slashed by half from $120 million in the first quarter of 1949 to $60 million in the second. *The Times* complained on July 7, 1949:

> " Government encouragement of synthetic rubber in the United States has limited the outlet for Malayan rubber. The encouragement of tin-smelting in Texas has lessened the earnings of tin-smelters in Malaya."

And again on July 26, 1949:

> " The long-standing criticisms of the United States' excessive preoccupation with her synthetic rubber production have revived with increased activity. Gratitude for Marshall Aid does not and should not silence complaints concerning any features of American policy which make it more difficult for the sterling area to pay its way. In his letter to *The Times* yesterday, Sir John Hay estimated the decline in the sterling area's dollar earnings from rubber at over one-third compared with the first half of last year. It is not difficult to show that fundamentally United States' protection of the synthetic product has been the most important influence in bringing about the decline in the price of natural rubber."

Similarly the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Creech Jones, replying to the debate in Parliament on July 20, 1949, issued this warning appeal of desperation to the American authorities:

> " I have been asked by several honourable Members about the Malayan rubber situation especially as it is affected by synthetic rubber in America. In our view, there is no greater danger to the stability of the Far East than a bigger fall in the price of rubber than there has been already. We consider that the price of rubber is as low as it can go with safety. If it goes any lower, there will be very great danger in the Far East. It will be difficult to maintain any security in that vast area. I hope that those who are concerned with this matter will realise that I mean what I say in this respect."

At the same time the American financial-political offensive has been pressed forward against the Sterling Bloc as the basis of Britain's economic organisation to hold together the countries of the Empire (other than Canada and South Africa) with London as the centre. On January 8, 1948, the *Economist* wrote:

> " Unfortunately, American hostility to the sterling area goes deeper than the reasonable desire to see that Marshall dollars are used for approved purposes. In part, the hostility is a reflection of that almost instinctive aversion that most Americans feel—and that so few Britons can fathom—for all of the symbols that unite the British Commonwealth of Nations."

This offensive was carried forward to a major victory with the devaluation of the pound in September 1949.

The rulers of the British Empire have found themselves compelled to accept the increasing American penetration and domination of their Empire with the best grace they can muster. It can be no pleasure to the former lords of the earth to find themselves displaced. Mr. Winston Churchill may most loyally sing the "Stars and Stripes,"* but he cannot but recall that he had once declared that he had not become Prime Minister of England to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire. Mr. Bevin may proclaim his desire to "cease to be English" and become a loyal member of the American satellite organisation in Western Europe,** but he will still proclaim his fervent devotion to the British Empire. If the Churchill-Bevin policy has in practice capitulated to American imperialism, it is not for love of American imperialism, but because these representatives of current British imperialist policy see no alternative. And, indeed, *on the basis of their imperialist premise,* on the basis of their hostility to the rising new world of socialism and colonial liberation, there is in fact no alternative.

The United States monopolists hold the whip hand. American imperialism possesses strategic supremacy, with its control of sea power ending the former British sea power, and control of air power, as well as economic supremacy, with its superiority of merchant shipping and ability to export capital. But without sea power and air power there can be no question of holding an empire spread over the seven seas and five continents. Hence it is manifest to the British imperialists, without need of the test of war, that they can only hope to remain even in nominal possession of their empire by permission of American imperialism. *The former owners become bailiffs.* The Empire is mortgaged, even if the creditors have not yet finally foreclosed. *The British imperialists find it only possible*

* "Every one in the Boston Garden Hall was deeply touched when, following the speech, the American National Anthem was played by the Marine Corps band and Mr. Churchill started singing it. None of his companions on the platform followed his example.

"Mr. Churchill sang the 'Stars and Stripes' in the same manner after his famous speech at Fulton" (*Daily Telegraph,* April 2, 1949).

** "He wanted a practical organism in Europe in which we should cease to be English or French or other nationality, but would be Europeans with an organisation that could carry out a European policy in the face of new developments in the world." (Ernest Bevin, speech to the Foreign Press Association, January 25, 1949, *Times* report.)

to endeavour to maintain their Empire under the general suzerainty and control of the United States—with all the consequences that follow from that dependent and satellite position. This was the significance of Churchill's declaration to Roosevelt in 1941 already quoted: "You know that we know that without America the Empire won't stand."

In this way develops the present peculiar relationship of Britain, the Dominions and the United States: one of subordination to the United States alongside conflict, of *antagonistic partnership,* with the United States in the dominant position.

The Dominions attempt to play both ways in relation to America and Britain. In the period between the wars it was customary to speak of the centrifugal tendencies of the Dominions, that is, the drive to end their dependence on the British centre and establish themselves as independent capitalist Powers. Today the situation is more complex. The aim of establishing themselves as independent capitalist Powers has been virtually attained (though the recent decision of the Privy Council upholding the annulment of the Australian Labour Government's legislation for the nationalisation of the banks has revealed an example of the legislation of an elected parliamentary majority and its Government in a Dominion being overruled by a superior non-elected organ in London). But the pressure of American penetration and the tendency to American domination has now come to the forefront. This has produced mixed consequences and conflicting currents among different sections of the Dominions capitalists according to the degree of their closer connections with British or American capital. The general influence of the United States on the various Dominions has undoubtedly become stronger; but at the same time the Dominions capitalists fear the domination of American capital, and in consequence seek to a certain extent to play off the relationship with Britain against the relationship with the United States. They fear the loss of the advantages of their trade connections with Britain through the weakening of imperial preference and the development of schemes for closer British and Western European "economic integration" through Western Union. On the other hand, American pressure is exercised to "prod" Britain (in Dewey's phrase) into closer absorption into Western Union and the abandonment of imperial preference. This

expresses the policy to weaken Britain's links with its empire possessions and reduce it to the rôle of a secondary satellite European country.

In Britain the consciousness of this dependent and satellite position in relation to America, despite continuing rivalry, is visible in all the utterances of the imperialist politicians, however much they may occasionally kick against the pricks on some secondary concrete issue. In every international conference the rôle of the British representative becomes to say ditto to the American leader. An obsequious tone dominates official and Press utterance in relation to the United States. This found characteristic expression in the speech of the former President of the Federation of British Industries, Lord Barnby, addressing the House of Lords on April 22, 1947, to criticise the B.B.C. for having committed the *faux pas* of permitting Henry Wallace to broadcast:

> "We were likely for some time to be dependent to a considerable extent on the financial consideration of the United States. Therefore a deferential and respectful attitude was desirable towards the United States at the present moment. We should be respectful to the U.S.A. We should try, where possible, to avoid causing unnecessary annoyance to her."

Or more bluntly in the words of the *Economist* (August 23, 1947):

> "For the present the Americans still retain the power to make the British Government jump through any hoop they choose."

So has developed the special character of the new American Empire as it has begun to take shape in the present phase. The old-style British Empire was based on the direct territorial domination of one-quarter of the world. The new American Empire is based primarily on economic and financial domination of the entire capitalist world, together with the maintenance of a large number of military, naval and air bases in every continent and intensive armament preparations and a network of military alliances under American control.

The Economic Control Agency, the Financial Adviser, the Joint Strategic Co-ordinating Authority, the Bomber Base replace the old-fashioned crude colonial methods of the traditional British Empire. The new colonial system of the American Empire is hidden behind a host of bodies with a forest of initials incomprehensible to the common man, who is only dimly aware that something queer seems to be happening to his country.

Thus American imperialism appears as a special type of imperialism with relatively few direct colonial possessions. The enfeebled European colonial Powers are graciously allowed to keep their colonial empires, that is, to pay the costs and supply the man-power for war against the peoples in Indonesia, Indo-China or Malaya, while the American monopolists draw the cream of the profits. On this basis American imperialism endeavours to present itself as the enlightened non-imperialist Power, which seldom soils its hands by using its own man-power, but prefers the politer methods of the threat of the atom bomb, a naval cruise or a training visit of a bomber squadron.

Lenin in his *Imperialism* has described the traditional position of the Portuguese Empire as a satellite of Britain:

> "Portugal is an independent sovereign state, but in actual fact for more than two hundred years, ever since the War of the Spanish Succession (1700-1714), it has been a British protectorate. Great Britain has protected Portugal and her colonies in order to fortify her own positions against her rivals, Spain and France. In return, she has received commercial advantages, better terms for exporting goods, and, above all, for exporting capital into Portugal and the Portuguese colonies, and also the right to use the ports and islands of Portugal, her telegraph cables, etc. Between large and small states, relations of this kind have always existed, but during the period of capitalist imperialism they become a general system; they form part of the process of 'dividing up the world'; they become links in the operations of world finance capital."

This analogy from an earlier type has its significance for the present still further developed stage of the satellite relationship of the British Empire to American imperialism.

In the nineteenth century the most sagacious of the Victorian statesmen of still ascendant British capitalism, Gladstone, discerned the beginnings of the decline in the last quarter of the nineteenth century before the advance of American supremacy, and wrote of America in 1879:

> "It is she alone who, at a coming time, can and probably will wrest from us our commercial supremacy. We have no title: I have no inclination to murmur at this prospect. If she acquires it, she will make the requisition by the right of the strongest and the best. We have no more title against her than Venice or Genoa or Holland has had against us."

But in practice America cannot succeed to Britain's nineteenth

century world leadership; for neither the conditions of the twentieth century world nor of America permit it.

Britain's nineteenth century free trade world supremacy represented at that time the most advanced and progressive stage of civilisation so far reached relative to the conservative, feudal, bureaucratic and despotic institutions still maintaining themselves over the greater part of the European continent in opposition to the rising liberal democratic challenge. The new American World Empire, on the contrary, gathers together all the most conservative forces all over the world in opposition to the advancing tide of the new higher stage of the socialist organisation of society.

Britain accepted the logic of its world economic supremacy, and, becoming the world's greatest creditor, became also the world's greatest importer, allowing its home industry, agriculture and productive equipment to fall into neglect—hence the present tears.

America, on the other hand, tries simultaneously to force up exports, maintain super-production at home and dam imports. The United States surplus of exports over imports, which amounted to 265 million dollars in 1937 and 1,134 million in 1938, attained 9,607 million in 1947, and still reached 5,544 million in 1948. By the first half of 1949, the United States exports surplus was rising again, even in the conditions of world crisis, through the slashing of imports and forcing up of exports, and reached a level of 3,226 million dollars, or an increase of nearly one-third on the second half of 1948. From this follows apoplexy of the capitalist world, expressed in the dollar famine, which is only temporarily allayed by the accumulating American export of capital, grants, Marshall Plans and the rest of it. Each non-American capitalist country adopts desperate emergency measures to restrict imports, impose austerity, and enter into a cut-throat fight for exports in a shrinking world market, an increasing proportion of which is conquered by the superior equipment of American industry, while the austerity-Marshallised countries tie up their economies to dependence on American grants.

Such is the sick condition of the declining world of imperialism in the mid-twentieth century, consequent on the Great American Contradiction, that is, the inequality of capitalist development. American capitalism has to sustain the sinking capitalist structure in every other country of the still surviving capitalist world, at the same time as its lusty competitive power continues to enfeeble

still further and knock out the same structure which its diplomacy is striving to sustain.

This Great American Contradiction received recognition in the remark of the Professor of Economics at Harvard University, Professor Harris, when in a letter to the *New York Times* on July 5, 1949, he spoke of the "schizophrenia" of American policy which

> ". . . seeks to make Western Europe sufficiently robust to leave her invulnerable to the Communist threat, but perhaps also sufficiently anæmic so that she will not compete successfully with exports from this country."

In this connection the words of Mao Tse-tung are apposite:

> "The American reactionary has a heavy burden. He must sustain the reactionaries of the entire world.
>
> "And if he cannot sustain them, the house will fall down. It is a house with one pillar."

CHAPTER VIII

NEW TACTICS OF IMPERIALISM—INDIA

" If an indigenous government took the place of the foreign government, and kept all the vested interests intact, this would not even be the shadow of freedom."

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU, *Whither India?*, 1933.

IT IS THE familiar claim of Government Ministers and official spokesmen today that the " old imperialism " is dead. To attack " imperialism," it is therefore held, is to flog a dead horse. It has been replaced by a new regime of freedom, self-government and friendly co-operation.

Lord Inverchapel, as British Ambassador to the United States, informed a Baltimore audience in February, 1947: " British Imperialism is as dead as Queen Anne."

There is some difference of opinion among the experts as to when the demise took place. General Smuts prefers to date it from the turn of the century:

> " The old British Empire died at the end of the nineteenth century. Today it is the widest system of organised freedom which has ever existed in human history." (General Smuts, *The Times*, January 11, 1943.)

It is evident that General Smuts is inclined to date the dawn of the new era from the time when he and his fellow Boer exploiters were drawn into the charmed circle to exercise their system of colour-bar repression of four-fifths of the South African population in the name of " organised freedom."

On the other hand, Pandit Nehru and Mr. Attlee prefer to date the change from the time when they themselves became rulers in the Empire.

Already on January 13, 1940, *The Times* described the Empire as " this free association of nations, peoples and tribes, owing allegiance to the same sovereign." In fact at the time seven in eight of the population of the Empire were subject to open despotic rule directed from London.

Labour Government Ministers, on the other hand, have emphasised that the reign of imperialism continued until their own advent to power brought the dawn of the new era of freedom.

In proof of this contention they cite the granting of Dominion status to India, Pakistan and Ceylon, and of formal " independence " to Burma.

Thus in June, 1946, Mr. Attlee, speaking at the Labour Party Conference, declared:

> " We ask for others the freedom we ask for ourselves. We proclaim this freedom, but we do more than proclaim it. We seek to put it into effect: witness India."

At the outset, in order to answer this question it will be worth while to take a wider view of modern imperialist development.

In the most recent period of imperialist policy a new technique has been evolved and elaborated and more and more widely used, which may be termed the *technique of " formal independence "*. The principle is not in itself new: it is indeed only the continuation of the old principle of concealed rule which was characteristic of the earlier period of British domination in India: but it has received a further extension and elaboration in the modern period, as a method of countering the advance of national liberation movements.

This technique was illustrated in classic form in the case of Egypt in 1922. Egypt, it will be recalled, was proclaimed independent by a British statement of policy published on February 29, 1922. But this Declaration stated that certain subjects would remain at the absolute discretion of His Majesty's Government until such a time as a treaty would be negotiated between Britain and the Egyptian Government with regard to their regulation. These special subjects comprised:

1. Security of Empire communications in Egypt;
2. Defence of Egypt;
3. Protection of foreign interests and minorities in Egypt;
4. The Sudan;
5. Egypt's relations with foreign States.

These terms were rejected by the Egyptian national movement. Nevertheless Egypt was proclaimed independent: Fuad was installed as King and a suitable Prime Minister found. British martial law was maintained in Egypt until August, 1923. In this way Egypt became " independent."

Twenty-six years later in 1948 negotiations were still at a deadlock between the British Government and the Egyptian Govern-

ment with regard to the unsettled question of the final withdrawal of British troops from the Canal Zone and the future of the Sudan.

Since then this new imperialist technique has been further elaborated and extended. In 1927 Iraq was proclaimed "independent" under King Feisal—with treaty provisions covering the maintenance of British bases. After the second world war examples multiplied. In 1946 Transjordan was hastily proclaimed "independent" under King Abdullah, to prevent its former mandatory status being transferred to trusteeship under the United Nations, with special provision for British military control of its armed forces and a two-million-pounds annual subsidy from the British taxpayer. In 1947 the United States took a leaf from the book of British imperialism and proclaimed the Philippines "independent," subject to maintenance of American economic rights, American military bases and an American Military Mission with retention of American troops for these purposes. In 1948 Burma was proclaimed "independent" under a treaty providing for the maintenance of a British Military Mission, payment of debt interest instalments to Britain and protection of British monopoly interests.

An examination of these examples would indicate that the use of the term "independence" is elastic, and that the label on the bottle is no guarantee of the contents. The examples cited cover a variety of forms, ranging from what would have formerly been frankly termed a protectorate or puppet State, as in the Middle Eastern examples, to more subtle forms of indirect rule. In every case it is obviously necessary to look behind the diplomatic conventions and paper formulas in order to judge the real concrete conditions and relations of power.

Reality in all these cases reveals a different picture from the diplomatic fiction. Imperialism has by no means yet withdrawn from the colonial countries on which "independence" has been conferred by imperialist fiat. The essence of the imperialist colonial system lies, *first*, in the economic exploitation of the colonial country, its resources and man-power, in the interests of the big monopolies of the imperialist power; *second*, in the strategic domination of the country and its absorption in the imperialist bloc on the world scale; and *third*, in the maintenance of a political system capable of fulfilling these aims in the interests of the imperialist power. The particular political form is subordinate to

these essential purposes. By all these tests the colonial countries on which formal "independence" has been conferred remain, with greater or less openness—crudely, as in the case of Transjordan under the subsidised King Abdullah, or more subtly in the case of a more developed territory handed over to the administration of compromising bourgeois interests economically and strategically tied to imperialism—colonial or dependent countries, even though at an advanced stage of decay of the old imperialist power. The vested interests of the great imperialist monopolies, dominating and strangling the life of the country, are maintained and protected and guaranteed by special treaty arrangements. Joint military arrangements are maintained, with varying degrees of direct occupation, control by military missions and upkeep of bases. Joint warfare or repression by imperialism and the puppet governments is carried out against the liberation struggle of the colonial peoples and against the working-class movement.

It is in the light of this new technique of modern imperialism, this technique of pseudo-independence, that the latest examples of India, Pakistan, Ceylon and Burma, and especially the crucial case of India, need to be examined.

The first point that is important to note is that the political changes executed by imperialism in India, Pakistan, Ceylon and Burma since the war were not so entirely "voluntary" an "abdication" as suggested. In the view of competent and well-informed British observers on the spot, these political measures were compelled by the depth of the crisis and the popular upsurge following the war, reaching to the armed forces, and were regarded as the only means to avert or postpone a revolution:

> "India in the opinion of many was on the verge of a revolution before the British Cabinet Mission arrived. The Cabinet Mission has at least postponed if not eliminated the danger." (P. J. Griffiths, leader of the European Group in the Indian Central Legislative Assembly, speech to the East India Association in London, June 24, 1946.)

Similarly in the case of Burma *The Times* Rangoon correspondent recorded on March 28, 1947:

> "The mood of the British officials I have talked to is one of resignation. They have been unanimous in declaring that British policy in Burma has been the only one that our resources permit, and that the Anglo-Burmese Agreement was the only alternative to a widespread rebellion with which we could not have coped."

Sir Stafford Cripps in the Parliamentary debate on March 5, 1947, stated on behalf of the British Government in justification of the policy pursued:

> "What, then, were the alternatives which faced us? These alternatives were fundamentally two, though both, of course, might be subject to minor variations. First, we could attempt to strengthen British control in India on the basis of an expanded personnel in the Secretary of State's service and a considerable reinforcement of British troops, both of which would have been required, so that we should be in a position to maintain for as long as might be necessary our administrative responsibility while awaiting an agreement amongst the Indian communities. Such a policy would entail a definite decision that we should remain in India for at least fifteen to twenty years, because for any substantially shorter period we should not be able to reorganise the Services on a stable and sound basis.
>
> ". . . . The second alternative was we could accept the fact that the first alternative was not possible. . . . One thing that was, I think, quite obviously impossible was to decide to continue our responsibility indefinitely and, indeed, against our wishes—into a period when we had not the power to carry it out."

Thus of the "fundamentally two alternatives" envisaged by the Government: (1) to maintain British direct power in India by "a considerable reinforcement of troops" or (2) to make the political transfer on the lines of the 1947 settlement, the first was judged by the Government to be "impossible . . . we had not the power to carry it out." The simple reader might be excused for concluding that the "two alternatives" were only one. Behind all the complicated parliamentary phraseology the supposed "two alternatives" boil down into one—in other words, *there was no choice.* In the same way the *Manchester Guardian* commented in an editorial on October 11, 1947:

> "Public opinion has preened itself on British virtue in withdrawing voluntarily from India: but posterity may dwell rather on the hustle with which the withdrawal was carried out. . . . It may be hard to disentangle whether the British action was based on high principle or on a less glorious desire to retreat to shelter before the storm broke."

The political settlement of 1947 was thus no magnanimous voluntary gift of freedom by imperialism, but a conscious political manœuvre extorted and dictated by conditions of crisis which had outstripped the power of imperialism to control it by superior force, and which rendered it impossible for imperialism to continue to maintain its direct rule in the old fashion.

But did this political manœuvre carry with it the "abdication" of imperialism and the ending of imperialist domination and exploitation? Or did it represent, on the contrary, only a change of form and method, a new and advanced stage of "divide and rule" culminating in partition, a transition from direct to indirect rule, a transference of immediate governing responsibility, under condition of extreme crisis, to draw in a new reactionary upper class section in the colonial country, the representatives of the big bourgeoisie, to become the "junior partner" of imperialism in holding down the masses of the people and safeguarding the vested interests of imperialism? Experience since 1947 has shown that there is no room for doubt on the answer to this question.

The new Governments which were established in India, Pakistan, Ceylon and Burma were established by a decision in London and draw their authority from a British Act of Parliament. In this connection it is worth noting the terms of the Declaration of February, 1947, which proposed the Mountbatten Settlement in India. The Declaration laid down that

> "His Majesty's Government wish to make it clear that it is their definite intention to take the necessary steps to effect the transference of power into responsible Indian hands by a date not later than June, 1948."

At the same time the Declaration warned that no Constitution drawn up by a Constituent Assembly would be accepted by Britain unless it were drawn up "in accordance with the proposals" of the Cabinet Mission Plan and "by a fully representative Constituent Assembly," i.e., with the assent of the Moslem League; and that failing such assent of the Moslem League, or if a majority of representatives of the Indian Constituent Assembly should dare to draw up a Constitution not approved by Britain.

> "His Majesty's Government will have to consider to whom the powers of the Central Government in British India should be handed over, on the due date, whether as a whole to some form of central Government for British India, or in some areas to the existing Provincial Governments, or in such other way as may seem most reasonable and in the best interests of the Indian people."

Since this Declaration of February, 1947, is the key guiding statement of policy for the so-called "transfer of power" to a

"free India," it is worth noting the very definite character of its formulation. There was no question of a free choice by the Indian people of the kind of government under which they might wish to live. There was no question of a free Constituent Assembly, freely elected by universal suffrage of the Indian people, being entrusted with sovereign powers on behalf of the Indian people to draw up a Constitution without external interference. There was no sovereign Constituent Assembly at all. All these normal characteristics of the genuine establishment of a sovereign independent democratic State were completely absent. On the contrary, the most explicit regulations were laid down beforehand by the overruling British Power as to what kind of Constitution would be permitted. Failing compliance with these regulations and requirements laid down unilaterally by the ruling imperialist Power, it is the ruling imperialist Power which holds sole decision and determines unilaterally to what "responsible Indian hands" the so-called "transfer of power" shall be made. In other words, *there is here no establishment of a sovereign independent State, but a delegation of authority by imperialism to such forms of administrative authority in India as imperialism may judge expedient in its own interests.* And this in practice is what happened through the Mountbatten Settlement and the establishment of the Dominions of India and Pakistan.

At the same time the technique of Partition, already tried out with considerable success in Ireland, further weakened the new satellite Governments by dividing their authority between two rival States and Governments, each continually at cross-purposes with the other, and therefore with imperialism as the final arbiter in the background.

The same process could be traced in the method of establishment of the Aung San Government, later Thakin Nu Government in Burma. Here nominal "independence" was conferred. But at the same time a Treaty was imposed which saddled the new State with a crushing debt burden equivalent to £120 million, protected the rights of the British monopolies dominating Burmese economy, and provided for a British Military Mission to Burma with British training and equipment for a Burmese Army, and British strategic rights to use Burmese ports and airfields as imperial bases. Not without reason the Labour M.P., Woodrow

Wyatt, could claim in his speech in the House of Commons on November 5, 1947:

> "Although the Treaty takes Burma out of the Commonwealth, in fact it leaves her practically in the Commonwealth. It leaves her so closely allied with the Commonwealth that it is true to say that we are in a very special relationship with Burma, one that we are not in with any other foreign Power. The agreement to accept military missions only from this country and not from any other country than this virtually does imply a military alliance. So also do the provisions that provide that Burma will afford all facilities necessary in Burma for the British whenever we wish to bring help to any part of the British Commonwealth. The solidarity of the Defence Agreement . . . has ensured that there is, in fact, no gap whatever in Commonwealth Defence. . . ."

Experience of the past two years has shown how the new regime of pseudo-independence has worked in practice in India and Burma. In Burma the puppet Government has been engaged in ceaseless war, with foreign arms and aid, against the popular revolt. In India the more advanced development of the bourgeoisie has made possible a relatively stronger basis for the new Government, but its reactionary character has been extreme and its instability in face of popular discontent is increasingly marked.

