

Radical Politics in Britain

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By

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Socialism is a living issue.
—George Orwell

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PREFACE

This book is a study of British politics. British society, today, has many political problems, social problems, and historical problems. British society, today, is in crisis. Indeed, it is clear that Britain is in the middle of a serious social crisis – and has been in crisis for a very long period of time. It is clear that the crisis of British society and British politics is the result of the crisis of British Capitalism. British society, today, requires serious social and political change – towards Socialism. In order to understand the problems of British society it is vital to develop a Socialist analysis of British society. Such an analysis is needed today – just as Britain requires a new Socialist politics.

This book is a study of British politics today - from a Left perspective. It is a study of how British politics and British society ended up in the crisis that is shaping Britain today - by examining British politics, British history, and British society. This book is a study of the problems of British politics and the problems of British society. This book is a Marxist study of Britain. This book is a Socialist study. It is a Socialist Humanist study, in the tradition of Democratic Socialism.

Britain, today, is a society in crisis. The crisis of British Capitalism is obvious today – as shown by the crisis of Capitalism, the crisis of Imperialism, and the crisis of Neo-Liberalism. If Britain is to advance beyond this period of crisis it will be necessary to think about Socialist politics and Socialism.

British society, today, has social problems. It is clear that the crisis of British society has social roots – in British history. British history contains its historical problems. This book looks at some of the historical problems of British society – from the rise of British Capitalism to the present day.

This book is a collection of essays. Most of the essays deal with Britain and with British politics. The book also contains two essays which attempt to look at the broader crisis of Capitalism today.

Britain is in crisis today. Britain has many crises today. These crises are the crisis of Capitalism, the crisis of Austerity, the crisis of politics, the crisis of Europe, and the crisis of Britain and Europe. These are serious problems. These are serious crises. Britain needs to solve its crisis. Britain needs Socialist answers to its crisis.

R.G. Williams

(2022)

CHAPTER I

PROBLEMS OF BRITISH POLITICS

This essay is a study of British politics. British politics reflects British society. British society reflects British politics. British politics, today, is in crisis. It is clear that British politics has been in crisis for a very long period of time. At the very least British politics has been in crisis since the 2000s and since the beginning of the Neo-Liberal period of British politics. It is vital for Socialists to produce an analysis of the problems of British politics. It is vital for the British Left to struggle for a better politics in Britain. It is vital for the British Left to struggle for a better Britain.

British politics, today, has many problems. Most of those problems are related to each other. Most of those problems are related to the crisis of Capitalism and the crisis of British Capitalism. All of the problems of British politics show the need for major social change in Britain: the need for Socialism.

We need to understand British politics. We need to understand British politics if we are to change British politics. British politics, since the beginning of the Neo-Liberal period, and since the end of the Cold War, has reached a certain point of political development. Britain is a Capitalist country, with a Capitalist history and a Capitalist politics. This political reality informs the politics of Britain. This political reality informs the politics of the Socialist struggle in Britain to achieve Socialism in Britain. Anyone who looks at British politics today can see that its politics, both Left and Right, are often shaped by Capitalist politics. Breaking these Capitalist politics, and creating Left politics, for a Socialist Left, is the current task of the Socialist Left in Britain.

Britain needs a better form of politics today. Britain needs a new form of Left politics and Socialist politics. The British Left needs to develop a better vision for British politics. Contemporary thinking on British Left politics and British Socialist politics has been undermined, in recent decades and recent years, by the limits of the end of the Cold War and the reality of Neo-Liberalism. Today, the British Left needs to overcome those limits. In the

current period of economic crisis, political crisis, and social crisis the time has come for the British Left to think about Socialist politics. The British Left needs to think about the reality of British politics today. The British Left needs to change the reality of British politics today. The key struggle for the British Left, today, is the struggle to develop a new Socialist politics.

British politics must shift towards the Left and towards Socialism. This is the only politics which can solve the problems of British politics today.

Britain, today, needs serious social change. This means that Britain needs revolutionary change. The existing Capitalist system needs to be replaced with a new and better system: Socialism. Britain needs a social revolution — a revolutionary transformation of society.

This essay is an attempt to outline a basic Socialist analysis of politics in Britain today. This essay is a Left study of British politics today and the problems of British politics today. This essay is an attempt at developing some Socialist ideas towards Socialist politics in Britain today. The sections of this essay try to outline the problems of British politics, in order to argue for Socialism in Britain.

