LABOUR BRIEFING

ELECTION SPECIAL 1987

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20p





PHOTO: Andrea Campbell



PHOTO: John Chapman

VOTE LABOUR!

The class war policies of the Thatcher government must be rejected by the whole of the working class and the oppressed at the election on June 11th.

Thatcher's strategy is to make us all pay for Britain's economic decline. She wants to boost the profits of our under-capitalised and backward industry for her friends in the ruling class. And she is prepared to do anything to achieve this, whatever the human cost.

Thatcher once said: "We Conservatives cannot accept that because some people have no choice, no one should have it." And that sums it up!

The so-called Party of "freedom and choice" means poverty and unemployment, low pay and poor health, loss of democratic rights and education on the cheap for the majority of workers and the oppressed. Only the rich few will benefit from Tory freedom.

The last two terms of Tory rule have been an attack on the whole of the working class. Not only trade unionists, who have lost many basic rights, but women, Black people, young people, the old — all have seen their standard of living fall, often to below the poverty line, and their rights curtailed.

The rhetoric of the pollsters and media commentators on the supposed growth of the "middle class" is just so much hot air. Structural changes there may have been; some white collar workers in the service sector may be better off now than ten years ago and many workers may own their own houses, but this doesn't make them middle class. The working class still makes up the vast majority of the population.

And if Thatcher is returned for a third term then we can be sure that her strategy of creating a low-wage economy will be ruthlessly pursued. But this time the attack will be precisely against those who have been a bit better off under Thatcher so far.

No to tactical voting! No coalition!

There is clearly a majority opposed to Thatcher, but the opposition is divided. The SDP and their fellow-travellers in the Labour Party, such as Frank Field, advocate tactical voting in order to defeat Thatcher. But this is an illusion. Owen and Steel are potentially as right wing as Thatcher — anti-trade union, racist, and with economic policies which are just as harsh as the Tories. Not only is tactical voting short-sighted, it would bolster the SDP and undermine Labour.

For the Alliance is just another capitalist party, promoted by the establishment to stop Labour, the Party of the working class, ever getting a majority in Parliament again. It is a cruel fraud to suppose the SDP would be any different to the Tories.

It is true that many of the policies adopted by the Kinnock/Hattersley team open the door to collaboration with the Alliance, but a coalition government will build only the Alliance. In such a government, Labour would by subject to them and their ruling class policies. It would make it impossible to build support for Labour.

So, we urge the whole of the working class and the oppressed to vote Labour. But we have to do more than just vote. For while a Labour government will provide the best conditions to reverse the years of Tory misrule, the best conditions for unity and combativity against the bosses, its present policies are completely inadequate for the battles ahead.

As well as voting Labour, we must organise to fight for a Labour government prepared to stand up for the interests of the working class against any obstacle the employers and their state put in its way. We must demand policies which defend the working class against the employers — policies to make the bosses pay. And we must be ready to act in solidarity with any section of the class which fights to try and achieve this. Whatever the outcome of the election we must organise to fight back. Vote Labour — and fight on!

FIGHT ON!

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

Why we should vote Labour

Trades Unionists

Why we should vote Labour!

By John Lister

No union member who values his or her right to organise and fight the employers will vote Tory at the next election.

Thatcher's eight years in office have taken the workers' movement pretty well back to the age of Dickens, Victorian values and all.

A massive arsenal of hostile legislation has placed the initiative firmly in the hands of the employers, the scabs, and the right wing union bureaucracy.

Solidarity action — in support of workers in Britain or overseas — has been outlawed. Collective decision-making has been replaced with compulsory individual balloting. Scab unions — most notably the UDM — have been cultivated by mangement as closed shop agreements have been torn up.

The logic of the Tory attack is transparent — by smashing the collective strength of the unions, the whip-hand is given to the employers to impose speed-up and rationalisation in the workplace.

Trade unionists who do not want to bring this reign of terror to an end, or who are not appalled by the equally anti-union stance of the Alliance, are clearly beyond rational argument.

Many thousands will only reluctantly vote Labour. They remember bitter past experience and they know that electing a Labour government is in itself no guarantee of trade union rights.

Labour leaders in office — committed to reform rather than overturn of the capitalist system — have time and again lined up with the employers against the strikes and struggles of the working class.



Arthur Scargill

In 1969, Harold Wilson tried to enact anti-union laws so sweeping even Thatcher has only just managed to match parts of them.

The 1974-79 Labour government used riot police and troops to break strikes and picket lines, and imposed on workers three brutal stages of wage control — a disaster which led to the mass rebellion of the "Winter of Discontent" of 1978-79, paving the way for Thatcher.

Central to Neil Kinnock's notion of planning and expanding the "mixed" (capitalist) economy is the acceptance of the "right" of the employers to make profits. This in turn means accepting their "right" to step up the levels of exploitation of their workforce. From this angle, Labour leaders begin to regard real union power as a threat to their economic plans.

This is why Kinnock has refused to pledge the total repeal of Tory anti-union laws. This is why he and Hattersley look towards new wage controls and other measures to contain the demands of the working class which will rapidly escalate if they get elected.

The return of a Labour government is an immediate necessity but in itself it is not *enough* to defend our unions. Despite and against Kinnock the fight must go on:

- For socialist, class struggle policies in the Labour Party and in the unions themselves;
- For the unionisation of millions of unorganised men, women and youth in the service sector and other industries, and a real fight for jobs, conditions and living standards.



PHOTO: John Harris (IFL)



PHOTO: Andrea Campbell

Women

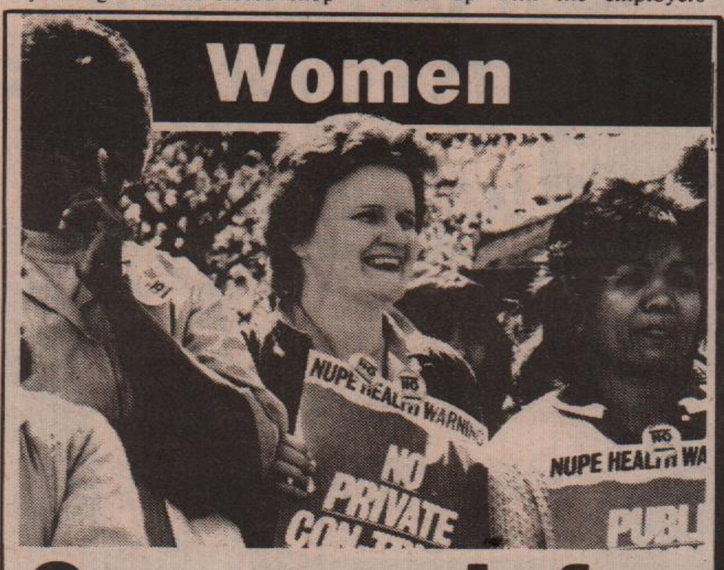


PHOTO: Stefano Cagnoni (Report)

Our need for socialism

By Mandy Moore
National Labour Women's Committee

The Labour Party does not move as fast as many of us would like.

Often it praises itself for action on women's rights when that action is either belated, inadequate, or both.

Nonetheless, *only* a Labour government can deliver policies for women to advance towards equality.

A Labour government introduced the Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay Acts. Only a Labour government can build on these measures and introduce the many new ones that are needed.

Many Labour polices are *crucial* for women:

- the statutory minimum wage;
- the pledge to restore maternity benefit and massively increase child allowances;
- plans to provide childcare on a hitherto unseen scale;
- radical improvements in women's health care;
- promotion of women's employment and training;
- a commitment to combat violence against women.

The list is long.

Most important is the **Ministry for Women**, which will play a strategic role in developing legislation and implementing policy, opening up possibilities of fundamental change in the position of women in this country.

But voting Labour is more than a question of specific policies. Only the return of a Labour government can create the political *atmosphere* in which radical change can take place.

Under the Tories, individualism reigns supreme, the strong flourish and the weak go under, freedom of choice belongs to those who can buy it. For women this is disastrous, as it is for the whole working class. How can the community as a whole care for children, the sick, the elderly, people with disabilities, when the message of the moment is looking after number one and to hell with everyone else?

Burden

How can we lift the domestic burden from women in a society which daily justifies and applauds discrimination and exploitation? How can we free women from the fear of sexual violence in a society in which Victorian moralism goes hand in hand with increasing crime against women and our bodies are exploited for financial gain?

The Labour Party has the right policies for women. It also, when its puts its mind to it, has the only political philosophy — socialism — that can deliver the goods.

Lesbians and Gay Men

The only comprehensive policy

By Alan Holder
Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights

Despite Tory rhetoric about individual freedom the real Tory philosophy is greed and Tory morality is the hypocrisy of "Victorian Values" in which lesbians and gay men have no place.

The Tories have introduced greater police power which are now being used to attack our basic civil liberties, raid our pubs and clubs,and harass us on the streets. The pathetic, belated response to AIDS and the attendant media hysteria have led to renewed attacks on the few rights we have won in years of struggle.

But why should lesbians and gay men vote Labour. Can Labour be trusted to defend our interests?

Labour is the *only* party which has a *comprehensive policy* to legislate for lesbian and gay rights.

Labour's policy commits it to:

- Outlaw discrimination in employment, housing, immigration, and elsewhere;
- guarantee full equality in law, repealing all laws used against us;
- ensure full equality before the law for lesbians, especially in custody cases;
- equalise the age of consent at 16.

Labour-controlled local authorities have *already* shown their commitment by:

- adopting equal opportunities policies;
- funding a large number of lesbian and gay organisations and centres;
- supporting our struggles against police harassment;
- beginning to confront the need for positive images of lesbians and gay men in education.

