The class struggle and the elections

a workers' manifesto

VOTE LABOUR BUT ORGANISE TO FIGHT!

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Workers Power
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Introduction

For months now the slavishly pro-Tory national press has been conducting a propaganda war to ensure that their beloved Margaret gets back into Number Ten. Barely a day goes by without one poll or another being published proving that Labour has already lost the impending general election.

This carefully orchestrated campaign—glorified ballot rigging in fact—is having some effect inside the working class. The labour movement is not in the best of states to counter it. It is in retreat and has been since the miners' defeat. Deprived of the confidence that comes from victories over the bosses, and deprived of a press that can answer the daily dose of lies administered by the *Sun*, the *Star* and the *Express*, too many workers have been taken in.

The people to blame for this situation, for this mood of retreat, are the leaders of the labour movement—the TUC and the Labour leadership of Kinnock and Hattersley. These gentlemen, eager to prove their worth to a sceptical ruling class, have systematically sabotaged every serious struggle against the Tories. They have stood by while the bosses have thrown millions onto the dole and destroyed hard won gains in working conditions, union rights and welfare services. Instead of rallying working class voters with firm promises that every loss suffered under Thatcher will be restored to workers under Labour, Kinnock and Hattersley have tried to reassure the bosses by giving them the firm promise that nothing will be done that 'the country' cannot afford. In other words they will not make the bosses pay a penny in compensation to those whose lives have been ruined under Thatcher. Indeed every time the bosses, through their gutter press, attack Labour, Kinnock and Hattersley respond by ditching yet another party conference commitment. The manifesto looks set to be the most threadbare ever. And the 'lefts' are silent in the name of unity.

Kinnock's strategy spells doom for the working class. His 'moderation' pleases nobody. For the middle class the Alliance is a safer bet. For the bosses Thatcher is still the preferred option. And, as both Knowsley and Greenwich showed, many workers do not

even feel inspired enough to vote, let alone vote Labour, by Kinnock's vacuous programme.

In this situation we publish this action programme. It is an attempt to address the problems the labour movement faces. It is a strategy both for stopping the retreat and beginning the offensive. It is a manifesto of resistance to the Tories, the bosses and to any anti-working class government that emerges from the next election, whichever parties make it up. It offers a revolutionary challenge to capitalism itself. In the election Workers Power will campaign for workers to vote Labour. But we will also campaign, with equal vigour, against the pro-capitalist policies of Kinnock and Hattersley. This pamphlet is an alternative to those policies on every key issue. Its message can be summed up as **vote Labour but organise to resist the bosses' offensive and to fight the capitalist system.** We urge all who read this pamphlet and agree with it to fight for the demands it raises within the labour movement and to join us in our struggle for a revolutionary socialist alternative to capitalism.

Workers Power April 1987

Stop Thatcher's third term

One prime minister, two terms of office and eight long years adds up to millions of Tory victims. Thatcher and her band of hard faced class warriors have ridden roughshod over the lives of thousands of working class families. Many people hate her for what she has done to their communities. They yearn to see her and her government thrown out. Polls show that over 60% of the population do not want to see her re-elected.

Soon, they will have their chance. The general election now dominates the political landscape. The Tories are set to spend an extravagant £20 million of big business money on *'being economical with the truth'*. Lies will be used to prettify their record, and rhetoric employed to cover their intentions. Thatcher has let nothing stand in her way. She came to power determined to break with the post-war consensus that to a large extent had bound the Tory and Labour Parties in the 1950's and 60's. The renewed crisis of world and British capitalism in the 1970's bit deep into the comfortable profits of the captains of industry. Inflation, necessary earlier to rob the workers of the fruits of their wage rises, was causing major concern to the money magnates of the city. The enforced concessions of the welfare state, union power, rising living standards were no longer affordable to the bosses and the bankers.

Thatcher and Tebbit were summoned from the ranks of the red-

neck suburbs of Torydom to claw all these gains back. The early compromises with the 'one nation Tories' were ditched step by step. Sixteen Cabinet 'wets' have been forced to resign since 1979 as Thatcher has insisted on pushing through her programme of a radical redistribution of income and wealth in favour of big business.

Of course, the naked ruling class interests of the Tories had to be draped in colourful cloth in order to sustain a political electoral base and to soften and divide the working class. *'Getting the state off our backs'* has masked the savage assault on the provision of welfare services. Chaining the unions in legal shackles to stop them representing their members common interests has been done in the name of defending 'individual liberty'. We are preached the virtues of 'prudent housekeeping' to justify the economic dogma of 'tight money' in order to push through massive cuts in public spending. The knock-down sale of state industry to private multinational monopolists and bankers was done to the tune of 'the virtues of free competition'.

The stench of hypocrisy that permeates the actions of this government makes the eyes water: millions are thrown onto the scrap heap of the dole queue while Thatcher fights for the scab's 'right to work'; the sanctity of the family is proclaimed while seven million people can barely keep a family life together on supplementary benefits; even the one time universal truth of monetarism is quietly ditched in order to cynically finance electioneering hand outs to the middle class.

As the working class prepares itself for an election it is vital that all class conscious workers rally the broadest layers—the jaded and demoralised as well as those who wish to fight—to stop Thatcher in her tracks and prevent her getting a third term. To those who say it can not get worse, we say, 'it can and will unless we rouse our class against her'. We must take the record of her government and her plans for future attacks into the factories, schools, offices, to those isolated at home as well as those in the community and unemployed centres.

REACTIONARY RECORD

Thatcher has doubled real unemployment to well over four million, nearly 14% of the workforce. The Tories have written off the unemployed. Lawson's March budget was an act of contempt towards them; a couple of pounds tax back for the wage-earner and those on the dole can whistle. After all, most of the unemployed do not vote Tory or do not vote at all.

Thatcher came to power promising to tame the unions, who were

'pricing people out of work'. This and *'squeezing inflation out of the system'* would create 'real jobs'. To a large extent she has done the first two, but where are these jobs? All we have had is 18 changes in the way the unemployed are counted since 1982. These and fake job 'training' schemes have knocked one million off the real figure of those who want a permanent job. Even *The Economist* said, *'the statistical fiddles are just that.'*

The real level (i.e. purchasing power) of benefits has plummeted since 1979. The 1% rise in 1986 set a record for meanness. The number of longterm unemployed has grown to over four in ten while the youth are harassed from town to town to keep their entitlement or browbeaten onto a scheme. Money denied the unemployed is given to pay for an army of snoopers and interrogators to intimidate more people into not claiming.

The two million manufacturing jobs gone in the last seven years have been sacrificed to the god of profit. Since the trough of the recession in 1981 profits have reached a proportion of national income, some 64%, not experienced since the 1960's. And it is in these years of 'recovery' that the dole queues have lengthened rapidly as more work has been done by fewer hands working more intensely.

As the election looms large the Tories do not make great play of their future plans; but they have them nonetheless. The new Job Training Scheme (JTS) for the 18 to 25 year olds indicates the shape of things to come. If the Tories get in again we can expect them to mimic the pattern of Sweden which deprives certain of the unemployed of their benefits if they refuse to take any old job or follow the example of several of the states in the USA which force people to work for their benefits.

MONEY IN THE POCKET, VOTES IN THE BAG?

Most people who have kept or got a job under Thatcher have seen their wages and salaries keep ahead of the rise in prices. Not that much but enough to notice. How has this happened? For a start those firms who have survived and prospered are making enough money to want to ensure a bit of industrial peace and not let rivals edge ahead. Some of the same firms who have been vicious in imposing redundancies have conceded wage claims at or ahead of the inflation level.

Needless to say, it is the 'fizz-kids' of the city and the professionals in the private sector who have done best; 25 years old, earning £50,000 a year for spending the day on the phone converting the wealth others have created from one currency to another.

Meanwhile the bottom 10% of earners have had no increase in real wages at all. This is hardly surprising since it is these workers who are most affected by the Tories' determination to abolish the Wages Councils which set minimum (very low) rates of pay, especially in the retail, hotel and catering sectors.

The picture is also quite different when you compare the private and public sectors. The Tory government have really tried to lead by example! On average public sector pay has fallen 11% behind the private sector. But even this hides the fact that while police pay has been boosted 12% above the private sector average, NHS ancillaries have had theirs kept 26% below and local authority manual workers 15% below.

There is also a purely political factor behind the wage and salary rises of the last seven years. The Tories' programme was always, as Thatcher said, one that would 'take two or three Parliaments' to achieve. But how to get re-elected? Part of the answer lay in encouraging divisions within the working class by fostering a mood of self-interest among the skilled manual workers. They suffered most under the wage-cutting Social Contract period of the last Labour government and some voted for Thatcher in 1979 and 1983. She needs them again.

The Tories have used changes in taxation to push through their give-backs to the rich. In 1986 tax cuts were running at £8.1 billion a year, over 45% of which were going to benefit the top 10% of salary earners. We need hardly mention the tens of billions they have given back to companies since 1979 in tax and national insurance relief.

Thatcher promised to cut taxes in 1979, but although she has reduced income tax to 27 pence in the pound this has been mostly a gain to those who earn most. Meanwhile, she has increased the VAT rate and put it on more things so hitting the poorest hardest. Overall, the burden of taxation has increased under the Tories for most working class families.

If we allow the Conservatives four or five more years it is clear where the next attacks on wages will come. Wage cuts are needed by the bosses if they are to maintain or improve their competitiveness precisely because they will not cut their profits. The bosses like to lecture us about the high level of wage costs per unit of output. But they forget to tell us that since the recovery from the last recession (1980/81) it is the raising of profit margins that account for the greatest addition to costs: 37% of costs per unit of output are down to profits and only 22% to wages!

A green paper already published by the government makes it clear that the Tories want to see wages pushed down further by breaking down national pay bargaining into regional or local

bargaining (which is also aimed at sowing division and discord within the workforce). Lawson has already called for lower wages outside the south east of England. The government is also under a lot of pressure to set a better example to industry by exercising tighter control over wages in the public sector.

Secondly, and more favoured by the bosses, is to link workers' wages to the profit performance of companies. Once this is accepted practice it is a short road to 'give backs' when a company makes a loss. There have been odd examples of this already but it could become commonplace in a Tory Britain of the 1990's, and it presents a potentially greater threat to class consciousness than the attempt to drag part of the working class into the new share owning democracy.

RICH PICKINGS FOR THE CITY

The experience of nationalised industries in the post-war period was a poor one for those working in them. Pay was often low and thousands of jobs were lost in industries like coal. The very reason for nationalising these industries after the war was that they were not sufficiently profitable and could not be maintained on the basis of private ownership. The former owners were paid a handsome price by Labour, saddling the state with decades of debt resulting from compensation.

Yet this nationalisation was a gain to be defended. They forced the capitalist state as a whole to sustain the losses rather than unload them immediately onto the working class through even more job cuts and closures.

Thatcher set about ending this. To the labour movement's shame it must count as one of her greatest victories. The sheer scale of the privatisation programme in seven years is hard to grasp. From small fry like Amersham to big game such as BT the city speculators have had rich pickings. Over £15 billion worth of state assets (often underpriced) has been floated on the Stock Exchange resulting in virtually overnight fortunes for the few as the share prices rise by up to 25%.

Again Thatcher has had a political goal in sight through this period. By forcing the sales of council homes, while virtually ceasing public sector house building, Thatcher showed she cared nothing for the homeless but wanted to foster what she believed would be a conservative property-owning instinct among working people.

So too with the sale of shares. Allow people to buy shares and not only would it serve to stay Labour's hand in re-nationalising

the industries concerned for fear of lost votes but it would actively promote the idea of a share-owning democracy. Everyone gets a piece of the action, everyone has a stake in the nation's wealth.

Like most of Thatcher's Saatchi and Saatchi packages this one was nine parts deceit. Over 75% of listed shares are owned by institutions such as the pension funds. The number of BT shareholders has halved since 1984.

The effect on jobs of this onslaught has been dramatic. Job losses in the privatised sector have ranged between a quarter and a half. In BT some 21,000 workers have gone down the road since 1983.

In some cases such as British Coal a major job cutting programme by the government has been a necessary prerequisite to making further chunks of the state sector a profitable prospect for future privatisation. Since the great strike was defeated in March 1985 57,400 miners' jobs have been cut as 41 pits have closed. Concentrating production in a few 'super pits' is a step on the road to de-nationalisation under a third Tory term. As this government draws to a close with a further shedding of shares in Brit Oil we can also expect the Post Office and parts of British Rail to be on the city's shopping list in the next few years.

'TAKE UP THY BED AND WALK'

Nothing better symbolises the Tories' contempt for working people than its attacks on the health service. We have not quite got to the situation where patients have to bring in their own beds, but success is judged in terms of how many patients can use the same bed in a year.

Since 1979 there has been a 7% cut in spending on NHS services. Because of the ageing of the population 3% per year is needed just to stand still. This has led amongst other things to the loss of some 40,000 beds in the NHS, a cut of some 10%. Patients are shoved through the system at a faster rate; the average length of stay in acute wards has gone down to seven days from ten days ten years ago. Thirty-six patients can expect to go through the same bed in a year compared to 24 a few years ago.

