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# ***THESE ARE LIBERAL POLICIES***

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# FOREWORD

*In July 1982 Party Council approved a detailed Programme which summarised the Liberal approach to the major issues Britain faces in the 1980s with a statement of Liberal priorities for government. This has been updated in May 1983 to take account of policy developments since the first publication.*

*The Alliance of the Liberals and Social Democrats is a partnership of two independent parties who have agreed to work together at the General Election and in the next parliament. The Alliance is publishing a Joint Programme which will deal with the immediate tasks for a Government of radical reform and reconstruction.*

*But we are no less Liberals for the fact of an Alliance. This document sets out our Liberal philosophy and approach for the future. The continued strength of Liberalism is vital to the success of the Alliance. The success of the Alliance will itself be an important milestone on the road to the achievement of our ultimate goal - a Liberal society.*

*The revisions were prepared by Leighton Andrews, and Chris Graham in consultation with Peter Knowlson, Head of Policy, and authorised by myself and William Wallace on behalf of the Standing Committee.*

*Alan Sherwell*

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DIRECTOR OF POLICY PROMOTION



# C O N T E N T S

Page 2	FOREWORD
Page 3	1. THE LIBERAL APPROACH
Page 5	2. THESE ARE LIBERAL POLICIES
	a) Political and Constiutional Reform
Page 8	b) Economic and Industrial Strategy
Page 11	c) People and Communities
Page 14	d) Supplying our needs
Page 17	e) Europe and the World
Page 19	3. CONCLUSIONS



# 1. THE LIBERAL APPROACH

Each political party is built upon a particular approach to politics and on its own view of people and society. The Liberal approach stems from our central commitment to liberty, to the development of human potential in its full range and diversity and to the importance of the community. We seek economic prosperity not as an end in itself but as part of the necessary foundation for a free and open society. We recognise the interdependence of human life and liberty in different communities, not only in Britain but throughout the world. Above all we seek to spread wealth and power, believing that liberty is best promoted through the responsible actions of men and women working together within diverse communities. We therefore see equality, or rather a diminution of gross inequalities, as a consequence of such a liberal society rather than an end in itself. We judge state intervention, not as in itself good or bad, but by its contribution to the development of a liberal society.

Britain has moved further away from a liberal society in recent years. Its political institutions have become more centralised, its society more divided. Its economy is in crisis, its public services unable to meet the demands made upon them. British governments now have to operate in a much more hostile world or with increasing threats to international security and a world economy sunk into recession. The task which will face a new government committed to liberal values will be difficult in the extreme.

We recognise that there are no simple solutions to Britain's deepseated problems, and no way in which Britain can resolve those problems in isolation. The illusion that Britain can somehow manage its economy, or maintain its security, without international cooperation reflects only the introspective nationalism of Britain's political extremes. A Liberal programme for economic and social recovery must place a high priority on active cooperation with other governments in Western Europe and beyond.

The path to recovery must begin with a transformation of popular attitudes to government, to social cooperation, and to economic activity. Britain's decline has been marked by the increasingly destructive struggles between management and labour, between different social classes and racial and religious groups and between the established political parties which represent these adversarial forces. A restricted secretive and centralised political system has made for ill-informed debate and encouraged irresponsible opposition, with the dangerous pretence that there are easy answers to our serious problems.

People are more likely to behave responsibly if they are tested as responsible citizens. Our political institutions fail to do this and our electoral system reinforces the deep divisions in society. Political reform must therefore play a central part in the Liberal Programme.

Citizen responsibility and social harmony must be rooted in local communities. Most citizens judge the quality of their society and of their government from what they experience in their daily lives. Britain's structure of government, its system of planning, its fashions in architecture, its provision of schools, shopping centres and medical care, have all been moving away from local control in the last forty years. The destruction of old-established communities, the removal of control and ownership from these communities to Town Hall bureaucracies, to irresponsible public authorities, and to distant company headquarters, have left whole sections of our population without power or self-respect. Liberals are determined to reverse this trend, to rebuild the local confidence and leadership which alone can provide a constructive alternative to the frustration and violence which mars our cities.

The rebuilding of public confidence requires that central government must also be made open and accountable. Cynicism about Britain's political institutions is reflected in declining turnout at local and parliamentary elections. Conservative and Labour politicians wax eloquent in defence of citizens' rights and democracy abroad whilst resisting their extension in Britain. The Liberal concept of democracy - and of efficient government - involves effective mechanisms of accountability, open and informed debate, wider representation of the diversity of views through a more democratic voting system, and greater protection for the individual citizen against the state.

Our centralised government concentrates too much power in the hands of far too few of our citizens, nearly all of whom are men. The severe underrepresentation of women in public life and positions of authority is a waste of abilities we can ill afford, and it leads to errors and injustices in public policy particularly those concerning family life, education and conditions of employment. Liberals are pledged to introduce reforms which will offer genuinely equal opportunity to both sexes.

The conviction that free and responsible women and men can work together to achieve far more than is possible within the

present system of organised antagonism is also at the heart of Liberal proposals for industrial partnership. There can be no basis for long-term economic recovery in Britain without engaging the constructive cooperation of the workforce as a whole - the examples of West Germany and Japan have much to teach Britain about the economics, as well as the social value, of patterns of work based upon the active participation of the workforce and the wider distribution of profits.

We offer no illusions that there are any short cuts to restore the British economy to health. We believe that the best path to recovery lies through the acceptance of a mixed economy not as a reluctant compromise, nor as a temporary expedient, but as the best way of reconciling human needs and capabilities with the efficiency of an open market and the public responsibilities of a self-governing society. Britain's economy has suffered from governments dogmatically opposed either to public or to private enterprise; we need a government which believes that both have a positive contribution to make.

A mixed economy can also provide the framework for a wider and longer-term approach to the environment for economic activity. We still know far too little about the growing influences of technology on society and our environment. Much more research is needed into the implications of the discoveries of science and technology. To take the most obvious example, the costs of pollution and dereliction and the failure to recycle to conserve resources, whilst appearing to gain short-term advantage, impose long-term burdens. An efficient system of public transport represents a public good to Britain's long-term economy and society which cannot simply be costed in annual accounting terms, nor can the support of rural communities and of a countryside of human scale. We are the creatures of our environment, made more or less human and healthy and happy by the conditions in which we live.

We share a common civilisation and a common commitment to democratic values with our partners in the European Community but we are also part of the world community. Our economic recovery must partly depend upon the ability of our neighbours to overcome the parallel difficulties which they face. The industrialised world has, however, a major moral responsibility as well as an economic interest in the immense problems of the less developed countries. We seek an international economic order as open and as flexible as possible; and are determined to strengthen economic cooperation at the European and global levels. Our security should be seen as one part of world security dependent upon economic stability and should not be a consequence of either political or economic exploitation or repression. We therefore seek to promote common security within both a regional and global framework, making full use of the United Nations, and ensuring that benefits to some nations are not at the expense of others.