Actions speak louder than words. Only under a Labour government can we win the rights we deserve.

Black People

No blank cheques!

By Kingsley Abrams
National Secretary,
Labour Party Black Sections

Anyone following recent events involving Labour Party Black Sections and the Labour leadership will share our concern at the rapid escalation of political differences.

These differences have come to a head with the onset of a general election — an election which Labour must win, for the whole of the working class, and for Black people in particular.

The Black community has suffered terribly at the hands of the Tories and knows that they must be defeated. A Labour government will create the best conditions for fighting for our demands. These are minimal: decent housing, jobs, education, health care, social services, repeal of racist immigration and nationality laws and democratic control of the police.

The row between the Black Section and the leadership is *not* about mere constitutional reform. It is about redistribution of power and the need to implement anti-racist socialist policies. How many Black people will actually benefit from Labour's plan to create one million jobs in two years? The Black Section calls for full employment because this is what the Black community needs.

At its fourth Annual Conference, the Labour Party Black Section considered policy papers on immigration, education, jobs, policing and other issues of burning importance to our communities.

Like other pressure groups in the Party, we support the Manifesto while at the same time seeking to improve it. We want to see anti-racist and socialist perspectives included in *all* policies.

The popularity of the GLC (which forced Thatcher to axe it), the electoral success of Black-led Brent, Haringey, and Lambeth show that Labour will win votes by adopting these perspectives. Nothing is gained by caving in to racism. Sadly, it appears that all parties will be pandering to it and the warnings of race relations think tank, the Runymede Trust, will be ignored.

Some argue that the Black Section should wait until after the election to make its demands. Faint-hearted Black parliamentary aspirants have accepted this, despite protests from the Black people they claim to represent.

We have been let down too often. It was Labour governments that passed the racist Immigration Act of 1968; laid the groundwork for the 1971 and 1982 Acts; and that, in 1978, was responsible for the notorious "virginity testing" at Heathrow. Roy Hattersley, speaking on immigration in 1965, said "there will be no integration without limitation."

Black people have a long tradition of self-organisation which will be continued both inside and outside the Labour Party. Witch-hunts cannot stop the anti-racist struggle.

The Labour Party's racist record can ony be reversed by giving Black people real power in the Party *through Black Sections*. History has shown that Black people cannot give the Party leadership a blank cheque, to be filled in *after* they receive our votes.

Expulsions and removals of Black parliamentary candidates like Sharon Atkin will not deflect us from our task.



PHOTO: Broadwater Photograpic

LABOUR
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15 TORY LIES EXPOSED

Trade Unions

TORY LIE: We support industrial democracy: our legislation has returned the trade unions to their members.

This is a bit much from a government which came to office with a plan designed to break the power of the trade unions and restore the undisputed authority of the employers — through the creation of mass unemployment and its use as a big stick with which to beat the unions.

Particularly in manufacturing industry, the employers grasped the opportunity created for them by Thatcher, and introduced what has become known in many industries as "management by fear" — where trade unionists are victimised for any challenge to management authority and workers are sacked for failing to meet management imposed work norms.

Result

As a result of Tory measures, workers in this country have less rights in law than they have had for almost a century, and far less than workers in any other West European country.

Thatcher "supports" free trade unions in Poland, yet we no longer have free trade unions in Britain. This is not a cliche — it is absolutely true! Legislation introduced since 1972 is entirely designed to back the employers against the shop floor.

New laws have taken away immunities from prosecution which are essential for the operation of free trade unions, and which were established as long ago as 1906! They have restricted the right to strike and to picket and given the courts wide powers to intervene in industrial disputes; yet the right to strike is fundamental to industrial democracy.

The government claims that the cornerstone of their industrial democracy is their measures to require the election of union executives and secret ballots before strikes! Yet they were very selective about the union officials they have made subject to ballot. Full-time officials, for example, who hold the real power in most unions, are not covered by the measures — since this could actually enhance the democratic control of the unions from the base.

Legislation already passed requires secret ballots before strikes; but the results are only recognised if they go the right way. If they go the "wrong way" the result is attacked and undermined — or simply ignored. A prime example of this was Rupert Murdoch's sacking of 6,500 printers at Wapping. The fact that the printers repeatedly voted to continue the dispute was ignored, and there were no protests when the dispute was called off by the unions with no ballot. In fact they never call for a demcoratic vote to call a dispute off — providing the decision goes the right way!

Legislation

Now the latest batch of Tory industrial legislation is designed to give strike-breakers the legal right to cross a picket line in defiance of the result of a legally required ballot.

The law demands a ballot before a strike — but individuals are only required to abide by the decision if it goes *against* a strike! This is the reality of "industrial democracy" in Thatcher's Britain!

The Tories are not "giving the unions back to the members" — they are strengthening the power of the state and the employers against the unions, to ensure that trade union members have no collective rights and no power at all!

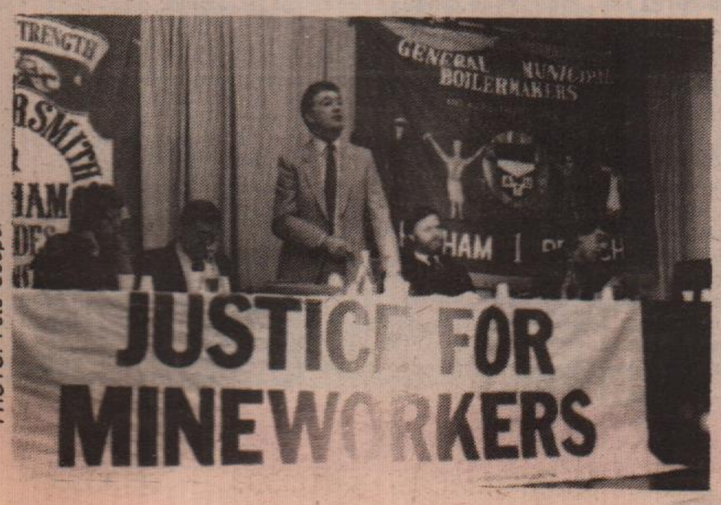
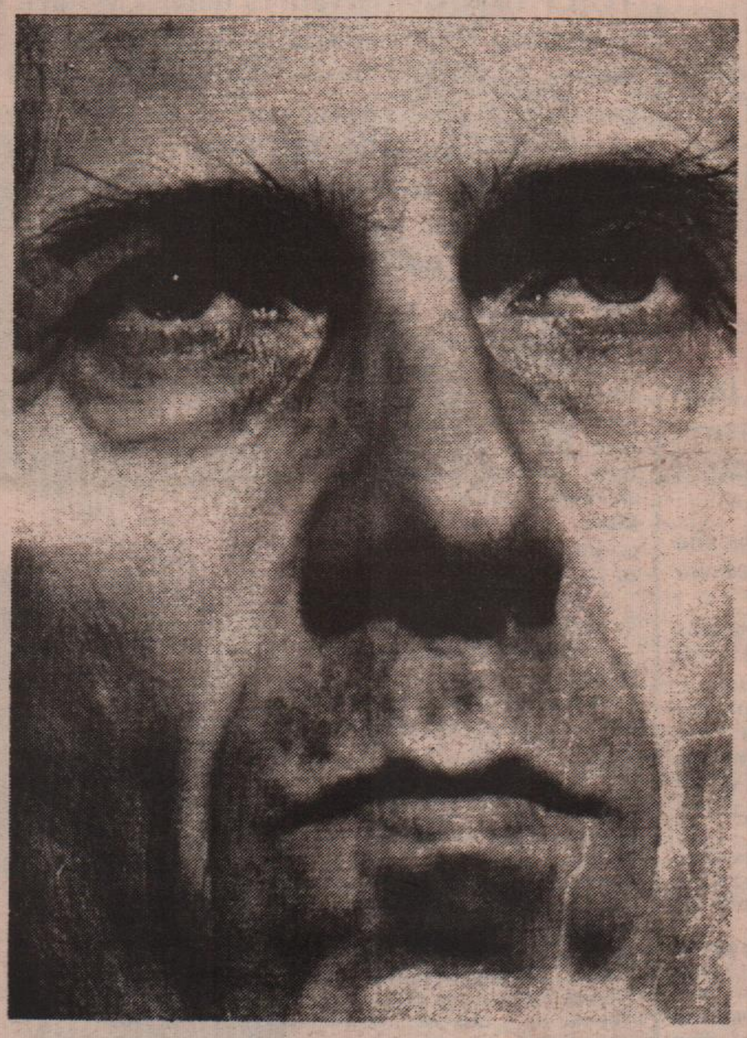


PHOTO: Pete Cooper



NHS

TORY LIE: We have massively increased spending on the National Health Service since 1979.

Much of the apparent increase in health service spending under the Tories was accounted for in the first few years of Tory rule, when major pay awards (won in 1979 under Labour) ran alongside inflation as high as 22% (and higher for the goods and services bought by the NHS).

Once this is deducted, total spending increased by only 7.5% in the five years to 1985: yet a third of that increase was on the Family Practitioner Service, (which has not been cash limited because most of it is funnelled through prescriptions straight into the pockets of the Tories' friends, the drug companies).

Spending on Hospitals and Community Health Services went up by only 3% in those 5 years — a mere 0.6% per year. Even Tory Ministers have conceded that an annual increase of 2% is needed in NHS resource to cope with growing numbers of elderly people, technological and other changes.

According to the all-party Commons Social Services Committee the NHS nationally had fallen some £1,325 billion short of its needs between 1980-1985.

In some areas — such as London — the picture is even worse: with actual *cuts* in budget for most districts every year — supposedly to divert "surplus" resources to other regions.