The Tories increasingly aim to reduce welfare provision to the level of poor law relief while the middle classes are encouraged to take up a place in one of the 120 (and growing) private hospitals, which, of course, are not too proud to refrain from leaching off the NHS labs, clinics and even staff.

Across the spectrum of education it is the same story. One in ten full-time student places gone under Thatcher; fees raised and real levels of grants cut. Thatcher would love to make the universities

and polytechnics the exclusive property of the middle classes again. Baker's proposals on polytechnics aim to put education at the beck and call of big business.

Whatever the human suffering caused over the last eight years the Tories' plans for the future will put it in the shade. Thatcher came to office promising the bosses that she would cut public spending on welfare so as to allow more money to be given back to big business. Yet, mainly due to the cost of funding unemployment, public spending as a proportion of GDP will be higher in 1987/88 than it was in 1978/79. Tory backers demand further cuts.

The spending targets for the next Tory term were published last year. They planned for 2% growth in election year and no growth at all thereafter! We can expect not only prescription charges to go up for the tenth and more times but major restructuring so as to radically reduce the value of the dole money, to privatise large tracts of pension and insurance provision and replace education grants with loans. We have been warned. The nightmare of Reaganite America could still be visited upon us; high tech operations for those who can pay and slow death from mundane illnesses for the poor.

THE OPPRESSED MAJORITY

The prediction that women would be forced back into the home under Thatcher's good housekeeping has proved one-sided. Whilst there has been a 1% decrease in the number of women in full-time jobs, there has been a massive increase in part-time working accounting for over 40% of women who work. Part time work has been promoted by the Tories for two main reasons. Firstly, it creates a 'peripheral' workforce with low pay and little employment protection who can be brought in and out of work as the bosses' needs change. Secondly, women who work part-time can continue to shoulder much of the responsibility for children and other dependants at home, fitting in their shifts with school times for example. Cuts in public expenditure and the moves towards 'community care' have not been backed up by support for ill or disabled people, so that more women now stay at home to look after them than to look after children.

Increasing part-time work has been backed up by Tory legislation. This has increased the hours part timers have to work to qualify for employment protection, leaving an estimated 1.5 million women with no rights until they have worked for five years. Protection against unfair dismissal now only applies after

two years of full time employment, and the Tories are making many small employers exempt from payment of maternity pay. All these concerted attacks on rights primarily affect women workers, but the maternity provision shows just how callous the Tories are. Finally abolishing the inadequate £25 maternity grant this year they now plan to make free milk and vitamins available only to mothers on supplementary benefit.

Health care provision for women is woefully inadequate, with few NHS abortion clinics, no nationally planned cervical cancer screening service and the closure of women's hospitals by the Tories. The public expenditure cuts have affected women as workers and users of such services. Thatcher has proved no sister for working class women!

DEEPENING DIVISIONS

Thatcher stole the National Front's clothes in 1979 and ever since has taken every opportunity to worsen the plight of black people. Anti-immigration laws, the Nationality Act, well-chosen deportations; these are the acts of a chauvinist government, keen to promote racism and xenophobia in the ranks of the working class. The blight of mass unemployment has hit the black inner-cities especially hard, worsening the oppression that exists already in the decrepit, overcrowded schools and slum housing. When the black youth fight back the Tories hurl down batons on their heads.

Vying with the black community as the favoured object of hate in the last years has been the lesbian and gay community. Bearing the brunt of the AIDS panic lesbians and gays have suffered an undeniable increase in the number of ideological and physical attacks on them. In an atmosphere were Tory councillors like Brownhille calls for *'90% of queers to be gassed'*, the police take the opportunity to step up their raids on the pubs and clubs. Clearly, so long as Thatcher stands by bigots like Chief Constable Anderton with his tirades against the *'cesspit of human filth'* created by homosexuals, then there is no hope of progressive leglislation.

Within the class as a whole, and especially among the oppressed, it is the youth who have been hit hardest by every attack. They are the lowest paid; they form the biggest group of unemployed; they are herded into 'training' schemes and denied access to higher education. Even the whole weight of the moralising media is turned against their social lives and their sexuality. Straight sex is illegal under 16, gay sex under 21; you can not drink alcohol under 18 or drive under 17 or vote under 18. Yet the rawest school leaver is taken as ready to shoulder a gun for Her Majesty or sweat

twelve hours a day in a hamburger bar without any legal protection.

THEIR LAW TO KEEP US IN ORDER

Reducing state provision of welfare has gone hand in hand with tooling up the state forces for stifling resistance to the Tories and centralising central government power over local democracy.

It is not just that the numbers of police have grown by 8% since 1980 or their pay boosted beyond recognition. They have become better equipped and organised. Special armoured vehicles wait for the opportunity to crush demonstrators bones. One third of all police forces have stocks of plastic bullets ready to use.

Since the Tories began to restructure the police in 1972 their organised brutality has reached new heights. The militarised operation of the police during the miners' strike, centrally directed by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), was a glimpse of what we are up against. Behind them and out of sight for the most part are thousands of Special Branch members trained to spy on and sabotage the activities of the trade union movement and any organisation that the victims of capitalism build to fight back.

And this government has given them sweeping new powers to intervene. The Public Order Act now in full force hands the police a wide range of powers of detention, arrest and banning of demonstrations.

Nor has Thatcher hesitated to abolish a whole tier of local democracy in London and the metropolitan counties because she hated the fact that being in urban centres they were potential or actual redoubts of labourism and resistance or obstruction to her plans. She brushed aside the fact that a large majority of the local electorate were opposed to the abolition of the GLC or that far from saving money, the whole process has cost hundreds of millions of pounds. Her naked class hatred was starkly revealed. We can expect Thatcher to reap the benefits of her victories in this field in the next years, if re-elected, by abolishing private sector rent controls since housing was one area where these local bodies did exercise some power. And further attacks on rates are inevitable.

As the Tories' anti-working class attack grew in the 1980's even the long unchallenged democratic rights and civil liberties such as the freedoms of information and criticism, became unendurable for Thatcher. Even loyal liberal defenders of the ruling class, such as Clive Ponting, who expressed doubts about Thatcherite

policies have felt the lash of the state. The Official Secrets Act has been used as a big stick on minor civil servants like Sarah Tisdall who dared to disclose government double dealing over defence; deployed against the BBC to prevent it revealing even a little of the inner workings of Whitehall and the secret service. It has even been thrown at Australian publishers who want to print something that is already known.

As much as anything these rows go to prove just how shallow are the rights of Parliament to supervise or even be informed about the dealings of the government. Real decisions are taken in Whitehall. On top of this have come the almost daily attempts, many successful, imposing 'self-censorship' on the BBC and ITV. There can be little doubt that if she gets another stab at ruining our lives Thatcher will listen favourably to the clamour for restricting the right of defendants in trials to object to the jury and a host of other measures to further erode democratic liberties.

TAMING THE UNIONS

Well before the Tories came to power in 1979 they had drawn up plans to confront the unions. Learning from the failure of the Heath government in the 1970's they decided to proceed step by step and concentrate fire at militant action rather than taking away the ability of the union officials to manoeuvre and negotiate.

Three bouts of legislation in 1980, '82 and '84 effectively outlawed solidarity action with other union members, strait-jacketed picketing and increased the rights of scabs and employers to use the courts to cripple the unions through punative fines. The defeats of the printers in their battles against Shah in Warrington (1983) or Murdoch (1986/87) and the defeat of the miners were in part inflicted due to the union bureaucracy's cowardice in the face of these laws.

However, the fall in union membership of some two million under Thatcher has been mainly due to the ravages of unemployment rather than a flight of the employed from the unions due to fear of being associated with them. Union density among the employed is still high. Nor, since the NUM strike, have the Tories or bosses' organisations given much backing for scab union federations, resting content with a tame-cat TUC. Outlawing of union membership, such as at GCHQ has been rare although new firms starting up have often taken advantage of the new climate to bar unions from their plants.

The Tories are not opposed to trade unions in principle. House trained trade unions can be useful to the bosses. They can discipline

the members for the bosses. But the Tories are likely to press home their advantage. The shape of things to come can be seen clearly in the government's stance towards the teachers. As Baker stated, it will take *'a no-strike deal to restore pay bargaining rights.'* The spectre of more no-strike deals in the public sector/essential services (fire service, NHS) is taking on more substance.

Meanwhile green paper proposals for a fourth bout of Tory legislation have been published. Essentially it would aim to: tighten the noose still further by stopping unions donating money to support the action of other unions; prevent unions disciplining members and appoint a paid scab counsellor to advise agrieved members about court action; further insist upon the secret postal ballot; force general secretaries of unions to stand for election and remove legal protection from action in defence of the closed shop. One proposal perfectly illustrates the Tories' sham concern for 'democracy'. They want to give scab union members the right not to obey a democratic majority decision to take action! Once more the open class nature of the Tories' proposals—to undermine collective action in defence of working class interests—is revealed.

All these measures are aimed at weakening resistance to the bosses' attempts to overcome what they consider to be the major unsolved problems on the labour front, namely, the high level of pay settlements and the lack of flexibility of labour inside the plants and offices. As the Telecom dispute revealed, the erosion of demarcation lines is an important element in management plans for the 1990's. The engineering bosses in the Engineering Employers Federation are offering a reduction in hours in return for complete flexibility, while British Coal insist upon more flexible shift patterns in order to *'compete with imported coal prices'*.

PLAYING AWAY FROM HOME

Apart from the USA no other imperialist power has as much capital invested outside its frontiers. Despite the waning productive base of the domestic economy, indeed because of it, the British ruling class needs a foreign policy that is global and aggressive in the defence of its world interests. Thatcher has proved herself when playing away from home.

In the Malvinas war with Argentina she acted not only for the city of London, but stock exchanges the world over. In showing who was master to a relatively strong semi-colonial power Britain demonstrated to the rest of the world what could be

expected if radical or nationalist governments tampered with its assets.

Thatcher hopes too that her tough pro-Reagan, anti-Soviet stance will prove an electoral asset. She will claim that 'peace through strength' is responsible for the Gorbachev offer on SS20's in Europe.

Her success in facing down the Unionist revolt against the Anglo-Irish agreement followed her cold-blooded murder of the republican hunger strikers. To date she has been able to contain the nationalist struggle in the North of Ireland within sustainable limits. She holds out the prospect that by further co-operation with the South she can erode the ability of Sinn Féin and the IRA to fight back.

The Tories have been ruthless in pursuing their interests in Ireland. They have endorsed the shoot-to-kill policy of the SAS and UDA, murdering unarmed republicans in cold blood. They persisted for years in the discredited 'supergrass' system wherby dozens of active republicans were harassed and detained for months or years on the lying say so of a few narks.

Even now, despite the mounting weight of evidence and even liberal public opinion, the Home Office has only reluctantly agreed to review the case of the Birmingham six who have already spent 13 years in jail for 'crimes' they did not commit; still the Home Office refuses to reopen the cases of the equally falsely tried and convicted Guildford four.

FALSE MESSIAH

Faced with this catalogue of reaction some workers will say that given over 60% of the electorate want Thatcher out should we not vote tactically for the Alliance in key marginals? Worse, others will consider voting Alliance because it is less extreme and more 'democratic' in its 'socialism'. Such reasoning is dangerously short sighted.

Ever since 1981, when the 'gang of four' broke away from Labour, the press have been talking-up the SDP/Liberal Alliance. While the Alliance may be short on public policy statements it is not short of friends in the media. It has chalked up very real successes against Labour. In Bermondsey the Liberals and London gutter press demolished a 12,000 Labour majority to beat gay left candidate Peter Tatchell. More recently Labour lost Greenwich to the SDP after going into the campaign with 60% of the intended vote in the first opinion poll.

In both cases the Labour right put the boot into what they saw as

a 'hard left' candidate and provided copy for the yellow press and media hacks. Neither campaign could have been won without the whole-hearted backing of the media. But none of this should blind us to the very real threat that the Alliance now poses to workers.

The bosses and their paid press are pushing the Alliance for one reason alone. It is not that they want to topple Thatcher. They do not at present. What the bosses have been concerned about, throughout the 80's, is putting together what they call a 'non-socialist' alternative to the Tories. That alternative is not intended for use in the here and now. It is intended as a fall back should the open and direct party of the bosses mess things up and lose an election. As *The Economist* put it when the Alliance was but in birth:

'No government constitutionally or politically dependent on organised (let alone unorganised) labour must again be allowed to rule Britain.'

As the election looms the backers of this project know they face a decisive test. It is not a question for them of who should win the election. What is at stake is who comes second and who comes third. The aim is to drive Labour into third place and on the road to isolation and further political decline. They must win a section of one-time Labour working class voters to opt for the Alliance. Many skilled workers who may have put their vote Thatcher's way in the past will not do so lightly again. The opinion pollsters will be out to trawl them the Alliance's way and rob Labour of their votes.

It is precisely for this reason that the election is a crucial one for the organised working class. We are under no illusions whatsoever that the Labour Party really does represent the interests of organised workers. But defeat for Labour at the hands of the Alliance would serve to further marginalise the voice of organised labour. A vote for the Alliance is a vote for a bosses' party that is openly doing the bosses' work for them. To the extent that their policies are visible beneath the media hype they are the party of incomes policy and of a European nuclear bomb.