I. Britain Today

Britain is a modern society. Britain has a developed political system and a developed politics. The political form of modern politics in modern Britain can be summed up as follows. Britain is the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Britain is a unitary state — a union of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Britain is a Capitalist society, with a Capitalist politics. Britain is an industrial society. Britain is organised as a constitutional monarchy, with a unitary government. Britain is a Neo-Liberal society, in economic terms. Britain, as a Capitalist society, is largely governed by Capitalist politics. Politics in Britain is firmly shaped by Capitalist society. Politics in Britain is firmly shaped by bourgeois politics. Politics in Britain is firmly shaped by parliamentary politics. British politics is mostly shaped around Liberalism, Conservatism, and Social Democracy. British politics is trapped within Capitalism. There has not been a political revolution in Britain since the bourgeois revolution of the 17th century. Politics in Britain is split between Right and Left — with the Right being Conservatives and Liberals, and the Left being Social Democrats and Socialists. Politics in Britain is split between two major parties — the Conservative Party and the Labour Party. The Conservative Party is a Capitalist Party. The Labour Party is a Democratic Socialist Party. So far,

Britain remains a Capitalist society with Capitalist politics. So far, Britain has yet to achieve Socialism or a mass Socialist movement since the 1960s and 1970s. To understand British politics is to understand the national reality of British politics under Capitalism today. In Britain today the bulk of British politics are Capitalist politics.¹

Britain is a Capitalist society. British politics, as it exists today, is primarily concerned with the key objective of maintaining old, Capitalist, bourgeois, Britain — in its modern form. Via the state, parliament, and its social structures, British Capitalist politics seek to maintain Capitalist society and Capitalist politics in Britain. Via parliament, the state, civil society, and the politics of Conservatism and Liberalism, British Capitalist politics dominates Britain. Since the beginning of the Neo-Liberal period in British politics, since 1979, British Capitalism has been very effective in maintaining the current system of British politics. This has ensured that for most of the last century British politics, particularly on the Right, has remained loyal to British Capitalism and the British State. British Capitalism dominates Britain.

Britain is a union of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Britain was formed through the economic, political, social, and historical struggles of the recent past. Britain came into existence due to the English Revolution of 1640, the Glorious Revolution of 1688, the Industrial Revolution, and the Acts of Union in 1707 and 1801. Britain, today, remains a unitary state — with a strong centralised national government. Britain has achieved some forms of devolution, during the last century, such as the independence of the Republic of Ireland in 1922/1949 and the devolution of Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, but it remains a unitary state. The union of Great Britain, since the 1990s and the 2000s, is currently facing a major social and political crisis — due to increasing demands for Scottish independence. Britain, as a union, might survive the 21st century — but it also might not. The crisis of the British union shows the need for a new union of Britain — a Federal Britain.

Britain is a European country. It is part of North-Western Europe. In the 1970s, specifically in 1973, Britain joined the European Union. Britain's fractious relationship with Europe, in economic, social, and political terms, in the 1980s and 1990s, eventually led to the Brexit Referendum of 2016 — when Britain voted to leave the European Union. Britain finally left the European Union in 2020. This caused a major, and lasting, crisis in British society.

Britain is an Imperialist society — as shown by the reality of British history. Britain was once a major Imperialist power — due to the reality of the

British Empire in the 1800s and 1900s. Britain remains an Imperialist power, today, but it is no longer the dominant Imperialist power — which is now the United States of America. The reality of the Afghan War and the Iraq War, in the 2000s, also shows that Britain is an Imperialist society. Despite this, British Imperialism is in serious decline. British Imperialism, today, can only really operate in connection with American Imperialism. The political and historical reality of the War on Terror, the Afghan War, and the Iraq War, was a major act of British and American Imperialism — showing that Imperialism remains part of modern politics. British Imperialism is a crucial part of British politics.

Britain is a democratic society. Democracy in Britain emerged from the social struggles of the English Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, and Chartism — resulting in the Great Reform Acts of 1832, 1867, 1884, 1918, and 1928. Britain finally achieved universal suffrage, for all men and all women, in 1918/1928. Britain is a democratic country, but its democracy has always been limited by Capitalism and by Imperialism.

Britain has a large working class. It also has a large working-class movement. This working class has the economic, social, political, and historical power to change British society today. Britain has the potential to become a Socialist society — a society based on the free development of each and the free development of all. Despite the major problems facing Britain, today, it still has the social power to revolutionise itself. Britain, in the future, could still become a Socialist society — as part of a Socialist world.

Britain, today, is an interesting society. It is an interesting society because it has so many different crises, problems, and issues. The economic, social, political, and historical crises of British society show that Britain needs major social change. The only major form of social change that can save Britain, today, is Socialism. The choice facing British politics, today, is a simple one: either Socialism or Barbarism. Either Britain will advance towards Socialism or fall into Barbarism.

II. British Politics Today

British politics is divided between Right and Left. Indeed, the political struggle in modern Britain is the struggle between the Right and the Left — between Capitalism and Socialism, between the Conservative Party and the Labour Party, between the ruling class and the working class. For the last few decades, the British Right has dominated British politics — via Neo-Liberalism, Conservatism, and New Labour. For the last few decades, the

British Left has had to deal with the political realities of British Capitalism, British politics, and British society, as it has developed through a real period of crisis in its politics and history. British politics, since 2008, has struggled to react to the crisis. The Labour government of 1997-2010, the Conservative-Liberal government of 2010-2015, and the Conservative government of 2015-present, have struggled to overcome the crisis of British politics. Today, since 2010, there is still a Tory government in Britain — but it is a terrible government. For the British Left today the political realities of Britain's contemporary social struggles are confronting, just as they are for the British working class. Britain has suffered through a profound crisis of Capitalism. Now, it seems, a new Left in Britain is beginning to emerge to challenge that crisis and its politics.

