

**the
British
Road to
Socialism
Draft**

for discussion

Foreword

This new draft of the programme of the Communist Party of Great Britain has been prepared as a result of a resolution passed at the party's 24th national congress in November 1975, which read:

"Congress instructs the executive committee to initiate and facilitate the widest possible debate within the party and the labour movement with a view to the adoption of a revised edition of *The British Road to Socialism* at the 35th national congress."

At its meeting in March 1976 the executive committee appointed a commission to prepare a new draft, consisting of George Matthews (chairman), Jack Ashton, Peter Carter, Judith Hunt, Martin Jacques, Chris Myant, Dave Priscott and George Wake, with John Gollan as secretary.

Party organisations and members, and others in the labour and progressive movement, were invited to send in their views to the commission, which met six times between April and September, and received and considered 83 contributions.

A draft prepared by the commission was discussed by the executive committee meeting in November 1976, which took decisions on the main policy questions involved and asked its political committee to revise the draft in the light of the discussion.

This draft is now published for discussion by the party and the labour and progressive movement in the period up to the 35th national congress, to be held from November 12-15, 1977.

The executive committee decided that while the discussion should start from the time of publication of the draft, amendments to it from party organisations for consideration by the national congress will be accepted **from July 1, and up to September 30, 1977.**

The columns of the party's fortnightly journal *Comment* will be open for discussion on the draft from the time of its publication, and the *Morning Star* has also announced that it will be publishing discussion on the programme.

As well as amendments from party organisations, submitted in accordance with party rules, the executive committee will welcome the views of others in the labour and progressive movement, which should be addressed to it at 16 King Street, London, WC2E 8HY.

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the British Road to Socialism Draft

Introduction

The first edition of *The British Road to Socialism*, the programme of the Communist Party of Great Britain, was published in 1951. Revised editions were published in 1952, 1958 and 1968.

All that has happened in the years since 1951 has confirmed the need for Britain to take the new path outlined in our programme, make a revolutionary change, end capitalism and build a socialist society.

Since the last edition was published in 1968 there have been big changes in Britain and in the world.

10 To take account of these changes, and draw the lessons from them, this new edition of *The British Road to Socialism* has been prepared.

It is based on the theory of scientific socialism first elaborated by Marx and Engels, creatively applying that theory to the situation in Britain and the world today.

In it we make clear our view:

First, that the big problems we face today have their roots in the capitalist system, and can only be finally resolved by socialism.

Second, that to achieve socialism the working class and its allies must take political power out of the hands of the capitalist class.

20 Third, that this socialist revolution can be carried through in Britain in conditions in which world war can be prevented, and without civil war, by a combination of mass struggles outside Parliament, and the election of a parliamentary majority and government determined to implement a socialist programme.

Fourth, that the forces exist in Britain which can put Britain on a new course, and that the need is to unite them in a broad democratic alliance embracing the great majority of the people.

30 Fifth, that the winning of political power by the working class and its allies will not be a single act, but a process of struggle, in which the next important stage is the winning of a Labour Government which will carry out a left policy to tackle the crisis and bring about far-reaching democratic changes in society, opening up the road to socialism.

Sixth, that socialism in Britain can only be achieved and built by the fullest development of democracy, involving far greater participation by the people in running the country, recognition of the elected Parliament as the sovereign body in the land, freedom for all democratic political parties, including those hostile to socialism, to operate, genuine freedom of the press, independence of the trade unions, and the consolidation and extension of civil liberties won through centuries of struggle.

Our programme is based on confidence in the ability of the British people, led by the labour movement, to transform our country and ensure that the full potentialities of every individual in it will be realised.

40 The task will not be an easy one. But in what follows we show how it can be done.

1 Why Britain needs socialism

Britain is in a deep economic, political and social crisis. It has not suddenly come upon us. It has been building up for many years. It is not the result of natural catastrophes or forces beyond our control. It is the product of the capitalist system under which we live, of the world crisis of capitalism, and of the policies of the governments we have had.

50 Since the end of the Second World War there have been Tory Governments for about half the time, and Labour Governments for the other half. They have differed in many of their policies, but neither has solved the basic problems. Always the economic miracle is to come. It never does. North Sea oil is presented as the hope for the 1980s. But whatever benefits it brings, it will not resolve the crisis.

60 After the Second World War, advances in living standards were won as a result of struggle and important social reforms were introduced. But now things are going into reverse. The concept of a health service free at the time of need has been undermined; education is under attack; the problems of housing get more acute. The future for millions of young people is bleak. There is widespread unemployment, and more are caught in the "poverty trap". Pensions remain at poverty level. But, in health, education and insurance, wealth can buy privileged treatment and services.

The quality of life is threatened. City centres become gold mines for property speculators. Long overdue urban renewal is further postponed. The countryside is despoiled, pollution is spreading, and fortunes are made out of "land development". The railways and public transport are sacrificed to the interests of the big monopolists. Culture is commercialised, and people are denied the opportunity to develop their talents and abilities to the full. Human relationships are distorted and sex exploited for profit by newspapers, advertisers and big business. There are frequent examples of corruption and financial scandals.

70 The utmost struggle is needed even to maintain real wages, let alone expand them. The trade unions, the main defence of working people, are under constant attack. It is a society in which millions of women are doubly oppressed, as workers and because of their sex.

Government is divorced from the people. Millions of them feel that they have little real say in the major decisions affecting their lives. Bureaucratic control by the state has increased as local democracy has been eroded. The ruling class tries to confine democracy to the right to vote in elections, and deny the people real participation in decision-making.

80 Indeed, democracy is increasingly threatened by authoritarian trends. The monopolists call for "order" and "strong government". Army chiefs, with Northern Ireland as the training ground, prepare for what they call "counter-insurgency action". Police chiefs demand more powers. Reactionary revision of the law is pressed for, and secret preparations are made to block democratic progress. Parliament's sovereign rights are being eroded, and still more limitations on its powers are being demanded by reactionary forces. Although the ruling class has been forced to concede measures of devolution in response to the national and democratic aspirations and struggle of the people of Scotland and Wales, efforts to thwart the fulfilment of those aspirations continue. British sovereignty itself is threatened by membership of the Common Market.

90 Is there a way out of the crisis? We believe that there is. By their actions people can change the situation. Britain has great resources and a highly skilled population. Now those resources are under-used or mis-used. If they are to be fully used to provide a better life, there must be far-reaching changes in the social system, leading to the replacement of capitalism by socialism.

Contradictions of capitalism

The root cause of Britain's problems is an economic and political system in which effective power is in the hands of a tiny minority of the people—the capitalist class, and especially the big monopolies.

100 Capitalism's motive force is not production for the needs of society, but for the maximum private profit for the employers and bankers. Its central feature is the exploitation of the working class by the capitalist class.

Most of the productive resources are privately-owned, and become concentrated in fewer and fewer hands. The public sector is subordinate to, and serves the interests of, the private sector. The workers by hand and brain—the great majority of the population—own little but their labour power, the capacity to work.

The wealth they produce by their work, manual or mental, is greatly in excess of the wages and salaries they are paid. The surplus goes to the capitalist owners or shareholders as profit.

110 Thus at the heart of the capitalist system there are deep contradictions. In modern society production is a social process, in which the workers are brought together in larger and larger enterprises and co-operate economically with their fellow workers both within each enterprise and throughout society. But ownership is not social—it is predominantly private. Within the enterprise production is planned; but in society as a whole it is not planned.

The capitalists always try to increase their profits, not just for their own personal consumption, but to enlarge their capital so as to get greater productive power and make still more profit. In general, the more they can limit increases in wages and salaries, the more profit they can make, and the more capital they can accumulate.

120 But to get the profit, the goods produced have to be sold. And since a major factor in the demand for goods is the level of wages and salaries, restricting them also restricts the market in each capitalist country.

These contradictions of capitalism are the root cause of capitalist crisis, and the political and social problems it creates. They are the reason why capitalist production does not develop smoothly, but in a series of booms and slumps.

Over the past century they have resulted in an extreme growth of monopoly, the polarisation of wealth, class inequalities and social division.

The big firms have taken over not only the small firms, but medium and large firms, and increasingly take over or merge with one another.

130 Excluding the nationalised sector (roughly one-fifth), the top hundred firms in Britain were responsible for 25 per cent of total manufacturing output in 1950. By 1970 they were responsible for 50 per cent, and it is predicted that within a few years they will account for 75 per cent or more.

The major monopolies are now multi-national, investing and operating all over the world. For them, patriotism does not exist. Britain is outstanding in the extent to which it is dominated by the multi-national firms.

140 Their policies have led to a continuous export of capital, with underinvestment in British industry and its consequent backwardness. This process has been accentuated by Britain's entry into the Common Market, seriously threatening national control over the economy and natural resources such as oil and natural gas.

Monopoly capitalism has become state monopoly capitalism, with the state and the monopolies intertwined. It can no longer exist without massive injections of state funds. The modern capitalist state has become more intricate and its function greatly extended. It is the biggest single employer of labour through the nationalised industries and its apparatus generally. As the state extends its so-called regulatory functions over the now highly complex capitalist economy, it does so mainly in the special interests of the monopoly and City sectors of capitalism.

150 This extreme concentration of wealth produces its opposite. The overwhelming majority of the people own little wealth, apart, perhaps, from a house and personal insurance.

According to the Royal Commission on the Distribution of Income and Wealth, reporting in 1975, the richest 5 per cent of the adult population owned more than half the total wealth. The bottom 80 per cent owned less than a fifth.

But while the wealth of the less well-off consists mainly of their dwellings and

personal possessions, that of the rich is mainly in the form of shares and land. Thus a mere 320,000 people (eight out of every thousand), owned 70 per cent of all personally-held company shares, and 72 per cent of the land.

160 Some 13 million people live on or near the official poverty-line. They include those on low wages, old people, unemployed, one parent families, and many who are sick or disabled.

In this society profit is put before the needs of people. All human activities are seen as a source of profit. Men and women are exploited at their work, their cultural, sporting and leisure activities are commercialised, they are held to ransom as consumers by the big business concerns which dominate the supply and distribution of the goods they buy. Capitalist morality is that of the jungle—each for himself or herself, and the devil take the hindmost. The economic crisis of capitalism is paralleled by a deep political, social, cultural and moral crisis.

How capitalist rule is maintained

170 The concentration of wealth and economic control in fewer and fewer hands means that a small number of big firms exercise enormous power. Their decisions have a major influence on the country's economy, on the extent of investments, the amount of goods produced, the prices charged, the balance of payments and the position of the pound. Yet those who own and run them are not elected by, or responsible to the people. It is a system which makes a mockery of democracy.

But the capitalist class does not only hold economic power, through its ownership of the main sectors of the economy and of the bulk of the country's wealth.

It also exercises political and ideological domination in society, by direct and indirect means.

180 The political power of the capitalist class is exercised through its effective control of the state and of government. This not only applies when the openly capitalist party, the Tory Party, is in office, but, as experience has shown, when right-wing Labour Governments, which see their job as making capitalism work, are in office. The ruling class staffs and controls the higher levels of the state machine (the civil service, the police, the armed forces, the judiciary, the Foreign Office, etc.).

190 The ideological control and influence of the ruling class is exercised in many ways, including through its ownership and direction of the main mass media, which it uses to promote capitalist ideas, and its use of the educational system to instil such ideas into the minds of children and young people. Most of those in charge of the state machinery and the main social, educational, cultural and ideological institutions of capitalist society accept its outlook and its values.

So, in their everyday life, millions of people are influenced to believe that the capitalist system is the natural way to organise society; that the improvements in living standards won over the years as a result of bitterly-fought struggles are due to the virtues of the system; that, despite temporary setbacks, they can continue in the long run to improve their conditions within it; and that there is therefore no need for fundamental change. Thus, as a result of a combination of the efforts of the ruling class and of people's own experiences and material circumstances, there has been a large measure of voluntary acceptance of capitalist rule.

200 Yet within this degree of acceptance there have also been conscious struggles for social reforms and democratic rights, and working class and progressive challenges to some aspects of capitalist domination, expressed particularly in the founding and growth of the labour movement.

Of special significance in the people's experience in Britain is the position of the Labour Party. Its formation represented a break with the traditional capitalist parties, since it was based on the trade unions, with the aim of giving political expression to the aspirations of the working class and achieving Labour Governments.

210 From the beginning there were two main trends within it—the left and broadly socialist trend, and the right-wing trend, accepting capitalism, which has been dominant throughout its existence.

The strategy of the ruling class, faced with this potentially hostile force, was to try to buy it off and contain it within the limits of the capitalist system. And, in fact, despite the election of Labour Governments, and whatever the social progress won, there has been no basic change in the social and economic system. The clear

divisions and social contradictions of society remain.