The result is a cut of over 36,000 hospital beds available (10% of the 1979 total), growing waiting lists, and massive pressure on nursing and other low-paid NHS staff — with more cuts announced almost daily.

A reversal of the Tory cutbacks, rebuilding our crumbling hospitals and a serious investment in a genuine system of community care for the elderly and the mentally ill are a major challenge for the Labour leadership.

Though costing extra billions, such change would create hundreds of thousands of useful new jobs, and relieve the strain on countless thousands of women forced to care at home for sick and elderly relatives for whom the NHS will not provide.

Unemployment

TORY LIE: Unemployment is dropping to below 3 million — the biggest fall in recent history.

More doctored than the National Health Service; more fiddles than Mantovani: the Tory statistics on unemployment make the Guinness balance sheet look like a paragon of scrupulous frankness.

Desperate to avoid embarassing reminders of Norman Tebbit's rash boast in 1983 that a government that did not get unemployment below 3 million would deserve to be thrown out, the Tories have set out by hook and by crook to whittle down the figures to below that magic figure, even while it has destroyed more jobs.

No less than 19 attempts have been made since 1979 to cut tens — even hundreds — of thousands of unemployed at a time off the growing total. First, as many as 190,000, including married women with working husbands were excluded; then in 1983 160,000 unemployed men over 60 were removed; since then figures have been delayed, distorted and massaged out of all recognition from 1979.

Estimates based on the old methods of calculation suggest a real February 1987 figure of 3.65m unemployed, compared to 1.24m in 1979 — a loss of 2.41m jobs.

But the full picture is much worse than this: a further 560,000 unemployed are kept off the register only by a range of phony "training" schemes, offering menial "work" at slave labour rates, on pain of suspension of benefits — all cynically designed to keep young people out off the figures (and lower their expectations for wages should they ever get a job). If these half million are added back in, the real figure rises way above 4 million (4.21m), a staggering rate of 15.3%.

Of course, this blanket "average" figure for the whole country conceals whole regions of much higher unemployment, and inner cities with vast concentrations of unemploymnet — not least inner-city districts in the "prosperous South East". The averages also conceal the much heavier levels of unemployment among women — hundreds of thousands of whom are "invisible" in the figures — and black people, especially black youth.

Worse again, of the claimed "one million new jobs" boasted by the Tories, no less than 600,000 (mainly women) are only part-time, often extremely low-paid jobs (tens of thousands of hospital ancillarry staff, for example, have been effectively casualised into part-time labour). Another 400,000 are allegedly "self-employed".

Of course the whole debate on unemployment has been turned upside down with the focus on the 3 million figure: even a "reduction" to 3 million would simply be a return to the horrendous 1983 figure created by Thatcher!

Living standards

TORY LIE: Living standards are rising: people are better off under the Tories.

Are living standards really rising?

In recent years living standards for a minority in work have risen or at least held steady: but among the unemployed, and large groups of workers, they have fallen drastically.

What's behind this paradox? There has been a massive squeeze on all benefits: virtually everyone on a state benefit is *worse off* under the Tories.

Employers have used declining benefit levels and the threat of unemployment to put the squeeze on low-paid workers — currently those earning less than £115 a week. These people are *worse off* under Thatcher, and there are more of them than there were ten years ago.

The Tories have thus impoverished a large section of the community — amounting perhaps to 25% of the population. Meanwhile the boom in banking, finance and some high-tech industries, mainly in the South East, has led to an increase in real income for others. Tax and mortgage concessions have also favoured them. Under the Tories, we have seen a dramatic widening of the gulf between rich and poor.

Gains made by better-off workers are fragile. Over the past two years inflation has been at a low ebb. Now it is rising again and likely to go on doing so. The result is that temporary wage gains are wiped out.

The Tories claim that the economy has "turned the corner". This is nonsense. In the last two years the British economy has grown from a low base by about 2% each year — much slower than other capitalist countries.

Britain's balance of payments is steadily worsening as income from North Sea oil declines. Overall, British capitalism's competitive position is getting worse. A new economic crisis is on the cards — and Thatcher wants the election out of the way before it arrives.



PHOTO: John Chapman

Popular capitalism?

TORY LIE: More people own shares than ever before: through "popular capitalism" workers and employers can work together for a common good.

In a binge of Tory handouts to the rich, perhaps the speciality has been prime cuts of nationalised industries, served up to the wealthy handful.

Successive portions of shares in privatised corporations have been dished out at bargain basement prices even some workers could afford.

This — coupled with the additional device of "employee share issues" has helped create the myth of a new "popular capitalism", in which a contented, prosperous body of working people share equally in the fruits of industrial expansion, while a mere handful of ne'er do well scroungers look on in envy.

Of course it is a myth: while huge banks and corporations clean up with record profits, nineteen million working class people live below the poverty line; four million are unemployed — despite the Tories' orchestra of statistical fiddles.

Against this a mere 2.3m comfortable individuals signed up for British Telecom shares, and now that the hullabaloo is over, fewer than 1.5m have held on to these shares.

While a relatively small number of workers have been lured into buying tiny parcels of shares in the firms that employ them, their "voice" in the firm is dwarfed by the financial institutions which continue to decide every aspect of management policy.

No amount of garnish can conceal the bitter reality that were workers consistent in pursuing their interests as shareholders, they would be pressing for measures to make themselves work ever harder or make themselves redundant: at which point they would need to sell their ludicrously tiny quota of shares (which in any case would not provide enough "dividend" to live off) — if they were not to fall foul of Social Security.

It is self-evident that workers who buy a few shares have not become capitalists, any more than workers who buy their own houses become landlords, or those who buy Berni steaks become gourmets. But of course the real capitalists try to kid them along, in order further to exploit their gullibility.

The real problem is not "capitalist" workers or the blandishments and con-tricks purveyed by the ruling class, or even the slick Tory presentation. The problem is in the leadership of the labour movement, who have rejected any kind of class response.

For millions of working class people in miserable low-paid jobs, sweating on production lines, paying sky-high mortgages, or facing the grim reality of life on the dole, capitalism is not popular at all. Socialism could be made popular for them — and for many workers who have until now been taken in by the Tory myth-machine, and never heard a real alternative.

The potential popularity of a "bash the rich" campaign waged with vigour by a Labour leadership pledging real action for the oppressed has never even been tested.

Renationalisation propaganda, targetted at the real profiteers, those who have now carved up the majority of the shares — along with their vast holdings in other industries — could be popular. Dennis Skinner and others prepared to present such policies in a robust, knockabout style to working class audiences can win tremendous support.

If greed and individualism are the weapons cynically used by the Tories to divide and confuse sections of the employed working class, then hostility to class privilege, and class solidarity can be weapons of the workers' movement in fighting back — and attract the best elements of the middle classes, revolted by Thatcherism.

Instead, commitments to renationalisation, and even verbal acceptance to socialism, have been quietly scraped into the bin.

While dreaming of pleasing all of the suppers all of the time, Kinnock fails really to please anyone any of the time. That is neither [illegible]



The family

TORY LIE: Conservatives defend women by protecting freedom and traditional family values. Only in a secure family setting is it possible to give proper care to children, the elderly and the sick. The family is the best guarantee of individual health and happiness for both sexes. Seeking any other way of life only creates unhappiness."

Not all of us live in traditional families.

Old people, children and adults in care, single parents, lesbians and gay men, people living on their own, people living in extended families of various kinds — together these groups now form a majority of the population.

A minority of people live in traditional family settings — mother, father and children.

Of course, many of us have, at one time or another, experienced life in such a family. This experience, however, is often not a happy one. The stress of unemployment, low pay, cuts in benefits, health, housing, education and social services has led to an *increase* in domestic violence, divorce, depression and child abuse.

Mrs. Thatcher's appeal to "family values" is part of a cost-cutting exercise. State expenditure is reduced by throwing an ever greater burden on to women in the home. Mrs Thatcher did not need a nursery — she could afford a nanny. She did not have to make ends meet by taking low-paid, part-time work while trying to keep up with the demands of child care and housework — she married a millionaire!

Government cuts have hit working class women harder than any other section of the population. Employment of married women in Britain is among the highest in Europe, yet two thirds of all children under five have *no* nursery place. Meanwhile, the Tories justify cuts in maternity rights and benefits on the grounds that they deter employers from giving women jobs!

Tory policy *promotes inequality* between women and men within the family. A 1985 EEC directive on parental leave was ignored by the government, which simply denies the realities of "family life" in Britain today.

Although only one in five male workers provides the sole financial support for his family (meaning that women in most families are also at work), a mere 7% of employers allow men to take time off to look after young children.

Even for women in full-time work, equality is a myth. Despite the Equal Pay Act, women's pay has been steadily declining in relation to men's. Overwhelmingly, women work in low-paid, non unionised jobs. Working conditions, job security, health and safety, protection from harassment are poor. Equal rights legislation is cast aside because it *costs too much*.

Restrictions on night work for women are now threatened by employers who argue for "equal rights" for both sexes to work night shifts! Neither government nor employers are prepared to cough up funding for the social and community facilities which alone make it possible for women to enter the workforce on equal terms with men.

The hypocrisy of the Tory defence of "the family" is exposed by their treatment of Black families. Using racist immigration and nationality legislation, as well as police criminalisation, the Tories attack Black families, separating husbands from wives, children from parents.

To reduce inequalities between women and men — which exist *everywhere* in our society — Labour needs a radical programme for women, based on a recognition that care for children, the ill, the elderly is a responsibility to be borne by the *whole* of society.