Civilised societies are judged by the quality of their public services and the provision which they make for the welfare, education and security of their citizens. From this perspective Britain has been slipping away from civilisation under the Conservatives. The particular emphasis Liberals give to education as a life-long activity reflects our commitment to encourage each citizen to develop his personality and his skills to the full. We reject imposed equality or restrictive uniformity in public services as in economic activity. People are not uniform in their skills, interests or needs, but it is impossible to create or maintain a sense of community in a highly unequal society. A progressive Tax system, a long-term incomes policy, adequate public welfare services and voluntary action within the community all have a role to play in reducing inequality and raising the quality of life for all. The fundamental rights of equality of treatment before the law, of equal representation in elected bodies and of respect both for individuals and for the diverse groups within our society must be strengthened.

The Liberal Party rejects the idea that there is any single blueprint for an ideal society. A free society will naturally grow and evolve; and the diversity that results brings a richness and a civilisation that cannot be achieved by central direction, or by the ruthless pursuit of material advantage.

The Liberal Party is thus committed to restoring hope to our disillusioned and stagnant society. We aim to build and encourage a broad radical movement, which can challenge and overcome the massive inertia of British society and of the British political system, both within each local community and within the central structures of public and private power. Only through engaging the enthusiasm and imagination of individual citizens, in local communities, in a working democracy, in shared responsibilities at the workplace, can we harness the resources that can reverse Britain's long decline.



## 2. THESE ARE LIBERAL POLICIES

### A. Political and Constitutional Reform

We have been too slow in Britain to draw the obvious connections between the unsatisfactory way we are governed and our economic and social failures. Divisive, secretive and centralised institutions have produced government which is out of touch with people's needs and is therefore ineffective at tackling our economic and social problems.

Liberals stand for government institutions which are closer to the people and which set out to represent them properly. Our proposals for reform rest on the confident proposition that an individual or community whose active involvement is encouraged will naturally contribute more to the society we all share and enrich its democratic life more fully.

### Electoral Reform

Liberals believe, along with the great majority of voters, that we should have an electoral system which recognises the importance of communities and seeks to give equal weight to every vote wherever and for whomever it may be cast. The present first-past-the-post voting system with single-member constituencies distorts the balance of political representation between city and countryside, between North and South and between majority and minority opinions. It also inhibits the election of women and of candidates from ethnic minorities.

Liberals want the system of proportional representation which uses the single transferable vote in multi-member constituencies to allow the voter to express his/her preference between candidates and parties. This will not only enhance the voters' rights of democratic choice but will produce balanced representation and a close proportionality between a party's votes and the number of seats it gains.

This voting system should be employed in local, regional and Westminster elections. The multi-member wards and constituencies drawn up should conform as closely as possible to the natural communities of Britain in order to maintain and strengthen the connection between elected members and their constituents.

The European Elections of June 1984 should be held on the proportional representation system devised and voted for by the European Parliament in March 1982. This should be adopted by the UK government, whether or not the Council of Ministers has agreed to its adoption.

The money deposit required from parliamentary candidates should be abolished and instead candidates should be required to collect a larger number of voter signatures in the constituency for nomination.

### Citizens' Rights and the Law

Citizens' civil rights and freedoms are under continual attack. Every person must be protected from the corporatism of bureaucracy, government and big business. There must be effective laws, particularly in the computer age, to guard fundamental rights such as that of personal privacy.

Ultimately Liberals would wish to see civil liberties and fundamental freedoms enumerated and entrenched in a written constitution for a federal Britain. Liberals have consistently demanded that as a first step the European Convention on Human Rights be incorporated into UK domestic law, with a number of limited but important improvements.

At the same time, however, excessive government secrecy which deprives the individual and his/her MP of necessary information to make mature democratic judgments should be broken down by repealing Section 2 of the Official Secrets Act and substituting an Official Information Bill on the lines of that introduced by Liberal MP, Clement Freud, in 1978.

Our present legal system is often unfair, inaccessible and inefficient. More resources are needed for community law centres and a comprehensive system of legal aid. A range of legal reforms are needed starting with Criminal and Civil Procedure to give adequate protection to the rights of the individual and effective remedies against abuse of power. Grossly overcrowded and out-of-date prisons are dehumanising for both prisoners and staff. We must reduce the number in custody by shorter sentences and increased remission and through wider provision of non-custodial treatment and community-based alternatives to prison. We aim to make rehabilitation more effective and reduce crime.

Many groups in our society are oppressed. All have a right to be respected and represented. To aid this process, there should be a single Anti-Discrimination Board to combat discrimination on grounds of race, sex, sexual orientation or religious belief and to help educate public opinion to understand the rights and values of those who follow different life styles from the majority.

We would introduce reforms which help establish genuine equal opportunities and rewards for both sexes by strengthening existing legislation and procedures against discriminatory policies and practices.

Educational provision for ethnic minorities should aim to enable these citizens to obtain employment, promotion and training

opportunities on an equal basis. Public authority employers and nationalised industries should be required to give a positive lead in providing employment and promotion opportunities to citizens from ethnic minority communities.

Particular hardship has resulted from the 1981 Nationality Act which Liberals will repeal. We would replace it with a new law giving one class of citizenship for all citizens of the UK and its remaining colonies. Wives, husbands, children and close dependents of UK residents should be allowed to join their families in Britain.

Although our legal system enjoys a good reputation it is often not accessible to people because of cost or complexity. To carry out the necessary reforms we believe that reallocation of the responsibilities of the Home Office, the Lord Chancellor's Department and Law Officers is needed so that responsibility for legal services, the administration of justice and law reform falls under a new Department of Justice. Income and capital limits should be raised to make more people eligible for legal aid and a Legal Services Commission should be set up which through local legal services committees would have responsibility for the financing of law centres, and running an effective legal aid system, and ensuring a better spread and delivery of legal services.

We will introduce independent Crown Prosecutors in each police area so that prosecution is properly separated from the investigation process and introduce other safeguards such as tape recording of questioning for those who have been arrested.

We will introduce a legal remedy for individuals who have suffered from maladministration by a public authority or a government department and strengthen the powers of the ombudsman.

We also intend to simplify and speed up civil courts procedure, particularly for small claims and improve facilities for litigants in person, set up a new system of family courts and simplify and improve the drafting and interpretation of statutes and the process of law reform.