220 A major reason for this is the fact that, despite the growth of the left in recent years, the decisive control of the labour movement, particularly on the parliamentary side, has been and still remains in the hands of the right wing. So Labour Governments have been right-wing Labour Governments, acting primarily as the administrators of capitalism. They have not made, nor had they the desire to make, any significant challenge to monopoly domination of the economy and the state. In this way the Labour leaders have helped to maintain substantial social support for the capitalist system.

230 Thus persuasion, politics and coercion are all utilised by the ruling class to maintain its rule. It is prepared to use coercion and violence in time of acute crisis, unless prevented by overwhelming working class strength, while in normal times it relies on achieving a social concensus and class collaboration, through its ideological control and influence, and with the assistance of the right wing in the labour movement. Even in such periods the forces of coercion are ever present in the background.

To challenge capitalist rule the working class and its organisations need not only to fight in the economic field, but also in fields of politics, ideology and culture. For all these areas are the arena of struggle between reactionary and progressive ideas, between the capitalist and socialist forces in society.

World balance changed

The democratic struggle in Britain takes place against the background of the world crisis of capitalism and the immense change in the balance of world forces.

240 In its imperialist heyday, capitalism dominated the entire world. The various capitalist states not only exploited their own workers and resources, but secured super profits from their colonial empires, with Britain in the lead. This resulted in a big expansion of production, but, as we have shown, progress was not continuous, proceeding through a series of booms and slumps—the “cyclical crisis” of capitalism. The capitalist countries developed unevenly in relation to each other, leading to conflict, and sometimes to war.

250 Now, although it is still powerful, capitalism is in its period of relative decline and decay, its period of “general crisis.” Its world domination has been shattered, with far-reaching consequences. The twentieth century has been the century of social revolution and national liberation. In 1917 the Russian Revolution made the initial breach and established the world’s first socialist system. Today, there are 14 socialist states covering more than a third of the earth’s surface. Capitalism’s world colonial system has virtually collapsed under the hammer blows of colonial liberation, and its remaining outposts are under siege. The people of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, aided by international solidarity, won an historic victory when they defeated the aggression of the world’s strongest imperialist power, the United States of America. This has been followed by important gains for the liberation movement in Angola, Mozambique and Southern Africa.

260 The existence and support of the socialist world has been a big factor in helping the national liberation movements to achieve their victories.

The economic advances of the socialist countries have also shown socialism’s great potential for human development, despite the problems which exist within these countries and in relations between them. In the post-war period the Soviet Union and other socialist states of Europe have achieved consistent economic growth increases, in contrast to the crisis-ridden economies of the U.S. and capitalist Western Europe, showing that capitalism will eventually be outpaced by socialism.

270 With direct colonial rule largely ended, the capitalists resort to neo-colonialism—the huge investment by the multi-national firms in the Third World to try to control and exploit its natural resources, manipulate governments and enmesh them in military alliances and indebtedness. But this meets with continued resistance and there is a powerful tendency toward non-alignment and anti-imperialism.

The NATO powers have been forced to abandon the worst excesses of the cold war, and consider policies of detente.

Important changes have taken place in the capitalist world itself. The earlier post-war period was characterised by U.S. supremacy in the capitalist world. But

American dominance was challenged by the rise of other capitalist states, notably West Germany and Japan. Thus, though the U.S. is still by far the strongest capitalist power, it has lost the pre-eminent position it formerly occupied.

280 At the same time, the period of post-war economic expansion has been replaced by stagnation and depression. Imperialism no longer finds it so easy to secure cheap raw materials, so advantageous to it in the past. The capitalist world monetary system is in disarray.

Contradictions between the capitalist states grow. The Common Market was originally encouraged by the U.S. not only as an economic grouping directed against socialism, but as the political counterpart of NATO. Despite the subsequent efforts of the EEC countries to develop it also as a counter to the U.S. and Japan, deep-rooted differences within it impede the efforts to integrate Western Europe economically and politically.

290 There have also been major political shifts in Western Europe. Fascism has been overthrown in Greece and Portugal and new prospects for democracy are opening up in Spain. The left forces in France and Italy have made major advances, opening up new prospects of fundamental political and social change in those countries.

Thus the capitalist world, though still strong, and with the greatest share of world production and assets and with a huge military machine, faces acute problems.

300 Its general capacity to roll back socialism and national liberation and impede working class advance is increasingly impaired because of the growing strength of socialism, national liberation, and the working class and progressive forces. These changes create more favourable conditions for the advance to socialism in Britain without civil war and foreign military intervention.

A decisive tilt in the balance of forces has taken place in the direction of socialism and progress. It continues despite all setbacks and efforts of imperialism to redress this balance. This is the main feature of the world today.

Britain's crisis and the fight back

In Britain, the first capitalist power, once the most powerful of all, the crisis is especially deep. London used to be the centre of the biggest colonial empire in history and the financial capital of the world. The pound was the monarch of the world monetary system.

310 All that has gone. New capitalist nations, and especially the United States of America, entered the scene and challenged Britain for supremacy. The people of the colonies fought for, and won, their independence. By the end of the Second World War the British Empire was on its last legs. The need for a complete break with past imperialist policies was urgent.

But instead, successive governments, whether Labour or Tory, tried to maintain Britain's imperialist position. Their policies involved huge investment abroad at the expense of investment at home, continued colonial wars and repression, the cold war directed against socialism, a gigantic waste of resources on arms and bases abroad, and the military alliance with the U.S.

320 In the initial stages these policies, though their cost was enormous, did not prevent some advances in living standards being made. But by the mid-sixties their effects had become disastrous, with the forced devaluation of the pound in 1967 and acute balance of payments crises. The modest rise in living standards was slowed down, then halted, and finally turned into a fall.

The result of the post-war strategy of Britain's rulers has been the lowest economic growth rate in Europe, the lowest investment per worker among the major capitalist countries, repeated attempts to impose incomes policies or wage restraint, and increasing attacks on the social services.

330 In attempting to hold back the advance of national liberation and socialism by entering into an antagonistic partnership with the stronger imperialism of the U.S., the British ruling class only opened the way for increased U.S. economic and political penetration into Britain. Similarly, when the big monopolists later succeeded in getting Britain into the Common Market, this not only imposed serious limitations on the country's sovereignty, but resulted in a big trade deficit with the Market, and further economic difficulties for Britain.

The country's economic and political problems have been accentuated by the

attempt to impose a military solution to the crisis in Northern Ireland, where British Governments have continued to pursue a policy of repression and denial of democracy. The growth of the civil rights movement and of democratic struggle in Northern Ireland led to the collapse of the Stormont regime which had operated there on behalf of British imperialism for 50 years. But successive governments, both Labour and Tory, have sought under the system of direct rule to prevent the further development of united struggle involving the whole of the working class.

340 They have openly tolerated right-wing terror, and the army itself has been responsible for many killings, for mass arrests, and for the maintenance of a martial law presence in working class areas. British imperialism has exploited the divisive IRA bombing campaigns both in Ireland and Britain, which have made more difficult the development of joint action by the working class and labour movements of Britain and Ireland. The cost of this policy of repression has been the loss of hundreds of lives and the squandering of millions of pounds.

350 As social and economic problems have got worse, there has been a serious upsurge of racialism, already deeply rooted in the ideology of wide sections of the British people as a result of Britain's imperialist and colonialist history. Insecurity and frustration have found expression in the growth of racialist propaganda, in violence against black people, and in support in elections for racialist and fascist candidates. The 2.5 per cent of Britain's population who are black are faced with discrimination, deprivation and hostility. But white and black working people alike suffer the consequences of racialism, which sets workers against each other instead of against their common enemy, and so helps the capitalist class to maintain its rule.

360 The post-war strategy of the ruling class has not been operated without strong resistance from the working class and other sections of the people. It was their determination to change things for the better which resulted in the return of the 1945 Labour Government, and the nationalisation Acts and social reforms of the immediate post-war period. Despite their efforts, the progressive forces were unable to prevent the subsequent setbacks, with the attempt to restore Britain's imperialist position, the cold war, massive rearmament, and the return of the Tories.

370 But as the ending of the post-war boom resulted in more and more ruling class attempts to put the burdens of the deepening crisis on the shoulders of the people, resistance grew. In this, the increasing strength of the trade union movement was a major factor. Successive governments tried to deal with it, both by policies of confrontation and class collaboration.

The defeat of the Labour Government's attempt to curb the unions by the policy outlined in "*In Place of Strife*" was followed by the even more decisive battle against the Tory Industrial Relations Act—the biggest clash since 1926.

This in turn was followed by the historic battle in support of the miners, reaching its climax with the joint action of miners, engineering workers and others in closing the Saltley coke depot, and leading to the defeat of the Heath Government in 1974.

380 New forms of struggle, including the work-ins, were developed against unemployment. The battles on incomes policy involved conflict not only with the employers, but the Government and the State. Fresh forces joined the battle, with the growth of trade unionism and militancy amongst white collar workers. Teachers, local government workers and civil servants, technicians, doctors and others took action to defend and improve their conditions and, in many cases, to defend services to the public which were under attack.

Many more women have been active in industrial struggles and in the trade union movement, especially on the points of the Working Women's Charter.

390 These and other struggles, including those against nuclear weapons, rearmament and the Vietnam war, helped to bring about moves to the left in the unions and the Labour Party, which shook, but did not break, the right-wing grip on the movement. This division between the right and the left continues to deepen. Although there are ebbs and flows, the development of the left trend is an increasingly important factor in the labour movement.

The demands for change, and the forms of democratic action have stretched far beyond the organised working class movement, and have involved many other forces.

400 A major development has been the growing movement for women's rights, challenging the oppression of this half of the population, millions of whom are members of the working class. They are exploited because of their position as workers and discriminated against because of their sex. But the increasing number of women in the work force, the expansion of education and the use of the birth control pill have brought about significant changes in social and family life and widened women's horizons. This, and the impact of the Women's Liberation Movement, stimulated widespread discussion and activity on economic and social issues, and challenged customs, laws and attitudes which justify and maintain male privilege and perpetuate the double oppression suffered by working women.

410 The struggle for national rights for the Scottish and Welsh peoples has had a profound effect, forcing the government to introduce measures to meet the demand for self government, though still with many qualifications and limitations.

Though the response of the labour movement to the growth of racialism was initially slow and inadequate, there have been significant developments in action, propaganda and the application of policies against discrimination and racialism. Black people's organisations are growing, and in many cases they recognise the need for the unity of black and white people against racialism.

420 Among the expanding student population a powerful movement has developed not only on their own conditions and on the need for improvement in the content and democratic control of education, but on political and international as well as general social and economic questions, with an increasing recognition of the need to associate and ally with the labour movement.

There has been a big growth in organisations and action concerned to protect the environment and help local communities. Young people have been active in all these campaigns.

430 Despite all the efforts of the labour movement and other forces, however, the attack on living standards has continued and intensified. For a period, resistance to it was successful. But for the most part, the various movements did not develop beyond the stage of defensive struggle (though some of them, such as those on industrial democracy, the work-ins, etc. challenged basic capitalist ideas). Many of those taking part did not see that the roots of their problems lay in the capitalist crisis. Thus at crucial times the capitalist and right-wing Labour forces have been able to create confusion, presenting, for example, high wages and trade union militancy as the main cause of inflation, and so holding back the struggle.

The various movements have often been isolated from each other, with the labour movement making insufficient effort to associate with and champion the cause of the other movements.

Right-wing Labour policies have also provided fertile ground for the Tories and other right-wing forces to step up their propaganda and activities.

440 Thus, although important advances have been made in recent years, they have not been sufficiently carried forward, and at times setbacks have been inflicted on the labour movement and the popular forces.

For democracy and socialism

The lesson of the past thirty years is that it is not enough to fight such defensive battles, important though they are.

It is essential to carry them forward into a struggle for far-reaching democratic and social changes which will, in the first stages, weaken the grip of the big monopolists and begin to tackle the grave economic, social and political problems of Britain in the interests of the working people.

450 Millions of people who are not yet convinced of the need for socialism are nevertheless deeply concerned about the present plight of Britain and the effects of capitalism's crisis.

The big question is whether they will be won for democratic advance, or whether the Tories and other reactionary forces will be able to take advantage of frustration and confusion to secure support for policies which would still further worsen living standards and increase the danger of authoritarian rule.

A great and urgent responsibility therefore rests on the labour movement and other progressive forces. They need to put forward and campaign for an immediate policy which, as outlined later, can rally all those seeking a way out of

the crisis, and unite them in a broad alliance for democracy and social change.

460 As people are drawn into this movement of struggle and action, they can also be convinced of the need to end capitalism and advance to socialism.

For the experience of past decades has also shown that capitalism's crisis cannot be solved within the limits of capitalism. A new strategy of social change is needed. It must be a strategy for a socialist revolution.

Only socialism can overcome the basic contradiction of capitalist society from which every aspect of the crisis flows. Socialism replaces private ownership by public ownership. The basic contradiction of society is removed. The social process of production is matched by social ownership of the means of production. Production for private profit is replaced by production for social needs.

