30p

workers power

KICK THE TORIES OUT!

VOTE LABOUR



but organise to fight!

EDITORIAL

BEYOND THE BALLOT

Workers Power is a revolutionary communist organisation. We do not believe that socialism can come through parliament. Even a parliament with a Labour majority would not be able to legislate socialism into existence. As we show on page 4 parliamentary democracy is merely a form of capitalist rule. The working class must overthrow that rule. It must smash the bosses' state. Yet we are calling for workers to vote Labour. Why?

While calling for a Labour vote we will not for one moment conceal our criticisms of Labour or our own fundamental views. What we do recognise is that our views are held only by a tiny minority of workers. Like it or not 8.5 million people, mainly workers, voted Labour in 1983. We aim to convince as many of these workers as we can that Labour cannot systematically carry out meaningful reforms to fulfil basic needs—jobs, housing, pay, services, amenities—let alone introduce socialism.

At present the vast majority of workers will not take our word for this. Only by putting Labour to the test of office and organising workers to fight for their needs can we prove our case. Only in government will the real, pro-capitalist, nature of Labour parliamentary leadership be exposed, as it carries out its business of managing the profit economy at the expense of our needs. In power the conflict of interests between Labour's working class base and bourgeois leadership makes itself felt more clearly and more sharply than when the government is in the hands of the open bosses' party, the Tories. This is all the more so when workers press their demands on Labour in office.

Precisely because we want to actively put Labour to the test of office, we do not simply say *vote Labour*. We add *organise to fight*. By this we mean that the working class must organise to resist—through strike action, the bosses' offensive which will intensify over the next few years *regardless* of who wins the election.

The onslaught on jobs and services will continue. An onslaught on pay will be launched. To meet these attacks we must organise to fight by continuing the struggles currently taking place, notably the civil service strikes, and winning solidarity for them amongst other workers. We must campaign to commit the unions to fighting, anti-capitalist policies and organise to combat the dithering bureaucrats who will be mortally hostile to turning such policies into action. We also think it is urgent to fight Labour's pro-capitalist policies. So when we say *organise to fight* we also mean no truce with Kinnock during the election. The labour movement must formulate its burning needs in a series of demands and fight to commit its organisations—the unions and the Labour Party—to implementing them. This will be no easy task. We need the organisational means to wage such a fight.

RANK AND FILE

In the unions we must organise, as an urgent priority, every militant worker into a rank and file movement. That movement must be committed to fighting the sell-out merchants at the top, and for class struggle policies. As communists we will openly fight for revolutionary leadership in that movement.

In the Labour Party we must organise to resist Kinnock alongside all those opposed to his treacherous policies and his witch-hunting. As well as this we fight to build a revolutionary tendency within the party around our programme. We refuse to subordinate the struggle for that programme to the dictats of Walworth Road.

The working class is at a historic crossroads. The bosses are set on marginalising the party the working class has traditionally looked to. The bosses have no present use for the Labour Party. But the Labour Party has refused to defend the interests of the working class. While we oppose the ruling classes' attempt to break the Labour Party we recognise that the working class needs a new party committed to a root and branch struggle against capitalism.

In organising to put Labour to the test we are laying the basis of a revolutionary alternative to Labour. The purpose of that alternative, revolutionary, party would be to direct the struggles of the working class for its immediate needs towards the struggle for political power. Working class power will not be based on the parliamentary talking shop. It will not require the good offices of the Eton and Oxbridge trained Whitehall mafia. It will destroy the military power of the generals and admirals, and the law and order of the police picket-busters and anti-union judges.

It will be an entirely new power, a million times more democratic than anything seen under capitalism. It will be based on the direct involvement of every worker in councils elected from the factories and the estates. It will rest on the armed power of a working class militia, on the justice of workers' tribunals and the expertise of officials who are elected by and accountable to the great mass of the people.

And on the basis of such political power we can free the economy from the grip of the bosses. We can be for ever rid of the men and women who feast on the products of our labour. We can free the economy and direct it rationally towards the fulfillment of human need and the elimination of poverty. The current election may seem a long way from such a prospect. But if our message, *vote Labour but organise to fight*, is taken up by militant workers then the building of a party committed to the fight for working class power will have been taken one important step forward.

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PARTY OF THE BOSSES FOR THE BOSSES

Anybody who votes Tory is voting for the open and unashamed interests of big business. They are voting for a party made up of and supported by the rip-off merchants of the City and the hard-nosed managers of industry. In the election every class conscious worker needs to drive this fact home to workmates at every opportunity.

The Tories are quick to attack trade union 'control' of the Labour Party and trade union 'power' in workplaces. What a cheek! This comes from a party that—out of its 305 backbench MPs—boasts a total of 155 company directors, with 399 different company directorships. And don't feel sorry for the non-directors. Another 118 Tory MPs are well-paid consultants to assorted capitalist firms.

SAVAGE

Amongst the government ministers the links with big business are legion. In case you were out there worrying about what Cecil Parkinson was doing with his spare time, rest easy. He is a director in one of the City's big merchant bank groups. And Lord Young, now one of Thatcher's most favoured advisors, was until 1984, when he became minister for unemployment, chairman of a City outfit called Manufacturers Hanover Property Services. In fact 11 former ministers from Thatcher's Cabinet have gone back to the City, while eight of the present Cabinet were City luminaries before being called on to govern in its interests.

It is little wonder, therefore, that the Tories have been attacking the working class with unbridled savagery. They will continue to do so if they are re-elected.

The City and industry demanded radical attacks on the working class. The Tories obliged by overseeing a massive shakeout of jobs—14% of the workforce are now on the dole. They cut health spending by 7% and achieved the first drop in public sector employment since the war.

ORGANISE TO FIGHT!

They have held down the level of benefits to ensure that the millions thrown onto the dole queue live on a pittance. They have boosted the police force to an unprecedented level to bully and control the millions in the inner cities whose lives have become a poverty-stricken misery under Thatcher. On top of all this the Tories sold off, at bargain basement prices, the nationalised industries to the privateers.

Popular capitalism? Popular with the likes of Tory MP Keith Best who bought BT shares from a variety of addresses perhaps. Popular also with 91 Tory MPs (and 32 of their spouses) who also snapped up BT shares. But not popular with the great mass of the working class, for whom privatisation spells pay cuts, job losses and rotten conditions.

CONNED

Of course, a number of skilled workers have been conned into buying shares. But they are of microscopic significance compared with magnates who—with the help of insider dealing and various other criminal tricks—own and control the great concentrations of shares. The workers are seduced into identifying with something over which they have no control. Moreover, their savings can disappear on one adverse throw of the dice in the casino economy!

Capitalism under Thatcher is far from popular. While investment in manufacturing in Britain has fallen by 40% between 1979 and 1983 and by a further 2% in the boom year of 1986, the bankers and financiers have reaped enormous rewards. Despite becoming a net importer of industrial goods in 1983 Britain's 'capital of capital' was soon to be turning over £1 trillion a year.

And while the City has been given a free rein to boost profits and dividends by 51.5% and 51.7% respectively between 1983 and 1985, the unions have been strait-jacketed by a series of vicious anti-union laws.

The Tories are quick to point out that they have compensated for these measures by letting real earnings rise above the rate of inflation. But during the period when profits boomed by 51%, wages rose by 16% while prices rose by 11%. The real rise in wages pales into insignificance next to the rich pickings that the bosses have had.

The bosses sure know how to reward the Tory Party for these services. The Tories will be spending in the region of £20 million in their election campaign (their official figure of £5 million is a laughable lie). Moreover they will be getting free prime site, normally expensive, hoarding space from the big brewers and the tobacco firms, and cut-price space in the press.

Where does the Tories' money come from for all this? In the year to March 1986 the Tories got £479,460 from City firms alone. On top of this, individual firms like Allied Lyons have stumped up £300,000 over the last five years to the Tory front organisation the British United Industrialists. For the election campaign numberless bosses in the country will be coughing up the necessary readies.

Needless to say the Tories are not about to force directors to consult their workforce about whether they want part of the wealth they produce to go to the Tory Party. Yet these hypocrites have forced dozens of unions to ballot their members on whether they want a political fund. Behind the Tories suave 'popular' image there is the naked and ugly visage of uncaring capitalism. Every worker needs to fight this open bosses' party on a clear class basis. In the election campaign the Labour Party shies away from such a forthright class denunciation of the Tory Party and its backers. We do not.■

by Mark Hoskisson



Thatcher's fizz kids at play — *John Harris (IFL)*

YOUNG SLAVES

SLAVE LABOUR SCHEMES are now a fact of life for nearly half the school leavers in Britain. They are expected to work, be seen and not heard, in return for £28.50 a week and 'training' in the most menial unskilled jobs available.

Far from creating new jobs, YTS has destroyed real jobs. since 1983 the level of youth unemployment has hardly fallen at all, but the number of 16 year-olds in non-YTS jobs has plummeted. Twenty four per cent of YTS jobs—by the MSC's own figures—replace jobs previously done by youth for better wages. A further 7% replace 'adult' jobs.

In addition to hiding unemployment and replacing real jobs, YTS has provided the bosses with a source of ridiculously cheap labour. The average wage of young workers just out of YTS is only £58 a week. But the most a YTS trainee can earn after two years on the scheme is £35 per week; and of this, the employer does not pay a penny. In fact the bosses make and estimated extra £375 million profit out of their YTS government grants.

Now the government plans to extend YTS conditions to all workers, especially the 18-25s. The JTS scheme which started in April forces the unemployed to 'train' or face the possible loss of benefits.

Under a third term of Tory rule some form of compulsory 'work-for-benefits' scheme is not just a threat, it is a certainty.

Lord Young has already commissioned a report from the University of Buckingham which showed how the US 'Workfare' scheme could be brought to Britain. The University of Buckingham is a private institution laughed at as a 'toytown' university by the real ones. Its recommendations, however, are no laughing matter. If Thatcher gets in three million will find themselves faced with an ultimatum—work for your dole or starve.■

ORGANISE TO FIGHT!

EVERY WORKER'S BLOOD should be boiling with anger at the obscenity of mass unemployment. For the Tories the 4.5 million out of work are an electoral write-off.

Not for them the tax cuts, the share hand-outs, the public spending U-turns and petty bribes that Thatcher has given to the better paid. Dwindling pay-outs and housing benefit cuts are amongst her gifts to the unemployed.

But Thatcher's fiddled unemployment figures will be waved around on election day as proudly as the Union Jack she hoisted in the Malvinas. Ministers, civil servants and the big employers have spent the last months working day and night to fiddle the figures and get them below 3 million for election day.

If and when they present us with news of yet another glorious victory of Thatcherite resolve we should throw it back in their smarmy faces. The Tories have taken more than a million off the unemployment figures by a simple process of lying, benefit cuts and constantly changing the rules as to who is entitled to benefits.

Since 1981, 400,000 youth on YTS, 130,000 men over 60, 150,000 school leavers every summer plus 100,000 who failed work availability tests have vanished from the register. And for thousands their dole has vanished too leaving them penniless.

And for the lucky 3 million-plus left on the unemployment list? They live day-in and day-out on less than £4 a day. Less that £4 a day to feed themselves, clothe themselves, light and heat their homes, pay their bus fares, let alone for TV rental, cigarettes or drinks.

Every rich Tory shyster who has volunteered to live on the dole for a TV stunt and to prove that the unemployed are well off, has emerged after a week, sallow faced and silent. One week on a diet of past its sell-by-date bread has shut these creatures up and had them clamouring to get back to their £50 plus weekly food purchases.

Yet four and a half million of our comrades, our brothers and sisters, face this life month after month. For them there are no TV presenters to call round after a week with the news that its all over. Only the action of the whole working class can put a stop to the misery and degradation of long term mass unemployment.

It is a scandal that the organised labour movement—the unions and the Labour Party—has not lifted a finger to try and help the unemployed themselves organise to fight. It is a scandal too that the leaders of the labour movement have been more concerned to stab struggles to defend jobs in the back, than to help them win.

Every job must be defended. Every threatened lay-off and closure must be met with strike action and occupation. Every unemployed person should be organised in a trade union. An Unemployed Workers Union in every town, embracing all unemployed workers, should be built.

And every voter should vote Labour. Labour's meagre plans for jobs for one in four of the unemployed over the next five years, and paltry benefit increases will not end unemployment or alleviate the plight of the unemployed. But by voting Labour we can scupper the immediate plans of the Tories.

We must fight for real work or full pay, demanding that Labour launches a crash programme of public works and investment funded from the pockets of the rich.■

by Dave Trussler



Thatcher's YTS slaves at work *John Harris (IFL)*

MISERY FOR MILLIONS

NHS - SAFE AS (COUNCIL) HOUSES

MARGARET THATCHER HAS launched the election campaign repeating her infamous words *'the NHS is safe in our hands'*. She added *'I say the NHS is safe only with us'*. In her 'never had it so good' speech to the Scottish Tories she claimed that *'living standards are higher than ever before in our history'*.

Her claims will be repeated, elaborated and become ever grander as the election approaches. But on the question of health the Tory claims are lies. Search as they will there are no 'independent' or even government reports on the NHS to back up their statements. Thatcher's claims on the NHS do not stand up.

Waiting lists have continued to rise. Despite fiddling the figures there are now 750,000 waiting for hospital treatment.

'Urgent' cases should be admitted within a month due to the life and death nature of the treatment. But 61% of these have to wait longer. Non-urgent cases like hip-replacements, where the wait means pain and disability can take months. 24% of these cases wait more than a year for treatment!

Prescription charges have risen too under the Tories; by a staggering 1,200% And 2,000 people a week do not claim prescriptions because they cannot pay the £2.40 per item.

Beds have been cut dramatically under Thatcher; 110,000 in London alone. Hospitals have been closed as 'old and decrepit' only to re-open as private clinics. The new hospitals proclaimed by Fowler at the Tory conference are often delayed opening due to lack of beds and 'community care'.

What does this mean? It means patients thrown out of hospital before they are better—sometimes in the middle of the night because someone needs the bed. It means mentally ill people thrown out of mental hospitals in to the 'community care' of down-and-out hostels and streets. It means more pressure on women to look after the old and the sick; there are now more women who stay at home to look after the elderly than look after children.

All this puts a terrific strain on the overstretched district nurses and home helps. Yet councils which spend more on day-centres and nurseries are ratecapped by the Tories and branded 'loony left'.

On top of all this is privatisation. Putting domestic and other services out to tender has provided fat profits for Thatcher's friends such as Crothalls who have made £9 million profit from the NHS. But it means poorer wages and no union rights for the staff and disastrous falls in the level of services.■

by a health worker

ORGANISE TO FIGHT!

TORIES MAKE YOU SICK

HEALTH IS A class issue not just a medical one. Thatcher has widened the health gap between rich and poor. Even the British Medical Association—staunch defender of the establishment—agrees. In a recent report the BMA said:

> ***'A substantial body of illness in this country was attributable at least partly to social and economic factors . . . the problem would be solved only with a significant diversion of public resources.'***

The report recommended increased spending on housing, jobs, benefits, health and social services.

Meanwhile, Thatcher has overseen a massive increase in poverty.

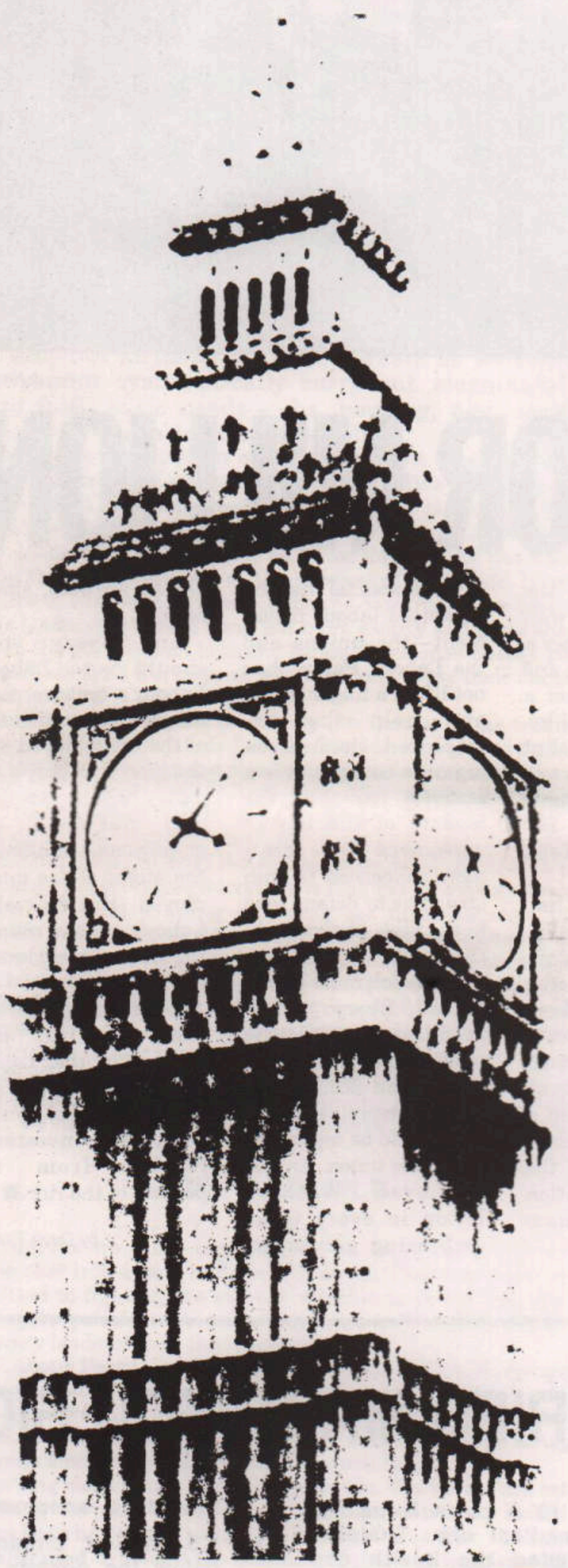
- **Since 1984 the number of homeless families has grown by 16%.**
- **20% more families are in short-term bed and breakfast accomodation.**
- **2.5 million children live below the poverty line.**

This figure is growing due to the recent abolition of single payments for children's clothes and bedding.