- Women should have the right to work, with equal pay for work of equal value, and equal treatment in benefit entitlement and taxation. Benefits and protective legislation should be available *equally* to full and part-time workers. Along with the introduction of a *shorter working week and day* (without loss of pay), these steps would undermine the employers' exploitation of women.
- *Positive action* for women in education and training — at all stages of life.
- Recognition of the rights and requirements of those who live *outside* traditional families — lesbians, single parents, and others.
- Equal rights legislation is only meaningful if a wide range of supporting facilities are in place: *free child care for all*, a health service tailored to women's needs, the right to choose whether or not to have children, easy availability of contraception, abortion and maternity care.
- All cuts in the Welfare State made by the Tories must be reversed. Extended facilities for the care of the elderly, the ill, and all those unable to care for themselves must be made available, in full consultation with those who will be using them.
- Racist immigration and nationality laws must be repealed to enable Black families to live together.



PHOTO: David Hoffman

Pensioners

TORY LIE: "We have given the pensioners a record standard of living."

Mrs Thatcher, House of Commons Question Time, February 1987

- **A few weeks later she gave pensioners a measly insulting 40p increase.**
- **This year it was all of 80p.**
- **Most pensioners are still worrying about how to pay off last winter's heating bill. Where's 80p going to go?**

In 1979, Mrs Thatcher went into the election campaign waving a shopping basket, showing how little £1 would buy in 1979 compared with 1974. We challenge her to show us what £1 will buy for pensioners today, after 8 years of Tory rule.

Pensioners who have worked all their lives are entitled to dignity, respect, and a decent standard of living. Labour will:

- **increase pensions by £5 single and £8 for couples, and raise pensions in line with increases in wages and prices;**
- **abolish standing charges on gas, electricity, water and telephones, and end TV licence charges for pensioners;**
- **maintain and extend free transport; spend what is needed to ensure safety on the streets and at home.**

That's Labour's answer to the Tory lie!



PHOTO: Wayne Edginton



PHOTO: Paul Mattson/Frame

Law & order

TORY LIE: Society is under threat from a plague of crime and violence. While Labour make excuses, the Tories make law and order a top priority. Instead of undermining the police, like Labour, the Tories invest in more police and impose stiffer penalties to deter crime.

Under the Tories, crime figures of all kinds have risen dramatically.

If throwing police at crime made it go away the big cities of the United States would be the safest in the world — instead of just the opposite.

Labour is worried about rising crime and will attack its *underlying causes*.

Tory "law and order" is selective — one rule for the rich and another for the poor. Socialists want law and order to meet the needs of the working class and the oppressed — rights and safety for the majority, including women, the elderly, and children.

Crimes like robbery with violence, burglary and heroin peddling — all rising sharply under the Tories — are clearly associated with poverty and its attendant demoralisation. Unless major inroads are made on poverty, and the gulf between the rich and poor is closed, crime of this sort will grow and grow.

In fact, the Tory priority is not those crimes affecting ordinary people. The police clear-up rate in London is only 17%. The Tories are far more interested in what they call "public order" — setting the riot police on pickets defending the right to work and on Black communities from Broadwater Farm to Handsworth. Enthusiastic police protection of Murdoch's union-busting operation at Wapping left many London areas virtually unpoliced.

Communities have the right to defend themselves against police violence. That's why *Briefing* calls for the release of all those convicted of charges arising from the Broadwater Farm uprising.

"Law and order for the workers and the oppressed — but a free hand for the rich and powerful" is the real Tory philosophy. Thatcher refuses to investigate Peter Wright's allegations of treacherous activities in MI5. The few scapegoats in the Guinness takeover scandal leave the vast majority of corrupt City operators unscathed.

The police force is riddled with corrupt and criminal officers. The so-called Independent Police Complaints Authority has shown itself to be toothless — unwilling and unable to enforce the law amongst the law-enforcers.

Property developers, industrial polluters, employers indifferent to workplace and health and safety regulations — these are the real lawless brigands, and they are flourishing under the Tories.

A socialist plan for law and order would make the police accountable to the elected representatives of the communities they serve. It would establish a genuinely independent system to investigate complaints. It would close down the Special Branch and thug-units like Special Patrol Groups.

Recruiting a few Black faces to an essentially racist police force is not enough. Indeed, the British police force is by nature anti-working class, racist, sexist, homophobic. It is set up that way by a state anxious to divide the working class and determined to crush all collective resistance. The police are a major part of the law and order problem — not its solution.

The police force as it exists cannot be reformed — it must be disbanded and replaced by a new type of service, one responsive to the needs of the majority and under their control.



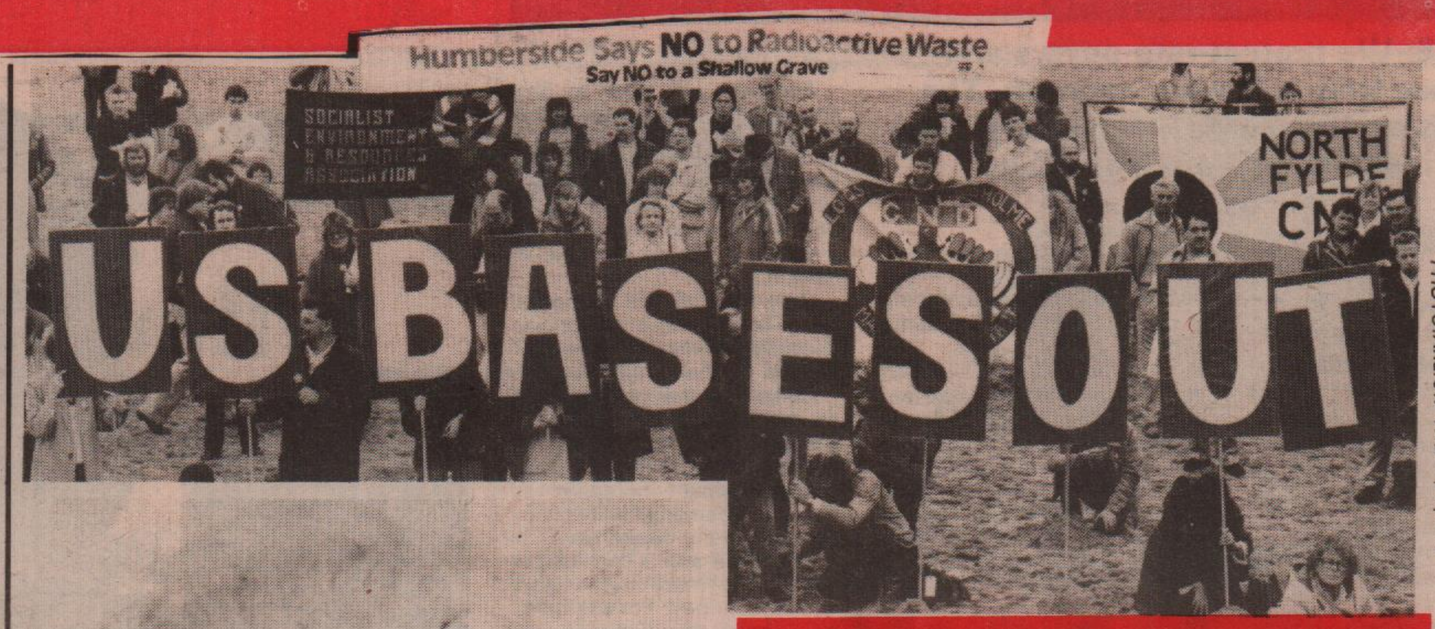


PHOTO: Andrew Wiard (Report)



Disarmament

TORY LIE: The Soviet Union is a threat to Britain's security and independence. We have to negotiate from strength. It was only Mrs. Thatcher's determination to keep nuclear weapons that brought Gorbachev to the negotiating table.

Recent hopeful moves towards detente have come about *in spite of*, not because of, Thatcher's "get tough with the Russians" attitude.

The international peace movement placed disaramament on the agenda in the early eighties and has maintained world-wide pressure on both superpowers. Powerful forces within Soviet society have had far more to do with Gorbachev's initiatives than Thatcher's sabre-rattling.

Recent developments by no means obviate the need for unilateral disarmament by Britain. Indeed, the best way to push the superpowers further along the path of real disarmament would be for Britain and other countries to take the *immediate* step of getting rid of all their own nuclear weapons.

The vast majority of people in Britain would be destroyed in a nuclear conflict, as would much of the rest of the world. Quite simply, nuclear war cannot be won and cannot be "limited" to a single battlefront. The Tories say it hasn't happened yet. Remember, it can and will happen only once.

If the mere presence of nuclear weapons acts as a deterrent to foreign aggressors — as the Tories insist — then why has it been necessary for nuclear stockpiles to be constantly increased and "improved"? If nuclear weapons keep the peace, then why not give them to everyone — to Iran and Iraq?

If nuclear weapons guarantee British "security and independence" why do they make Britain a priority target in any nuclear exchange! Why have they made us ever more subject to US domination, until Britain has been likened to a giant American aircraft carrier?

Finally, nuclear weapons are an integral part of the NATO strategy. NATO is not an association for the defence of freedom and democracy. It has included military and fascist dictatorships among its members, its structures deny members the right to work out their own defence strategy, and its purpose — from its inception after World War II, years *before* the Warsaw Pact — was the protection of American capitalism and its power in Western Europe.

Red menace

TORY LIE: A strong defence is necessary to combat the Red Menace of the Soviet Union.

Unfortunately the mythology of a "threat from the East" is by no means unique to the Cold Warriors of the Tory Party.

Kinnock's Labour leadership and most of the Party's rank and file also tacitly accept the idea of a Kremlin biding its time for the first opportunity to mount a military thrust into Western Europe.

