

Weekend
Saturday
25 July
and
Sunday
26 July



BEYOND THE GENERAL ELECTION

The 1987
general
election has opened a new
era in British politics. The
weekend at *Preparing for
Power* will be largely devoted
to discussing the consequences
of the election outcome for the
future of the working class.

For details on weekend workshops, specialist courses running throughout
the week, debates, music and entertainment, see inside

REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY SUMMER SCHOOL

Friday 24 to Friday 31 July
University of London Union
Malet St, WC1

Preparing for POWER

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Saturday morning
opening plenary
Frank Richards on *The
working class in the
Thatcher era*

Sunday afternoon
sessions
Mike Freeman, Mick Hume
and **Sabena Norton** on
*Fighting back in Thatcher's
third term*

THE BATTLE FOR THE NINETIES

For the past five years hundreds of people from Britain and abroad have gathered in London every summer for a week of discussion and debate about the state of the world and how to change it. This year *Preparing for Power* will follow a few weeks after the most important election for 50 years. It will provide a forum for assessing the balance of class forces and for sharpening our understanding of how we can take on the battles ahead.

For some months it has been clear that the only question that would be decided on 11 June was the size of the Tory majority. In many ways, the contest between the mainstream parties of British politics had been settled even before the campaign opened.

For eight years Margaret Thatcher has triumphed over her opponents through her success in defining the terms of political debate. Despite her government's disastrous economic record, she has succeeded in making law and order, prejudices against



THATCHER: LOOKING FORWARD TO A THIRD TERM

the trade unions, the defence of the nation, the family, and even the virtues of private enterprise, central themes of a new consensus. The extent to which all the opposition parties have adopted policies upholding firmer policing, anti-union laws, higher military spending, family values and a mix of public and private ownership is a true measure of the achievement of the Thatcher years.

The Labour Party's attempts under Neil Kinnock to steal the Tories' patriotic, militaristic and authoritarian clothes



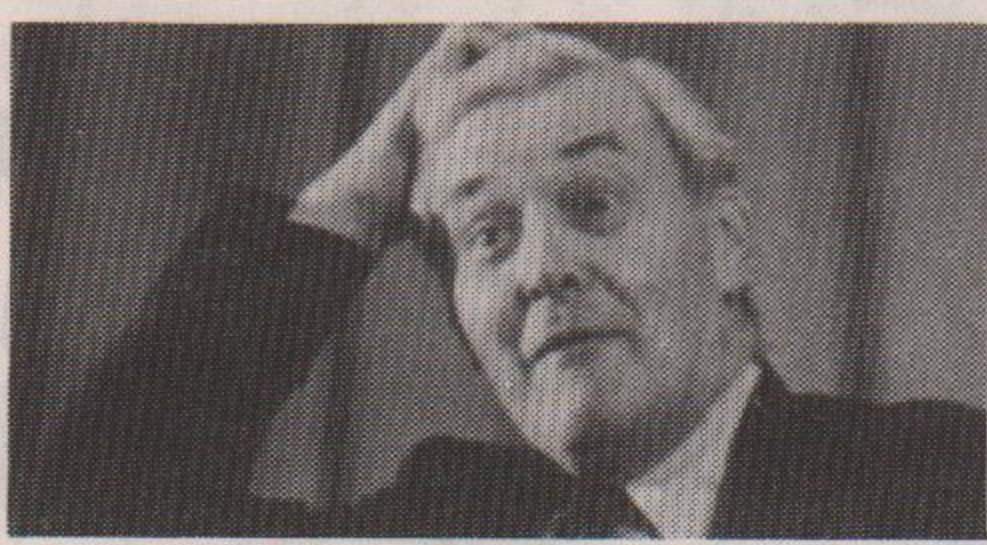
KINNOCK: APPEAL TO MIDDLE CLASSES

guaranteed its failure long before polling day. The election campaign could only decide the scale of Labour's defeat and the role of the Alliance parties in the new parliament. The third Thatcher victory will be a heavy blow to the party, confirming its shrinking social and geographical base and chronically declining influence.

If another Tory victory is bad for the Labour leadership, it is catastrophic for the left. In 1983 the left could take refuge in its new power bases at the GLC, in Liverpool, Sheffield and in other municipal strongholds; its campaigns such as CND could still mobilise hundreds of thousands; it still had its broad-left groups in the unions, powerful friends like Arthur Scargill and Jimmy Knapp were riding high, and Tony Benn and Eric Heffer were still prominent figures on Labour's national executive.

