

Socialist Organiser

Election Special



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The fight in the T&G

WHY WE SAY 'VOTE BENN'

by Jo Thwaites

HOW the T&GWU will cast its 1¼ million votes in the deputy leadership election will not be finally decided until the delegation meets on September 27 — the start of Labour Party conference.

But the Executive will meet on the 21st and make a recommendation. The delegation is unlikely to go against the Executive.

It is expected that the Executive will recommend a vote for Silkin in the first ballot. The second ballot is not clear.

How the recommendation will compare with the results of the 'consultation' with the Regions is anybody's guess.

No details of these 'consultations' are being published, but they seem very unlikely to show a majority for Silkin.

But in some regions the consultations haven't got as far as branch meetings. They have only gone to the District Committees or to the branch secretaries, with no time for a branch meeting to be consulted. Region Five circulated Silkin's election material, but not Healey's or Benn's.

In Region 6, branches have been consulted, but branches never known to speak before, particularly in South Manchester, are recording votes for Healey. There is no doubt that some full-timers have been working all-out to get in votes for Healey.

The most democratic way of making the decision on the TGWU's vote would have been to vote on it at the Biennial Delegate Conference. But it was clear to the leadership of the Union that that would have meant a vote for Benn — so no vote was taken.

All the machinations of the TGWU's leadership show that they know that if the rank and file had anything to do with it, then the T&G delegation would vote for Benn on the first ballot.

The Executive meeting that will take the decision on how to recommend the delegation to vote is on Monday September 21st. A lobby of this EC meeting is being organised. Come and support it — at 8.30am, Transport House, Smith Square, London SW1 (nearest tube, Westminster.)

"WHAT IS the Blackpool TUC all about if the people who voted for policies this week are not interested in whether or not these policies are carried out?"

These telling words from Tony Benn in last week's Blackpool debate with Healey and Silkin sum up the essential reason why he should be supported.

Benn alone of the three candidates stands for the election and accountability of leadership in the labour movement.

Benn alone has taken up the fight for democratic control and broken down the unspoken division between Labour Party politics and the trade unions. In fighting for party democracy he has broken up the old cosy 'unity' between the tame 'left' and the right wing, and has been willing to trample on the toes of the trade union bureaucracy.

Aspirations

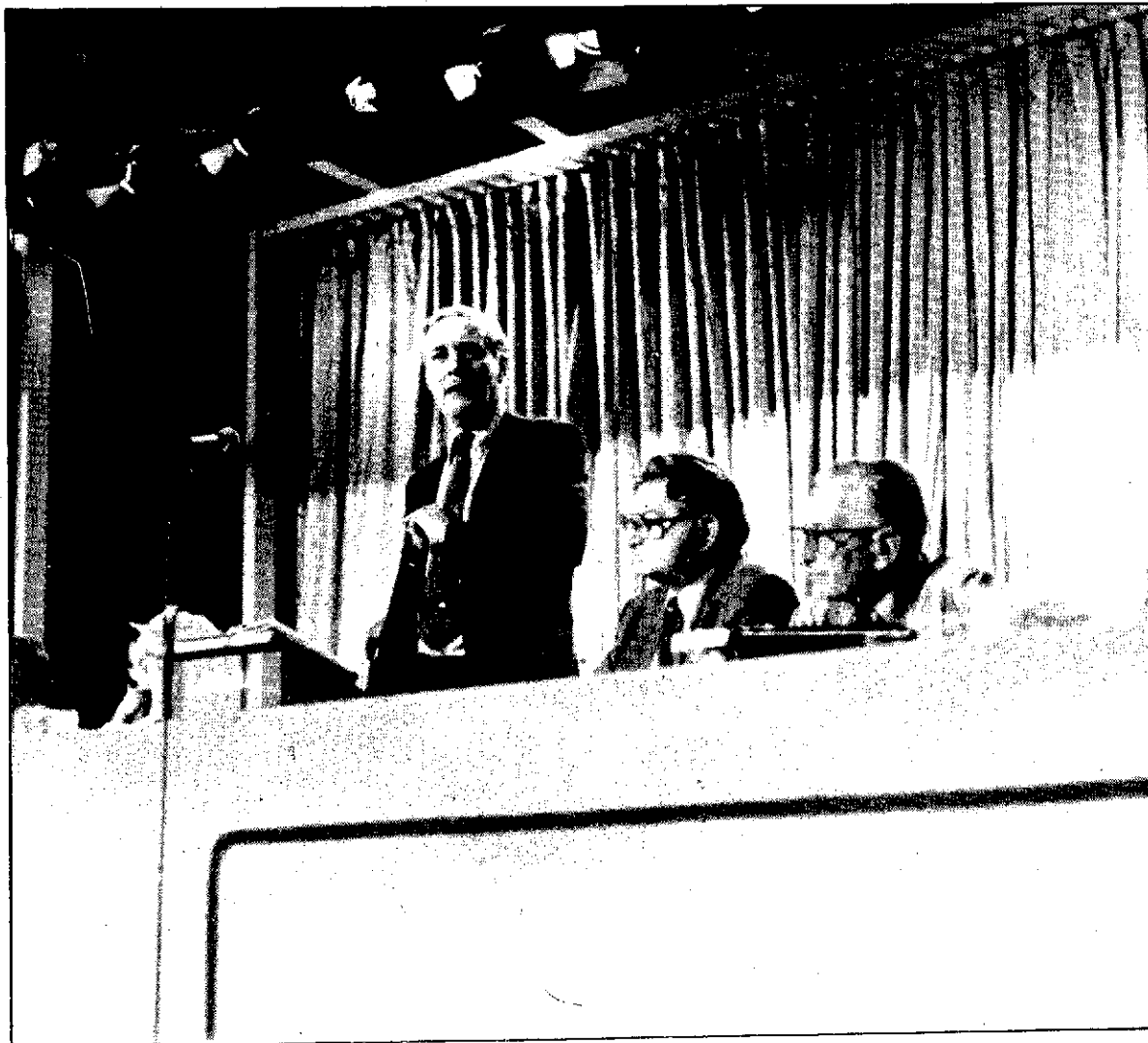
Benn's decision to stand against Healey, and his appeal over the heads of the union leaders to the rank and file membership of the whole labour movement, has fundamentally changed the conditions in which socialists argue against the right wing.

