

## **ALL FOR THE FIGHTING FUND**

(From a report to the Central Committee meeting, 18-20 February, 1949.)

J. C. HENRY

I WAS particularly impressed by Comrade Dixon's call for our Party to make far more use in all our work of popularising the Soviet Union, on the basis of the actual achievements, than has been done up to the present time. There is no doubt that since the conclusion of the war, in contrast to the capitalist world, the achievements attained in the socialist world are indeed enormous: in fact, the plan that has to do with afforestation, irrigation and water conservation is completely beyond envisagement by any other than a very advanced socialist country. It is a tremendous project, and shows the giant strides that are being made in the land of socialism by man in his struggle to master nature. To my mind the Soviet project is the greatest project that has ever been launched in this field of endeavour anywhere in the world.

When we take into consideration the crisis of the capitalist world and the fact that there is no way out for the capitalist order, and that the methods by which they will seek a way out for the time being are fascism and war, putting greater burdens on the backs of the working people, this should do far more to convince the people about socialism, far more to popularise the Soviet Union than anything else at the present time. That is, we must do as Comrade Dixon has said, really bring before the mass of our people the reality of the development in the Soviet Union and contrast this with the reality of the declining capitalist world.

In Australia all the general political and economic trends that are involved in the international situation are manifest and the signs of an approaching crisis are becoming clearer from day to day.

In this situation and leading up to the particular subject that I wish to speak about this afternoon, it is necessary for us always to be very conscious of the role and responsibility of the Party, for the answer — the only answer, as far as the masses of the people in the capitalist world are concerned, to the problems that are being presented to them by the decay of the capitalist order — is the victory of Communism. This is the only answer to the problems that confront our people the same as the people in the Western capitalist countries.

As we have discussed before, in the present immediate situation—in the struggle for peace, which is a definite, concrete struggle against the warmongers: in the fight to retain and expand democracy against the power of monopoly capitalism and its tendency in the direction of fascism; in the fight against the attempts of the capitalist class to place the consequences of the crisis and decay of the capitalist order upon the masses of the working people — it is essential that we work with the aim of building up from every possible angle a great mass movement of the Australian people.

This movement, irrespective of the particular fields on which its component parts arise at the present time, cannot be other than a struggle against imperialism, a struggle against the policy of the monopolists here in Australia. For the warmongers, and those who are the champions of anti-democratic movements and legislation, and those who would seek to worsen the position of the great mass of the workers and producers in a desperate effort to retain their profits—these are one and the same people. These are the monopoly capitalists, these are the Australian imperialists who, in pursuit of their general policy, are placing the future independence of our country in jeopardy, who are seeking to line our country up as a base against the progressive movement in the countries north of Australia and as part of the world anti-democratic bloc, as was so clearly indicated by Comrade Dixon yesterday.

It was very hard for me to understand what one of the comrades was getting at when he was talking about the peace movement, for I gather from his remarks that there tended to be an underestimation of the need for the working class to win allies. But our whole policy, the whole idea, the whole conception on which our Party is working at the present time is that it is necessary for the working class to win to its side, to win under its leadership every possible ally, and whether these people are won on the basis of the struggle to maintain peace, or whether it be the struggle to defend and expand democracy, or whether it be on the economic issues is not the all-important question. It can be on all or any of these issues; therefore, if we conceive of the struggle for peace—that is, the struggle against the warmongers, the creation of great public opinion for peace—if we conceive of this as being led by the Communist Party that is quite true and quite correct, for only the Communist Party can lead and retain a correct position, a correct political position in such a struggle. But this does not deny at any time the fact that we need the assistance of the pacifists, we need the assistance of all sorts of people who are, for the time being at any rate, in agreement with the Communist Party on one question even if on no other, whether it be the struggle for peace, the struggle to retain democracy or whatever it is.

Therefore, if we conceive of our work for peace as a very broad general work with various organisations, mainly propaganda work in the first stage, then it will become, in the final stage, necessary that we bring into being an actual organisational form. If we do not understand this to be an organisational form that will embrace much wider sections than those actually under the leadership of the Communist Party, then I am afraid we do not

ALL CONTRIBUTIONS SHOULD BE SENT  
TO THE EDITOR,  
COMMUNIST REVIEW,  
695 GEORGE STREET, SYDNEY,  
AND SHOULD BE IN BY THE FIRST  
OF THE MONTH.

understand what we are speaking about when we talk of developing a broad mass movement.

