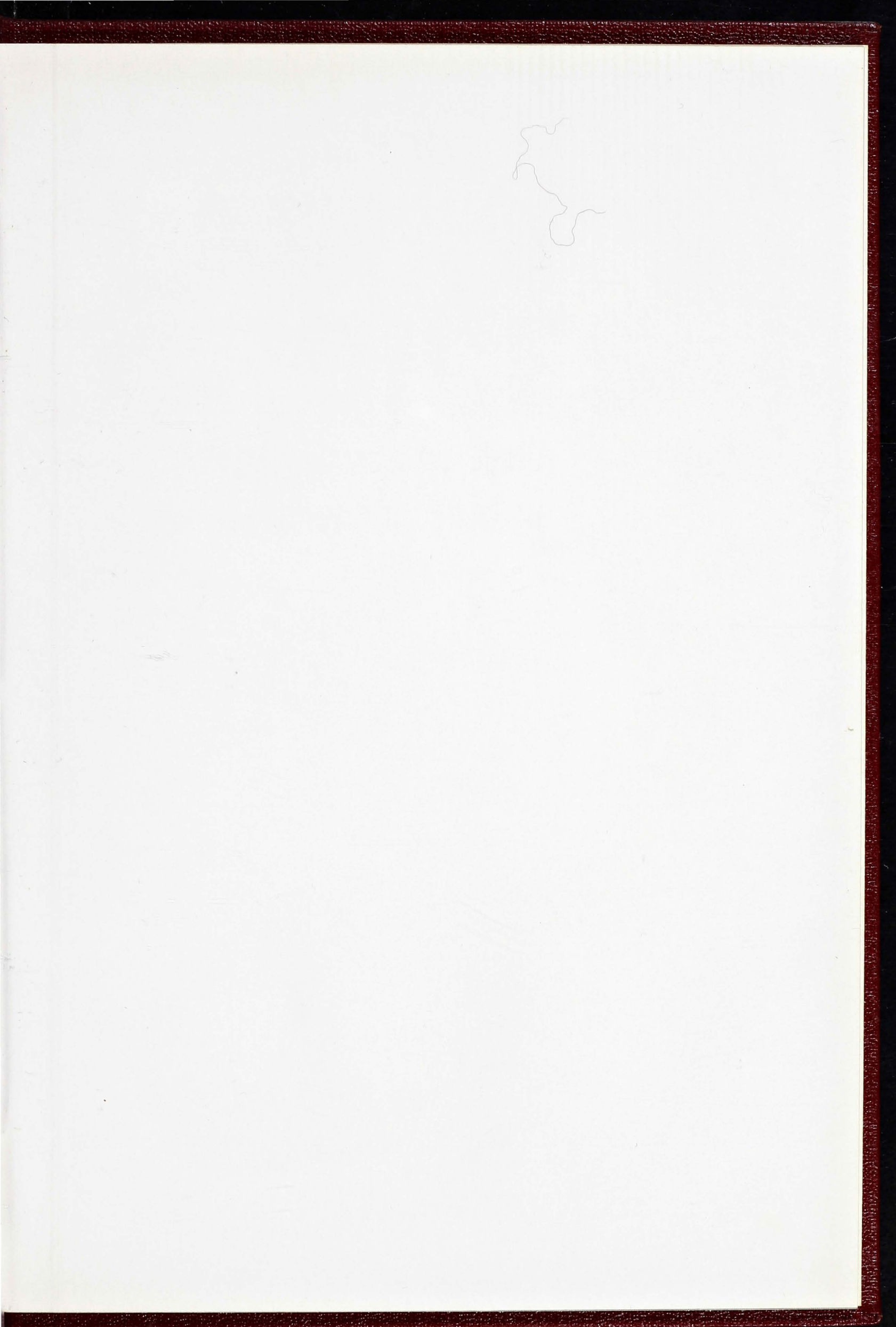
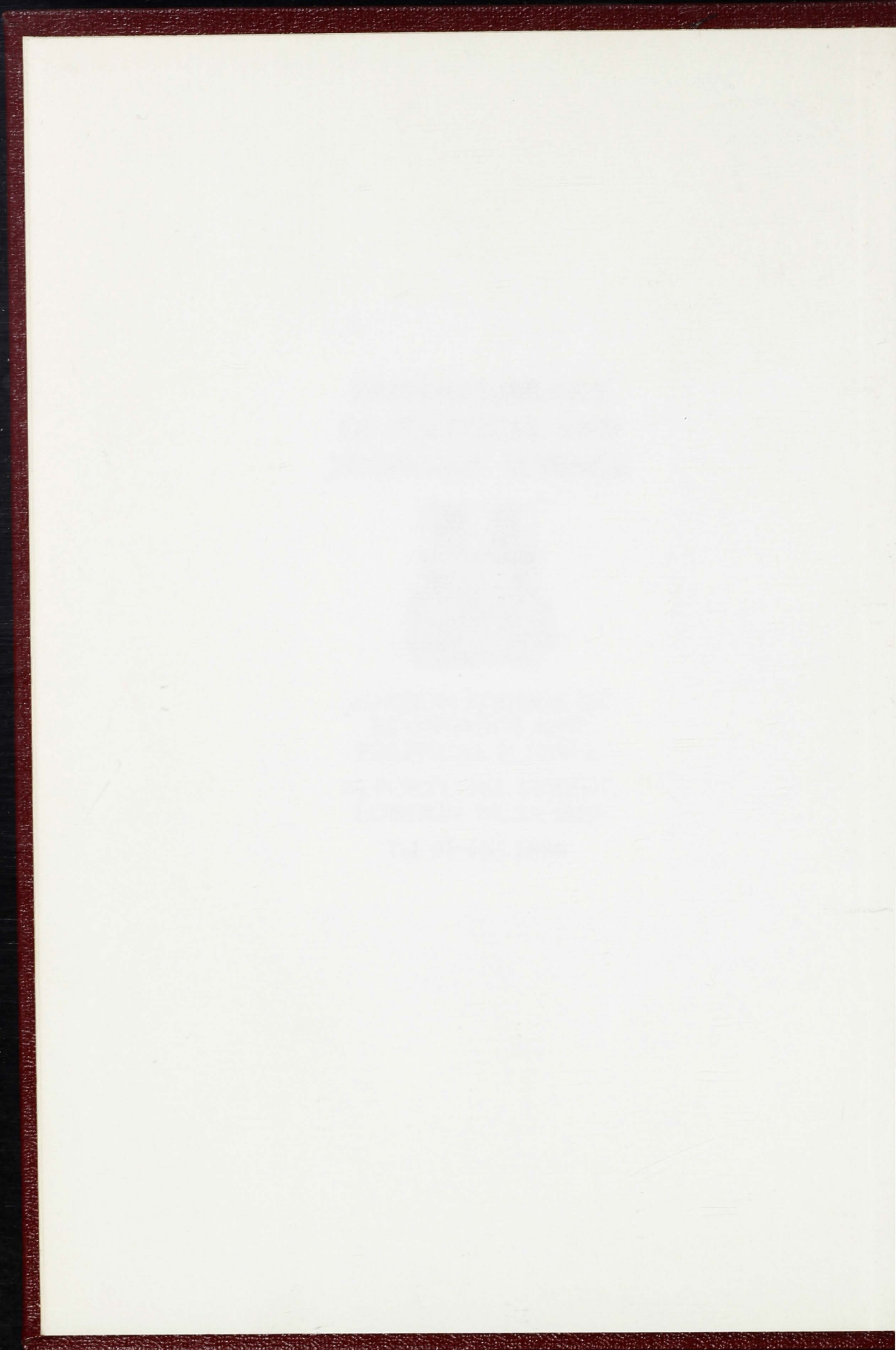


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Fabian Society

No.489

LABOUR'S CHOICES:

Roy Hattersley, Eric Heffer
Neil Kinnock, Peter Shore

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fabian tract 489**Labour's Choices**

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1. Roy Hattersley

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The Labour Party is at a crossroads in its history. And before the end of the year we may have decided the route which we will take. The choice is simple. We can become again a great national party — prepared, determined and able to win the next election. Or we can accept the role of a permanent minority — willing to become an unhappy compromise between a protest movement and a pressure group. Winning the next election is our moral duty. If we put at risk that victory we betray the men and women who depend on us. And we already know that to recapture the hundred and twenty seats that will make up a Labour majority, we have to become again the party that represents the hopes and aspirations of our traditional supporters.

