

Daily Notes

Saturday 4th June 1983

No. 12

THE REAL WORLD

Both Labour and the Alliance have tried to persuade the electorate that the Conservative Party is in some way 'extreme'.

There is nothing in our record, our Manifesto, or our statements during the campaign to justify such an accusation. We continue to support the institutions that Conservatives have consistently supported over many years—the armed forces, the police, the Education Service and the Social Services, including the National Health Service.

Why, then, should our opponents have resorted to charges of extremism? Because they are living in a nightmare world, dominated by the debate between two kinds of socialism—the moderate and the extreme. They have failed to recognise that in the real world, such debates are no longer of interest, since socialism of every sort is discredited.

Nothing is more symptomatic of our opponents' detachment from reality than Mr Healey's recent attack on Mrs Thatcher's leadership during the Falklands conflict. Mr Healey and his colleagues have clearly either forgotten or never discovered that the British people were, and remain, united in their admiration for the calmness and strength that was displayed by the Prime Minister during that crisis. Patriotism is not regarded as 'old-fashioned' or 'extremist': it is regarded as the height of good sense. In this, as in other things, the Conservative attitude is in tune with the times; we are at once traditional, moderate and modern.

**Conservative
Research
Department**



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1. YOUR BILL FOR LABOUR'S RECKLESS POLICIES

Speaking at Lingfield on 1st June 1983, the **Chancellor of the Exchequer** described Labour's Manifesto as: 'a reckless rag-bag of extravagant promises which no responsible opposition would dare to promise the voter'.

Colossal Expenditure

If Labour's Manifesto pledges were ever put into effect, public expenditure five years from now would be at least **£35,000 million a year more than the level now planned**. This is a minimum figure, covering only the 100 pledges which are precise enough for some sort of costing. It excludes both the £20,000 million cost of Labour's nationalisation plans, and the 77 pledges to spend the taxpayers' money on projects too vague for meaningful costing.

Additional Taxation

Even giving Labour the benefit of every doubt—assuming that the economy under Mr Shore grew by 9 per cent in five years, and assuming Mr Shore's figure of £3,000 million for extra borrowing in the fifth year—Labour would still need to raise an extra £22,000 million in taxes in year five. **That is £20 per week extra taxation, in today's prices, for every household in the country.** And, over the five years, Labour would on their own admission, have added an extra £25,000 million to the National Debt.

Excessive Confidence

If it was to pay for its pledges without increasing taxation, a Labour Government would need to secure economic growth of $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent per annum. This is nearly twice as fast as the average achieved in the UK in the last twenty years. It is inconceivable that Labour's policies could achieve such an improvement. Instead, like the Socialist Government in France, they would be hampered by rocketing inflation, devaluation and balance of payments crises.

Under Labour, the trade unions would become uniquely powerful. Labour's proposition is that if unions are given more powers they can be relied upon to use them less. There is no shred of evidence to support such pious hopes. Instead, once inflation started to accelerate, trade union leaders would be bound to demand offsetting increases in wages. Industrial relations would deteriorate, competitiveness would suffer, and Labour's hopes for an unprecedented rate of economic growth would disappear without trace.

A Circular Argument

The justification for Labour's proposed gamble with the economic stability of the nation is contained in a phrase in their Manifesto: '*Spending money creates jobs*'. Yet the same document, only two paragraphs earlier admits that it will not be possible to spend the money until the supposed jobs have been created: '*Our programme is heavily dependent upon a sustained increase in the nation's output and income and a matching decline in the numbers out of work*'. In short, the policy would have to succeed before it could be put into operation. Labour are intending to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps.

2. THE PEOPLE'S MARCH FOR JOBS

Background

- * After initial opposition, notably from Len Murray and Frank Chapple, the People's March for Jobs '83 was sponsored and set in motion by the TUC.
- * It has received considerable backing from Communists and Communist sympathisers.

- * The object was to repeat the 1981 march and, since the calling of the election, to boost Labour's election campaign.
- * Official marchers are thought to number about 300.
- * The March hoped to appeal to as wide a spectrum of opinion as possible, but has been handicapped by conspicuous extremist fellow-travellers who consider the project to be theirs.
- * The March has not been a success: turnout has been disappointing; the public has mostly reacted with indifference; and the national press has, by and large, ignored it.
- * The March was welcomed at Harrow by Ken Livingstone on Thursday. Yesterday it was addressed in Southall by Moss Evans.
- * Today (4th June) there will be a reception for the marchers at Battersea Bridge at 11.30, followed by a reception by the GLC at County Hall at 12.30. There will be a Festival for Jobs at Crystal Palace in the afternoon.
- * Tomorrow, Sunday 5th, a huge demonstration is planned, proceeding from Battersea Park at 1.15 pm and culminating in Hyde Park for speeches by prominent Socialist and CND figures. Organisers hope that 250,000 people will attend. Several trade unions have arranged transport for supporters.

