



Panic in the Tory ranks as Labour's campaign gains in strength

ALL OUT FOR LABOUR VICTORY



Neil Kinnock meets electors in Islwyn, his constituency in Wales. Photo John Harris (IFL)

THE STRENGTH of Labour's challenge, to save Britain for its people, has taken the Thatcherites aback. Desperate measures have had to be employed. Flag waving and cold war hysteria are desperate measures, along with the poison polemics of Thatcher and Tebbit. Labour supporters should be greatly encouraged by this crude display from the Thatcher camp. We raise the question of poverty and unemployment, homelessness and despair, industrial destruction and social decay, and we say that in present circumstances only Labour in government can replace Thatcherism. More and more people see now that change must come, that we must survive, that her government must go.

The diluted Thatcherism of the 'Alliance' is not an alternative. They would privatise British Steel, they say, and in coal mining they're on the side of the UDM, they say. Whatever happened to the Liberals? With 10 days to go to polling day, the Alliance looks to be fading, their bland manifesto as memorable as a TV weather forecast read by Gilbert and George.

Labour's campaign in the marginal seats, where elections are won and lost, has alarmed Tory MPs by its determination to succeed. Labour is ahead; a lead that must be built on.

Thatcher wants to avoid any serious discussion of the economy because her record in office is indefensible. The highly selective 'facts' put together for newspaper adverts are thoroughly misleading, designed to put voters off the scent, an example of 'blinding the cat with science'.

She is reluctant to discuss or even focus on her eight years of responsibility for education, science, research, health, and welfare. The idle rich have done well, the unemployed have been robbed. Citizens pay more tax under Thatcher, yet services have declined with public utilities sold to private interests.

What Thatcher would like, just weeks after grinning through the USSR, is to dwell at election campaign length on 'the Soviet threat'. This is a nice diversion. We must all focus on the Russian bear while millions of citizens here try daily to keep the wolf from the door. 'The Russians are coming' really is desperation stuff; it is baby food for the mind.

Watching opinion polls doesn't win elections. If you want Thatcher out, you must convince others that abstention is an abdication of responsibility, that the Alliance will shore up the Thatcherites, that there are no longer any soft options to be had. Those who stand against Labour are for Thatcher, fringe candidates included.

Facing the fight in Finchley

THE WHOLE of Britain should take heart from what is happening in that sea of terraced houses (and some rather more select ones) that is Finchley, North London.

A national newspaper said that Thatcher would not dare walk the streets of Wigan. The truth is that she would not dare walk any street in Britain, least of all in the constituency of Finchley. Thatcher has been to Finchley recently. When you see military personnel checking vehicles it is a sign that she is somewhere in the area - usually behind a locked door perfecting her avoid-the-people techniques.

On paper she appears to have a respectable majority of 9000. But that was in 1983. Since then there has been a marked change in Finchley's population as large houses have been sub-divided into flats and younger people have moved in. And more significantly, Finchley Labour Party is one of the biggest and best organised in the country. They have been on the streets of Finchley not just in the last two weeks, but every week.

As a consequence, last year's local election in Finchley saw a result that Thatcher chose to forget - six seats went to Labour from the Conservatives.

Labour now holds 9 of the 15 council seats in Finchley.

The battle is being fought on Labour's agenda to such an extent that Finchley Conservatives felt obliged to put out a defensive leaflet saying that a local hospital was "safe". As the Labour party had never suggested that that particular hospital was under threat, the leaflet only served to arouse people's suspicions!

Thatcher can not face the people of Finchley on paper, let alone in person. Her last parliamentary move was so typical of her destructive reign, she said that she would accept a petition signed by thousands of her constituents opposing the closure of the Lucas CAV factory, the last major manufacturing employer in Finchley, with the loss of 500 jobs. Having received the petition she then conveniently forgot to endorse it.

In sharp contrast to the Thatcher vanishing act, the Labour party is very visible. The Labour election hotline has received hundreds of offers of help.

The most common response on the doorstep is "We won't be voting for her". Finchley is not Thatcher's constituency. Britain is not Thatcher's Britain. It is ours.

