

Daily Notes

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No. 8

PEOPLE IN GLASS HOUSES

No one has been more vigorous in denouncing Labour's disunity over defence policy than Dr David Owen of the Alliance. On Tuesday, 17th May, Dr Owen made the memorable statement that: 'Labour is the Party of verbal elastoplast . . . they can't even stitch up their splits and divisions'.

This statement is an interesting example of someone in a glass house throwing boulders. True, Alliance leaders now claim to be united on the issue of defence. But when Mr David Steel said, just over a year ago, that an Alliance government would phase out Polaris 'as soon as possible', Dr Owen immediately retorted that Mr Steel was 'in no position to say what an Alliance government would do', and added a few days later that 'extending Polaris to the end of the century' was 'perfectly feasible'. If this is not a 'split' or a 'division', what is?

One might, nevertheless, commend Dr Owen for commenting adversely upon Labour's failure to 'stitch up' internal differences, if there were any signs of 'stitching up' on the part of the Alliance itself. Alas, there are no such signs. The Alliance manifesto recommends 'the inclusion of Polaris in disarmament negotiations', but it does not tell us whether, if these negotiations failed, Polaris would be phased out 'as soon as possible', or would be extended 'to the end of the century'.

The Alliance is clearly in need of some 'verbal elastoplast': no doubt Mr Jenkins will in due course oblige.

**Conservative
Research
Department**



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1. DEFENCE: A VOICE FROM LABOUR'S PAST

Just as the Labour leadership was desperately trying to patch up the row over Polaris (see *Daily Notes* No. 7), **Mr James Callaghan** enthusiastically stoked the embers of division in a speech at Penarth on 25th May.

The former leader of the Labour Party gave a powerful statement of what Labour used to believe on the subject of defence and disarmament. His words should serve to remind the electorate of how radically the Labour Party has changed since Mr Foot became leader.

'I do not fault the tactics of the Western arms negotiations so far. Our refusal to give up arms unilaterally has brought better and more realistic proposals from the Soviet Union that could form the basis of a serious negotiation . . .

'Before negotiations begin and unless we reach a satisfactory agreement, Britain and the West in my judgement must not dismantle these weapons and get nothing in return. Polaris submarines for example—they have a further life span of 10 to 12 years and perhaps longer as effective deterrents. They are deterrents, they are not first-strike weapons, they are intended to deter the Soviet Union from launching its attack. We should not give them up unilaterally for nothing . . .

'The Soviet Union's propaganda clearly wishes to use public opinion in this country to get the West to reduce its own arms while doing nothing themselves. In this way, they would gain nuclear superiority. This is simply not on . . .

'Now some of you may be surprised when I say that in my judgement, the likelihood of nuclear war in Europe will remain small. There has been a stability on both sides. I do not believe that there is a great likelihood of a nuclear attack being launched but this is subject to the condition that a broad balance of nuclear forces remains on each side.'

Press reports indicate that this speech was greeted with anger and despair at Labour Party headquarters, which is scarcely surprising.

Yet More Contradictions. The following morning (26th May) Labour Leaders contradicted each other about Polaris yet again on rival television programmes.

Speaking on TV/AM, Labour's defence spokesman, **Mr John Silkin** was asked whether Labour would retain Polaris if negotiations with the Soviet Union proved fruitless. He replied: 'No. We would not.' When pressed again on the same point, he said: 'In that case in 5 years time, we are a non-nuclear power.'

Mr Foot promptly endorsed Mr Silkin's statement, but then **Mr Healey**, speaking on BBC 1 *Election Call*, said that Labour 'would reconsider the position (i.e., the intention to phase out Polaris) if in fact the Russians broke their undertaking to reduce their weapons if we reduce ours.'

Mr Healey went on to say:

'No Trade Unionist is going to succeed in a negotiation if he tells the employer he's going to give up the object of the negotiation anyway, whatever happens in the negotiations.'

But that is exactly what Labour's Manifesto proposes!

2. WOULD MR HEALEY AGREE?

'The Labour Party has a non-nuclear defence policy and the Labour Government will implement that policy'.