The characteristic feature of the new Governments was continuity with the old imperialist regime. The entire administrative machinery of imperialism was taken over and carried forward: the same bureaucracy, judiciary and police of the old imperialist agents and servitors; the same methods of repression, police firing on unarmed crowds, lathi-charges, prohibition of meetings, suppression of newspapers, detentions without charge, persecution of trade unions and peasant organisations and crowding of the gaols with thousands of Left-Wing political prisoners. The vast assets, investment holdings and financial interests of imperialism in India were zealously protected, and the even flow of imperialist exploitation continued. Military control remained in practice in the hands of the imperialist High Command. In the initial stages even the British Governor-General was carried forward in the same position as the head of the Union, British Governors were maintained for the key Provinces in both Dominions, and British Commanders-in-Chief, military advisers and superior officers for both armies. In short, the new Governments were revealed, not as new independent

Governments established in their own right and making a break with the past of slavery, but as subordinate Governments established by the fiat of a superior ruling Power to carry through permitted tasks; as Governments in tutelage being trained for the job —the former prisoners learning to be gaolers, the former apostles of non-violence learning to denounce the anti-imperialist struggle in Asia as criminal unrest requiring to be put down with a firm hand.

Repression of the popular movement, and especially of the working class and peasant movement, has been extreme. In 1948 a general offensive was let loose against the Communist Party and the All-India Trade Union Congress, against the peasants' and students' organisations and against the Left-wing Press. In West Bengal and subsequently also in Madras, the Communist Party was banned; in other provinces conditions of semi-illegality were imposed. Arrests and detentions or warrants for arrest reached to practically all prominent working class leaders. Police violence in the jails as well as outside firing on unarmed demonstrators, resulted in many deaths. Repression laws taken over from imperialism were intensified by new special legislation. By 1949 it was reported by the All-India Trade Union Congress that no less than 25,000 workers' and peasants' leaders were in jail, the overwhelming majority without charge or trial. Thus the first two years of "liberation" revealed the heaviest offensive against the Indian working class movement yet known in its half century of history, exceeding anything previously experienced under direct imperialist rule.

No less significant has been the course of economic policy. The original programme of the Indian National Congress had provided for nationalisation of all key resources and industries. Such large-scale nationalisation would certainly be essential not only for progressive reconstruction, but for eliminating the dominant hold of foreign capital in Indian economy. But after the formation of the Dominion Governments this programme was placed in cold storage.

On February 17, 1948, Prime Minister Nehru declared:

> "There will not be any sudden change in the economic structure. As far as possible, there will be no nationalisation of existing industries."

Reuter's Trade Service Financial Section reported on April 1 from New Delhi:

> "Large-scale nationalisation of existing industries is ruled out in the Government of India's industrial and economic policy for the next ten years."

On April 6, 1948, the Government's Resolution on Economic Policy, substantiating these predictions, was published. The Resolution laid down that Government ownership would be confined to munitions, atomic energy and the railways (where it already existed); that in respect of coal, iron, steel and other leading industries "the Government have decided to let existing undertakings in these fields develop for a period of ten years"; that there would be State control of electricity; and that "the rest of the industrial field will normally be open to private enterprise." Nationalisation was thus abandoned in favour of the existing big monopolies, including the imperialist big monopolies.

The Explanatory Memorandum published with this Resolution on Economic Policy is of especial interest. The Memorandum declared:

> "The apprehension recently felt in Indian markets that the Government might experiment in nationalisation over a wide field of industries, thereby jeopardising their efficiency and credit, has been completely allayed. The expected result of the announcement of the policy will be the restoration to their former level of the prices of Government securities.
>
> "It is expected in knowledgeable quarters that the way is now clear for the Government to float big loans for purpose of reconstruction now that confidence has returned."

The Memorandum then proceeded to give assurances to allay fears of any possible limitation or control of profits:

> "Markets were touchy about the possibility of the Government stepping in to regulate and limit profits in private enterprise. The policy as announced contains no hint of this, and share values are bound to go up. Private enterprise therefore receives encouragement."

"Private enterprise . . . encouragement," "Share values are bound to go up"—the class basis of this appeal is sufficiently clear.

Nor was any room left for doubt as to the type of "private enterprise" to which this appeal was especially directed, i.e., to imperialism, to Anglo-American capital. The official Memorandum

accompanying the Government Resolution laid down the aim in its final clause:

> "The Resolution contemplates full freedom for foreign capital and enterprise in Indian industry while at the same time assuring that it should be regulated in the national interest. This part of the Resolution reveals the Indian Government's recognition of the need for foreign aid both in management and technical training and investment, and of the wisdom of welcoming foreign capital and skill to supplement Indian enterprise."

"Full freedom for foreign capital"—the Mountbatten Settlement was in truth realising rich dividends for imperialism.

Not without reason the *Economist* wrote already at the time of the Mountbatten Settlement, in the issue of June 7, 1947:

> "Something may remain even of the formal ties if Dominion status is not renounced: and in any case the essential strategic and economic ties between Britain and India will remain, even if it is under different political forms."

The continued alignment of India in practice with imperialism was most clearly shown in the sphere of military, strategic and foreign policy. Here India has been more and more clearly aligned with the Anglo-American Bloc, that is, with the bloc of imperialism.

The military structure and strategic planning of the Dominions of India, Pakistan and Ceylon has continued under British control and guidance. Even the Commanders-in-Chief remained British in the initial period, together with hundreds of British officers functioning in the Indian and Pakistan Armies. This control was especially close in the case of the Indian Navy and Air Force. Military and naval training, staffing and equipment were linked up with Britain, and the operation of air bases with the R.A.F. In Ceylon the naval base of Trincomalee continued to be developed as a main Empire base.

In foreign policy the alignment of Indian big business with imperialism found open expression in the leading organ of Indian financial interests, the *Eastern Economist* on December 31, 1948:

> "In practice—whatever political quibbling may say—our foreign policy has now been given a definite orientation. It is towards a foreign policy which will keep us primarily on friendly terms with the Commonwealth. . . . Association with the Commonwealth which is more friendly to the U.S.A. than to the U.S.S.R. implies that we are in effect leaning towards the U.S.A. The logical consequence of this political fact should be clear. *We cannot in the United Nations or elsewhere take a line except on a minor issue which is contrary to that taken by the Commonwealth and the U.S.A.*"

This alignment received its logical completion in the London Declaration of the Dominion Premiers' Conference in April, 1949. By this Declaration India agreed to stay in the British Commonwealth or Empire under the British King, while enjoying the little luxury of the nominal title of "Sovereign Independent Republic." The official communiqué declared:

> "The Government of India has declared and affirmed India's desire to continue her full membership of the Commonwealth of Nations and her acceptance of the King as the symbol of the free association of the independent member nations and as such for Head of the Commonwealth."

With this London Declaration, subsequently ratified by the Indian Assembly, India was formally linked with the camp of Anglo-American imperialism. The alignment was completed by Nehru's visit to Washington in October, 1949, when he proclaimed to an enraptured and applauding Congress his fidelity to the front against Communism and pledged that India would not be neutral in a war "for freedom and justice". The London Conference was accompanied by military conversations of an Indian Military Mission in London and in Washington. It was further announced that at the London Conference arrangements had been made for Britain, India and Pakistan jointly to supply the puppet Government in Burma with finance and arms in order to suppress the popular revolt in Burma.

The docile response of the puppet Government of Burma was expressed by its Finance Minister, U Tin, in September, 1949:

> "U Tin reaffirmed the country's policy of welcoming foreign investors, and said: 'Except in the restricted range of industries which the country has already designated for the purpose, there can be no nationalisation for a number of years to come." (*Times*, September 14, 1949.)

Similarly the Prime Minister, Thakin Nu, defined Burma's international alignment in the terms "The British are closest to us", and added:

> "The Burmese Government undertakes not to nationalise foreign undertakings within a period to be determined by discussion in each case, and is prepared to discuss alternative methods of granting security during this period. . . .
>
> "The Government will welcome proposals for the association

of foreign enterprises in partnership with the Government or with indigenous capital."* (*Times*, September 29, 1949.)

Thus the new dispensation of spurious "independence" for India, Pakistan, Ceylon and Burma has not only in practice served to hold these countries in the camp of imperialism. Following on the offensive against the popular liberation movement in these countries, it now seeks to make a satellite India the main bastion and offensive base of imperialism in Asia. This startling reversal of every previous tradition of the Indian national movement received powerful expression in Sardar Patel's broadcast on the first anniversary of "Independence Day" on August 15, 1948:

> "China, which at one time was expected to be the leading nation of Asia, had serious domestic troubles. . . . Again the conditions in Malaya, Indo-China and Burma were disturbing. . . . If the undesirable elements in the country were not put down with a firm hand immediately, they were sure to create the same chaos as they found existing in some other Asiatic countries."

"Undesirable elements." "A firm hand." The wheel has here indeed come full circle. Indian bourgeois nationalism has blossomed into India neo-imperialism acting as the junior partner of Anglo-American imperialism.

The conclusion is inescapable. The new tactics of imperialism in decline, demonstrated in the partition of India and the establishment of the new Dominions of India, Pakistan and Ceylon, and in the Treaty with Burma, have not brought freedom to these countries. They are still held as satellite countries in the camp of imperialism. The yoke of imperialist exploitation still lies heavily upon these peoples, alongside the yoke of their own exploiters acting in association with imperialism. The fight for real liberation has still to be won, and the fight is going forward today.

CHAPTER IX

NEW DREAMS OF EMPIRE—AFRICA

> *"Many go out for wool and come home shorn."*
> CERVANTES, *Don Quixote*.

THE NEW METHODS of extended constitutional concessions or conferment of formal "independence" in certain areas are not the only methods pursued by imperialism in face of the colonial crisis.

Alongside these methods of political manœuvre and partial retreat in particular areas, imperialism remains to the last, until its final overthrow, an aggressive force, driving to expansion, and seeking to maintain violent domination wherever it is able.

The "liberal" "enlightened" face of nominally "handing over power" is reserved for those territories where the strength of national revolt, in conditions of extreme crisis, advancing to the threat of revolution and the direct overthrow of imperialism, makes impossible the continuance of the old methods of direct rule, while at the same time possibilities exist to find within the upper class elements of the colonial country, and especially in the national bourgeoisie, a basis for a new counter-revolutionary alliance against the popular liberation struggle so as to maintain the essential strategic and economic interests of imperialism.

But this is not the only type, and these are not the only methods employed.

In other cases, especially where the stage of social and political development is less favourable for these methods, where there is no stable upper class or big bourgeoisie to whom to transfer administrative responsibility, and where the special economic or strategic importance makes imperative the maintenance of direct imperialist rule, the policy is ruthlessly pursued of seeking to restore or maintain the old colonial system by methods of violent repression and full-scale military operations against the popular revolt.

The outstanding example of this is Malaya, where the new constitution imposed after the war makes no pretence of veiling the open imperialist dictatorship and refuses even a façade of elections outside Singapore. The barbarous colonial war in Malaya is openly

justified on the grounds that Malaya represents Britain's "chief dollar-earning source." (Walter Fletcher, M.P., former Chairman of the Rubber Trade Association in *The Times* of September 1, 1948.)

Thus it would be erroneous to regard the new constitutional manœuvres as evidence of the abdication of imperialism. On the contrary, imperialism, although weakened, continues to pursue an aggressive colonial policy, and even seeks to extend the area of colonial exploitation as a means of solving its own crisis.

At the end of the first world war British imperialism, though weakened, extended its colonial empire by 1.6 million square miles, or eighteen times the area of Great Britain.

After the second world war the same attempt to extend the area of colonial territory may be seen in the tenacious grip maintained, four years after the war, on the former Italian colonies in Northern and North-Eastern Africa, and the assiduously pursued campaign to incorporate Cyrenaica (under the puppet Emir set up and recognised by Britain in June, 1949) in the area controlled by the British Empire.

Even more important, however, than the attempts to extend directly the area of colonial territory—which are necessarily limited, in an already divided world, with a restricted and even diminishing total colonial area, to claims on former colonies of defeated Powers—are the new plans and projects now in the forefront to intensify the degree of exploitation in the existing colonial territories still directly ruled by Britain, and thus to find a solution for Britain's economic problems.

An examination of the Labour Government's Four Year Programme, published in 1949, would show that the main basis of the proposals to overcome Britain's economic deficit rests on a projected enormous increase in the output of colonial raw materials, of rubber, tin, oil, copper, cocoa, etc., and an estimated sevenfold to eightfold increase of Britain's "invisible earnings."

Imperialism seeks to solve its economic difficulties by intensified colonial exploitation. This is shown with especial clearness today in relation to Africa.

The Marshall Conference European Economic Report in 1947, already quoted, indicated that one of the main factors in the economic difficulties of the Western European imperialist countries lay

in the bankruptcy of the old colonial exploitation. From this the imperialists draw the conclusion that the solution must lie in the intensified exploitation of the colonial countries, and especially, as the basis in the Middle East and Asia grows more precarious in the face of rising colonial revolt, in the intensified exploitation of the rich and undeveloped territories of Africa.

The programme of the Western European Bloc—that is, of the Bloc of Western European imperialism under American control—is integrally bound up with the programme of intensified colonial exploitation. The idealistic vision of "Western European Union," its promoters explain, must rest on a solid foundation of the intensified exploitation of Africa and other colonial territories. According to these curious geographers, Africa should be regarded as a "southern extension" of Western Europe, and such obviously Western European territories as Africa, Turkey, the Middle East, India and South-East Asia should be regarded as natural and indispensable bastions of "Western Christian civilisation."

The dream of solving the problems of Western European imperialism on the basis of grandiose schemes for the intensified exploitation of Africa is common to all the present-day spokesmen, economists, and politicians of Western imperialism, and unites Mosley-Fascism, Conservatism, the Labour Party and Social Democracy in a single chorus.

Mosley, speaking in London on November 15, 1947, declared:

> "If we link the Union of Europe with the development of Africa in a new system of two continents, we will build a civilisation which surpasses and a force which equals any power in the world."

The Conservative Imperial Policy Committee's organ, *Review of World Affairs,* brought out a special Africa number in December, 1947, holding out a megalomaniac vision of ultra-imperialism:

> "A British Empire solution all by itself is no longer enough. The only solution which is now large enough and practical is one in which America, Britain, the British Commonwealth, the Scandinavian countries, Switzerland, Holland, Belgium, France, Italy, Portugal and Spain together embark upon three projects: viz., development of the African continent, the restoration of China and Western Germany.
>
> "It is practical to start upon the development of Africa at once. . . . The whole Anglo-Saxon bloc must go into development: something which is going to develop entirely new sources of

wealth, provide new markets and smash right through the whole idea of restriction and restraint. The solution is an African Development Company, with a minimum capital of £5,000 million.

"Beyond all the commercial and strategic attractions are political ones too. If Africa is not developed by the civilised Powers grouped in this way, it will fall victim to many political dangers. What a chance for Christian leadership!"

These visions are not confined to the Fascists and ultra-Tories. They are fully shared and no less ardently expressed by the Labour Government and the Labour Party leadership. The Labour Party Executive published in March, 1948, *The Labour Party's Plan for Western Europe,* in which it laid down:

"It is fully recognised that Western Europe cannot live by itself as an independent economic unit. . . . A real reduction in our dependence on American supplies depends above all on developing the vast resources of the African continent. But such development depends on close collaboration among the Powers with responsibility in Africa."

On behalf of the Labour Government, Mr. Bevin declared in the House of Commons on January 22, 1948:

"The organisation of Western Europe must be economically supported. That involves the closest possible collaboration with the Commonwealth, and with overseas territories, not only British but French, Belgian, Dutch and Portuguese. These overseas territories are large primary producers. . . . They have raw materials, food and resources which can be turned to very great common advantage. . . .

"If Western Europe is to achieve its balance of payments and get a world equilibrium, it is essential that these resources should be developed."

Similarly Sir Stafford Cripps affirmed to the Conference of British African Colonial Governors in November, 1947:

"Further development of African resources is of the same crucial importance to the rehabilitation and strengthening of Western Europe as the restoration of European productive power is to the future prosperity and progress of Africa."

And the President of the Board of Trade, Mr. Harold Wilson, declared in the House of Commons on July 6, 1948:

"I agree with the view expressed by a number of honourable Members on many occasions, that the development of so far undeveloped territories in Africa and elsewhere can do more than any other single thing to redress the world balance of payments. . . . Pressed on—as we are pressing on, with the colonial development, and as we hope to press it on more and more as resources become available—this programme can, in a measurable period of time—say, a decade or so—completely alter the balance of world payments."

No less definite was the declaration of the Minister of State, Hector McNeil, on October 20, 1948:

"I am convinced that it is only by investment in such areas as Africa that the terms of trade which have been running against us can be redressed to afford Europe and particularly Great Britain a real opportunity of development."

British imperialism is not alone in entertaining these ambitious projects for solving its economic problems on the backs of enslaved Africans. The other European colonial Powers have prepared similar plans. At the same time the United States monopolists are more and more actively pressing forward their claims and interests in Africa.

United States imperialism has its own designs for the penetration of Africa and for utilising and dominating European colonial administration of and expansion in Africa. American representatives take a leading part in advocating the programme for African development with American financial backing as an integral part of the design of the Western Bloc. This conception has already found preliminary expression in President Truman's Fourth Point, and in the dispatch of American Technical Missions to British colonial territories in Africa to explore the ground and examine the possibilities for future investment.

Foster Dulles, the Republican adviser on foreign policy, who was the first prominent American spokesman to advocate the project of the Western European Bloc as a cardinal aim of American policy in Europe, from the outset linked this project with the conception of American exploitation as its indispensable base:

"Mr. Dulles has for some time been advocating United States financial and technical aid in developing the African continent. . . . Africa, he has said, could make Western Europe completely independent of Eastern European resources, and that should be the aim." (*Sunday Times,* July 4, 1948.)

The strategic scheme for partitioning Europe and then carrying the mutilated Western half on the backs of the Africans is here open.

The limitless extravagance of the dreams conjured up for the recovery of imperialism by these means was illustrated in the

recent report of an American Professor returned after a year in Britain:

> "Britain is preparing to stage a mighty come-back through the development of a great new empire in Africa, says Professor Lowell Ragatz, of George Washington University, who recently spent a year in Britain. British leaders, he said, predicted that within a few years Africa will be industrialised almost to the same extent as the U.S., and her wealth will enable Britain to regain her position as one of the leading economic and political forces of the world. . . . Leaders in Britain, realising that the present volume of exports, on which her current prosperity depends, could not continue for more than a few years, were skimping on other things to pour manpower and capital into developing Africa.
>
> "Britain has built and lost two great empires—in America and in India; but the prospects are that her third—in Africa—will be her greatest." (*News Chronicle*, August 25, 1948.)

Such are the grandiose—and greedy—dreams entertained by the sales-promoters of imperialism in present-day Britain. But the outcome is likely to be very different from these dreams.

These pipe-dreams of a declining imperialist Power are remote from reality. Already the initial experiences of the much discussed groundnuts project have brought the first shocks of disillusionment; and these are only the opening stage of the demonstration in hard practice of the decisive factors governing the problem.

These dreams are unrealistic, because they fail to take into account the real factors of the situation.

The colonial system in Africa of seizing vast areas of land for European possession and plantation economy, the forcing of the people to dependence on monocultural primary production, producing a single crop for export, with no development of their countries for supplying their own needs, and leaving the people to exist on the scanty product of the remaining available land and man-power at the most primitive technical level of production, has produced the progressive impoverishment, starvation conditions, and physical deterioration of the African peoples.

The new projects carry forward this process to a more extreme point. So far from being in a position to provide surplus food for export to Europe, the African peoples would in reality need food imports at present until such time as they can under free conditions build up balanced economies in their own countries.

> "Two years ago, the Governor of Kenya said that 'it is now evident that, taken as a whole, East Africa is barely able to support itself with food at the present time.' The vast extent of territory seems to have led to a belief that food production could be almost unlimited. The opposite is true, and responsible doctors use the words 'killing famines' when they speak of the future." ("Medical Work in East Africa," *The Times*, December 1, 1948.)

Second, the projects require enormous capital expenditure, including that necessary for reclamation of the jungle, which under the most favourable conditions could not bring in any rapid return. But the essential character of the problem of the British and West European imperialist countries today is that they find themselves short of resources even for necessary capital expenditure at home, which has had to be heavily cut down, and facing a deficit in the balance of payments which leaves them with no surplus of capital investment overseas. The inadequate capital which is extracted for these imperialist schemes means in consequence the starvation and strangling of home reconstruction, and at the same time the increase in the deficit on the balance of payments.

Third, the projects are based on the assumption of the passive servitude of the African people, who have no say in them. But the very process of capitalist expansion in Africa creates at the same time the colonial proletariat, through the destruction of primitive economic relations and conditions of production, and the dispossession of the people, and thus creates the conditions for the colonial revolution. The illusion that the colonial revolt which has reached such heights in Asia will never reach Africa is already being powerfully shattered by present events, as in the recent struggles in the Gold Coast, Nigeria and Uganda. The first forms of organisation and political consciousness are rapidly advancing at varying stages in all the African colonies. The dreams of a new revival of imperialism on the basis of intensified African servitude and exploitation are built on sand.

In order to establish further the truth of this, it will be necessary to examine in greater detail the "Colonial Development and Welfare" programme which is today presented with such wide publicity as the grand advertising prospectus of the "new imperialism."

CHAPTER X

MYTHS OF COLONIAL DEVELOPMENT

> *"If the Ten-Year Plan were carried out overnight, the improvement in the condition of the mass of Nigerians would be barely perceptible."*
> House of Commons Select Committee on Estimates, 5th Report (Colonial Development), June 30, 1948.

THE COLONIAL Development and Welfare Acts of 1940 and 1945, and the subsequent establishment of the Colonial Development Corporation and Overseas Food Corporation are today presented as the proof of a "new vision" and "new era" under imperialism. They are offered to the public at home and to world opinion as acts of unexampled generosity of the British taxpayer towards the colonial peoples. Impoverished Britain is pouring out its resources to help the backward colonial peoples along the path of economic prosperity and social wellbeing.

The Labour Party programme, *Labour Believes in Britain,* published in the spring of 1949, lyrically proclaimed:

> "Great Britain and the colonies have gone into partnership to liquidate ignorance, poverty and disease."

"Imperialism is dead, but the Empire has been given new life," announced *The Labour Speaker's Handbook, 1948-9,* and proceeded:

> "In the colonies Labour Britain has given a tremendous impetus to social and economic progress. Under the Colonial Development and Welfare Scheme, £120 million is given to colonial governments to assist local planning. The Colonial Development Corporation with a capital of £110 million has been established to finance special projects of large-scale economic developments. Further still the Overseas Food Corporation is empowered to spend £55 million on great plans for increasing food production in the colonies. Even Beaverbrook has welcomed these schemes and admits that the Labour Government has done more for the Commonwealth than the Tories ever did with all their phrase-mongering."

It will accordingly be necessary to examine a little more closely the work of these Acts and the operation of the schemes for colonial development.

The policy of "Colonial Development and Welfare," on the

basis of which the Act of 1940 was drawn up, was inaugurated under the Chamberlain Conservative government in the White Paper of March, 1940.

The Act of 1940 provided for sums of up to £5 million to be paid annually, for a period of ten years, from the British Exchequer to the Colonial Governments for purposes of improving communications, educational and health services, water supplies, etc., and the 1945 Act increased this sum to £12 million annually for the ten year period 1946/7 to 1955/6. In 1947 the Colonial Development Corporation was launched with borrowing powers up to £110 million and the Overseas Food Corporation with borrowing powers up to £55 million.

Before these vast figures of widely advertised generosity to the colonial peoples dazzle the innocent into taking them at their face value as a true picture of the economic relations of British capitalism and the colonies in the modern period, it will be advisable to make one or two comments.

In the first place the figures announced as *allocated* by no means correspond to the amounts *actually spent* during the nine years of operation of the Acts to date. This is shown in the latest return of the operation of the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts, published in July, 1949.

ACTUAL ISSUES FROM THE COLONIAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELFARE VOTE DURING THE NINE YEARS ENDING MARCH 31, 1949.

Year	Development and Welfare £	Research £	Total £
1940/1	170,389	—	170,389
1941/2	435,399	6,670	442,069
1942/3	473,372	13,793	487,165
1943/4	1,547,404	30,450	1,577,854
1944/5	2,980,817	58,345	3,039,162
1945/6	4,558,774	93,306	4,652,080
1946/7	3,377,300	169,388	3,546,688
1947/8	4,911,389	428,300	5,339,689
1948/9	5,610,974	743,110	6,354,084
	£24,065,818	£1,543,362	£25,609,180

Thus over a period of nine years the actual payments under the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts amounted to

£25,609,180. This had to be divided between 47 colonial territories with a population of 68 million. A simple sum in arithmetic will show that this is equivalent to a total amount of 7s. 4d. per head over nine years, *or an average annual rate of under 10d. per head.*

These figures of actual expenditure look decidedly less impressive in contrast to the vast promises of economic development, abolition of poverty, extended health, education, social services and welfare—all for 10d. per year per head. Even the maximum annual amount allowed under the 1945 Act, and never yet spent, would be equivalent to not more than 3s. 6½d. per head.