* IN BRIEF

ON THE Friday, Mrs Thatcher said she did not rule out the charging of fees at schools which had opted out of local authority control.

On Sunday she said there would be no fees. It has now been revealed that for the past few months a top-level government review has been considering the introduction of charges to parents for such things as music, sports, art classes, cookery, field trips, school books and stationary.

Mrs Thatcher has refused to give an assurance that VAT would not be put on electricity, gas and water. Five officials at the Treasury have been working on plans for wider VAT, for some time now, according to leaks to Roy Hattersley.

THATCHER'S plans for a poll tax will hit millions of families, students and pensioners. A family with three adults will have to pay, on average, £4.17 a week more.

KINNOCK had held nine press conferences at the halfway stage of the campaign - twice as many as Thatcher.

Thatcher has:

- *Refused to debate with Neil Kinnock.
- *Refused to take part in the BBC's "On the Spot" (where she would be questioned by voters)
- *Refused to take part in the Granada 500 Leader interview (where she would have been questioned by voters)

In short, she has made sure she hasn't met a single ordinary voter.

Kinnock has accepted every invitation to appear on a TV programme that would give voters a chance to question him, and has insisted his campaign schedule includes questions and answer sessions. So far he has had such sessions with sixth formers, tenants and pensioners.

Who's running away?

Five reasons to vote Labour

- Labour stands for jobs and industry
- Labour stands for peace
- Labour stands for education
- Labour stands for health
- Labour stands for the decent people of this country

Five more reasons to vote Labour

- Ronald Reagan doesn't want you to
- The City doesn't want you to
- The South African Government doesn't want you to
- The secret police don't want you to
- The me-firsts, the don't cares, the I'm-all-right Jacks, the spivs, the profiteers and privateers, and Rupert Murdoch don't want you to

ILEA faces fight for the future

THE ILEA, now under new leadership, must face up to another life and death struggle immediately: for who can imagine that another Thatcher administration would not destroy it?

The struggle for the ILEA is the struggle for state education against Thatcherite onslaught. Neil Fletcher, the newly elected ILEA leader is right to say "we must win back public confidence in our overriding aim of improving the quality of education for everybody." That is the old ILEA spirit, in which it must join battle with Thatcherism now in the election period.

Massive campaign

Diversion and internal division must end. Reducing class size remains the single best way of raising the quality of education, but also the flow from education of its life blood, the teachers, must be staunch. ILEA must also win back teacher loyalty and be given a chance to do so by its teachers.

There are no easy ways to good education. Parents see and hate low expectations on the part of educators even when they themselves are guilty of far worse. Parents can only play a useful role in the fight for education when they are marshalled right behind teachers. ILEA teachers achieved that in 1981 to save the ILEA and can do so again now. But the time is terribly short.

Universities oppose new 'elite'

MANY universities will cease to exist in all but name if Thatcher secures a third term of office. That is the logical consequence of recently disclosed Government proposals for establishing a league system for universities.

A University Grants Committee report on the earth sciences proposes a three tier ranking of institutions. The top group would be equipped for research and teaching, a middle group without costly equipment would concentrate on teaching and the bottom group would offer only low level teaching.

"There is a hidden agenda to produce an elite of 10 to 15 universities which will keep their present role. The rest may be merged with Polytechnics or lose their identity", says Dr Mark Richmond, Vice-Chancellor of Manchester University and the new chairman of the Vice-Chancellors' Committee.

The Government has also decided to scrap the present system of funding universities through grants and to adopt the American system of funding through contracts. Competitive tendering has proved to be a disaster for staff and patients in the NHS, it could prove a similar disaster for higher education.

Dr Richmond says the Government's insistence on funding universities by contract would contribute to the division of universities into two leagues. Those in division two, "would be scarcely more than teaching factories If relentlessly pursued, contract funding can only seriously damage research and scholarship and accelerate the brain drain."

Thatcher nightmare: 'Teachers for Labour Victory'

Thatcher's plans for education make chilling reading. Low standards, school closures, low pay, courses closed. But all involved in education are fighting back!

