MAR. 1985

WEST YORKSHIRE LABOUR BRIEFING



THE FIGHT GOES ON !

The magnificent 12 month strike of the miners has changed the political scene in Britain. The miners have been defeated by the failures of the Labour Party and the T.U.C. leaderships to organise with the N.U.M. for victory.

The defeat is not on the same scale as 1926 in that the rest of the working class organised at a rank and file level on a much bigger scale than the 1920's in support of the miner's. This unprecedented organisation of supporters, including Labour Party members, lesbians and gays, the Peace Movement and above all the Women's Support Committees have given renewed hope to millions of workers.

The huge size of the Democracy Day demonstration held after the return of the miners showed the willingness of the class to fight. West Yorkshire Briefing pledges its resources to join with these forces to fight the Tories.

WEST YORKSHIRE LABOUR BRIEFING



WEST YORKSHIRE LABOUR BRIEFING APOLOGISES FOR THE LATE APPEARANCE OF THIS ISSUE OWING TO PRODUCTION PROBLEMS. CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE NEXT ISSUE SHOULD BE SENT TO THE ADDRESS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE.

The editors of the last issue of West Yorkshire Labour Briefing have had it drawn to their attention that a short article concerning a possible conflict of interests between the director of a local radio station and some land which may possibly have had a community use, could be open to differing interpretations. It was not the intention of the article, drawn from previously published accounts, to impute the motives of the individual concerned. West Yorkshire Labour Briefing unreservedly withdraw any implications which could be interpreted as attacking the person concerned.

The following are the sponsors of the magazine in their personal capacities. They do not necessarily agree with the articles within the magazine, only its overall purpose of stimulating debate within the Labour Party.

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WEST YORKSHIRE LABOUR BRIEFING
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c/o 21 Bennett Road , Leeds 6 .

UNCLE ALBERT'S SHINY MEDAL *or what some'll do for baubles*

DEDICATED TO ALBERT BARLOW - an NUM Official at Denby Grange Colliery

He received a BEM in the New Years Honours List 1985

AW SHOW US IT UNCLE ALBERT, UNCLE ALBERT, PLEASE !
THEY SAY THAT IT SHINES SO BRIGHTLY IT REALLY DAZZLES THI EES
UNCLE ALBERT SHOW US THI MEDAL, THEY SAY ITS A B.E.M. ,
SHOW US IT UNCLE ALBERT, THEN I WON'T PESTER AGAIN,

HOW MUCH COAL DID YOU SHIFT UNCLE ALBERT, WAS IT TONS BY THE THOUSAND AND TEN,
DID YOU GO THROUGH THAT PIT LIKE A WHIRLWIND, AND FILL FULL FACE OFF THI SEN,
HOW NICE TO BE HONOURED FOR FACEWORK, A'MEAN SEEIN' AS YOU WERE ON STRIKE,
YOU'DHAVE THOWT THEY'D HAVE GIVE IT TO SOMEONE, WHO'D LOOKED FOR A JOB ON HIS BIKE,
BUT MAGGIE CAN'T BE ALL THAT BAD, SHE DIDN'T BEAR THEE A GRUDGE
A' MEAN, SHE STILL SENT THEE THI' MEDAL, 'THOUGH THA'D SAID THA' WOULDN'T BUDGE,

SOME SAY ITS NOT TRUE UNCLE ALBERT, THAT YOU GOT IT FOR SHIFTING COAL,
THEY SAY THAT YOU LOST YOUR BOTTLE AND SOLD OFF A BIT OF YOUR SOUL,
HOW YOU PUT ON SHOW UNCLE ALBERT, PLAYING YOUR UNION ROLE,
BUT YOU DON'T CARE TUPPENCE IF MINERS SPEND REST OF THEIR LIVES ON THE DOLE,
AN' THA WASN'T GONNA MISS THI MEDAL, WHATEVER THEW UNION SAID,
THA WOR FREETENED SHE WOULDN'T HAVE SENT IT, IF SHE'D REALLY THOWT THA WOR A RED,
SO THA ENDORSED DEFEATISTS IN T'MEETING AND SO SICKENED OF MOST OF YOUR MEN,
THAT THEY FLOCKED BACK I' DROVES AT DENBY;
A FEATHER I' T'CAP FOR BULMER AND THINGS KEP ALL SWET FOR THI SEN,
(Bulmer is the present manager and very ambitious)
AH'LL BE THE FIRST I' YORKSHIRE, THOW'T BULMER, PRODUCING COALS,
AH'M SURE OF A STEP UP T'LADDER; AND MAYBE A PRESENTATION,
AH'VE ALLUS FANCIED A ROLLS,

THOUGH THA'D NIVVER A' DARED FACE ARTHUR AND SPIT RIGHT IN HIS EE'
THA'D SINK THI KNIFE RIGHT INTO HIS BACK, A MAN WORTH TEN OF THEE,
THEY SAY YOU CONSORTED WITH T'ENEMIES LIKE QUISLINGS DID IN THE WAR,
WHEN YOU FIXED UP THAT NICE LITLE VISIT, FOR ARCH TORY, MR.GILES SHAW,
AN' HE'D HAVE A WORD WI'MAGGIE AN' FIX A NICE LITTLE SOMETHING FOR THEE,
AN WHEN THA' ASKED HIM WOR IT A MEDAL, HE SAID THA'D JUST 'AT A WAIT AND SEE,
BUT I CAN'T UNDERSTAND ! UNCLE ALBERT, AND BELIEVE ME I REALLY TRY HARD
WHEN T'SOUTH WALES LADS WERE SEEKING SUPPORTERS THA' WOULDN'T LET THEM INTO T'YARD

SAY ITS NOT TRUE ! UNCLE ALBERT, THEY'RE LYIN' SODS, AREN'T THEY, THE LOT ?
BUT IF ITIS TRUE, UNCLE ALBERT, SURELY THIS MEDALS ILL GOT.
WITH A FOOT IN EACH CAMP UNCLE ALBERT, YOU WON'T KNOW WHO TO CONDEMN,
YOU CAN'T BE FOR BOTH UNCLE ALBERT, YOU'RE EITHER FOR US, OR FOR THEM,
THERE'S SOME'AT ELSE THAT THEY SAY UNCLE ALBERT, THEY SAY YOU MUST HAVE SOME GALL,
ESPECIALLY AS T'MINERS WERE STILL ON STRIKE, TO HAVE TAKEN HER MEDAL, AT ALL.
BOUNCE IT STRAIGHT BACK UNCLE ALBERT, SHOW T'TORIES YOU'RE NOT PLAYING BALL,
IF THIS IS THE PRICE FOR HER HONOURS, YOU'D BETTER NOT HAVE THEM AT ALL,
YES SEND IT RIGHT BACK UNCLE ALBERT, SHOW EM' YOU'RE NOT UNDERNEATH,
TELL HER T'STUFF T'BLOODY MEDAL, SLING IT RIGHT BACK IN HER TEETH.
HOLD YOUR HEAD HIGH UNCLE ALBERT, SHOW HER YOU DON'T GIVE A DAMN,
TO BE HONOURED BY FRIENDS UNCLE ALBERT IS A FAR FINER THING, FOR A MAN.



MET SUPPORT

Dear Comrade,
Towards the end of 1984 the first issue of West Yorks Labour Briefing appeared. The major article comprised an ill-informed and largely incorrect attack upon the Labour Group of WYMCC for its support (or lack of it) for the NUM in its national struggle. I therefore enclose a brief summary listing many of the steps we have actually taken to support the NUM and their cause. Certainly, no other Met County Council has done more. I would be grateful if this list could be reproduced in your next issue. If you support the Campaign for Press Freedom, and the Right-to-Reply Campaign, then obviously you will feel able to oblige.
Best wishes,
DENNIS WILLIAMS ,Labour Group Secretary, WYMCC

THE LIST INCLUDED WITH THIS LETTER:

WYMCC & Labour Group- Support for the NUM and its members involved in the Mining Industry Dispute
FINANCIAL/SOCIAL:
* £50,000 for purchase of Saverstrips to enable free travel.
* £20,000 for purchase of toys at Christmas.
* £10,000 (approx) for provision of day trips and outings for families and children.
* £12,000 (approx) to provide regular welfare and benefits advice and support.