## **Changing the structure of British government**

In the long run Liberals are committed to working towards a Federation, consisting of Scotland, Wales and major regions of England, each responsible for the great bulk of public services with its own sources of revenue. The Federal government would then exercise centrally the functions of defence, external relations, the currency and macro-economic management. Within the nations and regions of the UK, there would be a single tier of most-purpose district authorities with a local income-tax as the main source of revenue resting on a greatly extended system of community and parish councils (with powers defined by statute and a right to be consulted on local issues) as the basic unit of local democracy.

As a first step towards federalism, Scotland should be given self-government with its own Parliament, with a single tier of most-purpose authorities, Wales an Assembly with extensive powers and the English regions elected councils taking democratic control of the functions of Regional Health Authorities and most health functions of the DHSS, and of Water authorities and other public services. As regional consciousness develops we will accelerate transfer of powers from central government to the English regions.

We deplore the cynicism which has allowed Northern Ireland to elect its European and local authority representatives by PR(STV) whilst retaining the divisive first-past-the-post system for Westminster elections. We will continue discussions on the future of Northern Ireland in a wider context of an all-Ireland dimension and with our partners in the European Community. Progress towards peace should come from within the Province but we must examine all possible sources of outside help. We will continue to emphasise the importance of full human rights.

The Federal system of government together with the protection of civil rights will be enshrined in a written constitution, guarded by a new Second Chamber which will replace the House of Lords.

The Civil Service should be increasingly decentralised from Whitehall to the regions. It should be opened up to recruitment from outside and by competition particularly at senior levels. We believe in a greater use of Policy Advisors to assist Ministers and giving the Central Policy Review Staff a role in longer-term thinking as well as advising Ministers on interdepartmental issues. The training and retraining of civil servants should be improved with more positive career development and secondment to local government and the private sector.

## **Reform of Parliament**

Parliament must be effective in both its roles, checking the Executive and contributing positively to legislation.

Reports from the Expenditure and Select Committees should be debated as of right and the role of the Comptroller and Auditor-General should be extended to review and control the effectiveness of public spending.

To reduce the domination over the Commons now enjoyed exclusively by the two front benches, an all-party Business Committee will be established with the responsibility for planning the order of business and allocating time for legislation and debates. The Committee system will be strengthened both in the powers to call Ministers and civil servants to give full evidence and in their involvement in pre-legislative discussion to improve the quality of Bills put before the House.

The House of Lords should be replaced by a new, democratically chosen, second chamber which includes representatives of the Nations and Regions of the United Kingdom, and UK members of the European Parliament.

## Support for political parties

We will continue and extend the practice of providing financial support for Parliamentary Opposition parties and introduce new schemes of aid for political parties including research and training, as a means of improving the processes of democracy in this country. We also believe that lack of private wealth should not be a barrier to people standing as Parliamentary candidates and that they should be able to reclaim basic expenses as well as having full access to information and training.

We shall end excessive dependence of political parties on vested interests by legislating to ensure that donations by trade unions or companies to political parties are only made after a positive decision by their members or shareholders.

We favour a scheme of state financial aid to the parties which would simultaneously encourage them to raise funds in small donations from individual citizens and thus improve participation in politics.

## PRIORITIES:

- \* Set up a special Constitutional Unit of government under a Cabinet Minister to oversee many of these reforms. (Prime Minister).

### Electoral Reform

- \* Introduction of Community PR(STV) in multi-member seats for parliamentary and local elections.
- \* Adoption of the European Parliament PR system for the Euro-elections in June 1984.
- \* Abolition of the deposit in Parliamentary elections and its replacement by a requirement for signatures of 0.5% of the electorate.

### Citizens' Rights and the Law

- \* Incorporation of an amended European Convention of Human Rights into British Law.
- \* Introduce a Freedom of Information Act and legislate for Data Protection and Privacy.
- \* Repeal the 1981 Nationality Act and introduce a new Nationality Act. (Home Office)..
- \* Reform Criminal Procedures with an independent system for criminal prosecution.

- \* A new Department of Justice responsible for legal service, administration of justice and law reform.
- \* A Legal Services Commission for legal services, law centres and extending legal aid.
- \* A legal remedy for individuals who suffer from maladministration by public authorities.
- \* Increase remission from one third to one half of the sentence.
- \* Reduce maximum permissible sentences.

### British government

- \* A Scottish Parliament with self-government for Scotland.
- \* Establish a Welsh Assembly and elected regional councils in England.
- \* Greater use of Policy Advisors throughout Whitehall.
- \* Support for Urban Parish and Community Councils where there is local demand. (Environment)

### Reform of Parliament

- \* Rationalisation of Parliamentary hours. (Parliament)
- \* Establish an all-party Business Committee. (Parliament)
- \* Increased roles and resources for Select Committees. (Parliament)
- \* Extend the role of the Comptroller and Auditor-General to review and control the effectiveness of public spending. (Parliament)

## B. Economic and Industrial Strategy

The temporary miracle of North Sea Oil, which should be used to modernise Britain's equipment, has been conscripted to pay the bill for unnecessarily increased unemployment. Our skilled population, who should be earning a satisfying living by restoring the nation's useful wealth, are increasingly unemployed, under-trained and under-promoted. Our national assets, including services essential for life and work are deliberately allowed to become dilapidated and obsolete. A Liberal-led Government would start at once to reverse these three disastrous courses, even though the world economic climate is likely to be hostile.

We would initiate recovery through a programme of public investment - aimed at creating worthwhile employment and better training - coupled with a long-term permanent prices and incomes policy to restrain inflation together with incentives for industrial partnership. We would promote new industries and smaller businesses and introduce a series of fiscal reforms to provide a minimum of income for all, develop a wider base for local taxation and redistribute wealth.

### Industrial Recovery

The framework for restraining inflation whilst expanding the economy includes a Prices and Incomes Authority responsible by statute to Parliament for monitoring pay settlements and price increases and developing arbitration procedures for pay settlements related to agreed annual pay increases. Where the voluntary approach failed, the Government would have the power to introduce fiscal sanctions on both employers and employees in support of arbitration awards and against monopoly pricing and monopoly pay settlements. The effectiveness of the incomes and prices policy will determine the speed with which our programme of expansion could be implemented.

We aim at creating over one million jobs in 3 years at a cost of £4 billion pa., under the following headings:

**Housing:** about half the programme in rehabilitating existing buildings, and half in assisting new housebuilding by housing associations and local authorities. (Private builders would tender for this work, under a requirement to employ substantial numbers of trainees).

**Environment:** a greatly expanded domestic energy conservation programme using mainly 'unskilled' labour; major sewerage and water main schemes, similarly labour intensive.

**Transport:** subject to the ending of restrictive practices, the further electrification of

the railway, and renewal of equipment and neglected track; acceleration of road by-pass construction and of relief roads; tackling part of the huge backlog of waterway maintenance.

