

Socialists for Labour

**Repeal the anti-union
laws!
Rebuild the NHS!
Poll tax amnesty now!
No deals with the
Liberals!**

VOTE

LABOUR

IN EVERY CONSTITUENCY!

THE GENERAL ELECTION gives us the opportunity to get rid of the Tories after 13 years of rising unemployment, soaring homelessness, and worsening living standards. They have promised us more of the same if they are re-elected - more privatisation, such as British Rail and Royal Mail, more anti-union laws, more attacks on the most defenceless - such a single parent families, and refugees.

And this is only what they have warned us about!

We have to say no to the Tories, and we have to turn out the largest possible vote against them.

But that vote needs to be a Labour vote. Not because Labour has made a good job of leading the opposition to the Tories over the years - it hasn't; it has backtracked at every opportunity - but because Labour is the only party in the election which is supposed to represent the interests of working people against the Tories' class, the bosses.

The Scottish and Welsh

nationalists and the Liberal Democrats all attempt to tie the working class to a common interest with the bosses, however radical some of their policies may seem.

The Tories have spent 13 years showing that Britain is a country fundamentally divided by class. They have acted in the interests of their class, however much they have conned some sections of the working class into backing them. We need a government which acts for our class in the same way.

We must fight to help Labour beat the Tories, and we must fight to transform the labour movement. That means voting for the Labour Party - the party set up by our unions to defend our interests. It means voting Labour in every constituency. And it means fighting and organising for the Labour Party to adopt policies reflecting the interests of our class, not watered-down Tory ones.

It means organising in the labour movement to fight back against a Labour government when it attacks the working class.



Sorry! We've spent all this year's budget. Or: we've cut back on treating local patients, because out-of-area patients are more profitable. Or: your GP is not a "fund-holder", and fund-holders get priority. Or: we've stopped doing that treatment altogether - varicose vein surgery, or abortions - because it doesn't pay. Those are the answers patients are getting from hospitals under the Tories' new "internal market" for the Health Service. Labour has rightly promised to abolish the internal market. It is still fighting shy of any commitment to make good the accumulated under-funding of the NHS since 1976. The Labour Party and the trade unions should insist on the cuts being restored. Otherwise the NHS will continue to crumble. Photo: John Smith/Profile

Fight for socialist policies!



The Tories have launched one attack after another on lesbian and gay rights. Yet Labour's leaders have tried to wriggle out of Party policy commitments to legislate complete equality. A Labour vote must be coupled with a fight to hold them to those commitments. Photo: Peter Walsh/Profile.

Fight for jobs!

UNEMPLOYMENT HAS BEEN rising since March 1990. It is now 2.5 million on the much-fiddled official figures. On the basis of calculation used before the Tories took office in 1979, the total would be 3.6 million.

The consensus of some 23 economic forecasters in universities, think-tanks, and banks, is that unemployment will continue to rise in 1992, averaging 2.7 million (official); or 3.8 million (real) over the year.

Manufacturing output fell 4.5% in 1991; fixed investment (buildings, machinery, and so on) fell 11.5 per cent, and the experts expect it to fall further this year.

The human cost was put into figures by research in the mid-1980s. For every 100,000 people who lose their jobs, deaths increase by 5,000, mental hospital admissions by 6,000, and prison intake by 1,900. A separate survey found that workers made redundant and their families had to visit hospital or a doctor 20% more often after they lost their jobs. Do you wonder that there is crime, violence, and despair on the streets of Tory Britain?

Yet those who have jobs in Britain work longer hours than anywhere else in Western Europe. Many of them are desperately overworked; Britain is now the only country in the EC with no law to limit working hours. As Karl Marx put it in *Capital*, "The condemnation of one part of the working class to enforced idleness by the overwork of the other part, and the converse, becomes a means of enriching the individual capitalists".

The standard work week should be reduced by law to 35 hours. And, beyond that, millions of jobs urgently need doing.

● New houses need to be built, old houses and flats need repair. Tens of thousands are homeless on the streets, hundreds of thousands are crammed into shoddy accommodation. Yet only

35,000 homes are being built for rent by councils and housing associations in 1991-2.