Support from Extremists

- * The Economic League (an independent organisation that monitors extremist groups), describes the Communist Party as 'the major influence' behind the March; and identifies the March's chairman and six or seven of ten regional organisers as Communists or Communist sympathisers.
- * The *Morning Star* has been adopted as the March's newspaper: each member of the March is provided with a free copy of the paper every day.
- * The *Morning Star* considers that the March is necessary because of the 'capitalist crisis and Tory Government policies' (8th April) and that it is in the finest traditions of the 'extra-Parliamentary struggle of the British people' (25th April).
- * The Northern Communist Party, the Stockport Communist Party and North Nottingham's Communist Parliamentary Candidate have associated themselves with the March.
- * Extreme Left factions, such as the Workers Revolutionary Party, accompany the March.
- * CND has been prominent in the March, uses it to amplify its views, and will have several speakers at the Hyde Park rally.

Vehicle For Labour

- * The March organisers have found themselves in a continual dilemma over whether to support their claim to be non-political by avoiding explicitly anti-Tory propaganda, or whether to give free rein to their strongly pro-Labour sympathies.

- * Repeated statements and denials have been made to bolster the 'moderate' claim, but this is a pretence which lacks any credibility; the March's left-wing allegiance has overwhelmingly dominated proceedings:
 - The March supports 'an alternative economic strategy'.
 - Gerry Cohen, Communist Party Organiser, has said: 'The People's March for Jobs will . . . counter the Tory imposed resignation and despair of unemployment'.
 - Jack Dromey, the March's South East organiser, has described the March as 'a crusade against Government policies (which have) deliberately created unemployment'.
 - Opposition to the Conservative Government is explicit in the 'Marcher's Song'.
- * The similarity with Labour's election platform is such that, since the announcement of the General Election, the marchers have been 'bored down to their blisters by some of Westminster's most egregious windbags' (*Sunday Telegraph*, 15th May). Michael Foot (who originally opposed the march), Tony Benn and at least ten other Labour candidates have taken advantage of the March to promote Labour's cause.
- * It is no surprise that Labour are supporting extra-parliamentary action of this sort. They are sinking in the opinion polls. The contradictions of their Manifesto have been systematically exposed. They dare not mention defence, deterrence, the Common Market, their fiscal plans or their National Economic Assessment; their leadership is in disarray; and they have nothing plausible to offer the public. In desperation, they naturally resort to the tactics of public militancy.

3. ANIMAL CRACKERS

'Socialists have a vested interest in supporting the animal rights movement. It is not surprising that many activists came out of the women's movement. It has taken a long time for us to realise that capitalism has its own insane logic that requires the oppression of women, the crushing of minorities and the wholesale slaughter of animals.'

(Valerie Veness, Labour candidate for Hornsey and Wood Green,
London Labour Briefing, December 1982)

4. HOUSING: DAILY MIRROR ALLEGATIONS

On 2nd June the *Daily Mirror* made a number of false or misleading statements about the Conservative housing record.

'The number of houses built by councils in Britain has more than halved under the Tories—dropping from 104,000 in 1979 to 49,000 last year.'

'Council rents have more than doubled in the first four years of the Thatcher Government.'

'Local authorities are spending just £500 million on new homes this year. Under Labour in 1978 the figure was £1,400 million.'

'Nearly 400,000 workers are on the dole. More than 2,000 building firms went bust last year.'

'In 1978 there were one million people on council house waiting lists. By next year the numbers are expected to reach two million.'

Under the Conservatives the emphasis on public sector house building for rent has shifted to the Voluntary Housing Movement. The Housing Associations completed 120,000 houses for rent between 1979 and 1982.

In spite of their policy pronouncements to the contrary the last Labour Government allowed rents to fall behind earnings, increasing the subsidies to tenants at the expense of ratepayers and taxpayers. In five of the last eight financial years, up to April 1982 the percentage increase in average council house rents has been below the percentage increase in average earnings.