The platform of policies on which he stands is not a perfect platform. But it reflects the present aspirations of wide layers of the workers' movement.

In the Blackpool debate he stressed that the election contest was about:

"... getting rid of Mrs Thatcher; restoring full employment; restoring the rights of trade unions; advancing the rights of women; and it is about getting a freedom of information act; leaving the Common Market; having a non-nuclear defence policy, and getting rid of American nuclear bases."

He went on to declare himself firmly opposed to



At Blackpool and Wembley, Benn was the standard-bearer of democratic reform

the disastrous policies of the last Labour government:

"We cannot go back to 1979, to the policies of wage restraint which not only undermined the Labour Government but undermined the role of the trade union movement, because trade union officials — like the old unions in Poland — were agents of Government policy rather than representatives of the membership."

In stark contrast to this, Healey nailed his colours firmly to the mast of the policies which brought the 1979 Election defeat.

Bluntly he argued that it is not the right wing but Benn and the left who have betrayed the working class:

"Those who have betrayed the working class of Britain are those who have forced us for two whole years to fight one another when we should have been fighting the Tories and who through ideological narcissism are helping to keep in power the most brutal government in living memory, a government which has committed itself to destroy our trade union movement."

Healey's stubborn defence of the anti-socialist policies of previous Labour governments was combined

with a firm commitment to NATO and the EEC:

"We cannot hope to avoid the disasters which now threaten the whole human race simply by ignoring them or by retreating into a neurotic isolationism which treats every international organisation set up to tackle them simply as characters in a cavalcade of monsters..."

As the unanimous favourite candidate of the Tory press, Healey was of course duty bound to discount the power and influence of the media and attempt to turn the tables and portray Benn and the left as "elitists".

But with Healey making no bones of his opposition to key Labour Party and TUC Congress policies — unilateral disarmament, rejection of wage controls, renationalisation without compensation, and withdrawal from the EEC — it was left to John Silkin to make the most dishonest presentation of the evening.

Sensing the predominantly left-wing politics of the 1,000-strong audience, he put forward a carefully-couched radical-sounding statement which skilfully concealed his opposition to the democratic reforms fought for by Benn.

His opposition to the Wembley decision was smuggled into a passage welcoming the wider franchise in leadership elections as the way forward... but stressing that the "ground rules" would have to be set out in the future!

Silkin declared himself against "authoritarianism" but then revealed that by

this he actually means accountability. Deliberately confusing the Chartists' call for secret polling for all in General Elections with the left's struggle to make leaders accountable to the membership for their actions, he proclaimed:

"The Chartists demanded secret ballots to end intimidation: no recorded votes for them!"

As a candidate who only emerged late on as the stalking horse of a few bashful right wingers in the PLP and trade union bureaucracy, Silkin felt obliged to defend the existing leadership against the criticism of the left:

"Some claim that the Party is becoming dominated by bureaucratic trade unions and lacking vigorous leadership."

"But the best leaders are not always the dominant, extrovert personalities, the folk heroes."