(**Neil Kinnock**, Pontllanfraith, Gwent, 26th May 1983)

3. CONSERVATIVE SUPPORT FOR THE STEEL INDUSTRY

The steel industry's recent problems derive not only from the world recession, but also from the failure of the last Labour Government to tackle gross overmanning and consequent uncompetitiveness. Many of the painful decisions that Labour postponed have had to be taken by this Government. But Conservatives have acted in the best interests of the

industry. We are committed to restoring the long-term viability of BSC. That is why, on 19th May, Mr. Patrick Jenkin, the Industry Secretary, announced that the Government had approved British Steel's corporate plan for 1983-6, which includes £256 million of investment due to start in the present financial year 1983-4, and a further £409 million for the two years 1984-6. The investment programme includes a major (£171 million) modernisation of the Port Talbot hot strip mill, which will enable Port Talbot to improve its quality and product range and thus enhance not only its own prospects but those of BSC's Strip Products Groups as a whole. This was a welcome boost for Port Talbot.

Mr Bill Sirs, General Secretary of the ISTC, who—on his own admission—'fought long and hard for' the programme, has nevertheless accused the Government of 'blatant electioneering' over the timing of the announcement. This is a misguided accusation. Mr Sirs, being an expert on the steel industry, knows perfectly well that the Government has made this announcement now for two good reasons:

(1) BSC's financial year started at the beginning of April. To plan its detailed operating budgets its management needed to know as soon as possible the level of its External Financing Limit for the year.

(2) Under the EEC steel régime, all members are committed to presenting their proposals for restructuring and financing their steel industries up to 1985 to the European Commission by the end of May. To comply with this deadline, the Government had to reach its decision on BSC's plan by the end of the month. It would have been bizarre to notify the Commission of the decision but not to announce it in this country.

The Government's policies are now beginning to bear fruit, as **Mr Jenkin** made clear when he said of the new corporate plan:

'BSC's plan is to phase out the need for state aid by the end of 1985. Market share is planned to increase from 47 per cent to 50 per cent, manned capacity utilisation will be maintained at 80 per cent and there will be continuing efforts to control costs.

I warmly congratulate BSC's management and workforce on the tremendous efforts being made to improve productivity, improve quality and reduce costs. Beating the competition in the market-place is far the best way to safeguard jobs' (Press statement, 19th May 1983).

4. SOCIALISM IN LIVERPOOL

What follows is a dossier of the actions already taken and policy statements that have been made by the new Labour-controlled Liverpool City Council, elected on 5th May. It serves as a stark warning to the national electorate of what could happen if they were foolish enough to elect a Labour government on 9th June.

The Labour Group on Liverpool City Council is now dominated by extremists. As the *Liverpool Echo* observed on 13th May:

'Nine of the Labour Councillors now running Liverpool City Council are official supporters of the Militant Tendency'.

A range of policy pronouncements betray the bitter destructiveness of the militants. They have announced:

The ending of all Voluntary church school education. In a recent policy document issued by the new Chairman of the Education Committee he stated that 'church schools were divisive and outdated', and threatened financial pressure to force them to join the state system [although the legality of this is questionable]. He has said that his long-term aim is to end separate church school education and bring all the 86,000 pupils into the State System, but '...we recognise that there is strong feeling in Liverpool and we are not suddenly going to close all church schools'.

The ending of council house sales. This will mean that Liverpool's council tenants will lose the right to buy unless the Government uses its powers to intervene and restore their right.

An end to low-cost homes for sale. The sub-committee that had been promoting these initiatives has been abandoned and the policy ended. This was one of the more successful policy areas under the last Council. Because of the Labour Group's hatred of private housing, there will be large-scale unemployment in the private building industry.

Abandonment of the office of Lord Mayor. In Liverpool the office of Lord Mayor has always been above party politics. The decision to abolish the office was announced by the President of the Labour Party and not by the City Council.

Union interference in staff appointments. In future, all vacancies which Chief Officers consider should be filled must be submitted to the Director of Management Services for determination by the Chairman of the Personnel Committee, and that Chief Officers should attend this meeting accompanied by the relevant shop steward.

All appointments to posts in the Administrative, Professional, Technical and Clerical Division have to be submitted to the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Personnel Committee for determination following interview by Chief Officers and prior to any offer of appointment. It may be noted that two years ago the City Council suffered a typists' strike. Loyal members of staff carried on working, kept the City running, made sure that bills were paid and salaries and wages were paid. At that time the present Chairman of the Personnel Committee threatened the staff that if Labour ever came to control the council they would be under threat.

5. BIG GOVERNMENT

'If people vote for us they are going to get both of us'.