There is nothing in their platform that could prevent them sharing power with the Tories should they hold the balance of power in a hung Parliament. Should the unlikely circumstance arise of them sharing power with Labour in some form or another after the election, they would block even the most minimal reforms that Labour would offer to workers. A worker's vote for the Alliance is a retreat, a step backwards, from a class identified vote for the Labour Party. It is the act of accepting a politically passive role for the workers' organisations.

THE DANGERS OF A THIRD TERM

Based on this record, armed with another programme, Thatcher will go the country this year and seek a mandate for another five years. If she gets it and rides out the full term it would be the longest continuous Tory rule in history.

Unlike the 'thirteen years of Tory misrule' in the 1950's and 1960's, however, this term is taking place against a background of decay in the productive base of the British economy and of imminent recession in the world economy.

The Tories are currently presiding over the tail end of a miniboom enjoyed for most of 1986. The fall in the price of oil, by cutting energy costs to industry, benefited business. The low level of the pound has helped the competitiveness of exports.

The rise in real wages and the expansion of credit has fueled consumer-led growth. This has boosted the government's tax revenues which they cynically aim to use for electoral purposes.

But the British capitalist economy is fragile in the extreme. Despite the revival in profits, investment is at a record low. The financial surpluses are being used instead to fuel a 'merger mania' The decline in manufacturing exports combined with the loss of oil revenues has already resulted in a balance of payments deficit for the first time this decade.

This will get much worse. And the result? An attempt to stem imports through tax increases, credit restriction or even incomes controls. An assault on wages and conditions in order to restore the competitiveness of business. These will be the objective tasks facing any bosses' government in the years ahead.

Despite the odd grumblings from within the ruling class, a big majority of them want such a government to be led by Margaret Thatcher. Some may wish her to be more radical, others more conciliatory, but they know that they have no better bet as British bosses' face the uncertainties of the 1990's.

In the face of this threat to the fabric of working class communities we must shake the labour movement and its allies out of their slumber. The Tories are an open bosses' party and we know what to expect from them. As Norman Tebbit said, *'no one with a conscience votes Tory.'* Certainly, no one with a class conscience or consciousness votes Tory. Those who have kept their jobs, seen their wages stay ahead of prices, those who have bought their council houses or invested a few pounds in shares must be persuaded that the atomised self-interest encouraged by the Tories makes them fatally vulnerable.

They will see their health provision, their children's education, whither away before their eyes. When their job gets shaken out

and only slave labour schemes remain for their childrem, then they will discover too late that they have sold their class birthright for a few shares. Many have already found this out to their cost in the last eight years. Sympathy for the plight of a neighbouring worker is not enough. In a third term every gain we have left will be a Tory target.

When Thatcher pronounces that her aim is to 'end socialism' in Britain she has in her mind the example of Reaganite America. There the unions organise a shrivelled minority of the labour force and business unionism is triumphant; there the welfare state does not exist; there the working class has not even got its own reformist Labour Party to represent it in parliamentary politics.

There skilled workers who enjoyed good pay, a home and even a few shares now traipse the length of the country in caravans in search of a new start. If we are to stop all this then only collective solidarity can upset their plans. If we do not want to be reduced to having a choice between the tweedle-dum of Republicanism and the tweedle-dee of the Democrats, between the Tories and an enlarged and unified Alliance, then we must fight back now. We have to strain our energies in order to make sure that an early election results in Thatcher's early retirement to Dulwich.

Force Labour to fight

In the first part of 1986 the Tories were on the defensive. The Westland affair exposed real differences within the government; two cabinet ministers had to resign to restore unity. For a while it seemed there were banana skins everywhere. Labour, on the other hand, seemed to be recovering its support. From the disastrous performance in the 1983 General Election when it polled only 27.6% of the vote, it was now reaching up into the 37-8% range regularly in the opinion polls. Labour held the Fulham by-election fairly easily. Even in the May 1986 local elections Labour's vote went up marginally.

Kinnock claimed that this turnaround in fortunes was due to his victories against the left in the party; the purging of Militant supporters, the disavowal of those local councils who had sought to defend services against the Tory attacks, and trimming party policy commitments so as to deprive the Tory press of ammunition against the Labour Party's 'lack of realism'.

Yet this triumphalist progress to Downing Street has been badly interrupted in the second half of 1986. Labour scraped through in the Newcastle-under-Lyme by-election. Later in Knowsley, a safe seat, 10,000 Labour voters stayed at home. In each of these seats candidates of the right represented Labour. Worse was to follow. At Greenwich in early 1987 a candidate of the left, Deidre Wood, but one packaged by the party machine, lost in humiliating fashion.

Since then in the propaganda war of the opinion polls Labour has slipped below 30% again, barely above its 1983 performance.Why has this happened? Why is the bosses' media merciless against Labour? Why are Labour so vunerable to the Alliance? Why are many workers and unemployed unmoved to vote?

The bosses of Britain are not at all fearful of Mr. Kinnock. They have his measure. As *The Economist* said in May 1986; *'Mr. Kinnock is ruthless enough to use the party as a way of getting to government, and of junking some of its deeply felt and expensive policies once he is there.'*

The point is rather that these bosses have no need of a Kinnock government at this time. Despite Walworth Road's soothing words the bankers and businessmen need more than just a government that they can trust with their assets. They need a leadership with a strategy for solving the problems of the British economy at the expense of workers' rights and living standards. In the 1960's they backed Labour as the best option for getting state backing for a badly needed modernisation programme, but those times have long passed.

Nor do the bosses need the services of Kinnock or Hattersley to head off a tide of working class resistance to Tory attacks; this was the role played by Wilson in 1974. Over the last eight years the Labour leadership in opposition has aided and abetted the TUC in stifling such resistance.

All this helps explain why the millionaire press and poodle-like TV channels seek to undermine Labour. But it is also important to explain why many millions are prone to accept the arguments of Fleet Street. The truth is that despite Kinnock's macho act Labour is not a united party. Indeed, Labour can never aspire to the unity that the Tories display. After all they are a party devoted completely from top to bottom to the preservation of capitalism and solving all its problems at the expense of the working class.

Labour, however, has a basic contradiction built into its foundations. While its leaders in the PLP and TUC share the Tories' convictions about capitalism's eternal nature, the mass voting base and the membership of the party have no such conscious commitment. Between elections their struggles and aspirations force their way through into party policy.

Kinnock's leadership has sought to reconcile the constituency activists to the 'realist' MP's on the basis of ditching as much party policy as possible. But if he dumps too much the enthusiasm of the base will dwindle to nothing. Yet given the growing plight of British capitalism Labour is under pressure from the

bosses to promise nothing or they will do all to sabotage Labour's election chances.

This is the party that Kinnock takes into an election. The left, silent, but attracting media attention for its past rhetoric. The right is prepared to see Labour lose another election if that is the price that has to be paid for ridding the party of those prospective MP's who still like to murmur under their breath, *'never again a Labour government like the Wilson-Callaghan one'.*

In short, the liberal-minded lower-middle classes that Kinnock aims to woo from the Alliance remain underwhelmed and unconvinced that Labour has fully rid itself of its obligations to the radical aspirations of many of its activists and supporters. They prefer a reformist party without organic links to organised labour—in essence a Liberal Party.

Despite Kinnock's attacks on radical policies the Labour Party remains tied to the organisations of the labour movement. Demoralised by Thatcher's victories, even vanguard workers have followed Kinnock in the drift to the right in the direction of lowered aspirations, a more restricted sense of what is 'possible'. Yet across their path they have met millions of workers who have seen through Thatcher's populist demagogy and have drifted back to Labour since 1983.

But if their illusions have been diluted they are there nevertheless. Even if the ten million or so Labour voters do not expect Neil Kinnock to bring socialism they do expect relief from the years of Tory misery, of an end to the offensive on their rights and living standards. We have to break through those illusions in the course of a common struggle.

Indeed, the Labour Party despite its 'no promises' stance has regrouped a lot of the support it lost from the ranks of the working class in the 1983 election. Despite its long years of betrayal in office, many are prepared to give Labour another go, especially after eight years of Thatcher. Young voters under 25 have never lived under a Labour government. Simple history lessons are not enough to budge the expectations of such people.

Thatcher has failed in trying to detach the trade union movement from the Labour Party as its chosen vehicle of parliamentary representation. Thatcher forced the unions to hold ballots on political funds in the hope of politically 'neutralising' them. Quite simply this has backfired. Of the 37 ballots on this issue all have voted to keep their political fund and, by extension, give it to the Labour Party. Some unions like ACTT actually doubled the numbers contracting in to the fund as a result of the campaign forced upon them. Other unions are to ballot their members with a view to setting them up.

Because we are a small group of revolutionaries who cannot at this time stand candidates on a revolutionary programme against Labour we call on workers to vote for Labour in the municipal and general elections. This is an elementary act of solidarity at the ballot box with our class against the open agents of the bosses' parties. However, when we turn to examine the pro-capitalist policies that Labour will enter these elections on, it is easy to see just how important is the additional slogan, **vote Labour but organise to fight for anti-capitalist policies!**

PROMISE LITTLE, DELIVER LESS

If the new model 'peoples party' fails to reassure the Alliance voter then it equally fails to ignite the enthusiasm of those of its working class supporters who have lost out under Thatcher.

Labour has constructed an election campaign as empty as possible of real promises. We have seen a steady stream of glossy brochures and meaningless catch-phrases; *Freedom and Fairness; New rights, New responsibilities; A Modern Britain in a Modern World.* One promise we have been given by the Campaign Committee is that the election manifesto will be *'short, sharp and limited in party commitments.'*

On every issue Labour's present plans are utterly useless measured against the needs of our class. Of what use is a programme for the millions of victims of capitalism that starts out from the need to appease the bosses? Thatcher did not worry about appeasing the trade unionists, the oppressed, the unemployed when she took office.

We must demand that Kinnock restores completely the damage done by the Tories. But because Kinnock has made it clear where he stands, no one can be under any illusion that we have to fight for a *workers'* answer to the crisis. A vote that puts Labour in office will only be a momentary setback for the bosses; we need to turn it into a rout. For that we have to organise to go far beyond what Labour is offering.

THE SCOURGE OF UNEMPLOYMENT

When Labour's candidate in the Truro by-election was asked to sum up Labour's policies in one word he answered, *'Jobs'*. Labour has rightly branded mass unemployment as the biggest crime of Thatcherism. But a more accurate description of Labour's answer for unemployment was presented in March 1987 in a pamphlet

called *New Jobs for Britain.* This contained many words, but can be boiled down to just eight: *'Jobs for some, if the situation allows it.*

Kinnock's one concrete promise is to cut unemployment by one million in two years. One can imagine the enthusiasm this will generate among the three million unlucky ones, condemned in advance to live out another five years on the giro. Kinnock loyalists in the unions such as Bickerstaffe of NUPE echo the official line; *'none of us think that full employment will be attainable in the old sense, even under a Labour government'.* Edmonds, leader of the second biggest union, GMBTWU, argued that *'we're not going to have enough work in our economy to provide enough work for everybody who wants it...'*

Looked at in detail the penny-pinching nature of the proposals is clear; nearly one third of the jobs will come from extending YTS and Community Programme cheap labour schemes. Another 250,000 jobs will be generated by cutting the bosses' national insurance contributions. This amounts to more profits for them not more jobs. The Tories have already cut national insurance contributions to the bone. How many jobs has that created? Finally, a further 160,000 will be put to work by allowing the same number to take early retirement on the Job Release Scheme.

This tinkering about is an insult to the millions kicking their heels on street corners. Where jobs are concerned Kinnock starts from what appears reasonable to the City of London. A working class answer starts from what we need. The principle we operate by is **work or full pay. We must force Labour to implement Labour/TUC policy by immediately legislating for the 35 hour week.**

For those threatened with redundancies through new technology or any other reason we must demand that firms **cut the hours, not the jobs, with no loss of pay.** Wherever they say they cannot afford to keep the plant or office open then we press for the **nationalisation under workers' control of all firms declaring closure or redundancies. Nor should compensation be paid to the parasites who have milked the working class for years.**

Benefits should be paid to all the unemployed at the level of the average industrial wage. Benefits should be available to make up the wages of part time workers. All the Tory cuts should be restored and the means tests abolished.

In every case our answer, unlike that of Prescott and Gould, is **make the bosses pay!**

BANDAGING THE WOUNDS

The state service sector has been savaged. But we have been

warned. The Labour leader said in February 1987 that *'I cannot and will not promise a supply of funds on a scale that compares with the level of cuts in support made in seven years of Tory government'.*

Despite Kinnock's talk about a 'new deal' for the NHS, real targets are few and far between in Labour's plans. It calls for the 'phasing out' of prescription charges. Why can they not be abolished overnight? Labour says it will *'cut waiting lists'*; but by how many and how soon? Kinnock claims he will *'aim for 3% growth a year'* in the NHS, knowing full well that this is just the growth needed to keep the level of services static.

Rather than looking to see where there is real need Labour prefers to concentrate health promises on preventative medicine and 'community care'. Both come relatively cheap and worse, without adequate spending, more beds and more health workers, then 'community care' will mean forcing care of the elderly and sick onto women in the home.

