

We Hold the Key to Victory

by HARRY POLLITT

We regret that the Editor has been prevented by temporary indisposition from writing the "Notes of the Month" in this number. They will be resumed as usual in the June issue.

THE month of May finds opening out the most decisive battles in the world struggle against fascism. It also finds the people of Britain in the most critical and determined mood that we, too, are going to play a decisive part and end the whole policy of "Too late and too little." The people are demanding deeds and victories, not excuses and defeats. They are ready to do what is required of them. The demoralisation that has seized certain sections of the ruling class finds no echo in their ranks. This is the reason for the expression of such deep discontent against the policy of the Government—in the Press, in Parliament, at public meetings, and in by-elections—and for the rapid growth in the public demand for the opening of the Second Front, a strengthening of the alliance with the Soviet Union, the winning of India as a powerful ally, and a stronger Government in Britain.

MORE and more is the Second Front recognised as the key to victory.

While sections of the ruling class now seem a little uncertain as to who is the main enemy in this world war, and where the main blows have to be struck, the common people are in no doubt whatever. They know it is Hitlerite Germany, and they also realise that the only place where it can be finally and completely

destroyed is on the Continent of Europe. This is why, although they have no illusions about the serious strengthening of the whole political and military basis of Axis fascism that has resulted from Japan's successes over Britain and America in the Pacific, there has been nothing like the same concern over this as over the collapse of France in 1940, and the threats to Moscow and Leningrad last summer and autumn. The Government may find this a little difficult to understand, but the sooner they do understand it, the sooner the necessary adjustments in the whole policy and conduct of the war will be made.

THERE is growing resentment of all the Press talk about "Hitler's gigantic spring offensive," while none of any kind seems to be being organised by Britain. The common people are aware of the successes of the Red Army, and their political repercussions throughout Europe, as seen in the growth of opposition to Hitler, both in the occupied countries and Hitlerite Germany itself. They understand that the new repressive measures directed against the masses on the Continent of Europe, the attack on the Bishops in Norway, and the changes in the Vichy Government are proofs of this new awakening and active rising.

THE common people can no longer be fobbed off with airy promises about "passing from the defensive to the offensive in the near future." They are demanding action now. They also see through the various explanations that are trotted out from time to time as to why it is not possible to organise the Second Front. They know that once the political conviction was held by the Government, then everything possible would be done to see that the Second Front was organised, that no obstacle of any kind would be allowed to stand in the way. The ships, men, munitions and aircraft would all be found.

IT is desperately urgent and necessary that the masses compel the Government to get this political conviction as quickly as possible. The Government must be given to understand that they have now to deal with a politically enlightened people, one which has learned a very great deal in the school of bitter experience and defeat, but also a lot more than is realised from the role that the Soviet Union has played in the life and death struggle against fascism.

DURING the Cardiff East by-election the Government candidate stated "that we must help Russia to survive this summer." That is a disgraceful misrepresentation of the issue. We must organise the Second Front so that *we in Britain* can survive as a free people and a free nation. The common people are ashamed to notice in London's Tubes an advertisement appealing for funds for the Soviet Union which reads "They fight for you. Help them to keep on fighting." They are ashamed because they, too, want to be fighting against the Nazis in Europe.

THE defeats in Hongkong, Malaya and Singapore were alleged to be due to our absence of aeroplanes and tanks. Yet when the people demand that

production shall be better organised, Government leaders never tire of telling us that we have more than parity with Hitlerite Germany. It is now alleged that we cannot open the Second Front because we have not yet got the necessary production. When the offensive against Rommel opened in Libya, the Prime Minister told the world that at last we were going to fight against Hitlerite Germany on equal terms. There has been no interruption in production in Britain through air raids for a year, but we are constantly assured of the great damage inflicted on Hitler's production by the continued raids carried out by the Royal Air Force in Hitlerite Germany and the occupied countries. When Soviet Ambassadors or British, Canadian, Polish and French generals call for a Second Front, when public pressure of all kinds becomes more vehement in demanding the Second Front, then the leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party, Arthur Greenwood, M.P., rushes into the *Camrose Press* to chide all and sundry for being romantic in demanding this vital front, when the production to equip it is not there.

THEN where is it? Mr. Bevin seems to have no doubt of the great new success of our productive effort. The people have read of the great new factories, the long hours of work, the intensive effort that employers and workmen alike have been making for years now, of the vast supplies sent from America under the Lease Lend Act. Millions upon millions of pounds are asked for in Parliament and freely granted for production. No concrete facts are given as to whether what has been produced has been lost in any battles comparable to those that have been fought on the Eastern Front.

THE public are led to believe that we have been short of tanks and aeroplanes in Libya and the Pacific because of what we have sent to the Soviet Union. It is necessary to be clear on this point. There can be no doubt that every effort has been made to fulfil the pledge given in our name by Lord Beaverbrook last October. But a very great deal of material that is popularly supposed to have gone direct to the Red Army has in fact gone to Iran for use by the British forces, because there was a mistaken belief that the Red Army would not be able to defend the oilfields of the Caucasus.