I thought in what that comrade had to say in this matter that there were such elements of lack of clarity on this question.

Comrades, I think we must draw the conclusion from our survey of the international and national situation that there is indeed a very hard battle ahead of us, that there is no easy road, and that our problems are part of the general international set-up. Today the battle is joined between the forces of progress and socialism and the reactionary forces of the old capitalist order. The struggle is joined and will be fought out. While there may be lulls here and there for a little time, actually the general crisis of capitalism is proceeding at a very rapid rate, is intensifying in every way, while the progressive forces are being massed on a far broader scale than ever. If we see this, then it must be made clear that the battle will be fought out to its conclusion. And the final conclusion is victory for the socialist forces — that is our perspective. What we must instil into the whole of our Party membership today is the possibilities for victory, and the will to battle, the will to win, the will to victory.

As Comrade Dixon says, the amount of work and effort we are able to put into it today will decide the issues in the future, irrespective of how it may work out in respect to this or that particular matter.

Now it has always been recognised, of course, comrades, that one of the great needs of the Australian Communist Party is a Daily Tribune. Considerable effort in the past has been put into the preparatory work to create the situation where the launching of a Daily Tribune would become a direct reality.

Still at the present time there is more yet to be done.

You know that in the last depression, at its beginning, our Party was indeed a very small Party, many of the older comrades who are here at this meeting will remember the situation that existed at that time. We had a very small Party, but the situation opened up and the Party grew rapidly and was able to extend its work and influence at a tremendous rate, because the situation was favourable for such a development.

Well, a very small Party of some three hundred members, not all of them particularly skilful, either, did a tremendous job. When you look back over the history of the development of the Party, a tremendous advance was made in that situation.

Comrades, today we have a Party that is very widespread throughout Australia, and despite all our weaknesses and all the mistakes we make our Party is becoming quite an experienced Party; we are not nearly as inexperienced, you know, as we sometimes may appear when we are having a meeting and discuss our difficulties. We have a Party of somewhere between twelve and thirteen thousand members at the present time, a very widespread organisation; the situation is opening up

again, the issues are going to be much sharper than before; therefore the possibilities of advance in this situation are indeed enormous. So it is essential that at the right moment we should be in a position to launch a Daily Tribune.

The question as to just precisely when it should be launched I think cannot be decided at this meeting. I don't think we can say that at some particular time we can launch a Daily Tribune, because the actual time must be decided on the basis of the actual economic and political situation as it develops and we must be in a position to launch it at the most opportune moment.

The Political Committee has discussed and decided to launch a Fighting Fund, a considerable portion of which will go into the fund that will be the basis for financing the actual launching and continuation of a Daily Tribune. In approaching such a proposition as a Daily Tribune we must estimate that for a time the paper will run at a fairly considerable loss, that is, if we base our estimate on ordinary bourgeois business methods. Therefore a very considerable amount of money will be involved in the launching and financing of a paper of a character that our Party requires. This paper will of necessity, for some time at any rate, be a N.S.W. paper in so far as circulation is concerned, but I feel that with improvement in air transport maybe some of the difficulties connected with national distribution can be overcome after a time. That is how it appears at present. Considering the importance of getting on with the idea, the Political Committee decided to send out the document which had been presented to the Political Committee to all members of the Central Committee for an expression of opinion before this meeting took place so that preparatory work could be gone on with. The majority have indicated support. There was no opposition, although some have not replied. This meeting will have to give a formal endorsement in relation to this matter. (It was unanimously endorsed.—Ed.)

The general idea is to launch a Fighting Fund, and the matters that I am going to deal with now relate specifically to N.S.W. and, unless otherwise stated, not to the interstate Party organisations.

The general over-all idea is to raise a large amount of money for those urgent general purposes that confront the Party at the present time, while at the same time earmarking a substantial sum for the launching of a Daily Tribune.