● Only 2 per cent of Britain's children under three have places in publicly-funded nurseries, compared to 44% in Denmark

● In the Health Service, the number of nurses has decreased - while the number of managers has risen 1800%! Ancillary jobs have been privatised and cut back. Now the National Childbirth Trust officially advises pregnant women to take cleaning materials to hospital with them so that they can clean the toilets and bathrooms themselves, to avoid infection. The Whittington Hospital in North London plans to stop giving patients an evening meal, providing only soup instead.

● Schools and colleges need repairs for their buildings, teachers for their classes. Libraries need more books - some local authorities have stopped buying any new books - and longer opening hours.

● More buses and trains, and more workers, are needed for public transport.

● Despite all the Tories' claims, their regime has produced no boom in new, high-tech industry. On the contrary: the British share of world exports in information technology dropped from 9% in 1970 to 4% in 1984. Britain now consistently imports more manufactured goods than it exports.

THE JOBS THAT need workers should be done by the workers who need jobs! To put together workers with jobs, just two things are needed:

● A programme of training and re-training at trade union rates of pay.

● Democratic public control of the "commanding heights" of industry and credit, which allows strategic planning of major investments in housing, childcare, health, education, transport, new technologies, and so on.

Central to that democratic

planning should be a conversion programme for the factories and skilled workers working on military projects which should now be cut back. That military production is a very large part of such skilled, high-tech manufacturing as Britain still has. If the factories are simply scrapped, and the skilled workers sent off to seek jobs in Disneyland, McDonalds, or Chessington Zoo, then it will send this country spiralling down further towards the status of an offshore European site for minor low-wage production and rentier speculation.

THE TORIES SAY that nationalisation and public control of industry and credit are shown to be outdated and inefficient by the economic failure of Eastern Europe. That is rubbish.

● The old system in Eastern Europe had "planning" not by democratic debate and decision but by bureaucratic diktat. Because it was a bureaucratic top-down system, it was a system of lies, corruption, inertia, alienation, and petty empire-building. No wonder it was inefficient.

● It was also greatly over-centralised. No working-class socialist, whether in Britain or in Eastern Europe, proposes such ultra-centralisation.

At present major strategic investment decisions are made partly by the flows and whirls of the City's "casino economy", and partly by push-and-pull within cabals of top industrialists, bankers, civil servants, and politicians. It is a crazy system - and one which is well on track to destroy the Earth's ecology.

We want to replace that crazy system by accountable, democratic, environmentally-conscious planning. Millions of smaller economic decisions would still be made through the market or by local democracy.

● The ruling Corporation of the City of London, no socialists they, are now protesting bitterly

against any further "deregulation" or privatisation of London buses, because, they say, it will lead to worse public transport delays. The Thatcher/Reagan craze for deregulation and privatisation has produced not efficiency but chaos.

The selling-off of state enterprises has brought gains to their bosses, who have voted themselves huge pay rises, and to the middle-class people who bought shares cut-price. It has brought no gains to the workers; and the sold-off enterprises have shown smaller improvements in productivity than those industries which remain in public ownership!

THE TORIES ALSO say that we can't afford even small improvements in public services, such as official Labour proposes. They will bring tax increases and trigger price inflation.

This is a lie, too.

● Despite all their cuts in public services, the Tories have increased taxes for most people. They have reduced income tax - a little for most people, a lot for the rich - but increased taxes, like VAT and poll tax, which hit hardest at the poor.

● A lot of money could be found for public services and for training and education without any tax rise at all, just by cutting other parts of state spending - military, police, and so on. (Money would be saved on unemployment benefit and social security, too, by giving the unemployed decent jobs). The Trident programme costs about as much as 500 new hospitals. What the Tories spent on the Falklands war and its follow-up was enough to clear up all outstanding repairs and maintenance on all the hospitals in Britain.

● Taxes should be taken from the rich! Today the effective tax rate for the well-off is often lower than for the poor. The low-paid can lose over 90p of

each extra pound in wages, through income tax (25p), National Insurance (9p), loss of housing benefit or Family Credit (up to 46p), and loss of other benefits. The well-off lose only 25p or 40p in income tax (they are exempt from National Insurance!), and maybe not even that if they have skilled tax accountants.