III. British Political Ideas

British politics is shaped by politics and by ideas. British politics is made up of several political ideas and political ideologies. The key political ideologies of British society, today, are: Liberalism, Conservatism, Social Democracy, and Socialism. These four political ideologies and four political movements represent the bulk of most political parties and political groups in British politics. The current British Right and British Left, more or less, exist within these political structures and political ideas. This has been the general political structure of British politics since the 19th century — even with the rise of the Neo-Liberal age of politics since 1979. British political thought and British parties tend to reflect most politics in a Capitalist society — within the local form of British politics. The key political parties of the Left and the Right in Britain tend to operate within this political structure — Socialism and Social Democracy on the Left, Conservatism and Liberalism on the Right. Since the 1980s, the ideas of British politics have moved clearly to the Right.

IV. British Politics and British Society

British politics are shaped by politics and by society. British politics are shaped by the past and by the present. The politics of Britain, today, have been mostly shaped by two recent historical developments — the rise of Neo-Liberalism and the end of the Cold War. Both of these historical developments shaped the politics of all British governments since 1979 — particularly the Conservative government of Thatcher and Major, and the Labour government of Blair and Brown. These political developments also saw both the Conservative Party and the Labour Party, the dominant parties in Britain today, shift to the Right, towards Neo-Liberalism, during the

1980s and 1990s. Today, British politics, with a Conservative government, is still shaped by that historical reality. The rise of Neo-Liberalism and the end of the Cold War might have occurred over a quarter of a century ago, but they still impact British politics. The only major change since then has been the possible shift back towards the Left by the current Labour Party since 2015. It is in this context that British Socialists and the British Left struggle for Socialism today in Britain.

V. British Politics and the Struggle for Socialism

Britain is capable of a better society. Britain is capable of Socialism — a society based on the free development of each and the free development of all. British history has created the potential for Socialism in Britain.² Britain has the potential for Socialism because it is an advanced Capitalist country — with a large working class. This historical development has created the potential for Socialism in Britain — for a society based on the free development of each and the free development of all. This historical background and political background shape the reality of politics in Britain today. The struggle for Socialism in Britain has emerged from this British history. This history makes the struggle for Socialism in Britain difficult. Despite this, the struggle for Socialism needs to happen in Britain. The working class needs to make Socialism in Britain. The Left needs to make Socialism in Britain.

VI. Britain in Crisis

Britain is in crisis. Indeed, Britain has been in crisis for a very long period of time. It has been in crisis since 2008 — since the economic crisis of 2007/2008. This crisis has been developing for a long period in British history and British politics. The biggest crises in Britain, today, are: the crisis of Capitalism, the crisis of Austerity, the crisis of Europe, the crisis of Brexit, and the crisis of British politics. The Left needs to confront these crises. Britain needs Left politics. Britain needs Socialist politics.

British society is in crisis. The problems of British society reflect this crisis. British society is suffering under an economic crisis and a political crisis — a crisis caused by the crisis of British Capitalism and by the crisis of International Capitalism. In response to this the political duty of the British Left is perfectly clear: the need to struggle for Socialism, and the need for Socialist politics in Britain today. Since the end of the Cold War, the British Left has largely lacked a serious Socialist politics capable of confronting the contemporary crisis of British Capitalism. The result has been a disaster.

British politics has continued to shift to the Right. British society has also continued to shift to the Right. All of the problems of British society show the real need for a British Left — a British Left which can argue for a better Britain. British society needs to overcome its crisis — by achieving Socialism.

British Capitalism is in crisis. British Capitalism has been in crisis since 2008. Since the global financial crisis, British Capitalism has collapsed into a series of crises and problems. The key problem of the current period of Capitalist crisis in Britain is that no effective Left politics or Socialist politics has yet emerged to confront the crisis. As a result, Britain has been struggling with crisis and austerity for a decade. In point: this crisis underlines the current crisis of Capitalist hegemony in British society as a whole — and its ideological structures. This crisis underlines the need for Left politics and Socialist politics in Britain today. To achieve Socialism and democracy, British society requires a new and renewed case for Socialism. British Capitalism needs to be replaced with Socialism.

British politics has many crises and many problems today — specifically the crisis of Capitalism, the crisis of Austerity, the crisis of politics, the crisis of economics, the crisis of society, the crisis of Brexit, and the crisis of Europe. Britain requires Socialism — to solve these problems.