Other smaller contributions have gone towards the provision of facilities (including a caravan) for the collection and distribution of donations;acts, etc. for fund-raising socials; fire-engines to attend children's parties.
All these initiatives have been discussed with NUM officials.

POLITICAL/ECONOMIC:
* Production of an in-depth study on the decline of industry in the West Yorks coalfields; a case that has won support on all sides in an attempt to boost investment and job creation in these areas.
* Regular statements at Council meetings and elsewhere supporting the NUM case and attacking the Government position.
* Making representations to the Government and individual Ministers (alone and in conjunction with other Councils) in support of the NUM case.
* Opposition to Sizewell and to the development of further nuclear power stations.

POLICING OF THE DISPUTE
* Regular policy statements outlining our opposition to the abuse of police power.

* A special sub-committee monitoring all aspects of the dispute, meeting regularly with senior police officers and reviewing all matters relating to the day-to-day activities of the police.
* Meetings with NUM officials to discuss police tactics.
* Daily attendance by Labour members at picket lines in West Yorkshire, with reports referred direct to the Special Sub-Committee and the Chief Constable.

It has been widely acknowledged, and at a national level, that the general policingof the dispute in West Yorkshire has not reached any of the excesses common in areas such as Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire etc. For example - no road blocks in West Yorkshire.

* A West Yorkshire Conference on the policing of the dispute open to all District Councillors; followed by an open Labour Party meeting.
* Meetings with other Police Authorities and representatives to the Home Secretary regarding the role of the police and the costs of the police action.
* Establishment of a Working Party to review the operation of the 1984 Police Act and the role of elected Police Authorities.
* Policy statement on policing of dispute at Council meeting 10/1/85 stating:
(i) Official pickets should be alowed to speak to those going to work.
(ii) Policing by West Yorkshire police and,
(iii) Community Constables tc continue in normal duties.
(iv) No involvement of the Special Branch.
(v) Total number of police deplo yed limited tc equivalent of 1 Police Support Unit(23 men) per working pit.



SUPPORT GROUP ROUND-UP

THORNHILL MINER'S WIVES SUPPORT GROUP

Thornhill Miner's Wives Support Group was set up four weeks into the dispute, it distributes food parcels to thirty-nine areas and seventeen pits. The committee of twenty-eight women give advice and support to the miners and their families who have remained solid.

To see the organisation and spirit of these women against all odds, with the full weight of the state apparatus and propoganda machine working against them, to see them suffering body blows, yet always bouncing back, stronger than ever, is a revelation.

To be stopped on the motorway and turned back, to be beaten up, arrested, dragged through kangaroo courts, to have your phone tapped, to be charged by animals on horseback, to listen to media lies, day after day after day - all this merely serves to harden our resolve.

What hurts, and hurts far more than the Tory jackboot, is to be sold down the river by our so-called "friends"in the Labour Movement; the half-hearted support from local Labour Groups, the bleatings of sympathy from the T.U.C. , but even worse, the condemnation of violence from the likes of Kinnock and Willis.

HOLMFIRTH MINER'S SUPPORT GROUP

Holmfirth Miner's Support Group was set up in October to raise money and support in the small towns and villages in the Colne Valley. A support group had operated successfully in Huddersfield since the beginning of the strike.

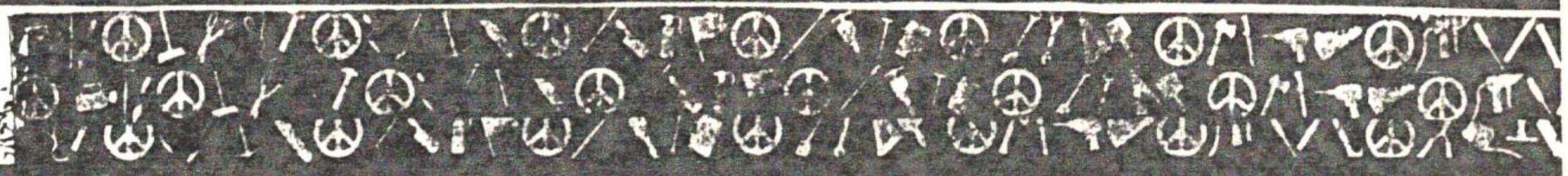
The area has some thirty miners families, mainly from Emley and Park Mill pits, who are on the fringe of the main mining communities. Together with Labnour Party activists, CND supporters, SWP and other individuals they have organised benefits, weekly collections, supported political meetings (e.g. Tony Benn) and actively supported picketing.

The response locally has been good, particularly up to Christmas, and enthusiasm in the group is still high.

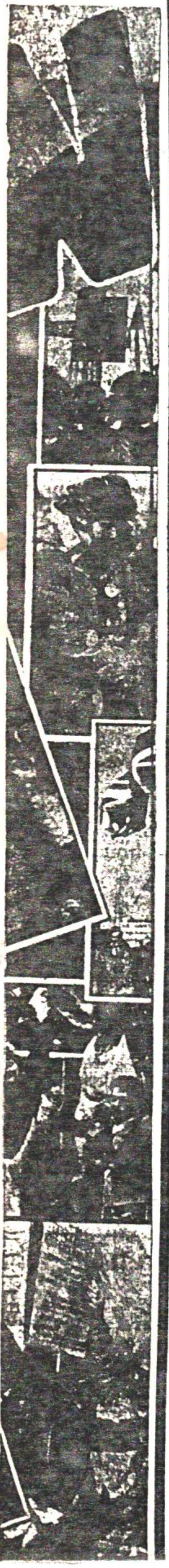
MINERS SUPPORT GROUP - HALIFA
****
The miners support group in Halifax has probably been the most successful campaign the town has seen in recent years It .....

continued on page eleven





********** MAKING PEACE IN LEEDS **********



Public memory is so short, if not repeatedly jogged. The man or woman in the street may remember C.N.D because someone may hand them a leaflet or maybe chat to them in the market place. they may not as readily remember Greenham women nowadays , since the media turned a blind eye to the police harassment and maltreatment that is handed out to them.

Joe and Mary Anyother would never guess that Leeds is a Nuclear Free Zone, and may wonderin any case what the term may mean exactly. They would be quite justified in their ignorance despite the fact that Leeds was one of the first cities to declare itself Nuclear Free.

Two years ago, Leeds City Council produced 'LEEDS AND THE BOMB', a booklet which set a new high standard of presentation and researched material to all other Nuclear Free Zones. It ran into several reprints since, but even at the cheap price of 30p, it did not reach EVERY household in Leeds. The Council's policy (June,81) of "adequately informing the Leeds inhabitants" fell far short of its target. Maybe a smaller leaflet, distributed free to every household, would have a wider impact , and may even have reached the happy-go-lucky Joe and Mary.
Until comparatively recently peace groups in Leeds campaigned, worked hard and struggled in the absence of any support from the Council . We could almost have been in Bradford or even Swindon for all the difference it would have made living in a Nuclear Free Zone. But, there are signs of new stirrings, and peace groups are almost holding their breath with anticipation.

Last September and October, the Council offered considerable help in the launching of Leeds Peace Festival and the Peace Film Festival. This January
a 'Peace Officer' was appointed. He is one of a team of four, with another appointment to come. The team will have joint responsibility of Emergency Planning and Peace Activities in the City.