**Information Technology:** including installing the cable system needed for two-way multiple communication.

**Other Major Projects:** regional schemes for inner-city renewal, flood protection, coast-erosion prevention and environmental improvement.

**Youth Training:** the development of facilities for a two-year traineeship for young people between the age of 16 and 18. Training would be provided at local schools, colleges, in industry or skill centres and trainees would receive a training wage. We aim to build up to 500,000 places.

**Adult Retraining:** a substantial expansion of adult training opportunities and facilities designed to equip people with newer skills, run by District Training Boards representing employers, employees and local education.

**Project Support:** government should give special support for socially desirable projects (eg: an expanded water and sewerage programme) and for environmental improvements, which are sub-contacted to smaller firms and cooperatives; ie. domestic insulation, house-building, recycling resources, refurbishing national parks and improvement of urban sites. Also for artists and groups of artists working in the community.

### Industrial Strategy

Support for the mixed economy is a crucial feature of our strategy. The key role of government is to provide a stable political and economic framework in which industry can plan with certainty. We accept the current balance between private and public ownership and propose no major changes. We believe that Government has a major role in assisting the development of newer technologies, by promoting them in a commercial framework supported by Private Enterprise. It should expand its efforts in export promotion (including education and training for overseas) and make full use of public purchasing to stimulate innovation and the introduction of crucial technologies. We would vigorously tackle monopoly power by encouraging de-mergers and give incentives for larger businesses

and the banking system to decentralise authority and decision-taking to local enterprise.

Liberals see small and medium-sized businesses as the major growth point in the economy. We would introduce a series of measures designed to provide positive discrimination for people starting up and developing small businesses, with particular emphasis on co-operative and community enterprise.

## **Economic and Fiscal Measures**

Our aim is to increase demand, ensure a competitive exchange rate and stop levying income tax on the poorest. There is scope for substantial expansion, provided growth is concentrated in productive and worthwhile areas of the economy. Government must effectively monitor both the quality and nature of growth to ensure that our measures benefit those most in need. We must co-ordinate our economic policies with like-minded nations, especially those in Western Europe, in order to create freer and fairer trade from which all can benefit. We will give priority to urgent progress towards European and Monetary Union, with greater coordination of financial systems. As a first step Britain should become a full member of the European Monetary System.

We would abolish the National Insurance Surcharge and reintroduce the lower-level initial rate of income tax, a Cumulative Capital Receipts Tax, and a comprehensive tax credit scheme which will unify and simplify the taxation and social security systems, as well as eliminating the poverty trap. It will provide a basic minimum income for all, abolish most means tests and restore supplementary benefit to its intended role of discretionary extra provision for a few special cases. It will be an important instrument of social policy, giving help to those who pay no income tax, removing discrimination against those who are out of work or in full-time education and treating men and women as equals for tax purposes. We would initiate a radical review of the whole of the taxation system including capital taxation.

In local government, Liberals would drastically reduce central controls over local spending, including powers to cut grants of those who overspend, and introduce a simpler system of central funding for local authorities plus project support for needy authorities. We would plan to abolish domestic rates and introduce Local Income Tax (through a system of end-of-year tax adjustments) as the main source of local revenue with a tax, at a single national rate, on the unimproved value of all land.

## **Partnership at work - a positive role for Trades Unions**

Britain's resistance to industrial change and innovation is partly the off-spring of "two sides of industry" and a life-style of confrontation and conflict measured in victories for "workers" or "management". This battlefield mentality is reinforced by Conservative and Labour governments legislating to shift the balance of power in favour of their paymasters.

Liberals believe that the introduction of genuine industrial democracy will progressively transform attitudes and enable people at work to participate fully in decisions that affect their working life and to share more fully in the wealth they help to create. Our proposals are twofold:

1. Employee Participation in Decisions  
- through democratically elected Works Councils with rights to key information and upper, supervisory, boards elected equally by employees and shareholders.
2. Employee Participation in Ownership  
- by an expansion of employee share ownership schemes.

Decentralisation of decision-taking, particularly in large enterprises, is essential. Liberals would discriminate in favour of community enterprises, producer and service co-operatives, and other forms of co-ownership as good examples of industrial democracy in practice, attracting to business life many young people wholly alienated by hierarchical and bureaucratic companies.

The Trades Union Movement has a key role in the development of workplace democracy. Worker-representatives, shop stewards and Trade Union officials must be fully trained and equipped to help develop the form of industrial democracy suited to each enterprise. There should be reasonable time off and adequate facilities for union representatives to perform their duties, and we would introduce an Employees' Charter clearly defining and safeguarding trade union and individual workers' rights.

The Trades Union Movement must be encouraged to adapt itself to play a constructive and positive role in newer forms of enterprise and in modernising British industry. Most of these changes cannot be imposed by legislation. Union Members must be allowed to play a greater role in decision-taking; officials should be subject to regular elections and fully accountable to the membership. We are concerned about the effects of recent Conservative legislation aimed at limiting Trades Union immunity and will review its impact on Trades Unions, but we regard legal encouragement of the Closed Shop as an infringement of an essential freedom. We would wish to see a careful balance of collective and individual rights on existing closed shops with action against the pre-entry closed shop matched by retention of legal provision for Union membership agreements on condition that they rest on substantial work force support and that exemption from Union membership is available on grounds of conscience.

# PRIORITIES:

## Industrial Recovery

- \* A Pay and Prices Commission backed by legislation.
- \* A two-year training for those aged 16-19. (Employment/Education).
- \* Expansion of adult training and re-training. (Employment/Education)

## Industrial Strategy

- \* More public funds for investment in new and high-risk technologies. (Industry)
- \* A strengthened Monopolies and Mergers Commission. (Industry)
- \* A range of measures to help people start up and develop small businesses. (Industry)

## Economic and Fiscal Measures

- \* The abolition of the National Insurance Surcharge, the reintroduction of a lower starting rate for Income Tax and a Cumulative Capital Receipts Tax in place of Capital Transfer Tax. (Treasury)
- \* An increase in child benefit and the introduction of Credit Income Tax. (Treasury/Inland Revenue)
- \* Reduction of central government controls over local government spending, abolition of powers to cut grants and the planned introduction of Local Income Tax. (Environment)
- \* The abolition of the National Insurance Surcharge, the reintroduction of a lower starting rate for Income Tax and a Cumulative Capital Receipts Tax in place of Capital Transfer Tax. (Treasury)
- \* An increase in child benefit and the introduction of Credit Income Tax. (Treasury/Inland Revenue)
- \* Reduction of central government controls over local government spending, abolition of powers to cut grants and the planned introduction of Local Income Tax. (Environment)
- \* Full membership of the European Monetary System.