British Socialists have noted the crisis in British politics. Most British Socialists have been aware of Britain's long period of crisis since 2007-2008 and the long-term nature of the crisis in British Capitalist society. Indeed, some British Socialists have been aware of the crisis of British society since the 1950s and 1960s. In this current period many of the British Left have begun the process of developing new political responses to British Capitalism — and the basis for a new Socialist politics in Britain, a politics which can renew the fight for Socialism in Britain.

The crisis in British politics is a deep crisis. It is a crisis which is unlikely to end for a long time in British politics. This is the general political context of Britain in the current decade, and perhaps in the coming decades. The crisis of British Capitalism and British society, reinforced by concerns over Brexit and other problems, seems to be hardly diminishing in contemporary British politics. It is from this political context that the British Left could perhaps make gains — and return the struggle in Britain to a struggle for Socialism.

Britain is a broken society. British society, today, shows that it is a broken society — and a society in crisis.

VII. The Crisis of British Politics — I

In order to understand the crisis of British politics we need to understand the crisis of British politics since 2008. British politics has clearly been in crisis since 2008 – since the global financial crisis of 2007/2008. British politics, since 2008, has changed a great deal. The crisis of British Capitalism has only intensified since 2015. The crisis of Brexit shows how broken British politics is today. All of the political results of British politics, since 2015, highlight the problems of British Capitalism. It is time for the Left to develop a new politics in Britain — a politics which can challenge the reality of crisis and Austerity. It is time for the Left to struggle, once again, for Socialism in Britain.

British politics, today, is shifting. This is because of the reality of the crisis. The political character and political mood of Britain is shifting. It is shifting in unexpected ways. It is shifting in unexpected ways due to the results of 2015, 2016, and 2019-2020. The crisis of British society is making an impact on British politics. That mood in Britain might shift Left or Right in the coming years.

British politics, today, is aligned towards the Right. British politics is aligned towards Neo-Liberal Capitalism. Indeed, Britain is dominated by the politics of the Right. British politics must be realigned towards the Left and towards Socialism. This needs to happen if any social progress is to be made in Britain today. This will require all the various elements of the British Left — from the Labour Party to the Socialist Left — to unite for a new Socialist politics. A political struggle for a new Socialist politics is necessary for British politics today.

VIII. The Crisis of British Politics — II

British politics, currently, is stuck in the old politics of Capitalist politics. These old politics cannot solve the problems of today. This has been shown most clearly by the politics and political results of the elections of 2015, 2017, and 2019. British politics has run out of ideas. This has also been the political reality in Britain since the end of the 1970s — since the age of Thatcher and Blair, and the rise of Neo-Liberalism. If Britain is to ever get out of the current political mess that it currently finds itself in, then Britain will have to rethink its old politics and its old ideas. Britain must think of a new politics — a new Left politics and a new Socialist politics. This is something that the Left in Britain must fight for — as it struggles to understand the results of the elections of 2015, 2017, and 2019.

In recent British politics there have been six major events since 2008 — the Crisis of 2008, the General Election of 2010, the General Election of 2015, the General Election of 2017, the General Election of 2019, and the Europe Referendum of 2016. Each of these events have shaped British politics since 2008, and they continue to shape British politics. It is because of these events that the Conservatives have shifted further to the Right and that Labour has shifted further to the Left. These six events continue to shape British politics and British society. It is these events which have created modern British politics.

British politics often shift in times of elections and crises. Britain is clearly in a period of crisis. This crisis was obvious after 2008 but the crisis has clearly deepened since 2015. None of the political developments of British Capitalism have solved the fundamental problems of British politics. The referendum of 2016 solved nothing. The election of 2017 solved nothing. The election of 2019 solved nothing. The current Conservative government is weak, divided, and incompetent. The time has come for a major shift to the Left in British politics. Britain needs to shift to the Left because the shifts to the Right have done nothing but intensify the crisis. British society cannot go on in this way. Either we shall see a major shift to the Left, or we shall see a further decline into the failures of the Right. The next decade in British politics will probably be a vital decade — a decade which will probably determine the future of Britain for at least a generation. For the Left, Britain deserves a better future than the misery of the current crisis. For the Left, the current crisis needs to be used to push Britain itself to the Left.

Recent British politics, since 2015 and since 2016, show the need for a new politics in Britain — a Left politics and a Socialist politics. British politics, today, has entered a strange period. British politics for the first time since the 1980s has entered a period of change and crisis. For the British Left this period of change and crisis perhaps holds the chance for social change in Britain — and a shift to the Left. The Left must fight for such social change. Britain, itself, cannot afford a repeat of the old politics.

British politics might shift Left or shift Right in the coming decades. It is up to the Left to ensure that the next shift in British politics is firmly to the Left — towards Socialism and towards a better future for Britain.

