

# New Factors in the Struggle Against Imperialism

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**W**HAT will the New Year bring? This question is in the minds and on the tongues of countless millions throughout the world. Will it bring war or peace, more national oppression or victories for national independence, new hardships or greater prosperity, the peaceful exploration of new planets or the use of more devilish weapons for mass destruction?

Every year the bells are supposed to "ring out the old and ring in the new"; and every year they ring in both the old and the new—though part of the new is blended with the old, and part of the old with the new.

For many years peace has been the heart-felt wish of the ordinary man and woman in every country. With great contrasts in climate, living standards, colour of skin, religions and customs, and even sharper conflicts in political views—the desire for peace is common to them all. And they desire it not only in 1958 but for all time.

The prospect of a nuclear world war has aroused mankind, even more the women-folk all over the world. Not only the desire, but the movement for peace is growing. And as it grows more rapidly into action for peace, so will the threatening clouds of war roll away.

New factors have arisen which are making a powerful impact on world affairs. Former colonies are winning their independence. Newly independent nations are determined to cherish their hard-won freedom and to advance to the next stage of economic liberation from imperialism. Conscious of the growing economic strength and political influence of the socialist world, they gather new confidence in their resistance to new forms of imperialist domination.

In the imperialist countries the press and radio constantly present the issue of war or peace as one between the "Great Powers". Between the Governments of Britain, the United States, and France on the one hand, and the

Soviet Union on the other, there are certainly conflicts of policy; but they arise from the contrast of two social systems.

The Soviet Union declares that these differences can be resolved without resort to war, that new "summit talks" could at least reach limited agreement on the issues of nuclear warfare, and that peaceful co-existence is possible between the two social systems.

Recent advances in Soviet economy and science have won world-wide admiration, and 1958 will prove even more the superiority of socialism over imperialism and the capitalist system as a whole. But it would be foolish to believe that this will soften the hearts of the imperialists. It is precisely their recognition of this socialist advance, and the contrast between the two social systems, which lies behind their efforts to step up the "cold war" campaign—and the language used, and threats made, are often akin to a state of actual war.

Of course, the aim of the "cold war" is to create the impression that it's the Soviet Union which has aggressive aims. Though the prospect of a new world war is a frightful one, somehow the imperialists have to win their peoples to support their policy. And not only their own peoples, but hundreds of millions in what is now known as the "uncommitted" countries.

This is one of their biggest problems. Not only are they confronted with the growing strength of the socialist world, and serious differences in their own ranks, but with the rising movement of millions in the "uncommitted" countries who are making a determined stand against imperialist domination and refuse to be involved in their war plans. This is a nightmare to the imperialists, but a beacon light of hope for peace-lovers all over the world.

No better time could be chosen than the beginning of a new year to review these new factors in the world situation, their impact on

world affairs, and the relation of the growing anti-imperialist movement to the struggle in Britain to end Tory rule and to advance to socialism.

Before the Second World War the majority of peoples were under the domination of the imperialist powers in one form or another. The defeat of fascism, the proved strength of the Soviet Union, and the extension of the socialist world, made a profound impression. This was the beginning of a big change. The sharpest impact was in Asia. Indonesia won its independence in 1945, and in 1947 India became independent, as did Burma and Ceylon. The struggle became more intense in Viet Nam, and in China the liberation movement advanced in leaps and bounds.

The victory of the Chinese Revolution in 1949 gave a new impetus to the struggle for liberation, not only in Asia, but throughout the Middle East, and in all parts of Africa.

### **The Advance of National Independence**

This rapid advance of the liberation movement on a world scale is now recognised on all sides. Within the past decade, one country after another has won its political independence, embracing 1,250 million out of 1,500 million former colonial peoples.

Together with the growing strength of the Soviet Union, the victory of the Chinese Revolution and the heroic struggle of the Chinese volunteers in the Korean war made a powerful impact throughout Asia and indeed the whole world. Korea destroyed the myth of imperialist superiority and brought the Asian peoples closer together. India came into close association with the new China, and speeded the advance from formal independence to actual and open resistance to imperialism.