## Partnership at Work

- \* Legislation requiring all organisations employing more than 20 people to establish Works Councils with democratic representation of all employees, access to specified information on the enterprise and specified powers of co-decision-taking. (Employment)
- \* Review of industrial relations legislation introduced by Conservative government. (Employment)
- \* Legislation to encourage wider employee participation in ownership, by expanding employee share ownership schemes. (Treasury)

- \* Introduction of Consumer directors on Boards of state-owned companies. (Industry)
- \* Legislation to introduce two-tier boards and give employees equal voting rights with shareholders in the election of directors on the supervisory boards. (Employment)

## C. People and Communities

Human beings themselves are the most potent resource available to our society. Only by developing the wealth of individual compassion, talent and skills will we have the resources to build communities that are in tune with human needs and which begin to liberate the immense potential that is so often stifled by circumstances. Liberal political action is in part to work with individuals and groups, in their communities, bringing the political dimension to assist their work and in part through implementing Liberal policies both at local and national levels. Liberal policies are distinct from Conservative and Labour in both purpose and practice. For Liberals the State should act to underpin support and enhance individual and community effort. It should neither substitute for voluntary activity nor, at the other extreme, abandon people to crude market forces or to inhibiting social disadvantage.

### Learning and Living

The ultimate aim of education, as of a Liberal system of government, is the development of the individual and especially of individual self-respect and autonomy.

The state should provide a system of schooling for those of compulsory school age which encourages diversity rather than uniformity, provided no individual is put at a disadvantage thereby. All citizens have a duty, through the taxation system, to contribute towards the cost of the education of the whole nation. But they also have the right to pay additionally for independent education for themselves or others.

Liberals believe in a society of free individuals, with real parity of esteem between all. Schooling must, therefore, emphasise social as well as individual development. The core of Liberal belief is that these two are complementary not contradictory; for only if an individual has genuine justified self-respect can that individual have genuine respect for others.

Individual autonomy demands education for capability as well as for self-fulfilment and, simply, fun. Education so viewed is essential to everyone throughout life; and the State has a duty to ensure this fundamental need is met.

In the light of these philosophical aims, the State must formulate explicit objectives for the education system. These objectives will change with time and need to be the subject of continuous debate involving all sections of society.

The management of education, as of everything else, must be developed to the lowest level compatible with ultimate aims and with acceptable efficiency. Schools and colleges must be closely integrated with their local communities.

Liberals will advance towards comprehensive tertiary education for 16-19 year olds. This will cater for both vocational and academic courses, allowing a valid foundation for future employment or for entry into higher education. Financing of individual students will be standardised.

### Youth: an investment in our future

Young people are the future of our country and yet they (and in particular ethnic minority youth) are increasingly alienated from our society. Current levels of youth unemployment, homelessness, leisure facilities and participation in the political process underline the total inadequacy of provision made for young people in this country.

Some of the factors are symptoms of the dreadful economic and industrial state of the country. But even with a healthy economy, young people must be given both the capability and opportunity to influence the political process. This requires both a comprehensive programme of political education, effective forms of participation in decision making and measures to meet the needs of young people.

Political Parties and Governments cannot produce universal solutions to youth issues; their role is to provide a climate in which young people can tackle their problems themselves. The Liberal Party can, however, present a challenge to the patronising and hierarchial attitudes endemic in British Society, particularly by giving young people at 16 the real opportunity and, as of right, the economic independence to choose between work, education, training, work experience and community service, without compulsion.

### The Social Framework

Liberals have opposed the reductions in Social Security benefits imposed by the Conservative Government. Our first aim must be to rectify these depredations. The introduction of our Tax Credit Scheme (see Section B) will unify benefits, abolish the poverty trap and restore personal dignity by providing a minimum income related to need.

Liberals reject the traditional attitudes to social welfare which restrict discussion to a choice between high spending and drastic economies. We recognise that differing patterns of provision may equally well meet communities' needs. For example, Liberals believe in community care with the maximum partnership between statutory authorities, voluntary agencies, with adequate support and informal networks, including family support, but we recognise that the balance within these partnerships will vary between different areas according to local needs and resources, especially the availability of local volunteers. Liberals accept that it will be no cheaper to care for frail elderly people, mentally handicapped people and severely disabled people in their own homes; the case for providing the service in this way is that it is the civilised option, allows them to live a fuller life

for as long as possible and recognises that recipients of care have status, rights and responsibilities. Liberals therefore wish to develop a continuum of care in the community, providing support and services across the range of needs, and to enable those who wish to do so to develop a fulfilling career in the community.

Liberals are prepared to make difficult decisions about health care priorities. Basic prevention, and care services that benefit many people, must have priority over those medical advances which can help only a few. The need for adequate provision for the growing numbers of the elderly and to make up for the years of neglect of the handicapped and the mentally ill requires an increase in the resources of the NHS and social services departments for this work.

Liberals would devolve much more power from the DHSS to RHAs; formal planning, for example, would become entirely a regional responsibility with only the monitoring bodies such as the Health Advisory Service, (which have to be independent of management), remaining at national level. Regional Health Authorities would in due course become an arm of regional government as part of constitutional reform.

Liberals would strengthen and support Community Health Councils, which we see as having a significant role for the foreseeable future and would develop employee participation in management of health and social services.

Community care links logically with Liberal housing policies which aim to produce mixed-tenure residential communities varied in style and slowly changing, in contrast to the disastrous demolition policies of planners and both other parties, which have produced vast artificial and soulless estates. We believe in rehabilitation not demolition. We also firmly believe that tenant management of estates would bring an essential new dimension to an otherwise insoluble problem of repair and maintenance. These destructive planning policies have brought about the lack of 'belonging', the loss of identity - both personally and communally - which is one crucial underlying cause of recent violent outbursts in inner cities. This violence will not be stemmed if it is seen principally as a problem of law and order; it will require a wide-ranging programme of remedial action.

Confidence and security can only be restored through involvement of the police - but through a massive commitment to community policing, with officers and community workers actually living in the small areas for which they are responsible. We will have to improve police recruitment and training so that ethnically mixed areas are policed by men and women sensitive to the diverse communities and traditions.

## The arts and leisure

In future more and more people will have increased leisure opportunities either through shorter working hours or, for far too many, no work at all. This makes our policies for arts and leisure even more crucial.

The arts belong to everyone or no-one. This aspect of our common but diverse humanity must be made accessible to all. We can ill-afford to do without any individual's talent to amuse, entertain or move us. Enjoyment of the arts must be opened up to all and requires a far wider definition of culture.

We believe that the quality of life in Britain is threatened by a confused administration of the arts, their poor methods of financing and the failure of successive governments to cope with the demands both of the new telecommunications technology and of the approaching age of leisure.