Sometimes, he implied, a stodgy nonentity, a fake left "conciliator" like himself is an ideal choice — offering occasional flurries of left rhetoric combined with consistent accommodation to the right wing in the unions and the Labour Party.

Clear

The debate spelled out the choices facing workers. The three candidates offer either:

*A defender of wage controls, NATO and the IMF, and a staunch opponent of unilateral disarmament, party democracy and accountability.

*A slippery and evasive opponent of party democracy and accountability, who proclaims his support for unilateralism but hedges on the issue of a new social contract "call it what you will".

*Or the leading advocate of party democracy and accountability, committed to implement Conference policies, openly criticising the discredited policies of 1979, and even now proclaiming that there is no solution through simply trying to reform capitalism.

We think that the choice is clear for all to see.

We need to drive forward the democratisation of the Labour Party and the unions as part of the fight for a new leadership committed to the struggle for socialism.

That's why we say 'Vote Benn'!

CENTRE PAGES.

The charge-sheet against Healey
Activists say why they back Benn

BACK PAGE:

The Bomb, wage control, cuts —
the issues at stake
Now organise the Left!

HEALEY: THE CANDIDATE FOR NATO AND THE IMF



JOHN LISTER
reviews the
contenders

Small wonder Healey defends NATO - whose policies he helped draw up!



MAJOR Denis Winston Healey is a dedicated, committed politician. Since his first involvement in the Labour Party he has been dedicated to the furtherance of the politics of the right wing and committed to preserving the interests of British imperialism.

He has never had - or sought - any real links with the rank and file of the Labour Party or with the trade union movement.

Having had his momentary "fling" at left wing politics while still at University - he briefly joined the British CP - Healey took up a full time office post at Labour Party headquarters in 1946 - serving as secretary to Ernest Bevin, Foreign Secretary in Attlee's government.

Greatest

Healey's reference to Bevin in last week's debate with Tony Benn as "the greatest ever foreign secretary" was no chance remark. From the very outset Healey was an eager supporter of Bevin's collaboration with the US imperialist leaders to consolidate capitalist rule in post-war Europe, and his efforts to maintain the British Empire.

Healey was to draft a pamphlet extolling Bevin's policies, and remained at his desk in the International Department until 1952 when he entered Parliament.

Healey's impeccable right wing credentials singled him out as a rising star for the Labour leadership - and for the "talent spotters" of US imperialism.

In 1954 Healey became the London correspondent of an anti-communist magazine, New Leader, produced in New York and backed by funds from the J.M. Kaplan Fund - a CIA front organisation.

The magazine openly advocated the infiltration of foreign socialist parties.

By the late 1950s he had become a close crony of Hugh Gaitskell, going with both Gaitskell and Anthony Crosland to attend functions of the CIA-sponsored "Congress for Cultural Freedom".

Funding

Gaitskell and Healey also went as guests of Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, to attend sessions of the "Bilderberg Group". The group was run by an influential American, Joseph Reinger, who also arranged US Marshall Aid funding for the European Movement.

Also prominent in these CIA-infested circles was Dick Taverne - later to become the trailblazing Lincoln renegade.

Sponsorship for the European Movement came from the nefarious "American Committee for a United Europe", whose members included the former head of the CIA's forerunner (the OSS), and CIA men Allen Dulles and Tom Braden.

The CIA had not invested without hope of return. In the wake of Labour's electoral defeat in 1959 Gaitskell, together with Crosland and other right wingers, took up a fight dear to the hearts of the US imperialists and British capitalists - to delete Clause IV - the call for nationalisation - from the Labour Party constitution.

In this struggle, and in

his determination to "fight, fight and fight again" against unilateral disarmament and socialist policies following his defeat at the 1960 party conference, Gaitskell felt certain he could count on the support of Major Healey.

Healey was brought into the Shadow Cabinet in 1959 and remained there - as Shadow Foreign Secretary, Shadow Secretary for Colonial and Commonwealth Affairs, and then Shadow Defence Minister - until the election victory of 1964.

Healey became Wilson's Secretary of State for Defence for the whole 1964-70 period of Labour government. And in that capacity too he was able in his own way to repay the hospitality of the CIA.

Trim

While being forced by the growing economic crisis of British imperialism reluctantly to trim back global military commitments, Healey put forward a substantial new structure for forces pay, providing them with a thumping 15% increase for many grades, and offering a system of 'bonuses' for less pleasant duties - such as Northern Ireland. The scheme is described by Wilson as "unprecedentedly generous".

No such generosity was applied by Healey to the social services or the forces

struggling against imperialism. In 1967, the economic crisis brought a cabinet debate on spending cuts. Healey adamantly refused to contemplate cuts in the defence budget.

