

PRESS REPORTS

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British Labor Party's
Statement on European Unity

BRITISH LABORITES REJECT ALL PLANS FOR EUROPE POOLS

Party Policy Puts the Commonwealth and Domestic
Affairs Over Unity With Continent
Socialism Also Stressed

Planning for Private Profit Is Called Useless-French
Taken Back by Announcement

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LONDON, June 12--The Labor party, which now rules Britain, rejected today all existing plans for merging its politics or economics with Western Europe.

Party policy was enunciated in an official statement of the party's Executive Committee--the first that has been made public since the end of the war. In it the party made it clear that the Commonwealth's and its own domestic policies must take precedence over any present plans of unity with Europe.

The party, it was revealed, now stands opposed to any commitment that would impair Commonwealth relations or jeopardize the planning and controls it deems essential for the maintenance of full employment in Britain.

The party opposes any strengthening of the Council of Europe or supra-national bodies and any further liberalization of European trade.

The Schuman plan for pooling Western European iron and steel resources would be acceptable only if assurance were given that all participating governments would have control over the investment policies of their industries. This, in the eyes of the British Labor party, implies nationalization of those industries.

Blueprint on Policy

Today's pronouncement was strictly a party manifesto. There is no indication that Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin was consulted or took any part in its preparation. Nevertheless, this was a blueprint for the guidance of the Foreign Office as long as this Government remains in power.

It will undoubtedly be a major instrument of party policy from now on, and it will be perhaps an issue in the next election campaign. Although in domestic issues the Labor party has been moving away from its emphasis on nationalization and control, the new statement on foreign policy may be taken as a concession to those within its ranks who have been demanding a "Socialist foreign policy."

The statement showed that the cleavage with Continental nations over plans for integrating basic economies was one of fundamental principle.

The frank exposition of the doctrinaire line of party thinking on foreign policy was issued on the eve of publication by the Government of a white paper reviewing negotiations with France on British participation in the conference meeting this week, without British representatives, to work out details for pooling the iron and coal resources of Western Europe. It was issued also in advance of the meeting of the international Socialist conference this coming week-end, at which British delegates will seek endorsement of their views.

Things Opposed Get Stress

At a press conference called to clarify the pamphlet, which devoted more space to what Britain opposes than to what she favors, Hugh Dalton, Minister of Town and Country Planning, who is chairman of the International Affairs sub-committee of the party's National Executive Committee, said that on the whole problem of European unity party thinking was colored by the fact that "we are democratic Socialists and also by the fact that we are British."

Discussing the Schuman plan the party statement said that it was recognized that "international planning was the key to economic unity but that planning for private profit would be worse than useless. Any industries concerned in European planning, the document held, should be subject to "Government direction in their own country."

Joint planning was meaningless, it said, unless the industries in each country "are required to fit their investment programs into a European plan." The statement added:

"The Labor party is convinced that nothing less than public ownership can insure this fully."

Other salient points in the policy statement were:

1. As Britain is the "nerve center" of the commonwealth and the banker for the sterling area, the largest multilateral trading zone in the world, the Labor party "cannot see European unity as an overriding end in itself." Not only are the commonwealth economies complementary to a far greater extent than those of Britain and Western Europe but "in all but distance" Britain is closer to Australia and New Zealand than to Europe.
2. The party is opposed to the establishment of any "supra-national body" such as appears to be inherent in the French pool plan, as "such an authority would have a permanent anti-Socialist majority and would arouse the hostility of European workers." At the same time the party turned its face against the development of the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe into a European parliament with legislative powers.
3. The party also went on record against even international organizations "taking mandatory decisions by a majority vote," holding that governments in "safe possession of an ultimate veto" can afford to

make concessions they could not grant under pressure.

