General Election Manifesto of the Labour Party 2017

An Analysis

Arthur Scargill
Leader, Socialist Labour Party

LABOUR PARTY MANIFESTO

The Labour Party 2017 Manifesto is slick, polished and in the tradition of the type of Manifesto produced by the right wing of the Labour Party in the 1950's and 1960's. It is certainly not a Socialist Manifesto.

An analysis of the main points of the Manifesto exposed a "Devils Bargain" which factions within the Party had to make in order for it to be accepted to both the right and left of the Party. It is in fact a classic Social Democratic Manifesto.

CREATING AN ECONOMY THAT WORKS FOR ALL

Labour's economic strategy is based on putting "small businesses at the centre of our economic strategy" and an industrial strategy which will support businesses to create new, high-skilled, high-paid and secure work across the country. (chapter 01)

There is no reference to rebuilding Britain's publicly owned manufacturing industries which prior to joining the European Common Market/European Union formed 80 percent of Britain's strong economic base; today only 10 percent of Britain's economy is based on its manufacturing industries.

Any doubt about the way Labour sees a future Britain based on a mixed market economy is removed by the section on page 27 under the heading of "A New Deal for Business". This makes clear that a future Labour Government would only reform the rules of companies so that they can stay focussed on delivering shared wealth. For example, Labour will amend Company Law so that directors owe a duty directly not only to shareholders, but to employees, customers, the environment and the wider public.

Labour's determination to continue with a capitalist system is made clear in this section of the Manifesto. It states, "Labour will amend the takeover regime to ensure that businesses identified as being 'systemically important' have a clear plan in place to protect workers and pensioners when a company is taken over".

Their policy is further emphasised on page 19 which states "in government, Labour would give more people a "stake" – and a say – in our economy by doubling the size of the co-operative sector and introducing a "right to own"

making employees the buyer of first refusal when the company they work for is up for sale."

What happened to the commitment of Labour's "left leaders" to reinstate into the Party's Constitution "Clause IV", a clause which called for the "Common Ownership of the Means of Production, Distribution and Exchange"; a clause which was ripped out of the Constitution by the Labour Party led by Tony Blair in 1995 and replaced by a commitment to a market driven mixed economy which has seen publicly owned sectors privatised.

A FAIR TAX SYSTEM

Labour's Fair Taxation System only proposes an unspecified tax increase for the top 5 percent of earners to contribute more in tax to help fund our public services. The Manifesto pledges not to extend VAT to food, children's clothes, books and newspapers, and public transport fares. Value Added Tax (VAT) is a tax imposed by the European Union and any socialist would call for its abolition. It cannot be right for a pensioner to pay the same tax for the purchase of goods and services as multi-millionaires. VAT should not be extended or even reduced. It should be abolished, not maintained.

The Labour Manifesto calls for businesses and large corporations to pay a little more corporation tax. A Socialist should be taking all businesses and corporations into public ownership and not simply tinkering with businesses paying just a little bit more Corporation Tax. Even a Social Democratic Party should be calling for Corporation Tax of 40% but that of course requires a Socialist approach! A sensible tax policy would be based on income tax in the following bands

Band	Income per annum (£)	% Payable
1.	Up to 25,000	0
2.	25,000 to 55,000	30
3.	55,000 to 80,000	40
4.	80,000 to 100,000	50
5.	100,000 to200,000	60
6.	200,000 t0 500,000	70
7.	Over 500,000	90

The tax calculations are not revolutionary. They are in line with tax bands implemented by the Labour Party and the Tory Party between 1945 and the

1960. Even under the current taxation system a 1% increase across the board would produce nearly £6 billion per year, whilst a 10% increase would produce £60 billion per year, enough to meet the shortfall in the National Health Service, Education System, Social Welfare and Pensions.