IX. British Problems

We can summarise Britain's problems since 2008. Britain has been in crisis since 2007/2008. This decade of crisis has produced nothing for Britain or

British society — except further crisis. The reality of austerity, since 2010, has crippled British society. There has been no real social progress in Britain for over a decade since 2008. The result of Britain's crisis has been economic destruction, social destruction, and political destruction. The national structure of Britain (as a union of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland) is also in crisis. The disaster of the ongoing crisis in British society, today, is a reality. British politics, and British Capitalism, are fundamentally broken today. It is a crisis of despair and disaster. This crisis is a reality. It is the reality of Britain today. Britain's problems have to be confronted. Britain's problems need to be solved. Britain cannot afford this crisis anymore. Britain's crisis provides an opportunity for the British Left — in the Labour Party, the Labour movement, and the British Socialist movement. Britain's crisis provides an opportunity for the Left and for Socialism in Britain.

X. British Political Problems

We can also summarise Britain's political problems. British Capitalism has numerous political problems.³ British Capitalism has caused the problems of British politics.⁴ British Capitalism, today, has declined in real social and political terms since the 1970s and 1980s. The rise of Neo-Liberalism has improved the wealth of British Capitalism but has plunged the British economy into constant crises and disasters. The crisis of 2008 shows that British Capitalism is unable to really engage with its economic, social, or political problems. The reality of Austerity, and Austerity politics, since the Liberal-Conservative government of 2010-2015, has enriched the British capitalist class but also resulted in the serious decline of the British economy. Britain was once the most important economy in the world, at the height of the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century. Its decline and fall, since the 1900s, shows how far the crisis of British Capitalism has undermined British society. The political character of British Capitalism is also shifting — and shifting towards a need for serious social change. British Capitalism remains in crisis. It is likely to remain in crisis for a very long time. The crisis of British Capitalism reinforces the need for Socialism. British politics needs to solve Britain's Capitalist problems. British society needs to solve Britain's Capitalist problems. This means that a new economy and a new society has to be built in Britain — a Socialist economy and a Socialist society.

XI. The British Left

The British Left must face the problems of British politics. The Left in Great Britain, today, has to face the current crisis of Britain itself today. This is clear if we look at Britain today and the British Left today. The task of the Left in Britain, today, at least for the Socialist Left, is to shift Britain towards Socialism and towards a better society — via the movement of the working class. The Left, in Britain, fights for a better society — a society based on the free development of each and the free development of all. The Left, in Britain, fights for a Socialist Britain.

The Left is re-emerging in Britain today. It is emerging as a powerful political force. There is now a Left in Britain. The shift to the Left by the Labour Party since 2015, and by the working-class movement in Britain, is a vital development in Britain today — both in British Left politics and in British society. This shift has not yet produced a Left turn in Britain, but it does mean that a Left turn is possible in Britain. This shift has not yet produced political results, other than the rise of the Labour Left since 2015, but it is placing British society in a place of possible change — towards the Left and towards Left politics. A possible shift to the Left, after a decade of austerity, is desperately needed in Britain. A shift to the Left is also what the British working class needs. A shift to Socialism is what British society needs.

The purpose of the Left is simple: the struggle for Socialism. The objective of the Left is also simple: the achievement of Socialism. The purpose of the Left is to build a better society — a society based on the free development of each and the free development of all. This purpose is the purpose of the Left. The struggle of the Left is to struggle until Socialism is achieved. This is true of any national Left or any international Left. The Left in Britain is today struggling to achieve such a struggle and such a politics. Given the reality of British politics and British society today the struggle for Socialism in Britain is difficult — but it is possible.

The British Left must fight for Socialism. The fight for Socialism in Britain today is based on the power of the working class in Britain, the trade union movement, existing Socialist forces, new Socialist forces, the Labour Party, and the growing Left within the Labour Party. Together these forms of Socialist politics are the real basis by which a new Socialist movement in Britain can emerge and begin the process of winning both Socialism and a new politics in Britain today.

For the British Left, today, the development of British politics and British society since 2007 offers some major opportunities. Indeed, the Left has had opportunities since 2008, particularly in the form of student politics and in the form of working-class politics. For various reasons between 2007 and 2015 most of those opportunities failed to bring results for the Left. Yet, today, there is some evidence that the situation is beginning to turn towards the Left — both in the Labour Party and in the wider Socialist movement in the United Kingdom. The period of 2007-2015 was a difficult one for the Left, particularly outside the Labour Party. Now, with the growing crisis of British Capitalism since 2015-2016, the Left has even better chances for its political development, its political growth, its political struggle, and its political success. So far, this development has only occurred for the Left within the Labour Party, but it is clear, today, that the Left is emerging again in British politics. Now the Left has the chance to make major advances today — both inside the Labour Party and outside the Labour Party. What needs to happen is the development of a broad united Left — a Left which can change Britain.

The development of new Socialist politics and new Socialist strategy always requires new ideas and a new Left. This has been a key part of Left politics since the 20th century. The struggle for Socialism and the struggle for the Left cannot rely on the old ideas and old methods of the past. Instead, the Left must develop new ideas and new methods for the current struggle. This development has been at the heart of the politics of the Left ever since the Left emerged in the revolutions of the 19th century. This development of Socialist politics is crucial for the development of Socialist strategy.