This prepared the way for the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung in April 1955, at which no less than twenty-nine countries (most of them former colonies) representing 1,200 million people were present. Differences existed on many issues, but there was common agreement on their opposition to colonialism, to imperialist war plans and war pacts, and to all forms of imperialist domination. This conference was a new stage in changing the balance of forces in the world today.

Since 1947 it is not only the colonies which have waged the struggle against the grip of imperialism. Former colonies which have won their political independence have raised the movement to a new level. Not only have they given a new impetus to the struggle in the remain-

ing colonies, and raised the anti-imperialist movement to a world scale. They have also reinforced the forces for world peace.

The actual imperialist wars of aggression in the past twelve years have been directed either against the colonial peoples striving for liberation, or to reimpose imperialist domination upon newly independent nations. In Asia it was against Indonesia, China, Malaya, Viet Nam and North Korea. In the Middle East mainly against the Arab countries, the most recent being the invasion of Egypt and the threats to Syria, together with the armed occupation of Cyprus. In North Africa it was centred on Tunis and Morocco, and the three-year ferocious onslaught against Algeria is still going on. In British colonial Africa it was against Kenya, now being strengthened for British military operations in the Middle East.

All the main imperialist powers (United States, Britain, France and Holland), were involved in these wars of aggression, though on occasions they have had conflicting interests. But despite the heavy blows inflicted by the imperialists they have not succeeded in destroying the liberation movements in these countries. On the contrary, not only the growing strength of the socialist world, and the desire for peace in all countries, but the actual *resistance* of the national liberation movements has become a powerful barrier to the plans for a new world war.

The movement is now growing even more rapidly. Early in the New Year the second Bandung Conference will conclude its discussions in Cairo. But the anti-imperialist movement is even wider than the group of Bandung nations. Early in 1958 also will be held a conference of African countries, convened by newly independent Ghana.

All this reveals the new powerful anti-imperialist force that is now growing throughout the world. Peace is not only an issue for the "Great Powers"; it is one that involves the majority of mankind—and womankind. National independence and freedom from colonial oppression is not only an issue for the colonial peoples; it is no less a crucial issue for those millions who have won independence—as it is for the people in the imperialist countries, and particularly in Britain.

These are the main conclusions we can draw from these new factors in the world situation:

1. The anti-imperialist movement now embraces the vast majority of the peoples of the world.
2. The newly independent nations have

extended and changed the character of the anti-imperialist movement, which has now become a decisive factor in world affairs.

3. The struggle to achieve and to maintain national independence is inseparable from the fight to ensure world peace and to speed the advance to socialism.

### Attitude of the National Bourgeoisie

In this new world situation the attitude of the growing capitalist elements in the colonies and newly independent nations who are opposed to imperialism (what Marxists more correctly term "the national bourgeoisie") is of key importance. No struggle for national liberation can be waged without a mass movement (workers, peasants, intellectuals, national bourgeoisie) fighting imperialism as the common enemy, but the actual leadership of the movement depends on the stage of development.

In China, North Korea and Viet Nam the working class, headed by the Communist Party, led the struggle for liberation, welding together all the class forces opposed to imperialism; and after the liberation is now leading the way forward to socialism—in China winning over the former national bourgeoisie to become builders of a new society. In most other countries it is the national bourgeoisie which is in the leadership of the liberation movement, supported by the workers, peasants and broad masses of the people.

Formerly, it was the Marxist view that national independence was only possible with the working class in the leadership of the national movement, but in the past decade experience has shown that it has been won in India and several other countries with the national bourgeoisie in the leadership.

Is this a denial of the leading role of the working class, and does it mean our former conception was based on a false premise? Judged from the standpoint of an *individual* country it would appear so, but this standard of judgment has nothing in common with Marxism. Ever since the 1917 Russian Revolution the struggle for national liberation has been inseparably bound up with the world fight for socialism, and since the Second World War the bonds are even closer.