BALANCING THE BOOKS

Labour's Manifesto makes on page 10clear that it is committed to having public services based on the foundation of sound finances. I say Public services should be based on the needs of people, not on fiscal manipulation not concerned primarily with "balancing the books". The reason was simple; full employment and decent wages for workers would result in a taxation policy which together with profits from National Industries and Services would fully fund a sensible socialist programme. This is a sensible approach to fulfilling the aspirations of people rather than an obsession with balancing the books.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

The Manifesto calls for National Transformation Fund that will invest £250 billion over ten years. A simple solution to help to meet the costs of infrastructure would be to scrap the £100 billion per year expended on the stupid policy of the Trident Nuclear Programme and the scrapping of the HS2 high speed rail link and replace it with a policy where all the rail systems wiped out by the Beeching policy are restored. Instead of spending billions on HS2 a government could be spending billions on electrification and refurbishment of existing lines such as London-Manchester, London-Birmingham, London-Sheffield, London-Cardiff, and London-Glasgow thus providing real investment and facilities for the neglected North of England. It should also install an efficient national rail connection with all areas of the South Coast including Brighton, Cornwall and Devon, in other words establish a rail system that would truly link the South with the North and the West with the East – That is real infrastructure

ENERGY

The Labour Manifesto policy is committed to "transform our energy systems, investing in new state-of-the-art low-carbon gas and renewable electricity production. It is not only short-sighted but is a policy which does not make economic sense. This policy is a betrayal of Britain's indigenous

coal industry which is able to produce all our electricity and also produce from coal all our oil and gas and by using carbon capture would produce our indigenous energy with zero emissions. We could also produce from coal all our petrochemicals and would be far cheaper and safer than Nuclear Energy.

On page 20 Labour sets out what it terms is a Sustainable Energy Policy. This Policy is pure Social Democratic economic policy; whilst it correctly puts forward a policy to stop fracking and commits to taking energy back into public ownership it clearly implies the continuation of private energy companies by its statement "Supporting the creation of publicly owned, locally accountable energy companies and co-operatives to rival existing private energy suppliers." this clearly implies that Labour accepts the continuation of private energy suppliers

The section referring to the nuclear industry is economically and environmentally unacceptable. Tony Benn consistently and correctly argued that nuclear energy in all its forms either militarily or for electricity generation is unacceptable. The disasters alone at Windscale in 1957, Three Mile Island in 1979 Chernobyl 1986 and Fukushima in 2011 have proved how correct Tony Benn and the anti nuclear movement were.

Labour's "Sustainable Energy Policy on pages 20 to 22 proves how right he was! It states it is committed "to ensure security of energy supply and "keep the lights on" and "ensure energy costs are affordable for consumers and business. This commitment is in contradiction with its statement on page 12; and which implies that Labour will continue to allow private companies to produce energy and electricity.

The Manifesto admits that one in ten households are in fuel poverty and that customers are over-charged by £2billion every year, yet it proposes to deal with this by introducing an "emergency price cap to ensure that the average dual fuel household energy bill remains below £1,000 per year. Its energy policy is even more contradictory with statements on page 2 that Labour will "take energy back into public ownership to deliver renewable energy, affordability for consumers, and democratic control, yet it proposes to do this by "regaining control of energy supply networks through the alteration of the National and Regional Network Operator License conditions" and supporting the creation of publicly owned, local accountable energy companies and co-operatives" to rival existing private energy suppliers, with at least one in every region" and ..... to permit publicly owned local

companies to purchase the regional grid infrastructure,, and to ensure that national and regional grid infrastructure is brought "into public ownership over time."

Labour's Policy is further confusing or deliberately discriminating when it says correctly "Labour will ban fracking because it would lock us in to an energy infrastructure based on fossil fuels (page 21). Yet on page 12 they are committed to "investing in new, state-of-the art low carbon gas" – a fossil fuel! Labour cannot have it both ways; on the one hand it cannot invest in a carbon gas energy policy and be committed to low carbon economy alternative fuels which produce electricity such as wind, wave, tide, hydro and geothermal power and solar which are currently producing only 7 percent of Britain's energy needs when it could invest in its indigenous coal industry which has over 1000 years reserves and can produce electricity, gas, oil petro chemicals and other essential chemicals for industry at no cost to tax payers for imported fuels.

The Socialist Labour Party welcomes alternative energies, such as wave, barrage, hydroelectricity, geothermal and solar, but these will not become a reality in a period when consumers are desperate for energy, above all, electricity and gas at a sensible price. Why not simply take the whole Energy Industry back into public ownership with no compensation or purchase arrangements.

Global warming should not be confused with climate change. The climate has been changing for millions of years. The earth's climate will continue to change but not as a result of global warming caused by using fossil fuels.