So while Thatcher tells the bosses that Britain is booming, their living standards are higher than ever, these are the facts about health under the Tories:

- **Manual workers' children are four times more likely to die before the age of one than the children of the bosses.**
- **Twice as many manual workers die between the age of 25 and 44 than the bosses and management.**
- **Three times as many working class women die of cervical cancer than women in 'higher income' groups.**

MOTHER OF ILLUSIONS



John Sturrock (Report)

IN SOUTH AFRICA today, millions of black people are fighting for the right to vote. Thousands have been killed already and thousands more are prepared to die. Yet in Britain only days into the election campaign, the polls were showing 60% had 'had enough of politics already'.

The root of this boredom is that when 30 million people vote on 11 June, few will believe that they will be fundamentally changing their lives by this act.

Yet the labour movement came into existence in the struggle for universal suffrage—the right of all to vote. Contrary to what most of us are taught in schools, parliamentary democracy has not existed since the middle ages. The Chartists—the forerunners of the labour movement—took up the fight for the vote in the late 1830s. But a majority of the adult population did not gain it until 1918, and universal suffrage was not achieved until 1928! This makes Britain one of the last advanced capitalist countries to become a 'democracy', not one of the first.

Democracy we are told at school means 'the rule of the people'. We are taught Abraham Lincoln's famous saying *'Government of the people, for the people, by the people.'* But this claim for the parliamentary system is a lie. Million of voters feel this to be so without ever becoming fully conscious of it. They have learnt from experience that 'nothing ever changes'—fundamentally that is. They feel that the parties and politicians are 'all the same'.

But what millions of working class voters do not spontaneously recognise is why this should be so? Why, despite all the promises of the trade union leaders and parliamentarians, no fundamental and irreversible change has ever come about to banish unemployment, poverty and war.

Our grandparents believed in the 'new Jerusalem' that would be built. They even believed that Attlee's 1945 Labour government had started to do it by creating a free health service, universal secondary education, nationalised coal, steel and transport. But then 'something went wrong'.

Tony Benn is fond of interpreting history in this way. The Labour Party lost the will and forgot the way. But the truth is that the 'parliamentary road' never led to socialism. It only leads to ministerial office for some of the leaders of the movement.

These leaders of 'British socialism' have devoted their every effort to concealing the fundamental fact that Parliament does not exert decisive power over the vast machinery of the state. Rather it gives legal sanctions to the action of this state. Neil Kinnock is only the latest of a long line of Labour leaders who hymned the praises of Parliament and condemned the actions of ordinary workers when they resisted—outside of Parliament—the attacks of the state on their struggles. At the 1984 Labour Conference in the middle of the miners' strike, Kinnock said:

'Democracy is the first promise of our socialism. We are upholding the only system which can give us power. And the only system that we are prepared to wield when we have that power.'

In reality parliamentary elections can never lead to power for the working class. Nor would a majority in the House of Commons enable us to wield power. Power is wielded by bodies outside the House of Commons. These bodies are neither elected nor removable. This fact was dramatically demonstrated during the 1984/85 miners' strike. The courts, the police, the bureaucracy all rained blow after blow on the miners. They were robbed of their union funds, beaten up, killed and imprisoned. Their elementary civil rights were suddenly suspended. But because Thatcher had a majority of MPs the Labour leaders insisted that they should not resist this onslaught 'with violence'. The violence of unarmed people defending their jobs was equated by the Labour leader with the brutal and systematic violence of the heavily armed, centrally co-ordinated police thugs:

'I condemn all violence without fear or favour. That is what makes me different from Margaret Thatcher. I didn't take her selective and blinkered view of the conflict'.

This 'selective view' was in fact a class view. Thatcher was being 100% loyal to her class. Kinnock was being 100% treacherous to the working class. It is the duty of real socialists—revolutionary socialists—to expose the real nature of the state and of Parliament.■

THE HOUSE OF Commons—the so called sovereign elected chamber—has far less power than its Victorian fancy dress suggests. The cabinet and the prime minister which it votes for is totally outside its control on all essential questions. The governing party does not select the ministers who make up the cabinet. These are chosen by the prime minister and are presented as a job lot to Parliament.

It is the PM and the cabinet that take all the important decisions. Many of these decisions only become known to backbench MPs after they have been taken and implemented.

Details of cabinet meetings are not released to Parliament for 30 years. The decision to build the atom bomb was taken in secret by Clement Atlee and his military advisors. A secret sub-committee of Callaghan's cabinet took the decision to modernise Polaris. Not even the full cabinet, let alone parliament, was told of this. All Thatcher, or any prime minister, must face is 45 minutes 'Question Time' a day in the House of Commons. Even then MPs must give 48 hours notice. In these moments of high democracy, no MP can ask questions about the royal family, court decisions, arms sales, foreign forces training in the UK, meetings of the NATO ministers, police operations, cabinet committees—the list is endless. In parliamentary debates, MPs can say things they would be libelled for outside Parliament. But they can be thrown out of the Commons for suggesting that another MP is a liar!

The Commons itself is therefore little more than a rubber stamp for executive decisions. What is more, there are plenty of 'executive bodies' besides the cabinet to take these decisions. There are the top civil servants for a start. The 'permanent secretaries' in every ministry are appointed, not elected as they rise effortlessly up the Eton-Oxford-Guards ladder. They are right-wing to a man.

They wield enormous power. Sir Robert Armstrong, the Cabinet Secretary, has even called in Labour and Alliance leaders to dress them down over their proposals for constitutional change. Likewise the Treasury Secretary has fed Kinnock and Hattersley's economic plans through the Treasury computer and come up with the completely impartial conclusion that they don't add up. In volume after volume of memoirs by Labour Ministers the power of the civil service mandarins has been testified to. They can contradict, obstruct and bring to nothing all but the most harmless and pathetic reforms their 'political masters' propose.

REFUSED

The unelected House of Lords can and has refused to ratify Common's Bills for up to three years.

Behind it all stands the Monarchy and the Privy Council. The Queen has the legal right to dissolve or refuse to dissolve Parliament, to appoint or refuse to appoint a minister, to give or refuse assent to a new Law. She is chief of the armed forces. Allegiance to the monarchy is drummed into the head of every new recruit. This military role is not merely decorative.This is testified to by the active service of nearly all male royals at some time or other in their youth. There can be no doubt where the loyalty of the high command and the whole officer corps would lie in any conflict between a consitutionally elected Labour government and the monarchy.

Parliament itself has passed laws to limit its own 'democracy'. The Emergency Powers Act, the Prevention of Terrorism Act, the Police Act, the Public Order Act, and quite a few more besides, give the state powers to break strikes, suspend all civil liberties, use troops, ban demonstrations, without any of these measures having to be discussed with MPs at all. The limits on parliamentary democracy are powerful indeed, even in normal times. But in case of need there are the forces of state repression—the police, the army and the judiciary.The first line of defence—the 'normal' expression of state power—is the police. The police in Britain are proud of being accountable to nobody. Any attempt by elected local police authorities to have any say whatsoever about what the local constabulary is up to is denounced as 'political interference'. The Police Chief's 'union' ACPO, was able to mobilise a military style national operation against pickets in the miners' strike, despite the wishes of the individual police authorities who had to foot the bill.

Should things ever get too hot for the police to handle—as they have in Northern Ireland—behind them stands the army. Its willingness to fight its monarch's 'enemies within' has been demonstrated time and again against workers' struggles. In 1919 tanks were sent onto the streets of Glasgow against Clydeside strikers. In 1926 the army ran essential services whilst the navy sent a gunboat up the river Mersey. As late as 1977, 26,000 troops were sent to break the firefighters strike—by a Labour government.

In the event of any serious challenge to capitalism, the military chiefs would have no hesitation in following the path of Pinochet in Chile, Evren in Turkey or Rabuka in Fiji. Even in 1968 some of them approached Mountbatten and Cecil King to discuss the possibility of some sort of military coup. They contacted Cunard's to see if the QEII could be used as a floating prison for Harold Wilson —and all this because the City financiers were worried about the value of the pound! If it was their banks, instead of their bank accounts that were threatened, the army would step in very quickly—and with the Queen and her Privy Council at their head they would have every 'constitutional' right to do so.

Parliamentary democracy was the object of a life and death struggle for our great-grandparents. But the ever increasing level of the class struggle over the years has led to the state's resources and power being shifted more and more to the army, the police, the judiciary, and the top ranks of the civil service. This state and its parliamentary facade cannot be taken over, reformed and used by the working class. On the road to socialism, the capitalist state has to be smashed and replaced with really democratic organisations of working class power.

Kinnock's commitment to parliamentary democracy is in reality a commitment to buckle forever, under the attacks of the bosses. According to Kinnock *'socialism by insurrection is a fantasy'*. No! It is a spectre that has been haunting the bourgeoisie, and its servants in our ranks, for 150 years or more. Even as a spectre in 1918 and 1945 it scared our masters into granting the democratic and social reforms that we won in those years.

FANTASY

To defend what we have—let alone to decisively end unemployment, poverty and war—we will have to make this spectre a reality. In doing so we will have to get rid of another fantasy that fogs our minds and cripples us at every decisive turn in the class struggle—the fantasy of socialism through parliament.

Does this mean that we should not work hard to get real tribunes of the working class elected to parliament? Not at all. Does this mean that we should not defend every democratic right our fore bears won? Far from it. We should defend every gain. But if we do, if we stand and fight the Tories and the bosses, then the conflict will turn into a struggle for real power long before the election machine can roll into action. Woe betide us if we are diverted away from the reality of power that lies in the factories, the streets, the barracks towards the shadow puppet show of the polling booths.■

by Paul Mason

MI5-THE MASK SLIPS

IN 1974 A right wing group in MI5 plotted to de-stabilise the newly elected Labour government. It plotted with loyalist gunmen during the Ulster General strike. Then it plotted the downfall of Heath and the rise of Thatcher as Tory leader.

This is the picture that has begun to emerge from a jigsaw puzzle of leaks and memoirs from former members of MI5. Thatcher is desperately trying to silence the allegations. No wonder. Her government is stuffed with ministers and advisers plucked from the ranks of the 'intelligence community' and its front organisations. For every one of them the MI5 scandal threatens to blow the lid off their image as democrats and lovers of freedom.

They have spent hundreds of thousands of pounds on an Australian court case to stop publication of Peter Wright's memoirs. Wright's book tells how his right-wing group of MI5 officers *'burgled and bugged their way across London'* in the search for smears against Harold Wilson and his administration.

They have served injunctions on the *Guardian*, *Observer*, *Independent* and two London newspapers to stop them repeating Wright's allegations in print. Thatcher has turned down calls for an independent inquiry into MI5. She has allowed MI5 to do its own 'inquiry' and find itself not-guilty. Meanwhile none of the four ex-MI5 officers making the allegations have been consulted by any official inquiry.

One of them, Colin Wallace, has been banned from speaking on the BBC. Wallace has revealed how he masterminded British Army Intelligence's 'dirty tricks' against politicians 'soft' on the Irish question. When BBC reporters tried to interview him, they were stopped by BBC boss Alan Protheroe. Protheroe, by complete coincidence of course, is a member of the Territorial Army Intelligence Unit, which is trained by MI5.

Despite the explosive nature of the MI5 scandal, the Labour leaders have refused to make it an election issue. Once Thatcher had told Parliament that MI5 was 'clean' Kinnock simply shut up. This is not just because of Kinnock's chronic fear of being branded as unpatriotic. It is because the Labour right has been, and still is, up to its neck in the cesspit called British intelligence.■

THE POPULAR IMAGE of Britain's secret service is one of glamorous spies locked in conflict with the KGB in exotic locations from Hong Kong to Helsinki. But the reality is very different.

MI5, with its annual payroll of £92 million and untold resources, spends almost all of its time and energy spying on 'domestic subversion'. It is an extremely political wing of the repressive apparatus.

Its regular targets go far beyond the left, taking in not only trade union leaders and Labour MPs suspected of 'subversion', but also 'subversive penetrated' organisations like CND and the National Council for Civil Liberties. It holds computer records on an estimated three million people in Britain. It is a fair bet that if you are reading this you are one of them.

MI5, like the external spy service MI6, GCHQ and the Defence Intelligence Staff, does not even exist in law. In actuality it is responsible only to the Cabinet Office and the Prime Minister.

But in the mid-1970s its crusade against 'domestic subversion' pitted MI5 against the elected Labour Prime Minister himself. Peter Wright, the leader of a right-wing group in MI5 at the time, has now revealed the campaign of smears and destabilisation carried out against the Wilson administration. Coupled with the revelations of other former MI5 and army security officers Wright's memoirs provide the clearest picture yet of the machinations of MI5 and its front organisations against Wilson.

THE WILSON CONNECTION

By 1974 the British ruling class was genuinely alarmed about the 'breakdown of society'. The NUM had defeated Heath, the IRA were holding their own against the British army and in February a Labour government came to power promising to shift the balance of wealth and power 'irreversibly' towards the working class. Tory minister John Davies told his family to enjoy Christmas:

> *'. . . because I deeply believed that it was the last Christmas of its kind we would enjoy'.*

Davies and his class need not have worried. Their Christmases were the same under Labour. Within two years Jim Callaghan was busy shifting wealth and power in the opposite direction, under orders from the IMF. Moreover by 1975 Heath had been ousted from the Tory leadership and replaced by the hardened ruling class-fighter who runs it now.

Thanks to Wright, Wallace and co, we now know the role played by MI5 in this turnaround in the bosses' fortunes.

As early as 1970-71 MI5 had opened a file on Wilson. His 19 business trips to Russia qualified him as a possible KGB agent. By 1974—KGB agent or not—Wright's group in MI5 were determined to get rid of Wilson. They used the time honoured methods of British democracy's secret service. Wright's report that MI5 'bugged and burgled' Wilson and his colleagues is borne out by Wilson himself.

Wilson reported no less than eight break-ins at the premises of his accountant and solicitors. Seven more break-ins to the offices of his staff over the three months prior to his resignation took place.

MI5 then used the information they had gathered to place bogus smears in the press. Wilson was a KGB agent. The KGB had murdered Gaitskell so that Wilson could take over as Labour leader. Thirty Labour MPs were communists. These were only some of the stories released to international press agencies.



For good measure MI5 set-up two forgeries implicating Wilson in corrupt land deals and Labour minister Edward Short in a Swiss Bank fraud.

In 1975 Wilson resigned, to be replaced by Jim Callaghan. Far from being a KGB suspect Callaghan was the only one of forty Labour MPs to be positively approved for Prime Ministership by MI5. An internal report at the time marked Callaghan out (who was Police Federation spokesman in parliament) as a 'good choice' for Labour leader.

THE IRISH CONNECTION

Colin Wallace was sacked from his top job in the Army 'psychological operations' unit in Northern Ireland after refusing to carry out unauthorised jobs for MI5. Fitted up on a manslaughter charge, he spent seven years in jail before coming out to spill the beans on army and MI5 operations in Northern Ireland.

Early in the 1970s, Heath set up talks and eventually a ceasefire with the IRA. This did not go down well with MI5 and the army. The top officers were keen to try out its newly learnt skills in 'low intensity' anti-guerilla warfare.

So MI5 organised the assasination of catholic civilians which, as planned, led to a breakdown of the truce. By the time Labour was back in power MI5 controlled all the key intelligence jobs in Northern Ireland. Wallace was under their control too.

Wallace describes how he set to work on a smear campaign against Loyalist politicians in 1974 only to be told to call it off once the Ulster Workers Council strike began. *'London'*, he was told by his MI5 boss, *'now wants the strike to succeed'*. Since MI5 by this time had agents in the Loyalist paramilitary groups it is reasonable to presume that they fomented the strike, which brought down the 'power sharing' agreement put into place by Heath and MI6.