Instead, he suggested, money should be raised by lifting the embargo on arms sales to South Africa, and by making cuts in social service spending. According to the Crossman Diaries:

"Denis Healey and Tony Crosland both observed in passing that we must have sharper Party discipline. Denis said that some of these fellows who were tabling motions against cuts in the social services should be thrown out..."

Healey took his responsibilities seriously - becoming a key member of NATO's Nuclear Planning Group. Harold Wilson writes of these early discussions of what has now become the infamous notion of "limited Theatre Nuclear War":

Warning

"Equally it provided the most sophisticated account so far published of the thinking behind NATO's developing attitudes on the doctrine of the controlled nuclear response to any outbreak of fighting in Europe. This was again based mainly on Denis Healey's leadership in NATO and providing, as it did, a means of studied restraint in escalation (!) was a warning to all concerned to think again before a

possible outbreak of fighting in Europe led to thermo-nuclear exchanges and all-out nuclear war." (The Labour Government 1964-70, p.775).

Opponent

Small wonder therefore that Healey today remains a foremost opponent of unilateral nuclear disarmament and defender of the NATO alliance whose vicious policies of escalation he helped to formulate 13 years ago!

The defeat of the Heath government in February 1974 brought Wilson back to office and Healey the post as Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Healey's starting point was the fight to hold wages down, trading on the much vaunted "social contract" with the TUC leadership. Initially this was attempted through subsidies and a cut in VAT.

But at the same time Healey's first budget raised electricity charges, rail fares, phone bills, postage, petrol prices and the cost of alcohol and cigarettes.

Healey was also busy cutting taxes paid by big industry - to the extent that few big firms now pay corporation tax.

His second budget declared the objective of "improving profitability and liquidity in the company

sector and shifting resources from consumption into investment and exports".

By the spring of 1975 all pretence of concern at workers' living standards was jettisoned as Healey's budget slashed food subsidies, housing subsidies and subsidies to the nationalised industries.

Healey's attitude was spelled out in the wake of the railway unions' 30% settlement in June 1975. He threatened that if the social contract pay limits were not tightened he would use "Tory policies" to cut living standards.

TGWU leader Jack Jones was quick to respond. He steamrollered through the union's conference acceptance of a £6 limit to wage increases. Healey seized the opportunity, and announced a formal limit of £6 - state control of wages.

He argued: "We must accept a 10% cut in the standard of living and public expenditure. The alternative (!) is to crawl to the IMF and accept the terms they impose upon us."

Controls

In March 1976 as talks began on phase 2 of wage controls, Healey's package of £3,000 million cuts prompted a revolt by 37 Tribune MPs. But the same MPs then trooped through the lobbies to support a vote of confidence in the govern-

ment's economic policies - including the cuts.

Wilson's resignation brought a leadership election within the PLP. Healey lost out to Callaghan as right wing candidate for the runoff against Foot.

August 1976 brought phase 2 of pay controls - a savage 4½% limit on pay rises, following hard on yet another package of £1,000 million cuts.

While no challenge was mounted to these policies by the Party conference, November 17 saw 80,000 trade unionists on the march in protest against the cuts.

Unofficial strikes began to break out against the phase 2 limits - including engineering workers, BL toolroom workers, Port Talbot electricians and Heathrow airport maintenance staff. All were left isolated by the TUC. Yet in the midst of these strikes Healey unveiled his phase 3 figure - a 10% ceiling to rises.

It was this limit that was to prompt the first major official union opposition to the pay laws - the 9 week long firemen's strike. Yet the TUC again successfully isolated strike action to this one union, ensuring that only the firemen broke through Healey's net.

By July 1978 Healey had the gall to follow an announcement of a 40% increase in police pay with a revelation of the figure for phase 4 - a miserable 5%. It was this figure which was to provoke the "winter of discontent", and trigger a fight back within the labour movement.

September 1978 saw the TUC rebel against the 5% figure and in October the pay policy was heavily defeated in the Labour Conference.

Wave

The ensuing wave of pay strikes included Ford workers, bakers, journalists, transport drivers and public sector workers who staged a second 80,000-strong demonstration in January 1979.

As the Thatcher leadership seized upon the disarray

of the Labour government force it from office, Healey joined with Callaghan to through an electoral manifesto based on more cuts in real wages and further measures to safeguard company profits - the result was a heavy defeat in the May General Election.

Massive rank and file resentment against Healey's record and that of Labour government as a whole has since been a major driving force in the fight for democracy and accountability within the Labour Party.

It is indeed ironic that Healey's actions in office from 1974-79 are a major reason why he is now forced to contest in an election the Labour Deputy leadership against Tony Benn.

While Benn stands on a platform of criticising the performance of the Labour government - offering a left alternative - Healey stands four-square defence of his record and a reversal of the limited gains so far achieved by Labour rank and file.