Our aim must not be limited by the conception of just a "finance drive" and that finishes it, because we cannot at all be satisfied with the financial position of the Party. I don't mean that it is broke. It is not broke, but it has not got enough money to develop its work in the way the situation demands it should. In looking through the balance sheets of the C.C. and districts, one is struck by the fact that everybody seems to be happy if there is enough finance to carry on what is usually called the ordinary work. There is no money coming in for the kind of campaigns we have in mind. In

this Fighting Fund campaign we must seek not only to improve the finance of the Party in a big way on the immediate issues, but we must also seek to raise the level of Party finance on a permanent basis.

Many of the difficulties in relation to the raising of finance don't actually exist in the situation outside us. Many of these difficulties exist in the minds of our comrades only. Either the problems are not thought about or are thought about in a narrow, restricted way and not in a way that opens up new possibilities and builds new endeavour along the lines necessary for a solution.

Then the aim, the over-all, immediate aim, the aim of the Communist Fighting Fund for 1949 in N.S.W. that will be launched by this C.C., will be to raise not less than £40,000 in N.S.W. during the months of April, May, June, July, August and September of this year for the following purposes:

Firstly, the Daily Tribune.  
Secondly, to combat the warmongers and expose the real character of those who are today attacking the Party and the working class.  
Thirdly, widespread expansion of publicity and Party organisation in an effort to reach all sections of the people.

Fourthly, to strengthen the fight for improved living standards against the greed of capital.

Lastly, to expand the internal and mass organisation of work for Communism, to strengthen the foundation for the victory of Communism over capitalism in the future.

In regard to the present situation, Comrade Dixon has already mentioned the growing trends towards crisis. Comrades, the actual position at the present time among the great mass of the people is quite suitable for us to launch the Fund and raise a very considerable sum of money. It is true prices are going up, rents are high, quite a number of families who are down on the basic wage are finding the going somewhat difficult. At the same time it is true the pubs are full, the racecourses are well attended, every picture house in the city is packed; it is also true that in so far as the immediate present is concerned the mass of the people, including our own members, have money to spend.

The Party needs money and the Party can raise what it requires. We must have this conception; we must not have a 1½d conception, a 2/ conception about the situation existing at the present time. A 1½d approach to finance may have been all right in the dole days, but I question it. We must see that the possibilities are there. If it is good enough for Communists to fight in other countries in the way they have fought and are fighting today, it is not too much to ask Party members and supporters in this country to subscribe finance in a big way, even if it does mean cutting down on some of the spending which we have come to feel is necessary to our existence, but which is not essential.

In view of this, I think no time is more appropriate than now for the launching of such a fund. The situation will certainly become much more dif-

ficult later on. Already signs of economic crisis are apparent. We want to go ahead full steam and see that we are working against time, we have to go right out after finance while the situation remains relatively good.

Briefly, this is how it is proposed to handle the Fighting Fund.

As from the official opening of the campaign to raise a minimum of £40,000 in N.S.W., all Party revenue, other than dues and initiation fees from the branches, should all go into the Fund. In addition to all direct individual subscriptions to the Fund. Budget payments from the branches to the districts will be suspended for the duration of the Fund campaign.

Why has this suggestion been put forward? Because only too often you bump up against arguments along the following lines—the thing to worry about is our Budget; or, the thing to worry about is our "special" campaign. Only too often, in cases where you hear these words spoken, what actually happens is that insufficient is done about either. The idea here is to eliminate all confusion and bring about concentration on one objective: that is to say, that all moneys other than dues money and initiation fees, Tribune and literature, goes into the Fund. This should eliminate confusion in the branches.

About the approach to this question. First of all, comrades, the approach to the Fighting Fund campaign is a political approach; the campaign around the Fighting Fund must be a political, ideological campaign to clarify before the members and supporters of the Communist Party the critical issues of the international and national situation, the advanced stage of decay and crisis of capitalism, the role of the reformists as the handmaidens of capitalism, the role of the Party as the vanguard fighter for peace in face of the warmongers, for security in face of the trends towards economic depression and for the victory of socialism over capitalism as the only guarantee of ever-increasing living, educational, cultural and health standards for the mass of the people.

To this end the whole Party must enter the campaign, and prime responsibility rests on the Central, District and Section Committees and the Branch Executives.