Speaking in 1983 an unidentified MI5 officer said:

> *'We thought that if the protestants won, Wilson would be discredited.'*
> (*British Intelligence and Covert Action* Bloch and Fitzgerald 1983)

Through Wallace's Army Intelligence Unit MI5 then channelled a series of leaks attacking Merlyn Rees, the Labour Home Secretary. When Rees sent over Michael Cudlipp to take press and information out of the hands of the Army and centralise it in the Northern Ireland Office, MI5 organised a series of leads of disputes between Cudlipp and his civil servants. This was after they had fruitlessly searched his files for any evidence that he too might be a 'security risk'.

By 1976 the 'military option' and the policy of Ulsterisation, were firmly in place as Labour government policy for Northern Ireland.

THE THATCHER CONNECTION

The most sinister aspect to emerge from the spate of allegations about MI5 is its links with the Tory Party itself.

In the 1930s the head of the Conservative Party research department Joseph Ball, managed to operate at the same time as head of the Government Intelligence Department! Nowadays Tory politicians and leading industrialists recycle MI5 information through a much more discreet network of right wing fronts and pressure groups. Aims of Industry, the Economic League, the Institute for the Study of Conflict and the Freedom Association are all funded with Tory and business money, headed by right wing Tory MPs and staffed by ex-members of the MI5.

Personnel and information flow freely around this network. The Economic League for example—an organisation with hardly any investigative apparatus—maintains files on 250,000 trade union activists. This information ends up on the desks of personnel managers in the Engineering Employers Federation, the CBI and co. But it starts life in the computers of MI5.

Until he was blown-up by the INLA Airey Neave was the key figure in this 'intellegence community'. A wartime intelligence officer himself, he approached Colin Wallace for information about possible IRA links with the Labour Party which Wallace supplied and Neave repeated in a speech in September 1976.

Before his death Airey Neave had been earmarked by Thatcher as future head of both Intelligence and Northern Ireland. He is alleged to have talked privately about the possible assasination of Tony Benn in the late 1970s.

By then however, Neave had already masterminded a crucial job for the right wing establishment—the election of Margaret Thatcher as Tory leader. Whilst Neave did not live to reap his reward in office, many of his former colleagues from the right wing pressure groups have done so. Nicholas Ridley—who formulated Thatcher's plan to beat the miners —and Robert Moss, a Thatcher speech writer, are just two of the right wing figures associated with Neave.

As late as 1983 MI5's links with the Tories were in operation. On the eve of the 1983 election the Tories set up an intelligence unit in the Minstry of Defence to co-ordinate propaganda against CND. They found ample material forthcoming from MI5, who as ex-spy Cathy Massiter revealed, and an agent and a full-time phone-tap in the CND HQ. This material was then used by Tory speechwriters in the election campaign to boost their theme that 'CND equals USSR'.

The lessons of the MI5 revelations are clear. Rumours of coups and the formation of secret armies were rife during the period between the fall of Heath and the rise of Callaghan. But the actual threat posed by the workers' movement in this period was not as great as the bosses feared. Despite the high level of industrial militancy, it was to a large degree headed off politically by Wilson, Callaghan and the trade union leaders themselves. MI5's role was to help undermine Wilson, help select Callaghan then prepare the way for their chosen leader, Thatcher, to replace 'Sunny Jim' in 1979.

MI5 did what it was set up for and continues to do day in and day out: to defend British capitalism from its enemy within. In the process it subverted the only elected minister who is supposed to control it. Of course Wilson was not the threat MI5 feared him to be. But this does not detract from the fact that they were able to so effectively subvert his authority. The whole saga reveals where the real power lies in British capitalism, as in all capitalist states. It lies in the unelected state machine of which MI5 is only a small section. If the British bosses were prepared to unleash MI5 against Wilson then what would they do to any Labour governement that came remotely near to challenging their power and wealth? This is a question that every Labour voter should bear in mind. For when we say *'Vote Labour but organise to fight'*, we mean, amongst other things, organise to fight the repressive state machine.■

by Colin Lloyd

BLUE MURDER

THE GREAT MAJORITY of that tiny minority—Britain's bosses -want Thatcher re-elected. The only point of difference many of them have had with her is that she has not yet gone far enough. They are hoping a third term will put this right.

If the Tory manifesto is anything to go by they won't be disappointed.

On one key front—the economy—the Tories are aiming to *'privatise more state industries in ways that increase share ownership'*. Vital services like water and electricity are to be handed over to people whose sole motivation in life is to amass profits.

To conceal unemployment millions will be herded onto bogus training schemes. Refusal will mean loss of benefit. Benefits will be cut anyway.

SHIELDED

To date increases in earnings have shielded quite a few workers from the worst effects of the Tory attacks. The Tory manifesto is quite clear that this will have to stop. The public sector generally will, like the teachers, have pay deals imposed upon it. In the private sector the Tories aim to get rid of annual wage deals. In fact they want to get rid of wage deals in the traditional sense altogether and replace them with *'proposed tax incentives for profit-related pay'*.

The money the Tories have been spending on the public sector—services, benefits, education and so on—has been a source of embarrassment to them for years. It is a drain on the overall profits of their masters. To finance their much vaunted income tax cuts they will not only increase VAT but, most importantly:

> *'Our aim is to ensure that public expenditure takes a steadily smaller share of our national income.'*

Massive cuts have led to the first fall in public sector employment since the war. This manifesto pledge guarantees that this fall will turn into an avalanche.

Besides cuts in the level of provision of service the Tories also aim to shift control of them towards the government or business. In education the Tories plan to give schools the right to opt out of LEA's and turn them into *'independent, charitable trusts'*, with headmaster control over budgets.

University funding will be placed in the hands of a board comprising

> *'non-academic members, with a chairman who has substantial experience outside the academic world'*. For 'non-academic member' read businessman.

Any leeway local councils still have to avoid the strictures of central government is to be eradicated. Local democracy is a thing of the past. Local government is to be compelled to tender out services such as refuse collection to the privateers. They are to be compelled to sell off the council houses they've got left. And, of course, they will abolish the rates and slap on a grossly unfair poll tax.

BALLOTS

In case workers thought of resisting this package the Tories are promising further measures against the unions. Having forced unions to hold a ballot before having a strike they now want to go a step further. Ballots have not done enough to prevent strikes. So, the manifesto promises to:

> *'Protect individual members from disciplinary action if they refuse to join a strike they disagree with'.*

So now even a ballot with a democratic majority for strike action means nothing. A scab can get legal protection for ignoring the vote.

to ensure that they can enforce their new laws and coerce the mass of the unemployed youth in the inner cities into submission the Tories will:

> *'increase the number of police further to ensure a stronger police presence on our streets'.*

Well the people of Brixton, Handsworth, Toxteth and St. Pauls will feel a lot safer! Indeed, the Tories are making no secret of their racism either. Their manifesto proudly claims:

'Last year fewer people were accepted for settlement in the United Kingdom than at any time since the control of Commonwealth immigration began'.

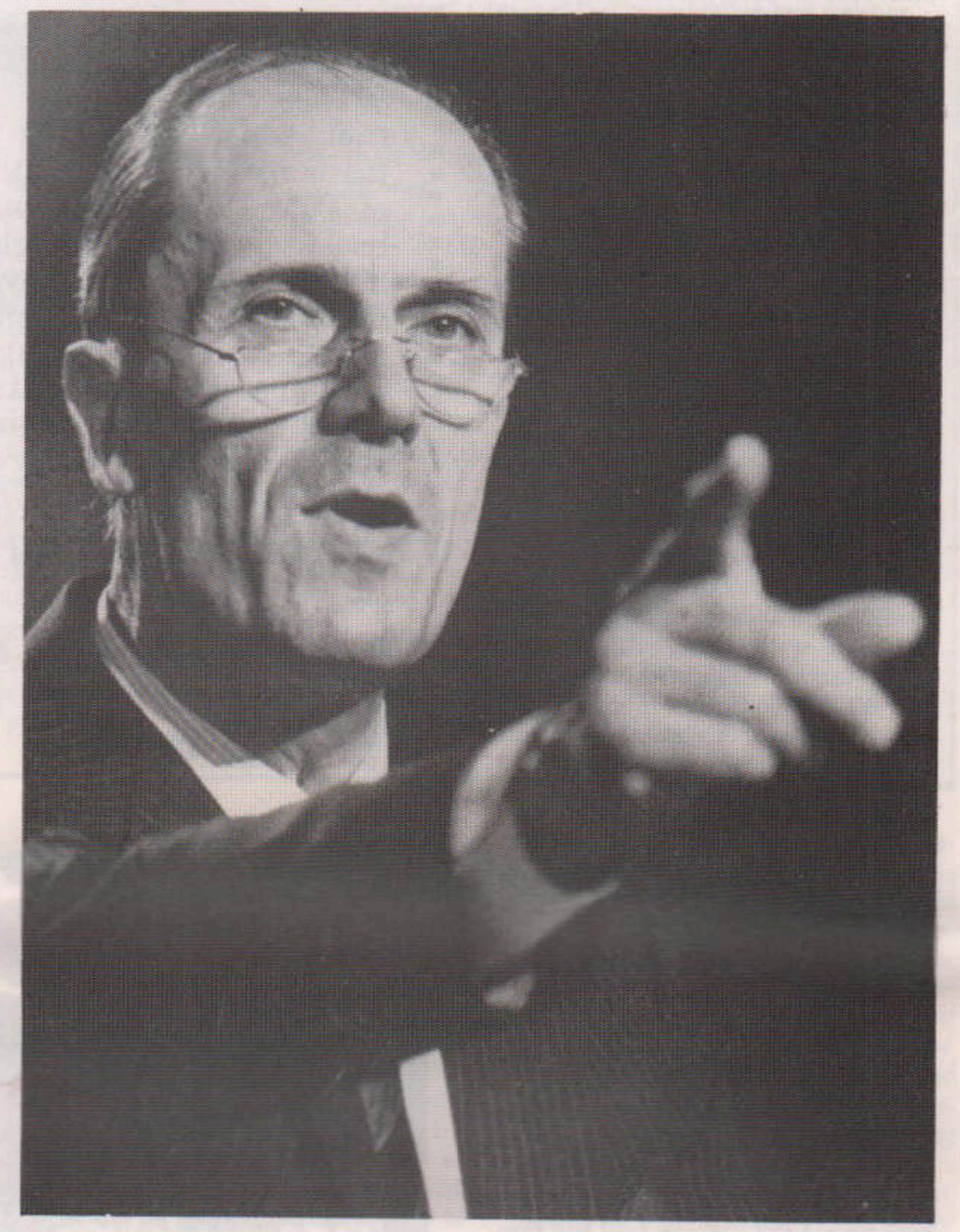
To please the rednecks even more:

> *'We will tighten the existing laws to ensure that the control over settlement becomes even more effective'.*

The Tory manifesto is a charter of reaction. Eight years of Thatcher has seen many attacks. The manifesto's authors gloat over the success of those attacks, particularly the defeat of the miners. Yetwe still retain many hard won gains and rights. Every one of them has been targetted for attack by the Tories.

This is what the manifesto means when it says *'A Conservative dream is coming true'*.

The time has come to sharpen our weapons, organise our ranks for battle now so we can turn the Conservative dream into a nightmare for Thatcher and the vile crew she represents.■



You are next for the chop

THE YUPPIES UNITED...

MUST ALWAYS BE DEFEATED

BRITAIN IS A deeply divided class society. Margaret Thatcher is well aware of that fact. So too are the millions of workers that her government has brutalised in one way or another. And the class divide will get sharper.

In such times those caught in the crossfire of the struggle between the bosses and the workers—the middle classes—hanker for peace and harmony. They become nostalgic for the days of 'consensus'—namely the economic boom years when the class struggle was at a less fevered pitch. The Alliance is their party.

The growth in electoral popularity of the Alliance can be explained in part by the growth in the class struggle. But in addition the Alliance has been 'talked-up' by the bosses as a way of damaging Labour and preventing it from majority rule. It is also funded and preferred by a section of Britain's bosses who either depend on buoyant income for retail prosperity or have sought refuge in the Alliance from Thatcher's neglect of domestic industry.

HATRED

The Alliance manifesto's tone, *Britain United*,encapsulates perfectly the middle classes hatred of the 'either. . . or' choices necessary in a class society. We are told:

> *'The two party system has broken down because it is rooted in outdated battles of class and ideology'.*

Class battles may seem outdated to the thousands of mini-Davids throughout Britain who don't face daily humiliation at the hands of tyrannical factory foremen or bullying office bosses.

Britain United wants it both ways. It wants a world fit for people:

> *'who want individual freedom to go hand-in-hand with social justice, who want the state to back industry without trying to take it over, who want power to be given back to the communities instead of concentrated in Whitehall and who want a nation which is soundly defended but takes the lead in the quest for negotiated disarmament and a fairer world.'*

In other words for people who can see the contradictions all around them but who—like children pulling the bedclothes over their heads to get rid of the bogeymen—want to wish them all way by closing their eyes to them. In fact the Alliance cannot wish away these contradictions. Of course, it can couch its politics in terms that will reassure the average middle class voter. But, its real policies—those that have led sections of the bosses to cultivate it and back it—are 100% capitalist. A close look at its manifesto should convince any worker, who has been tricked by the media into considering voting for the Alliance, of this fact.



For a start they back a policy of continued privatisation of Rolls Royce and say they would support the privatisation of British Steel.

Another handout they will give to big business is a 25% cut in the employers' National Insurance Contribution payments.

These policies are explained as part of the Alliance's plan to *'work in partnership with industry'*. They should add, in partnership against the unions. The Alliance supports the Tory anti-union laws and would severely curtail the right of workers to take effective strike action.

On pay they argue:

> *'We will control inflation by winning the support of the British people for our incomes strategy'.*

This is a strategy of pay restraint and, following Tebbit, of *'no strike agreements in essential services'*.

The list of anti-working class policies goes on and on. They favour immigration controls. They are pledged to defend the parasitic private health sector. They want to maintain the bosses' nuclear arsenal. In a word, they are watered down Tories.

For this reason no worker should consider tactical voting. The task of overcoming Labourite reformism needs to be carried through by the working class, not by big business via the Alliance. A tactical vote for the Alliance will help big business.

The Alliance strategy in this election is clear. to displace Labour as the main opposition and:

> *'. . . if we are in a balanced parliament we must heed the message of the voters and work with the other parties'.*

If Thatcher's vote slumped in the election and the Alliance did hold the 'balance of power' in a hung parliament then it may be possible that Steel and Owen could find common ground with Kinnock over the contents of a Queen's Speech. But make no mistake: Owen and the SDP wish to sit in Thatcher's Cabinet and help further the attack on the Labour Party they began in 1981.

The Alliance is a thoroughly middle class outfit but one at the service of the bosses. In power in local government in Liverpool and Tower Hamlets, London, it has sacked workers, evicted Asians from their homes, and carried out savage cuts. In government it would do the same, but on a bigger scale. It must not be given the chance.■

WHY VOTE LABOUR?

ON 11 JUNE the working class of Britain have the opportunity to kick out the Tories. We have to take that chance. In the absence of a revolutionary, Trotskyist, party standing we call on workers in every constituency to vote Labour.

In 1984/85 the miners' strike aroused many workers' hopes that Thatcher was about to get a bloody nose. But the isolation of that strike, deliberately maintained by Kinnock and Willis, led to its defeat. But in its aftermath illusions in the parliamentary road have increased: more out of the despair of that failure than due to any great hopes in any fundamental changes an election may bring. Still, the vanguard of the working class and its allies—perhaps as many as ten million—will vote Labour in this election.

For the last two years the high priests of moderation in the labour movement have counselled workers to *'wait for a Labour government'*. Many have accepted this argument. Eight years of Tory rule and its destructive effects, have led many to forget the wage and service cutting antics of the last Labour government. Six million young voters have never lived under a Labour government. It is clear why many of them—with the slave labour schemes, housing shortages and falling benefit levels—will feel inclined to give Labour a chance.

However, we call for workers to vote Labour not because we believe its promises, still less because we think it will legislate for socialism. There can be no room for doubt here. The Labour party is wedded by its programme and leadership to capitalism; to its management and its preservation in the face of economic crisis or challenge from the mass of workers exploited by it.

We call for a Labour vote because it remains the party based on the working class. Crucially Labour is based on the unions which affiliate to it, provide two-thirds of its finance and determine, through the block votes, the shape of conference policies.

The task of revolutionaries today is to campaign, together with the actual vanguard of our class, to get Kinnock into Downing Street. A common vote at the polling booth is a small step that expresses the unity of the working class and its fundamental hostility to the Tories and Alliance. It would be the first blow against the bosses' plan for the next four years, throwing them onto the defensive and forcing them to rethink their strategy.

ORGANISE TO FIGHT!

Yet such a vote should not be given free, with nothing expected in return. Kinnock should not be given a blank cheque by the working class. It takes a couple of seconds to put a cross on a ballot paper. But in the weeks of an election campaign we should make clear that we will only get from a Labour government what we fight for. People's aspirations must be activated and organised around a series of demands that together add up to what we need to exact revenge on the City of London and big business for what they have done to us under Thatcher's leadership.