As a minimum Labour should be aiming to **restore all the cuts in beds and staffing that we have suffered since 1979, abolish prescription charges immediately and get rid of the waiting lists by re-opening hospitals, expanding nursing recruitment and other workers and by nationalising all private hospitals.**

To pay for these services and the further expansion that is presently needed to provide, for example, for the demands of the profession to cope with the needs of AIDS patients, Labour should not only nationalise all the private firms and practitioners leeching off the NHS (such as Crothalls, the pirateers) they should **nationalise the drug and supply industries, without compensation and under workers' control.**

Labour should take the same approach to education and social services, restoring all cuts in jobs and services and massively expanding facilities.

Even under capitalism there is a real connection between the wasted lives of the unemployed and the desperate needs of workers suffering under a lack of proper services.

To overcome both problems on the scale necessary a Labour government would need to draw up a massive **programme of public works.** Such a plan could marry the skills of thousands of unemployed building workers with the needs of whole communities starved of health facilities; it could employ tens of thousands repairing the broken down infrastructure of the roads, the gas and water systems. It would in turn revitalise the industries that produce the components and equipment needed for all these things. The skills and abilities are there in superabundance. Only the obscenity of capitalism lets them rot unused.

ROBBING PETER TO PAY PAUL

As each glossy brochure from the Labour Party has appeared before an unsympathetic press the question that the leaders have been most sensitive to is 'How much does it cost?' This has them trembling in case the 'arithmetic does not add up'. As Hattersley put it in March 1987, *'The question is not; where is the money coming from? It is: what do we do with the money that is available?'*

It is all Hattersley could do summon up the courage to ask the city gents for licence to spend a pathetic £6 billion on employment measures and a further £3.6 billion on pensions, child and other benefits. So strong is their fear of attacking the massive wealth of the top bosses that most of this money is designed to come from reversing recent tax cuts. Just how timid these measures are can be seen at a glance when one looks at the real wealth that has been accumulated by the ruling class in Britain under Thatcher. In 1985/86 alone companies were handed back £12.8 billion in tax relief.

In 1984 after deductions for tax, investment and dividends, British bosses were left with over £60 billion profit. Hattersley's sacred figure—£6 billion—was the amount of 'financial surpluses' that could not even be accounted for in the figures! Half that sum is currently the subject of separate investigations for fraud in the city, the small change of city corruption brought to the surface to keep the police in a job.

Hattersley's sums whether they add up or not are an insult to the working class. While most Labour MP's have whiled away the time with parliamentary parlour games communities have been uprooted and lives torn apart. While Thatcher spends £6 billion to 'beat the Argies', while Lawson forks out nearly as much again to defeat the miners, Hattersley is worried about spending any more than this to put the country back to work.

To carry out a realistic programme, that is one that goes anywhere near fulfilling the needs of the working class, we need to make decisive inroads into the wealth of the bosses. Even more, it means challenging their economic power. In 1982 Labour stated that *'a strategy for economic recovery must entail a challenge to the power of the city.'* That was then, this is now. Hattersley has abandoned such thoughts. Instead, Labour plans a National Investment Bank, with as much power as a piggy bank, and about as effective in providing the money we need. We need more than a few bandages on the wounds Thatcher has inflicted. Only the **nationalisation of all the banks and finance houses** will bring into the public purse anything like the funds needed.

THE PARTY OF POOR PAY

Workers have never done well on the pay front under Labour governments. They have always used their special relationship with the trade union bureaucracy to hold back wage increases. Labour's Chancellor in the 1970's, Dennis Healey promised to *'squeeze the rich until the pips squeak'* and redistribute incomes to the working class. Yet under the last Labour government real wages fell by 15% in the years 1976-79 as the bosses were allowed to put up prices to protect profits but the 'Social Contract' was used to peg wages. In fact real wages have fallen under every Labour government since the war.

Kinnock and the TUC are fearful of talking publically of another round of voluntary wage restraint. After all, the last one eventually fell apart under the pressure of rank and file militancy in 1978-79. But they are committed to holding back pay in line with the desires of most boards of directors. Kinnock made this clear when launching *Work to Win* with the TUC at the end of March. In return for promises of state directed investment and some minor trade union law reforms, *Work to Win* underwrites voluntary wage agreements.

Kinnock said

'in the private sector, the discipline is competitiveness and costs. Everyone is acutely aware that unless their wage demands and other costs conform to the requirements of final costs and the ability to sell in the market, they are not being realistic or securing the future of their company.'

In short, profits have to be protected at the expense of living standards, and if you think that's rough then just be grateful you have got a job! And if you are thinking of a return to the 'winter of discontent' then that is why the bulk of the Tory anti-trade union laws will stay on the books.

Of course, the carrot that precedes this stick is Labour's minimum wage policy. At present some 8.5 million adults earn less than the EEC 'decency threshold' of £126 per week. But Labour's policy is not so 'crude' as to talk of a particular level at which the minimum will be set. That, like everything else, depends on what can be afforded. The unofficial level is £80 a week. Moreover, not only would a set level send unacceptable shivers down the spines of Britain's bosses but it would also threaten to become a focus of struggle for millions of low paid workers in the state sector, the sweat shops and the hamburger bars.

The leaders of the trade unions whose members are most affected do not even really believe in this policy. Take Bickerstaffe of NUPE. In March 1987 he stated that:

'We haven't really started getting together the mechanics of how a minimum wage would be introduced and at what level'.

This makes perfect sense if you do not take the policy seriously. Bickerstaffe's contempt for his own members is staggering. He even admits that:

'Whether the target is achieved over three or four years, or whether it isn't achieved, it's got to be aimed for and there's got to be some faith in it'

Otherwise millions of low paid workers will not see any point in voting Labour!

Against this cynicism workers must organise to ensure that there are **no wage restraint deals, compulsory or voluntary, with Kinnock.** We must force Labour to take seriously its own policies and **legislate for a national minimum wage linked to the cost of living and set at the level of the average industrial wage. This minimum level must be based on hourly rates in order to protect the growing numbers of part-time workers.**

A real workers' policy on incomes would start from the need not only to protect wages against price rises but, also to **act immediately to end the system of cheap labour by scrapping YTS/JTS schemes and replacing them with proper jobs at union rates of pay.** And it is essential with the vastly enlarged numbers of women workers now that Labour put an end to the judicial farce which allows employers to get around the equal pay legislation and **legislate for equal pay for equal work of equal value.** Not many workers will expect employers to cough up the required money without a fight. So faced with resistance to a living wage from those who enjoy 365 days a year holiday on the backs of sweated labour a **Labour government must be forced to nationalise without compensation all firms who cannot or will not pay. Elected representatives in the factories and offices must exercise control so that asset stripping is stopped, and a check is made on the salting away of profits.**

UNCHAINING THE UNIONS?

In three batches over five years the Tories have tried to shackle the actions of trade unionists with legislation. Labour are down on paper—in *New Rights, New Responsibilities*—as intending to repeal the Tories' union-hating laws. Fine. Yet they aim to put restrictive laws of their own in their place. Such legislation will insist on the holding of a ballot before taking strike action. Other elements of Kinnock's package include the return of the traditional range of arbitration boards and 'independent' tribunals for defusing rank and file anger and action.

In opposing such Labour-TUC deals we must fight for the **unconditional and complete repeal of all Thatcher's anti-union legislation, including rejecting the legal requirement to ballot. Further, Labour must guarantee the right to strike in law as well as ensuring full immunity from prosecution for trade unions involved in industrial action of any kind.**

In addition, especially since delegates to Labour Party conferences have made clear their support for it, **Labour must be forced to reimburse the funds of the NUM, NGA, SOGAT and other unions which have been seized by the courts under the anti-union laws. Release all trade unionists jailed for defending their class.**

Apart from crippling trade union action the Tories have also tried to prevent or discourage the unionisation of workers, especially the new, the young and the part-time, and deprive them of any employment protection. **Labour must restore all the employment rights abolished by the Tories, extending them to all workers, whatever age, length of employment, or number of hours worked per week.**

MINISTRING TO WOMEN

In every field of life women are on the sharp end of exploitation and oppression. Job insecurity, part-time work, social service cuts, lower wages—all these affect women most. In recent statements Labour has said that it *'has a clear political commitment to tackle the inequality women still face'*, a commitment forced upon the leadership by the growing number of women trade unionists and the drift into the party of many feminists from the womens' liberation movement.

Labour has drawn up plans for a Ministry of Women with cabinet status which will develop policies for sex equality in government departments, expand the toothless Equal Opportunities Commission, and ensure adequate representation of women on government bodies. But this 'small high powered ministry' will be working to get women a better deal within existing inadequate services.

Labour's *Charter for Women and Work* says a lot about developing women's talents, but gives no specific commitments on job creation and pay levels. It places stress on men and women sharing paid work and family care, together with the family and community 'sharing' the responsibility for the elderly, disabled and handicapped. Sharing out all this oppression is no solution! **We must demand of Labour a programme of social service spending to provide full free 24 hour child care for all, not just**

the three and four year olds they talk of. We must have expansion of community services to meet the needs of the disabled and elderly whilst allowing women to work.

On issues of key importance to women over pay, part-timers rights and maternity benefits Labour's commitments are well intentioned but vague. **We must demand equal pay for equal work, a guaranteed minimum wage based on the average industrial wage; full employment protection, including maternity and paternity rights, for all workers, part time or full time and regardless of the length of service. Expansion of the NHS to meet the needs of all women including free abortion and contraception available on demand is also essential.**

FAILING THE YOUTH

None of those eligible to be members of the Labour Party Young Socialists—the under 26's—have ever lived under a Labour government as voting adults. But the Militant led LPYS is a shrivelled youth movement that barely relates to the issues of working class youth. The Walworth Road alternative approach of Red Wedge platitudes and pop leaves the bulk of working class youth cold. It is a deeply patronising attitude towards the idealistic and fighting spirit of most youth.

Labour offers nothing much to the young beyond a few more pence on a glorified slave labour scheme.

At the heart of a fight for ending the oppression of youth by the bourgeois family, and their alternating super-exploitation and enforced idleness lie the following demands.

The youth need an independent income and should demand that all benefits and the minimum wage be available to 16 year olds. To break the chains that bind the young to the family home and to prevent the undercutting of adult wages **Labour must implement equal pay for equal work and end cheap youth labour. Restore all legal protection for young workers abolished by the Tories. Give the over 16's the right to vote.**

The stultifying morality that represses the sexuality of the young must be confronted head on. **The age of consent laws should be abolished.** They do not stop rape or sexual abuse of children; rather, they are used to repress the sex lives of the youth. **Abortion and contraception should be available on demand to anybody no matter how young.**

If Labour really fears that 'the devil makes work for idle hands' and they do not want youth to fall into a life of criminality then **they should finance a massive programme of facilities for youth,**

replacing the dilapidated youth centres staffed by ex-policemen with adequate sports and social centres under the control of the youth.

UNPOPULAR CAUSES

When the going gets tough, the tough get rough with unpopular causes. Patricia Hewitt, Kinnock's press secretary, reacted to the Greenwich defeat by urging the London Labour MP's to cow-tow to the conservative morality of the pensioner by ditching its public commitments to lesbians and gay men. And this at a time when they are finding themselves on the receiving end of an AIDS panic. The 1986 conference in fact passed, for the first time, a commitment to progressive legislation on the lesbian and gay question. In fact the Labour NEC let it through on the nod so as to avoid a public debate. They even timed the motion to coincide with *Playschool* to avoid TV coverage of the debate. **We must ensure that pressure is maintained to force Labour to enact any lesbian and gay rights Bill.**

While we consider the age of consent law to be repressive, until it is repealed it is an act of even greater repression to have an even higher age of consent law for homosexuals. **We demand that the age of consent be the same as for heterosexuals. Labour should also make it illegal to sack workers for being homosexual and enable lesbian and gay men to have custody of children, and not to be discriminated against in housing allocation.**

LABOUR'S RACIST RECORD

Black people in Britain have been amongst the most loyal of Labour voters in the past. The worst of housing conditions, constant harassment by the state and being top of the unemployment league—all these factors have made black people part of Labour's 'natural constituency', hoping for radical change.

Yet too often Labour has been the one to implement racist measures. Instead of fighting racism as a product of Britain's imperialist nature it has bowed to the pressure to blame blacks for capitalism's faults. Labour has introduced immigration controls which imply that the presence of black people is the problem. In 1965 Wilson tightened Tory legislation against 'coloured immigration'. In 1968 Labour banned most of the Kenyan Asians who held British passports from entering the country, so making some 150,000 people stateless.

In the last Labour government a commitment to repeal the 1971 Act was ignored; rather, Labour went on to introduce virginity tests on Asian women entering Britain to marry fiancés.

The climate of hatred that such measures promote lead to an increase in physical attacks both by the police and by the active racists and fascists. Beatings, razor attacks and fire-bombings are the daily experience for the black community. Increasingly, under the Tories many black people are having to fight to stay here; deportations are running at 250 a month.