ONE of Thatcher's nightmares - that the survival of state education will become a major election issue - looks like becoming reality. 'Teachers for Labour Victory' groups are being formed around the country in co-operation with the Labour Party and local trades councils. Following their annual conference, during which the executive of the union repeatedly pointed to the imminent danger of fascism developing through the Thatcher Government's growing dictatorial powers, members of the NUT have shaken off what reticence

they may have felt about identifying Thatcherism as the main enemy of education - and are now busy in working for a massive Labour vote.

They will be taking the record of the Thatcherites to parents, other trades unionists and their communities in general, and counter posing it to the policies of the Labour Party. During the Thatcher years the Government has:

- * Starved state education of funds, through rate-capping and punitive action against local authorities

- * Pumped public money into private schools through the Assisted Places Scheme
- * Attempted to establish 'Super Schools' for the tiny minority of children outside of local education authority control
- * Introduced narrow training for the majority of children through MSC schemes in schools
- * Driven down teachers' pay, and deprived them of negotiating rights - resulting in teacher shortages.

Given a third term they intend to:

- * Take control over what is taught to the nation's children
- * Introduce testing of all children from early ages to sort out who 'deserves' further education and who just needs to be trained for the dole
- * Allow a few schools to increase drastically in size, thus forcing the closure of large numbers of others - these then being up for sale to parents (subsidised by Government and industry)
- * Remove schools from LEA control
- * Further control the activities of teachers attempting to defend education
- * Use the full force of anti-union laws against organised opposition.

Not one vote

There cannot be one vote for Thatcher from people concerned to see education flourish, or even survive.

Teachers welcome the united decision of the NUT and NAS/UWT to escalate their industrial action during the election period, as it will provide a focus for the electorate to see the on-going resistance to Thatcher. In addition, their fight to kick Thatcher out goes on in a new form:

They will make the country aware that every Tory voter is saying: "Let the kids rot, I'm out for myself."

"While every Labour voter is saying: "I'm for a future - education must survive."



Under fives held back by Thatcher

THATCHER once boasted that she would usher in an age where pre-5 education would be freely available. That was in the days when she limited her ambition to stealing school milk and not whole schools.

Yet, 8 horrendous years after her first election, Britain now has some of the worst pre-school nursery provision in Europe. Provision throughout the country varies but it is rare to find anything like adequate provision anywhere.

By and large, Labour authorities tend to provide better child care and nursery places, with 2/3 of metropolitan councils giving some pre-school education compared to 1/3 of county councils.

Thatcher boasts that the number of children in nursery classes has risen from 138,000 to 267,000 over the past decade. What this hides is the massive shift to part-time nursery class places from full time.

Although countries like France and West Germany don't begin compulsory education until the age of 6, nursery provision is almost universal from the age of 4.

The advantage of being in a nursery class is shown in terms of studies which indicate that children who have had such education score better on reading and maths tests at the ages of 5 and 10 years.

If we want our children to receive the education they deserve, then June 11 must see Thatcher out.



Tories fail: thought control curriculum rejected

THE PRESENT government's idea of the nation's needs is already crystal clear. Local democracy must go, along with trade union rights, the National Health Service, transport and, of course, our ability to produce.

Education has been under constant attack in recent years but clearly the efforts to demoralise the teachers by slashing resources and taking away their negotiating rights has not had the desired effect, because teachers are still using their skills to teach children to think. The NUT's Easter conference suspended standing orders to discuss it. Clear policy resulted which opposes the introduction of a curriculum which sees education "as a process of uncritical adaptation to a narrowly defined world of work."

'Essential subjects'

Baker intends to lay down 'essential subjects' which must be taught: maths, English, science, foreign languages, history, geography and technology.

Such statements are a nonsense when taken at face value. There already is a core curriculum in schools across the country. The only reason that some subjects have been dropped is that there are no teachers available to teach them.

Integral to the proposals is testing of children at ages 7, 11 and 14. As one delegate

at conference pointed out "Our children are going to have a basic diet of a few safely tested skills. A full liberal education is too much of a luxury now". Education was about understanding, developing concepts, enlarging curiosity and imagination and stimulating creativity but these are not easily measurable or testable.