Yet there is no evidence whatever that Moscow's leaders covet Manchester; since the war the Soviet "expansionists" have shown not the slightest ambition to dominate even the other half of Germany.

Despite the opportunities for overthrowing capitalism in the immediate post-war years — when Communist-led resistance movements were within reach of power in France and Italy — Stalin's efforts were focussed upon disarming these forces and restoring capitalist governments.

Even in Eastern Europe, where Soviet armies unaided drove out the Nazis and became the new dominant force, Stalin tried first to re-establish capitalist coalition governments, and only abandoned this policy in response to the capitalist Cold War.

Since then the Kremlin leaderships have consistently shown themselves to be opposed to independent working class struggles, and committed to "peaceful coexistence" based on the capitalist status quo in Western Europe.

Nor have the consequences of the extension of Soviet influence in Eastern Europe encouraged any further military expansion. Moscow's leaders have faced repeated economic, political and military problems in combatting the waves of working class resistance to Stalinist rule and managing the dependent economies of the bureaucratic regimes established since 1945.

Indeed, it is most doubtful that Gorbachev's bureaucracy would give support to any revolutionary struggle which might jeopardise the political status quo outside its "spheres of influence".

The last instance of such support was Khruschev's tactical (and extremely expensive) decision to extend military and economic help to Fidel Castro's Cuban revolution in 1959. But more recently the Kremlin has been far from forthcoming in assisting the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua.

If they will not support such a popular revolution, it seems hardly likely that the conservative bureaucrats in the Kremlin would without provocation push a resolution through a Central Committee meeting for full-scale invasion of Western Europe!

The Tory claim that vast expenditure on nuclear and "conventional" weaponry is necessary to "defend" Britain against a Soviet threat is little more than a threadbare pretext for the anti-Soviet NATO alliance and for the armed forces, which continue to repress the Irish people — while standing in reserve against the British working class.

But cynical warnings against the "threat from the East" also divert from an important threat which would undoubtedly face a Britain which embarked on a programme of socialist reconstruction.

A real workers' government in Britain which set out to smash the existing state machinery, withdrew British troops from overseas, and which gave assistance to liberation struggles would face the same US hostility as did Allende's Chile and Maurice Bishop's Grenada.

Such a workers' government would need defending — and would be worth defending — not against the hypothetical aggression of Gorbachev's Red Army, but against the proven "dirty tricks" and military threats of the USA and Denis Healey's mates in NATO.

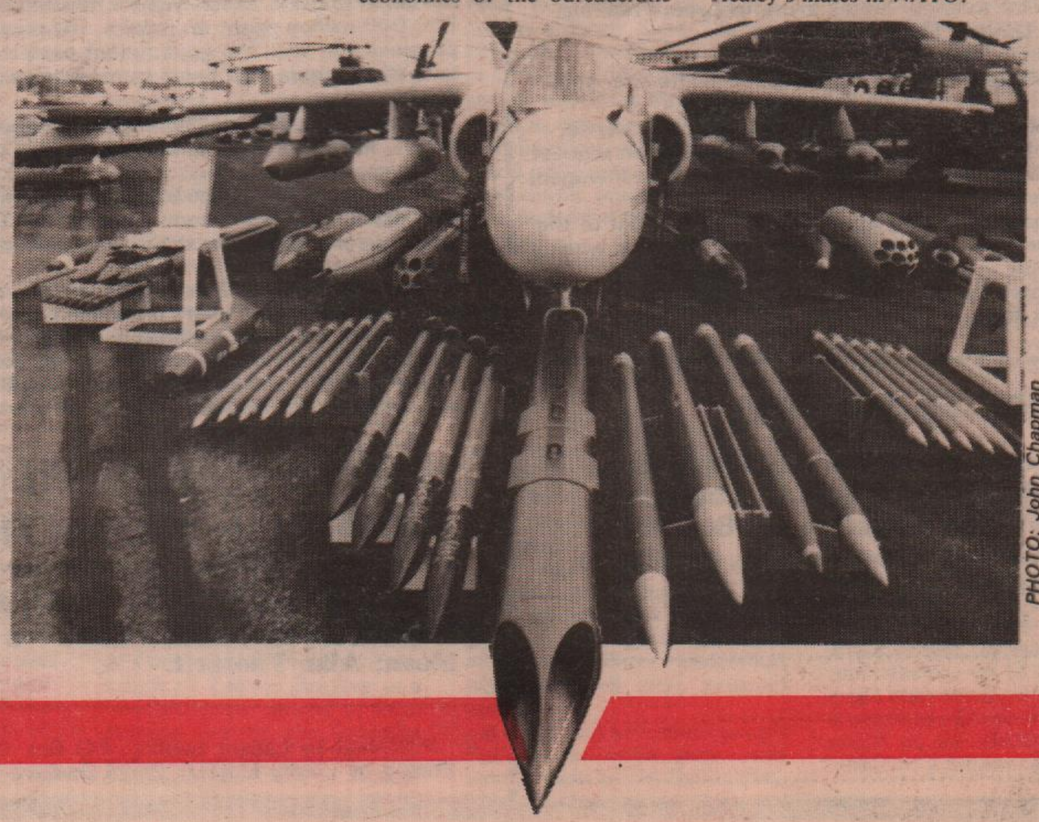


PHOTO: John Chapman

Poll tax

TORY LIE: We protect rate-payers and businesses from left wing councils. The new community charge will be fairer than rates — making everyone contribute towards the services they use.

Thatcher has long been committed to abolishing the rates but has found them difficult to replace.

Rate-capping, withdrawal of grant, abolition of GLC and Metropolitan counties were measures in part designed as substitutes for their outright elimination.

The idea of a *community charge* payable at a fixed rate by each adult over the age of 18 — has come to their rescue. Legislation is already in parliament to introduce the new system in Scotland, and England and Wales will follow if the Tories win the election.

What's the truth behind the Tory lies about Council spending and the rates?

- Council spending has risen by 79.9% since 1979 — but central government spending is up by 99.9% in the same period.
- 19 of the 20 councils which most increased their expenditure for the coming year are *Conservative controlled*.
- A government-funded official study of the relationship between rate increases and job losses concluded there was *no provable link*.
- It is easy to avoid or reduce income tax — but the rates must be paid, and the rich resent this.

The "community charge" is nothing but a **poll tax** — that is, a tax on the right to vote.

For the majority, the amount paid in poll tax would be much higher than the amount currently paid in rates. Inner city areas would be hit hard. Pensioner couples, working single parents, single unemployed will suffer terribly.

Everyone will have to pay the poll tax. Even people on benefit will be expected to pay at least 20% of the tax. For example, an unemployed single person in Camden, London, will have to pay out £154 a year — with no increase in benefit.

Only the rich will be better off. Thatcher and millionaire husband Dennis will save £37 a week on their local tax bill!

Collecting the poll tax will be awkward. An array of snoopers will be hired to oversee it. Under the proposed system, small increases in Council spending will mean big rises in *per capita* tax.

The more adults in a single house, the more that house will have to pay. For example, a three bedroom Victorian terraced house in Haringey, London, pays £630 in rates this year. Under the poll tax, the same house will owe £874 if two adults live in it, £1,311 if three adults live in it, and £1,748 if four adults live in it.

The poll tax is an attack on the poor — and yet another helping hand for the rich.

Left Labour Councils

TORY LIE: Left wing Labour Councils in London are completely incompetent; Marxist councillors constantly interfere in matters which should be left to professional officers; and they have built up such a mountain of debt that they are heading for New York-style bankruptcy.

The Tories have welcomed the Audit Commission report on the management of London's authorities.

Yet the real nature and purpose of this highly political Report is plain to see. As it says on page one:

"If local authorities in Inner London cannot be persuaded to adopt the steps necessary to improve their management performance, it will invite the imposition of new organisational arrangements."

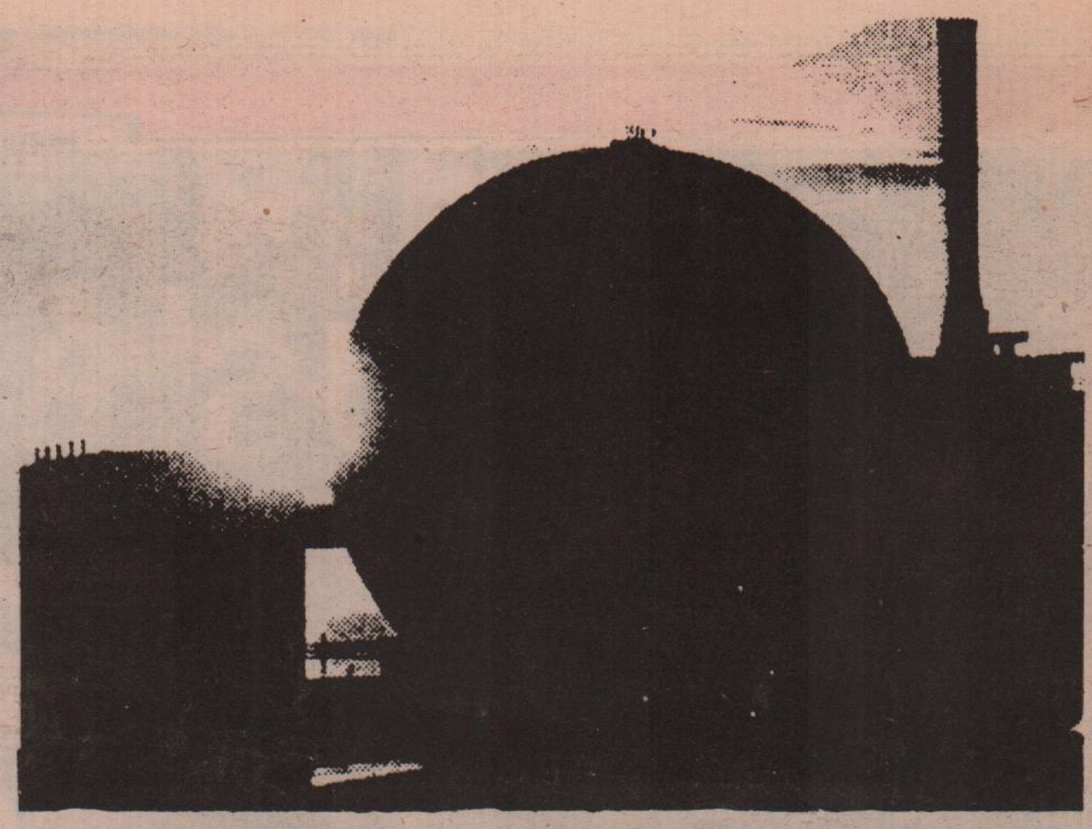
How about that for an "official" rubber stamp for the Tories' plans for further restricting local democracy in a third term of government?