Heckled

Put on the defensive by Benn's direct appeal to trade unionists over the heads of the bureaucratic leaders, Healey has waged a "campaign" which has consisted of a lot of right wing union headquarters, back-room voting, and occasional disastrous fringe meetings which he has been roundly heckled by the left, openly supported by rank and file workers.

But Healey must realise that in the longer term his position can only get weaker. Even were he to scrape home and win deputy leadership in October, he cannot seriously hope to roll back all of the gains made by the Labour left in the last two years.

His old colleagues - Jenkins, Shirley Williams, David Owen and Willie Rodgers have already signed the writing on the wall. Major Healey joins the march into the Labour sunset?

Silkin's candidacy

JOHN SILKIN's candidacy in the deputy leadership contest rests not on his record of having done anything but on his supposed ability to avoid annoying people.

His active service under Wilson and Callaghan governments included three years as Wilson's Chief Whip.

Silkin's election address claims that this period came to an end when he was:

"... sacked as Chief Whip for opposing anti-union legislation, In Place of Strife, which was supported by the other two present candidates for the deputy leadership."

In fact as Harold Wilson points out the decision to

remove Silkin was based on his failure to impose sufficient discipline on the Budget. Silkin was sacked from the government: indeed as Wilson writes:

"Very soon, as so often happens, John Silkin was fully absorbed in one of the most agreeable of ministerial tasks - Ministry of Works".

Silkin went on to serve the 1974-79 Labour government, and thus to share responsibility for the action of the Wilson/Callaghan leadership.

Silkin has never been noted for anything - alone as a left wing



The Ford workers rebelled against the 5 per cent limit. Now Benn leads the rebellion against such policies within the Labour Party.

BENN: CRITIC OF LABOUR'S BETRAYALS

TONY BENN served as a minister throughout both of Labour's last two periods of office. In Wilson's 1964-70 governments, Benn held office as Postmaster General, then as Minister of Technology and Minister of Power.

During this period Benn put forward no open criticism of Wilson's right wing policies, and was a keen supporter of Barbara Castle's anti-union White Paper *In Place of Strife*, which was eventually abandoned after heavy opposition from the trade union movement.

His loyalty to Wilson continued in the 1974 government, when Benn took office as Industry Secretary, acting as front man for Wilson's strategy of handing huge cash subsidies to private industry through the National Enterprise Board.

His Industry Bill included attempts to draw shop stewards into organised class collaboration through various forms of "workers' participation". A model of this approach was Lord Ryder's plan for the reorganisation of British Leyland which successfully undermined the independence of the shop stewards movement

— creating ideal conditions for Edwardes' subsequent attacks.

Removed from the Industry post, Benn was then allocated to the Department of Energy, where he helped oversee the exploitation of North Sea oil and gas by private oil monopolies.

As a cabinet minister, Benn shared responsibility for the imposition of wage controls and the other reactionary policies carried through by the Wilson/Callaghan government up to the electoral defeat of 1979.

But since that point Benn's political energies have been directed towards the fight for democratic reforms and accountability within the leadership of the Labour Party.

Openly criticising the record of the governments he was a part of, Benn has begun consistently to argue that the class collaborationist strategies of Wilson and the right wing cannot succeed in reforming capitalism.

He has emerged as the clear leader of the leftward movement within the Labour Party, and his challenge to Denis Healey in the election for the deputy leadership has opened up an

unprecedented debate on policies and the accountability of leaders to the rank and file throughout the labour movement.

His political stance remains that of left wing reformism: the Alternative Economic Strategy is little more than a package of measures to modify the pace of the capitalist crisis. And the nationalism implicit in Benn's calls for import controls has now been extended and rationalised into the theory that imperialist Britain has now become a "colony" deprived of "national independence".

Left

Nevertheless as the standard-bearer of the left, and leading advocate of much needed democratic reforms and accountability within the Labour Party, Benn, with his inadequate and belated criticisms of previous Labour policy is plainly preferable as a candidate to Healey — a dogged opponent of such reforms and supporter of the old policies.

It is for this reason that we call for critical support to Benn as the candidate of the left, the candidate for democracy within the Labour Party.

WHY THEY BACK BENN

'What's happening in the Labour Party will spill into the unions'



Jake Ecclestone joined the Labour Party because of the Benn movement

JAKE ECCLESTONE, newly elected Deputy General Secretary of the National Union of Journalists was among those who gave Benn a standing ovation after last week's debate in Blackpool. He told **SOCIALIST ORGANISER:**

"I only joined the Labour Party this summer, though I had held my own views for some time. Until now the Party always seemed so corrupt — not interested in socialism at all."