Labour's manifesto comes nowhere near to meeting this need. Nevertheless, by fighting to hold Kinnock to every limited progressive aspect of Labour's policies we can best organise ourselves—to force Labour to take measures that begin to erode the real power and wealth of capital.

Even if Kinnock does not win, if we organise ourselves now we will have at least built up our defensive strength for a renewed struggle with the Tories. This message must not be kept as a private opinion when we get out on the knocker. It is the message that has to be hammered home to potential Labour voters on the doorstep and at factory gate meetings.■



TOO PRUDENT BY HALF

THE *'MOST uncompromising, far reaching and radical programme yet'. 'Labour's plans —carefully costed, prudently programmed'*. Two statements by party leaders to describe their respective manifestos. Radicalism is back as a buzz word for the Tories, but for the Labour Party prudence and moderation are the watch words.

From the party conference to the party manifesto there has been a gap of a mere eight months. Yet all the vestiges of radicalism and left-wing policies aired at the conference have been laid to rest for the purposes of the election. This is not surprising. At the party conference the activists express to a limited degree the aspirations of those most affected by Thatcher's onslaught. Over recent years conference policies have reflected this to some extent. Commitments to re-imburse surcharged councillors, to review the cases of sacked miners, to unilaterally return Cruise missiles have all won out.

But the party manifesto is the property of the party leader and the PLP. They aspire to office and reflect the pressure of the civil servants, the army chiefs, the big business magnates. So Labour has produced a manifesto which starts out from the proposition that Labour must not provoke the wrath of these people by threatening any of their fundamental interests.

Labour's manifesto is divided into two parts: a priority programme for the first two years of government; and the rest of Labour's policies which *'require substantive public finance'* and therefore *'must take lower priority in terms of timescale, and public resources'*. That is, they are not to be taken too seriously.

The priority programme is minimal in the extreme and goes nowhere near restoring living standards, social service provision and jobs to what they where in 1979 or 1983. What Labour is clearly saying in the manifesto is that Labour will not reverse the huge increases in VAT, will not give a job to two in three of the unemployed, will not restore the 60% cuts in public spending on housing or the rate support grant to local authorities cut by the Tories. Police are a priority but the NHS is not.

There is calculated reasoning behind Kinnock's moderation. There is nothing in the 'priority programme' which the Alliance would find objectionable in principle. A 'gentleman's agreement' could be reached which would leave all the rest of the manifesto on the table during the life of a new 'Lib-Lab pact'.

This 'prudently programmed' package will be paid for by reversing the tax cuts given to the top 5% of earners under Thatcher, by reversing the 2p cut in income tax last March and borrowing £3 billion.

In all it will cost £6 billion a year for two years. What an insult! This is the small change of the City of London's financiers. Last year Thatcher handed back big business twice that amount in tax relief. She spent £6 billion in waging war in the Falklands/Malvinas and £5 billion on the strike they provoked with the NUM so as they could sack tens of thousands of miners.

The harsh truth is that fearful of 'radicalism', of upsetting the bosses, Kinnock is prepared to keep millions of workers on the dole, keep services underfunded and even attack wages for a few more years in the vain hope that this 'moderation' will get him to the key to Number 10.

In contrast to this Workers Power will argue for a 'priority programme' that is nothing short of a comprehensive set of demands on Labour which unifies all the sections of the class. To pay for it Labour would need to challenge the hold of the bosses over the main economic and political levers of power in Britain. It would need to break their will to resist and take from their wealth—plundered from us—whatever is needed.

But while we place these demands on Labour we are clear that much more needs to be done as well. A fight against unemployment and threatened redundancies or closures can and must begin from below. Workers' control over hiring and firing, work sharing with no loss of pay, occupations to keep factories open. Measures such as these have a decisive importance far beyond any election and represent the power of the working class to impose its will on **any** government.

Labour's manifesto in 1983 was decried for its supposed radicalism. Labour's right called it *'the longest suicide note in history'*. There can be no fear on that score this time. *'Britain Will Win'* has all the value of a bounced cheque. Will it be a case of 'please re-present in five years time'?■

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What we need

- ☆ Immediate legislation for a 35 hour week. Work or full pay.
- ☆ Nationalisation under workers control of all firms declaring closures or redundancies without compensation.
- ☆ Unemployment benefits to be set at the level of the average industrial wage. Abolish the means test. Make up the wages of enforced part-timers.
- ☆ Restore all cuts in beds and staffing made since 1979.
- ☆ Abolish prescription charges immediately.
- ☆ Nationalise all private hospitals , the drug and supply industries without compensation and under workers' control.
- ☆ Nationalise the banks and finance houses.
- ☆ For a programme of public works.
- ☆ A statutory minimum wage set at the level of the average industrial wage available from the age of 16.
- ☆ End cheap labour schemes and replace with proper jobs at union rates of pay.
- ☆ Legislate for equal pay for work of equal value.
- ☆ Full free 24 hour child care for all.

Labour's 'Priority Programme'

- ☐ Reduce unemployment by one million in two years.
- ☐ Extend long-term supplementary benefits.
- ☐ Increase pensions by £5 and £8 a week.
- ☐ Reduce the cost of pensioners' TV licence.
- ☐ Raise child benefit by £3 a week.
- ☐ Restore and increase death and maternity grants.
- ☐ Restore the State Earnings Pension Scheme.
- ☐ Set a statutory minimum wage at an undefined level.
- ☐ Introduce crime prevention grants.
- ☐ Put more police on the streets.

- ☆ Enable lesbians and gay men to have custody of children.
- ☆ Complete repeal of all Tory anti-union laws.
- ☆ Restore legal protection for wokers regardless of age or length of employment. Make illegal the sacking of workers for being homosexual.
- ☆ Legislate for the right to strike, with trade union immunity from prosecution for strikers.
- ☆ Release all trade unionists jailed for defending their class.
- ☆ Reimburse the funds of all unions seized by the courts.
- ☆ Abolish the age of consent laws.
- ☆ Give the over 16's the right to vote.
- ☆ Repeal the Nationality Act as well as all immigration and visa controls.
- ☆ Support the right of black self defence.
- ☆ Abolish the monarchy, the House of Lords and the Privy Council.
- ☆ Repeal the Public Order Act, the PTA, the Official Secrets Act.
- ☆ Disband ACPO, Special Branch. Ban firearms, plastic bullets, CS gas.
- ☆ Immediately scrap Polaris, cancel Trident and get rid of Cruise.
- ☆ Britain out of NATO, Scrap all US bases.
- ☆ Immediate and unconditional aid for those fighting imperialism including black workers in South Africa.
- ☆ Workers' sanctions now.
- ☆ Immediate withdrawal of troops from Ireland. Scrap the Anglo-Irish Agreement.
- ☆ End strip searching and no-jury courts. Release all republican prisoners.

ORGANISE TO FIGHT!

KINNOCK IN COMMAND

Kinnock has spent four years steering the party rightwards. Yet the opinion polls continue to bring him bad news. Here *Keith Hassell* examines Kinnock's record, its effect on Labour's ratings and the fraudulent nature of the supposedly independent opinion polls.

FOR THE RAVING right among Labour's enemies there is no doubt about it. Kinnock is not in charge of his party. The press jackals are all claiming that behind the Kinnock moderate facade there lurks a Labour Party controlled by extremist communists.

As usual the filthy *Sun* leads the pack. In an editorial worthy of Goebbels it informed us that Deidre Woods was in charge and that *'She would make Attila the Hun look a moderate'*. But the Tories are carrying out their own more sophisticated, but no less fanciful, version of this campaign. The Tory Party in 1986 put out a pamphlet which said:

> *'Skilful camouflage and a ready smile have been employed to conceal the half-hidden face of today's Labour Party'.*

For the Tories and their press it is the 'extremists' of the Militant, the local government left or the 'Marxists' in the trade unions who represent the 'real' Labour Party. Energy Minister, Peter Walker said in August 1985:

> *'If you want Arthur Scargill to run the nation you have only to vote Labour at the next election'.*

PERMANENT

The message is clear. Kinnock is the nice family man put before the TV cameras to woo the floating voters and reassure the middle classes. But if you elect him, then the left-wing Parliamentary Labour Party will oust him the next day and Scargill will be a permanent fixture at Number Ten.

At the moment the right wing in the party are content with Kinnock as the leader and, despite the witch-hunts that have gone on, they have so far held back from launching a full-scale purge. Should Labour lose the election, however, the right-wing in the party will forget their dismissal of the left as irrelevant and will be quick to blame the 'extremists' for ruining the party's election chances. So who does hold the reins of power inside the Labour Party?

For a while after Kinnock's election as party leader in September 1983 the bosses' press liked to portray him as a man of the left. He was saddled with a reputation as a bit of a firebrand. Kinnock was elected to parliament in 1970 as a 28 year old lecturer in Nye Bevan's old constituency. Like most of the Labour left he opposed Britain's continued membership of the EEC in the 1975 referendum. In 1976 he backed Foot against Callaghan to succeed Wilson as leader. Earlier that same year he had stood out alone in opposing the parliamentary pact with the Liberals. A year later he boycotted the state opening of Parliament in protest at the wasteful money spent on royalty.

FAVOURITES

This record seemed to place him in the same camp as Benn and Skinner, the favourites of the constituency parties. Like Skinner, Kinnock was elected by the constituencies onto the NEC in 1978. When Callaghan's government was defeated in 1979 Kinnock as a founder member of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (CLPD) helped to win party conference backing for compulsory re-selection of MP's (1979) and changes in the method of electing the party leader (1980).

But by then Kinnock was also well on the way up in the Labour Party's official hierarchy. He was appointed shadow education spokesman in 1979. When his political mentor, Michael Foot, became leader in 1980, he sensed that his loyalty to the leadership, as opposed to the left, could one day be rewarded. Foot would not last for long. He was recognised by nearly everyone to be a caretaker leader. Kinnock, free from any blame for the Callaghan years, got the scent of high office. But to fulfill his dream he had to distance himself from the Bennite left.

Kinnock turned on his old left allies in 1981. After Owen and his cronies (25 in all) deserted Labour to form the SDP, he threw in his lot with the Labour right as the means of rebuilding the party's electoral credibility. In 1981 he followed Foot and backed Healey against Benn for Deputy Leader. This ensured Benn's defeat by the narrowest of margins. The *Observer* hailed Kinnock as *'the man who saved the Labour Party'*.

PROTEGÉ

He has been saving it for the right ever since. Foot could not survive the catastrophic defeat of Labour in the 1983 general election and made way for his protege Kinnock. he was not the candidate of the right-wing (Hattersley and Shore stood on this ticket) nor was he the candidate of the far left who backed Heffer. His left reputation and past, combined with his role of saviour of the right from Bennism did, however, make him the ideal compromise choice to 'unify the party'. He won a majority of votes among the constituency activists, the PLP and, crucially, from the block votes of the unions. In the run off against Hattersley he got 71% of all the votes. He was definitely in charge—and was recognised to be so by a submissive left and a relieved right.

He promptly used his mandate to fashion the party in his own insipid image. Over the last four years he has trounced the left and reshaped the party's policies and organisation in a manner close to the heart's desire of the right-wing.

He began by reducing the influence of Labour's National Executive Committee (NEC) on policy making which still had a considerable left presence in 1983. He wound up many committees and gave more power to the PLP, through a new Campaign Strategy Committee (CSC). The shadow cabinet began to take over from the NEC as the central directorate of the party. He surrounded himself with advisors much influenced by the ideas of Eurocommunism such as Charles Clarke and Patricia Hewitt who are enemies of the Bennite left.



Stefano Cagnoni (Report)

Within six months of his elevation to leadership Kinnock was given the chance to prove himself against the charge that he was in the unions' pocket. During the year long miners' strike he refused to back the leadership of the dispute. More often than not he was busy backing the Tories' denunciation of miners' tactics on the picket lines. He repeatedly and publically snubbed Scargill. He condemned the violence of the pickets but excused the police as *'the meat in the sandwich'*. After the strike he took the lead in convincing the union bureaucrats that the Tories' autumn laws on ballots would have to stay under Labour. *New Rights, New Responsibilities* was a measure of his success in this venture, codifying as it does a whole number of anti-union measures. He has repeatedly vetoed union attempts to give firm commitments on low pay. During the election campaign he has told the unions to keep quiet. Before it he deliberately refused invitations to address the Scottish TUC fearing that it would have given the press an excuse to highlight the connection between Labour and the unions!

MASTERMIND

Within the party Kinnock has likewise pushed hard against the left. He backed the expulsion of The *Militant* editorial board in 1983. In 1985 he used Clarke to mastermind a campaign in the constituencies to prevent Militant supporters being chosen as prospective parliamentary candidates. This succeeded in five out of the six cases. Since then Kinnock and a completely loyal NEC has expelled a dozen Militant leaders in Liverpool and given the green light to more around the country. In addition he has imposed candidates of his choice on two



Red rose rally

Stefano Cagnoni (Report)

constituencies where he believed the existing candidate would not be acceptable to the Tory press, Knowsley being a case in point.

But perhaps most importantly Kinnock's attacks on the left have not just found support within the Parliamentary Labour Party. He has influenced the outlook of the bulk of the consitituency parties and the union activists. This is seen in the backing they gave to the witch-hunt of Militant at Conference. It is seen in the constituency sections' dumping of Heffer from the NEC. It is seen in party conference support for Kinnock's policies in backing council house sales, for union ballots, against black sections amongst others.

ATTACK

There is no question that Kinnock is in charge of the Labour Party. In establishing this control he has savaged the left and drawn closer to the right. After the Party Conference in 1985 at which he launched a massive attack on the record of struggle of Labour's Liverpool City Council, the right were at last convinced of this, not least because the 'soft left' backed Kinnock and this left the 'hard left' isolated.

In 1981 Dennis Healey, trusted confidant of NATO generals and MI5 and father figure of Labour's right refused to join Owen's SDP split saying, *'It will take a few years to change the Labour Party but it can be done'.*

CONFERENCE

After Kinnock's 1985 Conference speech he beamed:

> *'Neil's speech was of historic importance. He has shifted the centre of gravity, not just of the Labour Party, but of the labour movement as a whole decisively. We shall look back on this day as the moment when Labour won the next election.'*

While Healey's judgement will be put to the test on 11 June, he is correct to say Kinnock is in charge. He sets the agenda, dictates the priorites and fashions the policies. And he does so on the basis of traditional right-wing, promise-nothing reformism.

Of course, the left though marginalised from decision making can be an irritant and electorally embarrassing for Kinnock, whether it is black sections, Militant or Deirdre Wood. It is damaging to Kinnock only because it conflicts with his public presentation.

EXPULSIONS

In a sense the election is too early for Kinnock. He cannot yet totally control the selection of prospective parliamentary or local council candidates. His attempt to do this through introducing 'one person, one vote' in local Labour Parties was defeated in 1984. Should Labour lose it will no doubt be raised again together with further expulsions.

But even then Kinnock will not satisfy the editorial writers of the *Sun* and *Daily Mail*. So long as Labour is based on the trade unions and therefore susceptible to pressure from organised workers, and in so far as these people will fight back against Thatcher, then their struggle will find sympathy within the ranks of the Labour Party. This is a contradiction that Kinnock cannot rid himself of so long as it is the Labour Party he controls and not an SDP mark II.■

APPEALING TO WHICH CLASS?

ORGANISE TO FIGHT!

IN THE 1983 general election Labour won only 209 of the 633 available seats. They did it with a vote of only 8.45 million. This was the lowest total since World War Two by more than three million. They polled only 27.6 of the vote. Worse was to follow. In September that year Labour was down to 24% in the polls with the Alliance at 29%.

Four years into Kinnock's leadership and Labour on the eve of another general election, is struggling to stay above the 30% mark. Despite all the change Kinnock has brought in to satisfy Labour's enemies in the press and big business there has been no marked improvement in Labour's electoral fortunes. Why?

Leaving aside the element of overt manipulation involved in opinion polls, it is still plain that Labour is not convincing enough people at present that it can form a credible government.

Many in the Parliamentary Labour Party thought that by simply trouncing the left in the party, by denouncing militant trade union struggles and distancing the Parliamentary Labour Party from local council battles against ratecapping Labour's electoral standing would improve. Indeed, after two years of Kinnock's leadership the opinion polls still had Labour at the low 30% mark. After the showdown with Militant at the 1985 conference Labour jumped up to nearly 40%. Coinciding with Tory banana skins, Labour's share of polls were at a healthy high for most of the following year.

Yet although Kinnock's grip has got tighter since then the party's poll rating has plummetted. In the real test of the May 1987 local elections Labour failed to make any real impression in its targetted areas. In some areas, like the Midlands—devastated by Thatcher's eight years—there was a swing away from Labour.