The main reason why we have global warming is because mankind has demonstrated yet again its madness by deforestation which has already destroyed large areas of the rain forests and woodlands worldwide. The naturally changing climate together with the destruction of the world's rain forests is resulting in rising sea levels. The rise in the sea level can be reversed by constructing desalination plants which would turn the sea water into clean water which could literally make the deserts bloom.

If one traces back CO-2 emissions to a time before de-forestation worldwide it can be seen that the rainforests and woodlands generally were the main protector against CO2 emissions. Since the UK closed its coal mines

pollution has increased, not decreased. Eighty percent of UK pollution is caused by oil and gas particularly on transport on our roads, air and sea.

Coal mines in Wales, Scotland and England have been closed because the government claimed that it was essential on economic and environmental grounds. Government papers released in 2014 and 2015 prove that the real reason for pit closures was political. Whilst the UK has closed its most valuable resource other countries have been given money to spend on coal-fire power plants. Countries which have been authorised to invest in coal production include South Korea, Bangladesh, India, Japan and Australia. Japan designated $1 billion for coal plants in Indonesia. Coal plants in India and Bangladesh have been permitted loans totalling $630 million; and has seen Germany closing its nuclear power stations with the result that it now produces 30% of its electricity in coal-fired power stations; and recently Australia has announced it is to abandon support for renewable energies. It is now focussing on coal and gas in a programme which produces affordable energy. In Britain the imposition of a carbon tax of £23 per tonne, particularly on coal, has resulted in consumers paying expensive electricity bills.

NUCLEAR POWER

Labour is committed to a UK nuclear industry programme despite the fact that nuclear power is the most dangerous form of energy ever devised. Tony Benn warned that dependency on nuclear energy would be disastrous both from a safety and economic point of view. The disasters referred to between 1957 and 2011 proved how right he was. – The Labour Manifesto does not even refer to the countries which have abandoned nuclear energy including Germany, Japan, Ireland, Switzerland, Spain, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden and Cuba nor does it refer to massive subsidies given to the nuclear power industry and alternative energy industries many of which emit CO2 emissions. If it was not for these subsidies none of the energy sources in Labour's Manifesto would be considered on the grounds of costs to the consumers and tax payers. Labour goes even further. It wants the UK to buy and sell energy tariff free from Europe and it also wants to retain access to Euratom to allow continued trade of fissile material (page 22)

TRADES AND NATIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE (PAGE 03)

The Labour Manifesto states "education is what empowers us to release our full potential. When it fails, it is not just the individual that is held back, but all of us. When we invest in people to develop their skills and capabilities, we all benefit from a stronger economy and society"

The Manifesto goes on to state "to meet this responsibility Labour will create a unified national education service for England to move towards cradle-to-grave learning that is free at the point of use, yet when one reads its education policy it is not committed to a principle that "every child and adult matters because it does nothing to end discrimination on either religious or a class basis.

On the contrary, it makes clear on page 40 "in recognition of the role played by private-sector providers, it (Labour Party) would extend support for training to teachers in the private sector". In other words the privileged public schools such as Eton, Harrow, and Winchester, will continue to retain their elitist status. Such a policy cannot be accepted by any socialist. It makes no reference to banning Public Schools (which of course are private Schools) and Faith Schools, the very institutions which produce prejudice both on the basis of class and religion and division whether Protestant from Catholic or Islam from Judaism. Hindu from Islam or Buddists from Taoism and create intolerance and hatred.

Universities and colleges accommodate students from all backgrounds irrespective of colour, creed, religion or wealth, there can therefore be no justification for the segregation which continues to operate in our schools - religions which by the very nature produces intolerance and the hatred that we see in countries and/or areas where parents insist on sending their children to schools which teach intolerance one for the other.

The Socialist Labour Party would abolish all private and faith schools and have one unified comprehensive education system within which every child, every student and every adult has the same opportunity free of charge to a full education at all levels from the start of their education to their graduation.

The Manifesto makes no reference to those countries which already provide free education at all levels including at colleges and universities – Germany,

France, Norway, Demark, Sweden, Iceland, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic and Greece, yet we penalise our young people to a massive debt at the end of their education and at a time when they have been trained to give of their best to society as a whole.