Pretence

Another delegate said the Government's aim was to dismantle the education service and replace it with a "market economy" service.

The results of tests would be published and teachers would be forced, through pressure for pupil recruitment, to gear their teaching to the narrow concept of the tests.

With fewer resources, certain subjects are simply going to fall off the end of the school day as schools struggle to meet the most basic requirements of a national curriculum.

Grouping together of subjects, such as history, geography and religious education into 'humanities' only aids the Government in its efforts to reduce education to the barest minimum possible. Careers are being made on the back of this dangerous tinkering.

It is typical of this conniving government that it pretends

to advocate science and history as important subjects, yet ignores both in the introduction of so many of its policies.

If testing is not handled carefully, teachers know from long experience that it leads not to higher achievement but to early demoralisation and subsequent failure.

One of Baker's alleged reasons to bring in a national curriculum is so that parents can know what schools seek to teach and how well they are succeeding. But wasn't the 1986 Education Act supposed to give parents the right to decide what is taught,

along with LEAs, governors, headteachers and the local chief of police? Yet now we have imminent a piece of legislation to take that away again.

Ideas imposed?

The question of who would be involved in the writing of a national curriculum is of central concern to everyone involved in education - unions, parents, local education authorities, headteachers, Her Majesty's Inspectorate - all are desperately worried that the Government would just circumvent them and impose its own ideas, as it tried to do in everything else.

On the question of local control, another of the Government's fears, the national curriculum would fit in very

nically with the abolition of the metropolitan counties, reduction of the rate support grant, etc., because it removes control altogether from the local authorities.

In fact, the present government has issued more directive circulars, passed more laws and given more 'advice' than any in the past 100 years. Only in 1981 it issued a policy on the curriculum and followed it two years later with a detailed one for science. Perhaps the minister was mistaken - or testing the water?

Funding nightmare

Baker says he envisages the curricular guidelines as being of a similar nature, and decided in a similar way, to the National Criteria for the new General Certificate in Education (GCSE). For teachers the GCSE is nothing short of a nightmare. There are few resources and less clarity on what precisely they should be teaching.

The last sortie of the Government into secondary education, the introduction of Technical and Vocational Certificate (TVEC) was devised without even the involvement of the Department of Education and Science! This makes it even more imperative that teachers, parents and local authorities should be involved in the proposed introduction of a national curriculum.

PROFITEERS WRECK OUR SERVICES

The TUC has been active recently in its campaign against privatisation. Amongst the most vocal are NUPE and NALGO whose members are most under threat by the plans for bringing privatisation into the public sector.

However in a surprise and welcome move Environment Secretary Nicholas Ridley dropped immediate plans to force councils into putting a wide range of council services out to private tender.

No job is safe

No worker can afford to think that his job is safe, nevertheless. The Tories are just buying time. That is why we must keep up our campaign of opposition, the threat is as real as ever.

Since 1979 the government has been privatising the jobs of workers in the public services by offering the work to private contractors instead of directly employed labour. This has been done in the civil service, where cleaning work has been hived off to the private sector, in the NHS, with the compulsory tendering of all ancillary work, and in 1980 the Local Government Planning and Land Act compelled councils to put building work out to tender.

The Government stated in the Queen's speech in November 1986 that it would also introduce legislation to compel local authorities

to put work out to tender. Under the legislation five services are specified: refuse collection and street cleaning, cleaning of buildings, vehicle maintenance, ground maintenance and catering services.

It also makes provision for other services to be put out to tender by order of the Secretary of State. It was reported in 1986 that the following services were also under threat: waste disposal, printing, computing services, architectural services and sports and leisure management. A disturbing feature of the proposals is that the Secretary of State will have the power to order a re-tender after a contract has been awarded to direct labour if he thinks the council has given unfair preference to direct labour. So if the council doesn't give private contractors a 'fair' chance, the Secretary of State will be allowed to reverse any decision made.

Worse conditions

The process of putting public service work out to tender invariably results in a loss of jobs, even when a DLO wins a contract. To be competitive jobs have to be cut. Since 1979 34,000 jobs have been lost and a further 129,000 are threatened.