We intend to establish a new Ministry responsible for:

- i) Government support for the Arts through independent agencies, such as the Arts Council, the Film Finance Board, the Museums Council, the Crafts Council, and similar bodies;
- ii) A new Central Broadcasting Authority responsible for broadcasting and telecommunications, including the introduction of satellite and cable television;
- iii) National Libraries and publicly owned art collections;
- iv) Preserving and enhancing our architectural and environmental heritage.



# PRIORITIES:

## Education

- \* Increased provision for nursery education. (Education and Training)
- \* Abolish corporal punishment whilst recognising the need to support teachers more effectively in promoting good discipline. (Education and Science)
- \* End the Assisted Places Scheme and restrict charitable status to charitable objectives. (Education and Science)
- \* Review Higher and Further Education with the aim of providing one system which funds universities, polytechnics and higher education. (Education and Science)
- \* Better provision for post-school life within the school curriculum. (Education and Science).
- \* A comprehensive system of student support for all post-16 education. (Treasury)
- \* Comprehensive tertiary education, catering for both academic and vocational courses.

## Young People

- \* Provision of detached youth workers based in local communities. (Local Authorities).
- \* Local youth councils that provide an effective forum for young people to participate in taking decisions that affect them. (Local Authorities)
- \* Urgent reform of the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act to include young people under the 'priority' category.
- \* A common age of majority (16).
- \* A Statutory Youth Service, catering particularly for disadvantaged groups, in which young people can participate.

## Health, Social Services and Social Security

- \* An increase in real expenditure on Health and Social Services for the elderly, the handicapped, mentally ill and children - with more resources for community care. (Health and Social Services)
- \* A major programme of Health education. (Health)
- \* Devolve power to District Health Authorities, with greater employee and consumer participation and greater accountability to their communities. (Health)
- \* End tax reliefs for private medical care schemes. (Treasury)
- \* Reversal of the damaging cuts in Social Security made by the Conservative Government.

## Housing

- \* Substantial investment in repair, renovation and build-for-sale schemes. (Treasury)
- \* Significantly reduce central controls over local authority housing, giving local authorities the right to decide whether to sell Council Houses. (Energy/Housing)
- \* Review home insulation standards with a view to a significant increase. (Environment/Housing)
- \* No increase in the current level of mortgage interest relief. (Treasury)
- \* Charter defining the rights of tenants, occupiers and owners. (Housing)
- \* Encouragement of housing cooperatives including through housing associations.
- \* Legislation to allow all leaseholders to purchase their freehold at a fair price.

## Police and the Community

- \* Incentives for policemen and providers of community services to live in the areas for which they are responsible. (Environment)
- \* Reform police recruitment and training. (Home Office)
- \* Make police forces more accountable to elected local representatives, with an independent complaints procedure, and give elected representatives power to decide on budget, policy, operational strategy and the employment of senior officers.
- \* Implementation of the Lindop Committee proposals on police files.
- \* Disbanding of the SPG and similar groups and their non-replacement.
- \* Racist behaviour by police officers to be ordinarily punished by dismissal.
- \* A ban on the manufacture of and deployment of CS gas, rubber and plastic bullets.

## Community Relations

- \* Strengthen the 1976 Race Relations Act to eliminate gaps, eg. in youth opportunities.
- \* Oblige local authorities and employers to maintain ethnic records as a guide to their success in advancing equal opportunities, and require local authorities to publish details of the action they have taken in this respect.
- \* Amend the Public Order Act to enable certain demonstrations or processions to be banned if they are likely to stir up racial tension.
- \* Oblige local authorities to promote a genuinely multi-racial teaching force and curriculum for all schools.

- \* Greater financial encouragement and support to curriculum development in multi-racial education.
- \* Greater emphasis on multi-racial education in initial teacher-training and in inservice teacher-training.
- \* Representation of ethnic minority groups on Education Committees and school governing bodies.
- \* Increased provision for, and of, mother-tongue teaching.

#### Arts

- \* A Ministry for the Arts, Broadcasting and National Heritage.
- \* Abolish VAT on live performances, but introduce a low-level tax on blank music and video tapes to finance consumer vouchers. (Treasury)
- \* Strengthen Regional Arts Associations and the links between the Arts Council and local authorities.

## **D. Supplying our needs**

An essential element of a viable economy in future will be a high level of self-sufficiency in key resources enhanced by a thriving world trade. Europe's virtual self-sufficiency in food must be matched by less reliance on imported energy and other scarce resources, and a commitment to reduce pollution. We must avoid pursuing narrowly-defined economic objectives at the expense of our present and future environment. We know far too little about the longer-term impacts of new technologies on world ecology and must expand research in this area to avoid irreversible damage.

### **Agriculture and the Environment**

The Common Agricultural Policy guarantees Europe's food supplies but has led to surplus production, takes too large a share of the Community Budget and has not benefited those farmers most in need. Liberals wish to see the elimination of "green" currencies and Monetary Compensatory Amounts as part of Britain's membership of the European Monetary System with stricter limits on the production of commodities in surplus and lower cereal prices, with lower external tariffs on food. In the longer-term Liberals favour income support to help disadvantaged farmers and improve the quality of life in rural areas, instead of relying on the price-support system.

Good agricultural land should not be taken out of use and more land must be made available for letting with more small-holdings to provide greater opportunities for people to enter farming. Stricter controls of the use of chemicals and pesticides and of effluent and waste disposal are needed to protect the countryside.

"Man does not live by bread alone" and we must give greater recognition to the fact that the countryside has many other uses than the production of food and other natural materials. For many people it provides visual and physical recreation, for others it is a home, while it also provides habitat for our varied flora and fauna. The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Food concentrates far too much on the exploitation of the countryside, often at the expense of other equally important interests. Just as farmers recognise their obligation to preserve the fertility of the soil for future generations, the Ministry must recognise its duty to preserve the countryside for the future. Other industries and activities are appropriate in rural areas and this must be encouraged through an intelligent planning system with greater resources for the Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas (COSIRA). We would aim to retain rural schools and Post Offices and improve our rural transport system.

The fishing industry faces many difficulties, most of which are the results of faulty policies of UK and other governments. Too many boats are competing for a naturally limited fish stock and unable to cover their investment. Special aids will be needed to adjust and adapt. Liberals will emphasise the need for effective conservation measures and the securing of traditional waters for the fishing communities around Britain's coasts. EEC fisheries policies must be made to meet these requirements. We will seek to involve Producer Organisations more closely in evolving and sustaining the necessary discipline in catching and marketing fish.