"What Benn — and others as well — have done is to try to get *accountability*. The nub of it is that leaders should not be in it for themselves, they are there to represent other people. They must be called to account for how they vote, speak and behave."

"The NUJ is democratic

compared with other unions, but it's not perfect. I'd like to see the regular election of all officials — only a few are elected at the moment."

"What impresses me most about Benn and what struck me at the TUC last week was the feeling of apprehension among union leaders that what has been started in the Labour Party will spill over irretrievably into the trade union movement."

"People will say that what's good enough for MPs is good enough for General Secretaries. I'd like to see that."

"After all why does the General Secretary of the TUC emerge unelected from Congress House?"

"I think Benn has an appealing personality, and a genuine concern for people. I don't know whether he's ambitious — it seems that he's not."

Chile

"What slightly worries me is the view he and others put of socialism in Britain is so far in advance of what the Labour Party has been about — at least in my lifetime. I think if they try to put it into practice there will be a physical response."

"Has Benn thought through how they could respond if Labour began passing legislation which really did begin to shift the balance of power and were met by resistance from the establishment?"

"I don't think this country is all that different from countries like Greece or Chile. Statements by some of these Chief Constables in the last few years show the attitude of these people to the authorities which are supposed to control them."

"Some aspects of Benn's record bother me — he's no saint. And I wonder whether he's tough enough: sometimes he seems just too nice."

"But I think these are minor considerations compared to the structural changes he and others have helped bring about in the Labour Party."

Flabby

"Of course it could be argued that if Benn had been run down by a bus the movement would carry on. The Labour Party will never go back to the PLP choosing the leader alone — even if the balance of the electoral college is not right yet."

"I think it's sad that Michael Foot is so vicious, but it's a measure of how flabby the Party has become. As for Hattersley and Shore, I don't think they're socialists at all."

Healey 'A brick wall'

DAVE COOK, Secretary of the 45,000-strong Division 3 of ASTMS was one of those who supported the successful fight to pledge the union's votes to Benn:

"I think the point is that while Benn's not perfect he is the one who best articulates the policies wanted by the rank and file."

"I wouldn't describe him exactly as an open door. But let's say he's at least a door that's ajar."

"So when there's a door ajar we'd be fools to keep battering away at a brick wall — like Denis Healey — wouldn't we?"

Scotts back Benn

"THE best wishes of all the Laurence Scott workers go with Tony Benn in his contest with Healey and Silkin. We fully support the fight for alternative socialist policies in the Labour Party."

PETE ROWAN, Chairperson, Joint Shop Stewards' Committee.



Reg Race: Benn's the only candidate who stands for change

'We must change the Party'

REG RACE MP told us:

"Tony Benn must be supported because he is the only candidate who supports the transformation of society."

"He understands clearly that the decay of capitalism in Britain means that concessions, both political and industrial, to the working class, are not on the agenda for the Tories or right wing Labour."

"Higher real wages, full employment, and expanded social services, can only be won by changing the Labour

Party so that it is committed to a socialist strategy."

"Tony Benn's commitment to democracy in the Labour Party is also crucially important. He is the only candidate who supports mandatory re-selection, the control of the Manifesto by the NEC, and the Wembley conference decision on the electoral college."

"We must not allow the next Labour government to be sabotaged by MPs who think more of their independence than they do of the political programme on which they were elected."

Extend democracy

PETE WILLISMAN is the candidate sponsored by the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy for the CLPs section of the Labour Conference Arrangements Committee:

"The last Labour government took scant notice of policies adopted overwhelmingly by the Labour Party conference and of great importance to trade union-

ists. Opposition to public expenditure cuts, low pay, and wage restraint, are examples."

"Only an extension of democracy and accountability within the labour movement can provide the conditions for ensuring that this sorry history is not repeated."

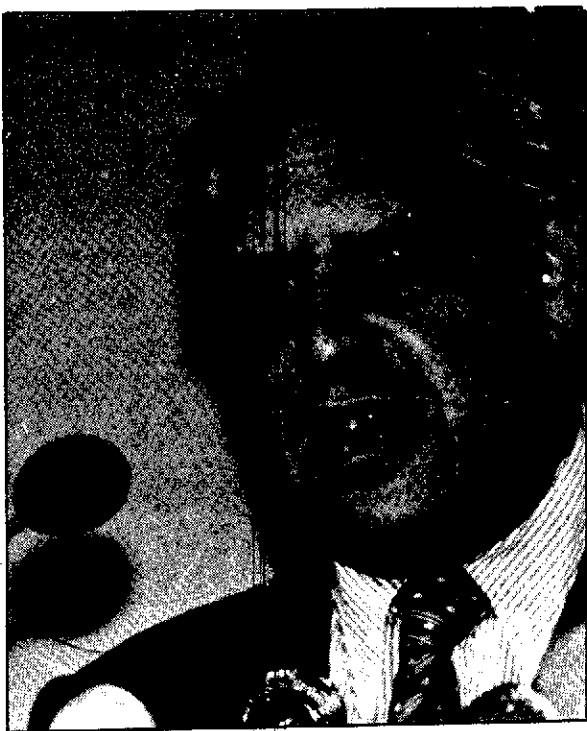
"Tony Benn is the only candidate committed to the democratic reforms."