The power of the Left is political. It is a power based on the political struggle for Socialism. The power of the Left comes from its ability to recognise the problems of Capitalism and to present Socialist politics to those problems. This is the key basis from which the current-day British Left can rebuild both working-class power and Socialist power in Great Britain today. It is ultimately the reality of the crisis of Capitalism and its social crisis which presents the best argument for an effective Left and an effective Socialism.

The British Left was particularly hit hard by the 1990s and by the 2000s. The ‘reality’ of the ‘end of Socialism’, the ‘end of politics’, and the ‘end of history’, affected the Left. The Labour Party also shifted to the Right — towards Neo-Liberalism, Blair, Blairism, ‘New Labour’, and the rejection of Socialism. Despite the victory of New Labour, in 1997, the 1990s and the 2000s were a dark time for the British Left — as were the 2010s. Today the

British Left is beginning to recover from the last thirty years and is seeing a return of Socialist ideas, Socialist politics, and Socialist organisation. The British Left, today, is struggling for Socialism and for Democratic Socialism.

The political basis of the Left in Britain is changing. The British Left is once again beginning to have a serious working-class base — such as it had in the 1880s, the 1920s, the 1930s, the 1940s, the 1960s, and the 1970s. This is a positive development for the British Socialist Left — considering that for most of the past thirty years British Socialist politics were often sociologically limited to simply student groups and student politics. Now the basis is re-emerging for a possible working-class Left in Britain — and for a working-class Socialist Left. Such a possibility has not existed in British politics since the 1970s and since the defeats of the 1980s and 1990s.

The political basis for the British Left is political. The economic basis for the Left in Britain is also political — highlighted by the continuing crisis of Capitalism and the need for a Socialist alternative on a major scale. The British working class is, once again, becoming receptive to some Left ideas and Socialist ideas.

The last few decades have been difficult for the British Left — but the Left still exists in Britain. In this period of crisis, the Left is beginning to emerge again in Britain. It is from this specific context — of crisis and social disaster — that the Left could emerge in Britain.

XII. A New Left

The British Left, so far, has failed to advance in British politics since the beginning of the current crisis of British Capitalism. While the Left is re-emerging in British politics it is still a Left which has failed to win political power. This point remains currently true — despite positive developments over the last few years — from the shift of the Labour Party to the Left to the current expansion of serious Socialist forces in the British Left itself. The Left, today, in Britain, is the Socialist Left, the trade union Left, and the Left of the Labour Party. The British Left, since 2015, is rising again — in the labour movement, the trade unions, the Labour Party, and in other Socialist forces.

Britain needs a New Left. A key issue for the Left today is to develop a New Left. We need a Left which can adapt to the politics of today and struggle for Socialism in the politics of today. This was the key basis of the New Left of the 1950s and 1960s — which tried to develop a new Socialist

politics from the tired failures of both Social Democracy and Stalinism. In today's politics a New Left needs to emerge from the current Left. It needs to struggle for Socialist politics, for Left politics, and for Socialism. This New Left needs to appreciate the difficulties of the past, in the struggle for Socialism, but it also needs to be critical of the failures of the past — particularly of the previous forms of Left politics which emerged at various points in the 20th century. This New Left needs to be a better Left.

The British Left needs a New Left. This New Left, however, needs to be more effective and more adaptive to British politics than the Left in the past. At the very least the Left must be realistic — both about Socialist politics and Socialist hopes. The likelihood of a full, classic, Socialist Revolution in Great Britain is unlikely. It is highly likely that British Capitalism will fight tooth and nail to defend itself in the coming years — even to the extent of trying to overcome its crises through producing further crises. The coming period might just as easily see the decline of the Left as the rise of the Left. In the difficulties of the present period, the Left needs to fight both effectively and realistically for Socialism and for the Socialist Revolution. It is only in those circumstances that the Left can fight and win. The Left must fight — and it must fight to win.

The politics of the British Left, today, need to be focused on the present struggle. They need to be focused on the future development of the struggle. Socialism cannot be completely planned out in advance but the Left needs to have some broad idea of how Socialism will be achieved and how Socialism will be maintained. The lack of a politics of the future has always been a key problem for the British Left and for British Socialism. The struggle in Britain, today, is the struggle for Socialism.

XIII. New Left Ideas

The British Left needs new ideas. It needs new ideas which can challenge Capitalism in Britain and put forward a strong politics of Democratic Socialism. In order to do this the British Left needs new ideas.

The British Left has Left ideas. One of the most powerful tools that the British Left has, today, is its ability to develop theories and studies of British society and British politics. For understanding British society and British politics, today, the power of class analysis, Socialist analysis, and specifically the ideas of Marx, remains vital. In 21st century Britain, with its classes and class struggles, the need for Marxist theory, and for Left theory, as a means of understanding the problems of British society, is vital.