The fact of the matter is that, try as Kinnock may, Labour cannot avoid the effects of class struggle factors. Faced with an election big business have no doubts that another four or five years of Thatcher is in their best interests. They have no use for a Labour government. They do not need it to demobilise workers in struggle and rein in the unions—Labour's service to the bosses in 1974. Nor do they need it, as they did in 1964, to push through a state-directed regeneration of industry; a task then that an archaic and aristocratic Tory Party was incapable of carrying out.

As for the middle classes they have done well out of Thatcher. Indeed, so too have small sections of the working class who have kept their jobs and seen their income rise. Labour's best standing among these layers was reflected in early 1986 when there was a collective sigh of relief in the press over Kinnock's victories against the left and the Tories seemed to falter at every turn. But for the middle classes Labour is really a last resort, to be voted for in the hope that it can save them from the trial and tribulations of a class struggle wracked world. The fact is that, despite Kinnock's attempt to make the Labour Party more and more like the SDP, the middle classes—in the context of Thatcher's victories over the organised working class—prefer to vote Tory or for the real SDP.

SLASHED

It is Britain's working class—in work or out—who have seen VAT increase, education resources slashed and the NHS cut in real terms, which remains Labour's natural constituency. Yet the unpalatable truth is that millions of workers feel that Labour nationally has little to offer them to compensate for the ravages of Thatcherism.

Contrary to Kinnock's belief, there is strong eveidence that Labour has done best in elections where direct industrial struggle has occured against the Tories. During the miners' strike in June 1984 elections to the European Parliament were held. Labour nearly doubled its number of seats and polled 36%. The Tories share went from 50% to 41%.

In the May 1987 local elctions the biggest swings to Labour occured in the Yorkshire coalfield where the memories of the battle against Thatcher are very sharp.

Even in Liverpool despite the attacks of the press and the Tories, and the national Labour apparatus disowning them the local party won control of the council in May with a 3% swing to Labour. It is not hard to see why. A struggle had taken place and some material improvements for the local working class, particularly in housing, gave tangible evidence that Labour was different to the Tories or the Alliance. They were not being asked to support moderation and empty promises.

Kinnock, on the other hand, has distanced himself from every struggle, every cause in which masses of people have felt anger and bitterness at the Tories. While the Tories allowed Britain to be used as the bomb launcher for USA's attacks on Libya, Kinnock did not lift a finger. When the extent of Tory duplicity over Zircon became apparant Kinnock castigated the Tories for not trampling more brutally on the rights of Parliament. And during the printers' strike against the despicable Murdoch, Kinnock denounced the strikers as irresponsible.

The man has tried to offer the middle classes words of reassurance and promises that they will benefit under Labour. But to Labour's own working class base he has offered only insults, slanders and the pathetic promise that one out of every four unemployed people might get a job—the good graces of the city allowing—during the lifetime of the next Labour government. This social democratic style claptrap is what is losing Labour working class support. It lost it support in Knowsley and Greenwich. It risks losing it support in the general election. That's why in the election itself we must continue to fight Kinnock's social democratisation of the Labour Party every step of the way.■

FIXED OPINIONS

ORGANISE TO FIGHT!

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR nearly all of the 20 national daily and Sunday newspapers are hostile to Labour. During the three or four weeks of an election campaign their hatred reaches fever pitch.

In this election only one daily paper—the *Daily Mirror* with a circulation of under four million—will recommend a vote for Labour. This compares with seven which will back the Tories, with a combined readership of over 11 million. the *Guardian*, *Independent* and *Today* will tell their million or so middle class punters to vote Alliance or vote tactically.

This kind of line-up in the 1983 election campaign ensured that the Tories enjoyed 23 times more column inches of favourable press coverage in the month before polling day, than that of Labour.

All of this is hardly suprising when you realise that the companies that own the national press are by and large big businesses whose interests are loyally served by the Tories. Eight companies own 17 titles. In addition these companies own much of the provincial press and commercial radio stations.

Thatcher has rewarded her press barons for their coverage and handsome donations to Tory party funds. After her 1979 victory she knighted Larry Lamb and David English, editors of the *Sun* and *Daily Mail* respectively. She also gave a peerage to Victor Matthews owner of the *Express* titles and the *Daily Star*.

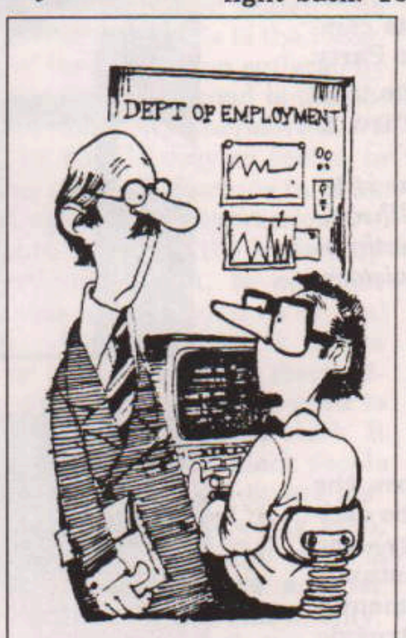
These facts alone should make us wary about the love affair the national press has with opinion polls. In 1983 forty three were carried out in the election campaign itself. This time there will be over fifty. The main reason for the increase is that Fleet Street and Wapping know very well the propaganda value of such polls. That is why it is they who commission and pay for most of them.

It is not just the left that considers opinion polls to be part of the propaganda war. During an election campaign itself they are banned in several countries, including West Germany. It is not hard to see why when you look at Britain.

Poll results provide sub-editors with headlines which have the value of appearing to be impartial since they are merely relaying the results of an 'objective' investigation into people's voting intentions. Yet matters are not so simple as that. For a start the methods of polling are highly questionable. In 1983 Audience Selection (ASL) did several telephone polls for the *Sun* and TVam which were given great prominence. Little or no effort was made to weight the results so that the well known fact that most people without telephones were likely to vote Labour was taken into account. Only after they had done their damage were they discredited.

But even the methods of face to face interviews with a 'representative sample' cannot be trusted. Great variations in response can be gained by the simple addition or subtraction of a few words. And just how 'representative' the sample is, is never made clear either.

Nor should workers place any trust in the main firms that carry out the polls—Harris, Marplan, NOP, etc. These firms, who regulate their own standards collectively, are part of big business corporations. They are in business to make profits. To do this they need customers. Customers will go back for more if they like what they hear.



'Do Opinion Polls come under services or manufacturing?'

It needs to be remembered as well that once the poll information has been passed onto the national press it is entirely up to them as to how they use it. They can, and do, ignore elements of the findings that do not fit with their propaganda aim. When did you ever see the front page of the *Sun* scream out: *'60% support Labour'* to report the true finding that six out of ten council tenants intend to vote Labour in this general election?

Selection and presentation are the chief weapons in the propaganda war. The press will concentrate on a Militant supporter standing for Labour in Bradford and stay silent on a recent member of the National Front standing for the Tories in Stockton. In the same way they will select out from the poll findings the information that will best serve to boost the Tories and demoralise potential Labour voters.

Labour and the trade unions do not have to be helpless victims in the face of this. We can fight back. To begin we should demand that opinion fixing by polls be banned during an election campaign. In essence this is only an extension of the secret ballot in the age of the monopolisation of the means of mass communication. In the last century the bosses used to ensure the right result by bribes and intimidation of the workers. Now they do it with the press. We should have none of it.

In addition the Labour movement must fight for the right to reply to the half-truths and outright lies that spew out of the gutter press. Print workers stopping the presses until this is granted have been successful during other struggles. It can be again. Beyond this the Labour party and TUC must create its own democratically controlled daily press. Kinnock and Willis are content to rely on millionaire Maxwell's *Mirror* because it supports them against the left. They fear like the plague a press that is radical, campaigning and democratically controlled by the rank and file. But that is precisely the kind of press the labour movement needs if we are to win the battle of ideas in the propaganda war.

And one parting thought: How many people in your street have ever been interviewed in an opinion poll?■

ORGANISE TO FIGHT!

Within the Labour Party the left are in a weak position. Their influence over the election manifesto this time has been minimal. It was not always so. *Mark Hoskisson* charts the rise and fall of the 'Bennite' movement and its fragmentation under Kinnock's leadership.

LEFT OUT IN THE COLD

IN 1979 THE Labour left, led by Tony Benn, campaigned under the slogan *'Never Again—a Callaghan style Labour government'*. In 1987 there is not the slightest room for doubt that if Neil Kinnock does become Prime Minister he will carry on, where Callaghan left off.

Yet the slogan of 'Never again' has been quietly dropped by the Bennite left. Benn, Heffer and even fiery Skinner have decided to sit on their hands until after the election. Yet they have seen the democratically agreed policies they fought for systematically dumped. They have seen their power base on the NEC whittled away as the axis of leadership in the party has shifted dramatically to the right. They have seen the leadership carry out witch-hunts explicitly aimed at driving socialists out of the Labour Party.

And the left are allowing them to get away with it. Or more accurately, the left around Benn, Heffer and Skinner—the Campaign Group, Labour Left Liaison, the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy—are now too weak amongst the rank and file of the party to withstand the Kinnock led onslaught on them. What has happened since 1979?

CONFERENCE

The Labour Party of Jim Callaghan was discredited in the eyes of hundreds of thousands of workers, thousands of Labour members amongst them. The left's campaign was aimed at ensuring that Labour in office, was to a limited degree, accountable to the party conference. This aim accorded with the views of the central core of the trade union bureaucracy, furious that in contemptuously ignoring their warnings on pay restraint in 1978, Callaghan had opened the door to the Tories. On the basis of these sentiments the Bennites enjoyed a surge in popularity in the party that led to both the defection of the SDP, and Benn himself losing the Deputy Leadership campaign of 1981 to the right-winger, Healey, by a whisker. But this was to be the zenith of the left's advance.

The left's advance had been used by the trade union leaders and the left and centre parliamentarians to introduce some methods of accountability beneficial to their own caste interests. The limited reforms achieved by 1981, notably the election of the leader by an electoral college, were sufficient for them. From that point on they wanted a compromise with the old Callaghan-style right, and an end to the feuding. Moreover, they wanted to curb the influence of the left which had, at the constituency level of the party grown rapidly with the Militant tendency gaining fastest of all. Such a left—influenced as it was by various 'Trotskyist' papers—needed to be tamed. Therefore less than four month's after Benn's near miss, they called a truce at Bishops Stortford.

Benn's response to the demand for an end to the left pressing on with its campaign for the reform of the Labour Party was clear. The battle was over. The task was to stop the in-fighting and turn to electioneering. He declared:

> *'The task of the Labour left now is to work flat out for victory at Hillhead, for Labour gains in the local elections in the spring and for a Labour victory in the general election.'*

BUREAUCRACY

Loyalty to this goal over and above the fact that the right-wing still held the decisive levers of power in the party—the hapless Michael Foot notwithstanding—was the Bennite left's fundamental weakness. They subordinated a struggle that still had a long way to go, to the needs and requirements of the right-wing dominated Labour and trade union bureaucracy. From Bishops Stortford in the retreat of the Bennites was inevitable.

Neil Kinnock's rise to leadership did not merely drive the Bennite left into retreat. It actually broke up the entire alliance around Benn and led to the so called 'realignment' of the Labour left. The first hint of this realignment came with the election of Kinnock himself in 1983.

The Bennite left by and large, decided in advance to support Kinnock and, after his victory, to abstain from challenging his leadership no matter what. Thus *Tribune*, well before Nigel Williamson (soon to become its editor) openly attacked Tony Benn and Dennis Skinner one and a half years before realignment was officially ushered in warned the Bennites:

> *'Anyone who upsets that new found unity of purpose and confidence will deserve short shrift from the rest of the movement. That includes the Left if it stands on the sidelines sniping from a position of ideological but ultimately sterile purity. There clearly can be no challenge in the electoral college for either leadership position in the next five years.'* (14.10.83)

This was a declaration of abject submission by the left. But the Bennite movement was not homogeneous and on the rock of the miners' strike it fragmented. Benn, Heffer and Skinner are not revolutionaries, but they did fall in behind the miners, going so far as to argue at the NEC for a general strike in late 1984. Kinnock on the other hand, was loud in his denunciations of the miners, seeing in the strike a real obstacle for his plans for a middle class, middle-of-the-road Labour Party.

Whole sections of the left, with the Labour Co-ordinating Committee and *Tribune* leading the way, distanced themselves from Scargill and from his supporters in the party like Benn and Skinner. At the same time sections of the local government left, led by Livingstone, put themselves at a respectable distance from those councils like Liverpool and Lambeth that appeared to be prepared to break the law.

The defeat of the miners' strike drove what became known as the 'soft-left' further into the Kinnock camp. At the same time it marginalised the rump of the Bennites who had identified themselves with the strike. The only hope for both wings of the left became a Labour government at any cost. For the so-called hard left—Benn, Skinner, Heffer and their supporters—this has meant accepting the role of loyal and tame opposition within the NEC, while doing nothing to organise resistance to Kinnock outside it. Most crucially this meant refusing to challenge Kinnock for leadership over the question of his treachery to the miners. By abiding by the peace deal struck at the time of his victory the 'hard-left' allowed the most advantageous moment for such a challenge to pass them by.

Clearly the realigned left are worried about the extent to which 'their Neil' appears to be following the advice and dictates of the right. In particular they worry that Kinnock will abandon unilateralism completely, a policy they held to be a precondition for their capitulation. But this side of the election they will do nothing to upset the leadership. The 'hard-left'—regrouped after the 1985 great realignment show, into the Campaign Group/Labour Left Liaison—have fewer illusions about Kinnock. But they still place winning the election on his terms above organising a fight to resist his anti-working class policies and purges.



Laurie Sparham (IFL)



Stefano Cagnoni (Report)

NO FIGHT

Tony Benn himself has become a somewhat eccentric character. With large numbers of his followers now in Kinnock's camp he can still blithely declare that while in 1979 to 1981 the left was strong:

> *'. . . now, five years later, that very same left, much stronger that it was, has got to work for the election of a Labour government.'* (*Campaign Group News* September 1986)

This strong left suffered defeat after defeat at the following month's annual conference, including the defeat of Eric Heffer in the 1986 NEC elections.

Regardless of Benn's barmy view that the left's only weakness was not realising 'how strong it really is', his allies have lowered their sights considerably.

In terms echoing *Tribune*, *Campaign Group News* argued with regards to its own left policies:

'These demands, however, must take account of the fact that the overriding priority of the party is, and must be, the winning of the next general election.' (June 1986)

SPLIT

The 'hard left' had become Kinnock's electoral footsoldiers.

The rise and decline of the Bennite left from 1980 to today holds many important lessons for class conscious workers. They are lessons that must be learnt now in readiness for any of the possible outcomes of the next election. Left reformism is tied to the right-wing leaders of the Labour party. While the rightist godfathers of the Callaghan mould will think nothing of publicly attacking Labour policy, and even splitting from the party (as Callaghan's Foreign Secretary Owen actually did), the left will always hold back. They will never risk taking a confrontation with the right through to the end. The reason for this is simple. They need the right to fulfill their perspective of achieving power through parliamentary means. They need them as the acceptable face of Labour to the bourgeoisie, without whose good graces Labour won't stand an earthly of getting into office.

The role of the left is merely to act as the conscience of the right-wing leadership, not as an alternative to it. To do this effectively, the left must under certain circumstances, really reflect the interests and pressure of the working class, within the Labour Party.

REVOLUTIONARY

They did this in order to refurbish Labour's image with workers in 1979-1981. They did it during the miners' strike in 1984-85. But at the same time they keep that pressure within strict limits, the limits of parliamentary reformism and the compromise with the right that they hold as sacred. As such, left reformism cannot ever be relied upon to wage a consistent struggle in the interests of the working class. It will dither and retreat at the decisive hour. Thus if, in the aftermath of a defeat the right wing do go for further purges, up to and including a split, workers must not rely on Benn and Heffer to stand firm and fight to the finish. Only revolutionary socialists will be prepared to do that.■

BEHIND THE DENTED SHIELD

WHICH LABOUR COUNCIL banned 'Baa-baa black sheep' from its nurseries? Which loony-left council withdrew black bin-liners as 'racist'? Which London borough ordered its workers not to call each other sunshine?

The answer is NONE. All of these stories were reported as front page news with screaming headlines in the *Sun*, *Star* and *News of the World*. Yet there is not a shred of truth in any of them.

When the truth comes out, when even the Press Council gets angry, these papers do not retract their lies. They keep on printing them day after day.

But while *Sun* journalists and printers will be wearing out the keys that spell loony on their Wapping computers in the next three weeks, this is the real insanity they will ignore:

Councils have sold twice as many council houses as they have built in the last 8 years.

Money from selling council houses cannot be used to build new houses. £8 billion has been raised this way but the Tories say councils are not allowed to spend it on any construction (houses, community centres, etc) at all.

HOMELESS

This takes place in the context of a quarter of a million people being officially listed as homeless, most of them with dependent children. In fact there are many more homeless people than this—including thousands of young working class families forced to continue living with their parents.