That does not require us to abandon our ideals or reject our socialist philosophy. Indeed, if we are to become again a party of power rather than a party of protest we need to say more, not less, about both our idealism and our ideology. We cannot win as working-class Conservatives or shop-floor Liberals. Nor would we deserve to win if we abandoned our historic duty to evangelize for a more equal society. It is our belief that "socialism is about equality" which distinguishes us from the grim authoritarians of the far left and the social ameliorators of the soggy middle ground. It is that hopeful, generous, confident philosophy around which we have to build popular support. Some of our votes will come from the families whose material condition will be much improved by the greater equality we pursue. But their votes alone are not enough. To help those underprivileged families we need the support of men and women who endorse our egalitarian programme because they believe in the principle of equality. We win their votes by combining a positive and passionate ideological campaign with a set of practical proposals which will benefit the whole of society. That is why we must make sure that in the campaign one other aspect of our programme is unequivocally clear. Ideology and reality are not in conflict.

We can fight the next election on a

manifesto which is just as progressive as that on which we lost on June 9 — and win. The difference between victory and defeat is the willingness of the Labour Party to offer a programme which seems both relevant to the nation's needs and capable of fulfilment. The British people are not antagonized by socialism. But they are unnerved by unreality. At the last election even our popular policies seemed incredible and as a result the promises which we made on unemployment, pensions and housing had the electoral value of no promises at all. When the next election comes, we must again be recognized as a serious political party — united in our determination both to take power and to use it in the practical interests of the people we represent. In the difficult days that lie ahead it should be our commitment to the ideal of equality that guides and sustains us as we begin methodically to reconstruct our policy.

To achieve or to approach that ideal we must initially provide special assistance for the areas of greatest need, then move on to the positive promotion of equality by genuine redistributive policies. That, of course, needs action by the Government. But it is action which liberates not subjugates our people. Each of the items on equality's immediate agenda will curtail the liberties of the rich and powerful. But all of them will liberate the poor and the weak. The liberties we cherish are very different from Margaret Thatcher's notion of freedom. She supports the right of the rich to spend their wealth without interference, the right of the powerful to control other men's destinies, and the right of majorities to ignore the interests of smaller, less favoured groups. For us freedom is more than the absence of restraint; it is the creation of a society in which lives are more fully lived.

I offer four items on equality's immediate agenda — items which have been long neglected because we have not pursued the vision of a free and equal society with the evangelical vigour that such an ideal should inspire — or because vested interests of our own have blocked progress in the pursuit of

their own narrow cause:

1. We need a national minimum wage. It is the only way to help the lowest paid. They will not struggle up the wage league through the benevolent operation of free collective bargaining. They are the lowest paid because they lack the industrial muscle to force their employers into paying a living wage. A socialist government committed to the pursuit of equality would provide them with the strength which they now lack.
2. We need a massive programme of concentrated spending on the areas of disadvantage — both rural and urban. Too much of our public spending is spread too evenly across the whole country. Schools in areas with special needs, hospitals feeling the pressure of age and overcrowding, housing projects in areas of particular deprivation, should be given absolute priority.
3. We need positive employment policies to protect groups within our community who are kept out of jobs by either overt or unconscious discrimination. Unless we introduce a new employment law, even when the upturn comes, the black and Asian British will be left behind in poverty and unemployment.
4. We have to remove those positive barriers to a more equal society which have been intentionally erected by the rich and powerful to preserve the gap which divides them from their fellow citizens. Those institutions — the public schools, private medicine parasiting on the National Health Service — emphasize the class division in our society and depress the standard of national provision available to everyone. They must go.

But, if we are once more to achieve the reputation of a serious political party ready to govern in the interests of the whole nation we have to put our own house in order now. We cannot go through four years of catastrophe, and then hope that all the earlier errors will be forgotten during a four-week election campaign. If we are humiliated in early by-elections, lose seats on local councils to the Conservatives, fail to fight the European elections seriously, adopt unworkable policies after brief conference debates and organize purges of

loyal and long-serving councillors and Members of Parliament, simply because they are not in wholehearted agreement with what is fashionable in their own locality, we can hardly expect to recover our popularity in the month before polling day. Recovery has to begin now.

It has to begin with both an examination of our policies and a careful re-appraisal of how our policy decisions are carried out. We have gone through five years of party reorganization which has created area after area of institutionalised conflict. There is no going back on the reforms of the early eighties. We have to go further forward. The card carrying Labour Party member must be emancipated. If we give power — and power means the right to vote on every vital issue — to every individual member, we will once more represent the real opinions of our traditional supporters. We will then all be able to campaign wholeheartedly for our democratic socialist policies in the knowledge and confidence that they have been agreed by truly democratic means.

If we had listened to the people, we would have avoided the errors of the recent election campaign — without abandoning any of our principles. In part, we made our mistakes because we had lost touch with their real opinions. But a further cause of our defeat has been the debilitating requirement to pass some arbitrary test set for the party leadership by self-selected guardians of the socialist conscience. It was they who insisted on making unilateral nuclear disarmament, leaving the EEC and free collective bargaining the issues against which socialist purity is measured. On these areas of policy my position is clear.

I oppose the stationing of Cruise missiles in this country. I am against the purchase of Trident. British Polaris should be included in multilateral negotiations in the hope that the Soviet Union will respond to that initially unreciprocated gesture. But we cannot, in honesty or logic, remain members of Nato (as conference decreed by

a majority of five to one) yet refuse to accept our Nato obligation — especially if we argue, as we did during the election campaign, that Nato provides our protection. This contradiction in our policy has to be resolved speedily.

No one believes that British withdrawal from the EEC will be a major feature of the next general election campaign. My opposition to leaving the EEC is long-standing. To withdraw now would be to put at risk thousands of British jobs for no other reason than the fear that the Treaty of Rome would prevent us from carrying out a socialist economic policy. That fear is groundless, as demonstrated by the consistent French policy of staying in but acting according to their own national interests. That is the approach I have long advocated.

To give substance to our economic strategy we need to re-create the relationship that was built up between the unions and the Labour Government during the 1970s. The great achievement of the now derided social contract was the way in which it involved trade unions in every part of our legislative and economic programme. Indeed, during the recent years of opposition the trade union-Labour Party liaison committee often provided the common sense our manifesto needed. When it seemed that our plan to invest pension funds in manufacturing industry had become a financial nonsense and a political liability, it was the liaison committee which produced a sensible policy on public investment. That sort of valuable detailed involvement has to be reproduced time after time. It has to be done not only through the formal mechanisms of the National

Economic Development Council and sub-committees. It has to be re-created through the direct involvement of trade unions in the business of government — our investment decisions; our plans for regional policy; our attitudes towards import controls; our judgment on the proper exchange rate. But that partnership has to work in both directions. We cannot have the trade unions initially involved in every aspect of our economic policy except the overall level of earnings. That is not a call for a detailed policy on earnings restraint with the trade unions and their members carrying the burden of economic recovery. I am, however, saying that to obtain an expansion of the economy which puts our people back to work and pays for the level of social services that we need, there has to be a measure of planning for earnings which is no less effective than the planning of investment, output and exports. And, of course, it is inherent in my advocacy of a national minimum wage.