(**Mr David Steel**, quoted in *Yorkshire Post*, 26th May 1983)

6. CONSERVATIVE POLICY ON HEALTH

Commitment to National Health Service. Speaking at the Conservative Press Conference on 24th May, **Mr Norman Fowler**, Secretary of State for Social Services, strongly defended the Government's record on health. He reaffirmed the Conservative party's commitment to the National Health Service in face of the barrage of 'evidence' and inventions to the contrary emanating from the Labour Party. He said:

'In health care the Conservative party is committed to the provision of good health care for all regardless of ability to pay. Our *first* aim is the development of the National Health Service and the provision of better services for patients. Our commitment is established by our record over the last four years. We are now devoting record resources to the National Health Service. This year spending in Great Britain will total £15½ billion compared with £7¾ billion when we came to office. Compared with the RPI, we have increased spending by 17 per cent. It has enabled a 7½ per cent increase in services and a 17 per cent increase in capital spending, which contrasts with the last Labour Government's capital cuts of a third.'

Care of Patients. Mr Fowler underlined the increases in the numbers of nurses and doctors referred to in the English, Welsh and Scottish Manifestos by pointing to the total GB figures:

'Altogether in Great Britain we are employing 56,000 more nurses and midwives and 7,600 more doctors and dentists.'

He went on to say that this increase in key staff had helped more patients than ever before to be treated—the best measure of Health Service performance. He pointed out that in Great Britain as a whole in 1981 the NHS treated 650,000 more inpatient and day cases: and two million more outpatient and emergency cases than in 1978.

Mr Fowler scornfully rejected Labour's claims that hospital closures since 1979 were part of what Mrs. Dunwoody, Labour's spokesman, has described as 'Tory plans to kill the NHS' (Sandbach, 25th May 1983). He said that as new hospitals were built, old ones would close, but if Labour wanted to use that measure it should be recorded that under Labour between 1974 and May 1979, 272 NHS hospitals in England were approved for permanent closure. By contrast, since May 1979 only 109 hospitals have been approved for closure.

Mr Fowler said that the second Conservative aim was 'to get the best possible value from the amount of money that the taxpayer is providing'. The Government had done more than any Government before to improve efficiency throughout the Health Service. It had removed a whole layer of administration and for the first time introduced a system of regional reviews whereby Ministers check on the progress and performance of health authorities.

Families and Voluntary Effort. Mr Fowler attacked Labour's refusal to accept the place of private and voluntary contributions to health care. Voluntary services were not even mentioned in the sections of Labour's

Manifesto dealing with the social services. He said that the Conservative Party strongly believed in the role of the family, voluntary organisations and the independent sector. Help was given by families and by neighbours on a scale which no state or local authority organisation could ever replace. 'Our aim should be to help them in their role, whether they are looking after children or the mentally handicapped or the mentally ill or the old or the disabled.'

Defending Choice. Mr Fowler said that Labour's opposition to the private sector was deplorable. Labour sought to claim that the private sector catered for an élite. In reality

'the vast majority of private beds in this country are not in private hospitals at all, but in small nursing homes who in total look after well over 20,000 elderly people.'

He confirmed that Conservatives would defend the right to choice:

'We believe that in a free society the citizen has the right to use his own money in the way that he chooses. It would be totally contrary to the interests of the public if Labour Party policy was ever to be pursued because it would deliberately reject a valuable source of health care. We welcome every contribution to the sum of patient care.'

7. LABOUR AND THE HEALTH SERVICE

Labour's inconsistencies are fast becoming the main talking-point of this campaign. But in one respect, Labour have been utterly consistent. For years they have repeated a pledge to increase spending on the Health Services by 3 per cent in real terms.

Mrs Dunwoody, Labour's Shadow Health Minister, reinforced that pledge on Wednesday. She declared: 'Labour is absolutely clear that we will revitalise the NHS. We shall immediately put £387 million into the NHS . . .' (Sandbach, 25th May 1983). (£387 million is 3 per cent of £12.9 billion, the sum allocated for health expenditure in England in 1983-4). Campaigning on the following day, Mr Foot characteristically raised the sum pledged by Mrs Dunwoody to £400 million. Yet neither figure seems adequate to cover the extra costs and lost revenue that Labour's Manifesto proposals would imply for the NHS. Labour's plans would abolish useful sources of income. By restricting private medicine, Labour would increase demand for NHS facilities; and by yielding to trade union wage demands, they would squeeze resources for patient care. Far from revitalising the service, Labour's commitments would endanger the expansion the Conservatives have charted for the NHS over the last four years.