Yet look at the facts about the situation faced by local government in London:

- There is an appalling concentration of poverty, unemployment and squalor in Inner London. There are more unemployed people in London than in the whole of Scotland; there is a scandalous housing shortage; there are 30,000 homeless families; and deep-rooted racial prejudice — particularly in state institutions.
- Many problems faced by London councils simply do not exist elsewhere. 70% of Inner London housing stock consists of high rise blocks, and only in Inner London is there such a high concentration of large estates.
- The London economy provide jobs mainly for people living outside London; driving up property prices and attracting the young unemployed from elsewhere, who are forced into homelessness and greater reliance on state and local services.
- London councils have faced massive losses of government grant; abolition of the GLC has cost around £200 million; and the housing programme has been virtually destroyed by government action.
- Accusations that councillors are interfering in decisions that should be made by officers is absurd. Elected members *should* control their authorities; and equal opportunity policies have been introduced in order to eliminate irrelevant bias.
- Deferred purchase agreements and other "creative accounting" measures have been introduced precisely because government has stolen millions of pounds of grant from the inner cities. Yet the debt to asset ratio of local authorities is much better than that of private enterprise.
- The Audit Commission report is mainly concerned with *efficiency*. It has little to say about *effectiveness*.

Mr John Banham has been quoted as saying, "If councillors can't do it, maybe Mrs Thatcher has a point, and local government has outlived its usefulness."

That is the danger facing us all. Not only do the Tories want to make us pay for the economic crisis in the sphere controlled by central government, they want to remove that thin line of defence represented by local government in their determination to get at the working class. In the meantime, the "independent" Mr Banham has now moved on to be Director General of the CBI.



Nuclear power

TORY LIE: The record of our nuclear industry is absolutely superb.

- **Since 1955, Britain has dumped over 70,000 tonnes of nuclear waste at sea — 95% of the world total.**
- **A 1957 fire in one of the reactors at the Windscale/Sellafield plant led to the escape of considerable quanitities of radioactive material, causing an estimated *250* thyroid cancers in subsequent years.**
- **Over 300 accidents have been reported at Sellafield involving contamination of staff. Compensation money has already been paid to the widows of eight Sellafield workers who died of cancer or leukaemia — and a further 100 cases are now in the pipeline.**
- An accidental discharge of nuclear waste in November 1983 led the government to warn the public to avoid 25 miles of the Cumbrian coast. Sellafield discharges radioactive material into the Irish Sea. Radiation levels are already 10 times normal in parts of this area. Local cancer and leukaemia rates are unusually high.
- Spent nuclear fuel is regularly transported throughout the UK by road and rail. The CEGB was recently forced to withdraw a number of faulty containers.
- The government is pushing ahead with a programme of nuclear expansion. The planned Sizewell B reactor is based on the US Pressurised Water Reactor design — the system which so nearly suffered a "melt down" at Three Mile Island in the USA in 1979. At least *6 more PWRs* are planned.
- On the basis of the CEGB's current plans, by 2050 over 48 obsolete nuclear reactors could be littering the coasts of Britain.
- As there is currently no long-term solution for high level waste, it will be kept in cooling tanks at Sellafield for up to 100 years, in the hope that a safe means of disposal will have been discovered by then.
- All nuclear reactors produce plutonium and can be used to produce weapons grade material. The government has been trading plutonium with the USA for years despite Thatcher's public denials.
- A Cabinet minute of November 1979 explains: "A nuclear programme would have the advantage of removing a substantial portion of electricity production from the dangers of industrial action by coal miners and transport workers."

It's not too late to rebuild the coal industry as part of a nuclear-free *safe energy strategy*, based on coal, conservation, and renewable energy sources (sea, wind and sun).

What's the alternative? A country dotted with obsolete but highly dangerous nuclear reactors and nuclear waste dumps lethal for thousands of years, beaches and coastal areas polluted with radioactive effluent, and a population living in fear of cancer.

(Information: The End of the Nuclear Road, a SERA Information Pack)

Housing

TORY LIE: There is no real national housing problem any more, as the private sector has been building sufficient homes. Councils have shown themselves to be incompetent as managers of housing, so we shall strip them of these powers. We have set tenants free by enabling them to buy their own homes.

Housing is one of the most serious social problems facing Britain; and the Tory record since 1979 is truly appalling.

- **House building has fallen to its lowest level since the 1920s. Capital spending on building homes and on major repairs is down 60% since 1979. *2,000 fewer homes a week* have been started than under Labour.**
- **£19,000 million needs to be spent on council house repairs in England alone. Private housing needs at least £26,000 million spent on repairs. (At present rates of progress and with the government cash available, it would take Birmingham 622 years to modernise all of its pre-war dwellings!)**
- **Nearly 300,000 households are on council house waiting lists — with little hope of being rehoused under the Tory government.**

In what is probably the biggest — yet most neglected — privatisation move yet committed by the Tories, our housing stock is going down the drain — sacrificed to the anarchy of the free market.

In contrast, the TUC estimates that if £30,000 million were spent over five years on housing and infrastructure work, more than half a million new jobs would be created. At present 400,000 construction workers are on the dole.

Let's end the years of Tory waste of our resources, and put construction workers back to to work.

Ireland

Ireland is an election issue

The day the General Election was anounced, the *Irish Post* — "the voice of the Irish community in Britain" — carried an editorial advising Irish people in Britian to vote Labour.

In a clear reference to the Labour Committee on Ireland and people like Ken Livingstone and Clare Short, the *Post* declares "no matter how shifty the Labour leadership may at times appear on the northern Ireland question, we owe it to ourselves to stand on June 11th with those in the Labour Party who stand with us."

So the *Post* is urging support for Labour despite the fact that the Labour Party has an appalling record on Ireland; that Neil Kinnock is as stout a Unionist as could be found — witness his support for the Loughgall killings; that the Labour leadership will do anything to avoid the question of Ireland in this election.

Party members should firstly thank the *Irish Post* for this support — then they should go out and do something to earn that support. Most importantly, this means pressing Labour candidates to take up Ireland as part of their own campaign. Ideally, this would mean supporting British withdrawal from Ireland. But, if not that, then at least to call publicly for those aspects of Party policy which are progressive on Ireland:

- repeal the PTA;
- abolish juryless courts;
- end strip-searching;
- end the use of plastic bullets;
- end supergrass trials.

As well as supporting these policies, Labour candidates and activists should do all they can to disassociate themselves from Neil Kinnock's hailing of the Loughgall killings as "a significant victory over the men of violence". Instead they should point out that, both historically and at the present time, the "men of violence" are the British state and its armed service.

The events at Loughgall prove this, if any more proof were needed. The evidence is that at least four of the Volunteers killed were executed after they were captured by the British Army and the RUC.

Such a "shoot to kill" policy, such a pursuit of a military "solution", has nothing to do with socialism or establishing peace in Ireland.

This is the message which socialists should be taking to people during the election campaign. No one on the doorsteps should be left in any doubt that rank and file activists in the Labour Party are committed to British withdrawal and we will fight on until a Labour government is elected which will do precisely that.

Keep in touch with *Briefing*!

Labour Briefing is a fortnightly paper. We have supporters and sellers in many major towns in Scotland, Wales and England; in most major unions; and in many of the campaigns of the specially oppressed and anti-imperialist campaigns. Want to know more? Write to *Labour Briefing*, PO Box 457, London SW2 5UZ.

Coming Events:

Steering Committee: Saturday, June 20th. (Note change of day).

Briefing A.G.M.: Saturday, July 4th, PCL, Marylebone Rd, London. Admission by supporters' card, available on request to 500 Club Shareholders or for £10 (waged), £3 (unwaged).

500 Club Winner

Perhaps the most deserving of all names to come out of the hat after all the hard work he's put into *Briefing*, this week's winner is No. 30 — Mike Marqusee, Haringey Labour Briefing. To enter the 500 Club, write to *Briefing* for a standing order form.

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Name .....

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The Tories

The Real Conservative Manifesto

The Real Conservative Manifesto, The Labour Party, £1.60.

The idea of producing the Conservatives' "real manifesto" is a good one.

The manifesto, produced in Tory Central Office style, complete with the Tory emblem on the front, outlines the hidden agenda in a matter-of-fact style — with quotes from Cabinet Ministers to make the pamphlet more convincing.

The accusation that the Tories want massive rises

By Bryn Griffiths
Brighton Labour Party

in VAT has already hit home — it put the Tories on the defensive and drove Tebbit into a frenzy!