These matters, and the genuine pursuit of equality, which is the cornerstone of our socialism, must be tackled now. We have no time for a long period of gentle convalescence. We cannot take refuge in comforting clichés about the capitalist press or venerable shibboleths about the crooked opinion polls. For the next five years, responding to the hopes and aspirations of our supporters and potential supporters must be the party's abiding obsession. I repeat that, for the old, the sick, the black and the unemployed, it is our moral duty to win. That is why I am so committed to the pursuit of a parliamentary majority and why anyone who denies or neglects that objective betrays the men and women who look to a Labour government for protection and assistance.

2. Eric Heffer

The Tory answer to Britain's problems has been to throw up a right-wing leadership who totally accept the free market economy. Sir Keith Joseph and Mrs Thatcher have repudiated the views of the traditional Conservatives, such as Harold Macmillan and Rab Butler, and as far as they are concerned the "middle way" is dead. The Tory solution is bound to fail in the long term, but if it is continued with in the short term there is no doubt Britain will go downhill and its people will suffer mass poverty, mass unemployment and the destruction of the welfare state, with the trade unions hamstrung through legislation. The only real democratic solution is socialism. That is why it is necessary particularly after Labour's defeat, to define what democratic socialism is.

There are a few in the Labour Party who would like it to abandon socialism altogether, while others would like socialism watered down until it was indistinguishable from a liberalistic view of society. The party, however, is a socialist party despite them, and the aims and objectives are clearly written down in its constitution. Clause 4 in particular makes it crystal clear how socialism can be achieved. Some of the confusion has arisen because of a misuse of the term "social democrat". The so-called modern social democrats such as Professor David Marquand place themselves in opposition to what they term the "Marxists" as well as to democratic socialists. They are in a historically false position, as well as failing to define what Marxism is. In practice there are "57 varieties" of Marxism. It is interesting to note that the original Social Democratic Federation in Britain, led by Hyndman, were Marxists, and although they did not stay within the fold of the Labour Party they actually helped to found it.

It is particularly important at the present time to define what we mean by democratic socialism, because democratic socialists are being attacked from a number of quarters. There are those, particularly in the media who argue that Labour is dominated by the so-called "Marxist Left", and that if they got power they would bring about an anti-

democratic communist type regime, based on the Eastern European pattern. On the other side, there are those who argue that Labour is not genuinely socialist, that it cannot achieve socialism, and that inevitably it must be pushed aside to make way for the "true socialists" who I presume are organised in one of the sectarian miniscule groups that hover around the fringe of the Labour Party, protesting that Labour is useless.

Both sets of critics are wrong, Labour is not and never has been out to build a communist-type state, and neither is it in existence to patch up a decaying capitalist system. Certainly, Labour governments can be criticised for their failures and not every leader has always been genuinely socialist, but the party — and it is the party that is important — is out to create a democratic socialist society by consent, through parliamentary means. It is possible, unfortunately, that if a Labour government seriously began to transform society in a socialist direction then it would find ranged against it anti-democratic forces who would resort to anti-democratic means to stop it.

Labour believes in extending democracy in politics and in industry, in involving the people at all levels in decision-making, and as part of that democratization it repudiates racialism, all forms of discrimination against women and all oppressive actions. It has been said by some in the Labour Party that it should not concern itself with the wider questions and should concentrate on bread and butter issues, because that is what the people are only really concerned about. Personally, I do not accept that the people are concerned only about immediate issues. But in any case, the wider issues are bread and butter ones, and those who fail to see that cannot begin to understand the ABC of socialism. Only socialist measures can restore full employment, ensure fair incomes and provide the people with decent homes and a good education.

Britain is undoubtedly in a serious economic crisis. Unemployment is rising and with the development of the second technological revolution unemployment

levels are likely to get worse. Even if inflation does fall, this will be due only to the high levels of unemployment, plus curbs on the trade unions that the Government have introduced. Britain is not alone, in fact. The whole of the Western capitalist world is in crisis, and it is clear that the Keynesian interventionist policies adopted by Labour and Tory governments since 1945 have not fully worked, although in association with a war economy arising out of Korea, Vietnam, the cold war, etc, they helped stave off the crisis for quite a long period. The mixed economy does not work. It has not and cannot solve the problems of the Western countries, especially those with advanced economic systems.

I believe the opportunities for democratic socialism, particularly in Europe, are greater than they have been for a long time. Some of the European communist parties are now developing democratic socialist positions and moving away from Soviet concepts and distancing themselves from Soviet policy. Socialist parties have also grown in strength and at last the possibility exists of a socialist Europe which rejects both the bureaucratic, totalitarian system of the Soviet Union and the unbridled "free" capitalist system of the USA. It is therefore of great importance that we explain what we mean by democratic socialism, particularly in the British context. Democratic socialists were responsible for the creation of the welfare state. They have, through Labour governments, pushed forward the frontiers of socialism, creating a number of important socialist outposts such as the National Health Service. Democratic socialists have always fought for a free education system, for better housing, for decent wages and conditions of employment, for strong trade unions, for good local government. In fact they have always supported all reforms that benefit the people. However, democratic socialism goes beyond mere reform and stands for a fundamental change in society.

Despite Labour governments Britain remains a class-ridden society. Democratic socialists believe it is essential to end class society. Socialism cannot be achieved

unless that happens and genuine equality of opportunity cannot be created while class divisions exist. Class society arises because the ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange is in the hands of a relatively small group. The socialist case for public ownership is not based on the need for greater efficiency in industry. It is nice to have greater efficiency, but efficiency — or inefficiency — can apply either to public or private companies. That is not the criteria for public ownership. Public ownership is necessary in order to eliminate class divisions and to end class power and privilege. It is impossible to create a classless society while private ownership of the major industries exist. That is basically the case for public ownership.

This immediately raises the question of how much public ownership? Is it essential to take over all industry, ie every small business, and if so should that be done by nationalization? The Labour Party, calls for public ownership, which does not necessarily mean nationalization. Nationalization has too often been equated with socialism. That is not so, it can be state capitalism, as are our nationalized industries in Britain. There are many forms of public ownership, which can range from the nationalization of an entire industry or groups of companies to municipal or co-operative ownership, or even a type of semi-public ownership, with a minority holding by private interests. It is essential that there should be varying forms of public ownership, otherwise it is possible to end up with a bureaucratic society, with the bureaucrats having their octopus-like tentacles in just about every aspect of industrial and civil life. The experiences of the East European communist states should make us recoil from that. It is important to create a society where the state has a positive role to play, but at the same time it must not be all-pervading.

The first thing, then, to create a socialist society, is to develop public ownership in many and varying forms which eliminates the power and influence of the capitalist class. Secondly, to avoid the creation of a

new class and to ensure that society does not become bureaucratic it is necessary to create forms of democratic management. A schematic approach to democratic management should be rejected, otherwise, despite democracy, bureaucracy can develop. I say democratic management because there are a lot of misconceptions about what is meant by industrial democracy and workers' control. Industrial democracy can mean merely an extension of free collective bargaining. It can mean that workers by right receive more information, that they participate in establishing planning agreements and have a greater say in health, safety and welfare matters. It could also mean that they have representatives on boards of directors. That, however, is not strictly democratic management. Workers can also exercise forms of workers' control. They can, by the use of their industrial power, force managements to do what they want, at a given moment. They therefore exercise workers' control, but that also is not democratic management, or to put it another way, self-management. Yet a system of self-management will have to be created if bureaucracy is to be avoided and workers are to participate in real decision-making and not be alienated from their work.