Pay is an issue of major significance to the NHS. It accounts for 70 per cent of the health budget. Labour's Manifesto reads 'We shall also ensure that NHS staff receive a fair reward for their work and dedication; and we will discuss with the TUC new arrangements for pay determination and the resolution of disputes' (page 19). Under a Labour Government, the Trade Unions would dominate wage negotiations for *all* staff working in the NHS. There is no commitment in the Labour Manifesto to maintain

the review body offered to nurses by the Conservative Government. Nor do Labour acknowledge the need to recognise the special and responsible position of the RCN which refuses to take strike action. In 1982, Labour unequivocally supported the trade unions' 12 per cent pay claim. If Labour were to meet that demand it would add well over £300 million to the pay bill. Moreover, if the unions pressed for improvements in hours, as they did last year, more staff might have to be employed, to compensate for the loss of man hours. Labour's pledge could only reduce the proportion of resources available for patient care.

Labour also pledge to phase out all health charges, including prescription, dental and optical charges, pay beds in the NHS and charges for overseas visitors. The promise to phase out prescription charges is an old one. The Labour Government of Sir Harold Wilson abolished them in 1965 but brought them back at a higher level in 1968. The last Labour Government left them unchanged. To abolish charges now would cost the £340 million that they are expected to provide in England alone in 1983-4. Charges on overseas patients using NHS facilities are expected to benefit the NHS by £6 million in 1983-4 - Labour would throw away that income, too. The revenue from pay beds in 1981-2 in England alone was estimated to have been £52.5 million—Labour would lose that too. All those resources—some £400 million and more—would have to be made up before Mr Foot's £400 million could do anything to improve patient care.

Labour are also pledged to removing private practice from the NHS, restricting its growth and nationalising 'parts of the profit making private sector'. Nationalisation has never been cheap. Since the Labour Party Conference in 1982, it has been official Labour policy to abolish private medicine altogether. If implemented, the NHS would have to bear the pressure of an additional 4 million potential patients who are presently covered by insurance to use private medical facilities. This would result in an inevitable expansion in demand and increased strain on both facilities and resources.

Conservatives have found the money to pay for patient care. Labour would have to meet the price of prejudice.

8. LABOUR SMEAR ON CHILD BENEFIT

Labour candidates are putting it about that the Conservatives will introduce a means test for child benefit in the next Parliament.

The **Prime Minister** dealt with this smear on 20th May in reply to a letter from Mr Brynmor John, Labour's spokesman on Social Security. After pointing out that the new rate which will be paid this November will put child benefit at its highest-ever real value, she went on to say:

'There are no plans to make any changes to the basis on which the benefit is paid or calculated.'

9. THE ECOLOGY PARTY

The Ecology Party was founded in 1973. It lays claim to a total membership of 5,000 divided among 250 branches throughout the UK. It has put forward candidates at all the general elections that have occurred since its establishment. At the 1979 election, the 53 Ecology candidates each obtained an average of 1.6 per cent of the votes cast in the constituencies in which they fought. This year the party is putting forward 108 candidates. Its Manifesto, *Politics for Life*, was launched on 25th May.

In the words of **Mr Jonathon Porritt** the party's co-chairman, 'Green politics have moved on considerably from the old-fashioned environmental vote'. The party is now firmly a part of the 'radical movement'. It has established ties not only with the 'Greens' in Germany but also with groups such as CND and 'Women for Life on Earth', the body primarily responsible for the so-called 'peace-camps' at Greenham Common and elsewhere. A spokesman for the Ecology Party has said that these radical groups 'have the same beliefs as us, a joint manifesto for peace and survival' (*Guardian*, 14th March 1983).

The Ecology Party mocks the 'environmental cosmetics' of the major parties. Its policies are uncompromising and shrill; it implicitly and explicitly rejects the modern world and advocates a transition to a 'post-industrial' society. When asked, for example, how the Ecology Party proposed to fund the National Health Service, Mr Porritt replied, 'It could not do it and would make no pretensions at doing it'.

In addition to stressing the need for unilateral disarmament and the abandonment of nuclear power, the party's Manifesto emphasises the need for economic self-sufficiency, decentralisation and devolution of power and radical change of the electoral system. The Ecologists call upon the example of the Levellers and the Diggers, who 'combined a fierce spirit of decentralist independence with an equal respect for God and Earth'. They propose to initiate a campaign of uncompromising civil disobedience, invoking the spirit of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King.