470 With the great monopolies in public hands, and the real planning of production, it becomes possible to make full use of modern scientific and technological advances to eradicate poverty and raise the standard of living. The scandalous contrasts of extreme wealth for a few and hardship for millions can be ended. A new quality of life and a common social purpose can be achieved.

More than that. Instead of political power being in the hands of a tiny minority, it is in the hands of the overwhelming majority. For the fullest extension of democracy to become possible, the working class and other sections of the people must take power out of the hands of the capitalist class. This is what is meant by the socialist revolution.

480 We are in a world where social change is taking place on an unprecedented scale. The growth of the socialist world, the sweep of national liberation, the growth of the working class movement throughout the world, has, as we have pointed out, brought about a decisive change in the balance of world forces.

Thus, here in Britain and the advanced capitalist countries of Western Europe, the opportunity arises to carry out social transformation in conditions in which world war can be prevented and without the social collapse and human destruction such a war would bring.

490 It will not be easy to advance to socialism. It can only be done by the massive democratic struggle of the great majority of the British people. But because of their overwhelming potential strength, and because of the changed balance in the world, we believe that they can achieve socialism in Britain without civil war.

2 The forces for change in Britain

The forces exist which can put Britain on a new course, tackle the crisis in the interests of the people, extend democracy and open the way to socialist change.

Glimpses of their potential strength have already been seen in the struggles of the past years. In them wide and diverse sections of people have been reacting against the adverse effects of capitalism and capitalist policies on their lives.

The need is to unite them in a broad democratic alliance, which can embrace the great majority of the people, and which would be overwhelmingly superior in numbers and strength to the forces which want to maintain the status quo.

500 The objective basis for this is the fact that the monopoly capitalists who dominate the economic and political system in Britain are only a tiny minority, pursuing policies which conflict with the interests of the great majority of the people. These monopoly capitalists are the main enemy in the way of democratic advance.

510 The sections and groups which can be brought into an alliance against them, on the other hand, are all involved in the battle for democracy. This is a common thread running through the various struggles—on trade union rights, free collective bargaining and industrial democracy; women's liberation; racialism and the rights of ethnic minorities; the national rights of Scotland and Wales; Northern Ireland; the Common Market and NATO; the protection of the environment; and community questions.

Classes in capitalist society

Building the broad democratic alliance involves, in the first place, an understanding of the class forces in capitalist society, and specifically in Britain.

The Working Class

The leading force in the alliance will be the working class, because of its position in society, as well as its size.

520 It includes the overwhelming majority of the population—those who sell their labour power, their capacity to work, in return for a wage or salary, and who work under the direction of the employers—those who own the means of production, distribution and exchange, or their agents.

Among them are those in mainly "manual" occupations, such as mining, engineering, dock work, etc. This is the section often traditionally called the working class, but in fact the boundary is far wider.

530 It embraces also white collar workers in industry and distribution, such as technicians, clerical and sales workers. These also do not own any means of production, depend on the sale of their labour power to the capitalist employers, and as a rule have no control relationship to the means of production. Then there are the workers engaged in education, the health service, the civil service and local government. They also own and control no means of production and depend on the sale of their labour power. It is true that they do not sell it directly to capitalist employers. But indirectly their labour contributes to the capitalist production of goods and profits.

Though some of these workers may regard themselves as "middle class", they are objectively part of the working class. Their interests broadly coincide with those of the workers in "manual" occupations, and indeed the distinction between manual and non-manual work is more and more being broken down by modern processes of production.

540 The working class is the most important of the forces that can be ranged against the monopolists, not only for immediate demands, but for socialist change. It is important not just because of its numbers, but because of its special characteristics as a class, and the decisive role it plays in society.

It digs the coal, drives the trains, makes and operates the machinery, produces the power, prepares and prints the newspapers, and staffs the local and central government apparatus. The conditions of its work have led millions of its members to organise in a powerful trade union movement, whose roots go back 200 years. The life of society as a whole depends on it.

550 It is not static in its composition and structure, for changes take place within it as a result of changes in the nature of production, and as the concentration of production under capitalism results in many who were formerly small capitalists or self-employed becoming wage or salary earners.

There are considerable differences, and sometimes conflicts, between its different sections. They differ in degree of trade union organisation and class consciousness; in political understanding, organisation and allegiance; in their function in relation to the productive process and social life; and in the degree of their ties, real or imagined, with the capitalist class.

560 At the heart of the working class are those in the basic extractive, transport and manufacturing industries who have always played a crucial role both in the development of the trade union movement and of the Labour Party. Although they have declined in numbers, these workers, because of their experience, organisation and degree of class consciousness, play a leading role in the working class movement. They have frequently demonstrated their power in industrial action and solidarity. Among these workers the need for trade union organisation became clear at an early stage, and the class struggle took a more open form.

570 In recent years, because of the way capitalism has developed, there has been a big decline in many traditional industries, and the rise of new industries. Even in the older industries, changes in the methods of production have taken place. Thus there has been a substantial increase in the number of non-manual or white collar workers in industry, while developments in the social services and the extension of the operations of the state have also resulted in increases in the numbers of workers employed in these sectors.

In the past, many white collar workers have held aloof from the traditional core of the working class, and even from trade union organisation. But changes in the nature of production and the impact of capitalist crisis have produced a transformation in recent years, with a great increase in trade union organisation among these workers and a readiness to take action to defend their interests.

580 Much more is involved here than just an increase in the size of the working class. For example, the carrying of trade union organisation and ideas of class solidarity into sections of workers employed in the state machine and in the mass media represents an important extension of the potential power of the working class to act in democratic mass struggle outside Parliament, as well as through elections.

590 Another important development has been the participation of many more women in the production process and in trade unionism. Their struggles against the discrimination from which they have suffered have been a significant new feature in the industrial scene. Although there has often been completely insufficient support from the movement as a whole, these efforts have begun to change the position and have already achieved the passing of the Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay Acts, imperfect though they are, and increasing support for the demands of the Working Women's Charter.

A central task in the struggle for democracy and social change is the uniting of the various sections of the working class in action. Unless it is united, it will be unable to play its leading role, and draw around it the other democratic forces in society.

600 This means combating the narrow sectionalist trends which affect both the manual and white collar sectors. It also requires an understanding of the differences which remain, despite the tendency for their conditions of work and political and class consciousness to converge. Their experience of class struggle, their forms of organisation and activity, and their approach to many questions still vary considerably, making the task of uniting the working class a complex and difficult one which calls for an organised and conscious effort.

Divisions in the Capitalist Class

The capitalist class comprises the owners and controllers of the means of

production, distribution and exchange—the factories, banks, shops, land, etc. Even as a whole it constitutes only a small fraction of the population. But within it there is a still smaller minority exercising the dominant power—the very big firms, which not only exploit their workers, but also operate at the expense of many smaller businesses, small shopkeepers, and small farmers.

610 These small enterprises are among the first victims in periods of acute capitalist crisis, many of them going bankrupt, being forced to close down, or being swallowed up by the big firms. When working class standards are cut, small producers, shopkeepers and traders are also adversely affected.

There is therefore an objective basis for an alliance between many in these sections of the capitalist class and the working class against the common enemy—the big capitalists. There will be many problems in building such an alliance, since the small employers are in a contradictory position. They usually see it as in their interests to keep wages down for the sake of their profits; yet they are in fact adversely affected by cuts in working class living standards and by the policies of the big firms.

620 The labour movement needs to show them that there is no solution to their problems in lining up with big business against the workers. It must seek to win them to the side of the working class, and prevent them becoming a prey to right-wing and fascist propaganda, by campaigning for specific measures to assist them, such as cheap credits, restrictions on monopoly price manipulation, control of rents, relief from high rates, the abolition of VAT, etc., as well as winning them for the wider democratic demands of the labour movement.

Intermediate Strata

630 Not all who sell their labour power are part of the working class. Those in higher managerial positions and in the higher echelons of the civil service and the state apparatus act directly on behalf of the capitalists, identify with them, and often own substantial amounts of company shares. They can therefore be considered as part of the ruling class.

Middle-grade management and the middle ranks of the state apparatus also act to a considerable extent as agents of the capitalist class, but the degree to which in fact they exercise control over the means of production is often limited, and they may therefore be classified as part of the intermediate strata between the capitalist class and the working class.

640 Among these intermediate strata are also the family businesses which employ no workers; and the self-employed professional sections like architects, lawyers, writers, artists and doctors.

Many of them are affected by the social and economic crisis of capitalism, and by the way in which it hits aspects of life with which they are particularly concerned, such as housing, health and culture.

There is an increasing basis for winning many among these middle strata also to the side of the working class as part of the broad democratic alliance.

The labour movement

650 The main influence of the working class on society is expressed through the labour movement, though this does not yet comprise the whole of the working class. It involves the trade unions, the Labour Party, the Communist Party, and the Co-operative movement at national and local level, and such organisations as the shop stewards' committees and trades councils.

The British labour movement is one of the best organised and potentially most powerful in the capitalist world. It has engaged in repeated struggles against the effects of capitalism. Yet its power has not been fully used in these struggles, and still less in a struggle to end capitalism and build socialism.

This is because, powerful as they are, the organisations of the working class are still dominated by an outlook which accepts capitalism and prevents their power from being fully used for the aims of socialism.

660 During the all-important formative period of working class history, Britain had a manufacturing monopoly as the "Workshop of the world". Although other states later developed and challenged this position at the end of the nineteenth century, the British capitalists were able to develop a fresh source of super-profit

by establishing the greatest colonial empire, exploiting hundreds of millions of people in other countries as well as at home. Over a long period this gave it the resources, strength and confidence to make concessions which resulted in many sections of workers feeling that, provided they organised and struggled, they could make sufficient advances within the system. The ending of capitalism was either seen as unnecessary, or as a remote aim to be achieved by transforming it through a process of piecemeal reforms. This was the basis for the dominant right wing outlook, reformism, which developed in the labour movement.

670 Its main features include class collaboration rather than class struggle; the view that the state is neutral and can serve the purposes of a Labour Government as well as Tory or Liberal Governments; an acceptance of "constitutionalism"; and the belief that the industrial power of the workers should not be used for political purposes, but only for economic ends. Even the traditional definition of socialism has been frequently challenged, with attempts to remove the aim of social ownership.

680 The large and complex ideological apparatus of the British ruling class has functioned continually to strengthen this outlook, so that it remains strong even in the period of deep crisis, when it is no longer so easy for concessions to be made to workers. From the cradle to the grave, the educational and legal systems and the mass media contribute to maintaining the domination of capitalist ideas in the working class movement, as well as in the rest of society. The way in which, over many years, leaders of the working class movement have been drawn into the practice of class collaboration, as part of the capitalist power structure, and have enjoyed some of its rewards, including company directorships, has made reformism particularly strong at the higher levels of the movement.

690 But within the labour movement there has been a constant contradiction between the class interests of organised workers and the class collaborationist policies of reformism. There has also been a recurrent clash between the socialist convictions of many in the labour movement, and the repeated failure of Labour Governments to carry out socialist policies. These internal contradictions have resulted in the Labour Party, formed from a combination of the mass trade unions and the early socialist societies, being from the outset a battleground between a right-wing trend, composed of the most consistent exponents of reformist policies, and a left-wing trend which to one degree or another has challenged either the basic ideas of reformism, or the practical policies which reformism has led to. The issues on which this right-left conflict has been fought out have constantly changed, and the political positions of individuals have shifted, but the clash has been constant and will continue, given the structure and history of the movement.

700 Changing the dominant outlook of the labour movement, breaking the reformist grip, and winning it for left policies, involves a battle in all the sections and at all levels of the labour movement. The Communist Party has played a significant part in this battle from its foundation in 1920, and has been publicly associated, directly or indirectly, with all the major left developments.

The most important arenas of the left-right struggle are the trade unions and the Labour Party.

710 The *trade unions* are class organisations, originally founded by workers to defend themselves against the employers, and primarily concerned with the economic struggle. They are not, and cannot be, a substitute for political parties of the working class.

Nevertheless, because of the federal nature of the British Labour Party, with its trade union affiliations, the unions play an important role within it. The direct impact of government policy on the economy, resulting from the development of state monopoly capitalism, has also resulted in the unions becoming increasingly concerned with political and social questions. Governments, and especially Labour Governments, have sought their collaboration in the carrying out of government policies.

720 Thus winning the trade union movement at all levels—from shop stewards' committees to national executives, trades councils and the TUC—for mass action on immediate questions, and for support for a policy of democratic advance and social change, is vital.

This has been demonstrated in the recent period, which has shown that industrial militancy alone is not enough. It needs to be linked with a political perspective if it is to produce lasting gains for the working class. This has been consistently

stressed by the Communist Party, whose members have worked to strengthen the trade unions, the shop stewards' movement and workplace organisation for social and political, as well as economic struggles.