It is the height of hypocrisy that many Members of Parliament who were educated free of charge can even think, let alone implement crippling costs on young people and/or their parents in order that young people today can have the same standard of education at an enormous cost implemented by those whose own education was free

DIGNITY FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT WORK

Labour's Policy seeks only to ameliorate the present system which consigns people in poverty, including the four million children currently recognised as living in poverty and deal with people in need of care by a meagre increase in the scandalous low carers allowance to the same level as job seekers allowance

Compare Labour's Policy with that of the Socialist Labour Party which has a policy that every person in Britain who is unemployed, in care, or is a pensioner will receive an income equal to the National Average Wage – currently £25,000 per year equal to £12.00 an hour; a sum just £2.00 more per hour than Labour said should be a living wage – then decide whose policy is right.

HOUSING

The Labour Party's Policy on housing is a disgrace and an insult to the Labour Government's Policy between 1945 and 1951. The Manifesto promises that Labour will invest to build over a million new homes but over a 5 year period, and even then only half will be council or housing association homes at what is termed an affordable rent or sale.

In other words a Labour Government is committed to retaining the private housing market which means private landlords, private contractors and a two-tier system. Any doubt about this policy is removed on page 61 which commits a Labour Government to guarantee Help to Buy funding until 2027 in order to give long-term certainty to both first time buyers **and the house building industry**!

The Labour Party Manifesto is committed to retaining private renters (private landlords). One of the ways in which they will achieve this irrational aim is to "empower tenants to call time on bad landlords by giving renters new consumer rights.

Compare the Labour Party's policy on how it intends to deal with the housing crisis with the policy of the Socialist Labour Party. The Labour Party is committed to build at least 100,000 council housing and association homes a year for genuinely affordable rent or sale. A policy which retains private landlords and accepts the terminology of the Tories when it states "affordable rents" The Socialist Labour Party on the other hand is committed to build or refurbish one million new or refurbished homes per year, a policy that would eliminate homelessness. We would have the same percentage level of rent people paid between 1945 and 1951. This would be commensurate with the council house rents in percentage terms equal to the rent paid in 1950's – That's a Socialist Policy!.

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

Labour's Policy in respect of the National Health Service makes me ill; it simply ameliorates the present system rather than take the concept of Aneurin Bevan to its ultimate objective of having a National Health Service including Dental Care which provides health care for every person at the time of need, upon demand and completely free of charge. We can help achieve this by abolishing the iniquitous private health care hospitals and schemes, abolish Hospital Trusts and restoring a National Health Service <u>not for the many but for everyone</u>

Britain needs a National Health Service fully funded with staff at all levels including doctors, nurses, care workers and all domestic and support staff. The cost requires an additional £35billion inflation proofed in line with the annual increase in the Retail Price Index. Our Health Service should not have waiting lists, it should have sufficient staff and resources to deal with every individual in need of care whether physical or mental disability.

Our Party is committed to a policy which would ensure that doctors and nurses or any other staff who have been trained free over years at public expense to be required to work in accordance with a binding contract within the National Health Service.

JUSTICE

Labour claims it is committed to a justice system to protect people whose rights are threatened. Labour would legislate to prohibit the characteristic of victims of domestic violence by their abuser in certain circumstances. This objective which seems on the surface to be reasonable does not deal with the inherent iniquities within our judicial system.

The Socialist Labour Party is committed to abolishing the adversarial system and replacing it with an inquisitorial system; a policy supported by many leading lawyers in the UK. Our Party would go further. We demand that all Judges should be elected and re-elected every five years. If an election process is necessary for the election of MP's and local councillors then Judges should be subject to the same democratic procedure. In addition the Socialist Labour Party would introduce a system similar to that which applies in France which would ensure that judges should be separately and specially trained. Judges would not be elected or appointed from the ranks of barristers and solicitors because this is a system that on any test is incestuous. This is not only a better system but is a system which is fairer and therefore, more favourable to victims to bring their cases for justice.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

Labour says it will make different choices. It will, it says, take advantage of near-record low interest rates to create a National Transformation Fund that will invest £250 billion over ten years in upgrading our economy. It claims that it will ensure that the huge potential of every part of our country is met. The next Labour government claims it will rebuild communities ripped apart by globalisation and neglected for years by government, and that it will rebuild and transform our economy so that it works for the many, not the few. It states it will put in place tight rules to ensure that investment is fairly shared around every region and nation of the UK. It will tear down the barriers that have held too many people back.- The SLP want a system for all.