On the other hand it is necessary to see certain features in the account which require to be set against the figure of 10d. per year per head before a final balance is struck. The total sterling balances of the colonies, representing the goods and services extracted without payment from the colonies during the war and after, amounted at the end of 1948 to over £600 million, of which £250 million represented sterling balances of West and East Africa and £100 million of Malaya and Borneo. It will thus be seen that the total amount paid over under the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts during the nine years of their operation is only equivalent to *one twenty-fourth part* of the sterling balances owing to the colonies for goods received and not yet paid for. If this one twenty-fourth part of the sterling balances had been released, the sum actually spent under the Acts would have accrued to the colonies without any of the humbug and pretence of free gifts and philanthropic grants.

It is further worth noting that these sterling balances have actually increased in the most recent period at the same time as the grants were being paid under the Development Acts. Thus the sterling balance of West Africa alone increased during the year 1948 by no less than £20 million or more than three times the total amount paid out to all colonies during the year 1948/9. This is indeed to take out a pound with one hand in order to return a few shillings with the other and call the procedure philanthropy.

But even this does not measure the full real balance sheet of the profit and loss account between British capitalism and the colonies. In the familiar official presentation that "Britain does not make a penny out of the colonies" and that on the contrary "Britain hands out millions of pounds to help the colonies," the

real profit drawn by British capitalism from the colonial possessions which finds expression in the profits of the big manufacturing companies operating in the colonies is never brought into the balance sheet. In the year 1948 a single imperialist combine, the United Africa Company, made a profit of £25 million. This means that the spoils drawn by a single imperialist combine from the African people were alone equivalent to the entire amount paid out under the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts to all the colonial territories in the world over the entire period of nine years.

This exposure of the flagrant deception perpetrated in the name of the so-called "free gifts" of the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts is more than the question of a simple arithmetical exposure of a balance sheet which is in fact fraudulent. It is necessary to examine what is meant by the term "development." *What kind of "development"? In whose interests?*

The essence of the colonial system lies in the subjection of the economy of the colonial country to the requirements of the economy of the imperialist ruling country. Its general relationship is expressed in the rôle of the colonial country as a source of cheap raw materials and primary products and a market for the relatively costly industrial products of the imperialist country. The natural resources available, minerals, etc., are appropriated by the monopolists of the ruling power and exploited for their profit, the resultant profit being drawn out of the country in place of serving the needs of development within the country. The land is either directly taken over, or the best parts taken over, with the colonial peoples segregated and over-crowded on the reserves or working on plantations; or the cultivating peasantry, remaining on the land, is drawn into the network of imperialist exploitation, providing cash crops for the capitalist market at the expense of the food needs of their own people. The labour power of the people is drawn, by means of economic pressure, taxation, special legislation or open coercion, to serve the interests of foreign exploiters.

It is evident that the first necessity for real economic development and advance in a colonial country is that the wealth and resources of the country shall cease to be alienated to foreign owners and shall be restored to the people, and shall be used, not to provide profit for absentee exploiting companies, but to pro-

mote the needs of development within the country. In place of the dependent and tributary colonial economy, a balanced economic development is essential, carrying through industrialisation and combining industry and agriculture in such a way as to make possible a real advance in productive levels and living standards.

In practice such a programme requires an indispensable *political* pre-condition—the national independence of the former colonial country in order that a government may be established representing the interests of economic development of the country which will carry through such a programme.

On the other hand, the imperialist type of "development plans" under the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts are primarily and mainly designed to continue and carry forward the existing colonial economy, and exclude in practice the objective of industrialisation. An examination of the twenty-one Ten Year Development Plans so far approved reveals an allocation of £2,778,000 for electricity and power schemes, and £1,578,000 for industrial development, or a total of £3,356,000 out of an overall total of £199,422,000 so far planned—that is, *less than* 2 *per cent.* In his speech to the African Governors' Conference on November 12, 1947, Sir Stafford Cripps openly expressed this negative attitude to industrial development:

> "You will, I understand, be considering the question of the development of manufactures and industries in the colonies. Though I take the view that such development is highly desirable, so long as it is not pushed too far or too quickly, yet it must be obvious that with the present world shortage of capital goods, it is not possible to contemplate much in the way of industrial development in the colonies. The available steel will be better used both from a world point of view as well as from the point of view of the colonies themselves in doing our utmost to increase the supplies of foodstuffs and raw materials."

Similarly, the Colonial-Under-Secretary, Mr. Rees-Williams, wrote in *Fact,* March 1949:

> "It is no part of our purpose to try and set up everywhere small Lancashires. It is quite obvious that every territory cannot produce everything."

And the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Creech Jones, in introducing the plans for the Colonial Development Corporation in Parliament on June 25, 1947, explained three governing principles:

(1) "it will operate on commercial principles";

(2) "it is not intended to supplant private enterprise, but to supplement it";

(3) "no doubt these enterprises will be mainly agricultural."

The governing personnel of the Colonial Development Corporation, Overseas Food Corporation and their subsidiary concerns is entirely dominated by big business interests and direct representatives of the banks and leading monopoly combines.

Beneath the transparently thin cover of "philanthropy" and "benefiting the Africans" the real primary purpose of imperialist policy in pursuing so actively these "development" schemes at the present stage is in fact unconcealed. As already shown in the survey of the dreams of the "New African Empire" in the last chapter, the aims of the Western European imperialist statesmen are openly directed to solve the problems of the bankruptcy of their own imperialist system by intensifying the exploitation of Africa and other colonial territories. This was the plain declaration of the Prime Minister, Mr. Attlee, in Parliament on January 23, 1948:

> "Western Europe cannot live by itself as an economic unit. Hence the desire for wider integration with Africa and other overseas territories."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Stafford Cripps, stated on November 12, 1947:

> "The whole future of the sterling group and its ability to survive depend, in my view, upon a quick and extensive development of our African resources."

And the Food Minister, Mr. Strachey, moving the third reading of the Overseas Resources Development Bill on January 20, 1948, no less emphatically asserted:

> "By hook or by crook the development of primary production of all sorts in the colonial territories and dependent areas in the Commonwealth and throughout the world is a life and death matter for the economy of this country."

Indeed, the former Conservative Colonial Secretary, Mr. Oliver Stanley, expressed his weariness with the pretences that the main purpose was to benefit the Africans when he cynically stated:

> "I agree that *indirect* benefit will flow to the colonies, but let us be frank about it."

And a year later Mr. Strachey, on March 14, 1949, frantically endeavouring to meet the barrage of criticism over the fiasco of

his groundnuts scheme, was at pains to insist that it had never been intended as a " philanthropic proposition ":

> " For us now to make some sort sort of announcement . . . that the scheme was no longer intended to produce oils and fats, but was to be turned into some sort of eleemosynary object of raising the level of African life, would be the worst thing to do. How can we develop great areas and lift the standard of life of the population except by businesslike schemes which have a real commercial object? . . .
>
> " The scheme is a thoroughly hard-headed and not philanthropic proposition . . . painful readjustments for the African population . . . this is not a philanthropic scheme started purely and solely for the Africans' benefit."

But in practice the aims of solving the problems of imperialism on the basis of intensified exploitation in Africa and other colonial areas come up against heavy difficulties and contradictions which finally prevent their fulfilment. Some of these have been already indicated in the last chapter.

Even the limited and one-sided " development " plans proposed, to extract the maximum volume of raw materials and primary products with rapacious haste from the African continent, require for their effective fulfilment heavy capital expenditure, to clear and reclaim the ground, install equipment and storage facilities, and extend communications, roads, railways, rolling stock and ports. All this means exporting and locking up a large volume of capital with no prospect of quick returns. That is the obvious reason why the big monopoly combines operating in Africa and overseas, which have in practice devised the schemes and control their operations, have preferred not to risk their own capital, but have kindly invited the Stracheys and other Simple Simons of Labour Ministers to come in as suckers on the ground floor and provide State capital for the costly initial stages. On the other hand, Britain and the Western European countries, faced with a deficit in the balance of payments, and seeking a quick solution of the deficit by intensified colonial exploitation, find themselves in no position to provide capital exports on the scale required for the success of the plans.

Thus the imperialist Governments of Britain and Western Europe are involved in a vicious circle. They desperately want more dollars to balance their deficit. To get the dollars, they demand more fats and oils, more coffee and tin, rubber, hemp and sisal from the

colonies. But to get these, they need to export capital to provide more roads, rails and equipment. And for this they need more dollars. In other words, *their brilliant plan to solve their deficit assumes that they first must have a surplus.* Their only solution is to hope that America will provide the dollars for long-term colonial investment. But if American capital provides the dollars, American capital will draw the profits, and the problem remains.

At the same time the greedy get-rich-quick plans for solving the deficit by speedy grandiose returns from intensified colonial exploitation come up against stubborn long-term natural and physical difficulties. The outcome of decades of previous imperialist exploitation has resulted in exhaustion of the soil and extreme impoverishment of the people. Repeated medical reports, such as the survey recently made for the Colonial Office by Dr. C. Northcott into the efficiency of African labourers on the Kenya and Uganda railway, refer to " malignant malnutrition," due to starvation in childhood, which is " probably incurable." There is evidence of progressive deterioration, declining standards and declining population:

> " Professor Carr-Saunders considers there is some evidence that Africans have declined in numbers during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. . . . For the majority it is at present impossible to say whether they are reproducing themselves or not." (Lord Hailey, *African Survey,* 1938, p. 125.)

In Sierra Leone:

> " In the seventeenth century the people were of fine physique, and lived on a mixed diet and apparently had sufficient animal food. In the early and middle eighteenth century it would seem that they still had a satisfactory diet.
>
> " The present dietary of the people is surveyed, and the evidence shows that it is ill-balanced with an undue proportion of carbohydrate, resulting in malnutrition and disease." (*Review of Present Knowledge of Human Nutrition,* Report of Senior Medical Officer, Sierra Leone, Sessional Paper No. 5, Freetown, 1938.)

In Basutoland:

> "According to residents of long standing, the physique and health of the Basuto today is not what it used to be. Malnutrition is seen in every village. . . . The progressive deterioration in native physique is becoming a subject of constant comment." (*Summary of Information regarding Nutrition in the Colonial Empire,* Cmd. 6051.)

Governor Lamb, of Tanganyika, defending the practice of flogging

as " a suitable method of punishment " before the United Nations Trusteeship Council in 1948, declared that " imprisonment was not understood, since *in prison the Africans would be better off than at home.*" Repeated surveys into " African Labour Efficiency " refer to the insuperable obstacles of malnutrition, low physique and lack of resistance to disease. At the same time provision for health or education is infinitesimal. While scores of millions of pounds are drawn off annually as tribute by the great monopoly combines, the amount spent on health or education amount to little more than a few pence per head—even in a relatively advanced colony like Nigeria one shilling per head for education (with the overwhelming majority of children receiving no education at all) and one shilling per head for health (with one doctor for 133,000 persons as against one for 1,200 in the United Kingdom).

Pests and diseases, despite all the much advertised efforts of well-meaning, but powerless, agricultural specialists, are taking an ever increasing toll of cattle and plantations in the colonies. Rinderpest, contagious abortion, trypanosomiasis cannot be fought by bacteriologists alone when the exhausted and eroded soil no longer offers the pastures required to keep the cattle in a good state of nourishment. The cocoa of West Africa is being relentlessly destroyed by swollen shoot, for which the cutting-out programme has not proved to be an effective remedy (trees are dying at the rate of 15 million a year). The clove plantations of Zanzibar are similarly threatened by the " Sudden Death " disease. No sooner is research hastily and inadequately organised in one sphere, than more of it is required in another. The truth is that the ruthless commercial exploitation of the high forests of West Africa, for example, has deprived the soil of its indispensable cover, replaced by tsetse-harbouring bush, so that the reclamation of West African agriculture is out of the question without a re-afforestation programme of gigantic dimensions. These things are beyond the power of imperialism, and can only be achieved when the energy of the people is released through their liberation from its deadening grip.

These contradictions have received a conspicuous demonstration in the initial experiences of the much advertised groundnuts scheme. This scheme was originally put forward in the spring of 1946. It had been prepared by the United Africa Company, the giant African subsidiary of the mammoth trust Unilevers—the biggest

and most universally hated African exploiting combine, which holds all Central Africa in its grip, and draws gigantic tribute. The United Africa Company kindly proposed the plan to the Labour Government in the spring of 1946, suggesting that the Government should bear the expense. The Labour Government eagerly adopted the plan, announced it with a flourish of trumpets in the White Paper of November, 1946, and gratefully appointed the United Africa Company to be managing agents for the initial period until the Overseas Food Corporation took over. The plan proposed that the Government should spend £24,000,000 initially and £7,750,000 annually to establish gigantic groundnuts (peanuts) plantations covering three and a quarter million acres, in 107 units of 30,000 acres each, in Tanganyika, Northern Rhodesia and Kenya, to be worked by 30,000 African wage-labourers at colonial wage rates. This giant scheme of plantation labour was actually presented to the British public as a great " socialist " plan—or " a curious and interesting mixture," as Mr. Strachey phrased it, " of the methods and motives of private enterprise and Government enterprise and finance." The tempting bait was held out to the hungry British public that it would by 1950 cover half Britain's deficit in fats and save Britain £10,000,000 a year. The practical experience of the first three years revealed a very different outcome. By 1949, in place of the original estimate of 1,230,000 acres of groundnuts planted, with a production of 228,000 tons, the total was under 26,000 acres (or less than 2 per cent of the estimate), together with another 23,000 acres of sunflowers and maize. The yield was 2,150 tons of unshelled groundnuts, or less than the seed provided, together with 800 tons of sunflower seeds. In place of the estimated clearing cost of £3 17s. 4d. an acre, the cost in the first year was ten times that amount, and by 1949 was still £14-£15. The Report of the Overseas Food Corporation for 1948-49 revealed that the expenditure up to March, 1949, was over £23 million (by October the figure was over £29 million), and likely to reach £50 million, or double the original estimate; that the assets were worth £14 million; and that the value of the 1949 harvest was £85,144. The auditors reported that no "proper books of accounts" had been kept. There were strong grounds for concluding that this colossal expenditure had served the strategic plans of British imperialism in developing its war base in East Africa, with the construction of

railways, roads, ports and airstrips, but had completely failed to fulfil the lavish promises of economic benefit for the African or British peoples.

In all these schemes for the "development of Africa," a "new progressive prospect for Africa," or a "socialist plan for Africa," the most conspicuous feature is the complete exclusion of Africans from any rôle save to provide the labour-power to be exploited. In contrast to the formal "transference of power" in India and Southern Asia, the colonial government of Africa, as of South-East Asia, remains completely despotic. Here the pretences of "constitutional reforms" are no more than a fig-leaf which fails to conceal the unchanged despotism of autocratic foreign rule. The Governor holds supreme overriding powers; his Executive Council is an advisory body consisting of European officials and nominated members; his "Legislative Council," even where there is supposed to be an "unofficial majority," consists mainly of officials and nominated members, representatives of Europeans, representatives of satellite chiefs, with here and there a powerless handful of elected Africans on the basis of the narrowest franchise (for example, in the Gold Coast Legislative Council of 30, five elected municipal representatives on the basis of a franchise equivalent to 0.8 per cent of the population; in Tanganyika, no franchise; in Uganda, no franchise; in Kenya, 16,000 Europeans elect eleven members, in addition to 16 official members, all European, while four million Africans are "represented" by four nominated members chosen by the Governor).

The contemptuous attitude to the conception of African self-government was openly expressed by the Governor of Kenya, Sir Philip Mitchell, in 1947:

> "This is a British country . . . Kenya and its people, all its people, are for ever British. . . . It is a fact there are people today with fantastic ideas of the creation here in Africa of an entirely native African self-governing State. That is as practicable a proposition as it would be to set up in the United States an entirely autonomous self-governing Red Indian republic."

Similarly the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Creech Jones, was at pains to reassure the British Parliament on July 29, 1949, that there was no question of self-government for the colonial empire "for a long time ahead anyway":

> "I cannot foresee a point, for a long time ahead anyway, when the work (of the Colonial Service) will come to an end because of the achievement of self-government, and when the Colonial Service will be discarded."

But the peoples of Africa are by no means so easily accepting the future of servitude and exploitation reserved for them. Here arises the finally decisive contradiction of all the imperialist plans of African "development." Under the title "'Exploiting' the Colonies?", the *Economist* of January 2, 1947, recorded the suspicions among colonial peoples about the real purposes of the corporations:

> "These suspicions arise mainly from the emphasis that was laid during the 'thirties and early 'forties on the need to diversify the colonies' economies, to prevent them from specialising on one or more export crops which made their prosperity dependent on world markets. What those colonies, where big production schemes are contemplated, are asking is whether, in its own interests and because of its own crisis, the United Kingdom is now changing its mind and imposing a policy of agricultural specialisation on them.
>
> "'Industrialisation' has become a political catchword in the colonies, especially in parts of Africa, and though industrial projects are not ruled out for the Colonial Development Corporation, its activities will be mainly agricultural."

Similarly *The Times* on May 24, 1949, recorded:

> "The good intentions of the British are suspect. There exists a frustrating crisis of confidence, and nothing significant can be achieved until that crisis is resolved."

The African Labour Efficiency Survey (Colonial Research Publications, No. 3, 1949) registered the same conclusion:

> "African confidence in the European is slipping. This is probably a gradual movement and may be due to changes in African sentiment to which the European has not adjusted himself. African aspirations, economic, political and cultural, have advanced in the past two decades. This alteration is not appreciated very widely, nor is there evidence of a policy to meet the changing situation. What cannot be gainsaid is that strikes and disorders break our without warning, and that the fear of strikes was 'in the air' during the period of the Survey."

The same survey notes the opinion of a doctor with two decades' experience in Africa:

> "A doctor . . . can assert that the cause of a poor work-output

is more mental than physical. Malnutrition and disease play their part, but, sitting and talking with the workers in their homes, one became aware of a very grave discontent which, unless constructively guided and relieved, may well threaten the civil peace."

The African revolt is rising from end to end of Africa. There are no more " backward regions " where the flame of revolt is not reaching. The Nigerian general strike of 1945; the Gold Coast "riots" in 1948, when the police firing on unarmed demonstrators led to 29 killed and 237 injured, according to the official returns; the Uganda Bataka movement in 1949, met with a reign of terror, 1,000 arrests (admitted by the Colonial Office) and 300 killed, according to reports from on the spot (" the beating and every kind of torture inflicted exceeds Christ's sufferings "); the advance of trade unionism and association with the World Federation of Trade Unions; the beginnings of political movements of national liberation and of Marxist groups—these are the portents of the future in Africa. The message of Communism is bringing the hope of national and social liberation, of the ending of racial and colour oppression, and the winning of African wealth for the African people.

Imperialism will not succeed in building its final bastion in Africa. The future of Africa belongs to the African people.

CHAPTER XI

EMPIRE MEANS WAR

" Terrible as war may be, even war itself would be cheaply purchased if in a great and noble cause the Stars and Stripes and the Union Jack should wave together over an Anglo-Saxon Alliance."

JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN, speech, May 13, 1898.

" We find England and America — countries with greater potentialities of remaining democratic than any—going to just such savage and insensate lengths as Germany before them, and therefore they are just as rapidly, if not more rapidly, approaching the end which has so effectively been reached by German imperialism. The latter first swelled, spread over three-quarters of Europe, grew incredibly fat, then it burst, leaving a ghastly smell behind it. And that is the end for which British and American imperialisms are now heading."

LENIN, speech, November 8, 1918.

THE RECORD of imperialism is a record of more or less continual war. World wars are an invention of the imperialist era. Colonial wars are ceaseless. Armaments have continuously risen at an accelerating rate throughout the imperialist era. Bombing expeditions and frontier warfare have provided the recognised training ground of modern imperialist armies. The colonial system is itself a system of permanent war, latent or open, of military occupation of foreign countries and holding down their peoples. Clausewitz described war as the continuation of politics by other means. Imperialist peace may be described as the continuation of war by other means.

This war tension has reached an extreme height in the period succeeding the second world war. Four years after the cessation of hostilities no peace treaties have yet been drawn up for Germany and Japan. The wartime agreements of the victorious anti-fascist alliance for the post-war settlement, reached at the Crimea and Potsdam, have been in practice repudiated by the Western Powers. Instead, a new military coalition has been built up, based on the Anglo-American Bloc, replacing the former Anti-Comintern Pact of Germany, Italy and Japan as the main expansionist imperialist combination, intervening directly and spreading its military forces in all continents and seeking to exercise world domination. This Western Bloc or Anglo-American Bloc, domi-

nated in practice by American imperialism, has found expression in the Truman Doctrine, Brussels Pact, Western Union and the Atlantic Pact, and the military arrangements arising therefrom.

This Western Bloc or Atlantic Pact military alliance has been described by its sponsors as

(1) "democratic"—a union of democratic peoples for the defence of democracy;
(2) "defensive"—a military alliance of Powers concerned for defence only, not for aggression;
(3) "pacific"—a military alliance of peace-loving countries for the maintenance of peace, in view of the failure of the United Nations.

An examination of the facts will show that none of these claims is correct.

The Western Bloc or Atlantic Pact military alliance is in reality the Bloc of Imperialism. Behind all the phrases of "Western spiritual values," "Christian civilisation," etc., the reality is—Imperialism. The twelve signatory States of the Atlantic Pact constitute a combination of the great colony-owning Powers and their immediate satellites. Their metropolitan areas have a total population of less than one-seventh of the world's population, yet they control directly or indirectly two-thirds of the world's population.

The main wars in the world today are conducted by the Atlantic Pact Powers. Britain conducts war in Malaya. France conducts war in Vietnam. Holland conducts war in Indonesia, United States arms and subsidies maintain the civil war against Chinese Democracy. British and American arms, military missions, troops and subsidies maintain the war of the former Hitler satellites against Greek Democracy. British arms, subsidies and officers maintained the war of the Arab League puppets against the liberation of Israel.

All these are colonial wars or wars against national liberation and democracy. They are not wars for defence. When Britain, France and Holland send troops, guns, tanks and bombing 'planes thousand of miles across the seas to spread slaughter and destruction in the countries of other peoples, this is not defence but aggression. They are not wars for democracy, but for the maintenance of colonial domination, whether in the form of direct colonial dictatorship, as in Malaya, or under cover of a puppet Emperor,

as in Vietnam, against the popular struggle for national liberation and democracy. Imperialism and democracy are mutually exclusive. The colonial system of imperialism is a system of aggression and military subjection of other nations.

The example of the Malayan War conducted by the British Labour Government is the clearest demonstration of this truth. There is no pretence that the inhabitants of Malaya are preparing to enter into their canoes and paddle across thousands of miles of intervening ocean in order to invade Britain and burn down British homes. But British troops, guns, tanks, Spitfires and Beaufighters (constructed by British workers for war against fascism), not to mention Gurkha mercenaries and Dyak head-hunters, are being shipped to Malaya to burn down Malayan villages. A typical scene was described by a correspondent of the *Observer* on September 19, 1948:

> "There was no whining or begging. They were given a few minutes to collect what they could. . . . The hut burst into a slow explosion of flame, and the family stood and watched ankle-deep in all they had. That happened five times. Once a child started to scream. Others just stood, their faces marble-cold. At the end of the line an old woman waited at the door of her hut. Her son crouched outside, his legs and arms like chicken limbs, approaching the slow end of his consumption. Inside was a climax of all poverty."

Inside the House of Commons the Fabian Colonial Secretary described these terrible outrages as "merely preventive measures."

This is not war of national defence for the British people. It is open, brutal, aggressive imperialist war. It is war of national defence only for the Malayan people.

Similarly there is no pretence of democracy in Malaya. The Malayan Federal Constitution which was proclaimed in 1948 established alongside the autocratic High Commissioner a consultative "Legislative Council" of seventy-five members. How many of these are elected by any electorate whatsoever? Not one. Fourteen are officials, eleven are agents of the puppet Sultans or British settlements, and the remaining fifty are handpicked by the High Commissioner. The Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions, which organised 300,000 workers, has been prohibited, as also the Communist Party, Malayan Democratic Youth League, Malay Nationalist Party, etc. According to Government replies in Parlia-

ment on September 15, 1948, up to that time 7,000 persons were detained in concentration camps on no specific charge, and 183 trade union leaders imprisoned.

Thus the war in Malaya is not a war for democracy. It is a war for colonial dictatorship against democracy.