Contracting out has also meant pay cuts for workers and worsened conditions of employment with the loss of most statutory employment rights. For building workers

contracting out can mean the loss of all statutory rights as they are treated as self-employed.

Cleaners and domestics have experienced the greatest deterioration in their work conditions since the reduction in part time hours means not only a loss of earnings but also a loss of statutory employment protection and national insurance benefits. Very few contractors' employees work for more than 16 hours per week so they lose their right of claim unfair dismissal, redundancy pay, maternity pay, time off for union duties or sick pay and holiday pay. This means the casualisation of thousands of workers previously in well-organised, secure jobs.

Lower standards

The use of contractors instead of direct labour also tends to produce a lower standard of service which is particularly worrying for union members who work in the caring professions. The Government's insistence on cheapness and the reduction in hours and jobs are at the expense of the quality of the job done. Value for money simply means the cheapest tender.

Where a private contractor has not been doing the job properly the council has usually taken the work back in-house, as was the case at Chesterfield at the Scarsdale Hospital. Contracting-out then does

not always save money. Especially when one considers the increases in other public spending such as redundancy payments, unemployment benefit and a loss of tax revenues.

Increased spending

A detailed study of these costs has estimated that the extension of compulsory tendering in local authority work would produce an increase of nearly £2000m in public spending over a five year period, offset by only £1334m cuts in council budgets for services - a net increase of public spending of £660m. (SCAT: 'The Public Cost of Private Contractors').

However, surprise, surprise, the contract cleaning and catering firms have been persistently lobbying the government to extend the scope of contracting out. The lobbying has taken the form of political donations to the Tory Party and has been helped by the presence of MPs or Lords as paid consultants or directors of the firms concerned. It is also interesting to note that most of the private contractors have subsidiaries in South Africa. Hence the Government's plan to stop the Council's right to enforce contract compliance.

Win the election

To stop the government bringing in these laws to privatise the public sector, we have to make sure that they do not win the election.

BMA condemns the high level of poverty

A MOST DAMNING report on poverty in Britain in the 1980's has been published by the British Medical Association's science committee. This is the latest in a spate of recent publications on the state of Britain's health.

This report questions the morality of allowing the levels of deprivation witnessed by Britain's doctors to continue as we approach the 1990's. The situation can be shown statistically to be worsening, not improving. Although the BMA claims to wish to avoid being seen as critical of one political party, the bare facts point the finger.

Unemployment and low pay are wasting Britain's potential and damaging its children. The report says it is imperative that action be taken to decrease poverty and its associated incidence of death and disease. The authors suggest increased benefits, better housing and reducing unemployment.

Homelessness increasing

Homelessness is increasing with a massive rise in London alone. Between 1970 and 1984 there was a sevenfold rise nationally. The quality of much housing is seriously inadequate. Between 1983 and 1986 benefit rates have decreased relative to prices. In 1979 6 million people were living at or below the supplementary benefit poverty line. In 1983 this figure had risen to 9 million.

The BMA might wish to avoid seeming partisan. But Thatcher has drawn the picture we now have presented daily by journalists of one guise or another. Unemployment and low pay equal poverty, ill health and increased mortality. Bad housing compounds the burden placed on Britain's deprived. Thatcher has created this style of Britain. She is a poison we must be rid of.

Charity for NHS

"A GOLDEN opportunity for the people of Oldham" is how the Chairman of the District Health Authority describes a new government-backed charitable trust-Oldham Communicare.

The local population including health service workers, are being offered the chance to make weekly contributions to the fund via the government's "give as you earn" scheme.

Monies collected are to be used to support areas of the health service "not currently receiving government funds".

An income of between £50,000 and £100,000 is predicted. Over 200 local employers, with a workforce of over 200 have been introduced to the scheme.

Underfunded

At a time when the NHS is massively underfunded, it is easy to see what this 'charity' is all about. Such a fund would increasingly become a substitute for central government funding.

Public donations are increasingly used to fund essential items of hospital equipment, e.g. body scanners, resuscitation equipment, special baby care etc, whilst hospitals waiting lists grow longer.