730 Such a vigorous fight for the interests of their members could help the trade unions draw into their ranks the millions of workers who are not yet organised, as well as giving new life to the branches and workplace organisations. In particular, they need to do far more to attract, organise and draw into activity the young workers on whom the future of the movement depends, especially through the establishing and strengthening of youth sections.

A stronger and more united left fight is needed to end the still dominant position of the right. This needs to be conducted at workplace level, among the mass of the workers, and not just at the level of union leadership. It is also closely related to, and dependent on, the increased activity and strength of the Communist Party and the Labour left within the workplaces.

740 The *Labour Party* is the mass party of the working class, with nearly 6 million affiliated members and over 600,000 individual members. It enjoys the electoral support of large sections of the working class and their families. Thus changing the politics of the Labour Party is bound up with changing the politics of the working class.

The reformist outlook which is dominant in the Labour Party has tried to confine it exclusively to a Parliamentary role within the capitalist system. Its political function is seen almost entirely as participating in elections. Far from developing mass action as well as electoral work, the right-wing has tried to hold back such action, whether by the Labour Party or the unions and the shop stewards.

750 This outlook is reflected in the structure of the Labour Party. The parliamentary party, and especially the Cabinet, in practice determines the key policies pursued, as well as electing the Party leaders, and annual conference decisions are not binding on the parliamentary party or on Labour Governments. The activity of the local organisations is overwhelmingly electoral in character.

760 The left within the Labour Party has opposed right-wing policies, and has often succeeded in winning the Labour Party Conference for a left position on important questions. Its influence has also increased on the Labour Party Executive. But it has not been able to break the right-wing grip, especially on the Parliamentary Labour Party, or decisively change the right-wing policies of Labour Governments. Its growth is of great significance, but more than this is needed to bring about real changes, particularly in strengthening democracy within the Labour Party and in the election of the party leader.

770 The Labour left is not a cohesive and united force. While some of its members are influenced by Marxist ideas, most are still influenced by the reformist outlook on such questions as the need for mass struggles in the workplaces and localities, incomes policy, the nature of the state and the issue of political power in the struggle for socialism. The parliamentary and constituency left has often underestimated the importance of the left fight in the unions, and, when the unions were almost entirely under right-wing control, some of the Labour left saw no future unless the union link was severed, so changing the traditional basis of the Labour Party. But others on the left, including the Communists, argued that the task was to win the unions for left policies as part of the process of winning such policies in the Labour Party and throughout the whole labour movement.

Because the Labour left lacks a clear political perspective, is not centrally organised, and is not sufficiently related to the many extra-parliamentary movements and struggles, something more is needed to transform the outlook and activity of the labour movement.

The Communist Party

780 The vital need is for an organisation of socialists, guided by the principles of scientific socialism, active in all the struggles, in all the unions, in all the progressive movements, and able to give leadership to them—in other words, an organised party, as distinct from the left groups in the Labour Party, the separate unions and the other social forces and movements. It was to fulfil this role that the Communist Party was founded in 1920 by Marxists in the labour movement.

What are the essential characteristics of a party capable of giving the leadership

needed in the struggle to transform the labour movement, strengthen working class unity, and build alliances with other democratic movements in society?

790 First, it must be based on Marxism-Leninism, because this enables it to analyse the nature of society, the character of class rule, and the varied forms of oppression experienced by the working class and other forces. Without such an understanding, a party cannot properly grasp the nature of different forces and the part they have to play.

Second, it has to be firmly rooted in the organised working class and labour movement, because of their leading role in society. But it must also be active and organised among all the other social forces and movements which in one way or another are reacting against the effects of capitalism. Its branches and groups must have a close relationship with all these forces if it is to be able to help them in developing a political perspective, relating the immediate struggle and possibilities - to longer-term objectives.

800 Third, it needs to be based on the principles of democratic centralism, combining full discussion within its own ranks with collective and united work for democratically decided political aims.

Fourth, it needs to have close relations with the Communist movement in other countries, based on the independence and equality of each Communist Party in the great world movement which is making history on a global scale. Such international solidarity is vital not only in the immediate struggles, but for the achievement and building of socialism.

Building and strengthening a party with these characteristics is essential to the strategy for democratic advance and socialism outlined in this programme.

810 Since its foundation the Communist Party of Great Britain has been a party of struggle, involved in all the main battles of the working class and the labour movement, generating class and socialist consciousness and showing the need to win political power and advance to socialism.

It is democratic; it is centralised; it is, and always has been, deeply rooted in the British working class and labour movement; it is internationalist in outlook; and, basing itself on the ideology of Marxism-Leninism, it has a viable strategy for socialist revolution as well as the capacity to give leadership in the daily struggles.

820 But to meet all the needs described above, it needs to be strengthened both numerically and politically. There are still many areas or sections in which it has few members or none at all. Expanding its numbers is therefore vital to its ability to generate struggle, give the people a socialist perspective and help build unity in action. It has to deepen Marxist understanding at every level, extend its public work and mass campaigning, work still harder for left unity in the labour movement and among the other democratic forces, improve its democratic functioning and the life of its branches, and use fully the skills and abilities of all its members.

It aims to be the initiator and inspirer of discussion and debate not only in the labour movement, but among all sections desiring social change. It has not only to help the process of left development in the labour movement, but the bringing about of unity with the varied forces which have to be won for the broad alliance.

830 It endeavours to show in experience of action, as well as by explanation, that class collaboration has to be replaced by class struggle, that the "neutrality" of the state is an illusion, that only if parliamentary struggle is combined with mass struggles outside parliament can the working class and its allies win significant victories, and that the problems we face can only be successfully tackled by a left strategy for socialist change.

840 These are also the aims of the Young Communist League, the youth organisation of the Communist Party, which has a special role among young people. It shows them that the roots of the problems of unemployment, inadequate training and education, and bad housing, from which so many of them suffer, lie in the capitalist system. It seeks to build the unity of young people in the struggle for a better life. It opposes racialism and imperialism and develops solidarity with oppressed people everywhere. It works side-by-side with the Communist Party in the fight for socialism.

One of the main sources of capitalist power is its control of the press and other media, through which it influences millions of people. This is why it is vital, in the building of working class unity and the broad democratic alliance, for the

850 progressive forces to have their own journals and newspapers. As the only daily newspaper advocating left unity and free of control by the press lords, the *Morning Star* is indispensable to the labour movement. Maintained in existence, with its predecessor the *Daily Worker*, for nearly half a century, its importance cannot be over-estimated.

The Communist Party, as a part of the labour movement, seeks no special privileges within it. What it does seek, however, is the removal of all those discriminatory bans and proscriptions directed mainly against Communists but also affecting others on the left, that only help the right wing by keeping the movement divided.

In particular, Communists want to restore to the trade unions the democratic right (which they had in the past) to elect delegates of their own choice, from those who pay the political levy, to the Labour Party.

860 Developing the Communist Party along the lines indicated is crucial for the building of the broad democratic alliance, for changing the outlook of working people and for transforming the labour movement. This perspective requires a much larger and more broadly-based party, with a significant electoral base.

The Communist Party does not seek to replace the Labour Party as a federal party of the working class. Rather, we see a much more influential mass Communist Party as crucial to the future of the Labour Party itself.

870 As right wing ideas and leadership in the Labour Party are progressively defeated and replaced by people and policies committed to struggle against the monopolies; as the Communist Party itself grows in strength and influence; and as bans and proscriptions are removed, so new opportunities will open up for still more developed forms of Labour-Communist unity.

Social forces and movements

The broad democratic alliance not only needs to be an association of class forces (the working class, parts of the capitalist class, the intermediate strata), but of other important forces in society.

Capitalism not only exploits people at work, but impinges on every aspect of their lives. Thus they react to it in their communities, in their leisure activities, as men and women, black or white, young or old, Scottish, Welsh, Irish or English.

880 So movements and groupings develop which may not belong to a major class (for example, students) or embrace people from different classes and strata (for example, national, women's, peace, black and youth movements).

One of the most significant developments of recent years has been the movement for women's liberation. It has focused attention on the sexual division of labour, particularly on how women's role within the family, economic dependence and total responsibility for child care limit educational opportunity, career prospects and participation in social and political life on equal terms with men. All this has highlighted the debate and activity on economic and social issues like equal pay and child care, and shown the importance and possibilities of organising on related questions like abortion and battered wives.

890 The struggle for women's liberation is a central political problem for the working class. Unless the specific problems of women are taken up, not only by women and the women's movement, but also by men and the labour movement, the possibilities of developing working class unity and the broad democratic alliance will be greatly diminished.

The black movement raises important and parallel issues. Black people are oppressed not only as, in their majority, members of the working class, but because of their colour. The struggle by the black movement and other ethnic minorities against all forms of racial discrimination is a vital democratic question. But it is not only a problem for the ethnic minorities. At the heart of the problem is the unity of all workers, black and white alike.

900 The labour movement has a decisive part to play in winning the working class to reject racialist ideas and practices, and in defending black people from discrimination. It is therefore essential for it, alongside other democratic movements, to develop action and propaganda against racialism. Unless the efforts already made are greatly extended divisions within the working class and democratic movement will play into the hands of the most reactionary forces in society.

910 The deepening of the crisis has accentuated the national problems of Scotland and Wales. Economic difficulties have been worsened by the decline of the key industries in these two countries. They have suffered from discrimination in housing, education, leisure and national and cultural rights. In response to this, national movements have developed, but the crucial question is the winning of the labour movement to champion national rights. This is what the Communist Party has consistently fought for, as part of the general social, political and democratic struggle against capitalism. Labour movement leadership in the fight for national rights is essential to the winning of the demands of the Scottish and Welsh people. Without it, right-wing elements in the nationalist movements could succeed in diverting the working class from tackling the big economic and social questions which arise from the class nature of our society and require the unity of the working people of Scotland, Wales and England for their solution.

920 Within the communities and localities, a mass of problems exist—on housing, urban decay, transport, the environment, health, leisure and cultural facilities. Associated with them is the lack of democracy in local affairs and the increasing trend toward central government dictation over local councils.

In response to these problems many movements and organisations have developed: tenants' and residents' associations, environmental groups, community newspapers, theatre and other cultural groups, transport campaign groups, and broad committees against social service cuts. These movements need to be greatly extended, their struggles linked together, and close links formed with the organised working class movement.

930 New areas of democratic struggle have been opened up by the growth and activity of the developing sectors within the working class, such as teachers, civil servants, scientists, technicians, journalists, local government and social workers. They are concerned with their economic situation, but many are also concerned with the social purpose of their work, with democracy in their institutions, and their relationship to the rest of the labour movement. Thus discussion and activity has been developed on such important issues as the content of education, teaching methods, private education, the viability of the health service, private beds, the use of science, and the role of social work.

940 Though the progressive political organisations of young people are small, and insufficient attention is paid to youth problems and organisation by the trade unions, young people have played a part in the struggles of recent years, reflected in the establishment of the TUC Youth Conference and the National Union of School Students. It is essential to end the labour movement's historic neglect of young people, by campaigning on their demands and providing organisational structures and social facilities for them. In this way, it can also influence the wider youth movement and bring great numbers of young people into the broad democratic alliance.

950 The student movement, and especially the National Union of Students, has made an increasing contribution to the democratic struggle, in response to the ways in which the educational system is shaped and distorted by the needs of the ruling class and monopoly capital. It has developed activity on such questions as educational expenditure, graduate and teacher employment, democracy in educational institutions, the content of education, and authoritarian teaching methods. It has also participated in and associated with many of the struggles of the labour and democratic movement, and in movements of international solidarity.

960 Many religious people are deeply concerned about the conflict between their religious ideals and the oppression and exploitation of capitalist society. They accept their social responsibility in this world, and are prepared to fulfil it. So, also, many humanists see the need for social change. Such individuals, and the organisations of which they are members, can play an important part in democratic and social struggles.

Those active in these fields share with the British people as a whole the desire to maintain world peace—a desire which extends far beyond the ranks of those active in the peace organisations which exist, and which also needs to be expressed in the broad democratic alliance.

These are some expressions of the democratic struggle against oppression and discrimination, which takes so many diverse forms.

Alliance, not isolation

970 It is clear, however, that if these movements proceed in isolation from each other, they can do no more than challenge the position of the ruling class on a series of different issues, and not its overall domination. If they are isolated from the labour movement, not only will they themselves suffer from the lack of its support, but the working class will be unable to fulfil its role of the leading force in society.

The labour movement needs alliances with these other democratic movements because, in supporting their aims and aspirations, it becomes increasingly aware that class oppression, and the struggle against it, extend far beyond the workplace. Such alliances can lead to a greater awareness of the forces that oppress all
980 workers, and also strengthen working class unity. It is therefore through such support and association that the labour movement becomes more conscious of its own national role as the leading force in society, and better able to fulfil that role, both now and under socialism.