Liberals believe that our society must take responsibility for the welfare of the natural world and it is therefore within the provinces of democratic government. We must ensure that resources are provided to preserve copses, hedges and wildlife habitat and, in the last resort, compulsory powers must be used to conserve specialised and scarce habitat such as moorlands, wetlands and nature reserves. We would reduce cruelty to animals by implementing the principles in the European Convention for the protection of Animals kept for Farming Purposes (with our European partners), ban imports of threatened and cruelly-treated species and seek to abolish the use of laboratory animals where pain or distress is inflicted, or where there is a failure to show that no alternative method of research exists, for purposes other than the protection of human or animal life. We are opposed to the hunting of animals for sport. We favour a Standing Royal Commission on Animal Welfare.

## Resources

Britain's most valuable resource is our scientific knowledge and understanding. We are concerned about the recent drastic cuts in basic research at Universities and the insistence that the customer-contractor relationship should dominate work at government establishments. We also believe that too high a proportion of our scientific and technological manpower are concentrated in our defence industries. In common with much of the developed world we are far too profligate with other resources, many of which are non-renewable. We believe it is better to restrain demand than increase extraction and accelerate depletion. We will encourage conservation, re-use, repair and recycling and the making of goods which last a long time.

Investment in energy conservation can be more cost-effective than building new power stations. There has been a steady advance in the technology of renewable power sources and we would invest in a series of pilot projects in this field. We support combined heat and power schemes where appropriate and the development and use of other alternative energy sources.

We reject the concept of nuclear power on a number of grounds. The safety of nuclear power plants is still suspect and it is immoral to produce highly dangerous nuclear waste before we have developed a safe method of disposal. We suspect that the costs of nuclear power will continue to rise rapidly and are concerned about the centralisation and potential threats to our civil liberties. We would phase out all nuclear power stations.

## Transport

The central objective of a Liberal policy for public transport must be to provide a cheap and efficient service which meets the needs of the consumer. Local authorities should have a much greater role in developing public transport in their areas with powers to decide the level of their own financial contribution, with full public accountability. We recognise the need for central government support for local public transport. Capital investment in transport should be substantially increased from present levels, including the railways, so as to create a highly efficient modern system which meets the needs of the nation. This can only be done with the wholehearted support of those who run the railways. A first priority must be to restore the morale of the workforce so that negotiations on removing outdated and inefficient practices can be based on mutual trust. We will also enlarge and modernise those parts of the inland waterways system with potential as new Commercial routes.

In the longer run we must develop communities so that houses, commerce, industry and services are closer together and easily accessible. Our road programme must make good the neglect of recent years and concentrate resources on environmental improvements, by-passes and road safety.

We strongly opposed increased axle-loads for heavy lorries and believe that local authorities should designate no-go areas and encourage break-bulk depots served by rail. We support experiments designed to exclude private cars from city centres, and the introduction of lead-free petrol.

## The Built Environment

Much recent development has destroyed local communities. We must aim to revive city centres and create living communities with an emphasis on rehabilitation rather than redevelopment. Community councils, community enterprises and tenants co-operatives should be encouraged so that people can participate fully in conserving and developing their communities. We must preserve our architectural heritage from decay and vandalism. Local work initiatives must be fostered with a special emphasis on small businesses and workshops.

# PRIORITIES:

## Agriculture and Rural Life

- \* Provide greater opportunities for people to enter farming; end the sales of small holdings.  
(Agriculture, Fisheries and Food)
- \* Establish an Agricultural Land Bank to provide finance for new entrants to farming to modernise and re-stock.  
(Agriculture, Fisheries and Food)
- \* Halt the rundown in rural services and increase help for rural industries by expanding resources for the Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas.  
(Environment)
- \* Stronger statutory protection for the environment especially where flora and fauna are affected including amending the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and increasing grants to preserve specialised habitat. (Environment)
- \* A Standing Royal Commission on Animal Welfare. (Home Office)
- \* A ban on imports of products from threatened species. (Environment)

## Resources

- \* A massive programme for Energy Conservation using both local authorities and the public sector as agents. (Energy)
- \* Support for combined heat and power systems and pilot projects for other alternative energy sources, including wave and tidal power. (Energy)
- \* Greater use of reclamation, recycling and re-use (including returnable containers) to use a much higher proportion of recycled material in British manufactures. (Environment)
- \* A significant increase in support for basic research into the social, economic and environmental consequences of technological innovation.  
(Education and Science)

## Transport

- \* Legislation to give greater local control over public transport with adequate public subsidies. (Transport)
- \* Making good the neglect of recent years in highway maintenance while concentrating resources on environmental improvements, by-passes and road safety.  
(Transport)
- \* The modernisation and renewal of the rail network provided the investment is matched by effective support from the workforce. (Transport)

## The Built Environment

- \* A Programme for the Inner Cities, designed to be managed by inner city communities. (Environment)

## Environmental Protection

- \* Phasing out of lead in petrol within five years.
- \* Designate a Ministerial post or environmental protection.
- \* Require environmental impact statements as part of the planning application process for any significant development.
- \* Introduce the 'polluter pays' principle.

## E. Europe and the World

There is no future for Britain in a retreat to sour and nationalist isolationism outside the European Community, behind a high wall of protective tariffs. Liberals support Britain's continued membership of the European Community - but deplore the failure of successive Conservative and Labour Governments to play a more positive role in its development.

### The European Community

The Community as it stands has some built-in disadvantages for Britain. A Liberal Government will seek a comprehensive reform of the Community's institutions and policies, including progressive changes in the Common Agricultural Policy and extension of European co-operation to new areas. Income supports for smaller farmers, justified on social and regional grounds, would allow agricultural prices to be more closely related to Community demand and to world markets. Britain would benefit from a Community energy policy which covered all the major sources of energy, including coal, oil and gas. Budgetary reform must include an expanded Regional Fund, and a greater Community role in industrial adjustment and retraining. We accept that such changes, together with the accession of Spain and Portugal, will require a Community budget much larger than the current 1% VAT limit will allow, and are confident that an active British role in promoting new policies will lead to a balance of gains and losses much more favourable to Britain. We will continue to press for an extension of Community policy to service sectors such as banking, insurance, and air and surface transport.

Britain's European position requires us to pay the highest priority to promoting relations of trust with our neighbours. We would press for closer co-operation on matters of foreign policy, recognising the useful but limited successes of the last decade. We support proposals for a stronger commitment to common action in foreign policy issues, and for an extension of that commitment to security policy and, eventually, defence. We see European co-operation as the most effective means of pursuing a fairer position for the less developed countries in the international economy.

We therefore look for stronger and more effective institutions. Acceptance of majority voting on most issues would have advantages for a British Government which was actively pressing for common policies in areas which would benefit Britain, and would do much to speed up Community policy-making. The European Parliament must be made fully representative, by the introduction of a common proportional system in time for the 1984 Elections. We will work to win over our partners to a relaunching of European co-operation, mobilising the support for such changes which already exists within many other member countries. Liberals would work positively to extend the powers of the European Parliament.