But medical staff are becoming more and more willing to speak out against the threat Thatcher poses to the health of the British people.

If you want to support the NHS don't "give as you earn"- just "think as you vote".

Family centre survival fight in Wandsworth

EVEN in the dying days of Thatcher's administration her callous disregard for the welfare of ordinary people continued to have its effect.

In Wandsworth, South London, the Shaftesbury Family Centre providing security, therapy, and programmes of help to parents with major difficulties with their children, has been issued notice to quit.

The reason? The local authorities which provide the funds can no longer afford to pay because of Thatcher's punitive regulations. The result will be more children taken into care, more lives destroyed, or even worse, the possibility that the children and their parents will be forced to 'sink or swim' by themselves.

Hypocrisy

Let us note the hypocrisy of the Thatcherites with their concern for 'the family', and that of the rat-pack gutter press who are so quick to attack the inability of local authorities to deal with child abuse, but who are so keen on Thatcher's attack on local government finance.

The staff, all members of NALGO, are however not taking the decision lying down. They are rallying community support, and have plans for fighting the closure.

One strategy about which they make no secret is to make the plight of the families they serve an election issue - just what does the Tory have to say for himself?

Returning to Victorian values, and possibly Victorian workhouses, is hitting home in Wandsworth. But those who stand for progress, decency and dignity for the people are hitting back.



Wandsworth council workers on the march against Thatcher

Photo: Carlos Augusto (IFL)

NALGO CAMPAIGN UPSETS TORIES

AT THE 1986 TUC, at the instigation of NALGO, 1987 was deemed 'Public Services Year', with all TUC affiliated trade unions committed to campaign for Britain's Public Services. NALGO translated this campaign into the 'Make People Matter' campaign, spending £1,000,000 on publicity and events nationwide.

The climax of the campaign is a nationwide billboard, leafletting and publicity campaign drawing the attention of the public to think before they vote, and to vote for their public services - not only their retention but expansion and enhancement. NALGO is not affiliated to any political party and does not have a political fund. NALGO views the campaign as political but not party political.

The public being asked to weigh the evidence as

to whom is for public services and who is for their destruction, and to vote accordingly. The Thatcherites do not accept such a naive viewpoint. And though some may view the 'Make People Matter' campaign as cosmetic, the Thatcherites do not.

They do not want the campaign to continue, they do not want £1m effectively spent to aid the parliamentarian opponents of Thatcher - the Labour Party, they do not want the veil of lies they have constructed about the state of the public services and their demise to be exposed to public scrutiny.

Hence, the day after the local elections, Alan Paul, Conservative Trade Unionists' Chairman and member of NALGO, issued a series of writs - listing 22 charges as how NALGO had broken

various legislation brought in by Tebbit and company.

The court case commences on 14 May. It is interesting to note that if the Thatcherites viewed the election results - as good then Mr. Paul presumably would not have been ordered to the High Court. The Tory court action is out of fear and weakness.

NALGO's 1987 Annual Conference is rapidly approaching. The opportunity exists on the order paper to establish a political fund, a positive move as it means NALGO can get off the fence and openly attack Thatcher. NALGO can also expect to be back in the High Court as Wakefield NALGO Branch expel Alan Paul for bringing the Union into disrepute, and Paul under strict Conservative Central Office instructions slithers off for yet another injunction.

SQUANDERING BRITAIN'S ASSETS

THATCHER is reluctant to discuss her economic record. The reasons for that are obvious:

When people look at their own experience and the experience of their own families, they don't see the success Thatcher boasts of.

They see the truth. This Government is eating away at the whole fabric of British life and all the gains won by working people.

She is a profligate. She has already squandered North Sea Oil. Her only investment is in waste: in her war machine, in City speculation, in hand outs for the rich, and in unemployment.

She squanders £21 billion a year on keeping 3.3 million people unemployed. That's £21 billion invested in wasted and unproductive lives.

Her tax cuts have benefited the top 5% to the tune of £3.6 billion since she took power. But the rest of us,

thanks to the doubling of VAT and higher national insurance contributions, pay more in tax than we did in 1979.