It is precisely the advance of the socialist world (expressing the leading role and victory of the working class) which has made it possible for the national bourgeoisie to lead the struggle, not only to the achievement of political independence, but forward from there for economic liberation and resistance to all forms of imperialist domination. It is the victory of socialism on a world

scale which has made national independence possible in *particular* countries with the national bourgeoisie in the leadership.

The rich experiences in China before and after the 1949 victory serve to emphasise the need for a closer study and analysis of the class forces within the national movement in various countries. Formerly, a simple distinction was made between the big national bourgeoisie (described as collaborators with imperialism) and the medium and small bourgeoisie (described as allies of the national movement). Not only the experiences in China, but the big changes in the world balance of forces in recent years, seem to indicate the need for a new political assessment.

It seems clear that what is decisive is not only the quantitative factor (big, medium, or small) but also the *political* factor—in other words, their economic and political relations with foreign imperialism. In a given situation sections of the "big" bourgeoisie may find its interests lie in opposing foreign imperialism in order to advance its own interests, while sections of the "small" bourgeoisie, feeling themselves in a weak position, could be drawn in as agents of foreign imperialism.

From the experience in China "national bourgeoisie" has now become the term used to specify the *whole* of the national bourgeoisie which takes a stand for national interests and against foreign imperialism. Their term "compradore" or "bureaucratic" for those closely associated with imperialism may not be the best for all countries, but it at least serves to indicate that the main measuring rod is the class structure of a particular country, and the relation of the various classes to foreign imperialism.

There is a striking contrast between India and Pakistan—the first with the national bourgeoisie in the leadership and presenting a determined resistance to foreign imperialism; and the second operating a policy of alliance with United States imperialism. Though Pakistan is formally independent (largely a creation of the British imperialist technique of "divide and rule") it is clear that imperialism has succeeded in forging a limited partnership with the big landlords and feudal elements, together with reactionary sections of the bourgeoisie. But the main elements of the national bourgeoisie seem to be in opposition to the existing ruling forces in Pakistan.

A somewhat similar position appears to exist in Iraq and Jordan, constitutionally independent, but having close ties with foreign imperialism. In striking contrast is the position in Egypt and Syria, where the national bourgeoisie is leading

the liberation movement, with the firm backing of the masses of the people, and where the big landlords, feudal elements, and reactionary elements of the bourgeoisie depend on the aid of foreign imperialism.

The actual alignment of class forces may differ from one country to the other, but in general the national bourgeoisie in the colonies and newly independent nations is a growing positive force in the advance of the anti-imperialist movement. It has served to extend the scope of the world-wide opposition to imperialism and is a powerful reinforcement to the struggle of the workers and peasants in every country.

At the same time, the national bourgeoisie can never be a homogeneous class force. Though its class interests can coincide with the interests of the masses of the people in the struggle against imperialism, it is also concerned with making bigger profits, and important sections can be won over on occasions by concessions from imperialism.

### **Role of the Working Class**

That is why the role of the working class (in alliance with the peasantry) in the colonies and newly independent nations is so decisive for the victory of national liberation, and for the further advance to socialism.

The working class is the only consistent class force whose interests lie not only in opposing imperialism but also in defending the daily economic interests of the workers and peasants, and carrying forward the struggle after the achievement of political independence to the transformation of society.

Without the leading role of the working class, headed by the Communist Party, the victory of the Chinese Revolution in 1949 would not have been possible, much less its subsequent advance to socialism.

Even where the national bourgeoisie lead the national movement to the achievement and maintenance of political independence, this is only the first stage. The further advance towards economic liberation, complete freedom from imperialist domination, and the achievement of socialism depends on the working class and its Communist Party coming forward to the leadership of the national movement—a process now evident in India, Indonesia, and Cyprus and elsewhere.

Bearing all this in mind it is none the less important to recognise the positive role of the national bourgeoisie in the present world situation, and to grasp the great opportunities which now exist for extending the scope of the anti-

imperialist movement, to achieve further victories of national liberation, and to ensure world peace.