Further, because many among such sections as teachers, journalists, civil servants and doctors have historically played, and still play, a big role in helping the ruling class to secure voluntary acceptance of its position, changes in their position are of major significance. The association of the whole labour movement with the progressive demands and struggles of these sections, therefore, can help to
990 undermine the political and ideological domination exercised in society by the ruling class, and strengthen the position and credibility of the working class as the alternative national force.

Finally, if the working class does not win over to its side other strata which are also victims of monopoly, there is the danger that reaction will be able to organise them and use them against the working class.

The work of the left is vital in building the democratic alliance. Left unity needs to be promoted both in the practical development of activity and in the battle of ideas. There are those who will be united by an understanding of the need for fundamental change, and those who will become involved only on specific issues. Communists and the labour left have a special role to play in developing broad left
1000 unity and in helping to build the alliances, of which only the most politically conscious sections of the new forces will see the need, between different sections of the working class and different social and political movements.

The Communist Party, as the organised Marxist political party, has a particular responsibility. Throughout its history it has been active on many of the questions around which the movements detailed above have been campaigning—women's rights, the fight against racialism, peace, Scottish and Welsh parliaments, education, housing, and the other social issues. Just as it works to overcome sectional divisions within the working class movement and unite it for the struggle against capitalism, so it can help the labour movement and the other social forces to see
1010 the need for alliances between them, to the mutual benefit of all.

Winning a new popular majority

We have described in this section the forces and movements which, brought together in a broad democratic alliance, with a labour movement won for left policies, as its core, can transform Britain.

The strategy we have outlined will, in the first place, help Labour to win the political majority inherent in Britain's social structure, with its huge working class—something that Labour's old strategy has signally failed to do.

As far back as 1935, Labour had already won 38 per cent of the vote in a
1020 General Election. In 1945 it got 48 per cent, and in 1951 registered its high-water-mark of 49 per cent. But in 1974, after 40 years of political experience, it was back to 39 per cent, or roughly the 1935 level—a striking indication of the failure of the old strategy. Achieving a decisive advance in the Labour vote is bound up with the need for a new strategy.

The traditional right-wing approach of adopting capitalist policies to win the so-called middle ground in politics, has been consistently tried, and has consistently failed to win the majority of the electorate to Labour's side.

Reformist policies always play into the hands of the Tories and help them to

1030 make a come-back. Right wing Labour's forms of nationalisation, and right wing opposition to further nationalisation, present the Tories with effective anti-nationalisation propaganda. Right wing Labour's immigration policies help and encourage the most racist elements inside and outside the Tory Party. Labour incomes policies pave the way for the Tories to return to operate their forms of wage restraint.

The first major change needed, therefore, is the adoption of a policy which really does challenge capitalist power, help build the broad democratic alliance, and open the way to socialist change.

1040 The second major change needed is the initiation, leadership and encouragement of mass struggle. The reformist strategy is based entirely on the ballot box. The mass of the people are accorded a strictly limited voting role, and MPs are regarded as little more than lobby fodder. Only the top parliamentary leadership have an active role to play; the masses have a purely supporting role.

This is wrong, and would be wrong even if the parliamentary leadership had a better policy. Mass struggle outside parliament has a vital role to play now and in the future—as a political educator of millions of people whose socialist ideas will be developed in such struggle; as the essential means for ensuring that an elected Labour parliamentary majority does the job it was elected to do; and as the essential weapon for breaking the resistance of the monopolists and their political representatives. Indeed, the major changes won throughout the history of the labour movement have mainly come as a result of the struggle outside Parliament.

1050 A labour movement with policies which challenged the monopolies and which led masses of people in struggle against them, could break out of the present vicious circle of British parliamentary policies, rallying wider sections around itself, detaching from the Tory, Nationalist and Liberal parties many of their present supporters, defeating the poison of racialism and winning the support of both black and white working people, and building a new, popular anti-monopoly majority.

1060 It will not be easy. Decades of the old two-party system, with both party leaderships equally devoted to managing capitalism, even if in slightly different ways, have deeply confused masses of the people. Illusions about the present system are deep-rooted. But the old historic strategy of three-quarters of a century of reformism has clearly failed; however difficult the struggle, this alternative that we propose is the only way forward.

3 Towards socialist revolution

The essential feature of a socialist revolution is the winning of political power by the working class and its allies. This will only be achieved when the great majority of the British people are convinced of its necessity and prepared to use their strength and organisation to bring it about.

1070 At each stage of the struggle, therefore, the aim of the left must be to win the working class and other democratic forces—in other words, the majority of the people—to defend the gains already won, and to take the next steps in extending democracy, improving living standards, and opening the way to socialism.

Success depends on the left becoming the dominant force in the labour and democratic movement, and on the building of a larger Communist Party as part of that left. The working class and its allies must have the aim of winning the leadership of the nation, and thereby deciding its future destiny.

1080 The broad alliance, developed and strengthened in mass struggles in the places of work and the localities, has to be reflected in Parliament, which must be the political expression of those struggles. Parliament has to be won by the people, made into the mirror of the country, with the activity of the working class parties in Parliament being intimately linked to the mass struggle outside it, each interacting on the other. In this way, the growth of the broad alliance will result in a parliamentary majority enabling the formation of Left, and eventually Socialist, governments.

This strategy is based on our actual political and social conditions, historical traditions, degree of working class organisation, and the new world setting. Every socialist revolution is unique in major respects. There is no single universal pattern or model that can be followed. Export of revolution is a myth. Decisive social change can only arise out of the particular circumstances in each country.

1090 Britain's road to socialism will be different from the Soviet road. The Soviet path of insurrection and civil war, the creation of new organs of power (the Soviets), and the subsequent development of a one-party system, was governed by the historic conditions and background of Tzarist autocratic rule, imperialist intervention, and the development of the counter-revolution. Similarly, the methods by which socialism has been established in other countries have been determined by their specific circumstances and by the world situation at the time.

1100 The different conditions and history of Britain, and the changed balance of world forces, give us the confidence that socialism can be achieved in our country without civil war. The working class is the majority of the population. The potential power of the labour movement is enormous. Together with its allies, it can isolate the monopolists and confront them with overwhelming strength. The democratic forces have had long experience of struggle, and have won civil liberties and democratic rights, which, though under constant attack, give the basis for carrying forward the political struggle. Parliament, itself the product of past battles for democracy, can be transformed into the democratic instrument of the will of the vast majority of the people. The possibility of outside intervention against a socialist government in Britain has been diminished by the weakening of the position of imperialism and the successes of the socialist world, the liberation movements, and the working class movement in a number of capitalist countries.

1110 Thus the possibility exists of advance to socialism without armed struggle. Democracy can be carried to its utmost limits, breaking all bourgeois restrictions to it, through the democratic transformation of society, including the State, in all the stages of struggle.

The revolutionary process

The winning of political power by the working class and its allies will not be a single act, but a process of struggle. The length of this process will be determined

by the outcome of the struggle at various stages.

1120 This arises out of our actual conditions and the nature of our political system. Capitalist rule, as has been shown, is exercised not only by coercion, but through the ideological and political grip of the capitalist class on every area of life, political, economic and cultural. This grip must be broken, and the majority of the people won for socialist policies if the working class is to win power. This struggle has to take place in every area of society, and on every issue—on wages, an alternative economic and social strategy, foreign affairs, democratic liberties, on the position of women, education, and all social issues. It is a complex, difficult and many-sided process which will, as all previous experience shows, take time.

1130 It is impossible to proceed overnight from Labour Governments which in effect manage capitalism, to a government which introduces socialism. The political conditions for this do not yet exist; they have to be won. Left governments are part of the process which must show the need for much more fundamental change, while at the same time creating more favourable conditions for such change.

Britain—the next stage

A strategy for socialist revolution has to be able to show the way forward, to spell out, not only the ultimate objective, but also the stages in that process.

1140 The next stage is to expand and unify all aspects of the working class and democratic struggle, and to raise its aims to the winning of a Labour Government carrying out a left policy. Bound up with this is the nature of the alternative programme to that of the monopolists and the ruling class. The essentially defensive stage of resistance to all ruling class attempts to put the burden of the crisis on the people must be developed into the battle for the complete alternative policy and for the new type of Labour Government which will carry it out, supported and pressed forward by the power of the mass movement.

This political challenge will be resisted by the big capitalists with all the means at their disposal.

1150 Even before such a new Labour Government of the left emerged, there would be the utmost resistance from the ruling class to prevent its establishment, ranging from the most virulent campaign of hostility, demonstrations, and opposition of the media, to threats and sabotage by big business, investment strikes, attempted removal of assets by the multinational firms, contrived runs on sterling and the like, to create an atmosphere of social chaos, in which the use of force could also be resorted to. All forms of international pressure, particularly from the U.S. would be exerted.

Only the most sustained resistance, mobilising the organised working class and democratic forces, would be able to defeat this. The Communist Party would have a special responsibility for developing and leading the mass struggle in this situation, and in campaigning on the big political issues involved in the factories, localities, universities, and working class organisations. Election campaigns in such a period would be bitterly fought.

1160 The programme of the labour movement and the left forces must therefore be one which will rally the widest support from those who want to combat the crisis and its effects, even if at this stage they still do not see the need to change the system itself. It must be seen as relevant and realistic, but must also make big inroads into monopoly power, which is a condition of successfully tackling the crisis, of breaking the sabotage and wrecking efforts of reaction and big business, and of extending democracy.

It must safeguard the national interests of the British people, now under attack as a result of right wing policies which surrender the control of their destinies to the Common Market, the international bankers, and the multinational firms. The survival of Britain as a manufacturing nation, and its capacity to decide its own destiny, are at stake.

1170 The left has the task of putting Britain on a new course, so that a far-reaching change in the fabric of society is initiated, the crisis is tackled at the expense of the big capitalists and not the working people, democratic rights are not only defended but very greatly extended, and the quality of life and personal freedoms are enormously enhanced.

Such a programme, therefore, must be democratic and bring social change—in

the economy, in the state, in education, in culture and elsewhere. Its essentials can be summarised as follows:*

Economic Policy:

- 1180 (a) For a government to exercise effective control over the operation of the economy, the key firms among the top firms which dominate the economy must be nationalised, while at the same time drastic controls must be instituted over the investment, production and employment policies of those remaining in private hands (which at this stage would still constitute the great majority). The decision on the specific firms to be nationalised should be agreed by the movement after the widest consultation. The big banks and the major insurance companies must be nationalised if effective control of the economy is to be exercised. Along with the existing nationalised industries, to which oil should be added, a powerful weapon would be at the disposal of the government. All energy resources should be publicly controlled and managed as part of an integrated overall plan. Further large-scale nuclear development should only take place if and when the vital issue of safety and our responsibility for the future of mankind are satisfactorily resolved. There should be an integrated transport system, with the emphasis on providing better and cheaper public transport. This increased public control of the economy must be combined with much greater democratic participation by the workers in decision-making at a plant, firm, industry and economy level.
- 1190 (b) A key question would be the balance of payments, which has to be tackled in a new way. The steps outlined above can lead to a transformation of the structure and efficiency of British industry based on increased and carefully directed investment in the main industries, using the great resources of the big financial institutions and the enthusiasm and creativity of the working people. These steps have to be combined, however, with a ban on the export of capital and ending military expenditure overseas. The repeated and fatal efforts to "solve" Britain's immediate balance of payments problem by resorting to the international financiers and borrowing, which places major restraints on British sovereignty and freedom of decision, have to be ended. Major overseas share-holdings of British firms and institutions should be sold off, and the role of sterling as a reserve currency ended. Selective import controls would have to be imposed. Withdrawal from the Common Market and an end to its economic and political restrictions would enable Britain to determine its economic strategy and develop its trade on a world scale. These measures would enable some of the key economic problems to be tackled and secure an important degree of planned development of the British economy, as well as a change in its direction.
- 1200 (c) There has to be a change of social priorities so that there is a big extension of social service spending on pensions, benefits, housing and education. Military expenditure should be halved; a wealth tax introduced; corporation taxation increased, and interest rates reduced. Price controls should be enforced and VAT on essential goods abolished. The role of the co-operative movement in distribution and production should be extended. Increased rates of growth resulting from these combined measures, and the consequent slashing of unemployment, would provide big additional resources for social spending. There should be full restoration of collective bargaining and increased wages.
- 1210 All these policies would require the closest co-operation between the government and the unions. A government carrying out such a progressive programme could be assured that the unions would take this into consideration in forming their wage demands.
- 1220 These measures would enable the essential causes of the crisis to be tackled, while shifting the balance of class forces in favour of the working class.
- 1230 The fierce resistance to this policy which would come from the monopolists and

* Detailed plans on various industries and social questions cannot be included in a programme of this kind. They can also vary from time to time in the light of new developments. The Communist Party produces both short and long term proposals of a more detailed character on many such issues, to supplement the general policy outlined in this programme.

bankers at home and abroad would have to be met by mobilising wide popular support for it on the basis of full democratic discussion at every level in society. The right of the democratically elected government to carry out its programme would be firmly maintained. Concentrating the measures of nationalisation on the main monopoly groups would create possibilities for dividing the capitalist class and preventing united capitalist counter-action.