Much of the material contained in this pamphlet will be of use in preparing election material. In particular, we should make the Tories' plans for privatisation a major election issue. Despite their denials during the mines' strike, the Coservatives are planning to privatise the whole of British Coal, for example. Or even, to put it in Nigel Lawson's own words: "... in the next parliament we will privatise most of what remains."!

The Tories' plans for phasing out local government can be used to go onto the offensive about local democracy — instead of responding to "loony left" slurs. Instead, we can quote "Raving Ridley" stating his approval of American cities, which "contract out every activity — even police and fire services."

Not only does Ridley want to see what little local authority housing he doesn't want sold put out to private management, he also thinks that local authority rents are much too low. Council tenants should be told!

One drawback in the pamphlet comes in the section on "defence", when Labour, instead of attacking Tory commitments to nuclear weapons by outlining Labour's unilateralism, attacks their "low" level of expenditure on conventional weapons!

Nor does the pamphlet answer the racist and anti-gay bigotry being whipped up and smugly used by the Tories; and the attacks on women's rights and living standards are virtually ignored, when Labour could have been promoting its policies successfully.

Still, on most of the areas that it does cover, the pamphlet provides invaluable information for doorstep campaigning, and is far more helpful to Party activists than the pale pink "freedom and fairness" drivel of recent months. Use it!

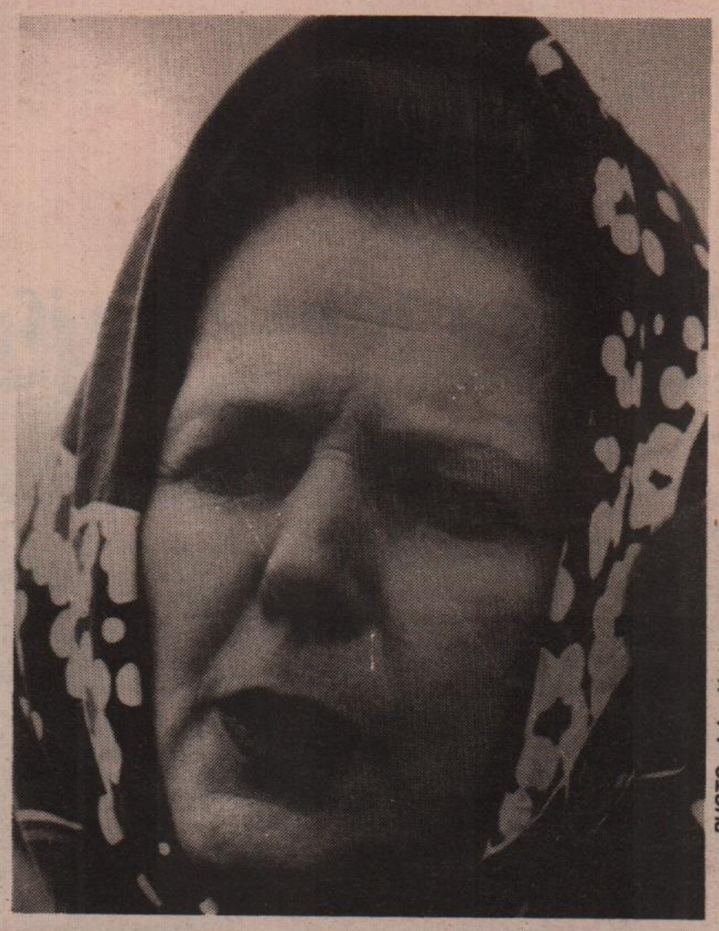


PHOTO: John Harris

The Alliance

Reality behind the Rhetoric

By Mike Marqusee
Haringey Labour Briefing



One of the more durable by-products of the post-'79 rise of the Labor Left was the formation of the Social Democratic Party.

Old-style Labourism had foundered on the rock of Britain's deep economic crisis.

Thatcher's victory had signalled the end of the social consensus which had dominated post-war British politics.

Adamantly pro-NATO, pro-EEC, pro-capitalist Labour politicians — Owen, Jenkins, etc. — saw the writing on the wall. They could no longer fulfill their ambitions within the labour movement. The advance of right wing Toryism opened a political space into which they boldly stepped — with media fanfare aplenty.

All kinds of rotten elements jumped on the bandwagon. Marriage to the surviving rump of the Liberal Party was only a matter of time.

Television offered the Alliance a short-cut to national status. But the real key to its survival and relative success is its special brand of opportunism.

In some areas, notably in parts of the affluent South, it has outstripped Labour to become the Tories' main challenger. Elsewhere, in areas where the Tories could never hope to get a foothold, or had lost what credibility they had, it forms the major opposition to Labour: Liverpool, Tower hamlets, Islington, Southwark...

The Alliance has always defined itself as anti-socialist. Indeed, it would not have come into existence at all had it not been for the advance of socialist ideas and forces within the labour movement.

It was not only that the Labour Party had nothing to offer the high-flying careerists. **It was no longer a safe bet for the bourgeoisie.** Another alternative to the Tories had to be prepared.

Alliance rhetoric has proved distressingly attractive to voters confused by the unpleasant realities of modern Britain. Social and national unity, modernisation, moderation, efficiency... this music is sweet to many precisely because of the breakdown of consensus, the capitalist onslaught and the resistance it has encountered.

The Alliance's veneer of radicalism — new benefit systems, proportional representation, decentralisation, devolution, freedom of information — enables it to maintain an independent base of middle class people hostile to socialism, but disenchanted with the unbridled rule of finance capital unleashed by Thatcher.

Labour must strip away this veneer — not only by exposing it for the double-talk it is, but also by establishing itself — in publicity and in practice — as *the* party of equal rights, civil liberties and radical democratisation.

The Alliance in power in local government has shown itself repeatedly to be anti-working class, anti-trade union, anti-public services, racist, sexist, homophobic, and as often as not simply inept. Labour must **spread this message** far and wide, something it can only do by championing the contrasting record of Left Labour Councils.

Labour must expose the lie behind the Alliance's claim to be a moderating force in a country wracked by social division. The common ground on which the Alliance claims to be able to unite capital and labour does not exist.

Moreover the Alliance's record — notably its bash-the-miners stance in '84-'85 and its applause for Murdoch's Wapping triumph — shows that it is in practice an opponent of trade unionism and a threat to every trade unionist.

The Alliance danger was clearly spelt out in Thatcher's unguarded comment about doing away with socialism and having an American-style two-party system — in which two parties equally dedicated to capitalism compete for votes without challenge from the Left. Not in spite of but because of its duplicity, bogus rhetoric, and sheer opportunism the Alliance can appeal to various layers of the population which the Tories cannot attract.

In a crisis, the Alliance would mobilise these layers against socialism and against the working class. A rapid swing to the right would follow and the rhetoric of "fair but firm, tough but tender" would be replaced by the rhetoric of discipline, authority, and national unity.

Like it or not, we are now in a *three-party contest*. The key to political success in such a situation is not to try to pretend one of the three parties doesn't exist, nor to try to outbid them for the middle gound, but to promote a *distinctive* programme, to appear and be as *different* from the other two as possible — in order to expose how much they really have in common.

The Labour Party Left

Organising the fightback

Fighting the Tories (and the Alliance) armed with a socialist manifesto (like the one printed in this Election Special) would be wonderful.

But, as we all know, the reality is something quite different. Today, the left is smaller, more isolated and more fragmented than it was in 79.

How then should it respond to the election result and its aftermath?

Whatever the outcome, the Left in the movement will have to fight like hell to survive. An outright Tory victory will lead to further attacks on the working class, the trade unions, and civil rights.

A hung parliament managed by some sort of coalition would also, undoubtedly, lead to attacks on living standards and democratic rights. Even if Labour wins a majority of seats, the politics favoured by the leadership would lead, under present economic conditions, to bitter disappointments for the working class and renewed attacks on the oppressed. Whatever happens, we can expect to see new struggles to defend jobs on several fronts.

The present TUC leadership is incapable of defending the working class, even if it wanted to. The sell-outs of the miners, the printers at Warrington and Wapping, Silentnight, and others are proof enough. Despite strong membership support, leaders of teachers and civil service workers also appear unwilling to fight. There is no reason to believe any of this will change after the election.

To strengthen our forces, to support the struggles that lie ahead and improve their chances of success, the Left must work together. More than ever, we need a united, democratic left organisation:

United — because our small numbers must not be divided or dispersed;

Democratic — because nothing permanent can be built that does not stand on the firm foundation of democracy, participation, and accountability;

Left — because without political principles, intransigent opposition to the Tories, the Alliance and the capitulations of Kinnock and Hattersley, we are nothing.

This united democratic left needs to be built across the *whole* labour movement, rallying trade unionists, Party activists, and campaigners in all the struggles of the oppressed.

Some small but useful steps have been taken in the last few years: the formation of the Campaign Group of MPs and the organisation of some Campaign Groups in the constituencies, the publication of *Campaign Group News*, the launch of *Labour Briefing* as a fortnightly, the spread of local *Briefing* Groups, the founding first of Labour Left Co-ordination and then of Labour Left Liaison.

Important as these initiatives are, we should not kid ourselves that *any* of them are adequate to the struggle ahead.

The Campaign Group did little in support of Sharon Atkin; Labour Left Liaison, although providing necessary co-ordination between different groups within the Party, cannot claim to organise the left in the constituencies. Crucially, trade union militants still have no cross-union organisational link with each other or Labour Party activists.

For a United Democratic Left

We need a new organisation of the left — an organisation which, while rooted in the Labour Party, can reach across the whole of the labour movement.