It is claimed by official apologists that the guerrilla forces of the Malayan liberation movement are only "bandits" and "terrorists." These are the same terms which the Japanese military occupation used against the fighters of the national movement. In fact it is the same national liberation movement, the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army, which conducted the heroic war against the Japanese occupation, after Malaya had been abandoned to the Japanese by the British authorities, which received the official tributes of Lord Mountbatten and the South-East Asia Command, and whose leaders were decorated and marched in the Victory March in London (and have subsequently been executed or had a price placed on their heads); and which took over and administered Malaya for several weeks after the Japanese had been driven out, until British troops arrived to endeavour to re-establish colonial slavery.*

This war in Malaya—in a single colonial territory with a population of under five millions—has cost Britain during 1948 and 1949 a direct overseas expenditure equivalent to ten million pounds a year. It has involved a strain on Britain's military forces

* The alternative sordid apologia of the more racial-minded spokesmen of imperialism, that the war in Malaya is only a war against a "handful of Chinese," with no Malay participation, and that therefore there is no question of a Malayan national liberation struggle, can be dismissed as a barefaced attempt to deceive public opinion outside Malaya. The 1947 Census showed the following provisional figures of the three main communities composing the people of Malaya (including Singapore): Chinese, 2,608,315 or 45.3 per cent; Malays, 2,511,777 or 43.3 per cent; Indians, 605,250. Since the Chinese are the majority community, it is not surprising that they should be in a majority in the national movement. Further, the Chinese are mainly workers, and the Malays mainly peasants; and since the working class is the vanguard and main fighting force of the national movement, equally against Japanese domination and against British domination, with the peasants in general acting as suppliers of food and other assistance, it is equally not surprising that the bulk of the guerrillas should be Chinese. But the official reports of British Intelligence officers brought back by Malcolm MacDonald in May, 1949, had to admit that 25 per cent of the guerrillas were Malays (*Sunday Times*, May 15, 1949). The first person executed for the possession of arms was a Malay—who had fought with the R.A.F. And it is worth noting that the leaflets dropped by British planes, carrying gruesome photographs of the murdered bodies of Lau Yew and other Malayan leaders and threatening a similar fate to any daring to resist British rule, have been printed in the Malay language.

which led to the unprecedented step of sending out the Guards for a jungle war. The dispatch of the second Guards Brigade to Malaya in the summer of 1948 represented, according to the Press at the time, the dispatch of the greater part of Britain's mobile strategic reserve.

But this is only the beginning. It represents only one sector of the war front in which Britain is involved by the policies of imperialism. This was before the decision to concentrate military reinforcements in Hong Kong in 1949. Already on August 29, 1948, the *Sunday Times* wrote of the wider military problems arising:

> "The Government has to take into account the troubles in Burma, Malaya, India and Palestine. The ordering of the second Guards Brigade to Malaya has substantially affected our strategic reserve. . . .
>
> "Russia is not believed to be bent on war. . . . But the Government's plans are by no means entirely dependent on the Moscow negotiations, nor are they due solely to Russian policy. We have to take a wider view, and in the East there are actual hostilities and a risk of their extension. . . .
>
> "The battalions of Guards and armoured troops now on their way to Malaya represented the bulk of our last and only mobile strategic reserves."

Similarly the Military Correspondent of the *Evening Standard* drew the conclusion on September 1, 1948:

> "If Britain is to fulfil its commitments in Malaya, the Middle East and elsewhere, it is essential that the period of service is increased by at least six months. Some Service Chiefs . . . would even like to see it increased from one to two years. . . ."

In response to this agitation the Government increased the period of conscription to eighteen months.

Here the aims of colonial war, of imperialist policy, are open. For popular consumption, talk of the "Russian menace" is freely spread, with lurid propaganda, in the same way as it was used by Hitler to cover his campaign of aggression before the war, in order to justify the Government's rearmament programme and the Atlantic Pact. But in the circles of the professional military correspondents this talk is discounted ("Russia is not believed to be bent on war"; the Government's rearmament programme is "by no means due solely to Russian policy"); the centre of attention is fixed on "Burma, Malaya, India and Palestine," "the

East," " the Middle East and elsewhere." Talk of the " Russian menace " is only a blind for reactionary aggressive imperialism.

There is no doubt that the aggressive military aims of the Atlantic Pact imperialist bloc are ultimately directed, as also were those of Hitler, against the Soviet Union as the impregnable central fortress of the camp of democracy and socialism throughout the world. This is made abundantly clear in all the pronouncements and strategic declarations of American leading politicians, publicists and Service Chiefs—even more explicitly than did Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. But the fulfilment of this ultimate objective requires many political and military pre-conditions. After the collapse of the illusions of the atom bomb maniacs, who preached that the atom bomb was the invincible weapon of a sole self-sufficing air offensive strategy to win the war and destroy the Soviet Union, the American General Staff came to recognise that the first condition for the fulfilment of their future plans of war against the Soviet Union required the establishment of bases, political control, and preparation of ground forces in the regions surrounding the bloc of the Soviet Union and the Peoples' Democracies, that is, especially in Western Europe, with Germany as the centre, and in Eastern Asia, with Japan as the centre, as well as in the Middle East, with Turkey and Iran as the main bases. Hence it is in these regions that there is the immediate concentration of the imperialist offensive and active war preparations. This is not contrary to, but precedent to the ultimate aims of aggression against the Soviet Union. At the same time this coincides with the present problems of imperialism, which are concentrated with the highest degree of tension in these regions.

In Western Europe the military preparations are openly proclaimed, with the building up of the combined staff headquarters at Fontainebleau, the reorganisation, training and equipment of the European forces on the American model, and the establishment of American operational bases on Western European soil, alongside the development of Western Germany as a reactionary semi-Nazi State. On the other hand, in Western Europe the military preparations are auxiliary to the main economic and political concentration, to maintain in power satellite subsidised Governments and break the resistance of the labour movement and national sentiment. Here it has been made clear, as in the Senate Foreign Affairs

Committee Report on the Atlantic Pact, that the military clauses of the Atlantic Pact may be invoked, if judged necessary, to cover armed intervention against " internal disorders and revolution."

In Eastern Asia and the Middle East war conditions are already present and the war plans are being most actively pressed forward.

In the Middle East the calling of the Conference of British representatives in the Middle East in the summer of 1949 reflected the breakdown of the previous plans to build a power-bloc on the basis of the puppets of the Arab League, whose military impotence and internal instability of their reactionary regimes had been ignominiously demonstrated in the war against Israel. The *Economist* of July 16, 1949, lamenting that the Arab League " which Britain used so hopefully, is broken," continued:

> " It would be as well to admit that the result is equivalent to the bankruptcy of British policy. . . . The political balance sheet of the last four years seems to be ending with a heavy deficit."

The journal drew the conclusion that the only future policy must be based on an Anglo-American combination in the Middle East:

> " The new starting-point of British interest in the Middle East must be a close Anglo-American understanding. No attempt to achieve such agreement was made in 1945. . . . On the contrary, there was an undercurrent of feeling in favour of excluding America from an area in which Britain had been dominant for the last eighty years. But the results have hardly been auspicious. The attempt, avoided in 1945, must be made today."

A similar conclusion was expressed by one of the leading American publicists on the Middle Eastern questions, that the aim must be to build up

> ". . . the combined resources of an historical British system of authority and influence and an influx of American power based on a vast economic and military potential. . . . The unvarnished fact of the moment is that the British system and American resources are a Siamese-twin power in the Mediterranean. The British system can no longer work effectively except in conjunction with American resources, and American policy cannot yet employ its resources effectively except in conjunction with the British system. . . .
>
> " The United States and Great Britain agree on the practical necessity for . . . blocking the Soviet Union from direct participation in Mediterranean affairs generally." (William Reitzel, *The Mediterranean, Its Role in America's Foreign Policy*, New York, 1948.)

With the weakening of British power, American predominance

advances in the Middle East, while both combine against the Soviet Union and against the rising popular movement for national liberation and democracy.

Parallel with this partial retreat of British power in the Middle East develops the increasing strategic concentration on Africa, which goes hand in hand with the economic concentration already discussed in previous chapters. This was brought strongly into the limelight with the visit of Field-Marshal Montgomery to Africa in the autumn of 1946, when the *Daily Mail* wrote:

> "The British Government's decision to quit Palestine, Burma's secession from the Commonwealth, the weakening of the ties with India, and the uncertainty of Britain's tenure in Egypt, have hastened the adoption of plans for a new Commonwealth defence system. . . . Kenya is the new centre of Commonwealth defence, and South Africa its arsenal."

The *Daily Express* wrote at the same time:

> "East Africa is expected to become a main atomic-age training ground of the British Army, and a main support base in the new Empire defence system."

Large-scale military bases are being constructed with lavish expenditure in Kenya and in Nigeria; and naval bases are being built up in Tobruk, Derna, Benghazi, Mombasa and Simonstown. The hope is even put forward to replenish the depleted man-power for the enormous military commitments of the Empire from the subject colonial populations:

> "Looking at the matter from the point of view of the army of the future, we were desperately short of manpower, but large numbers of men could be found in the colonies. Within two or three years we could get one million men from the colonies." (Lord Trenchard, House of Lords, January 29, 1947.)

Against this optimistic vision, the Under-Secretary for the Colonies pointed out that the obstacle in the way of such a desirable consummation lay in the disease, under-nourishment and weakened vitality of the African population.

But it is Eastern Asia which represents today the main burning centre of the struggle of imperialism and democracy, and the furnace of war and of menacing plans for war.

CHAPTER XII

EMPIRE WAR PLANS IN ASIA

> *"Would that I were King of India! I would make Moscow and Pekin shake. . . . The five rivers and the Punjab, the Indus and Sind, the Red Sea and Malta, what a chain of lands and waters to attach England to India! Were I King of England, I would, from the palace of Delhi, thrust forth a clenched fist in the teeth of Russia and France. England's fleet should be all in all in the West, and the Indian Army all in all in the East."*
>
> SIR CHARLES NAPIER, Commander-in-Chief in India, 1849-1853.

IN EASTERN ASIA American policy has sustained its greatest defeat with the collapse of Chiang Kai-shek and his feudal-militarist-bureaucratic clique, despite the limitless support of American arms and dollars. The victory of Chinese democracy and national liberation under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party has opened a new era. The voluminous White Book on American Relations with China, published in the summer of 1949, has set down the melancholy record of two billion dollars of arms and supplies lost in the vain effort to sustain reaction in China.

The victory of Chinese democracy and the strength of the rising national liberation battle in all South-East Asia has filled the imperialists with panic. It is here above all, in consequence, in Eastern Asia that the most active war measures and war preparations and strategic plans of imperialism are concentrated at the present stage. If we are to judge the full extent of the empire war plans today, we need to look beyond the blackboard activities of the Montgomery kindergarten at Fontainebleau, and extend our gaze to a world range. Especially we need to observe what is being done and prepared and planned in the battleground of Asia and in the hitherto, for our age, unhappily named region of the Pacific.

The unconcealed American claim to domination (with its junior British partner) in this region was expressed by General MacArthur in his interview with Ward Price in the *Daily Mail* of March 2, 1949:

> "Now the Pacific has become an Anglo-Saxon lake, and our line of defence runs through the chain of islands fringing the coast of Asia."

The active, open aggressive war front of Western imperialism—not merely threats of war, but violent, barbarous colonial war—of Britain, France and Holland and their American masters and backers, that is, of the signatories of the Atlantic War Pact, is engaged at this moment against the peace and freedom of the peoples of Eastern Asia.

Innumerable plans are put forward to build up a counter-revolutionary bloc of imperialism in Eastern Asia and the Pacific to correspond to the Western Bloc in Western Europe and the Atlantic. During the recent period there has been a spate of conferences, projects and soundings to promote this aim. Repeated military conferences in Singapore of British service chiefs, colonial governors and American admirals. Successive conferences in New Delhi of imperialist satellites under the sponsorship of Britain's junior partner, Nehru. Special Cabinet Envoys' missions to Australia, New Zealand, India, Pakistan and Ceylon. The Eden tour on behalf of the Conservative Party to Australia, Malaya and Singapore. The Dominions Premiers' Emergency Conference of the summer of 1949 to concentrate on the problems of India and Burma. Urgent propositions of Premier Chifley of Australia for a Pacific Pact. Alternative moves of the defeated Chiang Kai-shek to build an "Anti-Communist Bloc" with the American puppets of South Korea and the Philippines. Nehru-Truman conversations in Washington, and speeches on the common aim to defeat Communism in Asia.

The general line of all these attempts is clear. Faced with the fiasco of its military measures to restore colonial domination in South-East Asia, and panic-stricken at the collapse of Chiang Kai-shek and the victory of Free China, imperialism now turns its endeavours to build up a military bloc of Asiatic satellites and puppets in association with the imperialist Powers in Asia "against Communism in Asia," i.e., against the national liberation movement for the ending of imperialism and imperialist exploitation and its reactionary backers.

According to the British and Australian proposals, the basic membership of this imperialist bloc was planned to include Britain, Australia, New Zealand, India, Pakistan and Ceylon, with the co-operation of France, Holland and the United States. With these might no doubt be associated in due course Marshal Songgram

(the former Japanese puppet) of Siam, the ex-Emperor Bao Dai, and similar puppets for Indonesia and the Philippines.

The first step in the formation of this bloc was the Delhi "Asian" Conference on Indonesia in January, 1949. In contrast to the Delhi Asian Relations Conference of the spring of 1948, which included representatives of the Central Asian Soviet Republics and Vietnam, this new Delhi Conference was selective and included only "reliable" Governments from the standpoint of imperialism. To hoodwink the innocent and assuage anti-imperialist suspicions, the ostensible object of the Conference was to pass mild resolutions for a settlement in Indonesia along the lines of the United States resolution in the Security Council. But the rapturous reception by the B.B.C. and official expression in London, welcoming this Conference as the first step to a regional bloc in Asia corresponding to the Brussels Pact, the "authentic voice of Asiatic nationalism," and representing the emergence of "a new factor in world politics" (*The Times*, 24.1.49), revealed sufficiently the real strategy. By a curious coincidence Sir William Strang, the new chief of the Foreign Office, was in New Delhi at the time of the Conference. Once the ground had been prepared, the next step was the second Delhi Conference on Burma in the beginning of March. The third step was the Dominion Premiers' Conference in April, 1949, which fixed the retention of India in the Empire, and organised joint aid of finance and arms for the hard-pressed puppet Government of Burma.

There was little concealment of the strategic plan contemplated:

> "The real objects of the Conference will be to integrate all Commonwealth countries into the system of Western Defence and devise some sort of co-operation for resisting the spread of Communism in Asia. Active measures considered will be primarily economic and directed against Communism's political offensive, but the military aspects of the situation will not be overlooked. What is contemplated is a kind of Indian Ocean Pact to complement the Atlantic Pact in the historic task of 'containing Russia.'" (*Daily Telegraph*, March 14, 1949.)

More concrete details were available in the local Press:

> "In the new Defence plans the primary rôle of Australia and New Zealand will be the provision of air and naval forces. The main ground forces would be supplied by India and Pakistan. Ceylon's most important contribution would be the vital strategic

naval base of Trincomalee. It is known that the United States Government would welcome such a defence arrangement among the Commonwealth countries as a counter to the spreading Soviet Communist power in Asia." (*Straits Times,* January 24, 1949.)

"*The main ground forces would be supplied by India and Pakistan.*" Such is the ignominious destiny planned for "non-violent" India under the present regime of shame—to supply the troops for the subjugation of Asia to imperialism.

The modern base of imperialist counter-revolution in Asia is now attempted to be built on India, Pakistan and Ceylon. Such is the glorious outcome of the "emancipation" of 1947. The reason for this measure of temporary continuing hold of imperialism in these countries is clear. In these countries of prolonged and deep imperialist penetration there exists a considerably developed sub-ordinate big bourgeoisie (contrast the fiasco of the same manœuvres in Burma), which has close economic ties with British and American monopoly interests, which has always worked to throttle the militant national movement, in the sacred name of "non-violence," and which in the hour of revolutionary crisis after the war was only too thankful to sell national freedom for a deal with imperialism in order to safeguard its own position. To this big bourgeoisie is held out the tempting bait of "leadership in Asia" —the nascent Indian neo-imperialism which was most openly and crudely expressed by Patel with his demands for "a strong hand" to put down "disturbances" and "undesirable elements" in Burma, Malaya, Indo-China and elsewhere (Patel's Independence Day broadcast in 1948, already quoted).

But to win wider support for a satellite imperialist bloc in the anti-imperialist atmosphere of Asia requires more complex manœuvres than the mailed fist brutality of a Patel. New myths are required. The mythology used to put over the Brussels Pact and the Atlantic Pact in the West, is inapplicable in the East. Slogans of the defence of "democracy" can hardly be invoked to maintain the open anti-democratic dictatorship in Malaya. Slogans of the defence of "Western civilisation" and "Christian civilisation" can hardly evoke enthusiasm in the East. In face of the deeply anti-imperialist sentiments of the peoples of Asia any combination or political outfit seeking to win support must claim to be "anti-imperialist." Hence the skilful choice of the issue of Indonesia as the initial basis on which to call together the Delhi Conference.

But how to play with the slogans of abstract "anti-imperialism" and yet end up in the camp of the imperialists against the peoples struggling for freedom? Here is indeed a problem requiring a new mythology beyond the grasp of the outspoken mentality of a Patel, and only to be reached by a casuistry trained in the school of Western Social Democracy. So for public purposes Patel yields place to Nehru. The myth of the "Third Front" is transferred from European Social Democracy to India. India, it is explained, lines up with neither side in the world conflict, neither with the imperialist anti-democratic camp, nor with the democratic anti-imperialist camp, but pursues its own independent third line. If India in practice associates closely with British and American imperialism, this is no proof of India lining up with imperialism, but is solely in pursuit of India's own independent interests. India is an "independent sovereign republic." If India decides to remain part of the British Empire, or to enter into close economic, political and military arrangements with the British Empire, this is only proof of India's "independence" in choosing its own associates and friends. And so ad infinitum. We have entered the region of the higher philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru—today the darling of imperialism.

Chiang Kai-shek has failed. Today imperialism seeks to build up Nehru as his successor. It would not be possible to sponsor a satellite imperialist bloc in Asia under the direct leadership of a Malcolm MacDonald or General Boucher. For this purpose Nehru is found indispensable. And Nehru is ideally fitted to fill the bill. If Nehru did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him. With his cloudy mysticism of utterance reaching nowadays to almost MacDonaldite "up and up and up" incoherence, with his glamorous past of partial opposition to imperialism and Crippsian flirtation with the Left, he provides the sanctimonious cover for the brutal and degraded rôle of Indian satellite Big Business today. He can roll off the rotund phrases of abstract anti-imperialist eloquence to an applauding United Nations Assembly at Paris, and proceed to meet the Dominions Prime Ministers in London to sell India to the Empire and concert the measures for war on Communism. He can thrill the old ladies of both sexes with the pro-

fundities of his soul, and then proceed to order the arrest of 857 rail leaders to crush a rail strike or announce that he has thrown 6,500 Communist leaders into his prisons.

Hence it is no anomaly that Nehru, the former prisoner of British jails, has today become the darling of imperialism, cast for the rôle of the Bevin of Asia. Listen to the *Economist* on March 5, 1949:

> "The device of a Commonwealth Conference is as appropriate as it is novel, and once again shows Mr. Nehru as a statesman of daring and original constructive genius. Having assembled the nations of Asia for consideration of the Indonesian question, and incidentally taking the wind out of Russia's anti-imperialist sails by giving leadership to Asian opinion on the subject, he has now brought together a family council of the Commonwealth in such a way that neither is Britain exposed to the charge of reviving imperialism by intervention in Burma, nor is India left alone to cope with the very unpleasant situation on its eastern borders."

Or *The Times* on March 9, 1949:

> "In his determination to protect India against the disorders which are convulsing Burma and China, Mr. Nehru is giving a lead to other countries in south-east Asia."

But there are contradictions in the path of the fulfilment of these plans.

To begin with, the designs of American imperialism are far from coinciding with the projects of the British Empire rulers. At the very moment when Malcolm MacDonald and Chifley were most actively pressing forward the project of a Pacific Pact, repeated declarations appeared from State Department spokesmen, and finally from Dean Acheson himself on May 18, 1949, that "the United States was not currently considering participation in any further collective defence arrangements," and that a Pacific Pact was "impossible until the present internal conflicts in Asia were resolved." The argument was put forward that the Atlantic Pact, under its elastic Article 4, could cover all contingencies in all parts of the world:

> "It is becoming clear that in many respects Article Four is even more important. This, with no regional limitations, provides that if there is any situation anywhere which appears to affect the security of any member, they will all consult on what action to take.
>
> "The article does not explicitly promise action, but action could be taken under it. The implications of this article are important, because the United States has let it be known that she will not in the foreseeable future join any more defence pacts, for example, a South-east Asia Pact, or a Mediterranean Pact.
>
> "It recognises that threats of aggression may arise in other parts of the world, but they could be dealt with under Article Four. If developments in Burma or the Malay Peninsula led America, Britain or France to feel her security was threatened, she could call a conference of Atlantic Powers for consultation." (*Daily Telegraph, March* 23, 1949.)

It is evident that the United States preferred the Atlantic Pact under its own domination to the proposed Pacific Pact under the leadership of Britain and Australia in association with Britain's puppets in India, Pakistan and Ceylon. Trial moves towards an alternative combination with an American orientation were made by Chiang Kai-shek when he drew up his Tripartite Pact with the American puppets in South Korea and the Philippines. Strong inclinations to join this combination were openly expressed by Japanese reaction under MacArthur; and it is worth noting that General Eichelberger, formerly commanding the U.S. Eighth Army in Japan, publicly called in August, 1949, for the rebuilding of Japanese military power in order to resume its role of combating Communism in Asia.

It is not excluded that these imperialist contradictions may be temporarily smoothed out to a sufficient extent to permit eventually of a common plan under American leadership, although this stage has not yet been reached. But the other difficulties for imperialism lie deeper and are not to be easily overcome.

First, the South-East Asian national liberation movement is growing in strength. All the military concentration of the Western imperialist Powers has not succeeded in crushing it. After four years of warfare the writ of France and its puppet Emperor Bao Dai does not run in Vietnam outside the few big towns like Saigon, Haiphong and Hanoi held by French troops:

> "In Saigon last month I asked a prominent member of the French-sponsored Bao Dai-Xuan Government how many Vietnamese supported his regime. 'Probably about one per cent,' he replied frankly. 'Almost 90 per cent favour Ho Chi Minh's resistance Government.'" (Andrew Roth, in the New York *Nation,* January 8, 1949.)

In Burma the British-backed Thakin Nu Government only controls a minority of Burmese territory, and sends out desperate crisis

appeals for more foreign cash and foreign arms. In Indonesia the treachery of Hatta and Soekarno, with their slaughter of forty thousand of the best Indonesian fighters, has not succeeded in breaking the guerrilla movement. In Malaya the second year of warfare reveals what was originally proclaimed as a short-term "police operation" against "bandits" prolonged into an indefinite perspective of full-scale war against a national movement. The victory of Chinese democracy enormously strengthens the struggle for freedom in all this area and gives the confidence of future triumph.

Second, the plans to make India the bastion of imperialism and counter-revolution in Asia come into direct conflict with the national and anti-imperialist sentiments of the Indian people. Those "main ground forces from India and Pakistan," so lightly assumed by the strategic blue-print, will not be so easily forthcoming in practice. However willing the docile henchmen of the existing Governments, they are circumscribed in action by the conditions of their problem. Even Nehru has had to plead for postponement of any consideration of a Pacific Pact, so long as the national struggles continue unresolved in Asia, and has had to express a formal protest against the execution of the Indian trade union leader, Ganapathy, in Malaya. Already the ferocity of the present repression in India is testimony to the depths of the growing social and economic crisis and mass ferment which will finally bring to justice all the puppets of imperialism and range India with the rising forces of Free China of today and Free Asia of tomorrow.

Finally, and of decisive importance, the war operations at present in process, and still more the vast war plans designed by the world strategists of imperialist counter-revolution and a third world war, deepen the crisis of imperialism and are beyond the military strength, man-power or economic resources of the weakened colonial Powers of Western Europe. The Western colonial Powers find themselves compelled to dispatch hundreds of thousands of European soldiers alongside their Gurkhas, Senegalese and Dyak head-hunters to conduct the bloody work of suppression in Asia. France in the beginning of 1949 had 115,000 troops in Vietnam, and a military budget for Vietnam alone of over £72,000,000. It is not surprising that General de Tassigny has had sharp differences of opinion with Montgomery as to the extent of French troops to

be called on for the war plans in Europe outside the frontiers of France. Holland has employed four-fifths of its military forces in Indonesia, and had to send an official explanation to Montgomery that it could not supply the forces demanded by him in Western Europe. Britain had to dispatch half its mobile expeditionary forces to Malaya; and at the same time Tory and Labour M.P.s were rising in indignation to demand where were Britain's expeditionary forces to fulfil the obligations of the Brussels Pact; and Shinwell was left tongue-tied for an answer.