Today the left's organisations are mere shells and its old leaders mere shadows of their former selves. All were conspicuous by their absence from Labour's election campaign.

By retreating before Kinnock's attack, left wingers thought they could dig in and live to fight another day. Some even thought they could avoid the blame for Labour's defeat



BENN: WHERE WAS HE IN THE ELECTION?

and that an influx of radical new MPs would give the left a new lease of life against a defeated leadership. But in the end the left's refusal to challenge Kinnock has only reinforced its role as scapegoat for all Labour's failures. Acquiescing by its silence to the label of 'loony', the left is destined to become the main victim of the election debacle.

The events of the years between 1983 and 1987, culminating in the June election, have fully exposed the conflict between the strategies of the leaders of the official labour movement and the interests of the working class. In both the unions and the Labour Party, the labour bureaucrats have tried to save their own skins by coming to a closer accommodation with the representatives of British capital. In industry and services, union officials have been ready to negotiate rationalisation plans and in-house tenders which accept mass redundancies, inferior working conditions and restrictions on union rights — such as the effective withdrawal of the right to strike. To retain token union membership and the

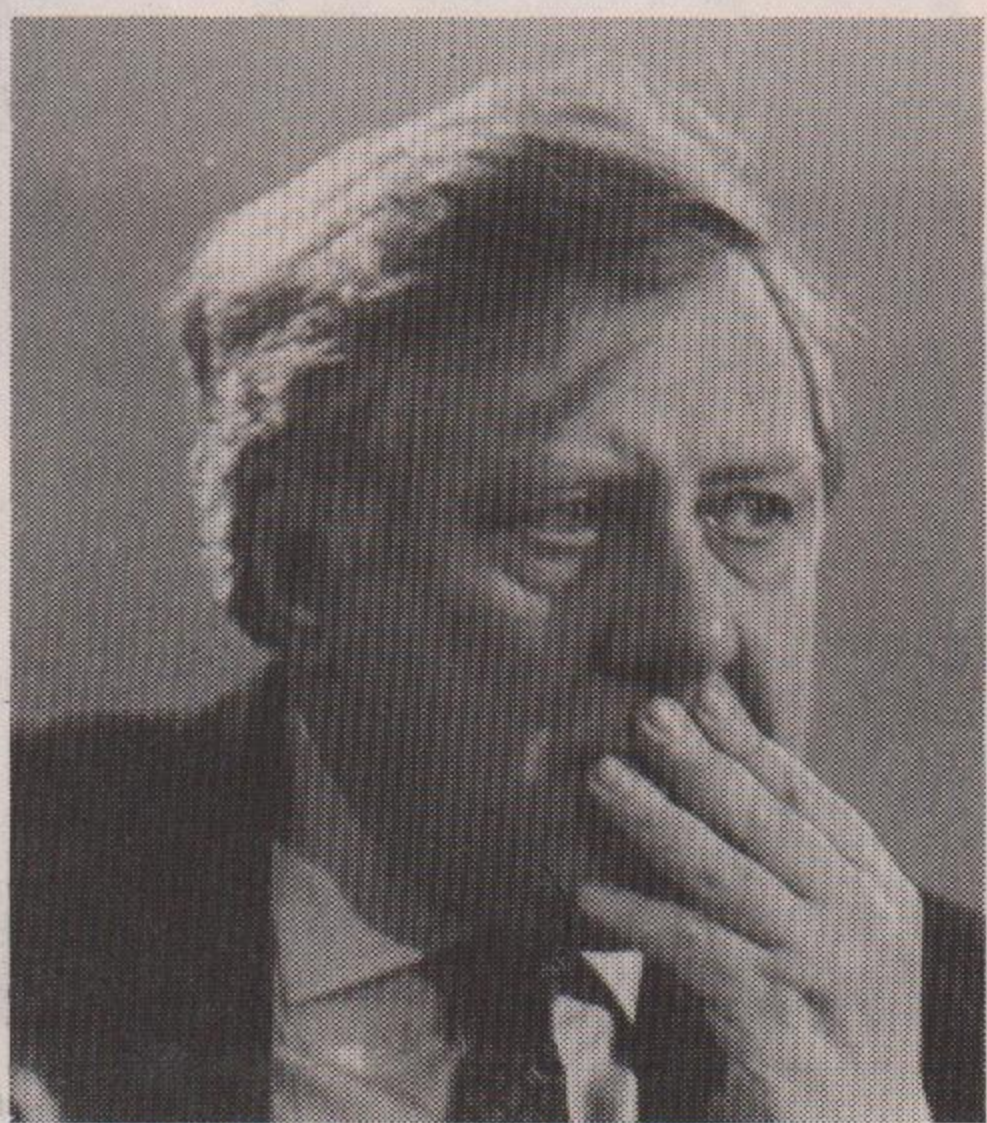


BRENDA DEAN: GHOST OF WAPPING

regular flow of dues to head office, union officials have sacrificed the jobs and rights of thousands of workers.

Meanwhile in the political arena, Hattersley and Healey and the rest have adopted policies on the economy, public spending and trade union affairs which accept permanent mass unemployment, wage controls, restrictions on welfare spending and state interference in union ballots and elections. In their desperate attempts to secure their own positions, the labour bureaucrats have adopted policies which can only accelerate the forces of division and demoralisation within the working class. Because the most politically active sections of the working class remain loyal to Labour, Kinnock's defeat is not

simply a problem for the labour bureaucracy — Labour is dragging the working class down with it.



HATTERSLEY: PROMISES OF AUSTERITY

Early in 1987 the Revolutionary Communist Party issued an open letter to all left-wing organisations and individuals, proposing the formation of *The Red Front*. We appealed to others to join us in putting forward a slate of candidates to stand in the general election on a basic platform which put forward the cause of working class unity. Our aim was to take advantage of the debate around the election to mobilise a core of resistance to the mounting capitalist offensive against the working class before, during and beyond the election itself.