- It will welcome into its ranks those who find themselves outside the Party because of the witch-hunt, already underway with recent attacks on Black Sections;
- It will fight with trade unionists struggling against attacks on jobs and living standards — and against the trade union and Party leaderships when they sell these struggles out;
- It will join with Black people fighting the racist state, with women fighting for their rights, with lesbians and gay men fighting in defence of their own sexuality;
- It will develop socialist economic policies that can really bring about an irreversible shift in wealth and power in favour of the working class;
- It will fight for disarmament, against imperialism, for the right of self-determination for all nations, and develop policies to meet the international crises of debt, poverty, and oppression.

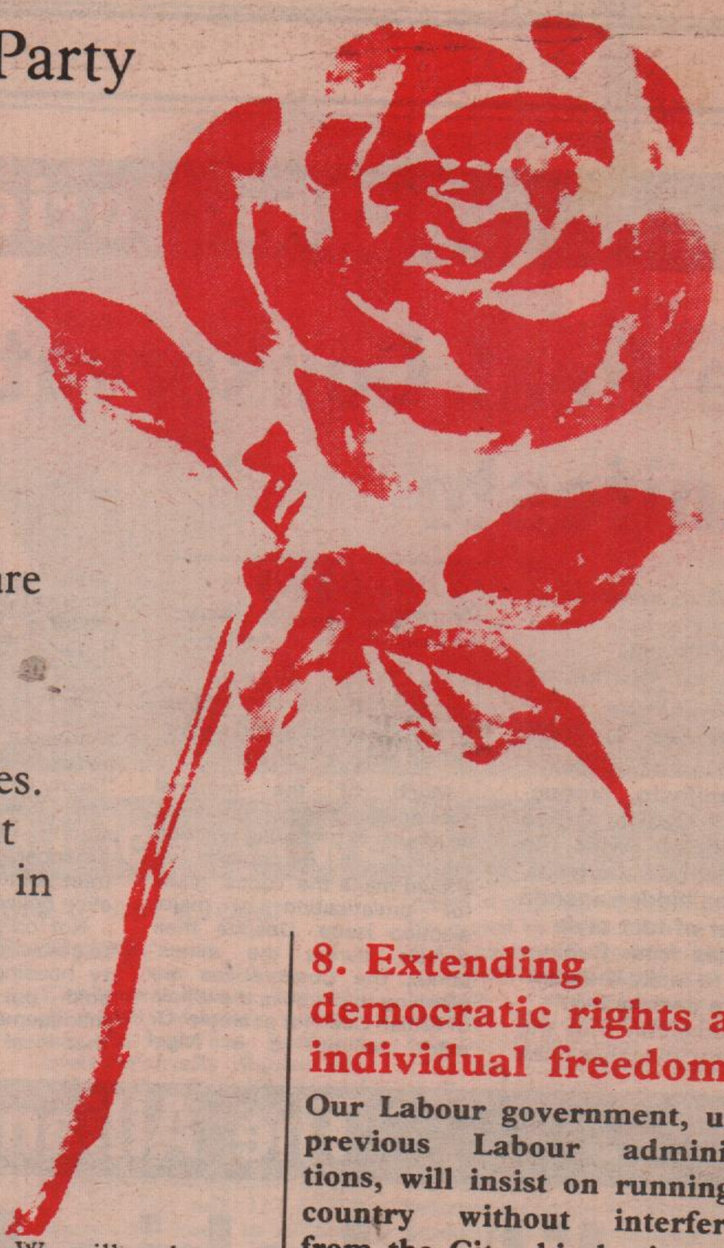
No one should doubt that organising such a united, democratic left will lead to conflict and confrontation with the trade union and Labour Party leaderships. They would rather witch-hunt, manipulate, split, and ultimately destroy the movement than see it taken over by the Left.

That's why we need to build the strongest possible organisation. If the Left that was molded in the battles of the last decade — the fight for democracy in the Labour Party, the militancy of the miners' strike, the struggles of women, Black people, lesbians and gays, and others — is to survive, we must begin the work of building a new organisation whatever the result of the election. And it won't be a minute too soon.

Briefing to win

A guide to Labour Party policies

NOT YET ENDORSED BY NEC



Wouldn't it be nice if...

Briefing will campaign for a Labour victory and a vote for Labour in every constituency. But Labour's manifesto and campaign priorities are a major obstacle to success. How can you inspire popular enthusiasm for redirecting money spent on Trident towards... other bombs, submarines, tanks and warplanes? How much better it would be if Labour stood for the same class against class approach as the Tories. Here *Briefing* puts forward a programme on which Labour could fight and win the election. Wouldn't it be nice if this programme appeared in the Labour Party election leaflet that dropped through every letterbox...?

1. Labour will side with the working class

Unlike previous Labour governments, we come to office pledged to confront rather than collaborate with the bosses, the banks and multinationals.

We will side on every issue with the workers, draw strength from, encourage and support their struggles against those who exploit them.

Only on the strength of an active, organised, confident working class mobilised in the fight for jobs, living standards and democratic rights can the root and branch transformation of society be carried through.

For this reason we will repeal every clause of Tory anti-union legislation, their "public order" laws, and all other measures blocking the power of the unions.

We will provide justice for the victimised miners: an amnesty for those fined and imprisoned, and immediate release for those still in jail, and full reinstatement of all the sacked miners.

2. We need radical socialist policies

After 8 years of Tory rule, Britain is "crying out for change". We need a strong Labour government which will stand up to the rich and get rid of unemployment, inequality and poverty. That's why Labour will have no truck with coalitions or deals with other parties. We seek a popular majority for radical socialist policies. A Labour government will legislate and mobilise to transform society in the interests of the working class and oppressed majority, and against the rich and powerful minority. Our programme represents the first steps towards a break with capitalism.

3. Socialism is international

Labour will break with Britain's historical role of exploiting and plundering other countries. The working class in this country has more in common with the international labour movement than our own ruling class. We will therefore withdraw all British troops from overseas — Ireland, Falklands, Cyprus, Germany, and so on.

We will pull out of the European capitalists' trade cartel — the EEC. Instead we will strengthen trade links with "Third World' developing countries and with Comecon. We will support liberation movements fighting against oppression throughout the world — in South Africa, Ireland, the Middle East, Solidarnosc in Poland, and El Salvador. Labour will deepen the fight against racism by repealing all immigration and nationality laws and opening our doors to refugees from oppression overseas.

4. Jobs and Welfare — not Nukes and Warfare!

Labour will strive to end nuclear and militaristic madness. We will unilaterally get rid of all nuclear weapons from Britain and rapidly phase out nuclear energy. We will withdraw from the imperialist NATO Alliance and remove all US bases from Britain. British troops are a barrier to a united socialist Ireland. We will immediately pull British troops out of Ireland so that Irish people can determine their own future.

Labour will slash so-called "conventional" defence expenditure and redirect the vast human and financial resources towards creating useful jobs and greater welfare spending.

5. Bring wealth and resources under popular control

The resources to fund our programme of reforms exist — not only in the superprofits of the City and big business but also in the wealth we will unleash by putting an end to the waste, unemployment and inefficiency of an unplanned capitalist economy.

Labour will take over the banks and finance houses and the key centres of industry. We will make them democratically accountable to their own workers and consumers. We will introduce punitive wealth taxes and exchange controls to stop profits being siphoned off abroad. Above all, we will establish a national plan of production to direct resources where they are needed, end unemployment and allow the economy to flourish as the condition of all our reforms.

6. Getting the country back to work

Labour will get rid of unemployment and create millions of new jobs. We will cut the working day and week with no loss of pay and reduce the retirement age. We will put millions to work on a programme of building new homes, hospitals, schools, nurseries and leisure facilities, and in staffing them when completed.

Labour will support all workers fighting redundancy. We will introduce positive action programmes to ensure that women, youth and Black people benefit fully from our job creation programme.

7. Putting an end to poverty

Labour will not allow working people to shoulder the cost of the economic crisis. We will link increased pay and benefits to inflation, giving automatic rises to keep pace with prices. We will eradicate low pay, especially in the public services such as education, local government and the health and civil services, and introduce a statutory minimum wage of £150 per week. We will raise pensions to 60% of the average wage and raise unemployment benefit, child benefit and all other benefits. Labour will abolish VAT, raise the initial income tax threshold, and tax the rich. We will give young people on training schemes a proper wage and full union rights, and raise student grants.

8. Extending democratic rights and individual freedom

Our Labour government, unlike previous Labour administrations, will insist on running the country without interference from the City, big business, the international banks or other unelected and unaccountable institutions.

We believe that those who elect the Labour Party into office with a majority of seats in Parliament expect us to *govern*, implementing our mandate in full. We will carry out our radical programme against any opposition or obstacles the rich may place in our path. We will therefore end unelected power by abolishing the Lords, the Civil List, the Monarchy, MI5, MI6, and the battery of undemocratic laws that exist to protect them. We will make the police, the media, and the judiciary democratically accountable to the working class and the community. Labour will extend individual and collective freedoms through a Bill of Rights, a freedom of Information Act and the repeal of all anti-union laws.

We will also devolve power to Scotland and Wales, re-establish the GLC and Metropolitan Authorities and provide adequate finances to restore local government democracy.

9. Supporting Women, Black People and Lesbians and Gays.

Labour will repeal all laws which discriminate against women, Black people and lesbians and gays. We will support forms of self-organisation and legislate for positive rights for the oppressed — the rights of women to work and to decide whether to have children, the rights of Black people to be free from racist harassment and discrimination, the rights of lesbians and gays to determine their own sexuality. Labour will encourage all forms of education and training which promote positive representation of women, Black people and lesbians and gays as part of its commitment to greater social equality.