The Economy. The Ecology Party is radically anti-industrial; it opposes all forms of what it calls the 'politics of growth'. Its Manifesto promises to:

- Set up a National Income Scheme to replace all existing welfare benefits and tax allowances, and to a minimum income *for all, unconditionally*. 'Taxation would be levied at a level sufficient to finance the scheme'.
- Abolish National Insurance, phase out the employer's contribution and merge the employee's with Income Tax.
- Phase out VAT, and replace it by 'a graded purchase tax levied at the wholesale level'.
- Introduce three new taxes: a Natural Resources Tax, a progressive Turnover Tax, a tax on advertising.

- Restructure the Corporation Tax, so that 'the larger the company, the more tax it would pay'.
- Establish Community Employment Agencies and Savings Banks.
- 'Create hundreds of thousands of jobs through sustainable agriculture, resources and energy policies'—a pledge nowhere costed.

Arms and Security. The Ecology Party is the only uncompromisingly unilateralist party. **Mr Porritt**, the Party's co-chairman, has said:

'The Green philosophy stands or falls on its commitment to peace.'

The Party would:

- Reject unilaterally *all* nuclear weapons—no Cruise, no Trident, no Polaris.
- Reject all other weapons of 'indiscriminate mass destruction'.
- Withdraw from NATO and close down all American bases.
- Accelerate the impetus towards conventional disarmament, by progressively reducing overall defence spending.
- Stop *all* exports of military, nuclear and 'other repressive technology.'
- Scrap present civil defence plans.
- Withdraw from the EEC, and establish instead a 'European Federation, non-aligned in defence matters, opposed to reliance on economic growth, with its emphasis on the regions of Europe, and not its nation states'.
- 'Seek to reduce international tension by building a self-reliant, sustainable economy in the UK co-operating closely with other countries during the transition to a post-industrial society'.

The Environment. The protection of the environment is no longer the major concern of the Ecology Party. Nevertheless, the party continues to advocate radical measures to preserve nature. *Politics for Life* promises to:

- 'Establish a programme for increasing agricultural self-sufficiency, (aiming to produce 90 per cent of our own food) based on mixed small-scale farming'.
- 'Set up a Commission to advise on the prompt introduction of measures to redistribute land'.
- 'Abandon all plans for more nuclear power stations'.
- 'Repeal Part II of the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act'.
- Set up an Environmental Protection Agency 'to protect people and countryside against industrialisation'.
- Take immediate action against battery farming.
- Ban all hunting and coursing with hounds.
- Cut back on drug prescription in favour of health education and alternative healthcare methods.

- Increase aid for Third World countries.
- Write off debts from the poorest countries.
- Discourage trade by tariff barriers.

10. STANDARD OF LIVING: THE PARTIES COMPARED

The Labour Party apparently believes, and has certainly made considerable efforts to persuade the British people, that Conservatives favour the rich at the expense of ordinary working people. This idea stems from an assumption fundamental to Socialism: that what is good for the rich is bad for the rest, and that what is bad for the rich is good for the rest. The facts do not bear out either the assumption or the conclusion. Under the last Labour Government real incomes fell for the rich but they also fell for some of the poor. Under the Conservatives, by contrast, the standard of living has gone up not only for the wealthy, but for those on average and below average earnings, too.

REAL NET TAKE-HOME PAY (AFTER TAX AND INFLATION)

| | Percentage Increases | |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | Labour 1973-4 to 1978-9 | Conservative 1978-9 to 1983-4 |
| <i>Single Person</i> | | |
| Three-quarters average earnings | down 2.2 | Up 4.4 |
| Average earnings | down 2.9 | Up 5.3 |
| Twice average earnings | down 4.1 | Up 7.1 |
| <i>Married Couples</i> | | |
| Three-quarters average earnings | up 0.3 | Up 4.0 |
| Average earnings | down 0.8 | Up 4.9 |
| Twice average earnings | down 2.5 | Up 7.1 |
| <i>Married Couple with 2 Children</i> | | |
| Three-quarters average earnings | up 2.0 | Up 4.8 |
| Average earnings | up 0.5 | Up 5.5 |
| Twice average earnings | down 1.5 | Up 7.2 |

(Source: *Hansard*, 6th May 1983, WA. Col 163)

11. NOW WE KNOW

At Labour's press conference on 26th May, **Mr Jim Mortimer**, the party's General Secretary, declared that 'the unanimous view of the campaign committee is that Michael Foot is Leader of the Labour Party'.