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though the strident nationalism contained within his anti-EEC stance has been a consistent feature of his politics as Minister of Agriculture and since Labour's 1979 defeat.

He is at present a trusted member of Foot's leadership, serving as Shadow Leader of the House of Commons.

Silkin's candidacy would seem little other than a sick joke if it were not for the desperate search of certain union leaders and Labour MPs for a means of ensuring the defeat of Tony Benn while avoiding the embarrassment and aggro of casting votes for Healey.



Election Special



Economist's plan for Healeyites

"IF, SAY, 60-80 Labour MPs were prepared to break away and form their autonomous parliamentary grouping they could change British politics.

"Such a group could announce they were not prepared to accept an election manifesto imposed by an unrepresentative national executive committee of the present Labour Party... and present themselves to the electors under some label designed to appeal to traditional Labour supporters, by implication labelling their official Labour Party opponents as left-wing extremists

... It might eventually prise away a substantial chunk of the trade union edifice

That's what the editors of the bosses' magazine, The Economist - thinking Tories, contemptuous of Thatcher's dogmas, and strong admirers of Healey - advise right wing Labour MPs to do if Tony Benn wins the deputy leadership.

Split

Whether the MPs will do that, or try some other splitting tactic, or join the SDP, we don't know. But one thing is certain: the Healey faction will not carry out Labour policies on the Bomb, the EEC, or incomes policy. If they hold leadership positions, they will use

those positions to thwart and combat Labour policy.

The power of the Healey faction should not be underestimated. They have the press, they have the dead weight of bureaucracy, and they have a thousand positions of influence.

To defeat them, and then to win a majority for left wing policies and implement them against all the entrenched power of Toryism, we need an active mass membership in the Labour Party.

Broad

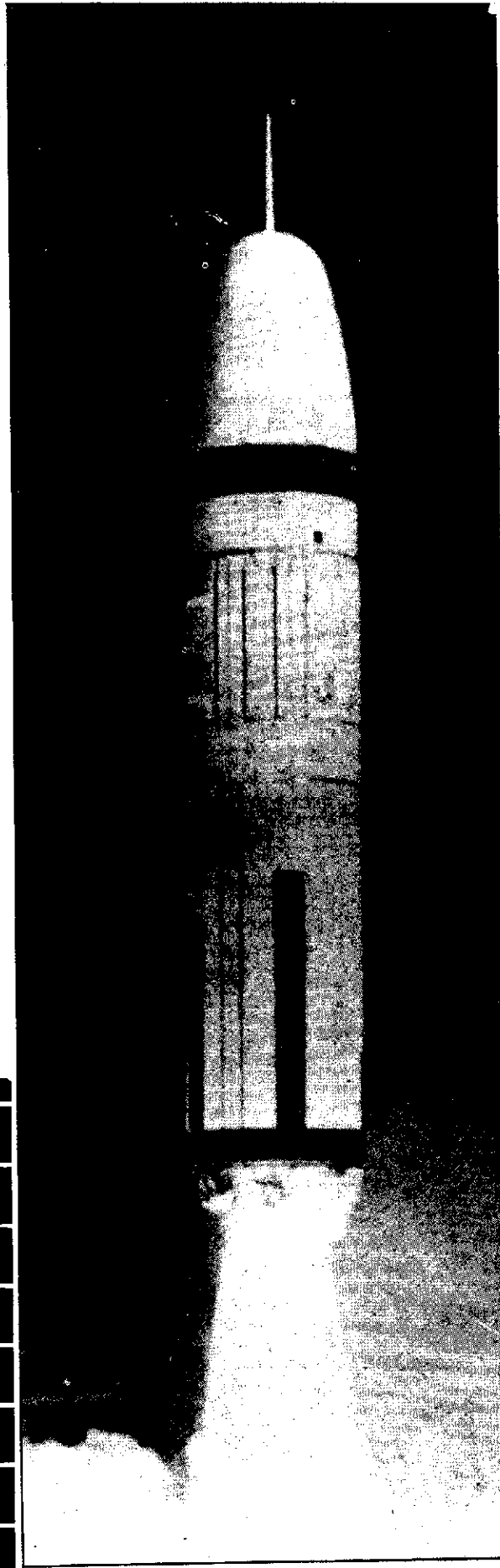
The Labour Left must organise itself, on a broad and democratic basis, to build a mass campaigning party and win a leadership accountable to that party.