WE therefore ask again—if we have not got the production, where is it, and who is going to be shot for us not having it? We are fully agreed that everything possible needs to be done to increase production. In fact, the Communist Party has published the only constructive and comprehensive plan on production that is before the public. A summary of this plan recently appeared in *LABOUR MONTHLY*, and it is not necessary to outline it again. We will do everything in our power to sweep aside every obstacle that stands in the way of the maximum output being achieved, from whatever quarter these obstacles may arise, but we refuse to accept the alibi for no Second Front that we have not yet produced enough munitions to make it possible.

AT other times it is said that we must preserve all that we can to fight against any attempt at invasion. This is a favourite trick that has been worked many times since 1940. Surely it is clear that the best investment against invasion of Britain would be to open a Second Front in the West so as to strike simultaneous blows against Hitler alongside those now being inflicted by the Red Army. The ressure on Bulgaria and the new demands in Vichy France are in themselves the

proof of how desperate Hitler's position in Europe is becoming. If now we attack in the West he would be compelled to withdraw many divisions from the Eastern Front, readjust the whole line of his communications, and face what so far he has avoided—war on two fronts in Europe. Once Hitler had to face this, then the entire political and military situation throughout Europe as a whole would change. Millions of people in the occupied countries would find a way to support a British-Soviet offensive. This would be worth many air squadrons and armoured divisions. It would also dislocate Hitler's production. We could wrest important industrial centres in Europe from his control, and the workers there would be only too glad to produce for freedom instead of their present enforced subjection. We could wrest important aerodromes from Hitler's grasp and then use them not only to destroy his armies, but as bases from which to bomb and destroy Hitler's decisive war industries in his own country. It is clear that the first cracks have begun to appear in the morale of the German people, and they, too, would find the way of playing their part in helping to bring about the defeat of Hitler, once the joint offensive of the British and Soviet armies was organised.

THERE is also another further important consideration to bear in mind. It is this. Once the Second Front was organised all the deep sense of frustration that is now felt in the war industries, and in the armed forces, would disappear. The fact that what was being produced was at last being used for direct blows against the Nazis in Europe would evoke a terrific response in every mine, shipyard and factory, on the railways and at the docks. The tanks, guns, shells, planes, ships and coal would be produced with a rapidity, efficiency and quality that would keep amply supplied our own armies in Europe and at the same time

fulfil every requirement of the Red Army. It would transform the entire situation amongst millions of the armed forces in Britain and abolish the "browned off" feelings that it is common knowledge exist on a serious scale throughout them.

IT is not the people who are afraid of what a Second Front would demand from them. It is the Government who refuse to organise both the people and the Second Front that they demand. The people who faced all the terrible blitzes, who are ready to tighten their belts, who have supported every measure that has been proposed as necessary for the war effort, whose sons and daughters have been gladly given to the armed forces, whose home life has been broken up to permit production to be increased—they will not hesitate to make still greater sacrifices once the call is made. For they want victory over fascism, and they want it this year. They want to emulate the deeds of the Soviet people. They want to use the key to victory that they believe lies in our hands.

WHENEVER the Government announces there has been a Commando Raid, there is an entirely different atmosphere that morning in workshop, street and bus. But the people do not want these raids to be the diversion from a Second Front. They do not want to listen to broadcasts calling on French workers to face death, to sabotage war production in France while we hesitate to organise a Second Front that could annihilate the Nazis who occupy France.

ALL over Europe suffering men and women are fighting back at the Nazi terror that holds them down, tortures them, starves them and tries to turn all Europe into one vast concentration camp. What deeds of heroism the guerillas in Yugoslavia have performed! The deathless example of Gabriel Peri, not in the heat and excitement of battle when the blood is up and there is a chance of having

a smack back, but in the cold light of dawn, to hold head erect and to die living up to Lenin's dedication of a life spent without regret. Or the young Soviet girl who called out just before being executed by the Nazis, "It is a great happiness to die for one's people." The British people know of these deathless deeds, these miracles of sacrifice, and they are roused by them to a readiness to acquit themselves on the same heroic scale and in the same ardent manner, not to save the Soviet Union, but to save themselves, their families, their homes and their country. Major Gribble, the Military Correspondent of the *News Chronicle*, expressed a very widespread feeling when, on April 14, writing in that newspaper in support of the opening of a Second Front, he stated:—

Opportunity is here. An opportunity which will not be repeated for gaining a quick decision. The coming months should see large-scale Allied offensive action in the West, if the spirit of England lives and is still to live and the name of Britain to be honoured among the nations.

THIS is what is at stake. This is why at all costs, and whatever personalities are involved, the Government must be compelled to organise the Second Front, and to do so whatever withdrawals have to be made in other theatres of war. For whatever temporary losses may have to be experienced on those fronts, once Hitler is defeated, then the combined might of Britain, the Soviet Union, America, China and India will soon put paid to the other two fascist jackals, Japan and Italy.