Labour must cease bending the knee to the racist lobby. **It should repeal the Nationality Act, all immigration restrictions and abolish visa controls. It must support the right of black self-defence.**

THE IRON FIST

Labour complains bitterly about the 'politicisation' of the police by the Tories. One year they are 'being forced' to act as MacGregor's boot boys, the next as Murdoch's. Labour's spokesmen are also to be heard complaining when police cover up their identification tags in order to anonomously truncheon demonstrators to the ground. The fact of the matter is that, brutal as this truth is, the police have only been doing their job. They enforce laws passed to defend the capitalist system. While the occasional law is passed to bridle the self-destructive greed of the boss class, no law can be passed which threatens the capitalist ownership of the means of production. No law abolishes profit making, the right to hire and fire. No law can compel capitalists to offer all workers a job. Why? Because the banks and industry also own the judiciary and police and the armed forces. The whole state, through the national debt, is in hock to these people.

An unelected chamber to check and weed out any progressive legislation and a monarchy with considerable powers over the armed forces and the composition of the government are the final safeguards. These are not just costly relics. Labour must immediately overthrow all these anti-democratic institutions. **Abolish the monarchy, the House of Lords and the Privy Council!**

It is in this framework that parliament makes laws and the police enforce them. All the guff about equality is so much head-fixing to make the exploited and oppressed 'go quietly' when they have their collar felt.

The worst of it is that when the downtrodden of the inner-city are fed up with daily harassment by the police and fight back or when the pickets of Wapping resisted, Kinnock jumped to the defence of the police! Kinnock tries to sell us the bobby on the beat

in the modern garb of the community policeman. But he likes to forget that in the 1980's PC Blakelock can be a model bobby on the streets of Muswell Hill one minute and in the next donning his riot gear and out battoning the black youth of Tottenham.

Labour want more resources than the Tories on cracking down on real criminals as a way of 'de-politicising' the police. Yet in the same breath they condemn the Tories for so impoverishing the unemployed and low paid that they are forced to turn to crime!

Less spectacular than the actions of the police on Broadwater Farm or in Brixton are the daily conspiracies of special branch. In the name of 'national security' Kinnock is prepared to forgive Thatcher most things. When she jumped on Duncan Campbell and the *New Statesman* over the Zircon satellite plan Kinnock demanded that she come down even harder.

We cannot expect Labour in power to put an end to the police rampaging through the inner-city ghettoes or prevent the real conspirators in the state from destroying democractic rights. But we must aim to get Labour to tear away the legislation that underwrites every action the police and secret service carry out. **Repeal the Public Order Act, the Police Act, the Police and Criminal Evidence Act, the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the Official Secrets Act. Disband ACPO, the Special Branch and all the Instant Response Units. Ban firearms, plastic bullets, CS gas and riot gear for the police. Immediately release all class war prisoners arrested during the inner-city uprisings.**

A PINK PATRIOT

The Tories like to play on the fact that Labour's defence policy, especially its position on nuclear disarmament, is unpatriotic. This is nonsense. Kinnock goes out of his way to stress that he means the same as the Tories by defence; namely, defence of British imperialism's extensive interests abroad. Labour wants to defend NATO and Britain's alliance with the USA against the USSR.

Kinnock's main objection to nuclear weapons in Britain is not that they threaten the world with destruction but that they are too expensive. It is certainly criminal that British governments spend billions on nuclear weapons while they let the health and education systems fall apart. But Kinnock's concern is not to spend more of the defence budget on welfare. He wants to spend the money saved on Polaris and Trident on 'conventional' weapons. He aims to appeal to that section of the military brass which yearns for more money in this area.

Whether British imperialism needs its own nuclear deterrent is a moot point in some ways. As a declining imperialist power it may be an unaffordable luxury. The SDP see the way ahead as part of a coalition of European powers dependent on a 'Euro-bomb'. But precisely if Britain could forsake its own bomb then it makes the system of alliances such as NATO, and dependence on the US 'nuclear umbrella', all the more crucial for those who claim to have the best interests of British imperialism at heart.

That is why Labour's paper policy of unilaterally getting rid of US Cruise missiles is treated with such hostility by the Tories and, as Kinnock found in his March visit to Washington, Reagan. Kinnock is a bosses' man and he has responded to the pressure to modify or drop this position. The fact that it has been Labour's policy at all is due to the strength of feeling over Cruise in the population at large as well as among Labour supporters.

But the pressure shows all the signs of paying off. The right in the PLP (witness Callaghan's outburst against Labour policy), the press and the White House have all had an effect. First, Kinnock agreed to lengthen the process of discussion with the US over Cruise before kicking them out. Now, seizing the opportunity of Gorbachev's offer over intermediate weapons, Labour is shaping up to drop the policy of *unilateral* scrapping of Cruise altogether.

Labour pacifism is fake. It always fails to resist the pressure of militarism. It actually succumbs to the pressure of a real war, as lifelong self-professed 'peacemonger', Michael Foot, proved in 1982 when he taunted Thatcher into war with Argentina from the sanctuary of his green leathered seat at Westminster. Whenever Labour tries to out-patriot the Tories it is the working class that loses—in lives lost and pockets picked to pay for the billions in hardware.

Utopian schemes to prevent imperialism's war drive always end up debating the best, least expensive, and most efficient way of conducting an actual war. Only an anti-imperialist, anti-militarist standpoint can guide the working class on the question of war. We support the policy of unilaterally getting rid of Cruise because if carried through it would be a blow to the anti-soviet war aims of NATO. NATO aims to weaken and break the post-capitalist system in the USSR so as to get a new lease of life for a rotten world capitalist system. **We must demand that Labour stands by its conference commitment to scrap Polaris, cancel Trident and immediately send Cruise back across the Atlantic.**

But a truly internationalist foreign policy for the working class starts from the need to fight imperialist war alliances which aim to spill workers' blood in defence of bosses' profits. That is why we fight for **Britain out of NATO! Scrap all US bases, nuclear and**

conventional. Publish and repudiate all the secret treaties and documents revealing the plots and crimes of the warmongers.

As revolutionary communists we do not distinguish between nuclear and 'conventional' forms of mass slaughter. The latter can effectively destroy the planet. Whatever the type of arms, as long as they are in control of imperialist governments, they will be deployed and used to defend their assets and rule. At home the garrisons are kept to supress domestic rebellion. Hence, we do not call for a mere reduction in military spending, rather we demand **not a penny nor a person for the defence of this system.**

The working class cannot hide from war. From its ranks are drawn those who fight and suffer. Workers need an active policy to bring war to an end in a manner that serves the interests of workers across the globe. In a confrontation between Britain and a semi-colony oppressed by imperialism or between Britain and a degenerate workers' state we cannot be neutral. A victory for Britain strengthens the rule of exploitation and oppression at home and abroad. That is why we say; **solidarity with all those fighting imperialism, under whatever leadership and for the defence of the USSR and Eastern Europe. The main enemy is at home!**

IRELAND'S HARD LABOUR

Labour enters this election, as in every other, with a carbon copy of the Tory Party policy on Ireland. Labour's record on Ireland is worse, if anything, than the Tories'. It was Labour who sent in the troops to contain the catholics' revolt against their oppression in 1969. It was Labour who bowed to the pressure of the loyalist strike of 1974, which scuppered limited concessions to the minority, and who passed the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act later that year. It was Labour who introduced no-jury courts.

In opposition it has backed the thuggery of the army, the shoot-to-kill policies of the RUC and UDA. It even sent spokesperson Don Concannon to tell the dying Bobby Sands that the hunger strikers he led were hated and scorned as much by the PLP as by the Thatcher government.

Labour greeted the Anglo-Irish Agreement as progress towards a united Ireland and thereby helped gain acceptance for it in the trade union movement. In fact, it signed, sealed and delivered partition as the Tories and the South made clear. Instead of protesting against the intensification of the repression aimed at Sinn Féin in the wake of the agreement Kinnock has gone out of his way to heap abuse on them and make it clear that he will not

speak to them, despite the fact that they command majority support within the working class catholic communities.

A Kinnock government would be more likely to revise the agreement than Thatcher, but only to the advantage of the unionist reactionaries who see the agreement as reducing their ability to continue to discriminate in housing, jobs and the repressive apparatus. Labour could do this either as part of a voting pact in a hung parliament or a renewed campaign of attacks against the Catholics by the loyalist thugs.

Britain created the Northern Irish state in 1921 with Labour backing against the express wishes of a majority of Irish people. The sectarian rule of the majority of unionists, backed by money and arms from Britain, has been the cause of the 'troubles' ever since. There can be no British solution to Ireland's problems since it is the root of the problem. The struggle of the nationalist population is a progressive one for national unity and for the right to decide their own future.

British workers have no interest in supporting troops in Ireland, backing the Anglo-Irish agreement, or following behind Labour's Irish policy. The Don Concannon that spat on Bobby Sands is the man that backed the UDM scabs in the miners' strike, despite being an NUM sponsored MP; the state that terrorises the anti-unionists in the six counties is the state that isolated and beat down the NUM. Same fight, same enemy.

We must demand that a Labour government immediately withdraws the troops from the six counties. Only the Irish people, on a 32 county basis, have the right to decide on what future political structures they want, free of British or other imperialist interference.

Whilst it is not a socialist fight, and while Sinn Féin and the IRA are not working class in their programme, their goal of Britain out of Ireland **should be supported unconditionally, whatever methods they choose to adopt and whether they choose to fight in Ireland or Britain.** Our criticisms aimed at Sinn Féin are directed at their inability to achieve their aim through the methods of urban guerrilla warfare and reformist electioneering.

For the same reason trade unionists and socialists should work **for an end to the battery of repressive legislation and institutions that enforce this presence and, moreover, are used to harass Irish people in Britain. We call for an end to strip searching, used to demoralise and humiliate prisoners, and an end to the no-jury Diplock courts, the repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the Emergency Powers Act and the banning of plastic bullets. In addition, we demand of Labour the release of all Irish republican prisoners (including the framed Guildford 4 and Birmingham 6 prisoners).**

INTERNATIONAL AID

Labour has been content to allow the progressive impluse of people to help the 'third world' be monopolised by pop stars and charity. Labour has not challenged the Tories' privatisation of aid. We must force a Labour government to **cancel the debt of the semi-colonies and massively expand aid to these countries, especially those struggling against imperialism such as Nicaragua.**

Though it has reneged on solidarity with the Irish struggle and done nothing to help the Palestinians Labour has saved its most fiery rhetoric for supporting the struggle against apartheid. But when Kinnock and Hattersley come to power they will be at the helm of an economy which keeps 40% of its foreign investment in the apartheid state. We must demand that Labour **immediately imposes economic sanctions on South Africa. A Labour government must guarantee the jobs and pay of all workers involved in trade with South Africa and nationalise any firm refusing to abide by sanctions or which sacks workers as a result of them.**

FORCE LABOUR TO ACT

The gap between what Labour are offering and what we need is glaring. But even if the pressure of our efforts forced Labour to implement these demands it would not make Kinnock's government a socialist one. It would only begin to repair the fabric of working class communities after eight years of Thatcherism; it would be the beginning of a regroupment of the trade union movement for a real assault on the strongholds of the bosses' power and wealth.

Yet the independent organisation of the working class *can* force Labour to carry out these necessary measures. It will be done against the will of the mass of the PLP who will feel the pressure on a Labour government from the civil service, armed forces chiefs and mandarins of the city. But it can only be done if we shake off the mood of retreat and overcome the legacies of defeat. In short, it can only be done if we put the labour movement and its allies on a war-footing and we revolutionise our organisations of struggle from top to bottom.

Onto a war footing

Thatcher came to power declaring war on the unions. Sure enough the Tories have systematically attacked the key battalions of the organised working class. Today the trade unions are in retreat, but not because the rank and file have let the bosses walk all over them. Time and time again the working class has waged magnificent struggles against the Tory offensive. The steelworkers, printers, miners and Telecom workers, to name but a few, have shown the fighting potential of the force the Tories are trying to destroy. Each time, however, the trade union and Labour leaders stabbed them in the back. The key question that faces the organised working class, whatever government should be returned, is how to make the trade unions effective bodies of struggle against the employers.

While the Tories have inflicted defeats on key battle fronts they have not won the war. In the key plants, mines and offices trade union organisation remains intact. The loss of nearly three million trade union members since 1980 (down to 9.6 million) is mostly explained by the threefold increase in unemployment under Thatcher. The numbers of trade unionists per workforce is still high. Private sector employment is the weakest with only one third in unions, whereas certain public sector unions have actually grown.

Without doubt the greatest advantage the Tories have had is that organised workers have been divided and unable to unite their

struggles against them. By their nature trade unions organise *their members on the basis of craft and trade. They presently are organised to represent sectional interests within the working* class.

In times of relative capitalist prosperity and expansion like the late 50's and 60's such trade unionism could secure concessions from the bosses. The employers could afford to live with that. But the minute things started to get rough for British capitalism the bosses moved to clamp down on trade union rights. Labour tried its own anti-shop steward legislation in the late 1960's. Heath passed his Industrial Relations Act in the early 1970's. But union organisation was strong enough to see them both off, at least temporarily. Thatcher's three doses of anti-union laws, and manifesto pledges of more to come show all too clearly that the bosses intend an irreversible undermining of trade union bargaining strength.