Labour's official policy of making the well-off pay National Insurance, and raising the top income tax rate to 50%, should be only a start.

WOULDN'T INCREASED SPENDING and increased employment pull in more imports and worsen Britain's balance of payments crisis? Wouldn't a Labour Government policy of vigorous state intervention, favouring the working class, trigger a "flight of capital" abroad?

Probably they would. Probably, too, the German and Swedish capitalists who are now telling their workers that they are the best-paid, and the best-provided with public services, in Europe, so they must accept austerity or see capital go elsewhere, can put some force behind their threats too. As long as working-class movements limit themselves to national arenas, and capital develops international strategies, the powers-that-be can always make such threats.

Sometimes they are bluffing. If "too much" public services bring economic ruin, why should "too much" mean more than the miserable British level, rather than the better French, German, or Scandinavian level?

And when they are not bluffing, the answer must be for working-class movements to link up internationally, with international demands and campaigns, so that one country's workers cannot be played off against another's. A campaign to level up workers' rights and conditions across Europe, and to win a 35 hour week across the continent, would be a start.

about in every constituency ● Vote Labour in every constituency ● Vote Labour

Why women should vote Labour

WORKING WOMEN'S CONDITIONS and rights have worsened drastically under the Tories.

Women still earn only 68% of men's wages; 80% of Britain's part-time workers - the vast majority of them women - earn less than the EC "decency threshold" of £3.25 per hour.

Basic rights such as holiday and maternity leave and pay are denied to part-timers' nor are these workers considered for training or promotion. Indeed, the vast majority of women full-time workers are passed over for training or promotion.

Since 1979 the Tories have abolished the universal maternity grant, making it a means-tested benefit. Compare this to Luxembourg, which awards a £735 maternity grant to all women. The Tories have also tightened the rules governing eligibility for maternity leave - many women now face the sack if they leave to have a baby, and rely solely on benefits of £40 a week.

Britain's provision of publicly-funded childcare is the worst in Europe - only 2% of under-3s have a place in publicly-funded nurseries, compared to 44% in Denmark, for example. Nor do 3-5 year olds fare much better: places are available for only 54% of these children, and only 1% of those can be cared for for the entire working day.

The Tories have blocked EC directives which would have benefited working women, such as full-time rights for part-time workers, paternity and family leave; childcare provision.

The record of the last 13 years has been one of discrimination and attacks on women's lives.

Labour offers more hope for working women: their pledge to introduce a minimum wage at 50% of median male earnings (£3.40

an hour) is a welcome step to bring more workers, women particularly, out of the poverty trap. But we want that raised as soon as possible - and definitely within the lifetime of one Labour government - to two thirds the average male wage.

The proposals to offer publicly-funded childcare for all 3-5 year olds who need it will again give a boost to women, enabling them to play a more equal role in

society. We must hold Labour to this pledge once in government, and fight any attempts to backtrack on this.

Labour also promises to implement EC directives on paternity leave, parental and family leave, and equity for part-time workers. But this should be only the start of a campaign to increase rights and benefits not just for women workers, but for *all* workers; the minimum from which to build.

Poll tax amnesty now!



Millions of non-payers wrecked the poll tax and forced the Tories to agree to scrap it. But the poll tax is still in force. Non-payers are still being dragged into court, jailed, harassed by bailiffs, and forced to pay deductions from their wages or benefits. The Tories plan to replace it with a "council tax" which keeps many of the evil features of the poll tax. A Labour Government must be pressed to abolish the poll tax straight away and declare an amnesty for non-payers and poll-tax prisoners. Photo: John Harris

Stamp out racism!

THE TORIES ARE resorting to racism in their attempt to win the general election. By trying to convince workers that black people pose a threat to their jobs and right to housing, they hope to stop workers realising that the real culprits for rising unemployment and homelessness are the Tories themselves, and their friends in big business.

The Tories don't care about the colour of their workforce - it was Enoch Powell who, as a Tory minister, appealed for West Indians to come and work in the hospitals and on the buses in the 1950s. But they will use racism to turn workers against each other whenever they can. They hope a working class divided by racism cannot unite against the real enemy - capitalism.

Unemployment, including large-scale unemployment - existed long before there were large numbers of black people in this country. It is not black people who cause unemployment, or a lack of decent housing, but a system which puts profits before people.