But, there is considerable confusion and apprehension among peace groups on how these functions could possibly be combined. Our feelings were voiced to the Council before the appointment was made. Now after the event, we welcome the new officer, George Crossley, and look forward to period of co-operation in promoting peace activities in Leeds.

For their part, peace groups in Leeds have many specific proposals on how campaigning for peace could be improved with help from the Council. Campaigning to get rid of nuclear weapons is the best insurance policy that the city could have against nuclear war. As 'Leeds and the Bomb'makes clear no amount of Emergency planning will help the city in the event of a nuclear attack.

Meanwhile, the peace groups in the Leeds area are in the process of organisation to co-ordinate their activities, and we all hope that in 1985
Joe and Mary Anyother will be happy to live in a city which the drive for peace comes from both grassroot and official organisations





********WAKEFIELD UPDATE ********

Readers of the last issue of West Yorkshire Briefing will know of the problems of the £3.8m cuts package and the suspension from the Labour Group of five Labour Councillors who, among others, opposed the package. The five Councillors appealed against the suspension and the NEC were due to hear the appeal on 9 December 1984. The appeal hearing did not take place because of the extraordinary events of the Labour Group meeting held on 27 November 1984.

The first shock of the meeting was the resignation from all Group and Council Offices of Sir Jack Smart. Sir Jack had lead the Council, and Chaired the Labour Group since 1974 he had also been at that time Chair of Wakefield District Labour Party and of course Chair of the A.M.A. Sir Jack had not been enjoying the best of health for some months, his resignation though was a shock to most of the Labour Group. Sir Jack remains a Councillor for the Glasshoughton ward in Castleford and is still of course the Chair of Wakefield Area Health Authority.

The Group decided to elect to the Groups and Leadership vacancies on a definite temporary basis. It was decided that at the next annual group meeting in May 1985 the NEC guidelines separating the Group officer posts from the Council Leadership and Committee Chairs would be observed for the first time since 1974.

The second bombshell at the meeting was the acceptance by the Group of an amnesty for all Councillors that the Group had taken disciplinary action against or who had "cases" pending. The five suspended Councillors were reinstated to the Group and the possibility of further suspensions or disciplinary action by the Group arising from the Cuts Package fiasco removed.

The third surprise at the Group meeting was the acceptance of the District Labour Party policy on a strategy for the 1985/86 Budget a strategy that included no job losses or cuts in services, and a commitment to detailed consultations with the DLP on the Budget.

However, it has to be said that the membership of the Group is still the same as it was in 1983 when the Cuts Package was accepted. Labour Party members in Wakefield District have got to be wary of claims from Councillors that they have seen the light of party policy on the roads from Castleford, Hemsworth, and Pontefract to Wakefield. It is just possible that they have been responding to the pressure from the Labour Party in all parts of the Country that condemned the Cuts Package and supported the action of the so called 'rebels'. It could be that they are trying to maintain their position and status as Councillors knowing that recruitment into the Labour Party has been extensive and that most of these new members have joined to prevent further cuts, (re-selection is a powerful weapon in the hands of Labour Party members).

The new unity between the Labour Group and the party in Wakefield District is paper thin and could break at any moment. The Labour Party has got to make all efforts to preserve that unity but must not sacrifice socialism or party policy for a unity that will serve only the Government and their thirst to cut and privatise Council services.

Four Labour Councillors and others still owe the Council a considerable sum of money in Government costs arising from the occupation of Langthwaite and Sandal Social Services Day Nurseries.

Wakefield Constitutency Labour Party has launched an appeal for the Labour Movement to pay those costs, donations to the appeal should be sent to The Treasurer, Wakefield Constituency Labour Party, c/o The Labour Club, Vicarage Street, Wakefield.

MIKE CHANDLER.



Dear Editor,

As one of the papers sponsors, I regret the necessity of having to write a critical letter regarding the front page article in Issue One headlined "Get off the Fence", which questioned the County Council Labour Group's support for the NUM.

Not because the Labour Group is above criticism, but because the article is factually incorrect. The comparisions with the other Metropolitan County Authorities were spurious and claims that the County Council was not supporting the NUM are patently untrue. Unfortunately, this meant that the attempt to then draw to the legitimate conclusion that as socialists we must be seen to adopt policies with particular regard to the police and the media which are supportive of our class has been lost in the outcry.

There are three main areas of debate regarding the County Council Labour Groups' policies:-

Firstly, the inability to run a cohesive local campaign against abolition in the various communities of West Yorkshire similar to that run by the GLC and the consequencies of not mobilising around that sort of campaign.

Secondly, the poor relations with manual workers employed by the County particularly in Highway Maintenance and Public Transport.

Thirdly, the role of the Police Committee when our local police are used by central Government to attack sections of our communities.

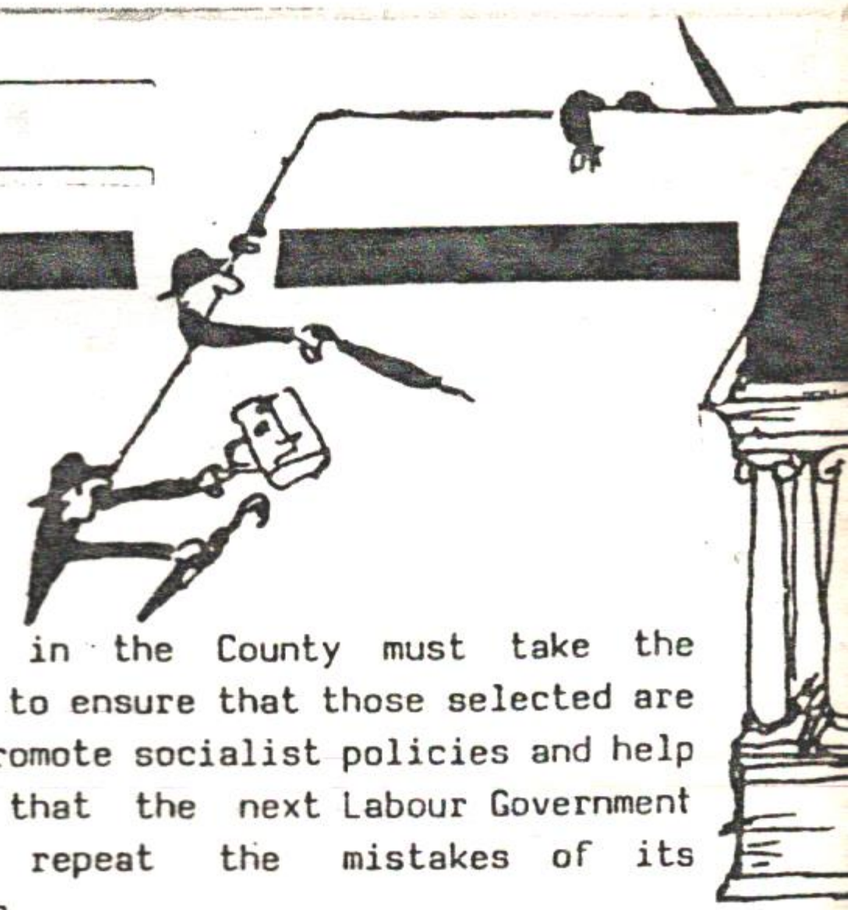
It should also be pointed out that the only place that socialists can explore with any effectiveness, beneficial changes in our society today are in Labour controlled authorities. It isn't only the County Council but also all the Labour controlled District Councils in our area which appear desperately lacking in innovating changes which fire the spirit and can be raised as standards against Thatcherism.

Yours comradely,

Colin Ashley
West Yorkshire Joint Trade Union Committee.
(in personal capacity).

PARLIAMENTARY SELECTIONS

An Opportunity for Change .....
or Just the Same Old Story ?



Up and down the country the Labour Party has begun selecting parliamentary candidates to fight at the next General Election. ALBERT HALL surveys the scene here in West Yorkshire.....