Here we come to the final contradiction and bankruptcy of the imperialist war policy represented by Mr. Churchill, Mr. Attlee and Mr. Bevin.

CHAPTER XIII

PRICE OF EMPIRE WAR PLANS

"If the threatened war comes, one of the leading American generals said not long ago, that while London and most of Britain would be quickly destroyed, Britain would remain useful as an aircraft-carrier for American bombers; they would still be able to use the excellent aerodromes built by Americans in East Anglia."

New Statesman & Nation, March 27, 1948.

THE EXTENT of British overseas military commitments arising from the existing imperialist policy can be seen from the following table compiled from official sources:

BRITISH OVERSEAS MILITARY BASES IN 1949
(excluding Germany)

Aden	Gibraltar	Tripolitania
Bermuda	Jamaica	Akaba (Transjordan)
British Honduras	Malaya	Greece
Cyprus	Malta	Austria
Cyrenaica	Singapore	Trieste
Egypt (Canal Zone)	Somalia	
East Africa	Sudan	

BRITISH AIR BASES OVERSEAS IN 1949

Gibraltar	Cyprus	Ceylon
Iraq	Somaliland	Germany
Arabia (Persian Gulf)	Southern Rhodesia	Aden
Malta	Hong Kong	Sudan
Transjordan	North Africa	Malaya
East Africa	(inc. Egypt)	Austria
Singapore	Pakistan	

These are routine commitments. The dispatch of special forces to Malaya or Hong Kong is additional.

But at the same time the policy of maintaining the Empire involves subordination to the United States, since the United States holds strategic sea and air supremacy, and Britain can only continue to hold its overseas empire by permission of and under the control of the United States. This is the key to existing British foreign policy. Imperialism is the key to the Churchill-Bevin policy of capitulation to the United States.

United States imperialism, however, has its own war plans in which Britain is allocated a subordinate and costly part. These plans have been made sufficiently clear in the documents and declarations of the American General Staff and military, naval and air chiefs and ministerial heads. Thus General Bradley, United States Chief of Staff in charge of the combined staff arrangements under the Atlantic Pact, outlined his conception to the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee on July 29, 1949:

> Their strategy was based on five assumed factors.
>
> First, the United States would be charged with strategic bombing. The first priority of the joint defence was ability to deliver the atomic bomb.
>
> Second, the U.S. Navy and the Western Union naval Powers would conduct essential naval operations, including keeping the sea lanes clear. The Western Union and other nations would maintain their own harbours and coastal defence.
>
> Third, the joint Chiefs of Staff recognised that the hard core of ground power in being would come from Europe, aided by other nations as they mobilised.
>
> Fourth, Britain, France and the closer countries would have the bulk of the responsibility for short-range attack, bombardment and air defence. The United States would maintain a tactical air force for their own ground and naval forces and for the defence of the United States.
>
> Fifth, other nations, depending upon their proximity or remoteness from the possible scene of conflict, would lay emphasis on appropriate special missions.

This is clear enough. The United States carries out the strategic bombing with the atom bomb. Britain, France and the other Western European countries provide "the hard core of ground power." The U.S. tactical air force is only to be "for their own ground and naval forces and for the defence of the United States," i.e., not for defence of Europe. This is the same conception which found classic expression in the declaration of the Chairman of the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee, Clarence Cannon, in April, 1949:

> "The United States must be prepared to equip the soldiers of other nations and let them send their boys into the holocaust, so that we won't have to send our boys. That's what the atom bomb means to us."

Britain is accordingly required by American strategic policy, to which Mr. Churchill and the Labour Government have equally agreed:

(1) to provide the atom bomb base for the American atom bomb offensive against socialist countries in Europe; and therefore to be the main target in the event of war;

(2) to provide a mass land army for use in Europe.

In its immediate effect this policy places a crushing burden upon Britain. In addition to the already vast military overseas commitments of empire, and of existing colonial warfare, Britain is required to provide and hold in readiness a Continental land army, that is, to become a Continental land power.

> "This is a revolution in our foreign policy, and it implies a revolution in our defence policy. It turns us from a maritime Power in reserve into a continental first-line Power. . . .
>
> "British land forces will have to take a major, perhaps *the* major part in meeting the the first shock. Unless there is a large standing Allied army on the continent of Europe, Western Europe is now indefensible. . . .
>
> "What our present position demands is not 200,000 regulars training 200,000 raw recruits at home; but 400,000 regulars ready to defend the Rhine." (*Observer*, March 6, 1949.)

Napoleon said of old that Britain could never become a continental land power, and that if it made the attempt, that change would mark the downfall of Britain. But that was still in the days of Britain's strength and ascendancy. It has remained for the present rulers of Britain to make the attempt in the days of the decline of capitalist Britain, economic exhaustion and impoverishment, and stringency of man-power.

It cannot be done. One year's conscription provides under 200,000 and eighteen months under 300,000. To maintain the present figures of over three-quarters of a million would require a vast scale of long-term regular recruitment. In vain the drums are sounded up and down Britain to boost up the figures of recruitment. The targets remain unfulfilled. The British people are voting with their feet against the existing policies.

The existing drain of £800 million for the armed forces, and the withdrawal of one and a half million of man-power for the armed forces or their supply, is imposing an intolerable additional burden on Britain's weakened economy. The expenditure on overseas military commitments is the main factor in the deficit on the balance of payments.

In its ultimate effect the atom bomb strategy means the destruction of Britain. Britain, in the delicate terms of the American strategic documents, is regarded as "expendable."

The rôle and fate of Britain in the American War Plan has been set out with unquestionable precision in the U.S. Navy Department Memorandum, quoted by Professor Blackett in his *Military and Political Consequences of Atomic Energy* (1948, pp. 75-76):

> "What is necessary to reach the target is a launching base relatively near the target—to put it literally, within five hundred miles.
>
> ". . . Under the conditions of war in which atomic bombs are available to a possible enemy, the importance of depriving the enemy of bases near one's own shore and preferably of acquiring and maintaining bases close to his territory remains as great as before. The logic supporting this proposition derives from the characteristics of atomic bomb carriers presently known or conceivable. . . . The outlying base, if properly placed, is also a tremendous advantage to the defence as a further measure of protection against long-range bombing aircraft. For such bases provide means of advance protection and interception which greatly augments the obstacles to penetration of vital territories by attacking bombers. These bases may themselves be vulnerable to atomic bomb attack, but so long as they are there, they are not likely to be by-passed. In this respect the advanced base may be likened to the pawns in front of the king on a chessboard; meagre though their power may be individually, so long as they exist and the king stays severely behind them, he is safe."

"The King" is Wall Street. Britain is "the pawn". Such is the glorious outcome of the imperialist war strategy.

CHAPTER XIV

LABOUR IMPERIALISM

"As sure as the sun will rise tomorrow the Labour Party will be called upon to save the British Empire from the disintegration with which it is now threatened."
SIR ARTHUR ZIMMERN, *Daily Herald*, December 3, 1924.

IN NINETEEN HUNDRED appeared a book entitled *Fabianism and the Empire*. This was the first Manifesto of what came to be known as Fabian Imperialism. Its thesis was set out in the declaration:

> "The problem before us is how the world can be ordered by Great Powers of practically international extent, arrived at a degree of internal industrial and political development far beyond the primitive political economy of the founders of the United States and the Anti-Corn Law League. The partition of the greater part of the globe among such Powers is, as a matter of fact that must be faced, approvingly or deploringly, now only a question of time; and whether England is to be the centre and nucleus of one of those Great Powers of the future, or to be cast off by its colonies, ousted from its provinces, and reduced to its old island status, will depend on the ability with which the Empire is governed as a whole."

At the time this open adoption of imperialism by a professedly "socialist" body aroused an outcry of indignation throughout the Labour movement. Ramsay MacDonald (later to be distinguished by the violence of his Government's repressive measures in India, Burma and Iraq) resigned from the Fabian Society as a protest. Yet in fact Fabianism, as in most of its work, was only codifying and expressing with shameless clarity the logic of the policy of the labour aristocracy and salaried groupings allied with the ruling capitalist class in the new conditions of the era of imperialism.

Already in the nineteenth century Marx and Engels had shown how the key to the special character of the British Labour Movement lay in the world monopoly and colonial monopoly of British capitalism. They showed how a "small privileged minority" of the working class and its leadership was corrupted by sharing in the spoils of Britain's world monopoly, and how this was the economic basis of the "liberal-labour" politics of alliance with capitalism and opposition to socialism—what Engels referred to as the

"bourgeois labour party." Against this acceptance of capitalist politics and alliance with capitalism the early socialists, like Tom Mann and Keir Hardie, strove to wage a tireless fight, and met with the same vilification and opposition from the older "Lib-Lab" leadership, as the Communists receive today in their similar fight at the hands of the leaders of Labour Imperialism.

> "Neither Marx nor Engels lived to see the imperialist epoch of world capitalism which began not earlier than 1898-1900. But already in the middle of the nineteenth century, the peculiar feature of England was that it revealed at least *two* of the outstanding characteristics of imperialism: (1) vast colonies; (2) monopoly profit (due to a monopolistic situation on the world market). In both respects the England of that time was an exception among the capitalist countries; but Marx and Engels, analysing that exception, clearly and definitely indicated its *connection* with the (temporary) victory of opportunism in the English labour movement." (Lenin, *Imperialism and the Split in the Socialist Movement*.)

Lenin and Stalin carried forward this analysis in the twentieth century and gave close attention to the special characteristics of the Labour Movement in Britain. They showed how in the era of imperialism the old Labour Reformism had ripened into Labour Imperialism—the open alliance of Reformism with imperialism.

> "On the one hand, there is the tendency of the bourgeoisie and opportunists to convert a handful of the richest, privileged nations into 'eternal' parasites on the body of the rest of mankind, to 'rest on the laurels' of the exploitation of Negroes, Hindus, etc., by keeping them in subjection with the aid of the excellent technique of destruction of modern militarism. On the other hand, there is the tendency of the *masses* who are more oppressed than formerly and who bear the brunt of the misfortune caused by imperialist wars, to throw off that yoke, to overthrow the bourgeoisie. The history of the labour movement will from now on inevitably develop as the history of the struggle between these two tendencies: for the first tendency is not accidental, it is 'founded' on economics. The bourgeois has already begotten, nurtured, secured for itself 'bourgeois labour parties' of social chauvinists in *all* countries. . . . The important thing is that the economic desertion of a stratum of the labour aristocracy to the side of the bourgeoisie has matured and become an accomplished fact. And this economic fact, this change in the relations between classes, will find political expression in one form or another without much 'difficulty.'
>
> "On the economic basis referred to, the political institutions of

> modern capitalism—Press, Parliament, trade unions, congresses, etc.—created *political* privileges and sops for the respectful meek, reformist and patriotic office employees and workers, corresponding to the economic privileges and sops. Lucrative and easy berths in the Ministries or war industries committees, in Parliament and on various commissions, on the editorial staffs of 'respectable' legal newspapers, or on management boards of no less respectable and 'bourgeois, law-abiding' trade unions—these are the means with which the imperialist bourgeoisie attracts and rewards the representatives and adherents of the 'bourgeois labour parties.'" (Lenin, *Imperialism and the Split in the Socialist Movement.*)

This was written before the creation of the new "super-aristocracy" of the Labour movement serving with Tories and big monopolists on the Boards of "nationalised" industries, Colonial Development schemes, etc., on a level of salaries and emoluments equivalent to Big Business directors, and thus carrying forward the process described by Lenin to a scale undreamed of in his day.

All the literature of Reformism—of the so-called "British School of Socialism" or "Evolutionary Socialism" or "Democratic Socialism"—without exception rests on the permanent assumption of the Empire. The vast overseas tribute income is taken for granted. The problem is seen as one of "distribution." Just as Churchill, when Chancellor of the Exchequer, openly proclaimed the Social Services to be based on the overseas investment income, so Reformism assumes the same permanent basis for its Social Services and proclaims the outcome as the "Welfare State." When the instability and impermanence of this basis is revealed in Britain's deficit in the balance of payments, Reformism is thrown into a panic of impotence and bankruptcy, desperately turns to the conventional emergency measures of capitalism in crisis at the expense of the workers, and feverishly strives to rebuild the basis of empire tribute. This is the history in a nutshell of the Third Labour Government—the demonstration of the bankruptcy of Labour Imperialism.

Today, in the era of the deepening crisis of the imperialist system, "Social Democracy" or Labour Imperialism steps forward to "save the Empire."

The plans of imperialist policy and strategy are so directly contrary to the interests of the British people in the present situation, place such crushing burdens upon them, and hold out such

menacing and destructive future prospects, that the task of winning support or acceptance for them from the mass of the working people can no longer be accomplished by the imperialist financial oligarchy alone—even with all their gigantic apparatus of control of the Press, radio, schools, etc. A special agency is needed to reach into the heart of the working class movement and popular opinion, and to conceal or distort the realities of empire and the crisis and the policies being pursued behind popular-sounding or even "socialist" slogans. This is the rôle of Labour Imperialism today in the era of the crisis of the imperialist system.

The unity of Mosley-Fascism, Toryism, and the Labour Government in advocating and promoting the schemes for the intensified exploitation of Africa and for the prosecution of the Malayan war reveals the rôle of right-wing Social Democracy in the present phase as the main propagandist and executor of the colonial policies of imperialism.

Attlee and Bevin shooting down the Gold Coast ex-Servicemen, or dispatching Spitfires and Gurkhas and Dyak headhunters to spread massacre in Malaya; Blum crippling the French budget in order to turn fire and sword against the freedom struggle of the Vietnam Republic—here is revealed the true picture of "democratic socialism" and "socialist humanism."

It will be necessary to examine more fully the current expressions of official Labour policy on the Empire in order to get closer to the essence of Labour Imperialism and its methods of covering imperialist practice with "socialist" phrases.

CHAPTER XV

ARGUMENTS OF EMPIRE

"So far from the Empire disintegrating, it is moving rapidly to a new strength and a new cohesion."
FRANCIS WILLIAMS, *The Triple Challenge*, 1948.

A RECENT BOOK by Mr. Francis Williams, who occupied a post as Press Officer to Mr. Attlee, entitled *The Triple Challenge*, sought to prove that the Labour Government has represented a triple challenge: (1) to Tory economic policy; (2) to Tory foreign policy; and (3) to Tory colonial policy. Unfortunately for the author, the *Daily Telegraph*, the organ of Toryism, in reviewing the book, blandly stated that the last two at any rate were nonsense since there was no difference in policy.

The outlook of "Social Democracy" or Labour Imperialism on the colonial question has found its current theoretical expression in such books as *Fabian Colonial Essays*, with contributions by the present Labour Government's Colonial Secretary, A. R. Creech-Jones, and others, Dr. Rita Hinden's *Empire and After*, or the various publications of the Fabian Colonial Bureau, which exists to whitewash the colonial policy of the Labour Government —that is, the colonial policy of imperialism.

An elaborate attempt is made to construct a special "socialist colonial theory" and "socialist colonial policy."

Is there in reality a special Social Democratic colonial theory? An examination of the facts will show that the distinction has no solid foundations. Social Democratic colonial theory and policy is, in essence, identical with colonial theory and policy. It is the theory and policy of modern imperialism decked out with phrases to give it a "progressive" and "Socialist" appearance.

The essential line of Social Democratic colonial propaganda is to declare:

(1) That capitalist exploitation and imperialism belong to the past and a new enlightened policy is now pursued in the colonies.

(2) Colonial policy is for the benefit of the colonial peoples and represents a civilising mission (a) to prepare them for self-government, (b) to assist their economic, social and cultural development.

(3) No tribute is taken from the colonies; the British Government pays out money for the benefit of the colonies, thus running them at a loss for philanthropic reasons.

All these lines of argument which are today put forward by Creech-Jones and Herbert Morrison could be quoted word for word in exactly identical terms from the last Tory Colonial Secretary, Stanley. The arguments of Labour Imperialism and Toryism on the colonial question are identical.

In this connection it is worth recalling what Engels said about ruling-class hypocrisy:

> "The more civilisation advances, the more it is compelled to cover the evils it necessarily creates with the cloak of love and charity, to palliate them or to deny them—in short, to introduce a conventional hypocrisy which was unknown to earlier forms of society and even to the first stages of civilisation, and which culminates in the pronouncement: The exploitation of the oppressed class is carried on by the exploiting class simply and solely in the interests of the exploited class itself; and if the exploited class cannot see it and even grows rebellious, that is the basest ingratitude to its benefactors, the exploiters." (Engels, *The Origin of the Family*, ch. ix, p. 203.)

A survey of the characteristic utterances of Labour Government Ministers and official Labour Party spokesmen on the Empire reveals that there are certain familiar themes which are repeated with wearisome iteration. These themes are, however, mutually inconsistent and contradictory—a sure sign that we are here in the realm of apologetics rather than of serious argument. To demonstrate this, it will be worth while to set out and illustrate the most typical themes.

Theme I: The "End of Imperialism." "There is no Imperialism."

This is the most familiar theme (it is, in fact, common also to General Smuts and Tory imperialists). As an illustration we may examine some of the recent utterances of Mr. Attlee or Mr. Bevin.

On July 3, 1949, Mr. Attlee, Labour Prime Minister of Britain, delivered a speech at Manchester to attack the menace of Communism:

> "Let me give you another example of Communist hypocrisy. The Communists are fond of accusing the Labour Party of imperialism.
>
> "During these years we have had to face momentous decisions with regard to the British Commonwealth.
>
> "Burma decided that she wished to leave the Commonwealth.

We were sorry, but we accepted that decision.

"India and Pakistan wished to be free to govern themselves. . . . We agreed and the change was effected. The same with Ceylon, which is now a full member of this great community of nations.

"Never before has there been such a handing-over of sovereignty freely given."

Within forty-eight hours of Mr. Attlee's declaration of the renunciation of imperialism, new Supplementary Estimates for £21 million were presented to an astonished House of Commons on July 5, 1949, to add to the already overburdened British Budget. These £21 million Supplementary Estimates included:

MALAYA	£6,000,000	(military operations extra costs)
BURMA	11,250,000	(compensation to British monopolies)
CYRENAICA, TRIPOLI, SOMALILAND, ERITREA	1,500,000	
BORNEO	600,000	(for the British North Borneo Co.)
TRANSJORDAN	500,000	(subsidy for King Abdullah and the Arab Legion)
MIDDLE EAST	245,000	
GREECE	145,000	(aircraft for Greek Government)
	£20,240,000	

Out of £21 million Supplementary Estimates, additional to all that had been already voted, £20 million were required for the expenses of Empire and overseas military commitments in the most far-flung quarters of the globe. For a Power which is supposed to have abandoned imperialism the burdens of Empire appear to be still considerable.

Mr. Bevin, Foreign Secretary, addressed the National Union of Manufacturers on October 14, 1948, and proclaimed:

"We have ceased to be an Imperialist race; we dominate nobody." In the same speech he proceeded to outline his modest programme (report and italics from the *Daily Herald*):

"I believed and still believe that

If we can organise Western Europe with its direct connection with the Middle East,

If we can use the great resources of our Colonial Empire in Africa,

If we can work out co-operation with our great Dominion of South Africa,

If we can arrange matters correctly with Pakistan and India,

If we can maintain a correct position in South-East Asia, and

If we can make our proper contribution to the revivification of China,

then with a little planning we somehow occupy the position of a great balancing factor as between East and West, and may provide the correct equipoise and the correct equilibrium for the maintenance of peace and prosperity in the world."

"The Middle East." "Our Colonial Empire in Africa." "Pakistan and India." "South-East Asia." "China." It is evident that the renunciation of imperialism must not be confused with isolationism or the abandonment of commitments all over the world.

Mr. Alexander, Minister of Defence, explained to the House of Commons on March 3, 1949, in greater detail the character of these commitments:

"We have to cover risks, including Hong Kong and Malaya.

"We have to think of the difficult position in the Middle East and the Mediterranean.

"Our commitments in Greece have to be maintained.

"There are forces of occupation to be maintained in Germany, Austria and Trieste.

"We have to watch developments in East and West Africa, and in places as far apart as Honduras and in the extreme South."

In view of these commitments, it is not surprising that Labour Britain, which is supposed to have abandoned imperialism, has had to maintain armaments expenditure six times the level (or three times the value) of pre-war Tory Britain, which was still maintaining the Empire. The "abandonment of imperialism" must evidently be understood in a Pickwickian sense.

Similarly at the Lord Mayor's banquet in November, 1947, Mr. Attlee objected to Soviet criticism of "members of His Majesty's Government as imperialists" and referred in disproof to "self-government in India, Burma and Malta":

"It is surely strange that in face of these facts Russian statesmen and journalists still accuse Britain of imperialism. If there is imperialism in the world today, by which I mean the subjection of other peoples by the political and economic domination of a powerful nation, it is certainly not to be found in the British Commonwealth."

Mr. Attlee was speaking in the historic Mansion House to an audi-

ence of City magnates whose wealth is built on colonial plunder, where even the traditional gold plate of the classic banquet is drawn from the agony of African slavery (the South African gold mine workers getting 2s. 5d. a day to yield £43 million profits to the gold mine shareholders, and when they dared to strike only in the preceding year were batoned back into the mines, with numbers killed and hundreds arrested).

When Mr. Attlee stepped out of the historic Mansion House, glowing with conscious virtue, he stepped into the midst of the imposing edifices of the great monopolies whose very names cry Empire exploitation—Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, Imperial Tobacco, Royal Dutch Shell, Unilevers, Consolidated Goldfields.

But of course British imperialism does not exist. It is only a dream of suspicious Communists.

Theme II: *End of the "Old Imperialism"*: *"There is no Exploitation"*

This is a variant of the first theme. In the words of the *Labour Speaker's Handbook, 1948-49:*

> "In all the areas under our control we have abandoned the old type of capitalist imperialism."

Similarly at the Africa Colonial Conference in October, 1948, Mr. Herbert Morrison said:

> "We must wipe out the word 'exploitation.' It is no longer a question of capitalist exploitation or imperialism."

This was the same year, 1948, in which the United Africa Company, with the assistance of the Labour Government, made the colossal published profits of £25,000,000. In 1948 the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, with the British Government sharing in the loot, achieved a record trading profit of £50,700,804 (against £33,412,939 after E.P.T. in 1947), leaving a net profit to the parent company of £24,064,920 on a capital of £32,843,752. In 1948 Rhokana Copper raised its dividend for fortunate investors to 100 per cent, as against 60 per cent in 1946.

However, let us do justice to Mr. Morrison. His ambitious programme is to "wipe out the *word* exploitation". He wishes to relegate the ugly *word* to the museum of the bad old past. Of course the reality of capitalist exploitation and imperialism continues to exist, and also of violent warfare against the colonial peoples which was being conducted by Mr. Morrison and his

colleagues with tanks and bombers and the burning down of villages at the same time as he was speaking of the end of imperialism.

Theme III: *"Jolly Old Empire" and the Maintenance of Empire*

On other occasions the same Labour Government Ministers have been no less concerned to proclaim aloud their devotion to the non-existent Empire and their determination to maintain it. Thus Herbert Morrison announced in January, 1946:

> "We are great friends of the jolly old Empire and are going to stick to it."

These words, almost exactly echoing the famous "We love our Empire" declaration of J. H. Thomas in the First Labour Government, caused no little distress to the imperialist philanthropists of the Fabian Colonial Bureau, who issued a disclaimer under the signatures of their Chairman and Secretary:

> "It makes a travesty of our work, a mockery of our sincerity and a hypocrisy of our professions, if the policy of the Labour Party is to be judged by these irresponsible words of Herbert Morrison. We hope Mr. Morrison will find the opportunity of putting the world right on this speech of his, and not undermine the backbreaking work the rest of us are putting in, in order to convince millions of hostile and suspicious Indians and Africans that we are not all hypocrites and liars" (*New Statesman and Nation*, January 19, 1946).

Not the deeds, it will be noted, of imperialist suppression and exploitation arouse the protests but only the inconveniently downright words which make difficult the "backbreaking" task of whitewashing imperialism or striving to hoodwink "millions of hostile and suspicious Indians and Africans."

Theme IV: *The "Sacred Trust" and the "Civilising Mission"*

The "backbreaking" task of the philanthropic apologists of empire requires different methods to justify the maintenance of the empire than the crude "We love our Empire" or "Jolly Old Empire" slogans of a Thomas or a Morrison.