12. THE LABOUR PARTY AND PENSIONS: PERFORMANCE AND PROMISES

Performance

Labour's record on pensions is much flimsier than is often realised. Between 1974-79 Labour's record included:

- * Slashing the value of pensioners' savings.
- * Cheating pensioners of £1,000 million of benefits.
- * Refusing to pay the £10 Christmas Bonus on two occasions.
- * Increasing the number of pensioners liable to income tax.

Savings. Under the last Labour Government, pensioners' savings were drastically reduced in value, because prices more than doubled. Furthermore, gross interest rates on savings failed to keep pace with the rate of inflation.

Pensions Swindle. In 1976 Mrs Castle, then Social Services Secretary, confessed that pensioners would not be receiving the pension increase which they were expecting. Under the old method of calculation, pensions should have gone up by 21.2 per cent to match the *past* rate of inflation; by switching to a *forecast* method, based on the expected rise in prices in the year to November, she gave a pension increase of only 15 per cent.

In this way, pensioners were cheated of £500 million, equivalent to around £1,000 million at today's prices.

(Note: The Conservative Government is now going back to the method of calculating pensions on the *past* rate of inflation. See *Daily Notes* No. 4, p.52-55).

Christmas Bonus. The Labour Government did not pay the £10 Christmas Bonus in 1975 or 1976. Indeed, in view of Labour's present commitment to double its value, it is amusing to recall what Mr Joel Barnett, Labour's former Chief Secretary to the Treasury, had to say about what happened in 1978:

'The Christmas Bonus was a very low priority for both David Ennals and Stanley Orme and it had to be almost forced upon them' (*Inside the Treasury*, Andre Deutsch 1982).

Increased Taxation. Under the last Labour Government personal income tax allowances were raised by less than the rise in prices; this meant that more pensioners were brought into the tax net for the first time.

Promises

Labour's programme on social security is so extraordinary that it is difficult to know how seriously to take it. It appears that almost any proposal that would add to public spending has been inserted.

Thus, the death grant would be raised from £30 to £200; the Christmas Bonus doubled to £20; TV licences for pensioners would be phased out; and new fuel allowances introduced for pensioners. There is, naturally, no explanation as to why the last Labour Government failed to do any of these things.

However, this is only the tip of the iceberg. Pensions would be raised substantially this November, and in future increases in pensions would be linked to increases in earnings, if these were higher than the rise in prices. Progress would also be made to a 'common pension age of 60'.

Sir Geoffrey Howe has estimated that Labour's social security programme, including pensions, would cost at least £13½ billion. If this were met, for example, by raising employee NI contributions, the tax burden would be intolerable—over £20 per week extra would need to be paid by the average earner.

In practice, a Labour Government would increase taxation and let inflation soar and pensioners would once again suffer most of all.

The final word should be left to Mr Joel Barnett. Warning against Labour making excessive promises, he wrote:

'It is therefore vital that Michael Foot, the new leader of the Labour Party, should make no rash promises. For if he does, he will create massive disappointment and anger' (ibid).

13. UNCOMRADELY WORDS

'The Association of Liberal Councillors is urging party members to distance themselves from the SDP in the election campaign. In Campaign Mailing, a letter published by the association, they said: "We very strongly urge all Liberals to use the Liberal programme. The Alliance Programme by contrast is wishy-washy, fudging many issues."'

(*Financial Times*, 26th May 1983)

14. ANIMAL WELFARE: ATTACKS ANSWERED

A two-page advertisement by the 'International Fund for Animal Welfare', which appeared in the *Daily Mail* and *Daily Star* on 25th May, contained gross misrepresentations of the Conservative attitude to the welfare of animals. Comments on these misrepresentations are set out below (See also *Daily Notes* No. 5, p.66; No. 6, p.85 and No. 7, p.100). The Conservative Government's record on animal welfare, far from being anything to be ashamed of, is outstanding compared with that of Labour governments.

Misrepresentation No. 1

'I hereby allow mobs of bloodthirsty huntsmen to take their pleasure in mercilessly hounding defenceless foxes to death in the name of sport'.

Conservatives have always believed that hunting is not a political matter. An official enquiry set up by the Labour Government in 1948 recommended that hunting should not be banned as being cruel.

