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POLITICAL PROGRAMMES OF BRITISH
COMMUNISM, 1944–1990

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From *The British Road to Socialism...*

British Online Archives' updated collection, *Political Programmes of British Communism, 1944–1990* is drawn from the papers of several commissions of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB).

The collection focuses on the CPGB's main political programme: *The British Road to Socialism*. First published in 1951 with the personal approval of the leader of the Soviet Union, Joseph Stalin, *The British Road* was redrafted several times as the CPGB wrestled with factionalism and tried to keep the manifesto relevant to British and international politics.



This collection is one of many CPGB resources hosted on the British Online Archives website.

The redrafting process was often long and arduous. Minutes, reports, and correspondence offer an exclusive look at how *The British Road* took shape.

The collection also features material from other Party commissions. These wrestled with issues such as the democratic deficit in Britain, class unity, and the organisation of the Party. These sources demonstrate how communist plans to reshape Britain developed over time.



The collection contains over 10,800 unique images.

“The basic problems facing the British people... can only be solved when the capitalist system is replaced by social ownership of the means of production”
– *The British Road to Socialism* (1968 edn.).

Sources include: Archive Trust of the Communist Party of Great Britain

...to commissions on internal Party issues.

LOOKING AT THE LEFT

'Post-Fordism'

Old ideas for New Times

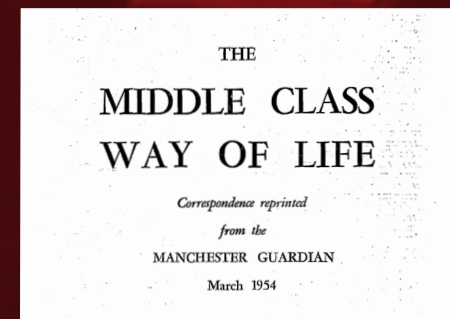
Mike Freeman and Gemma Forest take a critical look at the most fashionable theory on the left

Shortly after he became Labour leader in 1983 Neil Kinnock paid homage to professor Eric Hobsbawm, historian and leading Communist Party intellectual, as 'my favourite Marxist'. Kinnock adopted Hobsbawm's thesis that Labour's apparently inexorable post-war electoral slippage was attributable to the decline in the manual workforce and the rise of white-collar employment. Despite its internal strife, the loss of its daily paper and the departure of its members in

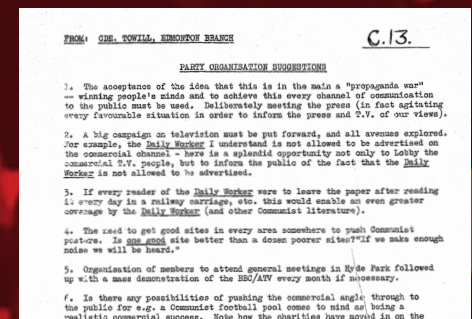
Now the Communist Party has come up with a new theory for its friends at Walworth Road—'post-Fordism', the mode of social organisation at the heart of what *Marxism Today* styles today's 'New Times'. This characterisation of a new phase of capitalist development justifies the redefinition of socialism in terms which accept the capitalist market and a trimmed-down welfare state. The Communist Party now puts its hopes for a better future in the exercise of choice by individual

the New Times analysis, and Labour's policy review, the first report of which was endorsed at the Blackpool conference last month. The key to the New Times is the transition from 'Fordism' to 'post-Fordism'. According to the *Marxism Today* thesis, borrowed from the French economists Michel Aglietta and Alain Lipietz, Fordism means an economy dominated by mass production and mass consumption, with centralised management and wage bargaining, and extensive state

In the CPGB's later years, many of the commissions became battlegrounds between various factions of the Party. The *Manifesto for New Times* signaled an end to the CPGB's flagship political programme: *The British Road to Socialism*.



The "Commission on the Middle Classes" investigated ways in which an alliance could be built between the middle class and the working class in Britain.



Internal commissions like the "Committee on Party Organisation" looked at streamlining the structure and methods of the CPGB.

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