Local authority capital spending on housing in 1983-4 is likely to amount to £3,200 million, over £300 million more than the expected level of spending in 1982-3. Councils were encouraged in 1982-3 to apply for additional expenditure allocations, but one-third of all housing authorities did not do so.

The building industry is now showing signs of recovery. The NHBC has estimated that by March this year there were 50,000 more jobs in private house building than there were at the end of 1982. In the three years 1980-2 there was a net increase of 11,400 in the number of building firms.

Council waiting lists are actually going down. Shelter's annual survey of council house waiting lists records a fall from 1,200,694 applicants in 1980 to 1,180,145 in 1982.

'There are more than a million unfit homes in Britain today and a further million need extensive repairs.'

'Around 500,000 council houses have been sold since the right to buy Act. Only 240,000 have been built.'

The number of unfit homes remained more or less constant between 1976 and 1981. The Conservatives have made considerable progress in improving houses. The number of dwellings improved with the aid of grant or subsidy has risen from 158,000 in 1979 to 194,000 in 1982.

The sale of public sector housing does not reduce the number of dwellings actually available for rent. For every Housing Association home that has been sold, 50 homes for rent have been added to the stock.

5. NEW BUSINESSES

For the UK as a whole, there was a net increase in the number of businesses in the three years 1980-82 of almost 20,000 (19,800 to be precise).

(DOI Statistics)

6. LABOUR v. LABOUR

The Economy

'We must . . . be ready to act on imports directly . . . to safeguard key industries and . . . check the growth of imports' (*Labour Manifesto*, 1983).

'We will . . . discuss with the TUC the possibility of introducing a statutory minimum wage' (*Labour Manifesto*, 1983).

'Faced with the difficulties of unilateral reflation, some Socialists are tempted to seek salvation through trade restrictions or competitive devaluation. But, such beggar-my-neighbour policies . . . are more likely to lead to a trade or currency war than to insulate their sponsors from the recession in the outside world' (Mr Healey, Paris, 12th November 1982).

'The reason we are against a minimum wage is because we will not accept any Government interference in wages' (Mr Terry Duffy, President of the AUEW, *Morning Star*, 1st October 1982).

European Community

'British withdrawal from the Community is the right policy for Britain—to be completed well within the lifetime of the Parliament' (*Labour Manifesto*, 1983).

'The consequences of abandoning membership are not being exposed adequately in London . . . I think that Britain's interests are best served by being in the Community' (**Mr Hattersley**, Strasbourg, 6th July 1982).

Defence

'Labour will cancel Trident and reject Cruise. All nuclear bases will be removed from Britain. Their possession, so far from making our country safe, makes it a thousand times more vulnerable' (**Mr John Silkin**, Party Political Broadcast, 1st December 1982).

'It is the stability of the military balance between NATO and the Warsaw powers which has kept Europe at peace for over 30 years when 20 million people have been killed in wars outside Europe. NATO's nuclear strategy is an essential part of that balance. To threaten to upset that balance by refusing to let America base any part of her nuclear weapons in Britain would make war more likely not less' (**Mr Healey**, Labour Party Policy School, Oxford, 11th August 1981).

'We will after consultation, carry through in the lifetime of the next parliament our non-nuclear defence policy' (*Labour Manifesto*, 1983).

'What our policy is, and it's quite clear, is to put Polaris into the negotiations . . . no Trade Unionist is going to succeed in a negotiation if he tells the employer he's going to give the object of the negotiation away in advance' (**Mr Healey**, 'Election call', 26th May 1983).

Northern Ireland

'We respect and support . . . the right of the Northern Ireland people to remain within the UK . . . ' (*Labour Manifesto*, 1983).

'We should be clear that Britain must withdraw from Northern Ireland . . . We shall withdraw. There will be an amnesty' (**Mr Benn**, *Hansard*, 9th December 1982, Col 1080).

Extremists

'At our Conference, we passed the decision about the Militant Tendency' (**Mr Foot**, *Nationwide*, 26th May 1983).

'It doesn't matter what resolutions are passed by conferences if we will not implement them . . . Foot and the National Executive's majority will not be able to deliver this witch-hunt because we won't agree to it' (**Mr Reg Race**, then MP for Wood Green, *Daily Express*, 27th September 1982).

'Those who say they are prepared to tolerate within the Labour Party the followers of Leon Trotsky simply do not understand what the difference between Marxism and Marxist-Leninism really is' (**Mr Shore**, *Daily Telegraph*, 29th March 1982).