### **Economic Liberation and Socialist Aid**

Whilst they are taking a stand against the political and military domination of imperialism, the newly independent nations are now conducting a big battle for economic independence. This struggle is equally as sharp as that for political independence. In the words of President Sukarno of Indonesia, in a speech at Djakarta last July: "The fight for economic freedom from imperialism will be as bitter as the fight we had for national freedom." In his fortieth anniversary speech, Khrushchev also emphasised that the newly independent nations "not only seek political liberation, but also strive to get rid of the economic factors which make them dependent on imperialism".

One of the chief aims after achieving political independence is to solve the land problem and transform the economy. This meets with strong internal opposition from the big landlords and feudal elements, and even more from foreign imperialism. So-called economic aid schemes operated by the imperialists are bound up with political strings and mainly serve strategic war aims. They are not designed to create or assist the growth of an independent economy.

Before and since India embarked on its second Five-Year Plan it has met with strong opposition from reactionary elements within the country and from foreign imperialism. Withdrawal of its own sterling balances from London raised a storm in British financial circles, demands to tone down the main features of the plan, or to slow down its pace. This had some effect, but the basic character of the plan remains, with its emphasis on heavy industry, and the development of an independent Indian economy. India is still faced with serious financial problems, but Soviet economic aid has been a powerful factor in surmounting many big obstacles, even forcing the imperialists to advance limited economic aid, without political strings.

On a smaller scale a similar battle is being waged in Indonesia, Egypt, Syria, Sudan, Ghana and other independent countries. Sterling assets held by these countries in London banks are under the control of the British Government. Though it cannot refuse to release them to countries which are now politically independent, all kinds of pressures are being used by British financial circles to prevent them being released or at least to slow down the rate of withdrawal.

Imperialist schemes of economic aid have all

kinds of political strings and are resented by most independent nations. Britain and the U.S. have turned down every proposal to extend economic aid through the medium of the United Nations, and are only prepared to co-operate in the U.N. schemes of technical assistance—for these provide a medium for thousands of “experts” and “technicians” to secure a footing in the countries which they seek to influence, but provide little or nothing by way of economic development.

On the other hand the Soviet Union reaffirmed its support, at the session of the Economic and Social Council of U.N.O. in October, for the “Special United Nations Fund for Economic Development” (Sunfed) which sets the aim of getting all member nations to contribute 1 per cent of their national income for economic development in the under-developed countries.

For the ten years 1946 to 1955 the total U.S. foreign aid programme came to £20,000 million. This seems a gigantic amount, but in fact 70 per cent of this went to the European countries (almost all of it military aid), 20 per cent to Asia, 8 per cent to Africa and the Middle East and 2 per cent to Latin America. In any case only 7 per cent of the total (£1,400 million) went for economic development. Three-quarters of this went to European countries and only about 20 per cent (£280 million) to the under-developed countries.

Britain’s aid to its own colonies during this same period was roughly £170 million, but less than 10 per cent of this was devoted to economic development. In general, Government loans and grants are devoted to what is called “public services” such as power stations, roads, bridges. These provide little or no profit, and do not attract private capital. They are designed to provide cheap transport, water, irrigation and electricity and so make it easier for the big overseas firms to make higher profits in other spheres.

It is in this situation that the offer of socialist economic aid on advantageous terms, without political strings, is a big attraction for the newly independent nations. Soviet long-term loans are offered at 2 per cent and 2½ per cent compared with short-term loans offered by Britain and U.S.A. at 5 per cent to 7 per cent. Moreover the socialist countries are entering into extensive trading relations on far more advantageous terms for the newly independent nations, accepting payment in goods or in the currency of the country concerned.

Of the eighty-four trading agreements which

Asian countries entered into during 1956 no less than forty-nine were with the socialist countries, eleven of them with the Soviet Union and China, and thirty-eight with the countries in Eastern Europe. Surveying all the under-developed countries in Asia, Africa and the Middle East, a report in the London *Times* (October 24th, 1957) states that:

“The trade agreements between the block [socialist countries] and under-developed countries have risen from only one-third of the total in 1953 to over a half by the end of last August. The total number of agreements has more than doubled to more than 200.”

During 1957 Soviet economic aid was extended even more rapidly. In the month of November alone there were three outstanding examples: (i) £35 million loan to Syria; (ii) £45 million loan to India; and (iii) £60 million loan to Egypt—all of them at 2½ per cent and spread over a period of twelve years.

