

The fight for economic advance and social justice requires the defence of our civil liberties and a major extension of democratic freedoms. So the Left Wing Programme should include such policies as:

- Opposition to any further erosion of the democratic powers of the Westminster parliament, notably by unelected and unaccountable European Union institutions.
- The repeal of all Tory anti-trade union laws by a Trade Union Freedom Act which guarantees positive rights and free collective bargaining.
- Scrapping prolonged detention without charge, house arrest and plans for ID cards and restoring full rights of assembly,

protest and free speech.

- Open and democratic control over Britain's intelligence services.
- Replacement of racist immigration, asylum and nationality laws by measures which reflect our international and humanitarian commitments.
- The break-up of the millionaire media monopolies and measures to ensure genuinely free, diverse and inclusive mass media.
- Public ownership of the main arms manufacturers and a shift to civilian R&D and production.
- Restore real powers to local government, including unfreezing the business rate for big corporations and changes to local taxation so that it based on the ability to pay.

THE NEXT STEPS

The Left Wing Programme was launched in the labour and progressive movements by the Communist Party in 2005. It does not fully reflect the policies of Britain's Communists.

For example, we would go further in terms of controls on capital exports, selective import controls, opposition to the European Union, nationalisation of key industrial and financial sectors, and in favour of the single transferable vote and a local income tax.

But we recognise the divergence of views which exists on these questions. This need not stand in the way of the unity which already exists on so much else – and which needs to be clearly expressed and mobilised.

Many policies in the Left Wing Programme have now been adopted by trades unions and at the 2005 Trades Union Congress. In the Morning Star (November 11) Tony Benn called for a united programme to be developed and fought for by the left, especially as Blair and New Labour face renewed challenges within and beyond the Labour Party.

The advances made in 2005 by the Charter for Women and the Charter of Employment Rights show what can be done when a broad, non-sectarian initiative is taken up.

If you agree with the Left Wing Programme, raise it with friends, colleagues, comrades and workmates. Help win them to the concept of the Left Wing Programme. Raise the need for it in your trade union, political, pensioners', tenants' or students' organisation. If possible, win support for a resolution in favour of the programme.

If you want more copies of this broadsheet, order them from the Communist Party. Let us know what you think of this initiative. Get in touch if you want to discuss it with us locally or nationally.

The Left Wing Programme belongs to everyone who wants to see an alternative to the policies of New Labour, the Tories and the capitalist monopolies. The more support it attracts, the more pressure can be placed on the Labour government to change course.

Take the programme, use it, fight for it!

THE COMMUNIST PARTY: BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

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Read the
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- Opposes privatisation
- Campaigns for international solidarity not imperialist wars
- Demands restoration of the link between average earnings and the state pension

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Britain needs a left wing programme



NEW LABOUR argue that the only alternative to its policies are those of the Tories. Yet there is no fundamental difference of approach between Blair, Brown and Cameron.

They all support policies of privatisation and war. They

attack civil liberties and asylum seekers. If they differ at all on these issues, it is a matter of degree not principle.

They do not want to fund investment in public services through progressive taxation. Instead they prefer to let the privateers and profiteers run riot.

Rather than challenge 'globalisation' and intervene in

the monopoly-dominated 'free market', they allow the run-down of British manufacturing industry to continue unhindered.

They want the Tory anti-union laws to continue. They do not defend the vital role of the state pension.

Under New Labour, the rich have got richer and the poor poorer.

Blair and Cameron, New Labour and the Tories believe that the big business profit system should be the foundation of our society forever.

But there is an alternative. The Left Wing Programme shows how we could address some of the fundamental problems facing this country in a fundamentally different way. We could begin to tackle them in the interests of working people and their families – the vast majority – rather than to the benefit of a rich minority.

And in doing so, we would project the values that point the way to a better society in Britain. One based on social justice, peace and internationalism which safeguards the ecology of our planet for future generations.

But first we need to understand the nature of the crises we face.

The crisis of the productive economy

Since 1995 manufacturing output in France and Germany has grown by more than 16 per cent. Britain's has fallen by 1 per cent. In the service sector most new jobs are casualised, low skilled, low wage and far too many are dependent on overseas-owned financial services. Productivity in both manufacturing and services is a third lower than that in Germany, France and the US.

Why? Because Britain's bankers invest far more abroad than at home. Britain invests only half as much as its main competitors in research and development and over a third less in plant and equipment. Against this, Britain invests a bigger share of its income abroad than any other major economy.

In 1992 accumulated overseas investment was equal to one and a half times total national output. Now it is over three and half times. In 2004 British firms spent £52 billion on foreign direct investment – enough to employ nearly two million workers for a year. Far more was spent, over £140 billion, on shares in foreign stock exchanges and lending to foreign banks.

This flood of capital overseas started when the Thatcher government ended controls over capital export. It has turned the City of London into the world's No.1 casino for financial speculation.

Today most of the capital employed is overseas owned – the bulk American. British bankers make their profits servicing this market and their investment strategies tie us ever closer to the most aggressive sections of US big business and their representatives in the White House.

The crisis of democracy

This alignment to the Bush administration has accelerated all the authoritarian and anti-democratic trends in British society.