It is taking place in the context of building workers on the dole. Thousands of teenagers on YTS spend their days building walls only to knock them down and start again!

This is the madness of Tory rule, which has strangled cash to councils through ratecapping and public spending cuts. But you will never read about it in the *'soaraway Sun'*. Soaring away from the truth, that is.

SERVICES

Thatcher has attacked local councils because they are the one source of services for working people she was not in control of. In the really depressed areas of Britain, where these services are needed most, Labour controls the local councils. So Thatcher has:

- **Abolished the GLC and other big Metropolitan Councils.**
- **Slashed £17 billion off grants to local councils.**
- **Banned councils making up the shortfall by putting up the rates.**

If she gets in again she will abolish council housing over the next ten years, ripping up the Rent Act to hive rack-renting landlords into the private housing market. This is to be done under the banner of taking away council control of council houses! Building societies are to be encouraged to take over the running of the council estates. The first step, say the Tories, will be to *'destigmatise private landlordism'*. This is a bit like trying to decriminalise Al Capone.

Thatcher will abolish the rates and replace them with a 'poll tax'. This would mean everybody on the electoral register paying the same amount, no matter what the size of their house is or what their income is. For most working class families this will mean a rate increase. The boss earning £4,000 a week will pay the same as a nurse earning £4,000 a year! Even those on benefit will have to pay some of the new tax: that could mean £4 a week for those on £27 a week benefit!

The sting in the tail of the new poll tax is this: local councils can set the level themselves. So in the Tory shires and rich areas services may even improve; but from Brixton to Birmingham where there are vast concentrations of workers on the dole or on low pay where will the money come from to empty the bins?

The real crime of the Labour councils is that none of them have fought to the finish to stop Thatcher's cuts. Until 1983 every one of them ran away from a fight with Thatcher by putting up the rates—rates as a whole rose by a massive 60% across the country. But this 'tactic' hurt the pockets of workers hard.

When Thatcher capped the rates fifteen councils vowed to defy the law. Only Liverpool and Lambeth did so for a time. Now every one of them has surrendered. They are mortgaging the future, selling off town halls and assets to fend off making big cuts. But real cuts have started—even in those councils branded as 'looniest' of all by the gutter press—Lambeth, Islington and so on.

If Thatcher is returned to office local government will be on the front line of the fight against her. The Labour councils must be forced to defy the law, to cancel the debts to the big banks and implement a crash programme of spending on homes, jobs and services.

Without this, all the equal opportunity schemes and well-intentioned anti-racist policies—though we defend them to the teeth against the Tory lie machine—will be little more than paper trimmings, increasingly unable to deflect attention from the destitution and crumbling services experienced by millions.

ORGANISE TO FIGHT!

by Helen Ward



Sharon Atkin, witch-hunted black section leader

Jez Coulson (IFL)

TORY GAY BAITING

THE MOST VICIOUS round of lesbian and gay baiting any election has seen is now underway. The treacherous Patricia Hewitt—Kinnock's press secretary—gave the Tories and the gutter press the scent of blood after Greenwich. She argued that the issue of lesbian and gay rights was a vote loser and should be, to all intents and purposes, dropped by Labour.

This cowardly retreat has given the Tories the cue to go on a binge of bigotry. One of their electoral posters, from the stable of the jumped up hucksters at Saatchi and Saatchi has a picture of the book *Young, Gay and Proud* under the headline, *'is this Labour's idea of a comprehensive education?'*

This had the *Daily Mail*—the paper that supports Thatcher now with the same vigorous enthusiasm that it supported the fascists of Mosley and Mussolini in the 1930s—jumping for joy. 'Tories go for the jugular' it screamed.

Former Tory chairman John Gummer, with the backing of senior ministers, has joined the campaign by attacking a bishop who said that a person's sexuality was their own business and nobody else's. Gummer fumed that the bishop should be acting as Christ's representative, and should therefore set high moral standards. He declared:

'To indulge in anything other than marital sexual relations is incompatible with setting those standards.'

Well, this just leaves you wondering whose morality soon to be recalled Cecil Parkinson, Jeffrey Archer and Harvey Proctor are representing.

Let's be absolutely clear. We condemn those three men because they are Tories and hypocrites. We do not condemn them for what they are or have done sexually. So why do the Tories, their press, and now the Labour leaders seek to condemn, vilify and even terrorise lesbians and gay men?

They do so not because there is anything corrupting, unnatural or abnormal about homosexuality—though for ideological reasons they portray it as all of these things. No, they do so because for them a sexuality that does not conform to their required needs—the maintenance and reproduction of labour power, of workers, via the heterosexual family—is a threat.

Working class people should recognise lesbian and gay baiting in this election for what it is. A crude but cruel attempt to divide the working class and attack people for something that, properly speaking, is nobody's business but their own.■

FIGHTING LABOUR'S RACISM

THE VAST MAJORITY of black people vote Labour. Indeed Kinnock and Hattersley have come to take such support for granted. So much so that they expect that support to continue regardless of what they do to black people in the party or of what they promise the mass of black people outside the party.

Indeed the Labour leadership is quite happy defending its rotten and racist record. It's a record which includes such affronts to human dignity as virginity tests on Asian women. It only attacks those who are prepared to remind people of this record, people like Sharon Atkin.

FORCE

The emergence of Labour Party Black Sections has challenged the leadership's patronising assumptions of eternal and passive black support. No longer can Roy Hattersley speak for 'his' Asians without fear of contradiction. Black people, faced with Thatcher's relentless attacks on their rights and communities, organised within the Labour Party to force it to respond to their needs and to fight against its racist policies.

Black people face prejudice and discrimination within the party as well as everywhere else. This racism cannot be wished away, nor conveniently ignored for the purposes of polling day. It has to be challenged, fought and beaten. The first blow in this battle is the recognition of the oppression suffered by black people. The second is the acceptance that they therefore have the right, should they so desire, to organise as Black Sections in order to fight against their oppression.

It is not 'racist', as the leadership hypocritically claim, to organise those who are the victims of real racism - black people. It is not 'divisive' to recognise that discrimination and oppression are used to divide white workers from black. It is not a 'fringe issue' to black people within the party that they are discriminated against at every turn, inside as well as out. The truth is that the leadership are against Black Sections for one reason only. They want a return to the 'good old days', when people knew their place and didn't rock the boat by telling unpalatable truths about Labour's racism.

Kinnock's attack on Sharon Atkin was an attempt to reimpose these old values. It was also an attempt to 'surgically remove' an 'electoral liability' as quickly and painlessly as possible. In fact the removal of Atkin as PPC for Nottingham East has been a gift to the Tory press and their Alliance hangers-on. They cheer on every move by the leadership to 'cleanse' itself of opposition and ditch 'unpopular' causes. They do not do this because they think it will help Labour win the election (unless *The Sun* is a very clever form of 'tactical canvassing'!). They cheer Kinnock on because they love the sight of the Labour leadership attacking its own activists. They reckon, and rightly, that this will weaken Labour's active base and hurt rather than help its election chances.

PRINCIPLE

Against all those who preach not rocking the boat on this issue until after the election, socialists must demand that Labour actively promotes the defence of the hard won rights of the oppressed rather than trying to sweep them under the carpet. They must be clear and uncompromising in their defence of these groups' rights to self-organise. They must not sacrifice this principle for the sake of becoming silent partners with Kinnock during the election campaign. They cannot ignore Labour's racist record—nor can they suspend for a moment, let alone three weeks, the fight against its legacy and its perpetrators today.

■ **Vote Labour, fight racism, defend Black Sections!**

by Chris Ramsey (Vauxhall CLP)

BULLETS AND THE BALLOT BOX

Connolly was not the first to die in the fight to free Ireland of British rule. The eight IRA men of Loughgall will not be the last.

IT DID NOT take long for the British state to exact revenge on the IRA for its killing of Lord Justice Gibson. Eight republican volunteers were slaughtered in a hail of bullets in a carefully prepared ambush by undercover assassins. No question of taking prisoners, not even sorrow for the death of an Irish man passing by, caught up in the murderous gun fire.

We salute the memory of these volunteers who were buried in the week when 70 years ago wounded James Connolly was taken out on a stretcher, strapped to a chair and executed by the British army. Connolly's crime, like that of the recent volunteers, was to resist British rule in Ireland, arms in hand.

Connolly was not the first to die in the fight to free Ireland of British rule. The eight IRA men of Loughgall will not be the last. Why is this?

Up until 1921 when Ireland was partitioned Britain had kept the country in colonial servitude. Absentee British landlords owned the land and preferred to see millions die or emigrate rather than reduce the profits from the export of the products of Irish peasant labour. For centuries their revolts were crushed mercilessly. The Protestant community was drafted in from Scotland to police the Catholics. In the nineteenth century industrial development on the North East benefitted the Protestant community. The working class was divided along communal religious lines as the Protestants were given the best jobs, wages and houses. Their loyalty was not to their class but to those forces (British governments included) who were prepared to underwrite those privileges.

Two years after Connolly's execution for his part in the 1916 rising, the Irish people voted for independence and a Sinn Fein government. The British colluded with the Protestants to deny the mass of Irish people this right. Six counties of Ireland were kept as part of Britain with an inbuilt Loyalist majority.

The remaining Catholic minority in Northern Ireland has been systematically discriminated against ever since. In 1969, when resistance boiled over onto the streets in a mass protest movement, British troops were sent into the Six Counties to preserve Loyalist rule.

Since then countless British initiatives—including direct rule from Westminister since 1972—have failed to crush the resistance or remove the sectarian privileges of the Protestants which inspire it. No jury trials, paid perjurers, shoot-to-kill, internment without trial, torture—all this has filed to stem the flow of volunteers willing to die to free Ireland.

In this General Election, the fact that Northern Ireland is not a part of Britain will be illustrated by the absence of the main three parties that contest elections in Britain. In their place will stand two main Unionist parties (DUP, OUP) who stand for Protestant supremacy and enlist the support of 90% of the Protestant community.

The Labour Party will not contest the seats—Labourism has only ever been present when economic growth in the North has made the Protestants less fearful of their position being eroded from below. This was true in the 1870s and in the 1950s. But the pathetically weak Northern Ireland Labour Party (NILP) has practically been squeezed out of existence by the re-emergence of communal antagonisims. It is not the job of the left to mourn its passing and artificially seek to promote the NILP as part of a solution to the sectarian divide. On the contrary its demise is a testimony to the inability of Labourite reformism to solve the antagonism within the Six Counties.

We urge any progressive sections of the Protestant working class not to vote for the open (DUP/OUP) or concealed (Workers Party) parties which either stand for Protestant supremacy or refuse to openly oppose partition. We must also fight any attempts by a Labour government to make formal or informal pact with Unionist politicians in Parliament.

There are no revolutionary communist candidates standing in the Six Counties in this election. Such candidates would need to stand on a platform of struggle against partition and Protestant privilege. But unlike Sinn Fein their programme would stress the central role of the working class throughout the thirty two counties in unifying Ireland. Unlike Sinn Fein, revolutionary communists would take their seats in Westminster to expose Britain's crimes against the nationalists and rally these people to an assault on Britain's rule.

In the absence of such candidates, however, we do urge a critical vote for Sinn Fein. We must aim to get Gerry Adams re-elected in West Belfast. We demand he takes his seat. We do so in the hope and belief that petit-bourgeois politics of Sinn Fein and their inability of them to successfully lead a struggle to unify Ireland will be recognised more readily.

- **Vote Sinn Fein!**
- **No Pacts with Unionism!**
- **Troops Out Now!**
- **Self-determination for the Irish People as a Whole!**

by Peter Abram



Funerals the RUC try to smash — *Derek Speirs (Report)*

NO CRUISE? ...NO CHANCE!

ONE QUESTION THAT won't be asked by the pollsters is 'Should Labour voters be concerned about defending Britain?' Perhaps it is because the answer is so obvious. 'Of course', would be the instinctive reply of many.

But ask two further questions. Safeguarding what? Defending it from whom? Perhaps then the answers are less than obvious. Thatcher and the bosses are in no doubt about where the threat to Britain lies: the USSR. That's where all the missiles point, that's why most of the tanks and troops are massed in Central Europe.

Thatcher and Reagan's propaganda argues that the 'evil empire' is intent on spreading communist revolution across the planet. This is laughable. In 1917 Lenin's Bolshevik Party led the mass of Russian people to overthrow the hated Tsar and capitalism. Until Stalin's rise they did seek to inspire the workers of Europe, America and Asia to rise up against their rulers. This had nothing in common with military invasion.

But Stalin crushed the revolution in the USSR and actively prevented revolutions in France and Spain in the 1930s. He did this as a service for yesterday's Thatchers and Reagans. He did it in the vain belief that he could thereby reach a lasting peace with them.

This is utopian. Thatcher and Reagan will never renounce the dream of restoring capitalism in the USSR and Eastern Europe so as to give their system a new lease of life.

It is Gorbachev who has proposed disarmament measures not Thatcher. What does this tell us? Certainly that the Kremlin dictators are in a fix, that their economy is cracking under the strain of financing a huge military machine. But also that they are not in business of building up their arms to be able to launch an assault on the West. They want to pare it down to the minimum necessary to defend their borders.

Yet Thatcher wants to keep missiles and Reagan won't let Star Wars go. They do so because their military capitalists make big profit out of new armaments and they want the USSR to crack under the strain of competing with them. It is not Gorbachev who wants to impose an 'alien' political system on the West but Thatcher and Reagan who want capitalism back in place in the USSR.

What are British workers being asked to safeguard? Our democratic tradition? Our civil liberties? Our basic rights? But it is Thatcher and her business backers who have eroded these rights during the last eight years. Was it Gorbachev who took away the rights of two million more people to a permanent job?

From Catterick to Aldershot armed garrisons sit in our midst to be deployed should our resistance to Thatcher's plans get beyond the capability of the increasingly armed police to handle.

Was it the Kremlin that batoned the miners into submission with the police? Was it in Moscow that ministry officials ordered BBC TV programmes be impounded because they voiced criticism of the government for going behind the back of Parliament?

No it was not. It has been Thatcher and the Tories. That's why they and their boss class are British workers' main enemy. They are to be found at home, not thousands of miles away. Thatcher knows this much. That's why they build up the armed forces inside Britain itself. From Catterick to Aldershot armed garrisons sit in our midst to be deployed should our resistance to Thatcher's plans get beyond the capability of the increasingly armed police to handle.

The Labour Party accepts the fundamental pillar of the Tories defence policy. Shadow Foreign secretary Dennis Healey on 16 May declared once again Labour's *'unshakeable commitment to NATO'*, an alliance which exists to carry out the anti-Soviet campaign.

Yet there is a weakness—from the bosses point of view—in Labour's defence policy. More than one conference has declared itself for unilaterally getting rid of US nuclear weapons from Britain. These weapons happen to be central to present NATO strategy. Kinnock's backing for this policy is less to do with Glenys' CND activity and more to do with the overwhelming popularity of this policy with Labour Party members.

It looked for a while as though this policy may be the only vestige of radicalism left in an election manifesto bereft of anti-capitalist policies. But it was not to be. The pressure of the chiefs of staff, of a hostile press and Labour's right-wing have proven too much. The East-West talks over medium range weapons have given the Party leadership the excuse to concede to this pressure.

Gone from the Manifesto is the call for immediate scrapping of US nuclear bases. Absent even was the intermediate position of doing this within a year. As the *Sunday Times* reports:

'Now the Americans will be told that a Labour government would simply like them to remove their nuclear weapons, subject to consultation, if the current East-West arms talks fail.'

Working people in Britain have every interest in preventing their sons being slaughtered and their pockets picked to defend the profits of British companies' overseas investments. They must therefore be anti-imperialist and anti-militarist. We must demand that Labour stands by its conference commitment to scrap Polaris, cancel Trident and get rid of Cruise missiles. We should redouble efforts to get Britain out of NATO and defend the USSR from all sabre-rattling and military re-tooling whichever party wins the election.■

by Keith Hassell

MANDATE FOR REPRESSION

SOUTH AFRICA HAS just had its election. As before 70% of the population was not allowed to vote. Their crime? Being black—which means they are systematically excluded from having any political voice at all and suffer massive discrimination and oppression. Increasingly since 1984 they have risen up against this.

The black population of South Africa, through their trade unions and township organisation, have thrown one of the world's richest and most ruthless ruling classes into severe crisis.

Only members of the white population in South Africa are accorded a meaningful vote, (the coloured and Indian populations vote only for powerless assemblies, which the majority of them rightly boycotted). But economic power in the country is even more concentrated. Four companies— Anglo American, Sanlam, South African Mutual and Rembrant— now own 83% of total market capitalisation on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. Anglo American itself owns 60%.

Most of these big corporations, and overseas investors would like to see reform in South Africa. They have profited from apartheid for years but now their profits are threatened by the black working class movement. *'Vote for racial equality'* Gavin Relly of Anglo American advised the white electorate. These 'progressives' want just enough change to head off a revolution and leave capitalism intact.