Our country and its people have been held back by a lack of investment in the backbone of a modern economy – the infrastructure of transport, communications and energy systems. And when investment has happened, it has been too concentrated in too few places.

NEGOTIATING BREXIT

Labour says it accepts the Referendum result in 2016, yet it has a Policy of retaining the benefits of the Single Market and the Customs Union, apparently forgetting or ignoring the fact that the current Leaders of the Labour Party repeatedly voted against all the Treaties and Directives including the Treaties of Maastrict and Lisbon which introduced the iniquitous arrangements for free movement of Capital and Labour which have and are having a direct threat to British workers and British industries.

Acceptance of the Single Market and Customs Union in any form prevents Britain from giving subsidies to vital sections of our economy unless it has approval from the unelected Bureaucrats in Brussels. The only subsidies that the EU approve are those which lead to the closure of an industry and the loss of thousands of jobs. In Britain's case this has destroyed our manufacturing base from 80% of our economy down to 10% or our economy. It is political, economic and social suicide to even contemplate retaining the Single Market or Customs Union.

Its Manifesto commitment to maintain membership of European organisations which it claims "benefits to the UK such as Euratom" and the European Medicines Agency and the Erasmus Scheme represent a "sell out" by Labour's so-called acceptance of the Referendum result. Its commitment to what it terms "the uncertainty for our farmers and food producers by securing continued EU markets access allowing British farmers and food producers to continue to sell their products on the Continent is both misleading and deliberately disingenuous

Prior to joining the EEC and later the EU, British farmers and British fishermen produced over 80 percent of our own food. Today as a direct result of EU Regulations and Directives we only produce 59 percent of our own food; that is the price of EU membership.

The suggestion by Labour that it will ensure there is no drop in EU structural funding as a result of BREXIT until the end of the current EU funding in 2019/2020 is not only massively costly for British workers but it effectively commits Britain to continuing paying £10 billion per year membership fee to the EU; and have an ongoing annual trade deficit with the EU of £60 billion per year. This is the real price of membership of the European Union; add to

that Britain's costly arms expenditure to NATO is not only stupid but irrationally unsafe.

Article 50 (1) stipulates that 'any Member State may decide to withdraw from the Union in accordance with its own Constitutional requirements' prior to the Lisbon Treaty of 2009 which extended the EU's power over member states there was no Article 50 at all. Former EU members including Algeria in 1962, Greenland (a protectorate of Denmark) in 1985 and Saint Barthelemy (a former French colony in the Caribbean) left the EU simply by writing a letter of 'goodbye'

Article 50 (1) makes clear that an EU member state may withdraw from membership without any conditions 'in accordance with its own Constitutional arrangements'. Strictly speaking, since the United Kingdom has no written Constitution anyway, it was and is free to withdraw from the EU in any way it sees fit and proper. This means that under international law including the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties of 1969 the UK was and is entitled to leave the EU by mere notice. Alternatively, we could have left by 'mere notice' if Theresa May had triggered Article 50 (1).

The Labour Party current Leaders voted against British membership of the European Common Market and against membership of the European Union; they also voted against every Treaty and Directive including Treaties of Maastrict and the two Treaties of Lisbon which incorporate the "free movement of labour and capital" yet today the Labour Party is guilty of a U-turn and now supports the Single Market, Customs Union and the free movement of labour.

The Socialist Labour Party position on the European Union is crystal clear Withdrawal from the European Union is a central part of the Socialist Labour Party's international policy. Britain's withdrawal from the EU would allow our country to develop and expand links with nations in Asia, Africa, South Pacific, Latin America, the Caribbean and Cuba which has endured 54 years of economic blockade and sanctions because the United States fears Socialism. Withdrawal from the EU would save Britain £170 billion a year.

The Socialist Labour Party is totally committed to complete withdrawal from the European Union. That is the only way Britain can begin to regain control of our economy, sovereignty and our political power and end the free

movement of capital and labour. The free movement of capital and labour threaten the independence of not only Britain but of all countries which are members of this United States of Europe.

The European Union is a capitalist club that makes it easy for multi-national companies to exploit workers throughout its member states, while the sovereignty of those states is increasingly meaningless, and we are all at the mercy of a vast, faceless bureaucracy.