'I am profoundly opposed to any attempt to outlaw, expel or excommunicate the followers of Leon Trotsky from the Labour Party' (**Mr Benn**, *Marxism Today*, March 1982).

7. LOANS TO ARGENTINA

Mr Healey alleged on 1st June 1983 that the British Government had been guilty of complicity in allowing loans to the Junta in Argentina. Clearly the Deputy Leader of the Labour Party has forgotten the lessons he should have learnt as Chancellor of the Exchequer. He should know that British banks are responsible for their own commercial decisions on this matter. The British Government, except at times of war itself, does not interfere with a bank's operations. Furthermore, if British banks were prevented from making commercial arrangements with Argentina, the process of recycling would be undermined, with a consequent increase in the likelihood of Argentina defaulting on its debt repayments.

Mr Healey also fails to understand the basis on which the IMF makes loans—to which Britain contributes—to individual countries. Debtor nations are obliged, in the case of large loans, to give an undertaking to the Fund about the economic policies they intend to pursue. This 'conditionality' ensures that the recipient Government attempts to correct the underlying causes of its economic difficulties, and that it uses the loan for its intended purpose. The **Prime Minister**, in effect underlined this on 10th February 1983; 'Her Majesty's Government will continue to examine each request for IMF loans against the Fund's guidelines on conditionality and in the light of the Fund's policies relating to the use of resources, as well as any other relevant factors. A member's performance under an earlier programme may be a factor to be taken into account, but each request is examined on its overall merits. (*Hansard*, 10th February 1983, WA, Col. 432).

If Argentina diverted any of the IMF's loans to pay for military procurement, this would jeopardise existing debt and Argentina's ability

to draw on additional loans in the future. In the absence of an IMF loan, Argentina's indebtedness to the commercial banks would become so serious that it is likely that it would default on its debts. If this happened it would release the funds that would have been used to service its debts, to spend on more military hardware. Clearly Mr Healey has failed to grasp this. That would be one defence related repercussion, the other would be the natural political instability that always accompanies economic instability. The logical consequence would be a worsening in the degree of repression in Argentina; a destabilisation of a large area of South America; and finally—directly related to this debate—an increased chance that the Junta would attempt to distract people's attention from the domestic chaos by embarking on a second flag-rallying adventure in the Falklands.

It is therefore in everyone's interest to see Argentina become economically and politically stable. The ordinary people in the country would be better off, as would British banks and companies and most important, the Falkland Islanders themselves.

8. THE YOUTH TRAINING SCHEME

Smears. A number of cynical and politically motivated attacks have been made by the Labour Party and their friends in the trade unions in a bid to discredit the new Youth Training Scheme, which starts in September this year. Mr Healey has described the Scheme as a device to cut the registered unemployed (*Daily Mirror*, 20th May 1983) and **Mr Chris Minta**, President of the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education has said the scheme will be a 'total and utter shambles' (*Daily Telegraph*, 3rd January 1983). The Youth Training Scheme is neither of these things. It is the most imaginative attempt to train young people for jobs ever seen in Britain. That is why the Scheme was welcomed in Parliament by the Labour Party and by the trade union representatives on the Manpower Services Commission. Indeed, Mr Healey's former Cabinet colleague, Mrs Shirley Williams, said in Parliament that she would have liked to set up the Youth Training Scheme when Labour was in office, but Mr Healey would not provide the necessary resources. The facts are set out below.

Proper Training. Contrary to Mr Healey's claim, and unlike the Youth Opportunities Programme, the Youth Training Scheme is not a short-term expedient to deal with unemployment, but an integral part of the Government's policies for improving Britain's industrial performance. At present, only about half of Britain's school leavers receive vocational training, compared with nine-tenths in Germany and four-fifths in France. Over a third of school leavers entering jobs receive no such training, and another fifth scarcely any. Moreover, by 1981, the labour costs of employing a 16-year old had risen to over £3,000, despite the fact that a person of this age usually contributes little to an employer's output. In Britain, 16-year old apprentices can expect anything between 30 and 70

per cent of the adult wage, whereas in West Germany they usually earn only 20 per cent. Lack of skills has made it hard for young people to find jobs; trade union efforts to raise youth wages have made it doubly difficult.

The Youth Training Scheme is therefore intended to give young people the skills and experience they need, and a ready appreciation of what they can expect to earn. Expenditure on the scheme in its first full year (1983-4) will be about £1 billion, twice as much as is being spent on the Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP) that it replaces, and more than eight times the expenditure—in real terms—of spending on YOP in 1978-9, Labour's last year in office.

