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# PRACTICAL SOCIALISM FOR BRITAIN

By  
HUGH DALTON

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## PREFACE

THIS book has grown out of my work during the past three years as a member of the National Executive of the Labour Party.

The political events of 1931 have led the Labour Party, through electoral defeat and through a passing phase of discouragement and self-distrust, to a new and more vigorous life. In 1934 we have regained confidence in ourselves and, as the by-elections and the local elections show, we have regained the confidence of at least as large a number of the electors as in 1929, hitherto the high water mark of our advance.

Those who speculate on the results of the next general election are only divided as to whether we shall win a clear majority in the next House of Commons, or, falling a little short of this, shall constitute a powerful Parliamentary Opposition, needing, for that majority, only a relatively small access of further strength.

There is to-day a widespread interest in the Labour Party's policy, both domestic and foreign, and a growing desire, often in most unexpected quarters, for a Labour victory at the polls.

Since 1931 we have been engaged in thinking out our policy afresh, in greater detail than ever before, and in relation to the present needs, national and international, of these troubled days. As a member of the National Executive of the Party, and of its Policy Committee, I have had, together with many others, some share in this thinking and some personal



responsibility for its results. Three years' work culminated in October, 1934, at Southport at the Annual Conference of the Party, which accepted the Executive's proposals *For Socialism and Peace*. This document, with others which it summarises, contains the marching orders which a Labour majority would take to Westminster, and Labour Ministers into their Departments. It represents the deliberate will of our Party, the basis of our next appeal to the country, the programme of our action if that appeal succeeds.

I claim for this book no official authority. It is an individual contribution and I have not hesitated to express my personal opinions and sometimes to emphasise them. But, on essentials, the programme which I advocate is that which the Labour Party, at its last three annual conferences, has approved. If any of my readers are curious to know how closely I stick to the official texts, they have only to read the latter for themselves.

Within the Labour Party during these three years there has been a healthy stir of ideas and some internal controversy. Much more, indeed, than in the MacDonald-Snowden era. This is as it should be. A political party without such stirrings is drowsy unto death. But a party which spends too long on introspection is out of health and shirking its duty, which is to go forth and conquer the greater world outside itself.

First we must persuade the electors to put faith in us, and then we must justify and strengthen that faith by effective action.

The balance of this book is not the same as the balance of importance of the questions treated. Some of the most important of these I am fully conscious of having treated very summarily. The limits of space and time, under which I have been working, have helped to make this inevitable. And, just because this book is an individual contribution, not an official pro-

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gramme, I have felt free to write at greater length where I thought I had something fresh to say, more shortly where the ground has already been well covered by others.

HUGH DALTON.

ALDBOURNE,  
WILTSHIRE.  
*January, 1935.*

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