In the event most of the surviving groupings of the far left put their fear of challenging Labourism at the polls before their formal commitment to building a working class alternative. While many individuals and some smaller groups in particular areas supported *The Red Front*, the larger left-wing organisations chose to campaign for the Labour Party. From the moment the campaign opened, the left's much-vaunted hostility towards electoralism in general and Labour in particular vanished as its supporters became the most enthusiastic canvassers and flyposters for the party that paralyses the working class.

Through *The Red Front* the Revolutionary Communist Party has put down a marker in the 1987 general election. At a time when the rest of the left is in abject retreat, we have pointed the way forward to unite and strengthen the working class for the battles ahead. While the

electoral focus of *The Red Front* does not extend beyond 11 June, the wider project of building a working class alternative to Labourism becomes even more important after the election.

Preparing for Power is the first step in carrying the approach of *The Red Front* beyond the general election. Our objective is to rally all those who want to fight back against the system and to forge them into a movement for building a new form of society. Building *The Red Front* cannot mean simply realigning the remnants of the old left, or assembling together committed activists from the unions, the women's movement or other anti-establishment campaigns. The aim of *The Red Front* is to unite all those who are looking for new political solutions around a coherent anti-capitalist outlook. *Preparing for Power* offers a forum in which to debate and clarify the policies we need to defend and advance the interests of the working class in the difficult time ahead.

The return of another Tory government will be a bitter blow to millions of Labour voters. Many will be responsive to the inevitable drive to make the party even more moderate and respectable and even more intolerant of left-wing policies or politicians. Others will feel despondent that Kinnock has made so many concessions to the establishment and the media that the Tories have been able to reap the benefits. Some will conclude that the election results prove that there is no hope for the working class. The popular prejudice that all political parties and all politicians are equally corrupt will be strengthened.

No doubt the Labour leaders will try to put on a brave face, and some left wingers will emerge to claim that the election debacle in fact marks a historic victory. In the post-election climate of gloom and confusion, new ideas and clear direction are more important than ever before. *The Red Front* has shown that it is possible to fight for working class policies at the polls. The aim of *Preparing for Power* is to share experiences, to challenge existing prejudices and thrash out solutions that measure up to the scale of the challenge facing the working class movement as we move towards the 1990s. Don't miss it!