For their use the alternative line of the "White Man's Burden," already familiar in Tory imperialist propaganda, has been devised. In answer to anti-imperialist critics, it is insisted that it would be a crime and retrograde step to "break up" the Empire (i.e., liberate the colonial peoples), since this would mean to "betray the trust" which these dependent backward peoples place in their

benevolent British protectors. "There is no reason for breaking up the British Empire," declared George Lansbury of old; and the former Labour Cabinet Minister, John Wheatley, put it: "I am opposed to any policy of wrecking the Empire." On similar lines the present Colonial Secretary, Mr. Creech-Jones, wrote in his Introduction to *Fabian Colonial Essays* in 1944:

> "Socialists . . . cannot stop their ears to the claims of the colonial peoples and renounce responsibility towards British territories because of some sentimental inclination to 'liberation' or internal administration. To throw off the colonial empire in this way, would be to betray the peoples and our trust. . . .
>
> "Colonies must therefore be the avowed concern of Socialists. It matters little how they were acquired, the predatory and possessive character of imperialism in the past, or indeed, the ugly episodes and exploitations many of them experienced in the past."

Observe that imperialism always belongs to the past.* He admits that it is difficult to make a distinction between this policy and the policy of Tory Imperialism:

> "The dividing line between socialists and others is often blurred in the constructive work being done on colonial policy today."

But he triumphantly concludes:

> "Escapism into the philosophy of Lenin or socialist monasticism will not bring better nutrition or the rearing of cattle in the tsetse forest belt."

Here the very system which entails the plunder of the resources of the colonial peoples, the degradation of their standard of life, and the prevention of economic development, is solemnly held up as the "constructive" alternative to the Leninist policy which in a generation has enabled the formerly most backward Central Asian peoples to advance to the highest levels of industrial and cultural development on a basis of complete equality and freedom.

On this sanctimonious cant of the "civilising mission" and "trustee's rôle" of the European conquerors, it is appropriate to quote a recent comment (Ivor Montagu in the *Labour Monthly*, May, 1948):

> "One knows of course that the Europeans are not guided by selfishness, think only of the best for the most and have as deep a sense of trusteeship as Mr. Bevin himself—but, curious, isn't it?—everywhere these European Governors and governments seem to have come to the same conclusion, namely, that the best interests of the Africans as objects-in-trust demand that their trustees should enjoy the best land, the best jobs, the best education and medical services and, by comparison, a heaven-high standard of living."

*A charming example of this relegation of imperialism and exploitation to "the past" may be quoted from an article by Gilbert McAllister in the official Labour organ, the *Daily Herald*, in 1949:

"It may be that in the course of fifty years there has been, here and there, an isolated case of exploitation of the African native. . . .

"We have no right to allow British ex-Servicemen to invest their capital in buying a farm in Kenya if after twenty years any British Government is going to yield to a specious plea of Afriea for the Africans." (*Daily Herald*, June 9, 1949.)

Theme V: The Old Labour Imperialist Line: Empire is Essential for the Economic Interests of the British Workers

Simultaneously with the proclamations of the philanthropic aims of the Empire, the practical aims of economic exploitation constantly protrude in Labour Ministers' speeches, and are most openly brought out in the declarations of such an outspoken Labour Imperialist as Ernest Bevin.

The most brutal declarations of the traditional classic outlook of Labour Imperialism, directly identifying the economic interests of the working class in the metropolitan imperialist country with the maintenance of colonial exploitation, are to be found in the speeches of Mr. Bevin. Thus he proclaimed in Parliament on February 21, 1946:

> "I am not prepared to sacrifice the British Empire, because I know that if the British Empire fell . . . it would mean that the standard of life of our constituents would fall considerably."

And again in his speech to Parliament on May 16, 1947, with reference to British interests in the Middle East:

> "His Majesty's Government must maintain a continuing interest in that area if only because our economic and financial interests in the Middle East were of vast importance to us. . . . If these interests were lost to us, the effect on the life of this country would be a considerable reduction in the standard of living. . . . British interests in the Middle East contributed substantially not only to the interests of the people there, but to the wage packets of the workpeople of this country."

Herein is revealed the classic outlook of Labour Imperialism, as long ago analysed and exposed by Marx and Lenin.

The fallacy of this line of argument, based on a shameless appeal to supposed economic self-interest to maintain higher standards on the backs of exploited and poverty-stricken colonial

peoples, is sufficiently demonstrated in Britain's present crisis.

In these five main lines of mutually inconsistent and contradictory argument we see the familiar propaganda of Labour Imperialism.

The practice of the three Labour Governments has revealed how this theory works out in the real world. It has been no less revealed by the disruptive offensive of the Trades Union Congress under its present leadership against the World Federation of Trade Unions, which for the first time united the representatives of the organised workers without distinction of race or colour, and gave practical assistance to the development of the young trade union movement in the colonial countries.

The first Labour Government of 1924 conducted the Cawnpore Conspiracy Trial against the Communist Party of India and carried out the air-bombing of Iraq.

The second Labour Government of 1929-31 carried forward the Meerut Conspiracy Trial against the Communist Party of India, organised mass arrests in India of 60,000 in connection with the Civil Disobedience campaign and suppressed the Burma revolt with blood-thirsty violence.

The third Labour Government has, through the new regime it has established in India, opened the way to the biggest offensive yet against the Communist Party and working-class movement of India, and carried through the Gold Coast shooting and other repressive measures in Africa and the present war in Malaya.

The endeavour to maintain the old imperialist basis represents the key to the Labour Government's policy both at home and abroad.

In the Government's Four Year Economic Plan for 1949-53, submitted to the Marshall Plan organisation (" Organisation for European Economic Co-operation ") in December, 1948, the aim of building economic recovery and balancing Britain's deficit on the basis of intensified colonial exploitation is unconcealed. "The plans described," it is declared, " contemplate a *large increase in the contribution of the Colonies to European recovery.*"

How much of " a large increase " is sufficiently evident from the accompanying Tables submitted in the document, which indicate the plans for increased output of typical colonial raw materials.

OUTPUT FIGURES AND PLANS FOR COLONIAL RAW MATERIALS
(*in thousand metric tons*)

	1936	1946	1952-3 (forecast)	Planned increase on 1946
SUGAR ..	980	895	1400	56%
RUBBER ..	400	435	830	90%
TIN ..	78	27.5	94.5	243%
COPPER ..	158	202	356	76%

Thus rubber is to be brought to more than double the pre-war level; tin is to be brought to more than three times the level of 1946; and copper to more than double pre-war. It is further stated that oil production of British companies is to reach by 1953 " double the 1947 output."

Most striking in this Four-Year Plan for *Britain's* " economic recovery " is the assumed increase in " invisible earnings." " Net invisible earnings," the document declares, " are expected to make a very large contribution." The accompanying table illustrates the extent of this " very large contribution."

NET INVISIBLE EARNINGS
(*£ million*)

1947 (Current prices)	1948-49 (Programme prices)	1952-53 (Programme prices)
—193	35	263

Thus between 1948-49 and 1952-53 net invisible earnings are to be multiplied over sevenfold. Such is the simple method of " solving " Britain's deficit—on paper (though even these contributions still finally leave a dollar deficit, which, the document cheerfully declares, can be covered by " the dollar earnings of the rest of the sterling area "—once again the colonial empire).

These rapacious plans for solving Britain's economic problems on the basis of intensified colonial exploitation will never be fulfilled. The basis for them is breaking down even while the plans are being drawn up on paper. The price of them is already being paid by the British workers in (1) crippling overseas expenditure; (2) the sacrifice of home development for rearmament and colonial war; (3) satellite dependence on the United States; (4) consequent deepening of Britain's economic difficulties, and the offensive against the social services and standard of living in Britain.

The bankruptcy of the economic basis of imperialism in the

present stage is preparing the way for the bankruptcy of the rôle of Social Democracy in the working-class movement.

Whereas previously Social Democracy could claim that its Empire policy brought results in the shape of social concessions to sections of the workers, the reverse is now the case. The prosecution of the imperialist policy requires cuts at the expense of the working class. So, far from "contributing substantially to the wage packets of the working people of this country" (in Mr. Bevin's phrase), Mr. Bevin's imperialist policy is responsible for lowering the value of real wages, inflicting crushing burdens on the people and carrying the country along the path leading to economic catastrophe.

Just as the present period has seen the collapse of the basis of Social Democracy in the majority of European countries, so the conditions are rapidly developing for a corresponding collapse in Britain.

CHAPTER XVI

THE PATH OF COLONIAL LIBERATION

"A people which enslaves another people forges its own chains." KARL MARX.

THE TRUE TRADITIONS of socialism and the working-class movement have always been anti-imperialist.

Chartism proclaimed its outlook on the colonial question in the declaration of the Fraternal Democrats in 1846:

> "There is no foot of land, either in Britain or the colonies, that you, the working class, can call your own. . . . They, your masters, will take the land—they will fill all the higher situations, civil and military, of the new colonies—your share will be the slaughter of the combat and the cost of winning and retaining the conquest. The actual settlers on and cultivators of the soil, these are the rightful sovereigns of the soil, and should be at perfect liberty to choose their own form of government and their own institutions." (*Northern Star,* March 7, 1846.)

Keir Hardie fought the corruption of Fabian Imperialism at the time of the South African war and wrote:

> "In the transition stage from commercialism to socialism there must be much suffering. . . . A great extended Empire lengthens the period required for the change, and thus prolongs the misery, and it follows that the loss of the Empire would hasten the advent of socialism. The greater the Empire, the greater the military expenditure, and the harder the lot of the workers. Modern imperialism is in fact to socialists simply capitalism in its most predatory and militant phase." (Quoted in *The Life of Keir Hardie,* by William Stewart.)

In 1925 the Trades Union Congress at Scarborough adopted the following resolution by 3,082,000 to 79,000 votes:

> "This Trades Union Congress believes that the domination of non-British peoples by the British Government is a form of capitalist exploitation having for its object the securing for British capitalists (1) of cheap sources of raw materials, (2) the right to exploit cheap and unorganised labour and to use the competition of that labour to degrade the workers' standards in Great Britain. It declares its complete opposition to imperialism and resolves (1) to support the workers in all parts of the British Empire in organising trade unions and political parties in order to further their interests, and (2) to support the right of all peoples in the

British Empire to self-determination, including the right to choose complete separation from the Empire."

These declarations embody the abiding anti-imperialist traditions of the working-class movement and socialism. Labour Imperialism expresses only the temporary corruption of an upper stratum, which holds back the advance of the movement and delays the victory of socialism.

Marxism has always taught that the liberation of the colonial peoples represents, not only the interests of the colonial peoples themselves as the first condition for their own social and economic advance, but equally the interests of the masses of the people in the ruling imperialist country, and especially of the working class for the achievement of socialism.

Marx and Engels in the nineteenth century gave the closest attention to the question of the relations of Britain and Ireland, which at that time was the foremost expression of the colonial question. Marx wrote in 1869 that he had originally regarded the freedom of Ireland as an achievement to follow on the victory of the working class in England, but that fuller study had convinced him that the liberation of Ireland was an indispensable preliminary condition for the victory of the working class in England.

> "It is in the direct and absolute interest of the English working class to get rid of their present connection with Ireland. . . . For a long time I believed that it would be possible to overthrow the Irish regime by English working class ascendancy. I always expressed this point of view in the *New York Tribune*. Deeper study has now convinced me of the opposite. The English working class will *never accomplish anything* before it has got rid of Ireland. The lever must be applied in Ireland. That is why the Irish question is so important for the social movement in general." (Marx, letter to Engels, December 10, 1869.)

Similarly the Resolution of the First International in 1869, drafted by Marx, and adopted by the General Council with the participation of the representatives of the British trade unions (though not till after a sharp preceding struggle with the "Lib-Lab" leadership, represented by Odger, Applegarth and Mottershead), declared:

> "A people which enslaves another people forges its own chains. In this way the viewpoint of the International Working Men's Association on the Irish question is very clear. Its first task is the speeding on of the social revolution in England. For this end the decisive blow must be struck in Ireland. . . .
>
> "The essential preliminary condition of the emancipation of the English working class is the turning of the present compulsory union, that is slavery, of Ireland with England, into an equal and free union, if that is possible, or into full separation, if this is inevitable."

Marx emphasised, in a letter to Kugelmann on November 29, 1869, that this demand for freedom for Ireland needed to be pressed forward

> ". . . not as a matter of sympathy with Ireland, but as a demand made in the interests of the English proletariat. If not, the English people will remain tied to the leading-strings of the ruling classes, because it must join with them in a common front against Ireland."

In the most vivid fashion Marx showed, in a letter on April 9, 1870, how the capitalist class plays on divisions between the workers of a ruling country and of a subject country:

> "Every industrial and commercial centre in England now possesses a working-class population *divided* into two *hostile* camps, English proletarians and Irish proletarians. The ordinary English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers his standard of life. In relation to the Irish worker he feels himself a member of the *ruling* nation and so turns himself into a tool of the aristocrats and capitalists *against Ireland*, thus strengthening their domination *over himself*. He cherishes religious, social and national prejudices against the Irish worker. His attitude towards him is much the same as that of the 'poor whites' to the 'niggers' in the former slave States of the U.S.A. The Irishman pays him back with interest in his own coin. He regards the English worker as both sharing in the guilt for the English domination in Ireland and at the same time serving as its stupid tool.
>
> "This antagonism is artificially kept alive and intensified by the Press, the pulpit, the comic papers—in short, by all the means at the disposal of the ruling classes. It is the secret of the impotence of the English working class, despite their organisation. It is the secret by which the capitalist class maintains its power. And of this that class is well aware."

Thus Marx found in the attitude to colonial policy the decisive test of the working class movement. It was here that he found "*the secret by which the capitalist class maintains its power.*" It was here that he found "*the secret of the impotence of the English working class, despite their organisation.*" That lesson remains, not less, but even more important today.

In 1882 Engels, in a letter to Kautsky, discussed the future of the colonies in the event of the working class winning power in England:

> "In my opinion the colonies proper, i.e. the countries occupied by a European population, Canada, the Cape, Australia, will all become independent; on the other hand, the countries inhabited by a native population, which are simply subjugated, India, Algiers, the Dutch, Portuguese and Spanish possessions, must be taken over for the time being by the proletariat and led as rapidly as possible towards independence. How this process will develop is difficult to say. India will perhaps, indeed very probably, produce a revolution, and as the proletariat emancipating itself cannot conduct any colonial wars, this would have to be given full scope; it would not pass off without all sorts of destruction, of course, but that sort of thing is inseparable from all revolutions. The same might also take place elsewhere, e.g. in Algiers and Egypt, and would certainly be the best thing *for us*. We shall have enough to do at home."

This was at a time when the national movement had hardly yet appeared or taken organised form in the extra-European colonial countries. But the principles of Engels' approach are remarkably clear. *"The proletariat emancipating itself cannot conduct any colonial wars."* The development of the national revolution in the subject colonial countries is "the best thing *for us*" and should be "given full scope". Here, too, are lessons whose principles have, not less, but overwhelmingly greater force today, in the present enormously more developed stage of the national revolutionary struggle in all colonial countries without exception.

These elementary principles of the socialist approach to the colonial question were universally accepted by the international socialist movement in the official resolutions of the old pre-war Socialist International or "Second International." But in the era of imperialism the offensive of Reformism, of the Revisionists, of Labour Imperialism, of the enemies of Marxism and socialism, began the attack on these principles. In 1907 at the International Socialist Congress at Stuttgart a great controversy on the colonial question took place. The German Right Wing Social Democrat, David, declared:

> "Europe needs colonies. She does not even have enough. Without colonies, from an economic point of view, we should sink to the level of China."

A resolution was introduced by the advocates of a "socialist colonial policy," that is by the Labour Imperialists, declaring:

> "The Congress does not in principle and for all time reject any and every colonial policy, which under a socialist regime could work as a civilising influence."

Needless to say, this resolution, which forty-two years ago anticipated the "new discoveries" of Mr. Herbert Morrison, Mr. Creech Jones and the Fabian Colonial Bureau, was ardently supported by Ramsay MacDonald. But the fight, led by the Bolsheviks and the revolutionary Marxists of all countries, against this betrayal of socialism and the colonial peoples, was victorious at the Congress. The final resolution of the Stuttgart Congress of the Socialist International, which was in the end adopted unanimously, with one abstention, laid down:

> "The Congress declares that capitalist colonial policy in its innermost essence of necessity leads to the enslavement, forced labour or extermination of the native population of the colonised areas. The civilising mission which capitalist society professes serves only as a cover for the thirst for exploitation and for conquest. Only socialist society will first offer all nations the possibility of full cultural development."

The anti-imperialist principles of International Socialism were thus still victorious and accepted with formal unanimity in 1907. But in practice the corruption of imperialism was already penetrating the majority of the leading circles of the old Social Democratic Parties. Marxism was accepted in words. In practice the old Second International was confined mainly to the imperialist countries and their satellites, and made no attempt to link up the fight of the working class with the colonial revolution. As Stalin declared:

> "In the era of the Second International it was usual to confine the national question to a narrow circle of questions relating exclusively to the 'civilised nations.' The Irish, the Czechs, the Poles, the Finns, the Serbs, the Armenians, the Jews and a few other European nationalities—such was the circle of non-sovereign peoples whose fates interested the Second International. The tens and hundreds of millions of the Asiatic and African peoples suffering from national oppression in its crudest and most brutal form did not as a rule enter the field of vision of the 'Socialists.' The latter did not venture to place the white peoples and coloured peoples, the 'uncultured' Negroes and the 'civilised' Irish, the 'backward' Indians and the 'enlightened' Poles on one and the

same footing. It was tacitly assumed that although it might be necessary to strive for the emancipation of the European non-sovereign nationalities, it was entirely unbecoming for 'decent socialists' to speak seriously of the emancipation of the colonies, which were 'necessary' for the 'preservation' of 'civilisation.' These apologies for socialists did not even suspect that the abolition of national oppression in Europe is inconceivable without the emancipation of the colonial peoples of Asia and Africa from the oppression of imperialism, and that the former is organically bound up with the latter." (Stalin, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, pp. 111-12.)

This system of the old Second International, of Labour Imperialism, reached its bankruptcy and collapse in the imperialist world war of 1914. The old Second International, having surrendered to imperialism, went to pieces. The main forces of the international socialist movement went forward to build the Communist International which was formed in 1919.

The Communist International corrected the errors and deficiencies of the old bankrupt Second International, and established for the first time an international union of workers without distinction of race or colour. For the first time the unity of the struggle of the working class in the "advanced" imperialist countries with the national liberation struggle of the colonial peoples received full recognition equally in theory and in practice.

So has developed the modern period of the general crisis of the old imperialist system. This period has seen the greatest advance of the national liberation movement in all colonial countries, the simultaneous advance of the fight for socialism and the strength of the working class movement in Europe and the metropolitan countries of imperialism, and the growing unity of the common struggle.

CHAPTER XVII

THE SOVIET UNION AND COLONIAL LIBERATION

"The equality of the rights of citizens of the U.S.S.R., irrespective of their nationality or race, in all spheres of economic, state, cultural, social and political life, is an indefeasible law.

"Any direct or indirect restriction of the rights of, or, conversely, the establishment of direct or indirect privileges for citizens on account of their race or nationality as well as the advocacy of racial or national exclusiveness or hatred and contempt, is punishable by law."

Constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Article 123.

THE DECISIVE turning point in the great advance of colonial liberation after the first world war was the victory of the socialist revolution in Russia in 1917.

Under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, the new Soviet regime liberated all the subject nationalities which had been oppressed under Tsarism. No distinction was made between "advanced" and "backward" peoples. No concession was made to theories of "tutelage" and "gradual advance to self-government" of primitive peoples at a low stage of development. On the contrary, emancipation was seen as the *first step* in order to overcome the backward or arrested development. All without exception received at once full equality of rights, and complete national freedom, including the right to secede. The Declaration of the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets on January 24, 1918, proclaimed:

"The Soviet Republic is established on the basis of a free union composed of free nations. In order to avoid misunderstanding on this question, the declaration offers to the workers and peasants of every nationality the right to make their own decision in their own authorised Soviet Congress: do they wish, and on what grounds, to participate in the federal government and other federal Soviet institutions?"

The reality of this right of secession was demonstrated in practice in the case of Finland in 1918, which, under a reactionary government, demanded and at once received complete independence at the hands of Lenin, after it had been refused by Kerensky.

Formal recognition of national freedom and equality was, how-

ever, only the first step. For this equality to become real in practice, it was essential that material and cultural conditions in the regions hitherto held backward by the colonial system should be rapidly carried forward to the level of the most advanced. Every aid was given from the more developed industrial regions to speed this transformation, and especially to speed industrialisation, not on the basis of capitalist investment and interest, but of socialist co-operation. The principle was laid down by Stalin at the Twelfth Congress of the Russian Communist Party in 1923:

> "Apart from schools and language, the Russian proletariat must take every measure to establish centres of industry in the border regions, in the Republics which are culturally backward—backward not through any fault of their own, but because they were formerly looked upon as sources of raw materials."

Here, indeed, we see the contrast to Sir Stafford Cripps' "It is not possible to contemplate much in the way of industrial development in the colonies," or Rees-Williams' "It is no part of our purpose to try and set up everywhere small Lancashires."

This programme of industrial, economic and cultural development has been fulfilled in practice. Previously in the Tsarist Empire industry was concentrated in the area of Moscow, Leningrad, the Ivanov region, etc.—a tiny limited area where industrial capital originated and developed, holding the huge lands of agriculture and raw materials subject to the industrial centre. Today the colossal industrial development is spread over the entire area of the Soviet Union. The Central Asian Republics, whose peoples were contemptuously dismissed in the *Russian Yearbook* of 1914 as "native tribes" at the lowest level, are now advanced centres of civilisation, of mechanised agriculture and industry, and of high social and cultural achievement.

In Tadjikistan, for example, the completion of the fourth Five Year Plan in 1950 will bring the gross output of industry to 450 times the level of 1913; in Kirghizia to 360 times. Uzbekistan has its steel mills, and the proportion of its industrial output represented in 1946 no less than 75 per cent of the total production, despite an enormous parallel increase in agricultural output. In Kazakhstan industrial output in 1946 represented 66 per cent of the total production. On all these developments the reader may consult with advantage the illuminating chapter on "Industrialisation in Central Asia" in Andrew Rothstein's *Man and Plan in Soviet Economy* (1949).*

Similarly, in the measure of social and cultural development. While in neighbouring India, after close on two centuries of British rule, more than 90 per cent of the population were illiterate, in Tadjikistan, starting from a lower level, in one quarter of a century of the Soviet regime literacy had risen from 0.5 per cent in 1913 to 71.7 per cent in 1939 and 75 per cent in 1943. Let us set out this contrast in a table to show the relative rate of progress.

LIQUIDATION OF ILLITERACY IN INDIA AND TADJIKISTAN

(Number of Illiterates per cent of population)

India in 1911	94	Tadjikistan in 1913	99.5
„ „ 1931	92	„ „ 1939	28.3
Decrease of illiteracy	2		71

Tadjikistan started at a lower level than India. It has left unhappy India far behind. This is the contrast in the rate of progress between a colonial country and a former colonial country liberated and advancing along the path of socialist development.

Or take the measure of health. In Tadjikistan, with a population of close on one and half millions, the number of doctors rose from 13 in 1914 to 440 in 1939, or over thirty times; the number of hospital beds from 100 in 1914 to 3,615 in 1939, or more than thirty-six times. Let us compare this with Nigeria.

HEALTH PROVISION IN NIGERIA AND TADJIKISTAN

Hospital Beds.		
NIGERIA, 1947 (after 80 years of British rule)	1 Hospital Bed	for 3,700 inhabitants
TADJIKISTAN, 1914 (under Tsarist colonial rule)	„	13,000 „
TADJIKISTAN, 1939 (after two decades of Soviet freedom)	„	408 „
Doctors.		
NIGERIA, 1917	1 Doctor	for 135,000 inhabitants
TADJIKISTAN, 1914	„	100,000 „
TADJIKISTAN, 1939	„	3,400 „

* It is on the basis of these practical results of Leninist policy in the most backward colonial areas that it is possible to savour to the full the characteristic Fabian "practical wisdom" of Mr. Creech Jones' dictum, already quoted, that "escapism into the philosophy of Lenin will not bring better nutrition or the rearing of cattle in the tsetse forest belt." Kazakhstan after the war supplied 500,000 head of cattle to the liberated area, and finished 1945 with 4,200,000 more head of cattle than in 1940.

Thus the initial conditions in Tadjikistan under Tsarism were at a level comparable with or worse than an African colony under British rule. Within one generation of Soviet liberation they have reached a level comparable with advanced European countries. What country in the world outside the Soviet Union, let alone what colony, can show a comparable advance?