A Gallup Poll published in January showed that three out of four people questioned believed that M.P.'s (of all parties) should have to go before their local party for reselection and, of these, 76% thought that'shortlists of one' should not be allowed and that there should be alternative candidates. Amongst Labour supporters, 63% said that reselection should be carried out by a mixture of Ward and Trade Union representatives..



This popular support for the Left's position of opposition to the 'shortlist of one' manoevre and the retention of M.P's accountability should be stressed on Constituency Executive and General Management Committees in the coming weeks and months, for now that the majority of C.L.P. AGM's within the County have taken place, the selection of candidates to fight at the next election can begin; and many sitting Labour M.P's are quietly hoping for (or actively organising for, in some cases) an unopposed shortlist of one when they undergo the reselection procedure during 1985.

The Left in the County must take the opportunity to ensure that those selected are going to promote socialist policies and help to ensure that the next Labour Government does not repeat the mistakes of its predecessors.

What are the prospects for this perspective, though ? Of the 23 Parliamentary Constituencies in West Yorkshire, only 10 are labour held (the Tories hold 11, the Liberals 2). West Yorkshire has traditionally been a stronghold of the Right. It was no accident that a succession of right-wingers, from Gaitskell, Pannell, and Bacon through to Healey, Harrison, Summerskill and Woolmer, were able to find seats in the region in the past. We've had our quota of traitors too - Ford, Ginsberg and Lyons. Of the forty-one Campaign M.P.'s and M.E.P.'s only two represent West Yorkshire seats - Derek Fatchett (Leeds Central) and Max Madden (Bradford West). Most West Yorkshire Labour M.P.'s are firmly on the right of the party.

THE LABOUR SEATS

The position in each Constituency from the safest through to the most marginal, is outlined below.

SAFE LABOUR

HEMSWORTH Alec Woodall, Majority -14,190 over Liberals)

PONTEFRACT & CASTLEFORD (Geoffrey Lofthouse, Majority -13,691)

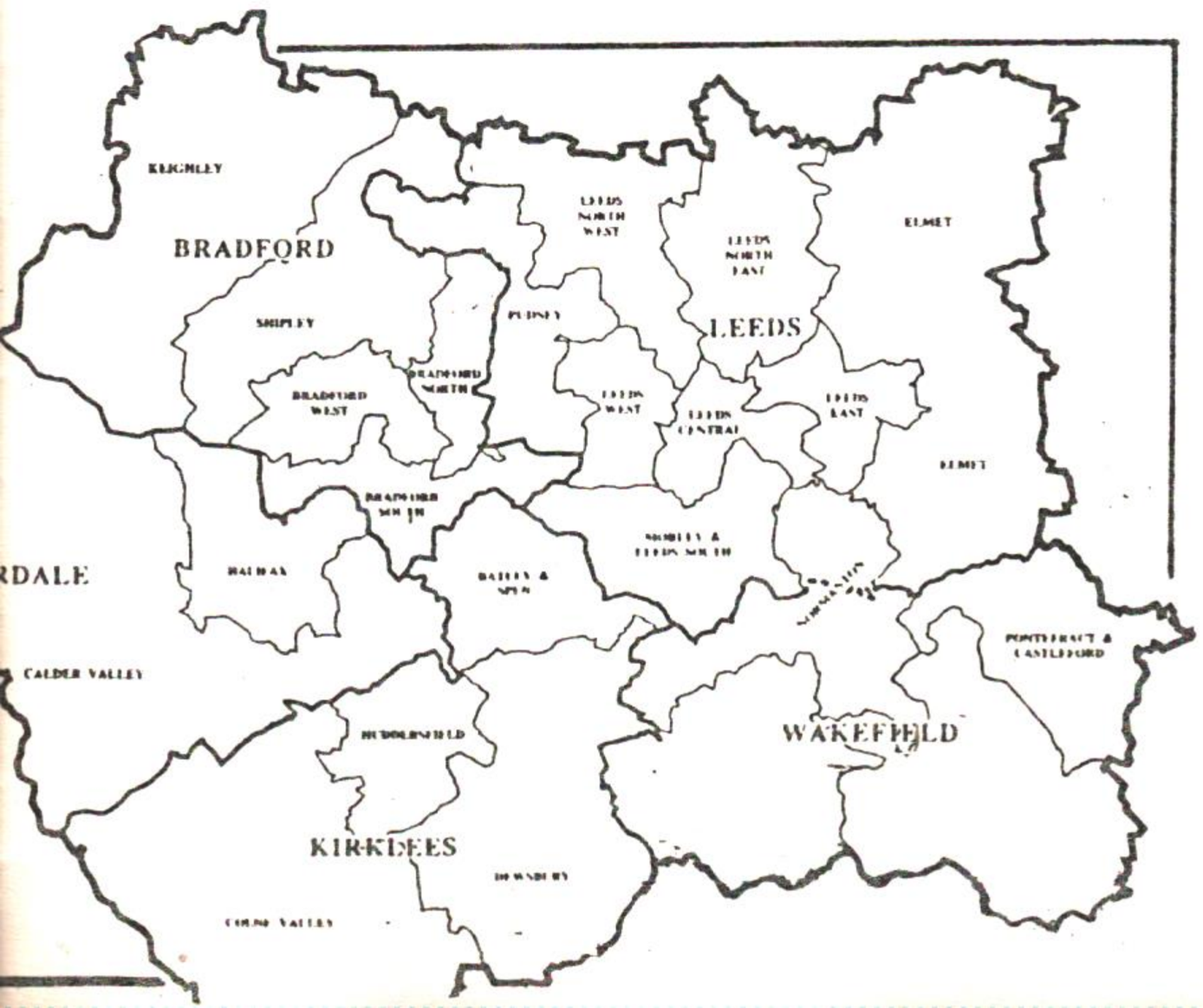
These are Labour's electoral jewels in the West Yorkshire crown. Despite our humiliating showing nationally in 1983, the results in these two seats proves them to be impregnable in any general election. The two sitting members both signed the infamous "open letter" of February 1981 calling for the Wembley Conference electoral college decision to be overturned. Pontefract and Castleford has had it's 'shortlist of one' problems before -- in 1981 Lofthouse was placed on a shortlist of one by just 43 votes to 41. More recently, the Party's Regional Oganiser has had to intervene in Hemsworth because of allegations of 'infiltration' of newly radicalised NUM members. Although miners have been joining the Labour Party and becoming GMC delegates in droves recently, only those who have been in membership for 12 months at



Batley and Spen	Mrs. E. J. Peacock
Bradford North	G. J. Lawler
Bradford South	T. W. Torney
Bradford West	M. F. Madden
Calder Valley	D. Thompson
Colne Valley	R. S. Wainwright
Dewsbury	J. Whitfield
Elmet	S. L. Batiste
Halifax	R. Galley
Hemsworth	A. Woodall
Huddersfield	B. J. Sheerman
Keighley	G. P. A. Waller
Leeds Central	D. Fatchett
Leeds East	The Rt. Hon. D. W. Healey, M.B.E.
Leeds North East	The Rt. Hon. Sir K. Joseph, Bt., T.D.
Leeds North West	Dr. K. Hampson
Leeds South and Morley	The Rt. Hon. M. Rees
Leeds West	M. J. Meadowcroft
Normanton	W. O'Brien
Pontefract and Castleford	G. Lofthouse
Pudsey	J. G. D. Shaw
Shipley	J. M. Fox, M.B.E.
Wakefield	The Rt. Hon. W. Harrison

the start of the whole reselection procedure can participate. This possibly explains why Pontefract & Castleford will be selecting so early - 23rd February.