VAUXHALL CONFRONTATION: LABOUR MP STUART HOLLAND KEEPS A WARY EYE ON RED FRONT CHALLENGER KUNLE OLUREMI

The Weekend Friday evening 24 July

Three introductory talks

- An absolute beginners' guide to the RCP — **Frank Richards**
- From the **Sun** to **News on Sunday** — **Mick Hume**
- Moral panics in the age of Aids — **Kate Marshall**

Saturday morning 25 July

Opening plenary

Frank Richards on *The working class in the Thatcher era*

- Note that the opening plenary will take place at Friends House, Euston Road, not at the University of London Union, where the rest of *Preparing for Power* will be held.

Saturday afternoon workshops

- Striking against the Tories
- The future of Thatcherism
- The breakdown of two-party politics
- The Irish War in British politics
- America in decline
- **The Red Front** election campaign
- Lessons of the Caterpillar occupation
- Left in Europe
- What's left of the unions?
- The working class: where is it now?
- The left after the election
- British economy: the bulldog myth
- Gorbachev and the West
- Apartheid stabilised

Saturday night DANCE!

- Live music
- Disco
- Bar



Sunday morning and early afternoon 26 July

- Specialist courses begin — see below

Sunday late afternoon sessions

Mike Freeman, Mick Hume and **Sabena Norton** on *Fighting back in Thatcher's third term*

Sunday evening

- Workshops on culture, music and film



Specialist courses

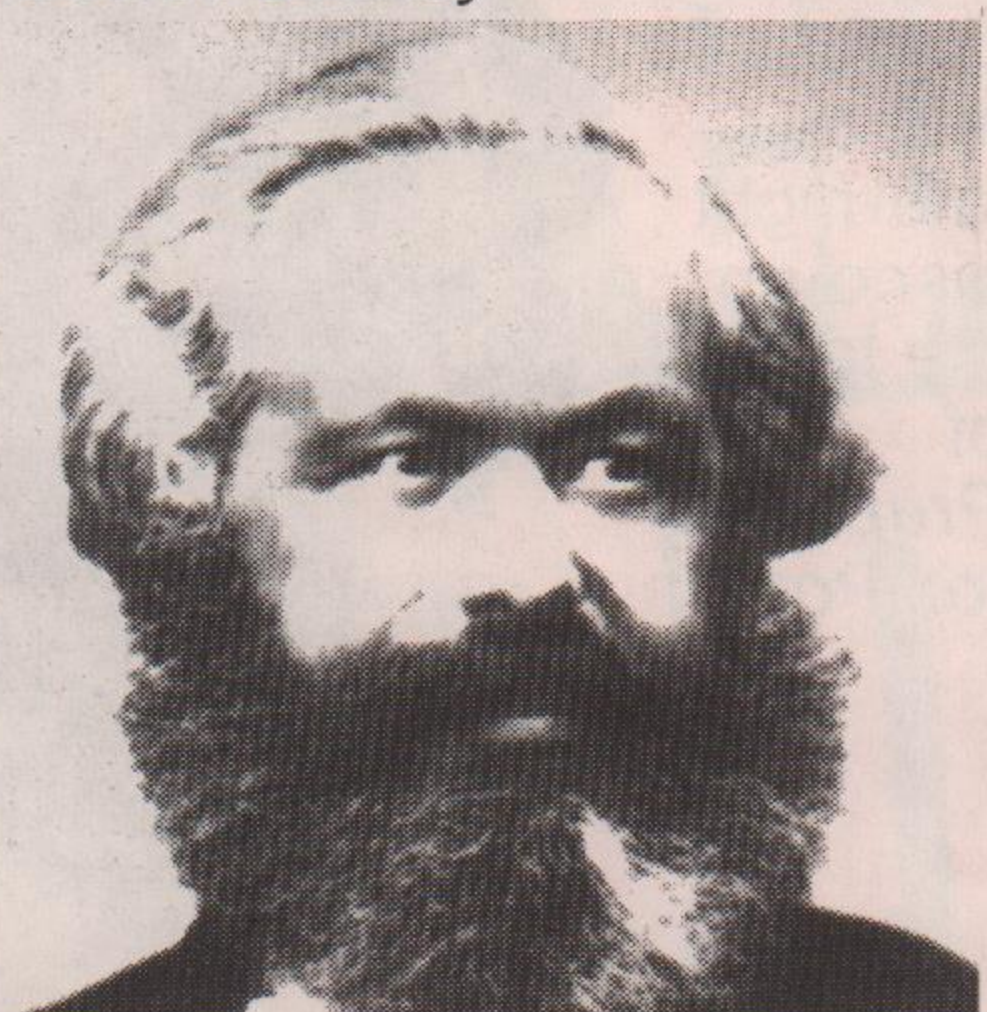
Specialist courses will begin on Sunday and run through the week. Courses 1 to 7 will take place in the morning from 10.30 to 12.30 and courses 8 to 14 will be held in the early afternoon from 2 to 4. Each course includes five scheduled sessions, running from Sunday to Thursday, but may be extended to take in a final session on Friday.