Misrepresentation No. 2

'I am prepared to do absolutely nothing to stop those without pity from forcing dogs to terrorise deer, often tearing them to pieces.'

No hounds in Britain tear deer to pieces—they hunt it until it is cornered and at bay when the huntsman decides whether to shoot it or not. Deer are classified as vermin, causing extensive damage to farm crops and standing timber. The last time a ban was imposed on the hunting of deer (on Exmoor) they nearly became extinct when the local population took the matter into their own hands.

Misrepresentation No. 3

'I totally accept the need for innocent live animals to suffer agonising cosmetic experiments . . . to add one more pointless beauty product to the thousands already marketed.'

The Conservative Manifesto states that legislation will be introduced to update the Cruelty to Animals Act 1876. This will be based on proposals set out in the White Paper on Animal Welfare (Cmnd. 8883), which contains very stringent proposals for the control of the testing of cosmetics on animals. In future, all applications for project licences for the testing of cosmetics should be referred to a new Animal Procedures Committee. They will apply strict criteria in judging the application; there must be no other scientifically satisfactory method, not involving the use of an animal, available; when there is a choice between procedures, those chosen should use the minimum number of animals, cause the least suffering, and be most likely to produce satisfactory results.

In 1981, the number of experiments to test cosmetics was around one half per cent of the total number of experiments. The Conservative Government gave serious consideration to a total ban on such experiments, but found that it would not be possible to do so, for two reasons. Firstly, it is difficult to define that which is strictly a cosmetic when substances may simultaneously be of medical or other therapeutic value. Secondly, such testing may also be required to comply with statutory or other requirements to protect users and those working on production of cosmetics.

Neither the Labour Party nor the Alliance, in their Manifestos, make any concrete proposals as to their position on the use of animals in the testing of cosmetics. There is no evidence to suggest that either party would ban the use of animals in the testing of cosmetics.

Misrepresentation No. 4

'I understand why "get rich quick" farmers condemn new-born veal calves to a living darkness of death . . . unable to move and fed solely on powdered milk.'

The new code of practice (December 1982) by the Farm Animal Welfare Council includes a number of requirements for veal production which have the effect of greatly limiting, if not absolutely discouraging, the production of veal in crates. As a result, farmers are rapidly changing their methods to a more open and free system of veal production.

Misrepresentation No. 5

'I empower the Government to resist any EEC regulation which could help end the senseless annual slaughter of over 100,000 seal pups in the infamous Canadian carnage.'

The Conservative Government took the lead in achieving unanimous support for an EEC Directive which will provide for a two-year ban on imports of harp and hooded seal pup products from 1st October 1983. This Community action has ensured that there will be no Norwegian cull of seal pups this year and any Canadian cull will be minimal.

Misrepresentation No. 6

'I must also ignore the fact that there is no scientific reason for the yearly killing of thousands of grey seals in the Orkneys, it is done to cynically pacify local fishermen.'

The grey seal population in Scotland has gone up from 29,000 in 1963 to over 70,000 in 1983 an expansion which has increased the damage done by seals to fish stocks. The Government has, therefore, commissioned a three-year research programme to get more details on seal diet, the extent of seal movement and the impact of seals on local fisheries. Discussion will follow with fisheries bodies and conservation interests before any decisions are taken.

Meanwhile, an annual pup hunt is authorized to allow a limited number of largely Orkney and other island-based people to take grey seal pups. A quota is set in the light of scientific advice. The method of killing is strictly controlled, i.e. confined to a specified kind of gun, and the operation is witnessed by Fisheries Inspectors from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Scotland, and—in 1982 for the first time—a representative of certain conservation bodies. All were satisfied that the operation was carried out humanely.

Misrepresentation No. 7

'I don't mind if snare wires are used irresponsibly to trap wild animals, such as rabbits, even if my own pet cat dies a slow lingering death by mistake.'

The law prohibits the use of snares except under licence, and the self-locking snare is totally prohibited.

A total ban on snares is not practicable for a number of reasons. Snares are, for instance, needed where other methods of pest control are ineffective or impracticable. In these circumstances they may, in fact, prove to be more humane than those other methods. And if snares were to be banned, this would undoubtedly encourage the illegal use of dangerous alternatives such as toxic chemicals or spring traps. So the cat or pet would still be in danger of injury or even death, whatever the law.

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