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The private sector of the economy would be subject to the general economic controls necessary to ensure the carrying out of the government's programme. There would also be practical measures in the form, for example, of cheap credits, the abolition of VAT, rent controls, etc., to help small businesses and shops and small farmers.

Extending Democracy

A central problem facing the left is how to democratise power and extend democracy. MPs must win greater control over the executive; there should be provision for their recall; voting should be on the basis of proportional representation; the House of Lords should be abolished; the structure of the civil service should be made more democratic and its top personnel radically changed. Drastic changes should be made in the Official Secrets Act to stop it being used as a means of suppressing essential information.

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Democratic changes in the armed forces are vital. Britain under a left government would need efficient and adequately-equipped armed forces to defend it against external enemies. But it is essential that the domination of their upper echelons by representatives of the capitalist class should be ended, and that their members should be granted full trade union and democratic rights. This should also apply to the police forces, and the use of both for strike breaking or other actions against the people's democratic rights should be prohibited.

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The left government should also take the most vigorous measures to combat racialism by the repeal of all racialist legislation such as the 1971 Immigration Act; the outlawing of all racialist propaganda, with legal penalties for acts of racialism and discrimination; a programme of expanding social services, housing, education, to assist minority groups to overcome the present conditions of deprivation in which so many live. Local democratic organisations must be encouraged, assisted by government finance, actively to campaign against all forms of racialism.

The parliaments for the people of Scotland and Wales should have adequate rights and powers to enable them to meet the national aspirations of the people, increase their democratic control and develop their economies. The people of England should have similar rights in relation to their affairs.

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The trade unions, fully independent and free from government interference or control, would have an important part to play in supporting the government's general policies against attacks from the right. A big development of industrial democracy would be vital to the carrying out of these policies and in overcoming monopoly resistance.

Workers elected directly, and those appointed by the TUC and public bodies, should comprise a majority of the management boards of the nationalised concerns, and their responsibility should be extended, on the principle of mutuality, to decision-making on all important matters. This would be a means of exerting pressure on the state. There would be a similar participation and control at all levels. This would make a significant contribution to the extension of workers' control and industrial democracy within the nationalised industries and firms, as well as contributing to the democratic process in planning the economy.

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In the remaining private sector we are against workers' participation in management, which would be disguised class collaboration. The necessary extension of industrial democracy in the private sector, which would be vital for any effective government control, would be achieved by struggle by the unions. They would seek to expand the area subject to collective bargaining and mutual agreement to include all important decision-making, e.g. forward manpower planning, investment, the location of development projects. Mandatory provision of all relevant information to the unions, or "opening the books", is a pre-condition for an effective extension of collective bargaining of this nature.

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The participation in control exercised by those who work in educational institutions, hospitals and local government, as well as by the public, should also

be greatly increased, and this will help to improve their efficiency and the service they give to the community.

1300 The practical foundation for women's liberation must be laid by the full implementation of equal pay and equal opportunities; the provision of adequate nurseries and child-care facilities; the extension of public services such as laundries and cheap restaurants; and better health facilities, including out-patient abortion services and more resources for the provision of, and further research into, contraception.

1310 The monopoly control of the newspapers and the media should be ended. No one should own more than one daily or Sunday paper, the monopoly groups should be broken up, the newsprint and ink firms nationalised, and government-owned printing facilities acquired from the monopolists should be placed at the disposal of democratic bodies at reasonable rates. The BBC and IBA should be democratically controlled. All democratic parties should have the right to own and operate their own newspaper and presses, and their representatives should be accorded full access to the media.

A new foreign policy

1320 Britain should pursue an independent foreign policy, co-operating with the socialist countries, the national liberation movements and the third world, and the progressive forces in the capitalist world for peace and progress. It should be in the forefront of the campaign for detente and the fulfilment of the Helsinki Agreements. It should withdraw from NATO, and work for an agreed dissolution of both NATO and the Warsaw Pact and their replacement by an all-inclusive European Security system. Independence should be granted to all remaining British colonies, all British troops abroad should be withdrawn, and all foreign military bases liquidated. Britain should unilaterally renounce nuclear arms and support a treaty to outlaw the manufacture and possession of nuclear weapons by all nations, with a similar prohibition of germ and chemical warfare, and work for general and complete disarmament.

It should withdraw from the Common Market and aim to develop all-European co-operation in trade, communications, transport, culture, and the protection of the environment.

1330 Full support should be given to the national liberation struggle in Southern Africa, and to the achieving of a lasting peace in the Middle East on the basis of United Nations resolutions. Aid to the third world countries should be an important part of its policy.

1340 It should ensure a democratic solution in Northern Ireland, based on the implementation of a Bill of Rights, the ending of all repressive measures, and financial aid and other measures to begin to tackle the appalling problems of poverty and unemployment. These steps should lead to the speedy and complete withdrawal of British troops and the creation of conditions in which sectarian strife could be ended, and the Irish people could exercise their right to self-determination, and work for the reunification of their country. Only in this way will the causes of violence in Northern Ireland be overcome, and the basis laid for a new relationship of co-operation between the peoples of Ireland and Britain.

A new kind of Labour Government

These are some of the points we put forward as part of the immediate alternative programme the situation requires. Its detailed working out, and application by a left government would take into account the balance of forces at home and in the world and the economic situation.

This programme should be pressed on whatever Labour Government is in office. But big changes in the composition of the government would be essential to its full implementation.

1350 They could only come about as a result of the further decisive changes to the left in the movement which have to be won, in the Labour Party, its National Executive Committee and Parliamentary Labour Party, and in the relationship of the Communist Party and the Labour Party. It is in the course of this struggle that the left leaders would emerge who would comprise a left government elected on

the basis of such a programme and determined to carry it out. As the programme is carried out, new demands and still further changes in government would become possible.

1360 But to guarantee this change needs a stronger Communist Party, helping to unite the labour movement and the democratic movements, and Communists in Parliament. The left fight in the House of Commons would be greatly strengthened by Communist representatives there. Both British experience and the important left developments in Western Europe show that a breakthrough to Communist parliamentary representation is vital for the success of left policies. The leadership and record of service to the working class movement of the Communist Party in struggles outside Parliament needs to be reflected inside.

1370 How can such a Left Labour Government be achieved? Even now it is possible for the pressure of the mass movement to influence the policies of the Government, as has happened before. But we are not speaking of a reluctant right wing Labour Government compelled by the struggle of the mass movement to implement one or other left measures. A left government would be one which not only responded to pressure, but which would be responsible to, shaped by, and a product of the popular democratic alliance.

1380 The fundamental characteristic of such a government would be its attitude to the class struggle and the respective classes. Unlike all previous Labour Governments, it would begin to solve the economic problems and crisis in all areas of society in a way that would enhance the position of the working class and its allies, and weaken the position of capitalism and the ruling class. It would carry out a series of measures which, on all fronts, would shift the balance of class forces against the big capitalists and their closest allies in favour of the working class and its allies. It would not be a socialist government carrying out a socialist revolution, but one which, in the closest relationship with the movement outside Parliament, would begin to carry out a major democratic transformation of British society.

1390 The period of such a new kind of Labour Government can produce a further left shift in the labour movement, widen and politically enrich the broad alliance, and strengthen the left parties. In particular, while the left shift in the Labour Party is consolidated and extended, the influence of the Communist Party, because of its nature and its unique role, would be greatly increased, particularly to the extent that it helped develop and give leadership to the mass movement, and won parliamentary representation. Subsequent left governments, therefore, would almost certainly be of a different composition—with the Labour Party shifting further to the left, the Communist Party acquiring a more significant presence, other progressive forces perhaps being added, and new forms of Labour-Communist unity being forged. As a consequence, the programme of subsequent left governments would be more far-reaching, and their composition would reflect these changes.

The relationship between government and broad alliance

1400 The success, and indeed the survival of such left governments would depend on closeness of the relationship with the mass movement, their willingness to respond to the latter's demands and initiatives, their capacity to mobilise that movement, and their ability to move at a pace which would strengthen the broad alliance.

Co-operation with, and support from, the trade unions, the co-operative movement, the political parties of the labour movement, and the other existing democratic organisations would be vital. Especially important would be the campaigning at local level through the trades councils and other democratic organisations and movements. New forms of popular organisation and new forms of struggle, giving united expression to the demands of the people, will also undoubtedly develop, and should be encouraged.

1410 The governments' actions would play a key role in strengthening the position of the working class movement, widening its alliances and deepening the political understanding of the broad alliance.

This would come about, firstly, by their ability to tackle successfully the country's problems, enhance living standards, and generate a more democratic society. It would strengthen the appeal of the left forces.

Secondly, the measures introduced by left governments, by shifting the balance

of class forces, would greatly strengthen the position of the working class and its allies. For example, nationalisation and greater democratic control over the big firms and the economy as a whole would weaken the economic power of the big capitalists, and the measures taken to democratise the media would also help to undermine their ideological power and influence. Similarly, democratisation of the state structure would serve increasingly to break the grip of the ruling class over the various parts of the state apparatus.

Thirdly, resistance from the right, from the big capitalists and elsewhere, would demonstrate, on the one hand the vital importance of extra-parliamentary action and mass pressure, and on the other hand, the need for a left government to go further, for example, to nationalise more big firms, exercise special control over currency movements, reform the civil service and the armed forces, etc.

The revolutionary transition

What is the relationship between the democratic process and the revolutionary change to socialism?

1430 The democratic process can produce a profound change in the balance of class forces, in the country, in the economy, and in the state apparatus. For social revolution and the transition to socialism, however, state power is critical. What is needed is the winning of state power from the old ruling class by the working class and its allies, and the democratisation of the state apparatus.

1440 On no subject in Britain is there such political hypocrisy as on that of the state. The modern state is the product of monopoly capitalism. The major civil service and army reforms of the past period were carried through to shape a state machine which would serve the ends of capitalism. The social composition, training and indoctrination of the higher echelons of the state apparatus were governed by this aim. Governments come and go, but the social nature of the existing top state personnel is permanent. On retirement they almost invariably join the boards of big business, and the reverse process also takes place.

No Labour Government so far has made basic changes in the social composition and functioning of this apparatus. Since these governments were carrying out policies which were in the general interests of the ruling class, the existing class composition of the higher state echelons was eminently suited to execute these policies.

1450 But left governments can and must change the composition and structure of the state machine by democratising it. Even before any such government is elected, this demand should be pressed for. There should be no illusions—this will be the most bitterly contested aspect of the programme of the left government, not least from within the state machine itself.

1460 A left majority in the House of Commons and the establishment of a left government would mark a major change. It would mean that the House of Commons and the Government—that is, the legislature and the executive—were won by democratic struggle from the control of the capitalist class, the minority, so that they served the interests of the working class and its allies, the majority of the population. At this stage, the armed forces, the police, the civil service, the judiciary, etc.—that is, the state apparatus—would still remain in the hands of the class representatives of capitalism. But the nature of the British constitution, under which Parliament has supreme authority, gives a left government the democratic right and the means, backed by the mass struggle of the people, to carry through drastic and necessary reforms in the state apparatus to correspond to the political change in the country expressed in the electoral verdict of the people.

1470 This will involve carrying further the steps already outlined earlier in this section, including changes in top personnel, and in methods of recruitment and training, and in the way the various departments function, as well as the abolition of some departments and the addition of new ones. Alongside such democratic change within state institutions, steps to ensure more control of them by the elected organisations of the people should be introduced.

It is in this context that the fight back of the bourgeois and reactionary forces must be considered. This could take a legal form—the attempt to oust a left government in a general election. It could also involve attempts to change the law to make the election of a left government more difficult or impose limitations on

its powers. Finally, it could take the form of sabotage or an armed coup, whether before or after an election.

Although millions of working people still vote for it, the Tory Party is the party of the big capitalists, who will resist progress by all means, up to and including force, if they can.

1480 We hold the view that all democratic parties, including those opposed to socialism, should be guaranteed political rights and the right legally to contend for power in elections. That is, the struggle should proceed in conditions of political pluralism. The declared position of the labour movement, including the Communist Party, is that it will respect the verdict of the electors, and that a left government will stand down if it is defeated in an election. We believe that correct policies by such a government, winning the support of the great majority of the working class and other sections, taking them into its confidence and greatly extending democracy, can reduce the chance of a Tory comeback to a minimum.

1490 The position of the Tory Party will be weakened by the measures taken against its principal backers, the big monopolists; by the steps taken to limit big business domination of the press, and to open up the mass media to the working people, and by the measures taken by the government to tackle the crisis in the interests of the people.