Socialist ideas are vital — given that the problems of British society have been caused by the contradictions of Capitalism itself, especially Capitalism in Britain. The British Left has always been very good at developing powerful theories and ideas about British society — about the problems of British society. Left ideas can help to solve Britain's problems. Britain has a tradition of Marxist ideas. It is time to develop those ideas — once again.

The British Left can understand Britain. It can understand Britain because it has the theory needed to examine the social reality of Britain. The British Left has Left theory. It has Socialist theory. It has Marxist theory. A powerful tool of the British Left is the Left analysis of British history and of British politics. The best British Left writers of the past century, especially from the New Left, understood the impact of Britain's politics and Britain's history on the present-day reality of Britain. The power of this social analysis was always the most powerful contribution of Socialist thought and Marxist thought in British society and British politics. The British Left has a powerful set of theories on British politics, British society, British economics, and British thought, but the most powerful aspect of British Left thought has been the Left's theory of history. Today, in Britain's contemporary struggles, the power of the Left's ability to understand the reality of British society, its Capitalist limits, and Socialist potentials, is vital to understanding where the Left can hopefully make advances today. If the British Left is to advance today and in the future, it must develop its theories and studies of Britain's politics. The British Left must re-develop its ideas in order to understand the present problems of Great Britain today. No British Left, today, can survive, or develop, without a theory of Britain's politics.

The contemporary struggle of the British Left has two parts — (1) to develop a Socialist theory and Socialist politics in Britain, and (2) to develop a new working-class movement capable of fighting for Socialism, here and now, in Britain. Such a statement is more easily said than it is accomplished — more easily said than done. Yet the British Left retains the ability to achieve this, and the means. In the next few years, and the next few decades, we can hopefully see new Socialist advances in Britain capable of pushing forward the struggle for Socialism in Britain.

Britain clearly needs New Left politics. The politics of this New Left have to be Socialist politics. This New Left cannot afford to present simply Social Democracy as its politics. This New Left has to struggle for Socialist politics and for Socialism. This might seem obvious, but it is a key political aspect of the struggle for a better society and a better world today. The Left cannot afford to struggle for anything else but Socialism. The Left needs to struggle

for Socialism.

A New Left is emerging in Britain today. If it is united and committed to Socialist politics this New Left has the ability to change British society. If it can change British society, it will achieve a better Britain — and a better world.

XIV. The British Left Today

Britain needs the Left. Britain needs Left politics. British Left politics, today, is coming out of a difficult period in its history – the 1980s, the 1990s, and the 2000s. This means that the British Left needs to be confident that it can actually change Britain and British society – despite the difficulties of the past. The results and problems of the last forty years in British society, since the rise of Neo-Liberalism, have severely weakened and demoralised the British Left. While the British Left, today, has more opportunities than it did a decade ago it still lacks the organisation, the strategy, and the tactics necessary in order to actually win the struggle for Socialism in Britain. The British Left, today, needs to think long and hard about how it can both interpret British society and change British society – if it seriously wishes to change British society for the better and build a Socialist Britain. By developing new ideas, new politics, and new strategies, the British Left will have the ability to solve the problems of British politics. By solving the problems of British politics the British Left will hopefully be able to change Britain itself. Britain needs to become a better country – a Socialist country, a country based on the principle of the free development of each and the free development of all. The British Left needs to solve the problems of Britain.

The British Left needs to think about both the politics of today and the politics of the future — of how Socialism will be achieved and how Socialism will be maintained.⁵

The British Left, today, needs to be confident. It needs to believe it can win the struggle for a better Britain. The theory of Historical Materialism shows that Socialism is possible. Socialism is possible at the right level of social development, historical development, and economic development. Socialism can exist in the right form of social struggle. Britain has the basis for Socialism. Britain can achieve Socialism. The British Left, today, just needs to struggle for Socialism. It has to have hope in itself and in the struggle for a better world.

Left unity will be vital for any Left advance in Britain. The Left needs to be united in order to lead the struggle — both against Neo-Liberalism and against Capitalism. All sections of the Left must unite — in the struggle for a better world. The Left will need to be united in order to effectively struggle for Socialism. If the Left is united, it can struggle. If it is united, it can win.

The Left needs to unite — and unite for Socialism. It needs to unite in the Labour Party. It needs to unite those Socialist forces outside of the Labour Party. It needs to unite any social force of the working class which can achieve positive social change for Socialism in Britain today. The Left needs to unite in order to actually achieve social and political power.

The task of the British Left is to fight for Socialism in Britain and for Socialism in the world. This task will only be achieved by a united Left. We need a Left which can unite the Labour Party and all Socialist forces in Britain — for the struggle for Socialism.

The Left must succeed — better than it has done so far in British politics. If any part of the analysis of this essay is correct, then the need for a new Left politics in Britain is vital. The Left must fight and struggle — in order to achieve its Socialist objectives and its Socialist politics. It cannot simply wait for events. Instead, the Left must develop new ideas and new solutions to the problems of British politics and British society.