SHIFT

But they were disappointed by the results of the whites only elections which showed a decisive shift to the right. PW Botha's ruling National Party retained a firm hold on power although their share of the vote dropped from 56 to 52 %. But the ultra right Conservative Party took 26.4% of the vote, and pushed the Progressive Federal Party out of its long standing position as the official opposition.

The election has done nothing to solve the crisis facing the South African government. In fact it has exacerbated the dilemma facing President Botha: whether to attempt to reform apartheid by winning a layer of the black middle class and the support of big business yet risk losing the support of much of the white minority whose privileged lifestyle depends on apartheid.

DIFFERENTIALS

Getting rid of apartheid's restrictions would mean challenging job reservation, 'whites only areas' and the gross differentials in wages which mean that the average wage for white workers is three times that of black workers.The signs from the elections are that it was precisely this layer that moved to the right, especially where jobs or residential areas previously reserved for whites were being opened up.

In the run up to the election, Botha had tried to fend off the right by going to the electorate on a 'get tough' programme. He had given the green light to the South African Transport Service (SATS) to attempt a lock out and smash up the revived rail and harbour workers union (SARWHU). He allowed the security forces to lay siege to the offices of the major black trade union federation, COSATU. Legislation in April aimed to stifle the campaigns to free the detainees, of which there remain several thousand under the emergency provisions brought in last summer.

From trying to steal the right's clothes Botha has ended up wearing them. It means that he is prevented from making any moves that would satisfy 'progressive' business. The coalition of white reformers and black collaborators who wanted to stitch up some kind of power sharing deal have seen their hopes, at least temporarily, dashed

In turn this has caused confusion in the camp of those opposed to apartheid. The United Democratic Front (UDF), formed to bring together apartheid's opponents, is a good example. In the first elections to the stooge Indian and coloured parliaments it advocated a boycott. But this time it had an equivocal attitude. One UDF national executive member who had temporarily emerged out of hiding argued:

> *'The UDF is not prescribing to people whether or not to vote because it considers the white elections to be a side show, detracting from the real issues facing the electorate'.*

MINORITY

Yet Nelson Mandela is reported as asking whites to *'vote against apartheid'*. But there was no way in which they could do so in this minority election.

Sections within the UDF together with the exiled African National Congress (ANC) do look to win over sections of the ruling class to an alliance to get rid of apartheid. Oliver Tambo found comfort in the support given to the Independents calling them a *'strong and solid movement away from apartheid'*; and this despite the fact that Worral had publically given his support to the emergency provisions prior to the elections.

In a revolutionary situation you need revolutionary leadership not sowing of illusions. The black working class can now expect not reform but a sustained attack on its organisations. The bombing of COSATU headquarters together with a further state crackdown on press reporting show that both the UDF and COSATU itself will come under attack.

We have every reason to believe that the black workers will respond. Already in the run up to the election the unions had found themselves inevitably drawn into sharper and wider struggles. The rail workers confronted an intransigent management and the vested interests of white workers for whom state companies had always provided reasonably paid jobs. A young and radical leadership emerged led by SARWHU's 34 year old President Justice Langa. The bosses aimed to break the union from the moment of its re-formation at the end of last year. But the rail workers were not the only section thrown into sharper conflicts.

The shop workers union fresh from unionising campaigns in the big white owned chains started to organise in stores in the black townships. And at its recent conference the NUM declared:

> *'The workers struggle in the mines cannot be separated from the struggles in the community . . . apartheid and captitalism are two inseparable evils that must be smashed.'*

The reaction to the whites only elections and the repression that surrounded it was also a tremendous demonstration of the black unions' power and discipline. One and a half million workers stayed away from work in the strike called by COSATU, the UDF and the student organisation SAYCO. One million students boycotted classes.

The Labour Monitoring Group described the strike as *'the biggest mass protest of its kind'*. In the Eastern Cape employers reported an almost 100% stay away, in the Transvaal 65% and even in the Cape area where the response was 25%, it was noted that more Coloured workers were joining the black African led protest.

CONFRONTATION

These developments indicate a growing class consciousness and recognition of the role that organised workers will have to play in the struggle to completely overthrow apartheid. A working class led revolution could not stop at dealing with the questions of the vote and democratic rights. It would find itself in confrontation not only with the reactionary wing of the South African rulers but also with the Gavin Rellys—the owners and controllers of the huge capitalist concerns. That is why the question of strategy for COSATU and other unions will continue to be debated even in the heat of a desperate defensive struggle. It is why the strategy offered by the ANC of alliance with the progressive capitalists spells disaster for the working class. In the months ahead the black workers must resist being dragged further down this cul-de-sac.■

by Sue Thomas



South African soldiers talking shop *Noel Watson (Report/IDAF)*

FREE MOSES MAYEKISO

IF THE SOUTH African working class is to have a chance of preserving its organisations in the next period and hammering out a strategy for victory, massively increased solidarity will be needed.

While the balance of forces seems pitted against our class in this country, the British labour movement becomes even more national centred than usual. 'we can't even defend ourselves' many trade unionists say. But we simply cannot afford this attitude. Our brothers and sisters in South Africa face torture, detention and death. They also have created the opportunity of dealing a mighty body blow to Thatcher and British big business which has a huge stake in apartheid.

Among our most important immediate tasks is the campaign to free Metal and Allied Workers' Union leader Moses Mayekiso whose trial is due to start on 3 August. He is charged with treason for his activities in the township organisations of Alexandra. Moses represented what the South African regime most fears, the unity of workplace and township organisation under working class leadership. It is essential we use every means to secure his release and help him return to the struggle. If we fail death on Botha's gallows awaits him.

Trade unionists can also raise support for the 900 workers sacked during a union recognition strike by BTR Sarmcol. A new initiative has been launched in Britain by MAWU to put direct pressure on the parent company. A demonstration outside the shareholders office on 13 May signalled to the chairman Owen Green that he will have no peace until the workers are reinstated.

One of the reasons why many trade unionists have already begun to raise support for Moses Mayekiso is that he is known here through visits and the direct links that have been built with the Metal and Allied Workers Union. Links between trade unionists help to further international solidarity. The COSATU unions continue to welcome links with trade unionists overseas, although the tremendous pressure on the unions at present may mean that replies are a long time coming. The unions prioritise links between workers in the same multinationals.

Throughout and beyond our election period we should remember our brothers and sisters on the other side of the world. We should never let the Labour leadership, including that long time supporter of sanctions, Neil Kinnock, off the hook. Whoever wins the election it is we workers who have the power to enforce real sanctions. Our black brother and sisters have waited too long already.■

SUPPORT
THE CAMPAIGN FOR TRADE UNION SANCTIONS AGAINST APARTHEID

For the latest bulletin and information on its activities contact:
CTUSAA, 17 Porden Road, Brixton,
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Tel. 01 733 7063

Socialist Organiser

LOYAL TO KINNOCK

Many groups and tendencies to the left of the Labour Party claim to be providing a socialist or class answer to Kinnock. In this survey of a selection of the 'far left' groups *Dave Hughes* shows that they are doing no such thing. *Arthur Merton* explains why the Communist Party and its offshoots are no alternative either.



GENERAL ELECTIONS COME but every four or five years. When they do they invariably catch the left groups in the most revealing postures, exposing the grossest errors in their political method.

A fine example of the Labour Party's 'hard left' falling in behind Kinnock and dropping any pretence of an independent profile is furnished by *Socialist Organiser* (*SO*). This outfit has long been drifting to the right after it failed in the project of building a broader hard left around itself in the Labour Party. Quite how far right it has swung is amply demonstrated by its early election coverage.

In its heart of hearts, *SO* claims to know that:

> *'The Labour Party is limited in the degree to which its leadership does in fact represent a real alternative to the Tories.'*

According to its editor, the working class really needs something different altogether. It needs what *SO* passes off as a workers' government:

> *'A government based firmly on the working class movement and determined to fight from the beginning in the interests of the working class, to cut a swathe through all the vested class interests represented by the Tories and the Alliance.'*

ACCOUNT

As ex-Trotskyists *SO* supporters know well the content that Lenin and Trotsky gave to the 'workers government'. It meant a government breaking with capitalism, one that set out on the road to overcome the economic and political power of the bosses. This government would need to create new types of workplace and estate organisations which held that government to account and also to arm these workers.

But *SO* have long given the term a different content. For them it is a radical Labour government accountable to the existing organisations of the labour movement. Even more interesting is that now *SO's* editor even give up on the fight for such a Labour government. They throw in the towel to Kinnock. We can't have what we need because Labour is not fighting for it, reasons their editorial. And with the time honoured refrain of opportunists *'socialists have to live in the labour movement as it is, even while we strive to change it'*, they resign themselves to fight for workers' needs another day and for Kinnock's campaign today.

Quite where this takes *SO* in practice was graphically demonstrated by their response to Kinnock's sacking of Sharon Atkin. They dithered over Sharon Atkin herself. At first she was 'considerably off beam' as *SO* declared:

> *'The Labour Party is a long way from deserving to be numbered among the active forces of racism in Britain today.'*

WHISPERED

But wait a minute. Someone seems to have whispered Labour's record in the editor's ear. Back to mind comes Callaghan's treatment of the Kenyan Asians. Back to mind comes Labour's record on immigration. Suddenly the *'considerably off beam'* Sharon Atkin becomes *'not entirely off beam'* after all.

But no matter that our author is tying him or herself in knots. Who knows who is on and off their beams? The important message is yet to come: Sharon Atkin's supporters should buckle down to the Kinnock right now because, after all, the general election is here. As *SO* puts it:

> *'The time for recriminations and for attempts to hold the leadership to account will come after the general election. It is not now.'*

TRAMPLING

At last a ray of clarity penetrates the political mist! We must not recriminate let alone attempt to hold the leadership to account. The Labour leaders are trampling on the rights of Labour Party members and witch-hunting the Black Sections in the vain hope of silencing the Sun and the *Star's* racist editorials. Yet we are supposed to turn the other cheek, get stuck in to Labour's campaign and only raise our objections once the votes are safely counted in. This is sheer political bankruptcy.

As usual *SO* is not short of spurious attempts to theorise its latest rightward spin. *'What is the Labour Party in the perspective of history?'* asks the *SO* editorial, before getting the answer absolutely wrong. Labour, we are told:

> *'... is a working class based reform party that has yet to break properly with capitalism.'*

This is a thoroughly deceitful and dishonest formulation. It implies both that Labour can and will break properly with capitalism, and that it has carried out that break to some extent already. At one with Militant at last, *SO* now envisage Labour being turned into a revolutionary party. What else would its proper break with capitalism signify?

Worse is to come. In pulling together for victory we must even praise the worst enemies in our ranks. As compared with Eric Hobsbawm apparently:

> *'Neil Kinnock, and even those right wingers in the Labour Party who support Kinnock in rejecting tactical voting, are loyal and honest working class politicians.'*

Do our eyes deceive us? Is there a printing error? We think not. Dennis Healey, John Smith, John Cunningham (the list is endless) are now annointed *'loyal and honest working class politicians'*. These servants of the bosses, these betrayers of the working class are loyal politicians alright. But, comrades of *SO*, their loyalty is to the capitalist class, while they dishonestly claim to speak for the working class. That *SO* have become attornies for them shows just how far right its editors have travelled.■

Revolutionary Communist Party

THE REAL LOONY LEFT

THE RCP ARE a blustering crew. More concerned with image than political principle, they are the counterpart of the Alliance on the British far left.

the next step (*tns*) has had the political bad taste to resurrect the 'Red Front' which led the German working class to defeat at the hands of Stalin and Hitler. After all the hype, and defeat at the hands of the Monster Loonies in Greenwich, they are due to field fourteen candidates in the general election.

The conceit of this organisation is incredible. So too is the political programme of these 'Revolutionary Communists'. They announce that:

> *'The Red Front aims to give the working class a voice in the general election.'*

But looking deeper we see that the voice they wish to give the working class is a feeble reformist one. As they put it their aim is to create a bloc that can fight the election:

> *'... on a platform of basic demands that add up to the minimum need for a decent life and a bit of genuine democracy'.*

Consequently they soup up a list of demands that add up to a series of reforms without even a programme for their actual realisation. Nowhere do our Revolutionary Communists so much as whisper the need for revolution to achieve the interests of the working class? Work or full Pay, the end of state interference in the affairs of the working class, the fight for civil liberties and democratic rights, and opposition to capitalist militarism are heralded as the policies the Red Front will fight on. But how they will be achieved is nowhere in view!

At one point *tns* bumps into the question of how to achieve their demands. But it does so only to escape into a whelter of confusion and euphemism. Mike Freeman declares:

> *'We recognise that a wide-ranging political struggle against the established order is the only guarantee of achieving our objectives.'*

What on earth does this mean? Is it the most convoluted long hand for 'revolution' in the annals of the left? Or is it an honest confession that the RCP can't offer anyone the means of achieving their goals.

Behind the pompous exterior is a squalid sect with a reformist programme. They deceive themselves they are breaking the mould of left politics when they are doing nothing of the sort. Their impatience with the organised workers' movement makes them dream of creating a new one more to their taste, one designed by them and for them. The working class has no need for this ultra-left brand of designer socialism.

There will be a neck and neck race between the Monster Raving Loony Party and the Red Front for last place in 14 constituencies. It is a matter of no significance to the working class which wins the wooden spoon.■

MILITANT WON'T FIGHT FASCISTS

SATURDAY 2 MAY was a satisfying day for anti-fascists in Lecicester. John Peacock, local BNP organiser, held yet another ill-fated election rally in Newarke School, Braunstone. But on the other side of Leicester the LPYS was holding a regional 'March Against Racism'. The march passed from the Belgrave to the Highfields areas: two black areas which are no-go for rascists.

Having built the march in previous weeks we argued that it had to change routes and confront the fascists once it knew that the BNP were meeting on the other side of the city. This was a view also taken by the trades council and the NUPE hospitals branch. This convinced most of the black youth on the march to break away at the start and head for the action, leaving less than 100 to troop around Leicester with Militant avoiding the fascists.

At the school about 300 anti-fascists, mostly black and white youth plus local trades unionists, assembled: all prepared to confront the racist scum. Youth from the school itself were out in force, as were teachers, united in their disgust at the school being used by the BNP.

About 30 fascist turned up, carrying pool cues, iron bars and flag poles in full view of the police who were offering them every protection. Inside the meeting 150 anti-fascists faced the BNP over a six deep cordon of police.

Despite many attempts, only a few of the fascists were got. There was no repeat of the last BNP election meeting—referred to as 'Poltergeist 3' by local anti-fascist due to chairs mysteriously beginning to fly through the air. But the fascist meeting was drowned out with chants of 'fascist scum, you're going home in a big white ambulance', and, for the intellectuals, 'Stalingrad '42'.

Police arrested seven activists—some of whom were beaten in the cells. At the end the Militant turned up claiming to be the organised labour movement. They were a laughing stock. Sectarian party-building stunts are more important to them than fighting fascism.

by anti-fascists in Leicester South LPYS

ORGANISE TO FIGHT!

Communist Party

BUILDING THEIR ALLIANCE

BRITISH STALINISM GOES into the 1987 election in a weaker state than it has ever been before. The Thatcher years have wreaked havoc in the party.

The Communist Party was, effectively, split down the middle during the summer and autumn of 1985 when the trade union bureaucrats and Kremlin lovers at the *Morning Star* broke with the trendy Euros who ran *Marxism Today* and controlled the party apparatus.

The *Star* declared UDI from the Party; a mini-version of the Moscow purges followed. The trendies may carry filofaxes and designer tee-shirts but they hadn't forgotten the good old methods of the Stalinist bureaucrat.

So today, Stalinism is intervening in the election under two separate banners, that of the *Star's* Communist Campaign Group, and that of the official party. The former is campaigning all out for a Labour victory, the latter is campaigning, halfheartedly, for a Labour victory and standing a handful of its own candidates.

The *Morning Star* wing are, in all essentials indistinguishable from the Labour left. They think that provided Kinnock makes 'it clear that Labour will stand up to big business' victory is assured. This outlook is laughable. Kinnock and Hattersley have made it clear that they will bend the knee to big business. What is needed is a fight against them and their pro-capitalist policies. But the *Star* like the Labour left, refuses to do this. It denounces those, like Workers Power, who refuse to subordinate the interests of the working class to the interests of Kinnock, as sectarians. The *Star* faction are no communists. They are left advisors and left cover for Kinnock.

But what of the Euros? *Marxism Today* has given great prominence to Eric Hobsbawm's call for a tactical vote. He is being used by the CP to argue for a parliamentary popular front. Hobsbawm himself is an irrelevant, former historian—in his own words a 'superannuated professor'—with little political wit. He has presented his views in *Marxism Today's* May issue on voting for *'the candidate who offers the best chance of defeating the Tories, whether Labour or Alliance'*.

The CP are happy to use him to test the water. In particular, they have their eyes fixed on the aftermath of the next general election when realignment following a defeat could open up new possibilities for the 'broad democratic alliance'.