The reality is that black people are *more* likely to suffer from the recession: while they constitute 4.4% of Britain's 57 million population, unemployment in the black community is 14% compared to 9% for whites, with the worst level - 25% among Pakistani or Bangladeshi people, and 16% among West Indians. Among young people (aged 16 to 24) the unemployment rate is nearly twice as high among ethnic minorities - at 21% - as among whites - 12%.

Black people are also discriminated against when it comes to housing: they are more likely to spend longer periods in bed and breakfast accommodation than white families, and be housed in the most run-down estates. Of the young homeless sleeping rough,

71% of them are black.

Police harassment is endemic in the black community: one in five black youth were stopped by police last year, and, by the age of 21, one in 10 black youth have been to prison. Since 1980, 61 black people have died in custody or due to police actions - no-one has ever been charged.

The Tories' latest dose of racism is the Asylum Bill, under which all those fleeing persecution and seeking asylum will be fingerprinted; appeals against refusal of asylum have to be lodged within 48 hours; in some circumstances there will be no appeal rights: in other words, the Asylum Bill will cut basic civil liberties and give the state more power.

In this election we can expect more comments along the lines of Mrs Thatcher's infamous 1978 speech when she warned of Britain being "swamped by alien cultures" if immigration was not halted.

Labour should confront such racism head on and confront it - not capitulate as Roy Hattersley did over the Asylum Bill, promising Labour's support. Labour's own record on immigration is shameful: in 1968 the Labour government introduced the Commonwealth Immigration Act specifically to deny entry to Kenyan Asians (who were British citizens) who were fleeing persecution.

The 1976 Labour conference, however, voted to repeal the 1968 and 1971 Immigration Acts - and that is still official policy. We must hold the Labour leaders to this, and demand they repeal *all* immigration laws when in office.

Black people are not "the problem" - policies which put profit before people *are*. Labour must introduce measures which offer jobs, housing and welfare services to all people - black and white.

Mobilise against the fascists!

THE THREAT OF fascism is growing across Europe. France's Front National, led by Jean Marie Le Pen, claims support from one in five voters. Le Pen has described the Holocaust as a "detail" of the Second World War.

It is estimated that there are 70,000 fascists in Germany; the neo-fascist Austrian Freedom Party has trebled its vote to 18% in recent local elections; and in Sweden, the recently formed New Democracy Party took 7% of the vote with a programme of anti-immigration policies.

The ex-Stalinist states are proving a breeding ground for fascism, as the people disillusioned with so-called "socialism" look to fascism to provide answers for rising prices and joblessness that the capitalists are

bringing in their wake.

In Britain, too, the far-right are growing, encouraged not only by the rise in European fascism, but also by the Tories' racism.

The British National Party and the National Front at present focus their campaigns against black people and Jews - firebombing their homes, attacking them in the street and desecrating cemeteries.

But they will, when they think the time is right, turn their attacks against the labour movement - as in Germany in the 1930s.

If the labour movement doesn't defend black and Jewish people now, it will be all the weaker when it comes to defending itself. The trade unions and Labour Party need to mobilise against fascism wherever and whenever it raises its head.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

- Labour must govern alone - no to coalitions or pacts with our class enemies; if Labour is the largest party after the election it should put forward its programme and go to the voters on it if the other parties vote it down.
- Decent jobs for all; cut the working week with no loss of pay; provide training and retraining at union rates of pay; no to pay restraint; a national minimum wage.
- Free trade unions: a workers' charter guaranteeing the right to organise, to strike, to picket and to take solidarity action; repeal of all the Tories' anti-union laws.
- Decent public services: return privatised industries and services to the public sector; restoration of all cuts in the NHS, Education, Housing, Social Services and Welfare Benefits; publicly-funded nursery provision for every parent.