No less revealing is the method of financing this gigantic transformation. Under imperialism a vast annual tribute is drawn from the poverty-stricken backward peoples under colonial domination to the wealthy exploiting class of the possessing Powers. The humbug of returning a few pence per head for "colonial development and welfare" only emphasises the real spoliation from which these few pence of charity are cheaply drawn. Under Socialism the extra cost involved in rapidly helping forward the economic and cultural development of the backward peoples has been met by allotting to them consistently a disproportionate share of the total U.S.S.R. budget expenditure, so that during this transitional period they have continuously received more than they have given —*a reverse "drain"*.

Thus, for example, in the Soviet Union Budget for 1927-28, before the development of the Five Year Plans, the allocation for financing economic development was 1.65 roubles per head in the Russian Soviet Republic, and 8.9 roubles per head in Turkmenistan; the allocation for social-cultural needs was 2.16 roubles per head in the Russian Soviet Republic, and 3.84 roubles per head in Turkmenistan. Similarly, the separate Budget of the Russian Soviet Republic received 18.8 per cent of the revenues derived in its territories, the budget of Tadjikistan received 100 per cent.

In this way the former ruling Russian nation, wealthier and more developed, received less and gave more. The former exploited colonial people, having greater needs, gave less and received more, until they could catch up. The surplus of economic benefit went, no longer to the former ruling country, but to the former colonial country—and freely, without any piling up of debt.

Such is the reversal of capitalist economy by socialist economy. We see here the miracle which has indeed made the desert bloom and the hungry well fed. In short, we see here in living practice

the contrast between imperialist colonial exploitation and the socialist fulfilment of the equality of nations, with the most backward rapidly helped forward to the level of the most advanced.

Is it surprising that this demonstration exercises its powerful influence among the colonial peoples throughout the world? The contrast between the complete absence of colour and racial discrimination in the Soviet Union, where the propagation of colour or racial hatred is a criminal offence, with the horrors and cruelties of the colour bar in the United States and the British Empire, must inevitably have its effect among the coloured majority of the human race, and gives to them a different significance of the controversies on "democracy" and "human rights" from that so easily assumed by the tiny handful of White imperialists who imagine themselves the spokesmen of "civilisation" and "liberty."*

The picture of equality and rapid advance of the former colonial territories of the old Tsarist Empire, and especially of the Central Asian Republics, cannot but give cause for furious thought to all colonial peoples. It is a picture which inevitably arouses bitter comparison with the stagnation and exploitation of every colony under imperialism. But it is a picture which also holds out glowing hope and confidence for the future advance which can be achieved in every colonial territory everywhere without exception, once the imperialist yoke has been thrown off and the colonial people have become masters of their own country.

* It is amusing to note that the Declaration of the Strasbourg so-called "European Assembly" (more correctly, museum of reactionary antiquities and American puppets from a fragment of Europe) on "Human Rights" specifically excluded the "overseas territories."

CHAPTER XVIII

NEXT STEPS OF COLONIAL LIBERATION

"I am sorry to say that if no instructions had been addressed in political crises to the people of this country except to remember to hate violence, to love order and to exercise patience, the liberties of this country would never have been obtained." GLADSTONE.

COMMUNISM STANDS for the complete liberation of all colonial peoples without exception. Communism rejects all racial theories of so-called "higher" and "lower" races. Communism combats all colour and racial discrimination.

In particular, Communism rejects the view that "backward" peoples, that is, peoples at a low stage of technical and cultural development, require a period of "tutelage" or undemocratic control by the military force of a colonising Power before they are "fit for self-government." On the contrary, the system of despotic foreign rule only serves to weaken the capacity for self-government. Jamaica has now been under British rule for three centuries. But it is not yet considered "fit for self-government" by its foreign controllers.

It is noticeable that the formula of "fitness" is always applied by the scarcely impartial judgment of the foreign rulers, who have a financial and economic interest in maintaining the "unfitness." In point of fact, there is not a single example of a colonial people in the British Empire having been granted self-government because it was judged in Whitehall that the "not yet fit" stage had been passed. Whatever political concessions have been yielded have always been made only in answer to and in proportion to the strength of national revolt threatening the foundations of imperial rule. From which it follows that the only real test of "fitness" in the hard school of actual political experience is the capacity to revolt. The freedom of the colonial peoples will be won, and is today being won, not through petitions or prayers or good behaviour or magnanimity of the rulers, but only through the strength of the national liberation movement, through the national revolution.

Undoubtedly it is true that a herculean task of economic and social development, of clearing away old abuses and backwardness and the evil legacy of subjection, and of new construction and training, will be necessary before the formal liberty and equality of the former subject people will become a real and effective liberty and equality in relation to more advanced nations. But those who argue from this that the social, economic and educational development must take place first before political independence can be considered, are putting the cart before the horse. On the contrary, political independence is the first essential step forward, in order that the people can begin to act on their own behalf, and in order that a Government may be established, representative of the people and not subservient to the exploiting monopolist interests. Only then does the possibility exist to utilise the resources of the country for independent, economic and social development, instead of for tribute to absentee shareholders.

Once this first condition is established, it is possible for the advanced industrial countries to give practical assistance, with the export of machinery and with scientific and technical advisers. But all such aid needs to be under the control and decision of the independent government of the freed colonial people. If the relationship of imperialism, of ruler and ruled, of exploiter and exploited, is once removed, then mutually beneficial economic relations can be established and extended.

This consideration and perspective of future economic development and co-operation also disposes of the panic fear expressed in some quarters that the liberation of the colonies would mean economic ruin for the peoples in the imperialist countries whose economies have been built on the basis of colonial exploitation. There is no question that these countries will have to end the unhealthy parasitic basis of dependence on overseas tribute. But the breakdown of this basis is already developing before our eyes, and is visible in the existing deficit in Britain's balance of payments. This crisis is clearly demonstrating that sooner or later a healthy productive basis and trading equilibrium must be reached, and it would have been in Britain's interest had the effort been made sooner. The parasitic basis has only done harm to Britain's economy.

On the other hand, the argument is sometimes put forward as if the flow of raw materials, foodstuffs and primary products in

world trade depended on the maintenance of the colonial system. It is said that Britain "must" possess colonies in order to obtain the necessary foodstuffs, minerals and other raw materials, since Britain cannot "feed herself" or supply her own industries.

This argument has no basis in economic facts. Only ignorance of the flow of world trade, as well as of the potentialities of food production in Britain, could attempt to sustain such an argument.

In the first place, food production in Britain has been deliberately restricted and obstructed by the conscious and criminal policy of the big monopoly interests—most openly expressed in Chamberlain's notorious Kettering speech* before the war, but still in fact continuing today behind the present feeble and one-sided Tory-Labour agricultural programme which is content to continue to neglect millions of cultivable acres.

Secondly, and even more important, the picture of world trade as inevitably dependent on the colonial system is entirely imaginary. According to this argument, the present imports of foodstuffs and raw materials from the United States must be impossible since the United States ceased to be a British colony; and supplies of Swedish iron ore can only be obtained provided Sweden is first conquered and becomes a part of the British Empire. The colonial system powerfully affects existing world trade, especially in a world of highly developed imperialist monopoly; but this does not mean that world trade is dependent on the colonial system.

The foodstuffs and raw materials and minerals will continue to be produced and will continue to be in the market. In fact, all experience shows that the output is certain to be greatly increased as soon as independence gives the possibility for ascending economic development and advance beyond the existing wasteful primitive technique. Precisely this development will give the greatest scope for co-operation of the advanced industrial countries, provided their governments have established a basis of friendship and equal relations, in place of the old imperialist relationship. The ending of the colonial system will mean that the basis of exchange

* "I have seen it said that we ought ourselves to grow at home all the food we need, and I want to give you a reason or two why I think that a wrong point of view. . . . If we could, what would happen? The first thing would be that we should ruin those Empire and foreign countries who are dependent on our markets." (NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN, Prime Minister, Speech at Kettering, July 2, 1938.)

will have to be *equal* exchange in future. There will be no more tribute. But it will also mean the creation of the conditions for an enormous expansion of economic interchange and intercourse resulting in mutual benefit.

The Communist Party, accordingly, advocates the right of self-determination of all colonial peoples in the British Empire—not as a distant ultimate goal, but as a practical and immediate programme. The right of self-determination means that the freely chosen representatives of the former colonial people shall themselves choose their form of independent state, and whether they desire separation or some form of federal association or link with Britain or with any other groupings of States. The desirable form of such future grouping or association (which may well in practice be regional, as for example, in Eastern Asia, rather than corresponding to the heterogeneous and miscellaneous composition of the existing British Empire) will obviously be decided by the colonial peoples themselves in accordance with the political conditions prevailing at the time of the establishment of their independent States, and cannot be the subject of advance blue-prints or imaginary constitutions. The important immediate principle is that the right of self-determination, to be real, must include the right of separation or secession; although it does not follow that secession may in given circumstances be desirable.

Does this mean that the Communist principle implies the fragmentation of the world into innumerable series of petty independent States, at a time when economic and political conditions more and more imperatively call for large-scale organisation and combination, and for increasing international association and co-operation? On the contrary. The Communist aim is directed towards, not the separation of nations, but the closest association of nations on a basis of democratic co-operation, the strengthening of the United Nations and the extension of the world democratic camp, leading towards the future World Union of Socialist Republics, and the final fusion of nations and overcoming of national differences in World Communism. But this association at every stage must be based on *voluntary* co-operation. It is first necessary to end the imperialist forced association of ruler and ruled, in order to advance to such voluntary association. As Lenin wrote:

> "The right of nations to self-determination means only the right to independence in a political sense, the right to free, political secession from the oppressing nation. Concretely, this political, democratic demand implies complete freedom to carry on agitation in favour of secession, and freedom to settle the question of secession by means of a referendum of the nation that desires to secede. Consequently, this demand is by no means identical with the demand for secession, for the partition and for the formation of small States. It is merely the logical expression of the struggle against national oppression in any form. The more closely the democratic system of State approximates to complete freedom of secession, the rarer and weaker will the striving for secession be in practice; for the advantages of large States, both from the point of view of economic progress and from the point of view of the interests of the masses, are beyond doubt, and these advantages increase with the growth of capitalism. The recognition of self-determination is not the same as making federation a principle. One may be a determined opponent of this principle and a partisan of democratic centralism and yet prefer federation to national inequality as the only path towards complete democratic centralism. It was precisely from this point of view that Marx, although a centralist, preferred even the federation of Ireland with England to the forcible subjection of Ireland to the English."

But this right of self-determination, this stage of possible separation or federation is, Lenin insisted, only a prelude or transition to the ultimate aims of the merging of nations:

> "The aim of socialism is not only to abolish the present division of mankind into small States, and all-national isolation, not only to bring the nations closer to each other, but also to merge them. . . . Just as mankind can achieve the abolition of classes only by passing through the transition period of the dictatorship of the oppressed class, so mankind can achieve the inevitable merging of nations only by passing through the transition period of complete liberation of all the oppressed nations, i.e. their freedom to secede." (Lenin, *Imperialism and the Right to Self-Determination.*)

The Communist Party puts forward this programme, not merely for colonial peoples in an advanced stage of development, but for all colonial peoples without exception. This is illustrated in the declaration of the Communist Party on Africa, published in 1948, which set out the demands:

> "1. The abolition of all discriminatory legislation, such as Pass Laws, Poll Tax, etc., in all African territory; full rights of assembly and association, and freedom of the Press and of government for every African.

> "2. The ending of British dictatorship in Africa; full democratic self-government for all African peoples, based on Parliaments elected by universal suffrage, which shall appoint and control the executive; the abolition of the Governor's veto; local authorities based on similar democratic principles.
> "3. Withdrawal of British armed forces and police; the elected Parliaments to determine what forces are necessary for the maintenance of order, to be officered and manned by Africans.
> "4. The rapid replacement of European administrative personnel by Africans, as determined by the elected Parliaments.
> "5. Financial and other assistance, if required, to be given by the British Government to the African Governments for the rapid development of industries under African control, as well as of housing, health and other social services, in accordance with plans drafted and approved by the African Parliaments."

The experiences of the Soviet Union in relation to some of the most primitive and backward peoples in their vast Arctic regions, sometimes even at a tribal or nomadic stage of development, no less than the present lively advance of the popular movement even in African colonies at a very low technical and cultural level, have shown that the possibilities of genuine self-government and popular representation exist also in these conditions, and that the supposed "insuperable practical and technical difficulties" alleged by the "old imperialist hands," can be overcome.

In fighting for this programme of final political liberation and the right of self-determination, the Communist Party does not separate this aim from the day-to-day fight for every immediate limited gain, removal of undemocratic and discriminatory legislation, extension of civil rights, extension of social services or education, which can be won also within the limitations of the existing colonial regimes. The confusion of the socialist principle of unqualified condemnation of the colonial system and fight for its abolition with a supposed renunciation of the fight for reforms within the colonial system is the familiar deception under which Labour Imperialism seeks to smuggle through its support and maintenance of the colonial system. This was the sophistry put forward by Ramsay MacDonald and the pro-imperialist minority at the Stuttgart International Socialist Congress in 1907. On this Lenin wrote:

> "Socialism has never refused and never refuses to advocate

reforms in the colonies as well; but this has nothing to do, nor should it have anything to do, with the weakening of our principle of opposing conquest, the subjugation of other nations, violence and plunder, which constitute 'colonial policy.' The minimum programme of all the Socialist Parties applies both to the 'mother country' and to the colonies. The very concept 'socialist colonial policy' is an expression of endless confusion." (Lenin, *The International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart*, 1907.)

Today the advance of the fight of the colonial peoples for liberation has reached a new height. In the world democratic camp the colonial peoples fighting for freedom are in the forefront. Where before the national movement was led by the colonial bourgeoisie, and reached only to sections of the population, and to limited forms of struggle, today the masses of the people are in movement, in a number of cases have taken up arms for their freedom, and the working class and the Communist Parties more and more directly lead the national movement.

At the same time imperialism is resorting to every device, not only to crush the popular struggle with terror, wholesale arrests and concentration camps, military expeditions and bombing and limitless violence, but also to split the national movement, to play on divisions, to build up new reactionary combinations, and to win over the dominant sections of the colonial bourgeoisie as allies and junior partners.

These new conditions have given rise to new tasks for the national liberation movements.

In the case of those developed colonial countries where a bloc of imperialism and the big bourgeoisie is now established and where Communist Parties are already leading the working-class movement and playing an important political rôle, the present phase has inaugurated a new stage.

Twenty-four years ago Stalin, in his address to the University of the Toilers of the East in 1925, gave warning with regard to the rôle of the colonial big bourgeoisie in colonial countries with developed capitalist relations such as India:

"In certain of these countries (India, for instance) capitalism is growing rapidly and is giving birth to, and crystallising a more or less numerous class of native proletarians.

"As the revolutionary movement progresses, the national bourgeoisie in such countries divides into two sections, a revolutionary section (the petty bourgeoisie) and a compromising section (the big bourgeoisie). The former continues the revolutionary struggle; the latter enters into a bloc with imperialism."

This process of the passing over of the colonial big bourgeoisie to a bloc with imperialism may be regarded as having reached its final completion in India with the establishment of the Dominion Governments of India and Pakistan. From his analysis of the colonial problem at that stage, Stalin drew three deductions:

(1) The liberation of colonies and dependencies from the yoke of imperialism is not possible save by a victorious revolution. Independence does not come as a gift!

(2) The revolution cannot be advanced and the complete independence of capitalistically developed colonies and dependencies cannot be achieved unless the compromising section of the national bourgeoisie is isolated, unless the petty bourgeois revolutionary masses are freed from the influence of this bourgeoisie, unless the hegemony of the proletariat is established, unless the advanced elements of the working class are organised in an independent Communist Party.

(3) No lasting victory is possible in colonial and dependent countries unless a real link is established between the movement for their liberation and the proletarian movement of the more advanced countries of the West.

All three deductions are more than ever important today.

The national liberation movement in countries such as India, having been thrown into temporary confusion by the betrayal of the big bourgeoisie entering into a full counter-revolutionary alliance with imperialism, can only re-group its forces and go forward under the hegemony of the industrial working class, expressed in the leadership of the Communist Party, uniting the widest sections of the people in a broad democratic anti-imperialist front. This general line has found expression in the decisions of the recent Second Congress of the Communist Party of India. In Burma, Malaya and Vietnam the Communist Party already leads the national liberation front.

In less developed countries where there is still only the beginnings of a colonial bourgeoisie and where Communist Parties do not yet exist, the stage and the tasks of the movement are necessarily different. Here, as in West Africa and the West Indies, the outstanding development of the trade union movement reveals already the key rôle of the working class, alongside the growth of varying forms of political and national movements. The influence of Marxist ideas and the inspiration of the world Communist move-

ment is already considerable and growing in these countries. The conditions are maturing for the formation of Communist Parties in many of these countries.

At the same time the responsibility is increased for the British labour movement and for all supporters of democracy in Britain, to play their active part in helping the heroic struggle of the colonial peoples.

We need to combat the colonial wars and regime of imperialist violence, as in Malaya, or the threat of armed action to maintain unjust and predatory conquests, as in Hong Kong. The attitude to the war in Malaya is at this moment the acid test of a democrat and a socialist in Britain.

We need to give every assistance to the development of the trade union and working class movement in the colonial countries. Wherever regulations and penal laws are imposed which either prohibit strikes or restrict the elementary rights of trade unionism —and in one form or another this is the case in every colony under British rule, and in many cases new, hampering restrictions have been imposed under the Labour Government—it is the elementary duty of trade unionism in Britain to practise solidarity with trade unionism in the countries oppressed by Britain, and to fight for the repeal of these discriminatory regulations and anti-trade union laws here in Britain where is the seat of authority which imposes them.

It is here, above all, that the World Federation of Trade Unions, with the affiliation of the trade union movements in the majority of colonial countries, is playing a rôle of first-class importance for international trade unionism. Hence it is urgent to take steps to overcome the present breach, to end the association with bogus government-inspired and employer-inspired "trade unions" (like the organisation founded by the National Congress in India to combat the All-India Trade Union Congress) and re-establish relations with the genuine working class trade union movement, and affiliation to the World Federation of Trade Unions.

Similarly we need to combat every infringement of democratic rights, denial of civil liberties, suppression of the Press, discriminatory racial regulations, and the operation of the colour bar, and fight for the same democratic rights for colonial citizens as we demand for ourselves. How many realise that the mere possession of Marxist literature, which Hitler outraged world opinion by

making a crime in Nazi Germany, is at the moment made a crime by the Labour Government in Malta? The *Communist Manifesto*, which the Labour Party officially re-published in London in 1948 with an introduction of glowing eulogy declaring that "the Labour Party acknowledges its indebtedness to Marx and Engels as two of the men who have been the inspiration of the whole working class movement," is banned in colonies under the dictatorial rule of the Labour Party Government. Periodicals like the *Labour Monthly*, contributed to by Labour M.P.s, and freely circulating in Britain, has been banned by the Labour Government in Kenya, Tanganyika, Zanzibar, British Guiana and Singapore.

Above all, we need to awaken working class and democratic opinion in Britain to the realities of imperialism and the crisis of imperialism; to expose the illusions of the "end of imperialism" and revive the anti-imperialist traditions of the labour movement; to spread understanding of imperialist policy as the root of Britain's crisis and the main obstacle to economic progress and the victory of socialism, and to mobilise support for a decisive change of policy.

The cause of the colonial peoples is today more than ever indissolubly linked with the cause of the working class and of socialism in Britain. The fight for the ending of imperialism and for the defeat of the multi-millionaire combines, which have their centre in Britain, but extend their operations over the entire world, and especially in the colonial empire (Unilevers, Tate and Lyle, Imperial Chemical Industries, etc.), and which are the main basis of Toryism and reaction in Britain, cannot be fought within the confines of Britain alone. The victory of the British working class cannot be won without allies, and our allies against British imperialism are first and foremost the colonial peoples. Stalin truly said that only those who do not want the political victory of the working class and socialism, who are not interested in the question of working class power, "those who are afraid of revolution, who do not want to lead the proletarians to power, cannot be interested in the question of allies for the proletarian revolution—to them the question of allies is a matter of indifference, a question of no immediate significance."

It is not only the liberation of the colonial peoples that is at stake. It is the liberation of Britain.

CHAPTER XIX

THE LIBERATION OF BRITAIN

"This England never did, nor never shall
Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror,
Save when it first did help to wound itself."
SHAKESPEARE.

THE TIME HAS come when the crisis of empire has to be recognised and faced, and practical conclusions drawn.

One hundred years ago Engels, with penetrating foresight, predicted the future downfall of the then ascendant and triumphant British world industrial monopoly before the advance of American capitalism, and outlined the sharp alternatives which would then confront the British working class:

> "If any country is adapted to holding a monopoly of manufacture, it is America. Should English manufacture be thus vanquished . . . the majority of the proletariat must become forever superfluous, and has no other choice than to starve or to rebel." (Engels, *Condition of the Working Class in England in* 1844.)

Today we are reaching a new and advanced stage of this deepening dilemma and crisis confronting British capitalism and the British working class.

Already in the last quarter of the nineteenth century American capitalism had overtaken and outstripped British in the field of industrial production. British capitalism, outdistanced by American and also by German capitalism, and falling behind in the field of industrial production, was nevertheless able to prolong its life on the basis of the accumulated reserves of its former world industrial monopoly and through the intensified exploitation of its world colonial empire. In the era of imperialism British capitalism provided the classic example of an older, decaying and increasingly parasitic capitalism ever more heavily dependent on world tribute to balance its accounts.

But now this basis also is reaching bankruptcy. The sharp choice foretold by Engels returns with added force in the closing phase of the imperialist era.

Britain's crisis is a crisis of empire. This is the background of all the present ever more urgent economic and political problems which press in upon us on every side.

The basic change in Britain's position since before the war can be most rapidly seen from the following table:

BRITISH OVERSEAS INVESTMENT INCOME AND GOVERNMENT OVERSEAS EXPENDITURE

(*£ million*)

	1938	1948	Decrease or Increase
Overseas Investment Income (net)	+175	+ 50	—125
Government Overseas Expenditure (gross) ..	— 16	—236	+220
Net Balance ..	+159	—186	

Overseas tribute has thus fallen in 1948 to *two-sevenths* of its pre-war level. On the other hand, Government overseas expenditure has multiplied *fifteen times*. If these two items, which reflect the most direct expression of imperialist policy, the takings (to put it crudely) on one side, and the upkeep costs on the other, are measured together, a pre-war surplus of £159 million has turned into a deficit of £186 million, representing a net turnover from profit to loss on the imperialist adventure (in relation to the total economy of the country, not in relation to the very comfortable gains of the imperialist monopoly enterprises) equivalent to £345 million.

Inevitably a further examination of all the facts would require consideration of many more factors than these extremely simplified figures. Nevertheless, these simplified figures, drawn from the official returns, sufficiently serve their purpose to indicate the indisputable *trend*.

Herein is exposed the bankruptcy of Britain's present position and of the imperialist policy of the Labour Government and Toryism.

Already in November, 1945, the Communist Party Congress gave the warning:

> "We warn the Labour movement that unless it compels the Government to change completely its present foreign policy, which is simply the continuation of the imperialist line of the Tory Party and of the reactionary monopoly capitalists, there can be no fundamental social progress in Britain, and that the whole future of this country is in grave peril."

The present deepening crisis, which in its onset took Labour Ministers by surprise and has found them ever more impotent to offer a positive policy, is abundant confirmation of the correctness of this warning.

As late as the Bournemouth Labour Party Conference in June, 1946, Mr. Morrison, having triumphantly defeated the proposal for affiliation of the Communist Party, actually boasted that the second Labour Government of 1929-31 was caught by surprise by the economic crisis because "we did not know we were going there," but that this would never happen again, because they had now established an "overall planning organisation":

> "In the Labour Government of 1929-31 . . . when we went into the economic and financial smash of 1931, we did not know we were going there. We ought to have known what was ahead, but we did not, because there was no proper machinery of State to tell us, and when we got there we did not know fully what to do about it."

And he continued with profound wisdom:

> "The real problem of statesmanship in the field of industry and economics is to see the trouble coming and to prevent ourselves getting into the smash."

Yet, in the whole proceedings of the Bournemouth Labour Party Conference there was not the slightest sign of a shadow of awareness of the crisis which was immediately in front and of which the Communist Party had already given concrete and explicit warning. On the contrary, Mr. Morrison, in the same speech in which he had displayed his economic ignorance in 1929-31 (when also the Communists had given exact warning of the coming crisis) and boasted of his wisdom and foresight now, went on blandly to hold out the economic perspective for 1947:

> "We will soon be able to pay for more and better things from overseas. . . . 1947 will be the year in which we are beginning to draw the dividends from our efforts during 1946. We can reasonably look forward to a rather higher level of imports."