1 Introduction to Marxism

- Historical materialism
- Scientific socialism
- Class struggle and revolution
- Ideology
- The revolutionary party

2 Marxism for non-beginners

- What is dialectics?
- The logic of **Capital**
- History and logic
- Class relations and class consciousness
- The laws of motion of Soviet society



3 Introduction to Marxist economics

- What is value?
- Exploitation
- Accumulation
- The crisis
- The state, imperialism and war

4 The future for Britain

- Britain: the weak link in the Western order
- A balance sheet of the Thatcher era
- Britain's new working class
- Can Labourism survive?
- Slaying the beast: a working class strategy

5 Other strategies for revolution?

- Utopias: non-Marxist visions of change
- Anarchism
- Bolsheviks and radicals in the 1905 revolution
- The legend of Che Guevara
- Amilcar Cabral and African socialism

6 Crisis and revolution in Africa

- The crisis in Africa
- Apartheid capitalism
- Western sabotage in southern Africa



- Colonialism? The debate about race and class in South Africa
- Black workers under Botha

7 Reformism and the left in Britain

- British Empire and the rise of Labour
- The brief flowering of British Marxism, 1914-18
- Sixty years of 'changing' the Labour Party
- Labour and the left under Thatcher
- Kicking the habit: **The Red Front**

8 Theories of imperialism

- From **Capital**, Vol 3 to Lenin's **Imperialism**
- Henryk Grossmann and Paul Mattick
- Revisionism from Stalin to Boccara
- Post-war debates on development and under-development
- Towards a contemporary theory of imperialism

9 Western society in crisis

- Reaction: what it is and how to fight it
- The problems of the establishment
- Middle class distress
- The remaking of the working class
- Revolution and the alternatives

10 Organising for power

- Leninism and the party
- Rosa Luxemburg's concept of organisation
- Gramsci's theory of class alliances
- Post-war debates about the party
- The RCP's theory and practice of organisation



11 The crisis of Marxism in Europe

- The war and the destruction of Marxism
- The radicals of 1968
- Urban guerrillas
- A wasted decade: Trotskyism in the seventies
- Breaking new ground

12 Racism today

- The roots of racism
- Racism in British politics
- Anti-racism since the seventies
- Black politics in Britain
- Why Workers Against Racism?

13 Women's liberation

- Working class women today
- Housework and the family
- Is nature the cause of women's oppression?
- Or is it patriarchy?
- Women in the trade unions — a debate



14 The Irish War

- Why Thatcher and Kinnock never debate Ireland
- Loyalism: myth and reality
- How Britain runs the Irish Republic
- The IRA
- British workers and Irish freedom



DOZENS OF WORKSHOPS & DEBATES



OPENING SESSION, PREPARING FOR POWER 1986

Transport

Cheap coaches will be coming from all major British cities, arriving Friday evening.

Location

The University of London is just off Tottenham Court Road in Central London. The nearest tube is Goodge Street. It has a swimming pool, sauna, gym, cafeteria, shop and bars.

Children welcome

A professionally run creche will be available throughout the week. Let us know how many children you want to bring and their ages.

Accommodation

Let us know if you need somewhere to stay — and bring a sleeping bag.

Entertainment

There will be a live concert on Saturday and a late-night disco on the last day of *Preparing for Power*



Make cheques payable to RCP Association and send to **Preparing for Power**, BM RCP, London WC1N 3XX

Also available from this address:
Full **Preparing for Power** programme — £1 (free with tickets)

- Recommended reading for all specialist courses
- Details of all workshops

For more information, phone (01) 729 0414.

- ☐ I need transport
☐ I need accommodation
☐ I need creche facilities

- Price paid
☐ £22 waged
☐ £15 unwaged
☐ £10 for the weekend only

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone number

Organisation/trade union

Number of children coming ☐

Ages of children ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

SIGN UP NOW!