As the unions grew so the membership has necessarily required leadership and organisation. But the form this has taken has been the creation of a layer of officials whose salaries and job security depend on maintaining a framework of permanent collaboration and negotiation with the employers. This layer of officials has cast the unions in a mould that makes them as non-accountable directly to the members as possible. And in every showdown conflict between the workers and the bosses this self preserving caste look for ways of maintaining their privileges that come from arbitration and negotiated 'compromise', at the expense of their members.

SECTIONAL WEAKNESSES

In periods of heightened class conflict the fact that the rank and file of the unions share different interests to those of the officials becomes more abundantly clear. Once the bosses cannot afford to offer so much the trade union officials can keep themselves in office only by policing their members that much more strictly, and by proving their worth to the capitalist class by negotiating away their members jobs and conditions.

They have, as a rule, seen their concerns as being within a self contained 'economic' and 'industrial' sphere while 'politics' was left to the Labour Party, funded by the unions. The industrial strength of the working class is therefore not supposed to be mobilised for our class political objectives. Within the terms of the parliamentary game the trade union and Labour leaders agree with the bosses' courts that this is strictly against the rules.

The trade union movement, as it is presently organised, has been incapable of effectively confronting a capitalist class that knows all too well that its various industrial and economic interests are subordinate to its overall interests *as a class*. The unions have been led by jackals who, in the main, have been more bitterly opposed to those who wanted to fight Thatcher than they have to the Tories and their servants. Central to the rebuilding of the self-confidence of the working class must be a drive to transform the unions by taking them out of the hands of the class collaborators and into the hands of the workers whose jobs, conditions and livelihoods are on the line.

Thatcher and the Tories have been allowed to take on key groups of workers one by one. Their aim has been to weaken the trade unions and assert what they herald as 'management's right to manage'. In their first term of office they started by taking on the engineers and then the steel workers. The steel strike of 1980 had the potential of becoming a rallying point for all workers against the Tory attacks. There was real rank and file pressure to activate the Triple Alliance (a pact between railway, steel and mine unions to support each other). Pressure for solidarity action went wider than that. Yet the TUC leaders worked hard to prevent any solidarity action and shunted discontent into harmless, and ultimately demoralising, protest days of action.

Having ridden that storm and beaten the steel workers the Tories turned their guns on the Leyland workers, imposing the slaves charter. In 1981 the civil servants were the target and in 1982 they took on the railworkers and the healthworkers. Once again the pathetic TUC could only reply with a damp squib day of action in September.

Returned to office in 1983 the Tories turned their attention to attacking the historically key battalion of organised labour—the NUM. They had been careful not to mess with the miners in their first term of office. Now, with their anti-union laws on the statute books and Ian MacGregor at the head of the Coal Board, they chose to attack.

The miners' strike cruelly exposed the weakness of even the most militant sectional trade unionism. The miners' leaders failed to break the strike out of its sectional isolation. Against the miners stood the entire might of the bosses' state—the police, the media and the courts. In the face of that enemy the key lay in generalising the miners' strike into a working class offensive to break the Tory government. There were, in fact, no shortage of workers who found themselves in the firing line alongside the miners in their heroic year of struggle. Railworkers, seafarers, carworkers and dockers all had their own disputes.

There was very real sympathy for the miners amongst the rank and file of the labour movement. But the trade union leaders sabotaged every move towards real solidarity and joint struggle. The TGWU leaders allowed their members to move scab coal. ASLEF and the NUR accepted a wage offer below inflation to get their members out of the firing line. The ISTC and EETPU refused point blank to give any backing to the miners.

The TUC sat out the first six months of the dispute on the excuse that the NUM had not asked for their support. Scargill's sectional militancy let these gentlemen off the hook. When the TUC did move in 'support' of the miners it was no more than a ruse to get the dispute called off.

Tragically the miners fought alone. The Tories eventually defeated the guards detatchment of the working class. We are still feeling the repercussions of that defeat. The employers have felt more confident and brazen as News International and Telecom have shown. The trade union leaders have become even more timid and frightened of a fight.

The legacy of the miners' defeat, is reflected in the fall in the number of industrial disputes over the last period. Prior to the NCU strike industrial disputes were at an all time post war low. In the year to June 1986 there were 892 recorded stoppages, the lowest figure since 1939. In that same period there were 2.4 million recorded strike days—the lowest figure since 1967. The average annual total over the previous ten years was 11.2 million. With leaderships refusing to countenance strike action on any significant scale the membership have been less willing to engage in unofficial action.

Before the miners' strike only the EETPU and the AEU were openly courting class treachery in the form of no strike deals and scab trade unionism. They were left to go unhindered by the TUC. Now in the name of 'new realism', all the trade union leaders are preaching conciliation and treacherously using the outcome of the miners' strike to claim that the members do not want to fight and that 'she' can't be beaten.

LEGACY OF DEFEAT

The miners' defeat is the single most important factor determining the balance of forces within the labour movement. The absence of an alternative strategy to either sectional militancy of the Scargill variety or brazen class collaboration of the Willis variety has been decisive in fostering and spreading a mood of pessimism.

Since the end of the miners' strike the right inside the unions has been ever more in the ascendant. But the fight to put the unions on a war footing must be engaged wherever the 'new realists' attempt to overthrow militant policies. The TUC annual congress in 1986 completely caved in on the question of anti-union laws (clearing the decks for the miserable collapse in the face of those laws by Dean and Dubbins in the News International strike). **Against this we have to fight for no compliance with the anti-union laws and courts, and promote solidarity action in support of every union or workforce taking such action.**

The 1986 congress also opened the door for an incomes policy understanding with a future Labour government. It effectively offered co-operation with any austerity programme that the bosses might require any such government to implement. As Willis put it:

'It is the nature of the partnership that we must accept our share of the responsibility for the difficult choices that will have to be made.'

Rank and file activists have to agitate among union members for a different approach, one which rejects wage restraint in any form. The idea that there can be a trade off of wages for jobs is a lie; it will be wages for profits as bosses push up prices. **Instead we have to fight to protect real wage levels through enforcing an automatic 1% increase for every 1% increase in the cost of living as calculated by committees of workers and their families.**

On every front of the class struggle the TUC will be preaching class peace. Before the election it will to the tune of *'Do not disrupt Labour's chances with the middle class by engaging in industrial action'*. After an election, if Labour are in office, it will be to the tune of *'Give Labour a chance'*. If the Tories win, it will be *'She's proved we cannot beat her.'* Against this abject surrender we have an answer. On the jobs front we say: **defend every job! Cut the hours not the workforce. For workers' control of the length of the working day to make sure new technologies benefit the workers, reduce the working day and make more jobs. For the occupation of all plants declaring redundancies, holding the bosses' property under the control of the workforce.**

Down with business secrecy. Open the books and accounts of the employers to the scrutiny of workers and their representatives. Only by struggling for this workers' inspection can we expose the tricks of the employers and resist their plans to cut jobs and wages in the cause of profit.

Challenge management's right to manage. Fight for workers' control over hiring and firing, work speeds and the length of the working day. Only in this way can we challenge the new get tough management regime, defend working conditions and make sure that

technical innovation works for the workers, not for the bosses' profit.

None of these demands will be handed on a plate to workers. They have to be wrested from the bosses by every relevant form of industrial action in our armoury. **Strike action and occupations against the threat of lockouts are basic weapons of the class war. But strikes have to be enforced and occupations defended by the means of the picket line; in turn the picket line has to defend itself from scab and police harassment or worse, by transforming itself into a defence guard when necessary.**

Thatcher has used the law against solidarity action. She recognises how important it is to winning any action today. Trade unionists must give it equal recognition by **establishing support committees around any major dispute, composed of delegates from local workplaces and directly affected industries. Trades councils should be transformed where possible into councils of action on a city wide basis, but if necessary those action councils should be created directly, based on local workplaces.**

BUSINESS AS USUAL?

What is now of primary concern to the trade union leaders is how they can maintain the flow of subscriptions that can guarantee *their* salaries and offices. This is becoming an urgent question for them. Trade union membership is in decline. Declining membership rolls, technological changes and diminished bargaining prospects are concentrating many bureaucrats' minds on the prospects of mergers. Inevitably those mooted—AEU and EETPU, NGA and SOGAT, ASTMS and TASS, SCPS and CPSA—are posed in functional bureaucratic terms and are designed to strengthen the grip of the officials over the membership. These mergers do not aim to break down craftism but rather update it for the late twentieth century.

In order to survive in an era of craven capitulation before the Tories leading sections of the trade union bureaucracy are following the trail of business unionism blazed by the AEU and EETPU. Financial services, health insurance and even shopping discount services are being offered as means of tempting those in work either to join the union or to remain in it. These leaders aim to strangle class struggle trade unionism.

The alternative to fighting to put organised labour on a war-footing is to accept further retreat and defeat, and with it a growing gulf between the organisations of the oppressed and those of organised labour.

But there is a force that can turn the tide. In every union there is a small minority of militants who want to stop the rot and get stuck into the Tories. In every dispute that the trade union leaders try to sell out there is a vocal and deeply involved layer of militants who try to prevent such betrayals.

We saw it in the steel and health strikes. We saw it in the rain outside Congress House the day the 'new realists' in the NUM decided to abandon the Great Strike. We have seen it outside Fortress Wapping while Dean and Dubbins counselled surrender. The problem is that this minority of active militants have accumulated bad habits. All too often they go back to sleep after the dispute and leave the same bureaucratic hands on the tiller. Of those who remain active too many succumb to a tradition of Broad Left caucuses whose horizons go no further than organising electoral campaigns for progressive officials. They are concerned with taking over the union machine and not with challenging the very nature and basis of that machine.

The past masters at this electoral politics have been the Stalinists in an around *Morning Star* or *7 Days*. They have provided generations of foot soldiers for functionaries such as Scanlon and Jones in the 70's and Knapp and Buckton in the 80's. Hailed in their turn as 'lefts' we could trust, they all practised collaboration with the bosses. Thankfully, the Communist Party in its fragmented bits is a dwindling force. Most of its members no longer have time for what they consider to be the primitive and outmoded world of organised labour. The Broad Lefts that the CP spawned and maintained are now mainly withered husks. While Militant has tried to breathe life into them the left in the unions remains at a very low ebb.

In order to fight for the transformation of the unions it is necessary to organise the minority of militant activists into a rank and file movement both within the individual unions and across the unions. Its aim would be to struggle *with the officials when possible and against them when necessary*. It would fight to thoroughly democratise the unions as weapons of class struggle.

The specific aims of this movement entail a break with craft sectionalism and genuine democratic industrial unions committed to solidarity backing for all in struggle. For all officials to be subject to regular re-election, to be recallable and to be paid no more than the average wage of those they represent.

For all major decisions on action and elections to be taken at mass meetings after full democratic debate, and by a show of hands. Only in this way can workers decide on action knowing their collective strength, and free from management and media pressure. Only in this way can workers keep decisions in their own hands and free of the union bureaucracy.

This struggle must not be left within the unions alone. The Labour Party is paid for by the unions and its policy largely determined by a handful of bureaucrats wielding a block vote. At every level the trade unions must take their struggle into the Labour Party, demanding that it acts on behalf of the workers. **The block vote must be taken out of the hands of self appointed officials and used to reflect the balance and proportions of the members' views as expressed in democratic debate.**

DOWN THE ROAD AND OUT OF SIGHT

The Thatcher years have seen savage attacks on the most down trodden and oppressed sectors of society. However, all too often the oppressed do not see the organised labour movement as their natural ally. And not without reason. This is most obviously true of the unemployed.

Millions have been left to rot on the dole queue without the official labour movement lifting a finger to mobilise their anger. It is to the shame of the labour movement that the unemployed are not organised in a visible and angry movement. The unemployed need more than two lousy People's Marches and playing hands across Britain with Jimmy Saville. The alternative is that they may be used against a labour movement that only organises the 'haves' with jobs!

That is why it is essential that we strive to build a national unemployed workers' movement funded by the TUC. For unemployed workers' full rights to union membership with no strings.

Raised slightly above the unemployed the bosses are aiming to create a periphery of less skilled workers to be shunted in and out of the workforce at the bosses' will. In particular they are increasing their use of part-time women workers. The 'new realists' wish to attract dues paying non-active women members from among their ranks by offering their services as providers of shopping services.

It is vital that the unions open their doors to women workers by organising branch meetings in worktime and with full creche facilities at every meeting. For union action against sexual harassment and against every restriction on women's rights to abortion and health care.

BUILD LINKS WITH THE OPPRESSED

It is no surprise that due to the ferocity of the Tory attacks and

the disinterest of the organised labour movement, the last eightyears have witnessed a mushrooming of the self-organisation of oppressed groups. Defence committees have sprung to life in the wake of inner-city uprisings. Anti-deportation campaigns have multiplied to cope with the effects of the tightened immigration laws. Black sections have asserted their right to represent black people in the Labour Party for the first time amidst the hostility of the bulk of the PLP.

Within the lesbian and gay community bigotry stoked up by the AIDS panic has resulted in a greater sense of urgency about fighting back in groups such as Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights (LCLGR) and Lesbians and Gays Support the Printers/Miners (LGSP/M).