LEEDS CENTRAL (Derek Fatchett, Majority 8,222 over Liberals)
Is the safest of the Labour seats in Leeds. The successor-constituency to the former Leeds South-East , Derek Fatchett emerged from the ranks of the suspended left-wing Wakefield Councillors to displace the sitting M.P. , Stan Cohen, before the boundary changes were announced . Although himself the beneficiary of a shortlist of more than just the incumbent M.P. , Fatchett is understood to be unhappy at being on a shortlist of more than one himself. Despite his continuing support for Kinnock as Leader (Central C.L.P wanted him to vote for Heffer) Fatchett's selection clearly marked out the shift to the left in the Leeds Labour Party and his work as a constituency M.P. cannot be faulted. He has a better profile as a 'local' M.P. than Denis Healey, for example, and should be supported by the Left against a candidate of the Right.

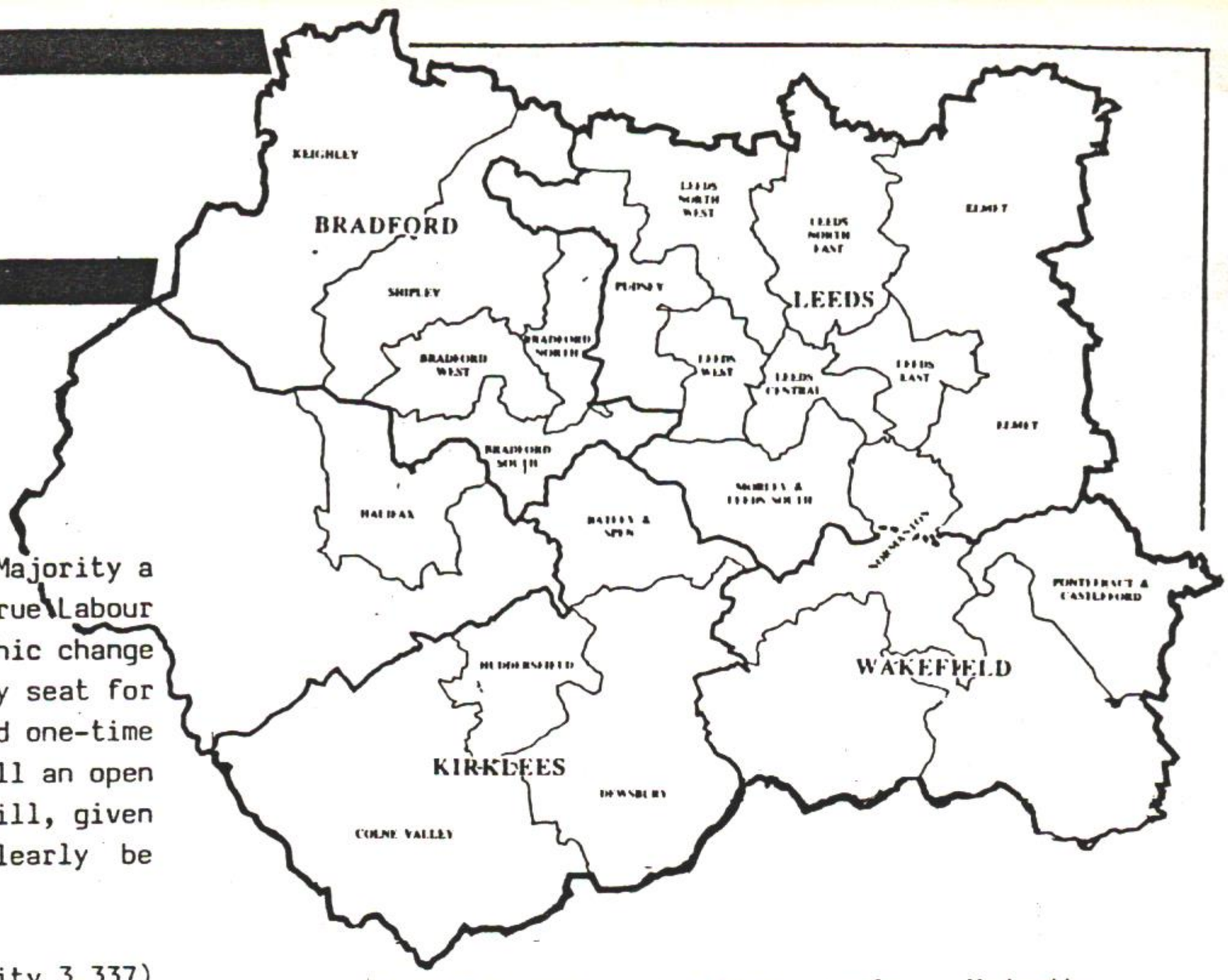


MORLEY & LEEDS SOUTH (Merlyn Rees, Majority 5,854) is not the marginal that the poor 1983 result seems to indicate and a seat where the long-serving M.P. has recently announced his intention to carry on at the next election. This is not the happiest of C.L.P.'s though, with one large Branch suspended for some months because of physical intimidation and rumblings of an uncomradely nature elsewhere in the constituency as well. Whether Merlyn Rees will be challenged remains to be seen.

LEEDS EAST (Denis Healey, Majority 6,095)is not quite as safe for Labour as the pre-1983 Constituency of the same name. Of the 12 City Councillors in Leeds East exactly half are not Labour and one working-class ward is now wholly held by the Liberals (in no other Leeds ward have the Liberals got all three seats). This is a state of affairs for which the sitting member should be prepared to accept part of the blame . However, it is rumoured that Healey intends never to retire and to carry on for ever. He was challenged once before, but who has the courage to stand against (and stand up to) him this time ?

NORMANTON (Bill O'Brien, Majority 4,184) has an unhealthy looking majority for a seat of this kind. O'Brien, one of the brighter lieutenants in 'Sir' Jack Smart's Wakefield empire, succeeding the ailing and 'controversial' Albert Roberts at the last General Election. Although his selection margin was not great last time, he will undoubtedly be aided by the 8th March selection date Normanton has gone for.

HUDDERSFIELD (Barry Sheerman, Majority 3,955) is a seat to watch with interest. Although Sheerman has a good track record on some issues (voting against Parliament for Abolition of the Lords and against renewal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, for example) he also signed the afore-mentioned Wembley 'open letter' and has succeeded in alienating many Party members in his own Constituency. It seems very likely that he will not be the only one on the shortlist.



LABOUR MARGINALS

With WAKEFIELD (Walter Harrison, Majority a mere 360) we are amongst the true Labour Marginals. With continuing demographic change this is still likely to be a dicey seat for the future. Just who will succeed one-time Government whip Harrison is still an open question, although his successor will, given the make-up of the C.L.P. , clearly be someone with left-wing credentials.

Max Madden in BRADFORD WEST (Majority 3,337) , the other Campaign Group M.P. in the County , had the satisfaction of pushing S.D.P. defector Eddie Lyons into third place at the General Election. A much more experienced politician than Derek Fatchett (he had over five years as an M.P. for the old Sowerby Constituency in the 1970's) , he has no enemies on the Left and should be safe from any threat at the polls or from replacement by a Right-winger.

The tenth and final Labour seat was a real cliff-hanger last time. Old Tribune-ite Tom Tourney in BRADFORD SOUTH (Majority 110) , only narrowly won both the nomination and then the seat on June 9th, 1983. His political limitations(he was one of the few Peter Shore supporters in the last leadership contest) and failing health point towards his replacement at the next election (the likeliest prospect though, is that he will announce his retirement first). Again, this is a seat where the C.L.P. will be selecting a Left-winger with much firmer perspectives.