It is clear from this that socialist economic aid has become a powerful factor in the struggle of the independent nations to build their own economies and patterns of trading relations. It serves to undermine the pressure of imperialism on these countries, and to bring them into closer and friendlier relations with the socialist world. And the spectacle of *Sputnik I* and *Sputnik II* circling the planet has given the peoples of the under-developed countries greater confidence than ever in the economic and scientific advances being made in the Soviet Union.

### Is the Colonial System Dying?

What is the impact of all these new factors on imperialism and the colonial system? It is clear that they serve to undermine its foundations, to weaken the imperialists, and to broaden the scope of the anti-imperialist movement. This was underlined by Khrushchev in his speech to the Twentieth Congress of the C.P.S.U. in 1956. But the phrase “disintegration of the colonial system” has been interpreted, even in Communist circles, to imply the automatic collapse of colonialism. It should be remembered that Khrushchev then went on to emphasise that: “The complete abolition of the infamous system of colonialism is now on the agenda as one of the most acute and pressing problems.”

It’s on the agenda because it is still a “pressing problem”, not an accomplished fact. True, there is a “deep-going crisis of the entire imperialist colonial system”, but the imperialists are taking

new and desperate measures. Its abolition is on the agenda of the day precisely because of the new forces in the world which can achieve this—but *only* if there is a united struggle against imperialism.

Never was the prospect more favourable. New victories for national independence were won in 1957 and there will be more to come in 1958. Early in 1957 Ghana won political independence. In August the Federation of Malaya won a limited measure of independence, and in January 1958 Singapore is due to get limited measures of self-government. British colonies in the West Indies are due to achieve Caribbean Federation in March. And Nigeria has staked a new claim for independence in 1960.

These forced concessions which have been won from imperialism are used by Tory and official Labour leaders to spread the illusion that colonialism no longer exists, and that the “old imperialism” is rapidly dying. But the fact remains that these changes (important as they are) have not altered the basic character of imperialism, the increased drive for exploitation, and its aggressive war plans.

British imperialism has been forced to make concessions in one sphere, but becomes more aggressive in another. The date for Ghana independence was fixed at the same time as the plans for the invasion of Egypt. Soon after came the mass bombing in Yemen and Oman—part of the campaign to extend British imperialist domination throughout the Persian Gulf.

Moreover, the concessions forced from British imperialism depend on the strategic position of particular colonies. Malayan independence is hamstrung because British military control still remains, and Malaya itself is a strategic base in Britain’s war plans. This applies also to Singapore. Independence for Cyprus is still denied because of its strategic position for British imperialism, and the Tory Government has told the world that Aden cannot have self-government because it is a key base for the Middle East. And now that Kenya is a main reserve war base Lennox-Boyd has declared that British rule must remain “for the foreseeable future”.

British colonies in Central Africa and East Africa (which are under European minority domination) are not only denied self-government, but the vast majority of adult Africans are even refused the right to vote. Even in Ghana, together with Malaya and Singapore, British *economic* exploitation still remains, and the economic grip

of British imperialism is still strong in India and Ceylon.

Direct colonial rule is only one aspect of imperialism, and changes in the constitutional relations between Britain and its former or existing colonies (forced upon British imperialism) do not in themselves change the character of imperialism.

Every democratic advance in the colonies has been won in the teeth of bitter opposition from imperialism. Even “constitutions” designed to split and retard the liberation movements have had the opposite effect, presenting new opportunities to raise the level of the struggle. But it is the united struggle, not the “constitutions”, which has blazed the path towards national independence.

British imperialism is combining more desperate and subtle measures than ever to stem the advance of the anti-imperialist movement. Far from dying a peaceful death, like a wounded beast it will stop at nothing. It may still achieve a temporary advance here and there, and so prolong a decadent system which should have been buried long ago.

Everything now depends on the united struggle of the anti-imperialist forces. Imperialism will not die of its own accord. It will have to be destroyed.