And who will ever forget the heroic role played by the miners wives groups in 1984-85, both helping sustain the strike and taking their place alongside the men on the picket lines in the defence of their communities?

All too often the labour movement, and especially its top officials, have connived in slandering or sabotaging these intiatives—reflecting rather than challenging bigotry. Where have the labour movement's organised battalions been when the inner city black communities have risen against their oppression? Where are they when the bosses' press crucify the oppressed with their reactionary bilge? When they inflame attacks on gay activists or act as judge and jury in cases such as Broadwater Farm? The trade union movement must prove itself to the oppressed.

Print workers must challenge management's right to manage in the print industry. For workers' action to ensure the automatic right to reply for all exploited and oppressed groups attacked in the bosses' press. For a democratically run labour movement press to counter the bosses' lie machine.

During the miners' and print workers' strikes lesbian and gay militants proved the potential for winning the organised working class to a defence of lesbian and gay rights. By forging links with workers in struggle LGSP/M have shown that they can break down the prejudice and bigotry that the bosses use to divide our class. In the same way the recognition by thousands of miners that the same police who hit their picket lines were cracking the heads of the black militant youth shows what can be achieved.

Organised labour must take up, as its own, the struggles of all who are exploited and oppressed by capitalism. In turn the oppressed must take their struggles into the organised working class, demanding not a patronising hearing but a common struggle against repression, oppression and exploitation.

We must fight for **union action against racial discrimination,**

immigration curbs and deportations. For active labour movement support for black self-defence. For the right to caucus in the unions for lesbians and gay men, for blacks and for women. For a working class women's movement that draws in the unorganised in the community behind the labour movement. For union action in opposition to discrimination against lesbians and gay men, and active solidarity against police harassment.

But if the racism and sexism of the labour movement is inexcusably divisive then it has to be said that the predominance of petit-bourgeois politics and ideologies within the leadership of these movements often helps to perpetuate and reinforce these backward sentiments.

In some cases, such as the miners wives movement, bureaucratic reformism smothered and eventually killed off the militant, class struggle orientation of the strike days. In the black organisations it is vital, today, to renounce separatist views which write off the labour movement as irredeemiably racist. In the LCLGR the struggle for lesbian and gay rights has been carried on more through the method of back-room lobbying of reformist bureaucrats than by agitating in the ranks of the union members. Over the last fifteen years the success of the attacks and the weakness of the petit-bourgeois leaderships have led to the dissolution of the various 'movements' into fractured and single issue campaigns. If the bonds of unity in struggle are not forged in the years ahead then Thatcher will be the only winner as the labour movement and its natural allies turn viciously in upon each other.

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

As the oldest imperialist power with the oldest trade union movement Britain's working class has often been crippled by its nationalism. While capital is truly international, while profit knows no patriotism, the labour movement is rallied by its leaders behind chauvinist or even xenophobic demands. Instead of supporting the fight of the super-exploited in the semi-colonies for decent wages, sections of British workers complain that their wages are being undercut by 'foreigners' and call for import controls which only serve to export unemployment to other countries. Yet in the same breath many of these self same workers in the UK will denounce import controls elsewhere as against free trade.

This vicious circle is like the treadmill of a mouse; it leads nowhere. Workers are divided against each other nationally and

so prevented from taking international solidarity action within the same multi-national corporations. **We call for a break with the crippling nationalism of British trade unionism. For fighting unions across state borders to take on the multi-nationals. No to import controls.**

As in economics so in politics. The defence of the British state against workers abroad strengthens that same state against us at home. We are therefore for active solidarity with all those struggling against British imperialism. **For trade union action for Troops out of Ireland Now! Troops out of the Malvinas!**

In South Africa the black workers are engaged in a ferocious struggle for their liberation from apartheid capitalism. Britain is one of the main international props of the apartheid state, economically and politically. A blow to South Africa as the mainstay of imperialist rule in the continent would be a tremendous blow to imperialism worldwide. British workers have a special responsibility to their black African brothers and sisters. At this time they must do all in their power to **implement workers' sanctions against apartheid.**

In the USSR and Eastern Europe we must **support the struggles of workers for their own free trade unions** against their bureaucratic overlords and their prison house unions.

The test of office

Whilst Thatcher has been wreaking devastation from Whitehall most big city councils have remained in Labour's hands. In many cases the councils have been led by lefts who declared their intention to fight the Tories. But in every case resistance turned to defeat. The left councils could not and would not mobilise mass working class action to defy the courts and the Tory laws. They have shown the futility of their brand of 'electoral' socialism.

The growth in local government spending and services in the post war-years was a concession won by the organised working class. The state was forced to foot the bill for improved education, welfare and housing. This was bound to be a prime target for Thatcher and a capitalist class convinced that the concessions could no longer be afforded. Since Thatcher came to power £17 billion has been cut off local government spending.

At first the 'left' councils responded to cuts in central funding of local government by denouncing the cuts and putting up rates and rents. But rate and rent increases bit into workers' living standards. No amount of socialist rhetoric could conjure up mass workers' action in support of councils whose rates bills were cutting workers' real incomes. As the councils climbed down so the Tories stepped up their attacks. In 1981 Lothian implemented £15 million worth of Tory cuts rather than break the 1981 Local Government (Scotland) Act.

So, sensing things were going their way, the second Thatcher

government broadened its attack to local democracy itself and so limited the scope of resistance. Defending democracy proved to be a popular cause, especially in London, where the GLC attracted many admirers. However, its main fans were those middle-class radicals and left reformists who found funds available to employ them in various policy units. The truth was that their work barely touched the lives of the mass of working people in London and so limited the chances of drawing on their active support for the GLC's defence and allowed the bosses' press to portray the GLC solely as a port in the storm for the oppressed minorities.

GLC leader Ken Livingstone thought that a cross-class alliance was the best bet for saving the authority. But the popular front proved a proper farce as Thatcher brushed aside the objections of the mass of Londoners. The GLC and the Metropolitan Authorities were at last abolished and the other councils' rights curbed through rate capping.

Rate capping closed the left councils' escape route. They could no longer raise rates to avoid cutting services. One by one the remaining left councils caved in, eventually setting a legal rate and trusting to 'creative accounting' to tide them over.

Yet those councils who initially tried to defy the government in this round did so not with a 'deficit budget' of required spending regardless of the law. They did so by refusing to set a rate. This was another cop out. Rather than mobilising workers' action in defence of services they thought they were cleverly putting the ball in the Tories' court. In fact the Tories' courts clobbered them. And it was all too late to rally the working class behind 'their councils'. Working class mobilisation cannot be turned on and off like a tap. Neither could it be rallied to a council moaning that the Tories were trying to take away '*our* right to put *your* rates up'.

MUNICIPAL MARXISM

Although different in rhetoric from the campaign to save the GLC, the fight of Liverpool council, even if carried out by self-proclaimed 'Marxists', suffered from the same attitude to the working class.

The rout of all the left Labour councils was rooted in one common error. As Labourite reformists they all took as their starting point the need to manage the local state and balance the books, albeit to what they thought was the advantage of working people and the oppressed. This led to inevitable compromise when the Tories dug their heels in and Labour councils were posed with the choice of an all out fight or maintaining services in a 'realistic' fashion. In a

situation where the Tory laws were savaging the councils' abilities to determine spending levels and eroding local democracy, 'realism' was sure to mean making cuts, presiding over ever declining services and coming into conflict with their own council employees. Increasingly, there seemed little to distinguish the left from Kinnock's original 'dented shield' approach.

It is now impossible for councils to resist the Tories without breaking the law. While **we must demand of Labour that it guarantees to repeal all the Tory legislation against local government rights and to fully restore central funding,** matters cannot be allowed to rest there. Should Labour win we will have to force it to act to **make the funds available for public works to restore services and jobs.** Hattersley and Smith will be sure to resist all the way. We will have to **force Labour to cancel the disqualifications and surcharges of those councillors who tried to fight, and repay all fines paid so far.** But in the here and now we need a strategy for fighting the Tories and any government set on ransacking local services and jobs.

We need a strategy for mobilising the strength of our class to force the bosses to retreat. As the Liverpool councillors found out, simply appealing to the courts to arbitrate between central and local government ignores the fact that the Tories control the courts and make the laws! Trying to 'creatively account' and borrow themselves out of trouble neglects the fact that the bosses control the finance houses and banks which are being appealed to for funds.

There is no room in the class struggle for flashy losers like Hatton or the GLC who protest their intention to fight while in reality accepting defeat. We need to convince workers that there can be a real improvement in their daily lives but that it can only be won through an organised struggle with central government.

Instead the Labour left have preferred to make great promises in their manifestos and then wonder why, when they subsequently withdraw from these commitments, the local unions and communities are not prepared to come to their defence and pull their chestnuts out of the fire.

UNION ACTION

Rather than asking the workers to troop out to defend their 'socialist' bosses when the Tories put the boot in, a council which really sought to defend the interests of the local community would place itself under the control of the working class. **Local *councils of action*, democratic bodies with delegates from unions,**

workers' organisations and community groups should meet regularly to decide what services are needed, how they will be run, and determine the wages and conditions of the workforce. A programme of house building, repairs, expanded nurseries and other community care—this would give the working class something positive to defend. And having placed control over these decisions with the organised working class, such action councils can also mobilise the kind of industrial action necessary to take on the Tory commissioners that get sent in.

It is not a question of making the money last as long as possible, but of using what is available to touch and transform the lives of the mass of the local working people, so that when the crunch comes they see that there is something worth fighting for. This perspective is not that of the Labour left. They cling to the hope that if they muddle through, a Labour government will bail them out. But Kinnock has made it clear he will not pay off their ever accumulating debts, neither will he even restore all the cuts the Tories have made. And in the meantime the Town Hall 'lefts' miserably cling onto power even when it means implementing the Tory cuts. Local councils can never solve the problems of the local communities in isolation, socialism cannot be built in one borough. But they can be used as centres for organising and leading resistance to the bosses. **We must demand that Labour councils set deficit budgets based on the needs of the community as determined by local councils of action. No compliance with the Tory local government legislation!**

The only policy for a fight against the cuts must be for Labour councils to **refuse to implement any cuts in services and at the same time refuse to raise rents or rates to bridge the gap.** The councils cough up enormous sums just to service their debts to the banks and finance houses. Debts and interest charges swallow up to 40% of rates. Workers' rent and rates should not be used to subsidise the profits of the finance capitalists. **Instead, by refusing to meet the debt and interest charges, the councils can make the funds available to maintain and expand the services that the exploited and oppressed really need.**

Of course such action would bring the councils into direct conflict with the law. But it would make it possible to mobilise the workers in defence of real gains through **borough/city wide strike action linking council and private sector workers.** Only that action has the force to stop the Tories and the judges in their tracks.

If Labour do not form the next government then the pockets of local government Labourism will be in the front line of the Tory attacks. Resisting them effectively depends entirely on learning the lessons of the last eight years.

Revolutionise the labour movement

To make the labour movement and organisations of the oppressed capable of withstanding the attacks of the bosses will take more than an organisational upheaval. The militants who see the need for it and who are prepared to lead the struggle must themselves be organised around a clear and consistent strategy. This can only be in the form of a political party.

At present the only party of any size in the labour movement is the Labour Party. It does not act to mobilise the mass of workers for struggle against the bosses and their state. Quite the opposite. Its mass membership comes primarily through the affiliated trade unions. The overwhelming majority of that affiliated membership plays no active role in the party. They never exercise any real control over its policies and direction. Instead the trade union officials speak in their name through the block vote.

Neither do the individual party members control the party. The 1979-81 reform and democracy movement did not fundamentally alter the undemocratic institutions that constantly thwart the desires and wishes of the party's rank and file members. This is the case, firstly and most fundamentally, because of the party's absolute devotion to winning governmental and local office through parliamentary means. This inevitably means subordinating workers' democracy in its ranks to the bosses' bourgeois democracy that the party is totally enmeshed in.

Bosses' democracy relies on an unorganised and passive mass of

citizens voting for candidates every four or five years. It is anything but 'the rule of the people'. Candidates and parties are not obliged to specify what they will do if elected. Even if they do they cannot be removed if they fail to deliver. Politicians vie with each other with empty phrases and blatantly false promises. The vast majority of working people have no access to the media which forms and manipulates information and opinions. It is in the hands of millionaires and upper class bureaucrats. They can use it to demagogically manipulate the atomised electors. So for the vast majority of voters politics is not about shaping their destinies, and those of their children, on a daily basis. No wonder the voters are often cynical and alienated from the whole process.

Parliamentary democracy is a system of highly indirect control over politicians and extremely limited choice of policies for running capitalism. The existence of capitalism is never allowed to be seriously questioned through this all pervasive system of control. The Labour Party itself is part and parcel of this system. It rejects the idea that socialism is a period opened up by the working class seizing power and when, through planning the economy and abolishing private property, classes and the state will disappear. To the extent that it even whispers that embarrassing word 'socialism' any more Labour means by it using occasional five year stints in power to legislate away the worst features of capitalism.