Britain's European Union 'membership fee' costs Britain approximately £170 billion a year. This deficit which has and is being used to impose austerity measures which are being paid for by the British people to combat a crisis caused by the European Union; the EU Central Bank; the IMF and the World Bank.

Britain's banks have been handed billions of taxpayers monies by the government yet taxpayers are being told that we have to repay the banks debt. To achieve this, the government has slaughtered public services such as health, social welfare, education, pensions and above all vicious cuts in care for the elderly. We now have the most severe austerity ever!

The true political nature of the European Union is now becoming clear. It was evident that the drive towards a United States of Europe was endorsed at the Summit which took place in Nice towards the end of 2000. The drive to establish a European army (a concept first advocated by Adolf Hitler), the introduction of taxation policies such as VAT, laws which over-ride laws adopted by the British people, do not represent an advance in either economic or human rights. On the contrary, the laws emanating from Europe mean that the British working class is infinitely worse off than it was in the 1970's.

Immigration – Migration

The Government and the media continue to brainwash the people of Britain by blaming the massive increase in people coming into Britain as immigrants including people who are seeking asylum from persecution in their own land.

There is a fundamental difference between immigration and economic migration from countries who are members of the European Union. The facts dispel this continuing misinformation.

In 2014/2015, 794,000 people entered the United Kingdom. Immigrants from countries outside the European Union totalled 251,000 (31.61%) whilst economic migrants from European Union countries, mainly Eastern Europe totalled 543,000 (68.38%). The economic migrants entered Britain under the EU Treaty which allows the free movement of labour.

In the same year, 2014-2015 327,000 people emigrated out of Britain to live abroad. It is clear that the number of people emigrating from Britain is more than the number of immigrants coming into Britain. These figures show that whilst 327,000 people left Britain to live abroad only 251,000 immigrants entered Britain.

If Britain had retained the policy it had in force for immigration prior to the European Union directive in 2004 the population of Britain would now be approximately 60 million as opposed to the projected 70 million within the next five years.

The Socialist Labour Party policy on immigration/emigration is clear. A sensible and fair immigration policy should give priority to asylum seekers, immigrants from Commonwealth countries previously "ruled" and exploited by Britain. The number of immigrants coming into Britain is 100,000 less than the number of people emigrating from Britain each year.

Opposing membership of the European Union is part of the Socialist Labour Party's internationalist outlook. We want Britain to come out of Europe and back into the world, developing and expanding links with nations in Asia, Africa, the South Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean.

RIGHTS AT WORK

The Labour Party Manifesto sets out a 20-point plan for what it describes as ensuring security and equality at work. This policy is like the curates egg "good in part" and "rotten in other parts". For example it confirms its acceptance for European Union citizens to freely enter Britain and take jobs that should be the right of British citizens. Labour's Policy is to legislate to ensure that any employer who wishes to recruit labour (workers) from

abroad (including the European Union) does not undercut workers at home – this is an acceptance of the free movement of Labour. The Labour Party claims it is committed to repeal the Trade Union Act but it does not say which Act. All the Trade Union Acts which allow Government interference with trade union rights are unlawful and in conflict with the United Nations Charter and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Directive to which Britain is a signatory.

Labour's Policy proposes a Minimum Wage of at least £10 per hour but not until 2020 and only for workers aged 18 or over – Why not have a Minimum Wage as the Socialist Labour Party proposes for all workers and all those unemployed or who are pensioners of at least £12 per hour or £25,000 per year.

Its proposal to "Amend" the take-over code to ensure every take-over proposal has a clear plan in place to protect workers and pensioners because workers should not suffer when a Company is "sold" is an acceptance that Labour accepts private companies. Any doubt about its compromise and collaboration policy on Trade Union Rights is outlined on page 48 where it states "use public spending power to drive up standards including only awarding public contracts to "companies which recognise trade unions" This again is confirmation that Labour accepts a mixed market economy and accepts private and multi-national companies.