BRADFORD NORTH (Geoffrey Lawler, Majority 1,602) only went Tory in 1983 because the de-selected Right-wing Labour M.P. , Ben Ford, stood as Independent Labour against the official candidate, the highly popular and much-esteemed Pat Wall (who had to undergo the selection process twice - the N.E.C. did not like the result the first time). Ford, though polling only 4,018 votes and forfeiting his deposit, managed to ensure that a Tory got in instead of Wall. Some in the Constituency want to see Pat Wall replaced with someone unassociated with 'Militant', believing that the key to victory at the next election lies in a change of candidate. Quite apart from the fact that Pat's support is too strong for this ploy to be successful, those advocating it should remember what happened in Bermondsey at the last election. Peter Tatchell was prevailed upon to stand down "for the sake of the Party" in favour of a 'safer' candidate - Lambeth M.P. , John Tilley. The Move failed. Labour still lost heavily to the Liberals. Even if an annoyed Right-winger stads against Wall at the next election, he or she would be unable to take sufficient Labour votes to prevent his winning the seat.

THE TORY SEATS

TORY MARGINALS

All eleven Conservative-held seats are marginals in a certain sense. None is held with 50% or more of the popular vote. However, four can be regarded as 'classic' marginals, with only minor swings required for Labour gains.

DEWSBURY (John Whitfield, Majority 2,086) and BATLEY & SPEN (Elizabeth Peacock, Majority 870) have something in common apart from being adjacent seats: neither of the Tories here had the slightest intention of going to Westminster, and their victories surprised both of them (There has been talk of Whitfield resigning so that he can concentrate on his lucrative legal practices, though he has denied it).However, they both know that lightning rarely strikes twice and that they will both be booted out at the next election . Ken Woolmer, the 'Great Helmsman' of Labour Solidarity, a machine politician

adept at internal Party organising but ignorant of how to run a proper election campaign , has not been forgiven by many Batley members for losing the seat , and has carefully built up such a portfolio of opponents over the years that his getting a second chance in BATLEY & SPEN seem remote. Some members in Dewsbury are also looking out for good Left candidates.

Some of Shirley Summerskill's campaign workers began June 9th:1983 believing that not only would she win, but that her majority might double . They were wrong. HALIFAX (Roy Galley , Majority 1,869) fell to the Tories after almost twenty years. Shirley Summerskill, always a somewhat reluctant M.P. , will not be contesting the seat again. A seat we should win back next time , it is anybody's guess who will be selected - it's wide open at the moment.

TWO OUTSIDE CHANCES

KEIGHLEY (Garry Waller, Majority 2,774) is not in the Batley, Dewsbury or Halifax categories , unfortunately. Bob Cryer's 18,596 votes here in 1983 probably represented the biggest personal vote in Britain. Now that Bob is in Europe and will not be fighting Keighley again, it will be an even taller order for Labour to anticipate a victory in this re-drawn seat at the next election. A Labour victory at this moment seems unlikely, but who can say how the political map will look in two or three years time ? With the right candidate, a Labour gain here is not impossible .

Over in Leeds the new seatof ELMET (Spencer Batiste, Majority 7,856) will not be an easy seat for Labour to win . The Conservatives were not just victorious in the General Election, they got a majority in the 1980, 1982, 1983 and 1984 city council elections as well (though only gaining a majority of the councillors in 1982). This is largely because of the presence of Wetherby, the safest Tory ward in the whole county. This seat should not be written off, however. In a good year it is a seat we can win. It is thought that the miners strike will have some bearing on who is selected to fight the seat.

VERY DIFFICULT SEATS

In the five remaining Tory seats , Labour, in every case came third at the General Election.

For thirty-four years Labour managedto hold Sowerby, though with declining and slender majorities. Much of the seat is now contained in the new CALDER VALLEY Constituency (Donald Thompson, Majority 7,999 over Liberals), with Labour slumping to 27% of the vote. One of the problems in this seat is the strong Liberal presence established over many years . It might just be possible, though, in the right conditions, for Labour to come through in the middle and take the seat next time round.

LEEDS NORTH-EAST (Sir Keith Joseph, Majority 8,995 over S.D.P.), LEEDS NORTH-WEST (Keith Hampson, Majority 8,537 over S.D.P.) and SHIPLEY (Marcus Fox, Majority 11,445 over Liberals) all have areas of significant Labour support, but this is outweighed by the fact that most of the anti-Tory vote goes to the Alliance rather than Labour.

PUDSEY (Giles Shaw, Majority 5,314 over Liberals) was our worst result in the County at the General Election (only 17.8% of the vote). On a note of encouragement, Labour came second in three out of four wards in the May 1984 Council Elections, but will have to do even better in 1986 to convince the multitude of anti-Tory voters in this constituency that it is worth voting Labour in a General Election.

THE LIBERAL SEATS

The Liberal Party was seriously hoping to win three West Yorkshire seats in 1983, but secured only two (the third target was Pudsey).

Some Labour activists in COLNE VALLEY (Richard Wainwright, Majority 3,146 over Conservative) more or less abandoned work over there to help neighbouring candidates like Barry Sheerman, so hopeless did Labour's position seem. We came in third, with 25.8% of the vote. Wainwright is a shrewd operator and well established , a difficult candidate for Labour to displace.

The other, and much more spectacular, Liberal victory in 1983 was LEEDS WEST (Michael Meadowcroft, Majority 2,048 over Labour) The only Liberal gain from Labour in the whole of the United Kingdom. Meadowcroft, one of the original 'grass-roots' Liberals and sometime darling of 'Marxism Today' , has a formidable personal reputation that should not be underestimated. However,
his victory in 1983 has not been repeated in Local Elections. The results in 1984 saw Labour back in the lead in the Constituency(as it was in 1980, 1982 and 1983); and, more recently, one of the few Liberal Councillors in the Constituency defected to - of all places - the Tory Party. There are now only two Liberal City Councillors in Leeds West - in contrast to Labours nine. If the local pattern is maintained a Labour victory at the next General Election should not be ruled out.

******VOLATILE VOTERS*******

With probably more floating voters around today than at any time this century, the shift of groups is comparativeley small numbers of voters between the three main party groupings can have a devastating effect on the results nationally. This is what happened at the last General Election. If Labour's fortunes at the next election decline even further (although this seems remote) we will lose a further three seats to the Tories . However, if many erstwhile Alliance supporters return to Labour (as they did in the May 1984 Elections) we could pick up between five and seven extra seats in West Yorkshire. And if, as now seems likely, the British Economy bursts at the seams under the pressure of Thatchers policies , and a collapse of the Tory vote follows, Labour might (though not necessarily, I should stress) do even better.

What all this means is that every committed socialist should treat with utmost seriousness the coming shortlisting and selection of parliamentary candidates (you can be assured that the Right certainly is). However hopeless your own Constituency might appear, on paper, the continuing volatility of the British political scene can mean that todays safe Tory seat is tomorrow's marginal. If the Labour Party is to have a good, Left majority in Parliament after the next General Election, then those of us in West Yorkshire must ensure that those standing, in all seats, are truly representative of the movement and prepared to fight, not only at the hustings but if elected, for socialism.

****** VICTOR GRAYSON, ***** THE COLNE VALLEY AND SOCIALISM

Edward Hepworth (preface by Peter Tatchell)
Available from Pink Triangle/Valley workers publications, 14 Townhead, Honley, Huddersfield. £1:00 incl. p&p .

At a time when Trade Union leaders, Labour MP's and the media are competing to denounce violence and extra-parliamentary action as something alien to the traditions of the British working class this pamphlet is very topical . It is also very relevant to present debates about the relationship of socialists to parliamentary politics and to industrial struggles.

Victor Grayson was elected as MP for Colne Valley in 1907 as a revolutionary socialist refusing to accept the Labour Party constitution. His success was due to the backing of a local socialist organisation, the Colne Valley Labour League which has deep roots in the working-class community.His outspoken advocacy of the unemployed and his single-handed demonstration against the false priorities of Parliament won him the condemnation of the press and the Labour MP's, and the warm admiration of workers throughout the



********** WHITE ELEPHANT PUGNEYS

Wakefield MDC have published for public consultation the plans for the development of the Pugney's site.

