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ANTI-LABOUR POLICY OF THE LABOUR LEADERS. HARRY POLLIT, GENERAL SECRETARY BRITISH COMMUNIST PARTY

The last time the Labour Party Conference was held in Scarborough was in the crisis year of 1931. I was naturally interested to watch how the Labour leaders who, at that time had fought against the policy of the MacDonalds who in alliance with big business in Britain and America, were trying to solve that crisis at the expense of the working class, would now face up to a still graver and deeper economic and political crisis in 1948.

Let me say at once, there is no fundamental difference between what was done in 1931, under the National Government of MacDonald and Baldwin, and the developments that can arise—unless the workers fight against it in time—in 1948-49 under a Labour Government of Attlee, Morrison and Bevin.

There are two ways of solving Britain's crisis; a working-class or a capitalist way.

Scarborough has made it plain to every serious political observer which course is being adopted. It is the capitalist way.

The labour leaders aimed to do two things through the Scarborough Conference. First, to secure support for a general line of policy which will inevitably lead to an all-round worsening of the whole living standards of the workers and their families. Second, to prepare the way for a general Election programme which, when it is presented and in the conditions that are then likely to exist, will come as a profound shock to all Socialists.

I consider that Morrison made the most significant

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statement at the Scarborough Conference when he stated:

"Social security was an historical fact. The next problem was to consolidate, humanise and pay for it. Could the gains be held?"

While Morrison is posing this question what is actually happening as far as the present conditions of the workers are concerned? Real wages are falling. Wage tribunals have been given the strong hint not to grant any further wage increases; the cost of living is rising, rents and the price of coal will soon be increased. The agitation on clothing coupons, at rock bottom, is largely because the workers have not got the money to buy the goods which are already in the shops. Unemployment is rising and will continue to rise. In July the workers will have a serious deduction from their wages to help pay for a scheme of social security that has only become a glorified panel system, devoid of the main thing both workers and progressive doctors had expected—the Health Centres.

On the other hand, three years of a Labour Government have left the capitalist class with all its principal class privileges and luxurious ways of living untouched. Today no Labour leader ever attacks capitalists or capitalism; all onslaughts are reserved for Communists and Communism.

On top of this is the grim fact that there is now a growing fear of a new world war because of the foreign policy of the Labour Government.

All the attacks against the Communists cannot hide this grave and disquieting situation. They cannot hide the fact the proposed line of solution of the crisis as formulated at Scarborough is increased production, freezing of wages, further capitulation to the demands of the capitalist class for slowing down on social services and nationalisation, and increasing dependence on the United States. It was amazing to hear so many people at Scarborough explain that while they

appreciated the gravity of Britain's position and problems, "even if our difficulties get worse. America cannot afford to let us down". And this at the very moment when America is already putting the screw down.

The delegates, however much they were convinced or stampeded by the anti-democratic methods of the platform into supporting the general policy of the leaders, were nevertheless apprehensive of its results.

The same note of concern was also expressed in relation to the urgency with which the nationalisation of steel should be carried through, but again the platform and certain trade union leaders allowed the leaders to get away with it.

On foreign policy you had the disgraceful spectacle of a war actually taking place in Palestine as a result of British policy without a single delegate making a fight on the conference floor that it should be discussed. And the point to note is that it is Bevin's foreign policy which has led to this war, and unless checked can lead to others.

Sooner or later the fact will have to be faced that it is not just certain aspects of foreign policy which are wrong, while the domestic policy is correct. To make this false division in order to placate the platform was one of the mistakes of certain speakers in the discussion. If the policy as a whole has been correct, then there would have been no need for Morrison to pose the question? "Could the gains be held?"

No one should be deceived by the size of the vote that Bevin obtained at the conference. We are quite sure that neither Bevin nor the Government is under any illusion about it. The bloc votes of all the big trade unions had been decided upon before the conference commenced and before a single speech or explanation had been made on any issue.

The Scarborough Labour Party Conference has come and gone, but the problems for the Labour movement remain.

England is faced with a crisis. There is not a single delegate to Scarborough who can honestly say he is satisfied with what took place at the Labour Party Conference. None better than the leaders know that their "victory" will soon demand its price-and bring its nemesis.

"Democratic Socialism" will face within months a deeper crisis. All the treats, intimidations, purges, expulsions, all the policy adopted at Scarborough will not produce one extra ton of coal or steel, one extra yard of cloth, or turn one ship round any quicker. There are too many doubts, too much concern and suspicion as to where the Labour Government is leading the nation.

On the very day the conference terminated, the latest figures showing the disparity between exports and imports were released, and they again reveal the adverse trade balance running at the rate of £650 million a year, and Marshall "aid" only comes to half this amount.

It is the whole fundamental basis of British imperialism which has been shattered, and the Labour Government, in trying to restore a rotten and outworn edifice, is only paving a harder road for the British workers than they are even now experiencing.

"Pseudo Socialism" as practised by the right-wing Labour leaders cannot ignore the growing strength of the Soviet Union and the new democracies, or charm away the coming economic crisis in the United States. For a time it is being staved off with war orders and Marshall Plans, but it will come, for if it could be avoided in the future it could have been avoided in the past. Let us be on guard lest that crisis, because of the Government's present policy, should enormously accentuate every problem we are now faced with.

As it becomes harder to live, as the Palestine tragedy unfolds itself still more and its complications develop, as

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American imperialist interference in our internal affairs becomes more arrogant—as the insufferable burdens of our enormous armed forces and overseas military commitments all become more evident, the revolt against the policy of the right-wing leaders will grow more pronounced.

The divisions already existing inside the Executive Committee of the Labour Party and the Labour Government—some of which were clearly visible at Scarborough—will increase. The Left inside the Parliamentary Labour Party and the trade unions will yet find common ground. At the same time, it needs to be fully understood that there will never be an effective Left mass movement unless it is one that is prepared to work in unity with the Communist Party.

That is the principle lesson we now need to drive home to every worker we come in contact with in the street, the factory or the branch room.

Once this lesson is learned, then all workers by hand and brain alike will be organised to successfully solve the crisis in their way—the way that leads to economic prosperity, lasting peace, and a speedy development towards socialism.

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