For the moment though Hobsbawm's position is not the party line. The CP is calling for a Labour or Communist vote. Far from being a left position, however, the CP's electoral tactic is being carried out, like all of their current tactics, on the terrain of craven class collaboration. Responding to the furore around Hobsbawm's article in *Marxism Today* Chris Myant, editor of the party's weekly *7 Days*, wrote that people should vote Labour but;

> *'some of the things the Alliance is doing and arguing for are things Labour should have been taking up long, long ago.'*

Like what, citizen Myant—keeping Polaris, incomes policy, anti-union laws?

In fact the CP's adherence to the popular front will pave the way to tactical victory, and even a formal bloc with the Alliance in the future. This is clear from the CP's approach to the trade unions at the moment. In the NUM, where the Euros do have some influence, they are busy promoting both a reunification—on the scabs terms—with the bosses' narks in the UDM. And to save the coal industry Scottish NUM leader George Bolton, is openly calling for a bloc with the class enemy. He wrote that to save coal:

> *'CND, Liberals, Labour, even some Tories, not to mention the local communities immediately affected and our colleagues in the trade union movement—all could be involved.'*

If such a broad democratic alliance is possible for industry, then why not for Parliament. The two wings of British Stalinism are not merely weak and palsied, they are rotten and bankrupt. Both want to tie the working class to the bosses. They merely differ over the form of that collaboration. Workers should reject outright tactical voting, Communist, or uncritical support for Kinnock, recommended by the *Morning Star*.■

Eric Hobsbawm: There is only one way of defeating the Thatcher government. It is by voting for the candidate who is best placed to keep out the Tory

Socialist Workers Party

UNDEMANDING SUPPORTERS

IT WASN'T ALL that long ago that the Socialist Workers Party was urging socialists in the Labour Party particularly *Militant* supporters to come on out and join it in a *'visible revolutionary alternative'*.

Indeed, *Socialist Worker* (*SW*) has always been an ardent advocate of abstention from the struggles that took place in the Labour Party. To honest militants who were fighing for what they saw as working class policies against the Labour leadership the SWP could only counsel that they give up the task.

Such an orientation did not get the SWP very far. Their advances to Militant were spurned. Few Labour leftists took their advice and quit.

As the prospect of an election loomed larger so the SWP had to revise its perspectives. As happens in every election campaign the abstentionist SWP has swung itself in behind Labour's campaign. In previous elections *SW* has argued for a Labour vote because it was a *'lesser evil'* than the Tories. Or, in Paul Foot's words, that there may be only an inch between Labour and the Tories but *'in that inch we survive'*. This has little to do with a communist approach to electoral tactics. Labour (and other bourgeois workers' parties) can and have been as ruthless with the working class as open bourgeois parties based on parliamentary democracy. The Callaghan government of 1976-79 cut real wages further and faster than any government this century.

This year *SW* has abandoned this approach and returned to Lenin. It is the relationship between the organised working class and Labour that is the key. As *SW* quite rightly admitted:

> *'The best militants in the working class—the ones who will lead the struggles of the future—will be voting Labour. They will be identifying with the idea that the working class has to organise politically as well as industrially.'*

SW argued that a vote for Labour was a means of establishing a relationship with those militants who support Labour. But this is where the problems of the SWP's electoral tactic really begin. Not only did its *'Vote Labour'* line attract a stream of abstentionist letters from readers who had followed the logic of their previous politics. The line also had no real means of challenging workers illusions in Labour.

This reality was expressed in two ways. On the one hand the *SW* had raised the slogan *'Vote Labour with no illusions'*. In the SWP's own terms this is a palpable absurd slogan given that the mass of workers will vote Labour with illusions that it will do better for them than the Tories. It can only have catchment as a slogan for the SWP's own members who have lost their illusions and must be persuaded to vote Labour all the same.

ILLUSIONS

On the other hand Callinicos realises the need to put workers illusions to the test. But he trusts in Labour itself to destroy those illusions form office, as he puts it:

> *'Practice will prove that the Labour Party will not deliver the goods.'*

Labour is left to expose itself with, at best, some passive literary exposure from the SWP.

The task of revolutionaries is to activate the contradiction that lies at the heart of the bourgeois workers' party between its working class base and politically bourgeois leadership. That means attempting to organise its working class supporters to defend themselves against capitalist attacks and to fight for their own needs. One vital form that struggle takes is the fight to force the Labour leaders to act on behalf of the working class and for the labour movement to organise independently whensoever the Labour leaders inevitably let the workers down. That means placing and fighting for demands on Labour.

CHALLENGE

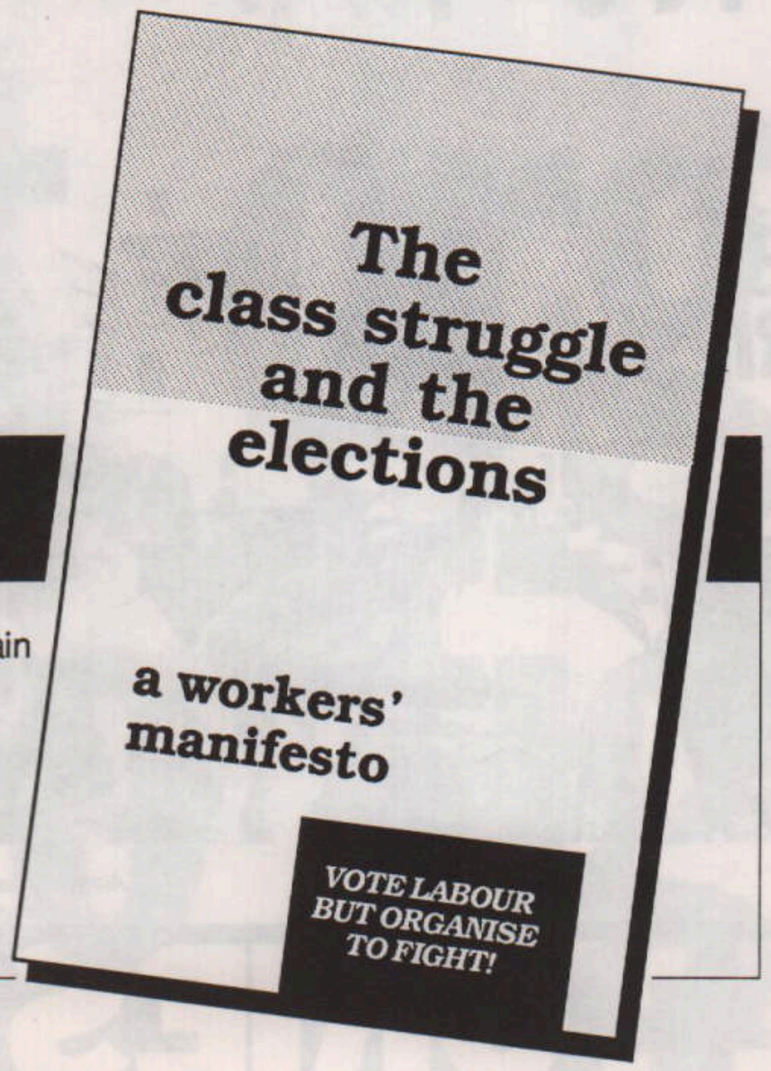
This the SWP do not do. Their abstentionism prevents them doing so in practice because they rule out, at present, work in many arenas of the labour movement (i.e. the Labour Party) where that struggle can be waged. Their tailing of the working class pulls them into the Labour camp at election time and it ensures that they offer no effective political challenge to workers' illusions when they do so.

SWP members will doubtless console themselves with the fine print talk of building a new revolutionary organisation. In the heat of the campaign the SWP will stand four square with the Labourite left it was so roundly denouncing until recently, who also fail to organise around demands placed upon Labour in the fight to get elected.■

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NO HOLDING BACK

The TUC chiefs and the Labour leaders are not keen on industrial action at the best of times. In an election campaign they see it as a downright embarassment that loses them votes. They try to get it called off at any price.

When Thatcher declared for an election her goverment was locked in battle with the civil service workers. It had failed to stem the militancy of the school teachers. A one-day London bus strike against the LRT's privatisation plans was rock solid. There were yet more signs of renewed fight in the coalfields as sacked men picketed out all the Doncaster pits for a day's strike action. Thatcher has not had it all her own way against the working class by a long chalk.

FAINTHEARTS

These struggles must be extended and built upon in order to secure victory. But the Labour Party and trade union leaders see things quite differently. The Labour leaders think they can win back middle class fainthearts if they distance themselves from the unions. They are desperate to prevent the smell of industrial struggle spoiling their sanitised professional campaign.

ORGANISE TO FIGHT!

They don't want action over the sacked lads reminding the middle class about the miners' strike and the miners' support for Labour—despite the fact that the financially hard-pressed NUM has just given Labour a hefty cash donation. They don't want the battle to continue in the schools. That's why Radice went out of his way to publicly exhort the teachers to call off their action for the election period. They are pressuring the London bus workers to hold back so as not to alienate the commuters. They are horrified at the prospect of the civil service action coming to a head at the same time as the election.

None of these actions should be called off for an election. In each case it would demobilise the workers, take the steam out of the dispute and leave them all the more vulnerable at the hands of whoever wins the election. It also lets Labour off the hook by allowing Kinnock to make the trade unions invisible. Organised workers must not take a back seat in the fight against the bosses. They must fight the bosses' chosen candidates in the election and their vicious attacks in every industry and workplace. And at the same time they must use their struggles to demand that Labour commits itself to act on behalf of the working class.

COWARDICE

Labour says it will take the civil servants' claim to arbitration. This is plain cowardice and treachery. It must be forced to promise to honour the full claim. Labour says it will review the cases of the sacked miners. Miners must demand it guarantees the return of every lost job. Labour says it is opposed to privatisation. Fine—let it guarantee to defend every job on London Transport. And if its so keen on improving education let it support the teachers wholeheartedly and not stab them in the back.

But its not just a question of keeping these campaigns going as they are. All of them are being prevented from developing into the all-out action needed to win the workers' demands. Taking a leaf out of the teachers' book the CPSA and SCPS leaders are committed to a strategy of selective strikes. The TGWU want to keep things that way on the London buses. The bulk of the NUM leadership are anxious to prevent the lightening pickets of sacked men becoming the launching pad for generalised action against British Coal.

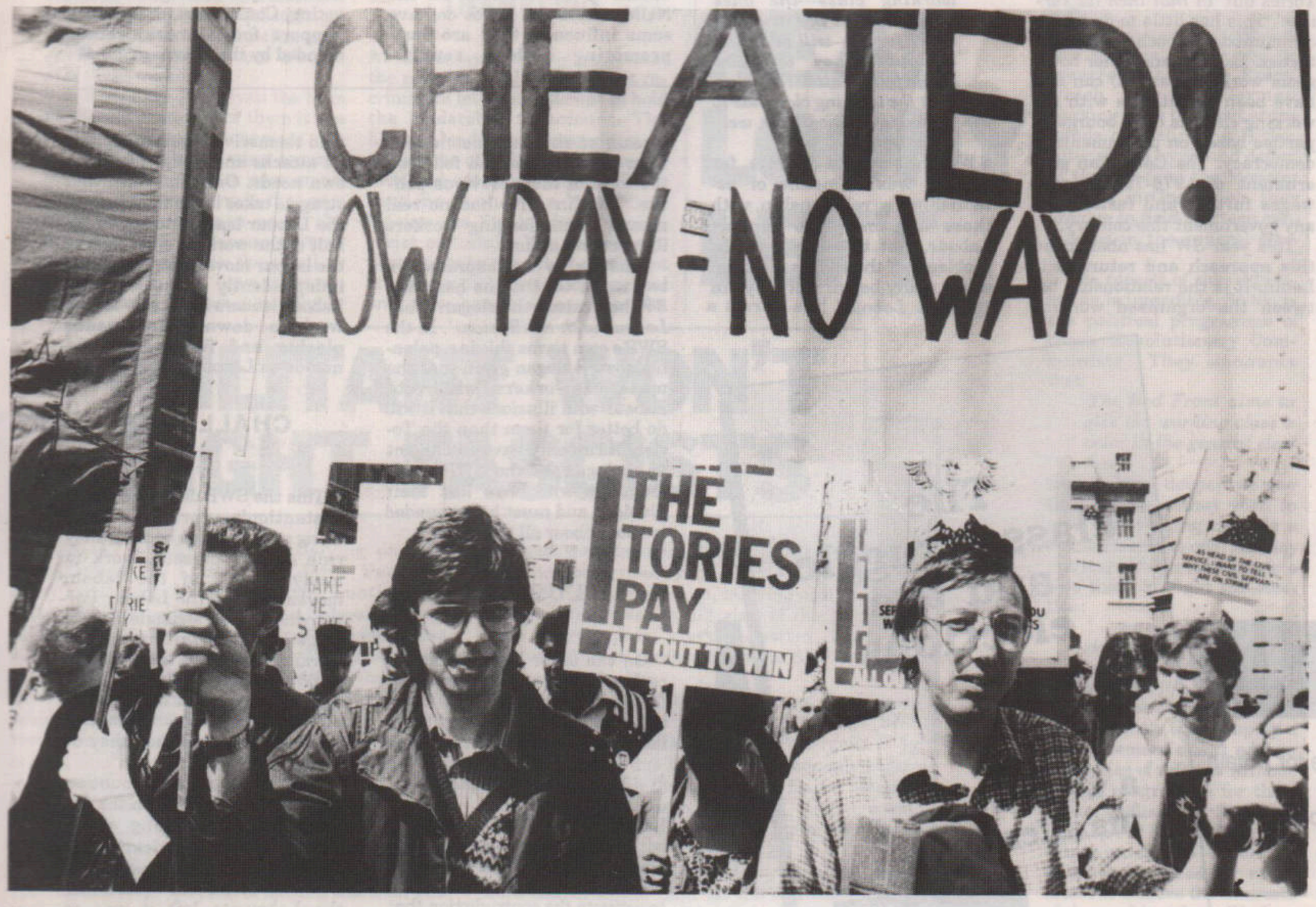
Such tactics express the trade union leadership's refusal to lead an all out fight against Thatcher. Instead they argue that they are winning public opinion to their side by such responsible and moderate—read ineffective—action. Meanwhile the bosses sit it out while the workforce becomes more demoralised as its action never really bites. Civil servants should remember their 1981 campaign of selective action left them divided and defeated. The teachers' selective action has not stopped Baker imposing his terms. *The lesson must be learnt.*

The CPSA and SCPS leaders have called a ballot for a two day stoppage on 8 and 9 June. Kinnock and Hattersley will be wriggling to get it called off. It must go ahead. But it must not be allowed to fit into the union leaders' schemes for continuing regional actions backed up with a one-off national stoppage. It must be made a springboard for all-out action to win.

The civil service unions have it in their power to spearhead working class resistance to the Tories in the election period and after. They must link up with the workers in the Town Halls, the gas and electricity boards to unite public sector employees against the Tories. They must organise alongside the claimants for better services and benefits for the millions forced onto the dole queues by Thatcher. They must fight for a system of emergency payments and services directly under the control of the strikers and claimants. In that way the hatred that the mass of workers feel for the Tories can be given voice despite Kinnock, despite Willis and despite the civil service union leaders.

- **No holding back for the election.**

by SCPS members



For an all out strike now!

Andrew Wiard (Report)

END LOW PAY

OVER THE LAST years unions organising the low paid have given priority to getting the Labour Party to include a statutory minimum wage in its manifesto.

What has this got the low paid? Nothing! There are still around 8.5 million adults who earn less than the EEC 'decency threshold' of £126 per week.

The statutory minimum wage is now Labour Party and TUC policy. Its initial advocates like NUPE's Rodney Bickerstaffe promised that *'a statutory minimum wage is not a stalking horse for an incomes policy'*. The Labour leaders clearly don't see it that way. The new pre-election *'work to win'* campaign, launched by the Labour Party and the TUC, does not put to the fore the minimum wage. What they advocate looks exactly like an incomes policy. Kinnock made this plain when he said:

> *'We will not have a statutory system because it does not work. As major employers all governments have policies for incomes, the question is not whether we will have a policy for incomes but who will be involved and what are the objectives.'*

The TUC have fully endorsed this statement and to rub salt into the wounds Willis has said that:

> *We will not baulk at recognising the hard choices involved in allocating scarce resources . . . We will not shirk facing up to our responsibilities in collective bargaining.'*

In other words they are prepared to pay lip service at conferences to the statutory minimum wage (of unspecifed amount) but when it comes to making pre-election deals with the bosses they will commit the trade union movement to wage restraint.

What this could mean under a Labour government will be bitterly remembered by many low paid workers who know that the last Labour government used its social contract against low paid workers and not for them.

MISERY

Low paid workers have waited too long in misery and deprivation. Holding on for a Labour government has not helped them. It has only served to help the Tories. Even if Labour is returned it will try to duck out of the measly commitments it has been forced to make unless the low paid organise. That's why the low paid must stand up and organise now. They have nothing left to lose.■

by Jane Bruton

KICK THE TORIES OUT