What is required is a system of elections for workers' councils, which will either manage industry or exercise control over the managers. There is no need to be too formal, to lay down a blueprint. Experiments can take place, some of them based on the system of workers' councils in Yugoslavia, others more clearly allied to methods of election adopted for our municipal authorities. The important thing is to integrate self-management into a national plan of production, otherwise it would be a type of syndicalist society, where workers did not concern themselves with society as a whole, but only with their own interests in their own factory.

The third vital ingredient of democratic socialism is democracy itself. There cannot be socialism without democracy. The two are indivisible. The deposed Czech Communist Party leader Dubcek argued

for "Socialism with a human face". The truth is that if it hasn't got a human face it cannot be socialism. The East European communist governments claim that their societies are socialist. They point out that in their countries there is public ownership with a planned economy, and therefore socialism exists. They of course are fully supported in this claim by most of our media, who are only too keen to equate socialism with the bureaucratic system of the Soviet Union and the other East European states.

The fourth thing that is essential for democratic socialism is to be international in outlook and action. It may seem strange that one can say this and at the same time be against the Common Market. Yet there is no real contradiction. The Common Market, based as it is upon the Rome Treaty, is a market which fosters and protects the capitalist system and operates against the development of public ownership, even though some public ownership has been developed in some of the Common Market countries. The Common Market is one thing, internationalism is something different. It is my view that we in the Labour Party, while being against the Common Market, must not get ourselves into a position of being against the European peoples. In fact, the only solution to Europe's problems is the socialist one. We must have the perspective of a socialist Europe. That cannot come about overnight. It is a fairly long way off, but if we believe as internationalists in a socialist Europe then to that end it is essential to strengthen our ties with all European socialists, in or out of the Common Market, and especially with our trade union allies.

As part of the political fight for a socialist Europe, it is essential to carry out the fight for peace. We should have as an objective a nuclear-free Europe. Detente must be worked for, and ultimately Nato and Warsaw Pacts be dismantled. Again, that is not possible immediately, but a beginning can be made with a reduction in the armed forces of both East and West, and both the East and West should agree that all nuclear weapons and bases should be dismantled

from the Russian/Polish borders in the East to the Portuguese coast and covering Britain in the West. Socialism cannot be created unless the conditions of peace prevail. To live in peace and harmony with one's neighbour internationally is a basic socialist objective.

Let me now turn to the role of the trade unions. The trade unions are an integral part of the Labour Party. They were the driving force in the creation of the party, and they will have an important role to play in a democratic socialist society. Unlike Soviet trade unions, British trade unions must never become a part of the state machinery. They must always have an independent existence and role, because even in a socialist society it will be necessary to have checks and balances in connection with the elected government, or even elected workers, councils in a factory or industry. The workers, even in a workers' state, will require organizations to protect themselves from their own state apparatus. State power and control should be slowly reduced until it is almost non-existent, so that government by the people, with the administration of things instead of people, becomes a reality, not just something to be considered in the distant future. The trade unions in a socialist society can and will play an important part in welfare arrangements, in health legislation, in negotiating rates of pay and conditions of employment. But they will also be another centre of power within the democratic structure of society.

I have agreed to stand for leader of the Labour Party because I believe that the whole of the membership of the party and the affiliated trade unions should have a real choice. I believe in the widest democratic involvement of the membership, which I fought for within the party, and I believe it is essential in this leadership election. In standing for leader, I stand on the following programme:-

1. An all-out attack to be developed inside and outside Parliament against the Thatcher Conservative Government. That the party supports and defends the trade unions, and that the unity forged between the two bodies be further developed and

strengthened. That there must be an intelligent, vigorous and competent leadership and fight in Parliament to expose and undermine Thatcherism.

2. That every effort be made to explain and expose the diversionary nature of the SDP Alliance and that radical policies be developed which can win back those voters who have temporarily been attracted to it.

3. To accept and fight for the basic ideas of the constitution, particularly Clause 4, ie, the extension of public ownership of the means of production and exchange under democratic control.

4. To fully support the policies as agreed by party conference, especially those embodied in the general election manifesto, on the strategy for jobs, for nuclear disarmament and Europe. I believe that in Europe it is essential to work for a socialist Europe, at the same time as we withdraw from the Rome Treaty.

5. That there must be the greatest possible development of a truly egalitarian society, with the extension of women's rights, the ending of discrimination against black people and Asians etc, and that our youth be given every possible assistance in all spheres of life.

6. That the party continues with its democratization and that it further develops the process, by a much greater involvement of the whole membership.

7. That policy and administration issues be settled by democratic discussion and through the party's democratic machinery. Party internal questions should be settled within the party and not in the press and via the media.

This is a time for the party to analyse soberly the reasons for the recent defeat in the general election. It is not a time for histrionics, for soft easy answers, but for serious discussion and effort. The time has come to build a mass party. The fight back must begin now. Labour can and must win the next election, otherwise, all the progress made under Labour governments will be destroyed. Labour needs a united, dedicated leadership which will fight to carry out the party's socialist policies which have been developed over recent years.

3. Neil Kinnock

The size and nature of the defeat of Labour on June 9 and the experiences leading up to it provide — for me at least — the most compelling confirmation of the views which I had reached long before, views that I first saw crystallized sometime around the 1959 general election campaign, as I discovered the words of R. H. Tawney: “It ought to be possible for a movement, like an individual, to be both sensible and trenchant . . . Until the Labour Party can persuade its fellow countrymen that it represents both — that its idealism is not lunacy, nor its realism mere torpor — it will neither deserve to win general support, nor succeed in winning it.”

Now, as when those words were written in the 1930s political loyalty has to be earned and retained from generation to generation. Even if it is true that “floating voters” are now more numerous than before, it does not follow that this is an irreversible process. Nor does it follow that it is exclusively damaging to Labour or that it is related exclusively or even mainly to the real or imagined failures of past Labour governments. Indeed, in a paradoxical fashion, the very opposite may be true. From 1945 and up until relatively recently British society has been increasingly composed of those for whom the welfare state, near full employment and an annual increment in their standard of living has been taken more or less for granted. Few people — thankfully — have had to engage in tooth and claw struggle for a decent wage, working conditions, basic human rights and access to education. In a sense, therefore, Labour suffers in some ways from the *success* of a century of organized labour, and from the necessary adjustments which have been forced on the “free enterprise” system. Capitalism, as Karl Marx advised, “can only survive by transcending itself.” In Britain since 1945 the success of mitigation, it appears, has slaked the thirst for transformation.

It is useless for socialists to surrender to the idea that our task is made hopeless by that fact. If democratic socialism depends solely or mainly on the fuel of poverty, deprivation and pain for its advance it will be motionless. Democratic socialism must

be as appealing as a source of efficiency and justice to the affluent and secure as to the impoverished and insecure if it is to succeed. The business of transforming society needs the legions of the confident as well as the battalions of the disadvantaged. Democratic socialism emphasizes the interest of payer and user alike in attaining a society with universally dependable and accessible health treatment, the serenity of good homes, the security of pensions and benefits, the freedom from the ugliness of poverty and from the menace of crime, the merit of a free and fair education system of high quality. To achieve support for that rational view democratic socialists constantly need to show the utility of democratic socialism for all as well as its desirability for the enlightened and its life or death necessity for the needy. And they need to celebrate success as a basis for further advance. As a movement we have not done so.