The scheme will provide 460,000 year-long places to all unemployed 16-year olds, some employed 16-year olds and some unemployed 17-year olds. The scheme will operate in two 'modes'. Under 'Mode A', 300,000 places will be made available by employers; some of the young people filling these places will spend part of their year at institutions of further education. Under 'Mode B', 160,000 places will be made available in the high quality training workshops and community projects developed under the Youth Opportunities Programme or in one of the 150 Information Technology Centres (ITeCs) being set up all over the country. In this case, the Manpower Services Commission will act as Managing Agent, arranging the training and work experience in conjunction with local colleges, firms and organisations.

Under 'Mode A', young people may either be taken on as employees, in which case they will be paid a wage and pay tax and NICs, or they may be paid a fixed non-taxable training allowance, which is currently £25 a week.

Organisation. To avoid the problems associated with a centralised bureaucracy, administrative machinery of an entirely new kind has been developed to ensure that local involvement and responsibility are paramount. Some employers will act as 'Managing Agents', taking responsibility for entire programmes. Others will act only as 'sponsors', providing parts of a programme. 50-60 Manpower Services Commission Area Offices will work with Managing Agents. 50-60 Area Manpower Boards (AMBs) will supervise schemes along guidelines set out by the national Youth Training Board, made up of representatives of employers, trade unions, local authorities and education and voluntary organisations. The Youth Training Board will be advised by an expert Advisory Group on Content and Standards. Area Manpower Boards (AMBs) will formally approve every scheme.

Progress. The Area Manpower Boards were only recently set up and have had to deal with a massive backlog. The progress they have made has varied from region to region, since some started later than others, but overall progress has been substantial. 390,000 possible places have been identified; of these, 53,000 have been approved and a further 254,000 are firmly anticipated. The experience of the Youth Opportunities Programme indicates that the ultimate target will be met: by Christmas

1982, less than 8,000 unemployed young people who had left school in 1982 were without an offer of a place on YOP.

The facts clearly contradict the malicious allegations of Mr Healey and Mr Minta. The co-operation and support of all sides in industry has enabled the Manpower Services Commission to devise, organise and now deliver the first comprehensive and workable scheme for training young people agreed to by any government. The carping criticisms of the Left, who in office had neither the means nor the will to act, cannot detract from that achievement.

9. BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

'A West London couple who stood for the SDP in last year's local council elections have defected to the Tories.

'Ian and Jill Franks of Doneraile Road, Fulham . . . contested seats on Hammersmith and Fulham Council after joining the SDP from the Labour Party, but now they claim, the SDP is nothing more than a Labour Party, Mark Two.'

(*The Standard* 2nd June 1983)

10. CARE OF THE ELDERLY

An indication of the extent of Labour's desperation is given by the tenor of Mrs Gwyneth Dunwoody's ever more lurid and absurd allegations about Conservative health policy. In a press release issued on 29th April, she accused Conservatives of wishing to see Britain's 'elderly abandoned (sic) forced to fend for themselves when they cannot even leave their own homes.' Indeed Mrs Dunwoody appears to have been carried away by her own rhetoric, for she went so far as to say that Conservatives are preparing 'their own "final solution" to the problems of the sick and elderly'.

These statements are not merely tastelessly overblown; they are false to the core. The Conservative Government's concern for the elderly is exhibited in a series of imaginative and practical policies designed to achieve close co-operation between the NHS and the private sector and to make the most of all available resources.

Nursing Homes. The Labour Party make much of the Government's discussion paper, *Co-operation between the NHS and the Private Sector at District level*. They allege that this paper advocates wholesale transfer of elderly NHS patients to the private sector. In reality, the paper said no more than that:

'health authorities could assess the scope for contracting with nursing homes . . . for the care of elderly NHS patients, so freeing NHS acute beds and enabling unsatisfactory geriatric accommodation to be closed.'

Co-operation between the sectors does not increase NHS costs: in 1981-2, the average cost of keeping a geriatric patient in an NHS bed (even without intensive treatment), was £217 a week; average charges in the private sector are only £135-£200 a week. Under any contracting arrangements the patients themselves would continue, of course, to receive treatment free of charge; their accommodation would be of higher quality; and the NHS would be able to treat more patients in beds that would otherwise be unavailable. Nor is this an innovation: such contractual arrangements have existed since the creation of the NHS, even under Labour Governments.