The Socialist Labour Party sets out what a Socialist Party should do

"Repeal all Anti Trade Union Laws

"The anti-trade union laws were introduced by both the Tory and Labour governments between 1974 and 2016. The aim was and is to emasculate the trade union movement, prevent trade unions and workers taking industrial or strike action. The object was to have a compliant workforce and to remove rights which trade unions and trade unionists had won in over two centuries of struggle. The anti-trade union laws are designed to allow high unemployment and low pay which is now embodied in zero-hours contracts and companies organised by gang masters.

"The Socialist Labour Party is committed to scrapping these laws altogether. They have been a weapon used to frighten workers and their unions, and are

designed to stop them taking action to protect jobs, decent wages and good conditions – including hours of work, holidays, sick pay and pensions.

"We believe that trade unions, controlled democratically by their members, are vital for a free and just society. British workers are being denied their human rights set out in the United Nations Charter and the International Labour Organisation conventions. Trade union activity has become in many cases a criminal offence. Workers are denied the right to effectively defend themselves or other workers without facing prosecution, and at the beginning of the 21st century we still have no legal right to strike in Britain.

"Trade unions which seek to defend jobs, services or industries face massive penalties, including the freezing of union funds (sequestration) or even receivership – all designed to stop unions from functioning effectively on behalf of their members, or in support of members of other trade unions.

"Tragically, too many trade union leaders are failing to defend their members against exploitation, abuse and loss of jobs. The Socialist Labour Party made clear that trade unions should adopt a policy of non-compliance with unjust laws.

"Our forebears had a policy of non-compliance with unjust laws, a policy which brought about trade union recognition and decent wages and working conditions. It was this policy of non-compliance by the suffragettes which secured the right of women to have a vote.

"Defiance by the trade union movement as a whole would render government anti-trade union legislation totally ineffective – as it did when workers stopped work to secure the release of the Pentonville Five in 1971, workers and the magnificent workers in Birmingham in 1972 who came to the aid of miners and closed Saltley Gates! This helped miners win a historic victory.

DEFENCE

The Labour Party's Manifesto commits Britain to a Defence Policy which is a disgrace. The Policy makes clear that our Armed Forces will be able to deploy to UN peace-keeping (which means any involvement), in countries the UN feels there should be intervention such as the fiasco in Iraq, Libya and Afghanistan. In addition, Labour makes clear its commitment to

NATO, a policy which could involve Britain in attacks on independent sovereign states.

It would appear that Labour has forgotten the disastrous role it played with the United States in Korea in 1950 a policy which haunts not only S.E. Asia, but the rest of the world. Above all Labour's policy to support the renewal of Trident Nuclear weapons, is an utter betrayal of thousands of people with a commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament as members of CND.

The Socialist Labour Party condemns the statements by the moron who is President of the United States of America; in particular his statements to wipe off the face of the earth North Korea and Iran and tighten the screw on Cuba. We also are critical of the role of both China and Russia in acceding to the demands of the United States to impose vicious sanctions on North Korea, Iran and Cuba despite international agreements signed with Iran and Cuba. We call on both China and Russia to stand by these countries who have been threatened almost daily with both sanctions and military might. There was no objection from the USA when Israel, Pakistan and India acquired Nuclear Weapons yet they threatened to inflict massive damage on a country that the USA has surrounded by military force both in South Korea and in the South China Sea. There is only one way to deal with bullies and that is to confront them and make clear that threats and/or action will be opposed.

A Socialist Policy would divert the whole of this stupid expenditure on arms and divert it into building Britain back to its original place as a major manufacturer. This Policy would save £150 billion over the period of time it will take to renew the Trident Nuclear missile programme. The Socialist Labour Party would turn "swords into plough shares."

PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

There is no reference to the voting system in Britain. We are one of the few countries which operates "the first past the post" electoral system. The Socialist Labour Party campaigns for proportional representation and we find it astonishing that Labour cannot see that this system is not only democratic but had it been in use in 2017 Britain today would have a Labour Government The Labour Representation Committee in 1900 and the Labour Party in 1918 supported Proportional Representation as a principled position It is a sobering thought that had the Labour Party retained P.R. as a voting

system in its political programme Britain would never have seen a Tory Government again after 1945.

In 1903 James Connolly warned that support for the Social Democratic Labour Representation Committee - which later became the Labour Party in 1918 - would be a recipe for disaster in political, economic and social terms. History has proved Connolly's analysis was correct!

Arthur Scargill
Leader
Socialist Labour Party
28th October 2017.