Our philosophy has been apologetic, our presentation coy. We have made our commitment to the welfare state seem like decent kindness when we should also have been emphasizing that universal and collective provision for care and opportunity is the fount of individual liberty and the means of discovering and nurturing merit.

Democratic socialism, with its emphasis on the systematic planning of the creation of wealth for use is a *productionist* philosophy. For decades we have made it to appear to be only a *distributionist* attitude and we have consequently allowed conservatism with its accompanying waste of abilities, thoughtless misuse of resources and fixation with making money rather than making things look like the mentality of production and thrift. We never even claimed credit properly for what Gramsci called the “passive revolution” — the modification of the economic structure by government intervention with subsidies and support to keep privately-owned industry alive and investing, if not actually kicking. When such a major part of our humane and creative ideology has been defensive it is small wonder that in recent years we have been losing other ideological battles on, for

instance, public expenditure, the positive role of trade unions, the commitment to individual liberty and the development of a modern international role for our country.

The long-term erosion in our voting strength, our philosophical hopelessness, our failure to respond to a reshuffled class system, to speak in a contemporary language, all combine to push the Labour movement to a new point of departure. I do not believe that our choice of socialist direction should be merely a matter of deciding between the "left" or the "right" — and certainly not as these classifications have been used over the past few years by media shorthand thinkers and self-appointed spokesmen of the factions working in an unholy alliance in which the editors require devils of extremism and the factionalists need the demons of a persecuting press. The first step in creatively developing an ideology and strategy of democratic socialism lies elsewhere. It requires first the recognition that every socialist movement exhibits not only flaws of caution, complacency and conservatism in the analysis on the right, but seductive, superficially radical, but ultimately destructive and reactionary tactics and strategy on the ultra-left.

In the present, as always in the past, democratic socialists will have to fight on both fronts. Up until relatively recently the main emphasis of attack has been addressed ideologically towards social democracy (I use the term in its most recent loose coinage, to refer to the body of opinion associated with the views most articulately outlined by the late Anthony Crosland) inside, and subsequently also outside, the Labour Party. The essence of social democrat philosophy is that the present economic system is capable of overcoming its own contradictions and of providing full employment and sustained growth. The assumption of civilized capitalism and modulated Toryism forms the foundation stone of Crosland's whole substantial argument in the future of Socialism. The fact that it was so completely wrong does not negate the valuable contributions made by Crosland on specific policy topics, nor does it tarnish his undoubtedly sincere

ideals. But it does collapse the whole theoretical edifice of modern social democracy. And it is precisely this assumption which underpinned the steady growth of social democracy inside the Labour movement from 1950 onwards, which has now been dismantled in the face of almost five million real unemployed and six million beneath the official poverty line and born-again Toryism.

Modern social democracy has been proved wrong not only in its economic premise, but also in the political assumptions based on it. In the atmosphere of the so-called consensus politics — the "Butskellism" of the 1950s and 1960s — social democrats rejected the possibility of the revival of a reactionary, class-orientated Tory Party and the destruction of the welfare state. As late as 1964 Crosland wrote of the Conservative Party that it was never likely that it would destroy, or attempt to destroy, the hard core of the social and welfare achievements incorporated within modern Britain. "It is not, for one thing", he wrote "in the nature of the British Conservative Party, which for all its clamorous fringe of backwoodsmen, usually entrusts its leadership to cautious, realistic Peelites." "Indeed", he continued, "it lacks the essential attribute of a counter-revolutionary party — a faith; a dogma, even a theory. A passionate desire to restore the past must rest on a deep attachment — moral, ideological or theoretical — to the virtues of that past." How ironic, almost bizarre, those words seem today. Only David Owen with his declared willingness to work with Mrs Thatcher appears to believe them any longer.

Democratic socialists have a radical and rational vision. We believe that the significant changes which we seek require a wholesale transformation of existing society. We do not believe it to be possible to create "equality" or "justice" in sufficient quantity or with sufficient quality in an economy which is permanently ruled by the values of minority privilege and majority sacrifice. We agree with Matthew Arnold that "on the one hand inequality harms by pampering; on the other by vulgarising and depressing. A system

founded on it is against nature, and, in the long run, breaks down". Rationality and morality both demand that the system dependent upon the inefficiencies and injustices of codified inequality be defeated, and defeated democratically, systematically and conclusively.

But knowing what to reject is not the same thing as adopting the correct course. In the Labour Party we are neither impossibilists nor adventurists. We do not gamble on a sudden crisis which will, somehow, as if by magic, precipitate a socialist utopia. Nor do we put forward a programme to be achieved by violence and bloodshed. Nor do we offer a programme whose justification lies in its pristine, socialist purity. Some of his avowed followers ought to recall that it was Trotsky himself who pointed out that "It is not enough to create a programme, it is necessary that the working class accept it. But the sectarian, in the nature of things, comes to a full stop upon half the task." The correct programme without the popular support is, as he said, "mere sectarianism" — a commonplace enough observation but for the fact that it so often goes unheeded by those who like to call themselves Trotskyites.

Unless the roots of a movement are, and are seen to be, deeply embedded in its local soil it will inevitably starve and wither. In Britain's case it is crucial that we extend rather than discredit parliamentary democracy. This is precisely why in our support for *extra*-parliamentary action we draw a distinction between that as essential and honourable in British democracy and our rejection of *anti*-parliamentary activity and philosophy whether it emanates from the ultra-left activist or from the board rooms of multinational corporations. That means — and has always meant — that extra parliamentary activity in the Labour movement has been and will be complementary to intra-parliamentary efforts, just as those efforts in Parliament must safeguard the rights of demonstration and respond appropriately to the needs manifested by extra-parliamentary activity. We need activity to organise, educate, advocate and explain in every sphere in

order to carry the convincing message that socialist answers are directly relevant to modern needs.

We can make that task arduous if we become incapable of appreciating that a yawning gap can open between the best intentioned party and those that it most wants to help. It can lead to rejection by the intended beneficiaries and, among the party adherents, to the worst form of elitism — a belief that waning public support, even from "traditional" industrial working class voters, must indicate their political immaturity rather than our political inability. A belief that an "unpoliticized" working class, incapable of understanding political reality, and therefore an easier prey to the capitalist press than a dedicated band of activists, will eventually come to recognise the "correctness" of our position if only we increase the supply of leaflets or hold a few more campaigns on yet more topics or try to dramatize the struggle with acts of synthetic martyrdom is arrogant, incompetent and the very antithesis of socialism. If followed through that approach would lead us to adopt a position of purely a "vanguard" party rather than a mass party where we could claim only to be "for" rather than "of" the working class. It would lead us to the acceptance of an internal division between "orthodoxy" and "heresy"; to demand, not simply accountable leaders but totally mandated leaders; a situation which invariably leads to more absolutist leadership as the leaders instruct the cadres on the newest "line". It would lead Labour, in short, towards an authoritarian centralism that even Lenin himself would surely reject as irrelevant to a modern, western democracy, towards political impotence and betrayal of the interests of those that we are in politics to emancipate. Coincidentally, it would fracture not only the unity of the Labour Party but that of the Labour movement and trade union movement. That way lies complete sterility.

The role of the organized Labour movement is essential — both on economic issues and political matters. The right of freedom of association to represent sectional interests to employers, to the

community and government is a keystone of democracy and who are more entitled to pursue this end than the producers of wealth! This is why we resist efforts to place trade unions in a legal and economic straitjacket designed to eradicate their capacity to defend themselves economically or participate democratically in decision making. Whether in general trade union rights or in specific issues like wages, solution by government *diktat* is morally offensive, democratically indefensible and unworkable in practice. What we, as democratic socialists, offer is something entirely different. We offer the producers of wealth and the provider of services a *positive* role, a partnership in governing Britain.