NOTHING would do more to strengthen the alliance with the Soviet Union than the opening of a Second Front, for our strategy, resources and perspective would then be identical; we would feel and act the same; we would build up such an alliance in the common fight as would achieve three important political consequences. First, it would inspire revo-

against Hitler all over Europe. Second, it would convince the German people that we were not fighting to overthrow Hitler in order to crown Vansittart, and thus would encourage them to give every form of assistance in the fight against Hitler. Third, it would ensure that the alliance would be so strong, so united that it would be capable of solving the many problems that peace will inevitably bring.

ENDING the present impasse in India by freely granting the Indian people the right to form an Indian National Government with full control over the whole resources of their mighty country would guarantee that Japan could be decisively held by India's millions, while Britain took its main place in the struggle against fascism in Europe.

IT will take a bold leadership to carry through this policy, and this is why the demand for the strengthening of the Government must be intensified. The Government must become based on real national unity, embodying the most capable and determined opponents of fascism and staunch supporters of a powerful Anglo-Soviet alliance. To such a Government the working class will give its fullest support, backed up by their deeds in workshop and on battlefield.

THE workers will never bend the knee. The Nazis thought they could conquer the world; but the first time they came up against the working class in power—in the Soviet Union—they got the biggest thrashing in their lives. Their onward march was stopped and the bully of the world began to whine like a spoilt child. The workers in Britain are made of the same mettle as their Soviet comrades; their power and strength, their ability and initiative, their unity and confidence are only waiting to be used to the full. Do not let us wait until an even heavier price has to be paid for delaying to lead and organise the working people.

THIS year's May Day demonstrations must stand for Unity, for Unity also spells Victory. We cannot obtain the same kind of moral and political unity as they have in the Soviet Union because of the difference of social systems, but we can obtain a far stronger and more indestructible national unity than exists at the present time. Only a Victory policy can command such a unity, but the fight for such a policy in itself becomes the instrument through which unity can be forged in the process of the fight.

THIS is why, in the first place, the unity of the Labour Movement is so essential. This is the lynch pin; upon this everything depends for final success. We hope that May Day will bring all sections of the Labour Movement closer together than they have ever been—closer even than we were on the historic May Day of 1926, when we thought the greatest crisis of all time had come to Britain. The times are more serious now. Life and the destiny of humanity are at stake.

THE National Conference of the Communist Party is being held in May, and immediately following it will be that of the Labour Party. These two great conferences can play a tremendous part in strengthening not only the unity of the Labour Movement, but the unity of the whole people. It is not the Tory Party that represents the rock of salvation for the British people, but the Labour Movement.

WE hope that the Labour Party Conference will be ready to take the initiative in trying to develop all forms of united action throughout the Labour Movement. If it were to do so, it would result in a transformation from the passivity that has fallen upon so many sections of the Labour Party to great mass activity. Joint meetings, demonstrations and conferences could be organised and

exchange of fraternal delegates. Local, divisional and national campaigns of all kinds in support of achieving the victory over fascism could be initiated. The trade unions, co-operatives, Labour and Communist Parties would all be strengthened, and the whole perspective for winning the war and the peace immeasurably enhanced. It would give a new hope to millions of people outside the Labour Movement who are now awakening to political consciousness. It would stiffen and strengthen the unity and morale of the entire nation, so that the determination to win, at whatever personal cost, would become one of the strongest weapons in our armoury of Victory.

WE of the Communist Party are ready to respond. We will allow nothing to stand in the way of such a unity being achieved.

ON May Day, 1942, let us all pledge ourselves anew to the sacred cause of internationalism. On this day, when the world is in arms against the vile creed of fascism, we salute those who have been wounded, killed and bereaved in the struggle against the forces of barbarism, terror and oppression. We salute those who are in the front ranks of the fight wherever they may be, and whoever they are. We greet the peoples of all lands, of all creeds, race, colour or religion, who have taken up arms in the most sacred

cause which it is the proud mission of Internationalism to carry to triumph.

IN very truth the peoples of all lands who are animated with hatred of fascism are at last united. It is a unity that will stand us in good stead in the peace we shall win. It is a unity that will last and endure. It is a unity forged out of the blood and furnace of war, out of the want and privation of starved peoples, out of the atrocities which have left indelible marks on the bodies of so many innocent peoples in Europe and Asia alike, out of the grandeur of the heroism of those who have fought and those who are still fighting under conditions of appalling difficulty.

MAY we all be inspired with a new sense of the righteousness of our cause, a new conception of our duty, an understanding that every day is precious in organising the victory over fascism in 1941, and that it can only be done by opening the Second Front ; strengthening the alliance with the Soviet Union ; allowing India to form its own National Government ; and strengthening the Government and the national unity of our own country. Then we shall all feel stronger and more united. Then sacrifice will be ennobled with a new willingness and majesty, and the common cause go forward to triumph.