### Defence and Disarmament

War, and in particular the horrifying prospect of nuclear war, can best be avoided by both adequate defence to deter present threats and by efforts to reduce those threats and to establish a greater sense of mutual security. The maintenance of an appropriate defence effort and the pursuit of disarmament must go together. We recognise that the current preponderance of Soviet power represents a real threat to the security of Western Europe. But we recognise also that the common security of mankind is threatened more acutely by the existence of nuclear weapons and by the proliferation of both nuclear and other advanced weapons and that the reduction of armed forces throughout the continent of Europe is the only way to guarantee peace. These are the aims of the NATO Alliance which we support.

It is dangerous to see Britain's defence or security outside this wider context. We reject the nationalism, both of those who demand an independent deterrent and, of those who imagine that unilateral action by Britain or other powers will somehow lead to general disarmament.

Our medium term goal is a verifiable nuclear-free zone embracing the countries of both Western and Eastern Europe, including the European Region of the Soviet Union.

We propose that the USA and the USSR negotiate an immediate mutual, and verifiable, freeze on the manufacture and deployment of all nuclear weapons, to be followed by progressive and agreed reductions in existing levels of deployment.

We support the Palme Commission's proposals for the reduction of nuclear weapons in Central Europe, and the parallel reduction of conventional forces on both sides. We attach particular urgency to the removal of battlefield nuclear weapons from the frontline, and to the current negotiations in Geneva to avoid the further escalation of the arms race which deployment of Cruise missiles and Pershings will bring. The Liberal Party opposes the deployment of Cruise missiles in this country. We are opposed to the purchase of Trident and would phase out the Polaris force as soon as possible.

Should negotiations for the reduction in conventional armaments not make progress, we recognise that a reduction in Western Europe's dependence on nuclear weapons for defence will mean an increase in its conventional forces with introduction of the latest anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons. We must also question the doctrine of "flexible response" based, as it is, on the first use, if necessary, of nuclear weapons. We would work for greater specialisation and integration of forces on a European basis, within the wider framework of NATO.

The competition for exports of arms among developed countries itself contributes to instability throughout the world. We would press for far tighter restrictions on arms sales on a European basis, and would negotiate their extension to the arms supplies of the United States and the Soviet Union. Pending such agreements, we should ourselves restrict Britain's arms exports and should support the adaptation of industries involved in the arms trade to civilian work.

International security is best promoted through common action within strengthened international institutions, regional and global - not by unilateral action by Britain or by other powers. For Liberals, the lessons of the South Atlantic War strengthen that conviction. Britain and its European partners must work to rebuild the UN's peace-keeping capacities, and in particular to strengthen the role of the Secretary-General. Britain's membership of the Commonwealth can be used to increase real understanding between nations of different race, creed and wealth.

## The Wider World

The provision of bilateral and multi-lateral aid is an essential contribution to world development. A Liberal-led government will work to achieve the UN Official Target of 0.7% of GNP within five years of taking office, directing our aid efforts to the poorest countries, as far as possible through European and International bodies, and to the poorest people within those countries. Trade and financial policies of the Community, of the advanced industrial countries and of such international agencies as the International Monetary Fund must be made more responsive to the needs of the poorer countries.

Liberals condemn the systematic and widespread abuse of human rights by regimes of both left and right throughout the world. Any country which denies human rights at home must be made to realise that this will lead to a deterioration in its relations with other countries and with international institutions. The protection of basic human and political rights should be a basic element of Liberal Foreign policy, international human rights institutions should be strengthened, and it should also play an important part in the formation of international trade and aid policies. Under no circumstances should arms be sold to regimes which consistently violate basic human rights.

Human and cultural contacts are as important as economic changes in bringing mankind together. Liberals will end the discrimination against overseas students from outside the European Community in Further and Higher Education in Britain, and will introduce new schemes to help and encourage overseas students to study in Britain. We will reverse the contraction of the BBC's external services and review the work of the British Council.

## PRIORITIES:

### European and Foreign Policy

- \* A new initiative within the European Community for comprehensive reform of community policies, strengthening of Community institutions and a larger budget. (Foreign Office)
- \* Greater European co-operation in the fields of energy, industrial adjustment, services, foreign policy, defence and security. (Foreign Office)
- \* The protection of political and human rights as a key principle in Britain's Foreign and aid policies. (Foreign Office)

### Defence and Disarmament

- \* Confirm our support of the NATO Alliance and advocate greater specialisation and integration of Armed Forces on an European basis within the framework of NATO. (Defence and Disarmament)
- \* Abandon any pretence of a British independent deterrent by cancelling Trident and phasing out Polaris. (Defence and Disarmament)
- \* Support for European and Atlantic initiatives on arms reduction in Europe both nuclear and conventional, with opposition to the deployment of Cruise missiles. (Defence and Disarmament)
- \* A more restrictive policy on arms sales by Britain and our European partners. (Defence and Disarmament)

### International Agencies and the Third World

- \* Supporting efforts to make the United Nations more effective as an international forum, particularly in preventing and settling disputes between member nations. (Foreign Office)
- \* Increase UK aid to the Third World to 0.7% GNP over five years. (Foreign Office)
- \* Provide further aid for students from the Third World, taking account of their needs and resources. (Foreign Office)
- \* Abolish the discrimination against overseas students attending Higher and Further Education in Britain and provide a specific number of places in Further and Higher Education to be reserved for non-fee paying students from the Third World. (Foreign Office/Ed.)
- \* Expand the BBC External Services. (Foreign Office)

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

Recently, there has been a quickening of hope in the British political scene which has been dominated for so long by the old class parties. For many years people have been searching for a new direction as their dissatisfaction has grown with the whole system of politics. Now there is a sense of new opportunities which offer the way forward at last from economic failure and social division.

The formation of the Alliance between Liberals and Social Democrats breaks the stranglehold of the Labour and Conservative parties exercised through the present electoral system. We now have a real chance to create a representative and responsible Parliament and a new kind of government.

Within this strategic Alliance Liberals have an important and unique role to play. We have never believed that politics begin and end with Westminster and Whitehall. Our roots lie deep in the communities of Britain. Our sense of what might be lies in our belief in the extraordinary potential of ordinary people rather than in an itch for power for its own sake.

It is the role of Liberalism to assert the values of tolerance, compassion and partnership so that the political revolution of the Alliance is accompanied by a social revolution which allows people to take control over their own lives.

There is no challenge which free men and women working together cannot surmount. The distinctive contribution of Liberals to the political life of Britain is to make that possible.

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