There will be those, of course, who will challenge this approach with accusations of interference with "free collective bargaining" or "seduction of trade unions into the state apparatus". Nothing could be further from the truth. As democratic socialists we are only too well aware that any attempt to merely use the trade unions as an extension of the government would result in Stalinism — a structural centralist approach with which Mrs Thatcher would be more at home than would anyone in the Labour Party. Whether in Poland or in Chile or in Britain, a free trade union movement, independent of government is the best guarantee of all our freedoms from encroaching corporate state power. Neither are we negating "free collective bargaining" insofar as that does or can exist. Indeed we are extending the means of effective bargaining in freedom, not only through our plans for industrial democracy with the attendant obligations, but also by raising it to a higher level, by establishing a negotiated bargain between the trade union movement as a whole and the political wing as a whole.

What such a strategy does do is to provide us with a realizable coordinated approach capable of maximizing the productive and progressive nature of our programme, avoiding adventurism, capable of winning electoral support and helping to sustain a Labour Government. The socialism we seek aims to give people the maximum possible

freedom to control conditions under which they live and work. It aims to provide a freedom that people will no longer need to be "given" anything. People will stand free of "handouts", paternalistic interference and bureaucratic indifference. Socialism stands, in short, for the freedom of everyone, in contrast to the Conservative freedom for the lucky few who climb a ladder and then kick it away in order to guarantee the superiority of their liberty.

Socialism stands for community. Freedom, justice and equality are meaningless as abstractions. They can only be translated into living reality through the interaction of men, women and children in the everyday world which for most of us means the neighbourhood, region or country in which we live. Community is not something which socialists can promise to give people, it is something that people have to build for themselves. All socialism can do is to create the conditions for it — though socialist ideas revised and restated in every changing situation can play a crucial part. A socialist community, like any other, will depend on individuals showing inventiveness, initiative and enterprise in the economic sphere. When Tories talk about "free enterprise", what they really mean is the freedom of the controllers of capital to be as enterprising or unenterprising as they wish, in both cases ultimately at the expense of the great majority of people. Democratic socialist values of enterprise mean the nurturing of all abilities, the reward of merit and service, the organized use of resources to maximize benefit and to provide surplus for fresh investment.

The equality which we seek is not a sameness: quite the opposite, we believe that people's uniqueness, their diversity and their differing qualities are obscured at present behind unacceptable differences in property and income and a drab uniformity of provision and imposed tastes in so many spheres from housing to entertainment. The advance towards those conditions of freedom, community, enterprise and equality has to be sponsored by positive policies of Labour Governments.

We need both statutory maximum incomes

and minimum wages, a sharply progressive tax system which is not disarmed by a vast maze of allowances for the rich, a social security system which offers people not simply a "safety net" but incomes that allow the old, unemployed, and disabled, single parents and large families sufficient resources to participate fully in their communities. We need an education service equipped and staffed and organized to meet the needs of children and adults by comprehensive means. We need a health service which prevents as well as treats illness.

We need to define the socialist goal of transforming the economy anew — in terms of popular control of the productive processes, an extension of democracy to work that is as natural as democracy in politics. This means that nationalization can only work if it becomes genuinely common ownership — and that the socialist objective is to change fundamentally the existing division of labour in society. Socialist society will never be advanced simply by the expropriation of private producers. That merely entrenches state power. It requires a new sense of what industrial democracy can become and it must include those workers whose speciality is the management and organization of the means of production, distribution and exchange. We need to achieve full employment in modern terms by a combination of planned expansion, reduction in the working year and the working life, extension of education and training and the deliberate improvement in opportunities for womankind.

We need to be internationalist. We have to implement a non-nuclear defence policy that sustains strong national security by conventional means in partnership with Nato. That must involve cancelling Trident, banning cruise missiles and other US nuclear weapons based in Britain, withdrawing our arsenal of tactical nuclear

weapons and phasing out Polaris, demanding an equivalent Soviet response as already indicated in the Andropov proposals. We have to redirect our world role to give priority to defeating deprivation, upholding human rights and promoting rising living standards by aid and trade. We have to use our economic, cultural and democratic status to arbitrate and negotiate and conciliate with and between nations and power blocs. These are the realistic functions for modern Britain that must replace the mixture of empty bombast and craven dependence on the USA that constitutes Tory foreign policy.

Democratic socialism is possible in Britain — in our time. Never has the case for a socialist transformation been stronger. The section of public opinion that is now comatose with complacency can be awakened. The people who still live in comfortable illusion can be educated. Democratic socialism can show its functional superiority, and its moral vision in a way that regains support and wins new strength. But those objectives cannot be accomplished if there are any in the Labour movement that are content to potter about with positions or if there are any who give the impression that they are so obsessed with ideology that they cannot see the people for the slogans. The British Labour movement has long understood the truth of Frederick Engels' maxim that "revolutions of small conscious minorities at the head of unconscious masses are at an end". To that I add that mild-mannered shuffling by benevolent social democrats is no answer to the great needs of a country faced with economic and social degeneration and not convincing for a public that lives daily with that crumbling condition. And then I rejoin Engels to insist that "the task of socialist parties in political democracies" is "to work for an uninterrupted increase in votes and carry on the slow propaganda of parliamentary activity" and to think and act in precisely that cause.

4. Peter Shore

To a Labour Party still licking its wounds after a massive electoral defeat, and a decade of internicine warfare, any attempt to reassert a vision of socialist Britain will be met with understandable scepticism. When we have the support of only 28 per cent of the voting public and when one faction of the party or another is devoted to finding scapegoats, and identifying men it considers guilty of betrayal, talk of a socialist Britain can all too easily sound like a futuristic fantasy. Yet a vision must be recreated, to guide and sustain our efforts in the years ahead. A vision not just of one individual, but a vision for the whole party capable of uniting our efforts and setting in context the petty squabbles and personal ambitions which have done us so much damage.

If there is one lesson we should learn from the last four years, and I fear learn again over the next four, it is that little can be achieved in opposition. We can roar against injustice with all the eloquence we can command: we can march, and demonstrate, and protest. But in the end our impact on events will be negligible unless it is a prelude to a return to government.

It is now nine years since Labour won a general election. In those nine years we have lost four in every ten of the men and woman who supported us then. In too many seats which we won to form a government in October 1974 we are now in third place. Those are the seats we must win if we are to form a government again. We now face the real threat of being a party of opposition and no more. We must not accommodate ourselves to that situation. Labour was created to pursue socialism through Parliament. The Labour movement in 1900 decided that protest and dissent was not enough. The party since then has been dedicated to the winning of power by democratic means — not for its own sake, but in order to use the instrument of government and parliament as the means of advancing the socialist cause.

There are those now who choose to denigrate the work of past Labour government, who seek to hold up to ridicule all that we have achieved — in the National

Health Service, in social welfare, in housing, in the establishment of public ownership, in the management of the economy, in the protection of working people and their families, in the extension of basic individual freedoms, in the protection of ethnic and other minority groups in our community, in the removal of disfiguring squalor and poverty. History will I believe cast a jaundiced eye on those who seek to deny our past in this way.

Past Labour governments created the sense of community, the society of cooperative and collective values which Mrs Thatcher now seeks to destroy. To preserve, to recreate or extend that society and those values will need another Labour government, and the achievement of the victory necessary should be the first step towards our vision of a socialist Britain.