1947 was the year in which the convertibility crisis broke, and the exhaustion of the American loan laid bare the bankruptcy of the Government's economic basis, leading to the Cripps emergency programme for austerity and restriction of imports. It is evident that Mr Morrison, like Belshazzar and his astrologers, had better dismiss his bogus "economic planners," and study with more care the literature of Marxism.

The sunshine optimism of the first two years after the war, when Government Ministers in their economic reports had prattled of an increased production of tennis balls and electric kettles as proof of recovery, gave way to permanent panic from the summer of 1947 onwards, when the real situation began to force itself on their attention with the rapid draining away of the American loan and the ugly spectre of a net deficit on the balance of payments of £630 million in one year.

But precisely because the real causes of the crisis were not understood, any more than its onset had been foreseen, the resultant panic only led to obvious measures of desperation which intensified the disease, while the operative causes in the sphere of *policy* remained unchanged.

The "balance of payments crisis" was seen as *only* a balance of payments crisis. The symptom was mistaken for the disease. Hence the moral was drawn and proclaimed with wearisome reiteration henceforth from every platform, newspaper, radio address and hoarding: "We are not producing enough exports to pay for the imports we must have." (*The A.B.C. of the Crisis,* published by the Labour Party in 1947.) We are importing and consuming too much. We are producing and exporting too little. And the solution? Restrict consumption. Increase production. Import less. Export more. And the crisis will be solved. Britain's accounts will "balance." How simple!

When the Marshall Plan was proposed, Government Ministers, Tory leaders, and the Trades Union Congress General Council leapt forward to welcome the golden shower with both hands. Once again the dollar subsidy, whose interruption with the exhaustion of the loan had caused such pain, could resume its beneficial flow. It was only thanks to the kind American capitalists, Mr. Bevan and Mr. Shinwell explained to bewildered Labour audiences who had

been brought up on the old-fashioned notion that socialism could cure unemployment, that we did not have one and a half million unemployed in this country. Never mind the conditions. Leave such querulous examination of the gift-horse's teeth to suspicious Russians and East Europeans who make a fetish of their economic independence. Once the four-year term of the Marshall Plan has expired, by 1952, we were assured, provided we pull in our belts and produce more, Britain's accounts will balance, and all will be well.

So the shackles of trade restrictions were imposed on Britain. The lists of banned exports arrived. The Hollywood films and magazines poured in. The American Economic Administrator for Britain established his offices in London with an ever-extending network of sub-offices and staff. He reported with satisfaction that ". . . the housing programme has been quite seriously cut back; so has the health programme and so has the programme for education." (Report of Thomas K. Finletter, Chairman of the Special Mission of the Economic Co-operation Administration for the United Kingdom to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on February 10, 1949.) Presently American economic occupation was followed by American military occupation. At first the military occupation was only temporary—for training. Then it became permanent.

Hitler has described the technique in *Mein Kampf*:

> "A shrewd conqueror will always enforce his exactions only by stages. . . . The more numerous the extortions thus passively accepted, so much the less will resistance appear justified in the eyes of other people, if the vanquished nation should end by revolting against the last act of oppression in a long series. And that is especially so if the nation has already patiently and silently accepted impositions which were much more exacting."

The nation obediently pulled in its belt, worked hard and increased production. During the two years from the summer of 1947 to the summer of 1949, according to the official figures, production increased by 17 per cent (and profits and interest rose by 24 per cent). Real wages went down by 3 per cent.

And then in the summer of 1949 it was announced that the crisis was worse than ever, that the dollar deficit was running at £600 million a year, that the gold and dollar reserve was melting

away and would at the existing rate reach exhaustion within a year, that no prospective Marshall Aid could cover the drain, and that there was no prospect of recovery by the expiry of the famous Marshall "Recovery" Plan in 1952.

Nothing remained but for the higher Government Ministers to make the pilgrimmage once again to the Mecca of Washington in the hope of another hand-out. This time, however, the tone of the American Press was becoming harsh, not to say unkind. The whip was no longer concealed. The eagle's claws were deep in the flesh of the wounded lion.

The new American terms for Britain were harsh. The pound was devalued from $4.03 to $2.80 on September 18, 1949, following the Washington Conference. This devaluation was carried through under open and violent American pressure, conveyed by the Secretary of the Treasury, Snyder, in his visit to London in July, and against the openly expressed unwillingness of the British Government at that time and of the British Treasury experts. This triumph of the American offensive further weakened the world position of sterling, lowered standards in Britain, increased Britain's economic difficulties by making imports more costly and exports less remunerative, and facilitated the penetration of American capital to buy up assets cheaply in Britain and the Empire.

No perspective was held out by the Government for the British people save to accept meekly the cut in standards, and multiply still further their efforts and sacrifices to pursue the elusive Holy Grail of expanding exports to the dollar markets, which did not need their goods. As a result of devaluation, dollar exports would now have to be expanded by two-fifths merely to maintain the existing gap, and would have to be quadrupled to overcome the gap. How much prospect was there of fulfilling these fantastic goals in the conditions of deepening crisis, when most of the other competing capitalist non-dollar countries had also devalued in pursuit of the same dollar market, while the United States was busily cutting imports and expanding exports? It was obvious that the new perspective for the solution of the crisis by intensified trade war to quadruple exports to the dollar market was even more wildly unrealistic than all the previous targets and surveys, which were now admitted by Ministers to have been no more than the pursuit of expedient after expedient leading to new crisis:

> "We have been trying to deal with them by a series of temporary expedients which have led a series of crises" (Sir Stafford Cripps, Press Conference, September 19, 1949).

The new "expedient" of devaluation would only lead to new and greater crisis, as the collapse of the programme of quadrupling dollar exports became revealed. This in turn would lead to the full intensification of the offensive on standards, begun indirectly through devaluation, to the extension of unemployment and the open offensive on wages, hours and the social services, already clamoured for by Toryism and Big Business, and foreshadowed by Sir Stafford Cripps in his speech in the House of Commons on September 27:

> "If it is not made to succeed, then deflation will be added to it, and we shall have failed to avert mass unemployment and poverty."

Such is the black perspective to which four years of the policy of Toryism and Labour Reformism has reached.

The conclusion from this Rake's Progress is inescapable. It is clear that there was something wrong in the original diagnosis and prescription of the Government and their economic physicians.

Let us examine a little more closely this "balance of payments" crisis. In all the voluminous outpouring of speeches, articles, broadcasts, leaflets, posters and picture-diagrams to "explain" the crisis to the poor, stupid ordinary man ("We import too much," "We export too little," "We need imports to live," "We must produce more," "We must go short," "We must export more," etc., etc.), the main immediate factor in the deficit in the balance of payments was never mentioned. And for an obvious reason. For that main immediate factor was the imperialist policy and its price.

The following table sets out the proportions of Government overseas expenditure and overseas military expenditure in the deficit on the balance of payments. Government expenditure is given on the basis of the gross total, since the "war disposals and settlements," which are recorded in the official accounts as offsetting part of the expenditure and thus leading to a lower net total, could, on the basis of a different policy, have helped, not to finance military commitments abroad, but to tide over some of the inevitable lesser commercial deficit during the transition from a bankrupt imperialist to a non-imperialist economy.

BRITAIN'S DEFICIT AND GOVERNMENT OVERSEAS EXPENDITURE
(*£ million*)

	1946	1947	1948	1949 Jan.-June	Total Jan. 1946-June 1949	% of Deficit
DEFICIT IN THE BALANCE OF PAYMENTS	380	630	110	10	1130	—
GOVERNMENT OVERSEAS EXPENDITURE (GROSS)	556	372	186	155	1263	111
of which MILITARY OVERSEAS EXPENDITURE ..	382	197	115	112	806	71

—United Kingdom Balance of Payments, 1946-1949 (Cmd. 7793)

Thus over three and a half years from the beginning of 1946 to the end of the first half of 1949, the entire deficit on the balance of payments was represented by Government overseas expenditure, but for which there would have been a surplus. Some of this expenditure was in part inevitable and legitimate, arising from the sequel of the war, relief and rehabilitation (£183 million) or occupation costs of ex-enemy territory (£143 million—much of the latter was the consequences of reactionary policy in the occupation). But the greatest part, £806 million, or *more than seven-tenths of the whole deficit in Britain's balance of payments, was due to overseas military expenditure.*

Nor is this only due to heavy initial overseas military expenditure immediately following the war. On the contrary, if we take the last year for which full returns are available, 1948, out of a net deficit on the balance of payments of £120 million, overseas military expenditure represented £115 million or *95 per cent.* The record for the first half of 1949 shows an increase to £112 million, or double the high rate of the previous year (arising from the military settlement with India and Pakistan).

This is the glaring elementary fact, the main immediate cause of Britain's post-war deficit, which was never mentioned on any poster or leaflet, never whispered on the radio, never admitted by a Cabinet Minister, never divulged by any official economist "explaining" the crisis, and never hinted at by any editorial leader-writer or feature-journalist in the million-sale Press lecturing the Government for its social extravagance at home or the workers for their idle and luxurious habits. It remained the grand guilty

secret of the dying British Empire to take down with it to the grave. For the workers the little picture diagrams (with all the arts of modern publicity experts to explain abstruse economic questions to a supposed population of morons) continued their little fairy tales. "Imports" would be represented by a loaf of bread and a tasty joint of meat. "Exports" would be represented by the product of John Smith's sweat. John Smith was not paying his way. If only John Smith would sweat harder, there would be more of the loaf and more of the meat, and lots of lovely things. So simple, if you just think it out carefully.

If any daring critic in a Labour conference did sometimes succeed in getting in a word to suggest that overseas military expenditure was the main cause of the deficit, the Cabinet Minister would bridle and declare with burning indignation, "Would you have our little island undefended?" And the troopships would continue to sail to Singapore and Hong Kong for the maintenance of military conquest over very different "little islands" from that understood by the audience.

But the full picture for a correct understanding of the immediate and controllable policy (the imperialist policy) factors underlying Britain's crisis and deficit, is not given only by the direct overseas military expenditure which has constituted the bulk of the deficit since the war. The effect of the arms expenditure of £800 million in 1949-50 and of the withdrawal of man-power for the armed forces and their supply in cutting down and misusing Britain's productive effort has to be taken into account.*

In the summer of 1949 no less than one and a half millions were still withdrawn from normal production to serve in the armed forces or for supply of the armed forces. If we assume that legitimate requirements for genuine national defence and fulfilment of international obligations under the United Nations would be amply covered, given a correct international policy, by half a million men, one million would be released for production. On the basis

* A striking demonstration of the waste of resources and increased output through diversion to military purposes was afforded by a survey of D. Seers in the *Bulletin of the Oxford Institute of Statistics* in the summer of 1947. This survey showed that in 1946 national output reached a level 14 per cent above 1938. Nevertheless, personal consumption fell by 2 per cent, capital formation by 9 per cent, and public consumption (civilian state expenditure and social services) rose by only 3 per cent. The explanation where the increased production went became clear when this survey revealed that military expenditure increased by 249 per cent.

of existing net output per worker, this would represent an additional output of goods equivalent to £500 million. It is obvious that such an increase of the national output by £500 million would not only provide the exports to wipe out the existing commercial deficit other than overseas military expenditure (amounting to £6 million in 1948), but would make possible a big immediate increase in the standard of living, and in providing houses, schools, hospitals and other constructive needs. All this development would necessarily involve at the same time a radical change in trading policy, but there are solid grounds for judging that this could be achieved if the obstacles arising from reactionary political considerations were removed.

The American loan for a period concealed this bankruptcy of the imperial policy. But the loan in fact, so far from assisting Britain economically, was used, and was intended by American policy to be used, to continue to maintain Britain's foreign military commitments which would otherwise have had to be cut down.

> "The very existence of the loan has enabled the Americans to impose on us obligations which we should otherwise have been forced to reject, because they would have been altogether beyond our immediate power. We should have been unable to go on garrisoning Greece against the Russians, or dallying disastrously in Palestine, or acting as capitalist policemen throughout the Near and Middle East. . . . Rejection of the loan, had it been possible, would have forced us at once to restrict our military and imperial commitments and to come to terms with the Soviet Union. . . . We should have been under the sheer necessity of reorganising our own metal and engineering industries to meet the demands of industrial re-equipment." (G. D. H. Cole, *New Statesman & Nation*, April 5, 1947.)

Thus the American loan actually hindered Britain's economic reconstruction, at the same time as fostering in practice (by the notorious Article 9 non-discrimination provision and other restrictive provisions of the Loan Agreement) the first forms of American economic domination on Britain. Similarly Professor Balogh wrote (*New Statesman and Nation*, January 24, 1948) that the cost of the imperialist policy pursued by Mr. Bevin and the Labour Government was actually greater than the amount provided by the loan. He emphasised

> ". . . the complete failure by the Foreign Office to take into

account, in deciding on policy, our capacity to sustain internal burdens and obligations whether military or economic in character, though this failure has cost the country, directly and through the decrease in production and exports caused by the slowness of demobilisation, well over £1,500 million or more than the total drawing on the U.S. Loan."

The net return from the loan was thus a minus quantity.

This policy of imperialist bankruptcy sustained and concealed by dollar subsidies, which is the essence of the Churchill-Bevin foreign policy, was further carried forward, after the exhaustion of the initial American loan, by the Marshall Plan and the Atlantic Pact with the present projects for American " military aid " under the Atlantic Pact.

But this policy inevitably carries with it the increasing economic, political and military subjugation of Britain to American domination.

Britain continues nominally to hold its Empire. But it holds it by permission of the American overlord. As President Truman's Point Four has clearly indicated, Britain becomes the caretaker-policeman on behalf of the American investor.

The imperialist financial oligarchy in Britain, wholly cosmopolitan in their outlook, interests and connections, eagerly cling to the American alliance to maintain their possessions and continue to receive what they can of their super-profits. For this higher aim they have no compunction in sacrificing the national interests of Britain to American domination, any more than their Munichite predecessors had any compunction in sacrificing Britain's national interests to the expansion of Hitler, so long as Hitler maintained hostility to the Soviet Union.

Thus, while Britain continues to " own " colonies all over the world, and even the largest world colonial empire, Britain itself becomes at the same time more and more of a colony or semi-colony, or at best a client-State or satellite, of American finance-capital.

American economic domination has been followed by American military occupation of British soil. Since August, 1948, the Third United States Air Division has been stationed in Britain as " an independent command, directly responsible to headquarters in the United States," and " available to carry out any directions received from headquarters in the United States." (*The Times*, 24.8.1949.)

But the American military plans to use Britain as an advanced offensive base for atom bomb warfare necessarily involve making Britain the main target and cockpit of the " third world war " so openly and publicly planned by the American strategists. Britain, in the words of a Government Minister, is to be the " Malta " of a third world war—but a Malta without the rocks and caves of the island in the Mediterranean. In the plans of the superior American strategy, so abundantly proclaimed alike in their military journals and popular Press, the prospect of the destruction of the greater part of Britain or of a large proportion of its population in the contemplated third world war, will be a sacrifice amply justified in the higher interests of the defence of the United States and Western Civilisation. (The safety of " the King," as the U.S. Navy Department memorandum quoted on page 113 laid down, requires the sacrifice of " the pawn.") For this purpose the preliminary tossing over of a few billion dollars of loans, subsidies or " military aid " is an investment well worth while.

Such is the present predicament and future prospect to which Britain has been brought by the imperialist war policy of interventionist adventures and colonial wars, of the Marshall Plan and the Atlantic Pact, of the Fulton programme and the " cold war " —the bi-partisan foreign policy of Mr. Churchill and Mr. Bevin.

This policy spells economic, political and military suicide for Britain.

The signals are sounding for a decisive change. There is no further progress along this road.

The old basis by which Britain functioned as a world imperialist Power, dominating one-quarter of the globe, intervening and policing in a score of countries, drawing overseas tribute to pay for imports and build up the fortunes of the super-rich class, and neglecting the development of home industry and agriculture—that basis is finished for good and all.

The decline of the world capitalist monopoly began already in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. But the new imperialism of Chamberlain and Rhodes, with its promise of dazzling prizes and a social policy for the poor, concealed for a while the decline. The new imperialism spread through all the political parties and penetrated the upper ranks of the labour movement in the shape of Fabianism. There followed the false dawn of 1906-14.

The price was paid in the first world war. Britain emerged in deepened decline. The time was ripe for the advance to socialism. But the opportunity was not taken. MacDonald and Thomas dominated the labour movement. There followed the long agony of the chronic depression of the inter-war years. The old imperialist policies were still pursued; Britain maintained hostility to the Soviet Union, built up a strong Germany, built up fascism. The price was paid in the second world war.

Britain has emerged still further weakened; the overseas tribute is drying up; there is chronic deficit on the balance of payments; the country is mortgaged to the American millionaires, and the day of foreclosure looms in view. Still the attempt is made to flog the old horse along the ancient ruts; to maintain vast overseas commitments beyond the economic strength and man-power of the country; to pursue the suicidal anti-Soviet and reactionary policies, while the vital home tasks of basic reconstruction are bogged and delayed. That way lies ruin, worsened standards, a new economic crisis and finally war.

It is time to change the course. It is time to rebuild Britain, to recall our manpower for the tasks at home, to concentrate our economic resources on imperative needs of reconstruction and technical development and re-equipment in Britain, and to co-operate in these aims with all the other peoples who are also building their future on a new basis after victory over fascism for real democratic freedom of the common people, Socialist economy and rising social standards.

The days when imperialist reaction could wear the mask of patriotism are past. Today it stands revealed as a policy which seeks to squander the resources and man-power of Britain in order to maintain the wealth and exploitation of the few, and which is ready to make Britain itself a colony of the last Empire of the monopolists in America. Today the experience of every country is more and more clearly demonstrating that it is Communism which most truly voices and fights for the interests of the nation.

The Communist Party, which has always fought for the liberation of all subject peoples from colonial and semi-colonial dependence, will equally fight for the liberation of the British people from dependence on American imperialism. It is the characteristic

irony of the existing situation that, at the same time as the present imperialist rulers are squandering the resources and man-power of Britain to hold other people in subjection, to bomb Malayan villages, occupy Greece or throw Cypriots in prison for the crime of demanding elementary democratic rights, by the consequences of that same policy they are surrendering the British people to increasing servitude to American domination. If war should come there is no doubt that the national liberation movement of the British people would throw off the yoke of American military occupation and unite with Socialist Europe. But it is better that that liberation should come before war, and in time to prevent war.

For it is not true, as the modern Munichites and appeasers of American imperialism seek to assert, that the British people are helpless and inevitably dependent on America. On the contrary, conditions were never so favourable for Britain to pursue its independent line in unity with the progressive forces of the world, and thereby not only to save Britain, but to change the world situation.

American imperialism is not invincible. The final moral of the United States Report on China, published in 1949 is clear:

> " The unfortunate but inescapable fact is that the ominous result of the civil war in China was beyond the control of the Government of the United States. Nothing that this country did or could have done within the reasonable limits of its capabilities could have changed that result; nothing that was left undone by this country has contributed to it. It was the product of internal Chinese forces, forces which this country tried to influence but could not."

Here is indeed a text for the times. Behold the philosophy of Marxism inculcated by its enemies—history " drumming dialectics " as Marx said, " even into the heads of the mushroom upstarts " of the new Holy American Empire. Today the Chinese have won through to freedom. Tomorrow Western Europe and Britain.

The choice before the British people is inescapable. It is at once economic and political, expressing itself equally in domestic and foreign policy.

Either continued capitulation to American imperialism, along the path of the reactionary Anglo-American bloc, which places crippling burdens on British resources and man-power, and by which Britain would lose all possibility of independent economic reconstruction, waste its strength on policing jobs for the Anglo-

American bondholders, sink deeper in the mire of debt and mortgage its last resources to the American creditor, and finish up a suppliant dependant on American charity, a hired *condottiere* among nations, and finally a military outpost and atom bomb base for the plans of American war against a Socialist Europe.

Or the alternative path of independence and social reconstruction; to break the shackles of the Anglo-American bloc and end the reactionary overseas commitments; to return to the basis of the British-Soviet Treaty and Crimea and Potsdam; to concentrate all strength on rebuilding British economy; and to march forward in unity with the European peoples who are building their lives anew, with the Soviet Union and with the peoples of the dependent empire who are pressing their way to freedom, to shape with them a stable and prosperous economic and political future which need have no fear of the threats of American reaction.

Nor is such a policy in any degree hostile to the progressive aims of the American people. On the contrary. It is the best aid to all the progressive sections of the American people, which are equally struggling against the present dominance of the blackest monopolist reaction, and striving to bring back America to the path of Roosevelt and of international co-operation.

Such an alternative policy is possible and practical. It is not only politically desirable in the interest of progress and of peace. It also opens the way to grapple successfully with Britain's immediate economic problems. Given a change in policy, and the ending of the present American " cold war " ban on effective trade with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, Britain could build up an alternative balanced trading pattern with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, with Democratic China, and with the liberated colonial countries, which would end the one-sided dollar dependence, and make possible the necessary more limited degree of trading with the dollar area without a dollar deficit.

This is today admitted even by the champions of the imperialist "cold war" policy.

For example, the *Observer* of May 22, 1949, wrote:

> "An active campaign for increased East-West trade in Europe has started. It sounds innocuous. . . . Increased East-West trade in Europe would reduce the dependence of Western Europe on American foodstuffs, and thereby the dollar deficit. *All this sounds tempting. But if we fall for the temptation the political result will be disastrous.*"

Economic Recovery would be " tempting." But the temptation must be resisted for political reasons—for the sake of preserving the Anglo-American Holy Alliance of Reaction. The façade of " economic recovery " with which it was sought originally to deck out the Marshall Plan has faded away. The grim structure of a political military alliance for war and impoverishment is laid bare.

Or again, the same journal on July 3, 1949:

> " It becomes increasingly possible to find elsewhere things for which during and immediately after the war we were absolutely dependent on America. . . . *While this policy saves dollars* . . . it inexorably widens the division of the Western world. If it were driven to its logical conclusion, transatlantic trade would shrink to a trickle, and for the rest the non-American part of the Western world would somehow make do as if America did not exist.
>
> " *This might balance the books, but it would nevertheless be a measureless calamity.* . . . For it is doubtful whether there is any alternative source except Russia and Eastern Europe for the massive bulk supply of grain and other staple foods."

Previously the Marshall Plan was advocated, despite the conditions of economic dependence on America, as the only way " to balance the books." Now it is urged that the books must *not* be balanced, for fear of losing the dependence on America.

Yet again on July 24, 1949, the *Observer* proclaimed:

> "Alternative sources of supply for Britain could, in a world buyers' market, probably be found—but for many of them we should have to look behind the Iron Curtain.
>
> " If the dollar crisis is regarded simply on its merits as an economic problem, therefore, without reference to the higher needs for British-American unity, its solution is simply a parting of the ways. But there could be no greater political calamity."

Thus the *practical possibility* of an alternative trading basis which could " balance the books " is admitted. But it is rejected for reactionary *political* reasons.

On the contrary, the economic and political interests of the British people point in one and the same direction.

There *is* an alternative policy for the people of Britain to solve the present problems, a practical and hopeful alternative—but on one condition only. That condition is that the British people will need to make a decisive break with the bankrupt basis of imperialism and go forward along the path of constructing a new independent

non-imperialist economy, that is in practice a socialist economy, in unity with the peoples who have already won or are winning freedom from imperialism and are treading the same path, at different stages, to the goal of Socialism and Communism.

This alternative policy is set out in the Communist Party Programme, *The Socialist Road for Britain,* published in 1949.

Undoubtedly this transformation will require great political changes within Britain, for which the conditions are still only beginning to develop. Political consciousness, as so often, lags behind objective reality. It will require an arduous and tenacious political struggle to end the present reactionary policies which have frustrated so many of the hopes placed by the peoples in the return of the Labour Government in 1945. Great changes are needed, and are on the order of the day, within the labour movement. New forces will need to come to the front in order to overcome those problems which Toryism and Labour Reformism—linked by their common imperialist basis—have proved incapable to solve. But the crisis is a stern taskmaster. The old road is finished. The new road must and will be found.

The time has come when the great alternative has to be faced. Britain must either break with imperialism or go under. The ending of foreign domination and military interventionist adventures is not only indispensable in the interests of world democracy and peace and of the colonial peoples struggling for freedom. It is equally the life-and-death need of the British people, if they are to solve their problems at home and advance to Socialism.

Socialism and empire are irreconcilable contradictions. If we choose empire, we renounce socialism. More than that. Should the present course be pursued to its conclusion, we should not only be renouncing socialism; we should be signing our economic, political and military ruin.

It is time to choose the alternative path, when the British people, in liberating the peoples of the Empire, will also liberate themselves. This is no longer wisdom of an ultimate future. It has become the urgent practical politics of the present. The troops must be brought home. We must use our resources for the tasks of reconstruction at home. Let us cut the losses of an outworn, criminal and bankrupt system of Empire, and build instead a new Britain as a free and equal partner of the free peoples of the world.

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