By contrast to the large-scale private provision, the NHS offers places only in often unsatisfactory long-stay beds, whereas the Royal Commission pointed out, patients remain because there is nowhere else for them to go. It is the Conservative Government which has launched an initiative to provide the first three NHS nursing homes—catering for the elderly with mental disorder. Labour Governments have made no attempt to provide facilities of this sort. But Labour now attack constructive Conservative attempts to offer better services to the elderly.

Residential Homes. Many elderly people who are not frail enough to require nursing home care live in residential homes. Between 1978-9 and 1981-2 (the latest date for which figures are available), the Conservative Government increased overall net public expenditure on such residential homes by 5½ per cent in real terms. Over 100,000 elderly people are supported publicly in local authority homes. There is also a flourishing private sector, covering some 45,000 people. And there is considerable co-operation between the two sectors. In March 1982, about 11,000 elderly people were sponsored by local authorities in voluntary homes, and some 2,200 in private homes. It is not clear whether a Labour Government would end these arrangements.

Care in the Community. The overwhelming majority of people over 65 (95 per cent) live at home or in sheltered housing. Conservatives recognise that many elderly people want to stay in familiar surroundings as long as possible and do not want to be forced into institutions.

The objective of the Conservative Government is to satisfy such legitimate claims by making available community nursing, home helps and day centres. We have also provided support for voluntary organisations whose vital role in care is totally ignored by the Labour Party. We can be proud of our record.

- (i) *Day Centres* (excluding lunch clubs). The number of places in March 1982 was 38,500—17 per cent up on the numbers inherited from Labour in 1979. Expenditure on the provision of these places in 1981-2 was £38 million—23 per cent up in real terms on 1978-9. (Figures here, and for ii and iii below refer to England alone.)

- (ii) *Home Helps*. By September 1981 the number of home helps had risen to 48,800—9 per cent up on the numbers left by Labour.
- (iii) *Community Nursing*. Expenditure on community nursing in 1981-2 was £212 million, an 18.5 per cent real terms increase on 1978/9. The number of people visited at home by health visitors and district nurses in 1981 had increased sharply. In 1981, 375,000 more people were visited in this way than under the last full year of Labour in 1978.

11. ALLIANCE POLICY ON 'THE RIGHT TO BUY'

Mr John Stanley, Minister of Housing, in a letter to Mr Roy Jenkins on 1st June, said:

"In your answers to questions in the *Daily Star* today you stated that "We will also continue the right to buy scheme for council tenants".

"However, that is surely highly misleading and inconsistent with the policy of the SDP/Liberal Alliance on the right to buy as stated in the Alliance Manifesto. The complete paragraph on the right to buy in your manifesto reads as follows: "The Right to Buy should be retained. After the introduction of proportional representation and hence greater accountability, Councils could be given more discretion to decide their housing policy. However, there should be a right of appeal in which Councils would justify to the Local Government Ombudsman any proposed restriction on the individual's right to buy such as in areas of housing need or in certain rural areas where cheap rented housing is necessary to keep an adequate proportion of young people in the community".

"It appears quite evident from your manifesto that the Alliance will not in fact retain the right to buy for all tenants in all parts of Great Britain. It is clear that the Alliance would, to some extent, make the right to buy discretionary rather than mandatory. You would, therefore, be removing from some council tenants, New Town tenants, and tenants of non-charitable housing associations the absolute certainty they now have to buy their own homes under the Conservative 1980 Housing Act.

"As this is an issue of the utmost importance to millions of public sector tenants in the election I should be grateful if you would respond on the following two points:

- (1) Will you state the geographical locations of the "areas of housing need" and the "certain rural areas" as stated in your manifesto where councils would be able to restrict the right of individual tenants to buy their homes?
- (2) As the Local Government Ombudsman can currently only examine questions of maladministration please will you set out the housing criteria against which the Alliance proposes the Ombudsman should in future decide whether individual tenants should have the right to buy or not?"

The transcript of 'The Christian & Conservatism Conference' (held in February) is now available from the CPC bookshop, 32 Smith Square, London SW1, at £1.25. It contains the full text of the papers prepared by Dr. Rhodes Boyson, Sir Fred Catherwood, Michael Alison, Paul Johnson, and it deals with Christian attitudes to society generally, and nuclear weapons in particular. It is a very interesting analysis of Christian and Conservative principles.

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