XV. British Hopes

Britain needs new politics. Britain needs new Socialist politics. A key point, today, is the need for politics — for Socialist politics and for Left politics.

Britain needs Socialism. Socialists, in Britain, have always fought to overthrow Capitalism in Britain — and to replace it with Socialism. For Socialists, the limits of Capitalism are well known. The limits of Capitalism, and the crises of Capitalism, have caused the problems of Britain. We need a society based on Socialism. We need a society based on the free development of each and the free development of all.

Britain also needs democracy. Capitalist democracy is a limited democracy. Capitalist democracy is a flawed democracy. Britain needs Democracy. Britain needs Socialism. Only Socialism can bring about real democracy — both in Britain and in the world. Britain needs to become a Socialist society. Capitalism in Britain needs to be replaced with Socialism in Britain and with Socialism across the world.

Britain can solve the problems which are currently dividing Britain — but only through major change and radical change. Britain needs to shift to the Left in order to solve the major problems which are damaging British society and the British working class.

XVI. British Results

We can end this essay by briefly outlining the problems of British politics. We can also briefly outline some of the solutions.

Britain, today, is facing a major crisis — a crisis which has its roots in the repeated failures of Conservative governments and the Neo-Liberal order in Britain.

Britain, today, needs to change. It is time for the crisis in Britain to be confronted by the Left and by a Left alternative.

Britain, today, needs major change. Britain especially needs economic change, social change, political change, and structural change. This change can only be brought about by Socialism.

The struggle for Socialism in Britain might soon be entering a new phase — a phase which might see the end of Neo-Liberalism.

The only solution to the problems of British society, and British politics, is to overcome Capitalism. Britain requires serious social and political change. Britain requires serious social and political revolution.

Britain must become a Socialist society — a society based on the free development of each and the free development of all.

XVII. Britain and the Future

British politics, since the 1980s, has been trapped in the limits of Neo-Liberalism. Like the limits of the post-war period, and the limits of the Cold War, British politics today is trapped in the limits of Neo-Liberalism. In order for the Left to make any serious advances in Britain the stalemate of the Neo-Liberal period needs to be broken — by a struggle from the Left and by the Left. The British Left, like the Left in other countries, needs to confront the crisis and the limits of Neo-Liberalism. Of course, this would require a major social revolution in Britain but at the moment some progress can still be made in Britain through other forms of struggle — via the struggle for a Labour government, the struggle to end Austerity, and the

struggle to end Neo-Liberalism. The problems of British society show the need for Socialism. Indeed, the problems of Capitalism, today, show the need for Socialism. If humanity is to progress in the 21st century then humanity needs to achieve Socialism — a society based on co-operation, freedom, and equality.⁶

The task of the British Left is to overcome the difficulties of the present-day crisis. Socialist recovery and Labour recovery remains difficult, today, but not impossible.⁷ The British Left needs to learn the political and social lessons of the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s, in order to struggle for a better Left. A Left that can struggle for Socialism in Britain.⁸

The task of the British Left is to fight for Socialism. The British Left can fight. The British Left can win. It remains a force capable of fighting for Socialism. Marxism and radicalism can help in this struggle. Today, once again, British workers and the British Left can fight for Socialism. The recent past has been hard for British workers and the British Left. Today there is a possibility for the Left and for Socialism in Britain. For British Socialists, as well as the British Left, there is now hope for major social change. The British Left can fight today.⁹ The British Left can win today.

Britain today is trying to face multiple crises. The current context of British politics, British society, and the British Left, today, is one of crisis and difficulty. There are many crises in Britain today — the crisis of Britain in the early 21st century, the crisis of British Capitalism since 2007/2008, the crisis of national decline, the crisis of national politics, the crisis of Europe, the crisis of Britain and Europe, the crisis of Brexit, the need for a new Left in Britain, and the need for a better political situation in Britain. All of these crises have been developing in Britain since the end of the Cold War and the beginning of the Neo-Liberal era. In this general context the British Left, since the 1990s and since the 2000s, has struggled to rebuild itself. The British Left, today, needs to struggle for Socialism. Today, there is some chance and some possibility of a turn to the Left. This turn shows there is hope for the Left in Britain. There is hope for the Left. This hope could lead to a better Britain.

Notes

1. E.P. Thompson, *Socialist Humanism*, (1957)
2. E.P. Thompson, *Peculiarities of the English*, (1965)
3. P. Anderson, *The Figures of Descent*, (1987)
4. P. Anderson, *The Origins of the Present Crisis*, (1964)
5. E.J. Hobsbawm, *Politics for a Rational Left*, (1989)

6. P. Anderson, *Origins of the Present Crisis*, (1964)
7. P. Anderson, *Origins of the Present Crisis*, (1964)
8. E.P Thompson, *Socialist Humanism*, (1957)
9. E.P Thompson, *Socialist Humanism*, (1957)

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