The scheme costing over £50 million, if it is implemented , will be done by a partnership between companies 'Presscord' and 'Techno-Sunley' and Wakefield MDC . The scheme is toinclude an ice-rink and water palace, international swimming pool, 100-bed hotel, indoor and outdoor sports area, a large lake will be developed to provide a rowing/canoeing course,windsurfing, dinghy sailing, water-skiing, sub-aqua and water-biking. A small lake will be developed into a nature reserve with a holiday village, caravan and camping site alongside. The site will also contain an equestrian centre, outdoor sports, and extensive car-parking facilities.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Pugneys is in the Green Belt and since the open-cast works stopped it has been a major stopping-off point for migratory birds. Many people put its importance as a bird sanctuary higher than Fairburn Ings. Its importancec in this respect will increase as the lakeside is allowed to mature. The property development is not only jeopardising the potential of a valuable nature reserve but will have a significant environmental impact on the surrounding areas.
To realise the income that the two companies expect from the proposals, around 2,000 visitors will be required every day . The amount of traffic generated in the area will be intolerable for local residents, who are already suffering the effects of a new large supermarket. Pugney's development provides for at least six times the car parking space of the supermarket.

WHAT IS IT FOR ?

It would appear that it is intended to attract visitors to the project, locally,regionally, nationally, and even internationally. There is no denying that local facilities are needed, but will it really attract people from the region?
Doncaster Council is already well ahead building a similar sports and leisure complex, Leeds has a regional swimming pool, running tracks already exist in the region, Wakefield MDC itself also has plans for a leisure swimming pool. The complex will be competeing with their facilities for regional events. It is even more difficult to envisage that the complex will play a full role in national and international sporting events, given the large number of facilities at these levels.

Internationally renowned athletes that can attract large audiences are already complaining of too many events. One would expect detailed market research to justify statements made by the two companies before the Council is committed to a mult-million pound white elephant.

THE FINANCE

The actual development of the site will be undertaken by the two companies in the partnership. "Prescord" is a new company with no financial backing, "Techno-Sunley" is a subsidiary of "Sunley Holdings" and again financially has an unsound base. These two companies will share iin the development profits of say, £50 million, I believe the firm of architects involved are also tied up with the two companies, and they would expect about £5 million profit, with that in their pockets will they really be interested in making continuing day-to-day profit from the management of the development ?
Any profit or loss suffered by the management will be born by the three partners. In the glossy brochure provided by the companies they say "If a profit is achieved it will be distributed in an agreed manner" (our emphasis).
In fact it is difficult to see from the figures produced by the two companies that a profit will be made. They estimate a trading surplus of £2.6 million per year , and certainly haven't taken into account the competition from the Doncaster complex only twenty miles away. But from that trading profit the development costs will have to paid back for the first two phases - that will be between £3million and £5million a year.

CUTS

Local government is under attack. In the last fifteen months more than three million pounds has been cut from Wakefield MDC's budget, with the resulting cuts in services such as the provision of day-care nurseries . The government is trying to force the Council to make further cuts. Now is not the time to enter into this massive project with two companies that could, let's face it, go bust at any minute, leaving Wakefield with a massive unused sports and leisure complex and impossible debts.
With a Labour government I would expect the Authority to be able to go ahead with a project to provide local athletics tracks, football and rugby pitches without having to rely on an unreliable private sector involvement.



!!!!! FOR A MASS DEMOCRATIC LABOUR PARTY !!!!!!!!

This years Conference saw a muddled attempt by Neil Kinnock to introduce an extension of party democracy and allow 'One member One Vote' for the reselection of Labour MP's. As a democratic socialist, I believe in and support a 'participatory membership' of the Labour Party. It is for this reason that the issue of 'One Member One Vote' cannot be analysed simply in Left versus Right terms; although there can be no doubt that many people on the Right of the party see their salvation lying in such an extension.

For the Left, I believe that 'One Member One Vote' is an important issue to be fought for today. This is not to support the call for postal ballots and the like - we must support direct democracy as the only way to involve more party members in the running of our party. Thus there are certain necessary practical participatory qualifications and the ILP has suggested certain basic provisions such as: those eligible to vote must have been members for at least one year prior to ballot and must have attended at least one-third of ordinary branch meetings they are eligible to attend. Furthermore, there should be no proxy voting and Labour Party branches should be required to meet at least nine times a year. Such constitutional requirements would ensure that a developing participatory democracy would actually guarantee genuine involvement.

Socialists cannot afford to be afraid of democracy; the more people involved, the more people to be won for socialist policies. We cannot support democracy only when it leads to a favourable outcome for the Left. Perhaps, therefore, a real issue involved in the 'One Member One Vote' debate is a recognition of our past failures. From 1979 the Left, by pursuing a strategy of internal battles, has paid little attention to winning the support and consciousness of the working people outside of the party. As Pat Seyd has put it, "Too many of the Labour Left have a very narrow conception of political power that extends no further than winning majorities amongst the small number of party activists." (New Socialist No.10). We, the Left, must recognise HOW the working class is veiled with conservative ideas before we can begin to formulate a strategy to build a socialist culture. Where we have failed in recent years is in allowing the opposition the right of primary political definition. Thus, the political climate in which we have had to operate has been favourable to- and on the terms of- the Right.

In opposition to 'One Member One Vote' it is often alleged that party members will be open to the influence of the media and other bodies of thought outside socialist parameters. (When has this not been the case ? !!) It is true that an active role for more party members- which is what 'One Member One Vote' will mean- will not necessarily create a new body of support for left-wing policies; what we can be certain of, however, is that a better informed and more discerning membership will begin to emerge. As Eric Preston has recently argued in an important pamphlet (1), the least the Left can hope for is a membership which has been exposed to alternative arguments, and will therefore be the better able to judge where it stands politically.

The aim of democratic socialists should not be to disband the alliances which constitute the Labour Party; rather the task remains one of shifting the centre of party gravity to the Left as part of a wider struggle to shift working people's consciousness in a similar direction. 'One Member One Vote' is an important part that struggle and will remain a vital component in the rebuilding of an active, mass socialist Labour Party.

Rob Minshull

(1) Eric Preston : ONE MEMBER ONE VOTE : ILP : 20p from ; 49 Top Moor Side, LEEDS, LS11

ONE PERSON ONE VOTE

West Yorkshire Briefing is going to try to be a magazine of debate on the left not one where the editorial team have the last word. We would however like to comment on the review of the ILP pamphlet as no critical element seems to have entered the reviewers head.

The Left do not see Parliament as the sole or even the most important element in changing Britain to a Socialist Society. They see the direct influence the Labour Party can potentially have over millions of trade unionists and co-op members as a real force for change. ILP see these millions as not pulling their weight in having cut-price Labour Party membership affecting the selection of MP's and the passing of resolutions.

In other words ILP have fallen into the trap they so often attack others for, i.e. the passing of resolutions somehow changes things. The so-called "hard-left" see the millions of affiliated members as opportunity to build a massive army for socialism.

A "hard-left" Labour Party NEC could have converted the tens of thousands of rank and file activists in the miners strike into hundreds of thousands laying the basis for a mass party of socialism for the 1980's . The hard left see a future for the socialist transformation of Britain.

GARTH FRANKLAND

continued from page three

was set up by the Trades Council early on in the strike to raise money and food for our two nearest pits, Astley Moor and Parkmill. We have steadily continued to hold regular supermarket collections and social events, which have helped forge strong links between N.U.M. branches, the women's support group and the Halifax labour movement.

There have been many obstacles placed in our path, such as the arrest of a local miner for obstruction and begging when collecting food and the refusal of the local Tory/Liberal council to allow us permits to collect money on the streets on more than a handful of days.