Dissent on Trade Curbs

4. The party declared itself in fundamental disagreement with proposals for freeing European trade by the removal of customs duties exchange controls and quotas, on the ground that the immediate effect would be to cause unemployment and other dislocations that could be exploited by the Communists. Moreover, it was said, "any further liberalization of intra-European trade" would hamper efforts to close the dollar gap by making it still easier to sell in profitable European markets instead of seeking sales in hard currency areas.
5. In the view of the Labor party, the economic stability and military security of Western Europe depended upon close cooperation with North America and the peoples of Asia and Africa. The party statement rejected as unsound any idea of Western Europe's remaining neutral in a struggle between the United States and Russia although it said that the concept of a "third force" was "valuable" if it meant "political solidarity against the extremism of Right or Left." The policy statement held that "neutrality was impossible as the Soviet Union recognized no alternative between "slave and enemy," and it pointed out that in its social and economic policy Western Europe stood "to the right of the United States," which since 1931 "had pursued more advanced policies than most of the European countries."

The statement of policy and Mr. Dalton's remarks at the press conference marking its issue presented a challenge to the Conservatives.

Stand on Nationalization

It contains many declarations of principle, especially on the necessity for nationalization of industry, with which the Conservatives almost certainly will take issue and shows very clearly that if the party, through political necessity, has called a temporary halt in nationalization at home it has not changed its attitude toward this basic issue.

The challenge to the Conservatives was clearly conveyed in the following passage of the Labor statement referring to plans for European unity. It said:

"All the forms of union so far discussed entail a transfer of power from the peoples of the individual European states to some new body. This would involve a major constitutional change in every country. Such a change can only be made if the people of every country so decide after mature consideration during which all the implications of the change have been fully presented.

"It is, therefore, the duty of any group of persons who desire this change to seek to convert the people in each country to their views. In particular any political party which supports the change is clearly obliged to make it a major proposal in its election program."

"No politician has the right to support such changes unless he has the honesty and courage to present them for the verdict of his own electorate," the statement declared.

'Democratic Socialism'

The party statement declared at the outset that the party attitude toward European unity as well as all problems both domestic and foreign would be governed by "the principles of democratic socialism and British interest in the commonwealth." Social justice, full employment and economic stability the party held, could be maintained only in a free market economy with the state intervening to correct harmful tendencies.

"Socialists would, of course, welcome a European economic union which was based on international planning for full employment, social justice and stability," the pamphlet said. But international planning can "only operate on the basis of national planning," it added. "And many European Governments have not yet shown either the will or the ability to plan their own economies."

In the discussion of the document at the press conference Mr. Dalton was asked if it would be easier for the British Government to participate in plans for the integration of Europe if the continental countries had Socialist governments. He replied that the policy statement was based on "present realities."

Referring to the statement that any supra-national body established in Europe would have a "permanent anti-Socialist majority," a French correspondent asked what made the British Labor party take such a "dark view of the future of socialism in Europe?" Smiling, Mr. Dalton said perhaps it would be better to "wait and see."

The statement of party policy on foreign affairs was contained in a fifteen-page booklet of 7,000 words.

The reaction of the British press to this new statement of the Labor party's policy was predictable. Lord Beaverbrook's Express, which puts considerations of Empire above all else, praised the Labor party for its good sense in turning its back on Europe.

The Daily Mail said that President Truman, French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman, W. Averill Harriman, roving Marshall Plan Ambassador and Paul G. Hoffman, head of the Economic Cooperation Administration would all "groan" over this latest and well documented isolationist statement of party policy.

The Laborite Daily Herald naturally endorsed the party program. The News Chronicle, which speaks for the Liberals, said the statement showed the party in a disappointing and defeatist light." But, it added, "at least it provides a coherent policy with which to come to grips."

In view of the charges on both sides of the Atlantic that Britain was "dragging her feet" on the issue of European unity The Daily Telegraph said it might be expected a statement under the title of "European Unity" might have been expected to try to "smooth ruffled feelings and commend cooperation." To the contrary, it continued, "never have the continental nations been more rudely and sprawingly lectured for their efforts to emerge from the post-war chaos."

The London Times, in a long and not unsympathetic editorial, said the party statement "adds foreign policy to the lengthening lists of Labor's new judgments or second thoughts since the election."