But when the Royal Institute of British Architects reports that a £25 billion programme is needed to rebuild our decaying inner cities. She says 'we cannot afford' to spend this money. Labour says we cannot afford not to. And Labour is right.

Labour is committed to cutting unemployment, building homes and hospitals, roads, sewers which the country needs, and to rebuilding our industry.

That is the only way forward because we are an industrially dependent people who can only build a decent life using the human and material resources that Britain has.

Yet under her, we can no longer make the things we need:

- For the first time since the industrial revolution, the country is dependent on imports.

- Scientists and engineers look elsewhere to work because she is not prepared to fund their research.

- In engineering, the nation's industrial foundation, one third of the workforce has gone since Thatcher came to power. Their skills have gone with them.

- The number of engineering craftsmen is down 175,000 and the number of apprentices down 68%, by over 50,000. Sixteen of Britain's 23 industrial training boards have been scrapped.

- New investment at the end of 1986 was 19.2% lower than in 1978. Only four manufacturing sectors have shown growth and all of them depend on military contracts.

Labour exposes Thatcher's suicidal defence policy

THATCHER tells us that Kinnock has hoisted the white flag against the Russians. Forget the slur against the Russians who, despite the Cold-War rhetoric, have never threatened Britain, and look at Thatcher's record.

It's 'patriot' Thatcher who has handed over control of Britain's finances to the international financial speculators.

It's 'patriot' Thatcher who gave Reagan the right to push the button whenever he likes, making us merely an aircraft carrier for the US Navy.

It's 'patriot' Thatcher who has handed over more and more British law making to Brussels.

It's Thatcher who has surrendered, sold out and sabotaged our industry, the only secure foundation of any country's defence.

And it's Thatcher who attacks anyone who opposes her as 'the enemy within' taking away our civil liberties, trade union rights and press

freedom.

Thatcher shows her contempt for the British people when she stakes all defence policy on nuclear weapons. It's not a defence policy, it's a suicide policy. Her only defence against an aggressor is the total obliteration of Britain.

class

There is only one class which can defend Britain and that is the class she has waged war against at home for the last 8 years.

That is why Kinnock was right when he responded to Thatcher's 'white flag' innuendoes. This is what he said.

"It is they have surrendered. They have given up on British industry. They have sold out and sabotaged.

"These are the people who show their love of the country by shutting down whole industries, and selling off industries bought and paid for by the British public."

LABOUR VICTORY IS WITHIN OUR GRASP

"PULL OUT all the stops for a Labour victory!" This was the message of last Friday's public meeting in London organised by the Communist Party of Britain (ML). Key points included were:

"Voting Labour is a matter of honesty and integrity. We don't expect socialism on June 12. But we will have checked the move towards fascism."

"Thatcher is looking more and more haggard every day. She keeps on putting her foot in it. She says she'll go on and on and on."

"But young people are looking to Labour for the future. They see there is work to be done, people to do it, and money to bring them together."

freedom

"Thatcher talks of freedom, but real freedom comes from having jobs and social services."

"She says Power to the People and takes away teachers' and civil servants' trade union rights."

"She talks of individual rights. But without trade unions there would be no individual rights."

The real threat to the individual comes from the monopolists, the media barons, the state, the police and her secret service."

"Owen tries to out-do her and says 'things like "If you take out Moscow..." But what does he mean? He wants to destroy Moscow. Just listen to the way they talk. They are the real extremists."

"The press tell us that Thatcher is a great leader. But leadership is about bringing the best out of people. She has made 'caring' a dirty word."

"If we are fooled by the pollsters we might as well not have a general election. Why not let Mori go out and do it?"

"It's Labour that's been forcing the issues, talking about the things that really matter - matters of life and death for ordinary people."

"Today there are tens of thousands of active fighters against Thatcherism. This combined strength can bring out millions to vote, just as it did in 1945. There are plenty of votes to be won for Labour."

New threat to textiles

ACCUSATIONS of asset stripping and deliberate running down of a mill that once employed over 2,000 have been levelled at Viyella the cloth manufacturers in connection with their mill at Mansfield in Nottinghamshire. The site has been sold to British Coal and the company is serving notices of redundancy to the workforce.