There have been no coal mines in the vicinity of Halifax for many years, but the strength of support from working people in the town has been overwhelming and sometimes moving. In an area which itself has a high unemployement rate, people are regularly making great sacrifices to support mining families, as they can obviously link the destruction of the mining industry with the destruction of the textile andengineering industries in Halifax.

Young people in Halifax have also played their part, lending their support to benefit gigs in large numbers , with many local bands giving their services free.

Local support groups like ours which have sprung up all over



Dear W.Y.Briefing,
I feel it is my duty to point out the goings-on in Wakefield concerning a subscribing supporter of West Yorkshire Labour Briefing, namely Mike Chandler, (Councillor and Chairman of Wakefield C.L.P.).

Shortly after the inaugural meeting of West Yorkshire Labour Briefing, a similar organisation was set up in Wakefield, namely Wakefield Labour Left.
Prior to its first meeting the C.L.P. , Wards, and Trade Union Branches were sent an open letter explaiining the aims and the need for such an organisation and inviting people from all sections of the movement to take part and if not they were given a perfect opportunity to voice their criticisms, if this was the case.

Not long after this meeting we were amazed to see our local rag , the Wakefield Express with front page headlines, "LEFT'S NEW SURGE FOR A POWER BASE" (28/9/84). This consisted of 24 column inches of so-called "moderates" using the media to put forward an hysterical view of "their fear of a takeover by the 'hard-left' ".

Actually this article is not the point of issue, because its what we have come to expect from the media and also the "moderates"(rightwing). But the real point of issue is a letter printed in the Wakefield Express(5/10/84) , in response to this article.

This letter was sent in by Colin Lilley (Secretary of Wakefield C.L.P.) in conjunction with Mike Chandler (Chairman of Wakefield C.L.P.), and the gist of the letter was:
The officers of the C.L.P. chose to attack Wakefield Labour Left in virtually the same manner as the so-called "moderates" , and one of the statements used to back up their argument that Wakefield Labour Left have nothing to do with Wakefield Labour Party, and I quote, "People who read Militant tell me that they have no connection with Wakefield Labour Left".

Soon after this letter , at my next ward meeting I brought a resolution, to the effect, "This ward deplores the fact that officers of the C.L.P. have stooped to attacking a campaigning group of the Labour Party through the media and if anyone feels criticisms of this group , that they should debate it within the Labour Party , and that this item be placed on the agenda of the next C.L.P. .

A delegation from Wakefield Labour Left be invited so that this issue can be discussed in a democratic and civilised manner .

Co-incidently on this particular meeting, Mike Chandler (Chair of C.L.P.) was present to give a talk on another matter, and he ruled my resolution out of order.

I finish by asking Mike Chandler one or two disturbing questions.
Since when have Militant been an integral part of the Labour Party ?
That their views are the criteria on which officers of the C.L.P. argue their case ?
Why has this matter never been discussed at the C.L.P. or even at the Executive committee, either before or since the letter was sent to the Wakefield Express ?
In view of the fact that this matter was never discussed , why was it signed; Colin Lilley, Secretary , Wakefield C.L.P. ? Thus giving the false impression thatthe C.L.P. delegates had endorsed this letter, which is clearly not the case.

Under what rule of the Labour Party Constitution did you rule my resolution out of order ? Whilst in a ward that you are not a member of.

And finally this is the point of the whole letter.
How can you support West Yorks Labour Briefing and at the same time try your hardest to 'strangle at birth' Wakefield Labour Left, which is a very similar organisation ?

I await your reply.

JIM FAZAL, Secretary, Wakefield Labour Left. Supporter of Wakefield Labour Left and West Yorkshire Labour Briefing (PERSONAL CAPACITY)

MIKE CHANDLER REPLIES:

Rather than answer the letter as fully as I could, I will restrict my right of reply to answering the "one or two disturbing questions" Jim puts to me.
1. The Wakefield Express article specifically refers to the involvement of Militant in Wakefield Labour Left. The Secretary of Wakefield C.L.P. was clarifying that this was the case.
2. The letter written by the Secretary of Wakefield C.L.P. to the Wakefield Express was on the table at a meeting of the C.L.P. Executive under the agenda item 'correspondence' details of which were circulated to delegates at the meeting. No delegates chose to raise the matter for detailed discussion. The letter was therefore noted.
3. I did not "rule out of order" Jim's resolution to his ward. That was done as a result of a vote taken by the members of his ward at a meeting I attended. I did give my advice, which was sought by the Chair of that meeting. My advice was that the question of Wakefield Labour Left was not in my opinion a matter for debate within the Party , but a matter for individual members of the Party. It was not a recognised organisation of the Party. I do not recall that Jim's resolution "deplored ..... Officers of the C.L.P." It would have been most improper of me as C.L.P. Chair to "rule out of order" a resolution criticising C.L.P. Officers.
4. The purpose of the letter to the Wakefield Express was to diffuse the harm that their article of 28/9/84 could have done to Labour support in Wakefield
(I'm sure Jim will agree with the main intention of the article). For Jim to suggest that I tried to 'strangle at birth' Wakefield Labour Left is incorrect. He might recall that I, with other led an attempt to form (with some success) a left group in Wakefield MDC to organise the challenge to entrenched positions of the Labour Right Wing in Control of the District Labour Party. That organisation folded because no agreement could be reached on specific policy issues. In Wakefield CLP and DLP I believe the aims of the group have been achieved, Wakefield Labour Left is attempting to raise policy issues within the broad left framework, I have yet to be convinced that such discussion is necessary or desirable in Wakefield outside the Labour Party organisations of Ward, LPYS, Women's Sections, CLP etc. West Yorkshire Labour Briefing is different, in that it provides a vehicle for the dissemination of information and ideas within the Labour Party.

Yours fraternally,
MIKE CHANDLER

YORKSHIRE REGION LPYS CONFERENCE

About 150 young people attended the annual Yorkshire region L.P.Y.S. conference in Bridlington over the 19th and 20th January .
Naturally the miners strike dominated the conference, reflecting the role that young party members have played in supporting the strike.
there were, however, sharp disagreements over the role of the police in the strike. Whilst the whole conference was unanimous in condemning police violence against the working class , supporters of the 'Militant' were still strongly in support of the 'workers in uniform' theory, arguing that trade unions in the police force would bring many police in support of the labour movement. A large minority of delegates opposed this strategy, instead arguing that the party's youth should be campaigning against young people joining the police and armed forces, and that workers self-defence squads should be set up to defend picket lines and communities.
The question of lesbian and gay liberation has at last begun to be taken as a serious issue in the L.P.Y.S.. For several years the L.P.Y.S. has tried to ignore the question, fearing it would alienate working class youth, but thanks to continuous pressure from opposition tendencies in the L.P.Y.S., there is at least a debate now. At this conference, there were excellent speeches from all sections of the L.P.Y.S. supporting the struggle of lesbians and gays against discrimination and oppression.
My own branch moved a resolution calling for wider democratic procedures to be adopted by the L.P.Y.S. . This would have ended the practice of our executive summing up for too long and recommending which way we vote. It would also have meant the introduction of single transferable voting for executive positions to allow for minority representation of the sizable number of 'non-Militant' L.P.Y.S. branches. This caused the closest vote of the conference, but on the platform's recommendation was defeated.
The women's debate again divided the conference, with delegates who were supporting 'Militant' and 'Socialist Action' arguing a resolution to hold a women's dayschool with men present. A resolution from Harrogate , which was defeated, called upon the Yorkshire region to organise a women-only dayschool, where women could feel more at ease to debate and relate their own experiences, without being inhibited by the presence of male comrades.
L.P.Y.S. conferences are generaly fairly predictable affairs with no very close votes nor any defeats for the platform, but at regional level there are usually some good(sometimes heated) debates, with various positions being put. But if the L.P.Y.S. is going to turn into a real mass socialist youth movement , alongside action there must be much more political discussion and education.