The more the wealth of Britain's richest people depends on overseas investment and imperialism, the more we are dragged towards a police and warfare state that rides roughshod over civil liberties. The more control over the economy is ceded to big business, the more governments will be pressured to limit parliamentary democracy and to curb the legal rights of organised labour.

The draft EU Constitution would take Europe further along the road to a military imperialist United States of Europe with monetarism and privatisation enshrined in fundamental law.



SPEND £25 BILLION ON NEW NUCLEAR WEAPONS TO REPLACE TRIDENT?

for that Britain could

- Build and equip 40 new state-of -the-art hospitals AND
- Build 400 schools with modern technical facilities AND
- Provide 120,000 new homes for young families and the elderly

In terms of the assault on civil liberties, the control of the media, the resort to the language of racism and the loss of parliamentary powers to the European Union, British democracy is in grave danger.

The crisis of infrastructure, energy and the environment

Britain has become a radically more unequal society over the past twenty five years. Despite New Labour's hype, the resources devoted to the welfare state are woefully inadequate.

Privatisation has placed whole sections of the country's infrastructure beyond democratic control and has had disastrous consequences for services. Housing policy has created ghettos. The push for private pensions threatens many with poverty. The privatisation of council housing, energy and transport makes it virtually impossible to introduce comprehensive programmes for energy saving and renewal.

Britain could become dangerously reliant upon nuclear power and imported coal, oil and gas unless an alternative energy policy is developed.

The run-down of the productive economy and the erosion of skilled jobs and training means that – if nothing is done – the coming generation will find it increasingly difficult to sustain pensions, welfare and a society that can meet basic needs.

These are the crises that the Left Wing Programme seeks to address.

WHAT KIND OF LEFT WING PROGRAMME?

We need the maximum possible unity around a coherent alternative to New Labour and Tory policies. We need a programme which responds to each aspect of Britain's crisis with policies which reinforce one another.

Only then can the left and the labour and progressive movements claim with credibility that there is an alternative way forward. Such a programme must be winnable, although to get it adopted and implemented by a left or Labour government would require a massive, united and sustained effort.

What would the policies of such a programme be, at least in outline?

There would need to be policies which could rebuild industry, sustain our environment and revitalise our public services, including:

- An end to all forms of privatisation including the break-up of our NHS and state education system, with public services financed from progressive taxation and sustainable long-term borrowing.
- Opposition to the EU Services Directive which would open the floodgates to privatisation of our public services, and to adoption of the euro would lock Britain into a one-size-fits-all interest rate policy and to Euro-monetarist policies with penalties on government spending and borrowing.
- Public shareholdings to accompany public subsidies to failing private companies, with the option of nationalisation to save strategically important enterprises.
- Measures to counteract the transfer of jobs from Britain to super-exploited labour markets abroad, including the enforcement of international labour standards and a law to prevent mass redundancies in profitable companies.
- Expansion of mutually beneficial trade and aid relations with China and other developing and less developed countries.

- Concerted national and international action to control and tax movements of capital, especially capital for speculative purposes.
- More public investment in renewable energy sources such as tidal, solar and wind power rather than an expansion of nuclear production, together with the revival of deep-mined coal using clean fuel technology.
- A major extension of public ownership back into the energy and transport sectors – including the coal, water and railway industries – so that we can plan to meet future needs while protecting our environment and making the best use of its natural resources.
- Real powers of economic and industrial intervention for the Scottish parliament and Welsh assembly.
- A massive programme of housebuilding to meet social need, with no more council housing stock transfers.

The Left Wing Programme must wage a real war on poverty while at the same time stimulating the economy, with such policies as:

- Restoring the link between the state retirement pension and earnings or prices, whichever is higher, with a universal level payable to all.
- A second state pension for all workers, with compulsory employer as well as state contributions.
- An immediate increase in the national minimum wage to the level of half median male earnings, irrespective of age, rising over time to two-thirds.
- Compulsory pay audits to enforce genuinely equal pay for women.
- Abolition of student tuition fees and the phased reintroduction of student grants alongside interest-free loans along the lines being pioneered by the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly.
- A substantial increase in all social benefits, including for carers, the long-term sick and people with disabilities.
- Cuts in VAT on essential goods and services and selective price controls on domestic fuel and water supplies.

The economic and social policies of the Left Wing Programme could be paid for by:

- Raising the top rate of income tax and introducing a wealth tax for the richest 5 per cent of the population.
- Increasing corporation tax on monopoly profits, including those made by British transnational corporations overseas.
- Imposing a windfall tax on British bank and oil corporation mega-profits (totalling £50 billion in 2005).
- Reducing military expenditure in Britain to European levels and ending the huge subsidy to arms exporters.
- Scrapping plans to replace the Trident nuclear weapons system at a cost of £25 billion.

U.K. DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH (%)

owned by	1996	2002
richest 1%	20	23
richest 5%	40	43
richest 10%	52	56
poorest 50%	7	6

- the richest tenth of the population own more than half of all the wealth in Britain
- the poorer half of the population own just 6 per cent of the wealth

(source: National Statistics/ Inland Revenue
www.statistics.gov.uk/cgi/nugget.asp?id=2)