That is but the starting point for the achievement of what should be our central aim and objective — the re-establishment of socialist values at the heart of British society. Those are the values of liberty and community, of justice, equity, reason and democracy. They have been cast aside and will no doubt continue to be damaged or ignored by the actions and policies of Mrs Thatcher's government. But I do not believe that they will be destroyed. The long and rich British political tradition has for centuries had those values as the guiding forces of its development, and in one form or another they stretch back well before the formal creation of the Labour Party. In a period of national pessimism Mrs Thatcher has tried to replace them with a very different set of values — inequality and fear as the spurs of economic success; prejudice and instinct instead of reason; inherited privilege and command instead of democracy and consent.

For all the manipulation of the advertising men I do not believe that hers is a permanent achievement. Our values can be reasserted. We can win again the arguments we appear to have lost or to have abandoned, and having won the argument we can use our democratic victory to turn words into reality. I wish to quote a single

example of where the battle for values must be fought.

Labour is, and should present itself to be, the party of individual freedom. There was no greater slur during the election campaign than the Saatchi and Saatchi advert which equated Labour's case with that of the Communist Party. Freedom and choice have always been central to Labour's message. Our economic and social reforms over half a century have been designed to give to those lacking the privilege of inherited wealth and power an ability to determine their own lives, free from the pressures of poverty, homelessness, and ill health, which in a privatised society, the society of Victorian England for instance, bred upon each other. We succeeded in ending the cloth cap society of deference and social distinctions, and in establishing the principle of equality for all, regardless of race, sex or creed. But that freedom was achieved without the destruction of other and older freedoms. British society is now more open, more honest, less constrained and hypocritical as a result of Labour actions. Our aim remains the achievement of economic and social equality, without the destruction of individual choice or individual rights. We despise the jackboot society of Eastern Europe, which buys a pretence of equality at the cost of dictatorship. And we despise those like Mrs Thatcher for whom freedom means the freedom to exploit, the freedom of the few, the freedom of individual privilege and not collective right.

Liberty was the motivating force of all the movements which built up the radical and socialist tradition in this country. As the Levellers put it in the seventeenth century: "freedom was the man to turn the world upside down" and to replace tyranny with justice. Freedom was the cause of the Chartists too when they proclaimed: "the free rights of the poorest man in England to choose his government".

Freedom is inseparable from all the other socialist values, for socialism without liberty is inconceivable. Our values have not changed with the passage of time. But our

application of those values through specific policies must develop and be adapted to the changing circumstances of the 1980s. Labour sometimes gives the impression of ignoring the ways in which society has changed around us, the ways in which life for working people has improved, the speed with which expectations have developed.

If our values are to retain their relevance they must be shown to be applicable through policies which meet the problems and the circumstances of the 1980s and 1990s, and are not just relics of the 1930s and 1940s. It is the special role of the Fabians to explore and understand social change. Government statistics on the manner and pattern of life were almost a Fabian creation. *Social Trends* and the *Family Expenditure Survey* have their roots in the social inquiries of the Webbs and other Fabian reformers. What do those statistics tell us about the society in which we live?

First that there has been a major change in the pattern of employment. The unskilled industrial proletariat has shrunk to a small minority in 1983. That is not just a consequence of recession and Mrs Thatcher's policies. By the mid 1970s only one worker in ten fell into that category, and the proportion has now declined further. Technological progress has required a skilled, trained workforce. Labour has shifted from heavy industry into the service sector. In 1950 the proportion of people at work in manufacturing industry was 41 per cent; by 1974 it was 35 per cent and, after the Thatcher job slaughter it fell to 27 per cent in 1982. Over the same period the service sector grew from 51 per cent to 63 per cent of people at work — with the public service sector expanding on average by 77,000 each year. Mrs Thatcher's recession has tended to disguise the trend, creating a massive unnecessary and destructive run down of our manufacturing base. Given the right policies that will recover. But it will not provide all the jobs we need, and recovery will not reverse the trend to a skilled workforce, or to the service sector. There should be no nostalgia for the dark satanic mills in the Labour Party. Our economic,

and industrial policies must be directed to the new industries as well as the old, to skilled as well as unskilled workers, to the service sector as well as manufacturing.

The second message of the statistics is that socialism and a little prosperity have unlocked aspirations which cannot, and should not, be denied. In 1947 only 26 per cent of households owned their own home. By 1960 the figure had risen to 42 per cent. It is now over 59 per cent, and all the surveys show that many of the remaining 41 per cent would like to do so. There have been other major changes too. In 1950 only one child in ten stayed at school beyond the age of fifteen. Now 18 per cent take A levels and 198,000 per year go on to polytechnic, university or other further education courses. The extension of the education system, and the creation of comprehensives has broadened horizons for those to whom thirty or forty years ago further education or qualifications were only a dream. There is more physical as well as social mobility. 61 per cent of households now have the use of a car. In 1949 the figure was only 7 per cent.

The aspirations of ordinary people which have made normal what once seemed privileged are now being massively set back by the induced deflation of Mrs Thatcher's economic policy. School leavers and university students with good qualifications are offered no prospect of work. High mortgage rates are crippling those struggling to buy their own homes. Labour has to respond to the new hopes and expectations which we have rightly helped to create. Owning a house or a flat with a garden or a garage does not transform a socialist into a capitalist. It should not be allowed to transform a Labour voter into a Tory voter. The sense of community and of collective responsibility which we seek to establish cannot be restricted to the council

tenant or the manual worker.

A certain amount of social mobility, the spread of home ownership, and sixth-form education are important changes in society but they should not lead us to the conclusion that a comfortable meritocracy has been attained. The divisions of society remain deep, even if the distinctions and boundaries have shifted. Labour's case for redistribution of wealth, income and opportunity, has lost none of its relevance. 43 per cent of the country's wealth — its land, its property, its resources are owned by just 5 per cent of the population. The country's businesses and institutions are run by an elite, far too many of whom are reliant for success not on ability or effort but on inherited wealth and the old school tie. At the other end of the scale 1.6 million adults, the majority of them women, earn less than £75 per week for a full week's work. That sort of low pay is now an instrument of government policy. According to Mrs Thatcher low wages create jobs. In her view, and in defiance of all the lessons of twentieth-century economics they offer a solution to unemployment.

Beyond the low paid, there are millions without earned incomes; who struggle on unemployment pay, on the national insurance retirement pension, on sickness and other benefits, to survive and to make ends meet. We have eradicated by legislation much of the gross poverty which existed forty years ago but we have a massive problem of low living standards and poor living conditions that must be tackled; and we have not closed the divisions of British society — divisions which are now being widened, rapidly and deliberately, by a government dedicated to increase inequality of income and wealth, of opportunity and power. There is no cause then for the complacency of the

Social Democrats, with their vague philosophy of amelioration. Equally there is no moral basis for the Tory philosophy which offers to the poor and needy only the rattle of the charitable collecting tin.

Labour must return to office committed to using the instruments of government — from tax policy to education policy, from the rate support grant to the social security system, from planning to common ownership — to end privilege, to build equality and to create wealth. Our purpose is not to manage the system as it is, nor to tinker at the margin, but to change fundamentally and permanently.

Radical change will be even more necessary at the time of the next general election than it is now. Unemployment will be four or five million, anything up to two million of whom will have been unemployed for five, six, seven years. Two generations under the age of twenty-five will never have worked. Our welfare state will have been cut back, partly for ideological reasons, partly as a simple consequence of the imbalance of government income and expenditure when five million are on the dole. Much of British industry will be a lifeless skeleton, our public services mouldering in ruins. Nor will Britain be alone in its misery. International Thatcherism will have halted all the efforts of Third World countries to develop. Mass poverty, and mounting debts will be even greater problems in Africa and Asia than they are today. The division of rich and poor, of the privileged few and the rest will be starker and more bitter globally and nationally.