### **Imperialism and the Workers**

This situation presents a serious challenge to the British people, and in particular the organised Labour movement. The continued existence of British imperialism is not only a menace to the peoples of the colonies and the newly independent nations, but also to the fundamental interests of the British people. Unless the struggle in Britain is seen as one which is inseparable from the whole anti-imperialist movement, there can be no real advance to socialism in this country.

From its foundation in 1920 the Communist Party has consistently advocated solidarity action with the colonial peoples, and to the extent it was able to do so has endeavoured to put this into practice. The 1951 programme of the *British Road to Socialism* marked an advance in combining the the immediate solidarity fight with the perspective of future relations when socialism is achieved in Britain.

The new text of the *British Road* carries forward to a new stage the conception of “a firm alliance” between “the British people, the subject colonial peoples, and all the peoples of the pre-

sent Empire” on the basis of their “common interests”. And it is strongly emphasised that this alliance “needs to be built on the common struggle on every issue that affects the colonial peoples”.

There should be no illusion that British workers are automatically convinced of the need for this alliance. Within the Labour movement there are still those who believe “we can’t do without the colonies”; others who are convinced that “we are already helping the colonies towards self-government and higher living standards”; and a strong trend (even within the Communist Party) of belief that British workers derive economic benefit from colonial exploitation.

It is therefore clear that the creation and development of a firm alliance depends on winning the conviction and understanding that British workers, far from deriving economic benefit from colonial exploitation, have to suffer heavy burdens and lower living standards to maintain imperialism and the existing colonial system.

There is a wide-spread impression that the essence of Lenin’s teaching on imperialism was that “British workers live on the backs of the colonial peoples” and this expression can arouse emotion and win applause at enthusiastic meetings. Though this gives vent to feelings of indignation against low living standards in the colonies and is intended to emphasise the need for solidarity action with their struggle against imperialism, it does not coincide with Lenin’s standpoint.

### Lenin’s Assessment

Lenin focused his analysis on the early symptoms of imperialism in Britain from the middle of the nineteenth century to the First World War. He drew attention to the fact that “neither Marx nor Engels lived to see the imperialist epoch of world capitalism which began not earlier than 1898-1900”, but they were still able to discern its earliest symptoms.

Lenin emphasised that one of these important features was that “the receipt of high monopoly profits by the capitalists . . . make it economically possible for them to corrupt *certain sections* of the working class, and *for a time* a fairly considerable *minority*, and to win them to the side of the bourgeoisie” [my italics]. The effect of this was “to divide the workers, to encourage opportunism among them and to cause temporary decay in the working class movement”.

His definition of colonial super-profits (from

which economic concessions were made to the upper strata of the working class) made it clear it was “over and above the profits which the capitalists squeeze out of the workers in their ‘home’ country”. From all this it is clear it was never Lenin’s contention that “British workers live on the backs of the colonial peoples”.

With the emergence of capitalist Germany and the United States, Britain was already losing its monopoly of the world market at the end of the nineteenth century. Moreover, the unskilled workers were now organised, forcing the employers to grant small increases to the lower-paid. It was still possible to bribe the “labour aristocracy” at the expense of the workers, but social concessions were conceded to the workers as a whole through the medium of extended social services. Moreover, early in the twentieth century, a new revolutionary trend (arising from the changed position of British imperialism) was growing in the working class movement. So that in 1916 Lenin was able to point out that: “Opportunism, therefore, cannot now triumph in the working class movement of any country as it did in England in the second half of the nineteenth century.”

Writing this in 1916, when there was also an increasing revolutionary ferment on an international scale, it is easy in 1958 to conclude that Lenin was a little too optimistic. But today it is evident that the *economic* basis for opportunism has rapidly declined, though it would be folly to underestimate the *ideological* influence of imperialism still existing within the Labour movement, and the “plums” available for Labour leaders.

Opportunist ideas are not necessarily based on the majority of the working class deriving benefit from imperialism. The *essence* of opportunism is the sacrifice of the majority in the interests of the minority, or grasping immediate benefits at the expense of permanent benefit for the working class as a whole.