- Immediate scrapping of the Poll Tax; restoration of local democracy and the financial base of local government; an amnesty for Poll Tax non-payers and Poll Tax prisoners.
- For democracy throughout society; abolition of the House of Lords and the monarchy; freedom of information; public control of the police; end censorship.
- Recognition of the right to self-determination of Scotland and Wales.
- For women's right to choose whether to have children or not; equal pay for work of equal value; full-time rights for part-time workers.
- Complete equality for lesbians and gay men and the abolition of crimes without victims; repeal of Section 28; for the right of homosexual couples to adopt children; the right of lesbians to

- have access to AID; equalise the age of consent.
- Repeal all immigration controls.
- Support the right of black self-organisation.
- Repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act; an end to rule by repression; support moves to British withdrawal and a political settlement in Ireland based on self-determination.
- Immediate withdrawal of all Western armed forces from the Middle East; self-determination for all peoples of the Middle East including the Kurds and Palestinians; aid from the Western powers to restore civilian life in the areas devastated by the Gulf War.
- For unilateral nuclear disarmament and withdrawal from NATO; implement workers' plans for conversion of the military economy to useful civilian purposes and for public works.

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Free our unions!

ARE YOU GETTING a little bit fed up with hearing about the anti-union laws? After all, it's nearly twelve years since the Tories' legislation offensive began. John Major isn't fed up. If he wins the coming general election he plans yet another Employment Act. This would be the seventh since 1980. Amongst other things, it will make collective agreements legally enforceable, introduce statutory periods of notice before strikes, outlaw the Bridlington Agreement, and make it difficult for unions to maintain the check-off system by which union dues are deducted at source.

If some in our movement are giving up on the laws the Tories certainly aren't. If you are tired hearing about the legislation, just remember what it means, and how appalling it really is.

SINCE 1980

- Rights to union recognition have been completely abolished.

- All forms of 100% trade union membership agreements have been legally outlawed.

- All forms of industrial action have been undermined by the rights given to employers to sack all or any of those taking strike action.

- All forms of secondary action and solidarity action, even by those working for customers and suppliers of firms in dispute, have been declared unlawful.

- All unofficial strikes have been banned, and it is now unlawful to organise any kind of industrial action in support of those sacked for participation in such action.

- The detailed requirements for ballots before industrial action have been tightened and tightened. The judges have been able to rule strike after strike unlawful because of defective wording on the ballot paper, and in cases such as that involving the seafarers in 1988, stop the NUS from even holding a ballot!

- Unions have been forced to hold ballots before they can spend a penny on political purposes. Meanwhile,



Tens of thousands are homeless on the streets, hundreds of thousands are crammed into shoddy temporary accommodation. Yet the Tories have systematically blocked councils from building new houses and flats, and forced them to sell off the best of their stock. Just as the Tories see unemployment as a "price worth paying" to reduce inflation, so for them mass homelessness is a "price worth paying" to revive the private landlord! The labour movement should fight for a Labour Government to launch a crash programme of house building and renovation.

companies have continued to donate millions to the Tories without even a shareholders' meeting.

The Tories agree they have weakened union rights. But they claim they have done this in order to increase the rights of the individual. If you are going to tell a lie, they believe make it a big one!

Unions governed by draconian and unjust laws like these are not free trade unions. These laws are worse, far worse, than those which apply in any other EC country, in the societies of Eastern Europe or in the USSR. As early as 1983 it was possible to point out that the industrial action which Mrs Thatcher was so enthusiastic about in Poland would have been illegal had it occurred in Britain. And the same, of course, is true of recent strikes in the USSR.

These laws work. They work to weaken unions. They work to cut wages. They work to instil fear into workers. They were to increase profits. They

must be opposed - now.

But we cannot ignore the difficulties involved, so vile are these laws, so far have they gone. The employers are able to get an injunction against almost any form of industrial action. Whilst resistance must be mounted, it can ultimately attract sequestration—the state takeover of the assets of the union involved.

While we must urge resistance to the degree it is possible in every situation where we are confronted by the laws, the permanent answer can only be achieved by a combative labour movement demanding that a Labour Government repeals these laws hook, line and sinker.

Labour went into the 1987 election on a platform of repeal of the Tory legislation. Since then it has been backtracking all the way. The present position developed by the leadership of the Labour Party and endorsed by the TUC would mean:

- Solidarity action would

continue to be unlawful.

- Unlimited fines would still be imposed on unions by the judges if they refused to accept injunctions. If the fines were ignored total sequestration of a union's assets could take place.