Conviction as to the policy and role of the Party and real determination to contribute to the struggle to unite the working class and all working people to win both the immediate and ultimate objectives of the Party are the basic prerequisites for the success of the Fighting Fund.

It has come to my attention that in our ranks there are men of limited vision, some who think the target is impossible; but happily of the comrades so far that have discussed this matter the vast majority think it is possible not only to obtain this minimum target but to go further ahead. Therefore it should be considered only as a minimum target.

The Party has a fair membership throughout N.S.W., a fair membership throughout Australia. Do you know what it would take to get £40,000 in N.S.W.? One thousand subscribers at an average of £20 per head, 2,000 subscribers at an average of £10 per head. Can you tell me that within the ranks of our Party and supporters there are not twice as many people as that who can put in twice that amount and make it £80,000?

Do you think it is an impossible proposition, if we look at this from an Australian point of view; because here what applies to N.S.W. applies to the rest of Australia, and it is the desire of the Political Committee in presenting this report today that the Party organisations in all the other States launch a Fighting Fund independently and around their own particular objectives in the various States, which will dovetail with this campaign to raise a minimum of £40,000 in N.S.W. and make it a national drive. If throughout the length and breadth of Australia 5,000 members were organised to subscribe an average of £10 per head and 5,000 supporters were also organised to put in an average of £10 per head there would be 10,000 people involved in the campaign by direct donations. This would mean £100,000. Surely this is not impossible. If it proves that this is impossible, then we must seek the deficiencies in the organisation of the Party and not seek excuses because of the actual situation in the country itself.

The struggle is essentially a political struggle, but at the same time, if only the political aspect is dealt with, the Fund will not come in. It is all right to make decisions, as Comrade Stalin stressed, to carry resolutions as a guide to action; but when it comes to actually testing them out and getting real action about them, organisational measures must be taken. The Fighting Fund campaign involves attention to all the practical work and detail: to sign up pledges (promises to subscribe), to collect the promised subscriptions, issue the necessary interim receipts, forward the money subscribed to the Central Committee, etc. — in short, to do efficiently all those practical things that alone can ensure the success of the appeal once members and supporters are convinced politically of the need to subscribe.

Here the idea is that a comrade will be in charge in the centre and also a comrade will be in charge in each of the districts. This responsibility, so far as the districts are concerned, will be primarily political; the responsibility for the organisational aspect, for seeing that the detailed organisational aspects of the campaign are carried on, rests in the branches and the Central Committee.

We have had pledges printed which briefly state the aims of the campaign.

In all branches, branch agents for the Fund will be elected and the branch agents will send all pledges and money collected direct to the Party centre, not through the districts or through the sections, but to the Party centre. The centre will handle the whole work from one end of the country

to the other. This will mean that the districts will not be burdened with a lot of routine about the campaign at all. It will be handled in the branches by the branch agent and at the top by the Central Committee. The allocation of percentages will be made to the various districts by the centre and the districts will be closely acquainted with the position of each branch in its area from fortnight to fortnight, likewise the Section Committee.

In this campaign the main thing is to place the stress upon the individual subscriptions to the campaign—how it can be done, show how it is possible for the people on relatively small incomes to donate a substantial sum over the period of the campaign—and to place the issue squarely before the membership on the basis of politics. First of all, when we launch the campaign sign up as many Party members as we can and immediately, while doing that, show the need to go to the mass of the Party supporters on a very wide basis for pledges to the Fund.

We don't want any narrow conceptions about the appeal, but we must understand that in the conditions of today it is no use appealing to the enemies of the Party to support the aims for which this Fund is being launched. It is only the members and supporters of the Communist Party who will provide the greatest portion of the money that is to come in.

There has also come to my attention the fact that certain comrades suffer from strange illusions, that they have from time to time expressed the idea that it is opportunist for members of the Communist Party to subscribe to the Communist Party funds. Comrades, I believe that such an idea is opportunist, because to my knowledge of the workings of the Communist movement throughout the world and here in Australia, the great bulk of the money has always come from the membership and those who are the supporters of the Communist Party. It cannot come from anywhere else. How was the Party built in the first days here in Australia? It was built by the devoted work of comrades who were prepared to make personal sacrifices, by hundreds of comrades who were unemployed and by comrades in industry who were dipping very deeply into their pockets. If it was good enough for the other fellows to devote all their time to it, it was good enough for you to contribute very substantially, if you were in a position to do so. So this idea that it is opportunist for Party members to contribute to the Fund must be completely scotched; such ideas, if allowed to continue, would destroy completely the very basis of achieving even the minimum aim.