Labour must then be the party of reconstruction, building from the rubble upwards. That reconstruction, as in 1945 will need radical policies, policies which will

inevitably be labelled as extreme. Those policies will only win the support they need if Labour is able to show that it is not just a party of faction, a party of ideological dogma, a party of the past. We must be a party of the whole country, of all age groups, of those in work as well as out of work, of the majority as well as the minorities. We must be a party which can unite the country on the basis of the values in which we believe, values which do not change with the wind or the fashion of the opinion polls.

We have five years at most to become that party again. This is no time for the defeatism which argues that we have already lost the next election, and that our campaign must stretch over ten or even fifteen years. We cannot afford the luxury of a long decade relearning all the experiences of futile opposition. Our task now is to win the argument by persuasion. Socialism will be achieved not in our own committee rooms, nor in caucuses or fringe groups, nor in Parliament alone but on the doorsteps, in the factories, offices and shops, talking and listening as well to the concerns and the priorities of the people.

This process of persuasion is the most vital and probably the most difficult task of all — more difficult certainly than passing resolutions or changing constitutions. It is hard, exacting and inevitably slow. But it is by the methods of persuasion, of debate and of choice, on which a democratic, socialist society will be built in Britain. Adherence to these methods does not imply a weakening of our vision or a softening of our purpose but rather the strength of our nerve and the depth of our conviction that experience and reason rather than oppression or compulsion will bring the people to our cause.

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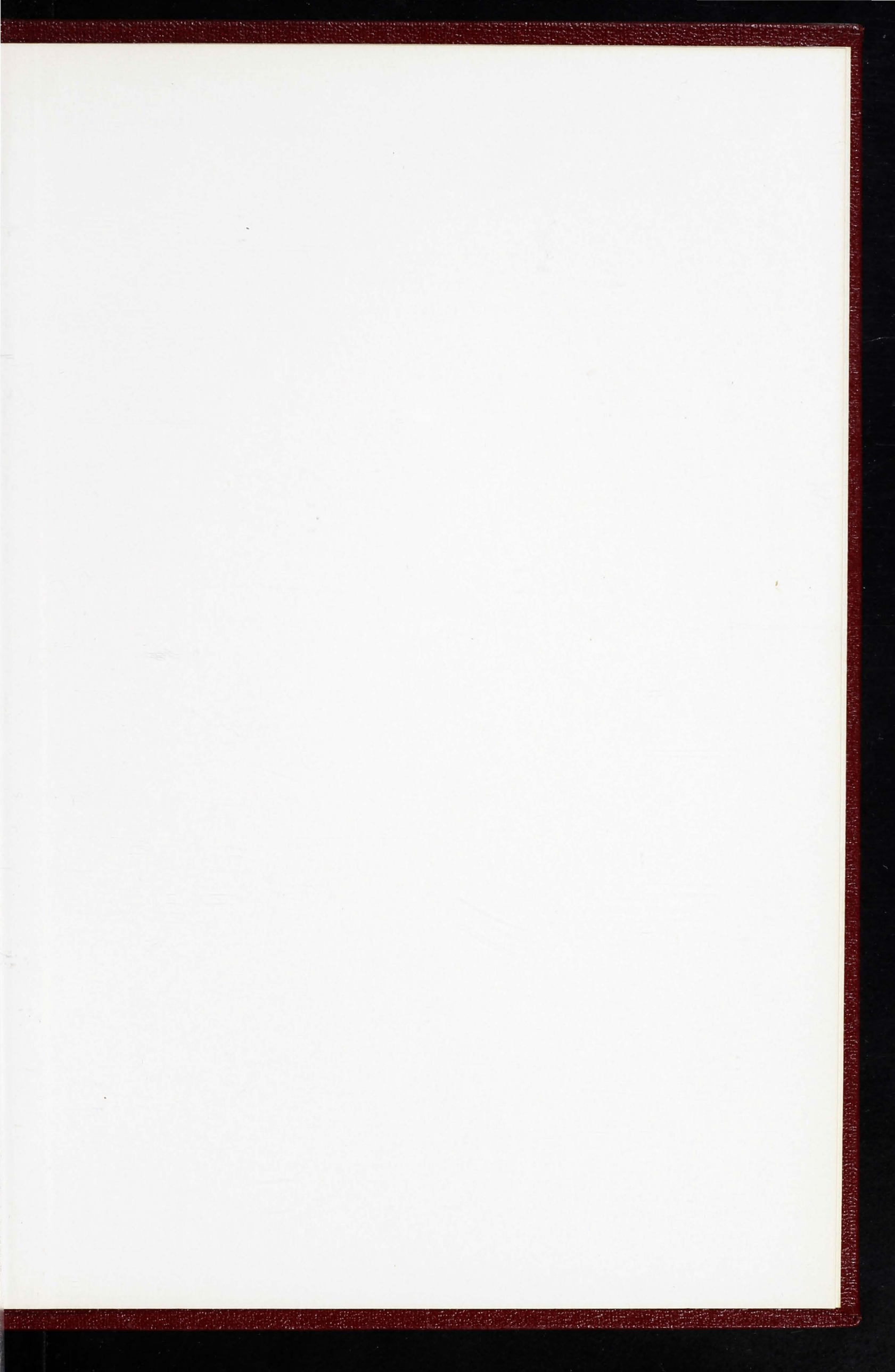
The next leader of the Labour Party faces a more difficult challenge than any of his post-war predecessors. He will lead a party which has just polled its lowest national vote since 1918; which came second in only 15 more seats than it would need to gain to have a majority after the next general election; which lost a staggering 119 deposits (against 82 in 11 previous post-war elections); whose existence as a national party is threatened by the fact that it holds only 3 out of 176 seats in southern England excluding London and came third in 149; which lost most ground among the working-class voters whose interests it particularly seeks to defend; whose voters are now on average older than those of the other parties and whose support among first-time voters was less than that of either the Conservatives or the Alliance. He will have to command the broad support of party members whose growing recognition of the need for unity is not yet accompanied by any widely shared view of how to reconcile a commitment to democratic socialist principle with a strategy for winning majority support in an increasingly right-wing political culture.

This is not, of course, a challenge to one person alone, or to a leader and deputy leader: it is a challenge to all democratic socialists. It requires them to restate their socialist commitment and to rethink the strategy for winning others to support the courses of action it requires in the 1990s. An obvious starting-point for the Fabian Society's post-election contribution to this task has been to invite the four contenders for the leadership, three of whom are members of the Society's Executive Committee, to publish statements rather longer than the manifestos that will otherwise reach party and trade union members.

Fabian Society

The Fabian Society exists to further socialist education and research. It is affiliated to the Labour Party, both nationally and locally and embraces all shades of Labour opinion within its ranks — left, right and centre. Since 1884 the Fabian Society has enrolled thoughtful socialists who are prepared to discuss the essential questions of democratic socialism and relate them to practical plans for building socialism in a changing world. Beyond this the Society has no collective policy. It puts forward no resolutions of a political character. The Society's members are active in their Labour parties, trade unions and co-operatives. They are representative of the labour movement, practical people concerned to study and discuss problems that matter.

The Society is organised nationally and locally. The national Society, directed by an elected Executive Committee, publishes pamphlets and holds schools and conferences of many kinds. Local Societies — there are one hundred of them — are self governing and are lively centres of discussion and also undertake research.



The first part of the report deals with the general situation in the country and the progress of the work during the year. It is followed by a detailed account of the work done in each of the various departments. The report concludes with a summary of the work done and a statement of the progress made during the year.

The second part of the report deals with the work done in each of the various departments. It is followed by a detailed account of the work done in each of the various departments. The report concludes with a summary of the work done and a statement of the progress made during the year.

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