Moreover, since the Tory Party is not solely supported by big capitalists, but by large sections of the working class and the middle strata, it is likely that, as the country moves left, it will be increasingly racked by internal divisions on the question of how to avoid losing its mass basis.

1500 But the possibility of the Tories, or a coalition of capitalist parties, defeating the left government in an election, cannot be excluded. In that event, there can be no question of a coup by the left to reverse the electoral verdict, though it should certainly resist, by all democratic means, any efforts by the Tory Government to reverse the political and economic gains won by the working people.

The real danger of a coup comes from the right. This was shown in Chile, and has been further demonstrated by the reaction of the United States and other Western governments to the democratic struggles and advances of the left in Italy and France, and their financial and political support of the right wing forces.

In the event of such a right wing coup being launched, the left government should have no hesitation in using force to defeat it.

1510 While the government would rely on its mass support among the people, the composition and orientation of the armed forces would be critical. Hence the need, already stated, for democratic reforms in the armed forces, changes in their structure and personnel, and a political battle to win support from within their ranks for the policy of the left government and for the democratic process, and later, in support of socialist construction. This would be closely related to the breadth of support for the broad alliance, which would directly and indirectly affect the position within the armed forces.

1520 The possibility of a coup, in fact, depends above all on the relation of political forces. Hence the importance of winning the mass political majority, with the working class as its core, ready and willing to use its strength to support the left government. This also emphasises the need to win all democratic forces around the labour movement, so isolating the Tory Party. The more support there is for the left government, the less will be the possibility of creating the political atmosphere of tension and social chaos in which a coup could be launched.

This, then is the process of transition to socialism in Britain as we see it. It can only come about when the majority of the people are convinced that it is necessary and that they want it, and are prepared to overcome all the powerful forces which want to maintain capitalism.

1530 They can come to see the necessity, and achieve the clarity, strength of purpose, unity, organisation and confidence required to make it a reality, in the big struggles to extend democracy, weaken monopoly power, and support a left government in the carrying out of its policy.

It will be a process in which the strong points of capitalist power—economic, political and ideological—are successively taken over by the working people. The later stages of the democratic process would, in effect, be the period of revolutionary transition to socialism.

They would involve carrying the democratic process to its conclusion—the

complete ending of the grip of the monopoly capitalists on society, and the transfer of political and economic power, of the state apparatus, into the hands of the overwhelming majority of the population, the working class and its allies.

Communists want not only a society in which there are more material goods and better social services, but one in which the great and varied capacities of men and women can be fully developed. Changing the economic system is not an end in itself. It is a means of creating conditions in which human beings will be able to realise their full potentialities, in which they will be able to work together for the common good instead of being divided by class, sex or race.

1550 Capitalism crushes human individuality, subordinates men and women to the needs of the profit system, sets them against each other. Socialism aims to develop their individuality, in all its infinite variety, by creating a society in which exploitation and poverty are ended, and the resources of science and technology used to reduce the time spent in monotonous and mechanical jobs to a minimum, and vastly increase the amount devoted to leisure and creative work.

Our concept of socialism is not a society in which the state and the government, as institutions separate from the people, either regiment them or do everything for them. It is the people themselves who have to build socialism, become involved in government, and be responsible for the development of society.

1560 In the process new attitudes to society, to work and to culture will develop. New relations, based on co-operation instead of domination and exploitation, will come into being between the sexes, between generations, between races and between nations.

Bringing about this change in society and in the outlook of men and women will not be easy. It is not only that there will be capitalist opposition, but that there will be for a long period the heritage of capitalist ideas in people's minds.

But this only reinforces the need for the fullest development of democracy, since it is only on that basis that such ideas can be effectively contested and defeated, and the outlook of people changed, so that they take a more and more active and conscious part in the building of the new society.

The economics of socialism

1570 Because under socialism all the main industries and means of production are publicly owned, the wealth produced by the labour of the workers in them would be available for the use of the people as a whole, including that which is now appropriated as their private profit by a handful of capitalists. Part of it would be used to increase the standard of living of the people directly, in the form of wages, pension, allowances and grants, or lower prices, or both. Part of it would be used for the social services, such as health, education and housing, and for culture and leisure amenities. The third part would be used for reinvestment in industry and agriculture, so as to expand production. Finally, part would be used to provide funds and staff for the administration of the socialist state and for its defence forces.

1580 The socialist government would have two main aims:

- (1) To complete the socialist nationalisation of all monopolies and other large concerns in productive industry, finance and distribution; of urban land, except that of owner-occupiers; and of large agricultural estates. Only limited compensation would be paid in the form of reasonable life annuities to individuals, provided by the state. It would be a phased nationalisation and would not include the small concerns.
- (2) To initiate socialist planning over the economy as a whole, to raise the people's living standards and continuously expand production. This would be done in consultation with and in response to popular organisations in all the relevant fields.

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Socialism in Britain would be built on an economic and industrial base that is more developed than in most countries. It is, however, as has been shown, an

economy that has been distorted by the pressure of capitalism. Socialist planning presents the possibility of correcting that distortion.

Socialist nationalisation and planning would eliminate the wastage of the present chaotic society. It would also redirect national wealth to regenerating industry and to providing the vital social and welfare advances the country needs, augmented by taxes on those with higher incomes.

1600 Socialism possesses an enormous advantage over capitalism which, despite its achievements, places severe restrictions on possible economic development because of its contradictions.

Because of its planned nature and production for use, socialism eliminates the cycle of booms and slumps. Technology itself is publicly owned, rationally planned and applied across the board. As a result higher growth rates would be possible than under capitalism.

1610 Under socialism financial policy would be a means of ensuring proper use of the country's resources, labour, plant, materials and the land. A socialist government budget would be of a radically different pattern from those of capitalist governments. Its main source of revenue would be the publicly owned enterprises. Personal taxation would take a simple form, and the aim would be to keep indirect taxation down. Budget expenditure would include funds for expanded production and all social services. Drastic cuts in military expenditure would release resources for constructive use.

Foreign trade and monetary movements would be planned. With overseas investment abolished, foreign borrowing curtailed, the role of the City eliminated, the speculative commodity markets closed down and trade expanded, a rational handling of the balance of payments would become possible.

1620 The success of socialist planning will depend upon a detailed and intimate knowledge of the enterprises concerned and the commitment of the workers involved. A socialist government and its planning authority, in conjunction with the relevant trade unions and public bodies, would produce draft plans for discussion by the House of Commons and the nation as a whole. Before finalisation by Parliament the plans would be submitted to the unions, co-operatives, consumer bodies and councils at regional, local and factory level.

Both existing and new nationalised industries would be conducted on democratic lines of planning and consultation. The Boards would have a majority of workers elected from the industry and appointed by the trade unions.

1630 Trade unions would be independent of the state, and the development of industrial democracy would have a vital role in creating the economic base for socialism, and in strengthening political support for the socialist government. Management would be really democratic, with workers' participation at all levels, in planning industry as a whole and in every enterprise and department. The workers would have a dominant say in determining environment and conditions of work. Unions would be responsible for protecting the conditions of the workers and negotiating wages and other benefits. They, with the Government, would need to guard against over-centralisation and the subordination of the interests of one section of the workers to those of another section. Excessive pressure of production targets, abuses of the work force and unreasonable demands by the management or the central planning authorities would be avoided or corrected by the full development of industrial democracy.

1640 This is one respect in which socialist nationalisation would be radically different from capitalist nationalisation, in which the boards have been mainly staffed by representatives of the capitalist class and have created a bureaucratic and undemocratic structure. Under capitalism it is mainly the unprofitable industries and services which have been nationalised, to provide cheap raw materials and transport for private industry. They were nationalised on terms which crippled their development and have had to meet huge interest burdens both to pay compensation and secure finance for development. All this would change under socialism.

1650 The co-operative movement would be encouraged. Already on the distribution side it is a weapon against the monopolists. This role would be enhanced and the co-operatives encouraged to expand into new production spheres for which they are suited.

Though the main industries and much of the land would be in public ownership,

small businesses, shops and farms would have a place in socialist society. They would be helped to fulfil a useful role, with proper standards for those they employed, and would be free from the grinding pressure of the monopolies.

1660 Planning, central and local, must benefit the consumers. Close attention would therefore be paid to consumer demands, the encouragement of public criticism and advice from consumers' organisations, which would be extended and would represent all sections of the people.

1670 Socialist economic planning would also have the vital task of safeguarding the earth's precious resources, preventing industrial pollution and protecting the environment. There should be democratic accountability of all public bodies involved. A big increase in publicly financed and controlled scientific research and development could be a major factor in improving life. Properly applied, existing scientific and technical knowledge could release people from senseless and repetitive toil and provide a variety of leisure and employment possibilities not yet seen. To help bring this about, a big effort should be made to increase the scientific understanding of the people, so that they could participate in deciding on the proper use of scientific and technological knowledge and capacities.

1680 Agriculture, already one of Britain's biggest industries, will become even more important, both to supply our own growing needs and to make Britain's contribution to the elimination of world hunger. It will require a support programme by the state to achieve a high technical development and the supply of food at reasonable prices. The grip of the monopolies over farming through their control of the manufacture and distribution of fertilisers, insecticides, machinery, etc., would be broken. Farm workers' wages would be brought up to the level of skilled workers in other industries and housing and amenities in the countryside would be improved. Small farming would not be prohibited, but encouraged, and voluntary farmers' co-operatives would be promoted. The largest privately-owned farms would become state property.

As far as incomes generally are concerned, the huge gap which exists at present between those of the very rich and the majority of the people, would be eliminated. Wages and salaries would be negotiated with the trade unions, taking into account the needs of society, and aiming to reduce excessive differentials.

1690 A flourishing socialist economy would be able to meet the social needs of the people and improve the quality of life. It would give priority to providing every family with a separate house or flat at a low rent or purchase price. The health service would be expanded and would be free and available to all. Educational opportunities would be greatly extended, with nursery schools for all children up to school entry age, genuine comprehensive education on the basis of the provision of the necessary buildings and facilities, and expanded higher education to serve the needs of society. The arts, sports, leisure and cultural facilities would all receive the necessary encouragement and increased financial assistance, as the essential condition for a full life. The retirement age would be lowered, and those who had given a lifetime's service to society would have pensions big enough to enable them to live in dignity and security, as well as good housing and welfare services.

1700 Foreign policy

A socialist government would participate to the full in supporting and developing the process of detente and disarmament, and the principles of peaceful coexistence.

Its particular policies at any given time would depend on the circumstances then prevailing and the degree to which the foreign policies of previous left governments had succeeded.

However, it would conduct its foreign policy on these broad principles.

- 1710
- To win a world without war and to renounce war as an instrument of foreign policy. Hence its opposition to antagonistic military blocs, its support for world disarmament and outlawing of all nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. It would be vigilant in detecting and opposing new weapons and methods of warfare, including in outer-space.
 - A world without war and conquest requires the victory of national liberation everywhere; an end to all fascist regimes; full and equal rights and indepen-

dence for all nations, respect for their territorial integrity and non-interference in their internal affairs. Hence all movements for national liberation would be supported; neo-colonialist policies of continued economic exploitation ended; and full support accorded to all measures to overcome poverty and underdevelopment in the third world.

- 1720 — As a European nation Britain would be concerned to develop fully all-European co-operation in all important spheres, security, trade and economics, and social and cultural questions. On a world scale the aim would be to extend trade and co-operation on the widest possible basis, and in particular with the socialist countries.
- Britain would seek to enhance the status and authority of the United Nations, in which all nations large and small should have their rightful place.
- A socialist government would radically cut military expenditure. Its defence policy would consist in retaining adequate armed forces for Britain's defence from any outside aggression and in fulfilling obligations arising from all inclusive alliances for this purpose, such as an all-European security organisation and the country's obligations arising from the United Nations. A socialist government would not, under any circumstances, allow the use of the army for strike-breaking and other anti-democratic actions or against the democratic verdict of the people.
- 1730

Socialist democracy

With political and economic power firmly in their hands, the working people will need to use that power to complete the democratisation of the state apparatus and to effect a thorough-going democratic transformation of the whole of society.

- 1740 This does not mean abolishing existing democratic institutions and organisations, but changing and improving them so that they more effectively serve the needs of society, as well as creating new organisations where necessary.

Parliament would be the sovereign body in the land, exercising its powers as the elected representative of the people without restrictions imposed by the Common Market or by the actions of the big monopolies and financial institutions.

- 1750 There would be full democratic control of the Cabinet by the parliamentary majority. A clear differentiation between the functions of the political parties and the state would be essential. Parliament would be a real national forum as well as a decision-making body, debating statements of policy as well as voting upon Bills drawn up in consultation with all relevant public bodies. It would have Standing Committees to enable members to learn about and influence administrative policies, so that these are constantly brought under popular scrutiny. The House of Commons would be the sole legislative body. There would be no place for the House of Lords or the monarchy in a socialist Britain.