- The Taff Vale decision, making unions financially responsible for the actions of officials, consigned to the dustbin of history in 1906 and reintroduced by Tebbit in 1982, the object of class hatred for six generations, would continue to be.

- Detailed requirements for balloting compromising the right of union members to make their own rules, would continue.

- Individuals would have a right not to belong to a trade union, to undermine bargaining strength and benefit gratis from the endeavours of their brothers and sisters.

- Restrictions on picketing would continue.

Labour's programme is simply not good enough. There is no room for fudging if we want a clear legal platform on which to base a new powerful socialist trade union movement. We do not need Tony Blair's blinkers: we need a campaign from the rank and file for a better policy which should include such fundamental rights as:

- (a) The right to belong to a trade union for all employees including those employed at GCHQ, the police, and the armed services.

- (b) Legally enforceable rights for unions to gain access to workplaces to organise, for workers to join unions, and for unions to gain recognition.

- (c) A legally recognised right to strike; to picket effectively and in whatever number is chosen, and to take other forms of industrial action.

- (d) The right to strike for all trade unionists, including secondary or solidarity action, without fear of dismissal, fines or sequestration of union

assets.

- (e) The right for unions to determine their own constitutions and rule books in accordance with their own democratic procedures, free from any interference by the state.

- (f) The right of trade unions to take political action and collect a political levy.

- (g) The right to job security.

- (h) The right to stop work whenever health and safety are threatened.

- (i) The right to employment free from discrimination on grounds of gender, race, age, religion, sexual orientation, disability or political persuasion.

- (j) The rights of workers and their unions to be fully consulted and informed by employers on all decisions relating to working conditions, jobs prospects, strategic investments, mergers and takeovers, and to have the right to veto such decisions.

- (k) Full-time rights for part-time workers; rights for short-term contract workers.

- (l) Rights for homeworkers in employment protection legislation, and financial sanctions on those who illegally exploit them.

Any such positive rights for trade unions must go hand in hand with reform of those who would "interpret" it - the judges.

Judges and magistrates should be chosen by democratic processes.

Positive discrimination should provide for more women and the ethnic minorities. Only if we change the administration of the law, as well as the form and content, will we secure a lasting and just settlement for trade unions and, more importantly, for their members.

We should be confident and articulate in our demands. Doing so confirms our faith in our movement, its history and,

Yes to a minimum wage!

BRITAIN IS A grossly unequal society. The top ten per cent own 53% of all marketable wealth, the bottom 50% only 6%. The top three per cent own about 75% of privately-owned land and shares. The top 20 per cent have 39% of the income, the bottom 20% only 9%.

Between 1979 and 1987 real income for the poorest 10% of families, after housing costs, fell 7%. Real incomes for the top 1%, after housing costs, rose 72%.

Yet the Tories say that even the meagre official Labour policy of a legally-fixed minimum wage of £3.40 an hour, is too generous. It would cost too much, drive businesses to ruin, and thus destroy jobs.

Why a drastic shift of income from poor to rich should be health, but a mild shift from rich to poor bring sudden ruin, they never explain!

According to detailed economic research, workers in British manufacturing industry produce at least £200 in new value for each £100 they receive in wages. Workers get the equivalent of only half, or less, of the value they produce, and the other half goes to the capitalists and to the State.

Of course, resources are needed to invest in new technology. But the workers and citizens should be able to decide, democratically and collectively, how much will be invested, and how. In any case, the capitalists are not investing much now. They are paying out fully 70% of their profits in *dividends* - money which the rich receive for not doing anything productive, but simply for owning shares.

No god-given economic law lays it down that workers can only get 50% or 40% of the value

they produce, rather than 60% or 70%, any more than an eternal law lays down that shareholders should get 70% of profits in dividends, rather than 7%.

Wages can be increased at the expense of the rich.

As for the shoddy small businesses that would be ruined by having to pay £3.40 an hour - such threats of ruin can be used against any public safeguards for workers.

What about the small businesses which squeeze a profit from outdated technology by super-exploitation, and are ruined by having to provide safe work conditions? Or by having to allow workers enough time off and breaks in work time, to avoid exhaustion? The quicker they are ruined, and those workers are found productive jobs in decent conditions, the better.