From 2,000 plus mill workers in three mills on a large site, Viyella's scale of operations has been allowed to decline to the level where only 200 remain, and two of the mills are empty and falling into disrepair.

At a mass meeting on Wednesday 6 May, TGWU official Peter Thompson, denouncing this latest move by the firm, pointed out

that Viyella was receiving up to £4 million for the sale of this site, and that they could therefore afford to build a new factory near Mansfield. For some of the workers involved it is the third or fourth time that they have been made redundant whilst for many others, Viyella's is the only employment they have known throughout their working lives.

Under a Labour Government, a strong case could be made for protecting jobs and creating employment in towns like Mansfield by investing in existing industries. Under Thatcher you'd be wasting your breath. The choice for Viyella workers and millions like them is that between hope and despair. It's just a vote away.

Vote for coal on June 11th

THE SUREST way to put Britain's mining industry right is to elect a Labour Government on 11 June and give the same assistance to our industry that our European and world competitors receive.'

This was the response of Arthur Scargill, NUM President, commenting on the latest figures released by the National Coal Board - masquerading as British Coal (PLC). The NUM president stated further that the Coal Board's results showed, 'a tale of mismanagement possibly unequalled in British industry.'

British Coal, in its trading year 1986-7, reported losses of nearly £358 millions, paying £386 millions in interest charges and £262 millions in pit closures, resulting in a deficit of £290 millions. This after a shuffling and jiggling of the books to disguise the awesome damage done to the industry by the combined pit closure programme, ongoing since 1979.

disaster

The employers' view of the figures is simply to berate the miners: work harder and get rid of your trade union organisation. Haslam, Chairman of British Coal, ignoring the disaster of pit closures, highlights the fact that miners struck 30 times more often than the average British worker and 8 times more than the average hourly paid British worker.

Industrial action in 1986-7 cost the employer over 1 million tonnes in production and £20 million in revenue. What the figures demonstrate is that out of 125 pits in Britain, guerrilla war is ongoing at 113.

ragouts

What Haslam denigrates as 'ragouts' are the flexing of organisation and muscle at the point of production; they are not games - they are necessary for survival.

In six examples of ragouts, Haslam noted miners walked out in Yorkshire over dislike for visiting dignitaries - Board Directors, Tory MPs, etc. What he deems 'trivial' speaks volumes about political power and who actually controls the coalfield - not Haslam.

The future of Coal lies in the hands of the working class. June 11 is the beginning of the prising loose of Thatcher's claws.



The industrial landscape of Britain has been transformed by eight years of Thatcherism. This is Sheffield - a picture that flies in the face of 250 years of the city's industrial tradition.

Photo: John Harris (IPL)

No peace for British Steel

WITH STEEL production in Britain 14 million tonnes and falling and Ravenscraig, Llanwern and Firth Brown's under threat, the recent analysis by the steel committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) must cause profound concern.

In the Soviet Union annual output is greater than the US and Japan put together. Further, plans are to increase it by 10% so that self-sufficiency in manufacture to meet the material needs of the people and to generate the wealth to develop services can be achieved as quickly as possible.

In the West 45% of all steel is used in the automotive industry, whereas in the Soviet Union most goes into infrastructure and the means to make the means to manufacture. In Britain the bulk of our 45 million tonne raw material needs is met by

imports, and the BSC continues to describe a total output 30% less and produced by a workforce half the 1979 size as improved productivity and profitability, instead of the national disaster it really is.

excess capacity

The OECD expresses grave concern about the very high degree of excess capacity not in terms of actual social need, which output is too small to meet, but in terms of the risk of depressed prices and losses to the steelmakers. In other words cheap steel is a bad thing!

They talk of a world steel excess capacity of 200 million tonnes, or more than 20% of total output by 1990. The parallel is mass starvation on the one hand, and the closure of a tractor factory in the Midlands on the other.

Public Meetings

PUBLIC MEETINGS
June 12th: Peace not War
June 26th: Youth Demand Work

All meetings at 7.30 pm, Bellman Bookshop, 155 Fortress Road, London NW5. Nearest tube: Tufnell Park.