The right wing leaders are willing to make any sacrifice to attain office. Anything that might lose votes or cause disfavour amongst the ruling capitalist class must be chucked overboard. They are firmly established as the safe and conservative leadership via the PLP. Once they have got their seats they can not be removed until the next election. Even then the new re-selection procedures have proved painfully slow and inadequate. Only six sitting MP's have been de-selected in this parliament. Then the process can still be trampled on by the right when the results displease them.

So devoted is Labour to Parliament that the parliamentary leadership is given near total control over the party's election policies. The shadow cabinet decides on the manifesto and election propaganda. Party policy decided by conference or NEC is no more than impotent advice. The bosses' democracy of the parliamentarians reduces to nothing the democracy of the labour movement. Kinnock's socialism is a contradiction in terms. The 'democracy' is capitalist democracy which destroys workers' democracy. The 'socialism' is an empty and meaningless label.

There is another wing of reformism with a somewhat different approach. The left wing—Benn, Heffer, Skinner, etc—are also committed to parliamentarianism. But they believe it can and

should be made to deliver serious reforms for the advantage of the working class. In their view reforms can undermine and eventually abolish capitalism.

STRAIT-JACKETED LEFT

In reality these lefts are tied down by Parliament. They reject the need for class struggle to break right out of this strait-jacket. For them this is too dangerous and, anyway, not really necessary in Britain. As a result they are tied to the Labour Party as an election machine and must therefore remain in a bloc with the right wing. After all Labour must be a 'broad church' if it is to win elections.

The left chalks up temporary victories when it shifts Labour's 'policies' their way. They moved Labour 'left' in 1970-73 and again between 1979-82. They actually served to refurbish the image of Labour as an instrument of radical change to workers and the oppressed. But each time they do so only to see the right wing throw their policies into the gutter come an election.

The Callaghan government started slashing the welfare state at the IMF's bidding and lost the election to Thatcher. The left declared it would 'never again' allow a labour government to dump party policies and do the bosses' bidding against the working class. They won conference support for re-selection of MP's and an electoral college to choose the leadership, one that remained dominated by the PLP and the union block votes. But they pulled up short of victory once 'the gang of four' quit and the right threatened to follow. They made their compromise with the right in 1982 and have been feeling the consequences ever since. The right have re-established their hold on the party. They have terrorised the left with both the reality of a witch-hunt and the threat of more to follow.

The Labour left dare not face up to the Labour right's sabotage and its threats to betray the party. They know the right would if the left succeeded in establishing the elementary norms of workers' democracy or forced the party to defend workers' basic rights when in power. That is why they are prisoners of the right in the Labour Party. They serve the right by boosting workers' expectations from the party.

A COMBAT PARTY

The labour movement is crumbling under its reformist leadership.

We must create a new leadership in the workers' movement that is based on consistent loyalty to the working class and the oppressed in struggle. It must advance a strategy for achieving working class power and toppling the bosses' state. That means a strategy to defeat its police squads, to win over and disintegrate its army and to smash its unelected bureaucracy and judiciary. The working class needs a party that is made up of the hundreds of thousands of fighters to be found in the workplaces, who are defending the black communities, who are defending women, who are fighting for lesbian and gay rights and who are struggling against Britain's oppression of Ireland and its support for apartheid. These are the potential vanguard of the working class.

Many of these militants will not agree that a new party is necessary. They will argue that the Labour Party can be transformed into a Marxist party. Others will claim that their extremely small 'party' already exists to perform the role. They are all wrong.

History has proved that the transformation of the Labour Party into a revolutionary party is impossible. The right would far rather wreck the party than allow the left to control it. The Labour Party is not the instrument by which the British workers will take power. Any serious clash between revolutionaries rooted in the working class and the Labour leaders backed by the bosses would not leave the party intact or recognisable in its present form.

Labour is a party marked down for destruction. From Thatcher through to Kinnock they are doing their best to destroy it as a party of the working class. Thatcher wants to drive it into the wilderness. Kinnock and his advisers want to get rid of the outdated 'class' tag and turn it into the sponsor of a 'rainbow coalition'. So too do the Eurocommunists around *Marxism Today*. Thatcher and Owen consciously, and Kinnock more confusedly, want Labour replaced by something akin to the US Democratic Party.

FIGHT THE RIGHT

We set ourselves the task of seeing to it that a real workers' party rises from the shattered shell of the present Labour Party. But we will not abandon that party to Kinnock. To do so would be to leave tens of thousands of activists to Kinnock's mercies or to the Labour left. Serious struggles lie ahead in the 'mass party of the trade unions'. If Labour wins, the straightened economic conditions of the 1980's mean that a Callaghan-type government would be far less stable than its predecessors.

If it notches up a third defeat that will inevitably re-open

factional warfare and redoubled bitterness. The left will blame Kinnock's abandonment of 'socialist policies'; the right will seek to remove the left in the council chambers and among the prospective parliamentary candidates, as a prelude to a more open popular front approach. There may well be defections, expulsions and splits. Revolutionaries should continue to be involved in those struggles alongside those who defend democratic procedures and pro-working class policies. In part those struggles are a continuation of current ones; **the fight against the witch-hunt of socialists, the defence of the LPYS from further attacks by the NEC, for the right of black sections to organise as well as all socialist political tendencies in the party.**

Yet the left must also return to those battles half won, lost or never seriously undertaken in the years 1979-81. These are battles which must be won if the Labour Party is to even be destabilised as an instrument of bosses' rule. **We should strive to subordinate the PLP to the membership of the party. It must be subordinated to the conference and the NEC it elects. Conference and the NEC must deprive it of the power to determine the manifesto and the PLP's tactics. At the same time we must fight in the unions to take the block vote out of the general secretaries' hands. It should be the property of the affiliated members organised in workplace Labour Party and union branches.** In this way we can hurl down the twin pillars of the reformist leadership—the trade union bureaucracy and the parliamentarians. We can break the paralysing division between the 'political' and 'economic' wings of the labour movement.

As a key task in the struggle to free the vanguard from reformist domination **we must rally together a revolutionary tendency in the Labour Party.** It must be pledged openly to the defeat of the reformist leaders. It must fight for the total transformation of the whole labour movement so as to create a revolutionary party.

A PROGRAMME OF ACTION

That party must be forged on a programme for the revolutionary seizure of power by the working class. The programme the working class needs now must be precisely a programme for advance towards socialism. It is impossible to end unemployment and give the victims of the dole queue a socially useful job on an average income without a clash with the whole logic of capitalism. Anyone who wants to stop Thatcher's self-proclaimed capitalist revolution must realise that the only viable

alternative is to make a workers' revolution, to establish workers' power and to build socialism. The truth is that in order to seriously meet the essential needs of millions of working people for jobs, education, health care and more we cannot avoid advancing measures which challenge capitalism.

From the vantage point of the oppressed and exploited that is far more realistic than any of Hattersley's penny pinching policies. Let him be 'realistic' about what the bosses want us to have. We will be 'realistic' about what the working class needs. Our programme shows the road to an economy and society founded on planning people's labour to meet people's needs. The profit motive and the anarchic 'market' of entrepreneurs which creates scandalous surpluses of unsold goods while billions are kept in dire poverty must be overcome.

Our revolutionary programme must therefore be based on measures which open a bridge leading from the struggles and needs of today to tomorrow's planned economy. For example, a sliding-scale of wages and hours would apportion the length of the working day to the total amount of work to be done. It would protect working people against inflation by tying wages to a working class cost of living index as worked out by organised workers and their families. A massive programme of public works would put the unemployed back to work and restore and vastly improve the shattered social services. It could be funded by expropriating the resources necessary to carry it out wherever the bosses' sabotage or feigned bankruptcy attempts to obstruct it.

The establishment of workers' control and inspection throughout industry, commerce and finance would run through the whole process as a unifying and educating struggle. Millions of blue and white collar workers can open the books, the data banks, the boards and committees where the bosses and managers plot to boost profits at the expense of workers. Organised workers must seize the greedy paws of the job cutters and asset strippers in an iron grip. They must say *'enough is enough, if you refuse to help us re-organise production then it is time to get on your bike.'* By its very nature the fight for this programme must start from below—in the shops, factories and offices, transforming the workplace organisation of the unions into democratic fighting bodies. In every locality, in every city it will be necessary to group representatives of the workplaces, regularly elected and re-elected at mass meetings, into councils capable of co-ordinating the struggles. Those councils must be capable of organising solidarity for all workers in struggle. They must answer the moves of the police and courts with the mobilised strength of the whole working class. In 1921 and 1926 our grandparents met the needs of struggle with councils of action. If we

are to take the struggle against the capitalist attacks on to the fight for demands transitional to socialism then councils of action must be built.

Mass struggle can and doubtless will wring concessions from the bosses. But if our forward march is not to be halted we must push ahead against the crumbling resistance of the capitalist state. We need a government pledged to take decisive measures against the bosses. In order to do so it must be under the direct control of the organisation of struggle the workers have thrown up in battle with the capitalists. The mobilisation of the workers through general and mass strike action will, to be victorious, of necessity have to create workers' militias to defend the working class and maintain order for the working class. Its councils of action will have to maintain supplies and services for the working class struggle.

We fight for a *workers' government* based on those councils of action and the workers' militia which would be counterposed to the bosses' standing army and forcibly dissolve it. *This* is the alternative to a Labour government in the strait-jacket of the bosses' state.

Whether such a government might have won an election and have a majority of MP's is a secondary question. Power does not lie in the parliamentary talking shop but in the workplaces, the barracks, the streets. If we win the battle then we can send the generals, the judges and the civil service mandarins to cool their heels in the cockroach infested hell holes they have thrown class war prisoners into.

We have to aid the workers of those countries where they have already overthrown their capitalists to remove the bureaucratic oppressors who leech on the socialised property and deny the workers democracy. We have to aid those countries struggling against imperialism to overthrow it and its local agents. We have to help the workers of other 'advanced' countries to overthrow their bourgeoisies and finally create the basis for a planned world economy.

In short, we have a whole world to rebuild. When the working class has seized power then history can truly begin!

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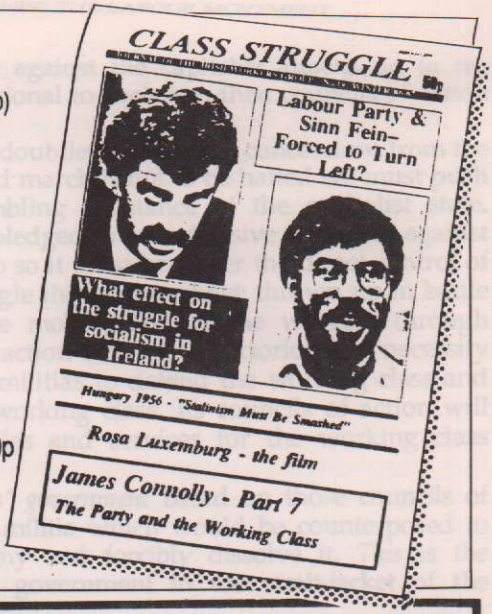
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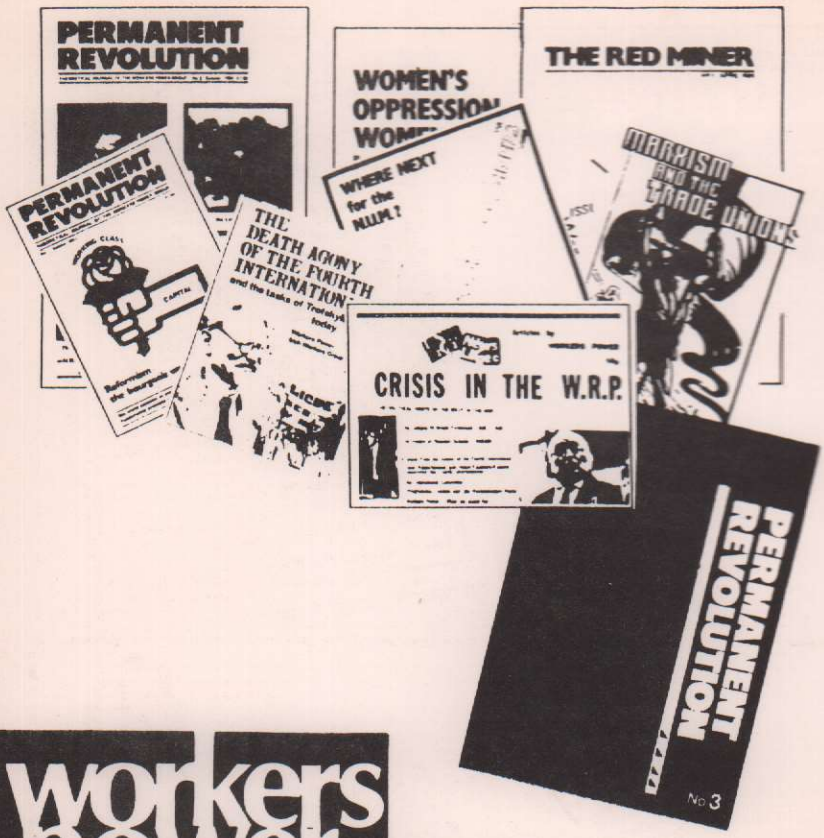
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