If elected Parliaments with adequate powers in Scotland and Wales had not yet been set up, they would be. The people of England would have similar rights in relation to their affairs. There would be continuous review of the experience of devolution with the aim of extending the effective power of these bodies.

- 1760 The right of self-determination, including separation, would be guaranteed, while stressing the need for voluntary, social, economic and political co-operation of the peoples of England, Scotland and Wales for their mutual advantage. The unity of Great Britain, however, can only be based on this principle of voluntary co-operation between its separate nations.

- 1770 The freedom of all democratic political parties, including those hostile to socialism, to contend for political support would be guaranteed. The ending of capitalist power does not mean the immediate disappearance of classes. This is a long process, and the elimination of class conceptions from people's minds is an even longer one. There can also be, in a socialist society, conflicts of views and interests which could find expression in a parliamentary form. Nationalist parties could well continue to exist until the national problem is completely solved. So there can be an objective basis for the existence of different parties in the period of the construction of socialism. For these reasons we stand for the plurality of parties, and for them having the right to maintain their organisations, produce their publications and stand in elections. They should all be pledged to respect the verdict of the electors when elections take place.

If, however, parties hostile to socialism turned to the use of force, before or after an election, to sabotage the democratic process, the socialist government and the working people would use whatever force was necessary to defend democracy.

1780 The process of transforming the state apparatus from one serving the needs of the capitalists to one serving the needs of the working people would be completed under socialism. A socialist government would encourage the exercise of their full civil and trade union rights by citizens in the police, the army and the civil service. It would rightly demand from those in high positions that they should be loyal to the elected government. Those who proved unwilling to implement government policy, or incapable of doing so, would be retired or found other jobs, while those who tried actively to sabotage the implementation of socialist legislation would be dealt with under the law.

The judiciary would be independent of the executive, and no longer drawn, as at present, from a small privileged sector of the community. Magistrates would come from nominations by the trade unions and other democratic bodies.

1790 Arbitrary acts of officials would be subject to appeal. A free legal aid and advice system would provide the necessary service for those who require it. Corporal punishment would be abolished and the death sentence would not be imposed for any crime.

Civil liberties won through the centuries would be consolidated and extended. These would include: habeas corpus to protect citizens from arbitrary detention; the right to be tried by jury; the right to strike and to demonstrate, associate and organise; freedom to think, work, travel, publish, speak, dissent, act and believe, subject only to those limitations required in any ordered and just society to protect citizens from interference and exploitation by others and to safeguard democracy.

1800 There would be freedom of religious worship and equality for all religious beliefs and creeds and separation of church from state. Incitement to race hatred and all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, creed or religion would be prohibited. All discrimination against homosexuals would be ended, and their full civil rights guaranteed.

Democratic participation

Whatever the formal structures, full democracy depends on the extent to which the people themselves participate in the running of the country.

1810 Socialism alone makes possible a tremendous extension of this participation. In the first place, this results from the nationalisation of the monopolies and other large businesses. The management of these nationalised enterprises would be genuinely democratic, with workers' participation at all levels, in planning industry as a whole, and in every enterprise and department. The workers would have a dominant say in determining the environment and the conditions of their work. Local government should be brought much nearer the people, by changes in structure, by continuous discussion of policy and its operation, by the establishment of community councils with adequate resources and staff and by more participation of local government workers.

1820 A fruitful interplay between local and national organisations and bodies is essential for genuine participatory democracy. This has to be a two-way process, so that those with the responsibility for overall planning are fully aware of the pressure and desires of those who implement and enact those decisions and those who are affected by their results.

Tenants' associations, trades councils, women's organisations, local community groups and action committees should be encouraged, and new democratic organisations based on their struggles and experiences would develop.

In the schools, universities and colleges, effective forms of democratic participation and supervision should be worked out, involving staff, students and parents. Similar principles should apply in the health service and other social services.

1830 To defend their interests under capitalism the British people have created a great variety of grassroots organisations. In a socialist Britain there should be the fullest encouragement of such democratic initiatives, as an essential check to bureaucracy and to the abuse of power by the state.

The press and other mass media will be crucial to the development of socialist

democracy. In the period of the transition to socialism the dissolution of the press monopolies should have already weakened the grip of big capital. Now further steps will be needed to ensure that a democratic and lively press, radio and television service is developed, with the state providing the necessary technical means for it. Political parties and social groups, trade unions, co-operatives and professional associations and organisations for women and young people will be enabled to publish newspapers and journals. Individuals would have the right to publish their own material. The national broadcasting and television services would be run by boards representative of the democratic organisations of the people, and directly accountable to Parliament. They would be under an obligation to provide adequate facilities to all democratic political parties to put their views. Local radio and television would be accountable to local elected organisations, and also be required to give coverage to varying political views. The production of specialist, community and factory papers would be encouraged, with the active involvement of the people.

1840
1850 Creative artistic activity, experiment and innovation would be encouraged, without any administrative interference. Conditions would be provided for the fullest development of scientific inquiry into natural and social phenomena, with free confrontation of different ideas and theories.

Women and socialism

Though major improvements in the position of women under capitalism can be won, the conditions for their full liberation can only be achieved under socialism. But it will involve a persistent and determined struggle against the deeply-ingrained prejudices resulting from generations of discrimination against them. Certainly a socialist government would complete the practical basis for women's liberation by fully implementing any of the measures outlined in the previous section which had not yet been carried through.

1860
But, as has been shown by the experiences of the existing socialist countries, which have ended legal and economic discrimination against women, more than this is needed. There would have to be a sustained effort to end the sexual division of labour between men and women in the family and at work, recognising that the continued subjugation of women in their personal relationships would limit their potential role in building socialism.

1870 The aim would be to create a deep respect between men and women within which would lie the possibility for both sexes to use their skills and abilities for the benefit of all, and express themselves fully within personal relationships.

Political parties of the working class

The continuous development of the popular alliance, built up in the process of the struggle for social change, would be vital for the construction of socialism.

Within this alliance the working class would be the decisive element and would have the leading role in the construction of socialism. This is an objective social fact. That leading role, however, cannot be imposed. It would have to be won by work and example.

1880 Its parties, the Labour Party and the Communist Party, would have the main role to play in this respect. The trade unions have their own particular and vital contribution to make, not only economic but political. But the trade unions are, and would remain under socialism, mass non-Party bodies. They are not political parties.

Socialism can only be won and built on the basis of Labour-Communist unity. In this political process, both before and after a socialist government, the Labour Party and the whole labour movement would increasingly turn to the left and socialism. The Communist Party would grow in numbers, influence and in Parliament and local representation and increasingly play a leading, though not exclusive, role. Still closer bonds of unity would develop between the two parties.

1890 The political organisations of the working class, therefore, would have the major role in winning the working people to elect a socialist government, in providing the personnel of the government, and in organising and leading the mass movement to sustain the government, particularly in moments of crisis. They would have the

responsibility of developing the programme on which the government is elected and which it is pledged to carry out.

As far as the Communist Party is concerned, and we would envisage also that it would be the case with the Labour Party, this policy-making function will be democratically conducted in public congresses and conferences, in open and full debate in which all trends will participate. Decision would be by democratic majority.

1900 As working class political consciousness deepens, the basis will be laid for a greater strengthening of working class unity. Different trends within this overall unity of purpose, however, will continue to be expressed in democratic discussion and controversy, and the working people will be able to choose between the political organisations of the working class, both in elections and in activity between elections.

The members of the working class political parties would have a special responsibility to ensure full internal democracy within their parties. This would be all the more important as these parties develop in strength and influence.

The goal of Communism

1910 In the socialist Britain for which we are working, based on the principle: from each according to ability, to each according to work, the conditions will be created for advance to a still higher form of society, Communism, based on the principle: from each according to ability, to each according to needs.

Such a society requires an abundance of goods, sufficient to meet the needs of all men and women, and a new outlook of co-operation and concern for the common good, so that deeply ingrained attitudes and habits associated with the past class-divided society are ended.

1920 Communist society will be a classless society, free of exploitation, using science and technology to free people from monotonous toil, extending leisure and education and culture, so that human capacities are developed to the full—a society in which, in the words of the Communist Manifesto, "The free development of each is the condition for the free development of all."

AN INVITATION

from the General Secretary of
the Communist Party

A central argument of our programme is the need for a more powerful Communist Party.

Britain needs such a party, which, through its branches in workplace, college and area gives daily leadership in the struggles of the people, while conducting a battle for the revolutionary ideas of Marxism.

Because of its Marxist outlook, participation in the labour and progressive movement, and form of organisation, the Communist Party is able to do this job. But it needs to do so more effectively.

Each new member contributes to the part the party can play. An influx of new and active forces into our branches in the days ahead would bring the realisation of the aims of our programme much nearer.

There is no greater cause for which to work than that of ending capitalism and building socialism. In the belief that the most effective way to do this is in the ranks of the Communist Party, we extend to you a warm invitation to join our ranks.

Gordon McLennan

I wish to join/have more information about the Communist Party/
Young Communist League

name

address

phone no. (if any).....

age (if under 18)

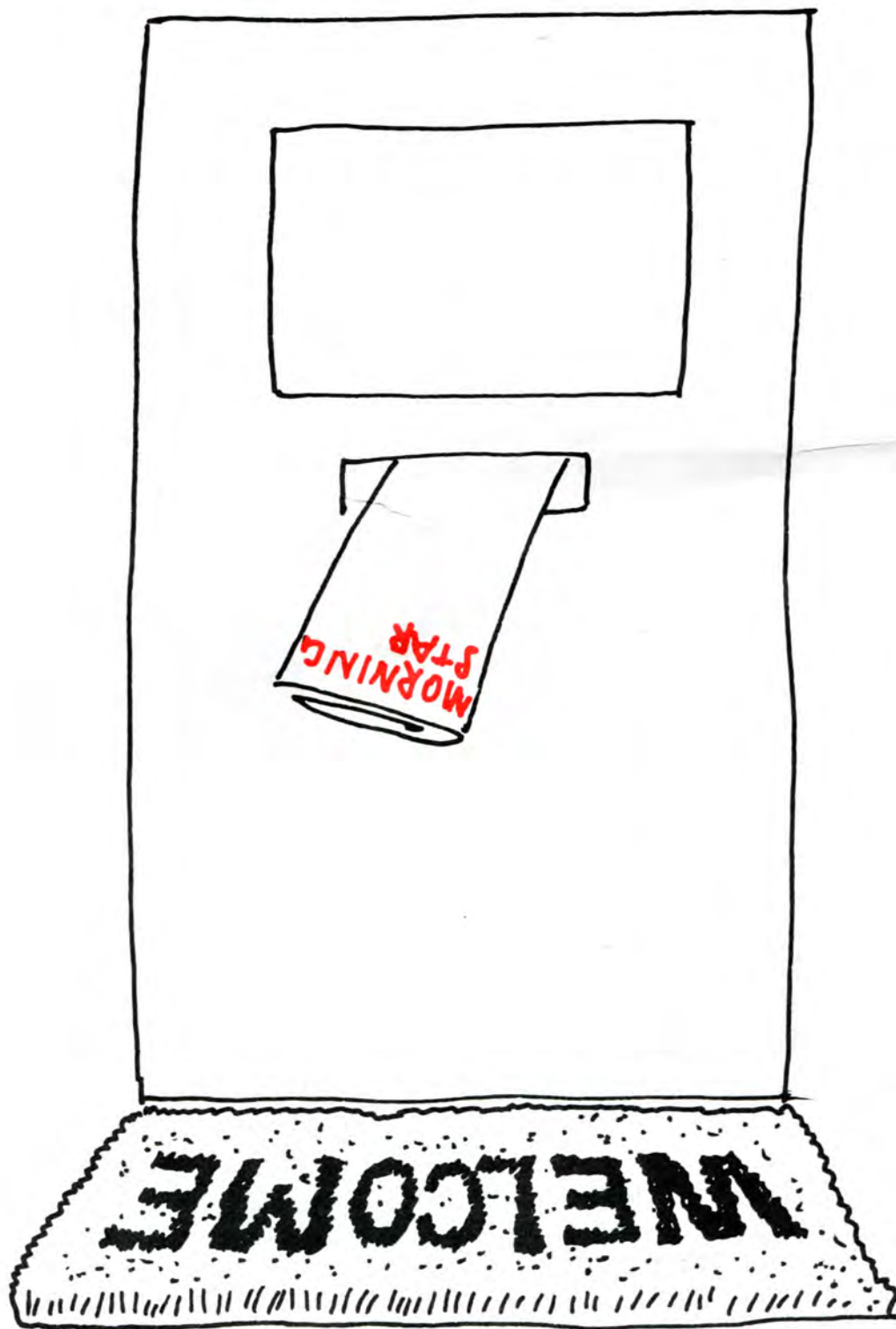
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comment

The Communist Party's fortnightly review, in addition to its usual features, is carrying discussion on the British Road to Socialism, up to the Congress in November.

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