Even forty years ago Lenin’s general assessment of imperialism was that “. . . the yoke of a few monopolists on the rest of the population becomes a hundred times more severe, more burdensome and intolerable”. And this is evident if account is taken only of the rapid growth of arms expenditure. It was just over £20 million at the opening of the new era of colonial expansion in 1875. It doubled that figure in 1897, and in twenty-five years was up double again in 1913. It reached £115 million in 1929, more than

double this total in 1938, and came to £770 million in 1949, and is now up to £1,600 million. Even accounting for the fall in the value of the £ since 1875, this is a gigantic increase.

All this is apart from the shattering effect of two world wars, numerous colonial wars, breaking up of homes, and the tragic loss of human lives. The burden has grown heavier in the past decade, and R. Palme Dutt puts the present position in one sentence in his book *The Crisis of Britain and the British Empire*:

“In place of economic advantage and higher standards, the cost of maintaining the Empire of domination and exploitation is imposing on the masses of the British people ever heavier burdens of taxation, higher prices and lowered standards, colonial wars and the menace of a new world war.” (1957 *Revised Edition*, p. 365)

It is essential to get this conviction throughout the Labour movement (particularly within the Communist Party) if we are to succeed in building a firm alliance with the colonial peoples.

In recent years the rising struggle of the colonial peoples has made a big impact on the rank-and-file of the Labour movement. It has given rise to the rapid growth of the Movement for Colonial Freedom, supported by 120 Labour M.P.s, and with affiliations from sixteen trade unions on a national level, and hundreds of Labour and Co-op organisations on a district and branch level.

Within the organised Labour movement itself this rising political interest is having its effect. Within two years no less than three colonial policy statements have been adopted, the latest one on economic aid to the colonies. Though this represents an advance in official Labour thinking (in so far as it recognises the colonies are being exploited) it fails to present the conception of an alliance of the British and colonial peoples to advance their common interests.

Indeed, the emphasis on the need for “more sacrifice and more work” in Britain tends to divert attention from the robbery of the colonial people. At the 1957 Conference a South Paddington amendment urged that the next Labour Government should hand over the assets of British overseas firms to the colonial peoples. The delegate pointed out this was far more than the proposed 1 per cent of Britain’s national income. It was strongly resisted by the platform and rejected by the Conference. In other words, official Labour policy is that British workers must

sacrifice, but British monopoly firms can go on robbing the colonial peoples.

Of course, loans and credits should be advanced to the colonies and newly independent nations, *providing* there are no political strings and that the aim is to promote industrialisation and the creation of an independent balanced economy. But in its present form Labour’s programme does not differ in principle from the existing imperialist schemes. What it does is to divert attention from the real solution—the united struggle to end all forms of imperialist rule and exploitation.

### The United Fight

Marxist economists would do well to review the impact of the colonies on Britain’s economic position, the effect of U.S. imperialist domination on Britain’s trading relations with all Empire countries. For the record shows that Britain’s proportion of trade with the Dominions is declining while the U.S. share is growing, together with a decline in Britain’s share of trade with its own colonies. At the same time, a bigger proportion of colonial profits is devoted to capital investment and re-investment, while the military cost of the colonial system (the main burden of which falls on the working class) has rapidly increased.

Even in our political treatment there is still a tendency to treat Britain in isolation from the colonies. This is evident in the discussion on the Marxist theory of crisis, the so-called theory of increasing impoverishment; even in John Gollan’s book *The British Political System*, and in the discussions on the forms and methods of British democracy.

In every aspect of our fight in Britain we need to have a clear conception, in theory and in practice, that it is inseparable from the struggle of the peoples of the colonies and newly independent nations against all forms of imperialist domination.

New victories for national independence are being won in advance of the achievement of socialism in Britain, and the whole Labour movement is seriously lagging behind the rapid growth of the anti-imperialist movement. We need to enlarge our vision, eradicate the insular approach to Britain’s problems, and recognise that the struggle in Britain is *inseparable* from that of the anti-imperialist movement on a world scale. Only in this way can we make our contribution to ensure world peace, win new victories for national independence, and advance to socialism in Britain.