At the same time, do not get the idea that the whole Fund must be financed by the Party membership. That, too, would be quite wrong. We must seek to involve broader and broader masses of working people generally and all people sympathetic to Communism who are prepared to subscribe to the Party. This is not the complete answer to the opportunist theory that I have but briefly

discussed; the answer is to see the whole picture of the Party membership and then, outside the membership, wider and wider sections of Party supporters.

I think, comrades, that covers the main points I wish to deal with in connection with the Fund itself, as it relates to N.S.W.

In regard to the Fighting Fund from a national point of view, as a result of discussions with the States on the minimum targets finally decided upon

## THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE

(From a report to the Central Committee meeting, 18-20 February, 1949)

R. DIXON

The upsurge of socialism in the Soviet Union, which is in marked contrast to the developing economic crisis in the capitalist world, the sweeping victories of the liberation forces in China and the rising movement in defence of peace throughout the world show that the general crisis of capitalism is deepening and that the forces of socialism and progress in the world are growing stronger every day.

Soviet Russia is rapidly overcoming the devastation caused by World War II. The post-war Five Year Plan is an immense success. 1948 was the decisive year of this Plan and in 1948, it was planned that production in the Soviet Union would achieve the levels of 1940 and exceed them. The latest figures of the Soviet Government show that industrial production in 1948 was 18% more than 1940 and 27% more than 1947. Agricultural production reached pre-war level.

In 1948 Soviet Russia embarked upon a fifteen years' Plan to combat soil erosion and drought which will improve the quality and production of the soil, a scheme that is so vast that it completely dwarfs anything of the nature ever attempted before in the world. It will transform the Soviet countryside.

In the capitalist countries the workers have come to realise that more production means increased profits for the capitalists, that harder work for the workers means lower standards of living; and, as the production of goods catches up and overtakes the demand, over-production develops so that more production under capitalism means a larger army of unemployed.

How then does an increase in production affect the standards of living of the working class in the country of Socialism?

We know that following the end of the anti-fascist war all special war-time taxation in the Soviet Union was abolished. In 1947 the rouble was revalued and its purchasing power increased, which is in contrast with the position in Australia and other capitalist countries where the purchasing power of the currency is continually declining. Furthermore, in 1947, in the Soviet Union, rationing was abolished, prices were reduced and wages were

increased. The result of all these measures, combined with the increased production, which made more goods available, was that in 1948 the real wages of the workers and the employees in the Soviet Union were more than double those of 1947.

The fact that more than thirty million workers and employees in the Soviet Union had their standard of living raised 100% in the course of one year is an event of colossal importance which we must not fail to make known to the working-class here in Australia.

The superiority of socialist society, which can never be convulsed by economic crisis, over capitalist society, must, as the economic crisis develops in the capitalist world, more and more impress itself upon the working class. Therefore, we must not fail to popularise everywhere the vast developments in the Soviet Union, the socialist construction, the increase in production, the rise in standards of living, the meaning of Soviet democracy and Soviet foreign policy.

We must also popularise the developments taking place in the People's Democracies. In contrast with Soviet Russia, where they are already moving to the higher stage of communism, the people's democracies are going through the transition to socialism, which is the lower stage of communism. The path they must travel to socialism, to the abolition of exploitation of man by man, is a path of sharpening class struggle against the remaining capitalist class in the towns and countryside. It is no accident, therefore, that we are witnessing today in the people's democracies a series of trials in which are involved representatives of the old ruling classes and capitalists, land owners, high church leaders, bourgeois professors and others who are doing everything in their power to undermine and sabotage the people's democracies. The arrest and trial of Cardinal Mindszenty shows clearly, I think, the links between the old ruling class of Hungary and American imperialism and the Vatican, and of the joint efforts of these people to overthrow the People's Government of Hungary.