Anywhere in the country now, Tony Benn can draw enthusiastic audiences of hundreds of labour movement people. Those hundreds must be organised, so that they are not just audiences but activist forces.

Socialist Organiser is trying to organise the Left, both in our local Socialist Organiser groups and by taking the initiative for broader Mobilising Committees and Labour Lefts.

But what's most needed now is a call from Tony Benn himself, as the leader of the Left, for a national conference to organise a left-wing movement in the Labour Party and the unions.

THE ISSUES AT STAKE



Wages

DENIS Healey's 5% pay limit of winter 1979-80, imposed in defiance of TUC and Labour Party conference decisions, pitted the Labour government against angry workers fighting for decent wages, and helped let the Tories in.

And Healey's previous incomes policies forced a 14% cut in average real take-home pay between 1975 and February 1977.

That's why Labour and TUC conferences have said: no more incomes policies.

But Healey told the deputy leadership debate at the TUC that incomes policy "could be made to work again".

The tale they tell is that a new incomes policy could be different - tied to price controls, dividend controls, and economic planning.

But price controls are always a sham (short of a war economy). Dividend controls just mean the money is stashed away to give the shareholders more gains later. And economic planning will be a farce like the last Labour government's planning agreement with Chrysler unless the major industries and banks are taken into common ownership.

Some say incomes policy will help the lower paid. But the best thing to help the lower-paid would be a decent legal minimum wage - the last thing these right wingers support!

All value is created by labour. But wages reflect only the value of labour power, i.e. the amount necessary to maintain the working class at a minimal standard of living. In return for limited wages, the capitalists are able to purchase the full creative power of Labour. They live and prosper on the unpaid labour of the working class.

Cuts under Labour?

EVERYONE knows that the Tory government is monetarist. Not so many people know that Denis Healey pioneered monetarism in Britain, and is still a monetarist.

He paved the way for the Tory cuts, with a £2400 million package in 1976, introduced on the orders of the IMF.

All he offers now is the same policies.

The argument is that "we can't afford" decent public services any more. But there is plenty of wealth in Britain - in the pockets of the top 10% who own 60% of the wealth, 90% of the company shares, and 84% of the land. The banks are turning in record profits.

And there could be a lot more wealth produced - if only the chaos of capitalism had not thrown three million on the dole.

Nuclear Disarmament

LAST month, all five of Labour's front bench defence spokespersons signed a letter to the unions opposing Labour defence policy.

They called for no nuclear disarmament and no cuts in defence spending.

These are the allies of Healey, and of NATO.

NATO's plans are now geared to starting a nuclear war - a 'limited' one, they say, costing perhaps only 20 million dead if it does not spread too far. A single nuclear bomb can kill millions and cover huge areas with deadly radiation. And

there are thousands of them stockpiled.

As Tony Benn has pointed out, it would be no help to the workers of Poland in defending themselves now against threatened Russian invasion if Poland had nuclear bombs.

Likewise, nuclear bombs - or any other weapons - in the hands of Britain's generals (hard-bitten Tories, all of them) are a danger rather than a defence for British workers... and also a danger to workers elsewhere in the world.

That's why it is vital that Labour and TUC policy, for the next Labour government to get rid of Britain's nuclear arms and US nuclear arms in Britain, is implemented without fail.

And US nuclear arms in the US or in continental Europe are no less a risk to the world than nuclear arms in Britain. British Labour should also give a lead to the world-wide fight to disarm and overthrow the warmongers, by withdrawing from NATO.



The EEC

THE TUC and Labour Party conferences want immediate withdrawal from the EEC. Denis Healey is 100% for staying in.

He scarcely even bothers with the "internationalist" phrases which some EEC supporters use. He is for the EEC because the majority of the capitalist class is for the EEC, that's all.

He is for the EEC for the same reason as most left-wing activists are against it: because it represents, and organises, multinational capitalism.

Most people on the Left believe that withdrawal from the EEC would be a blow struck against multinational capitalism.

Some (including some Socialist Organiser supporters) think that it would counterpose national capitalism against multinational capitalism, and yield no advantages for the working class.

But that's an issue to be debated in the labour movement. For now, the policy of the labour movement is for withdrawal. And the movement has the right to demand a leadership that will carry out that policy.

The House of Lords

"YOU don't set up another Royal Commission, you don't set up another inter-departmental committee, you don't have another clutch of programmes on Panorama about what shall we do with the Lords... you do it". That's Tony Benn on abolishing the House of Lords.

Nothing has aroused more scorn. Scrapping the House of Lords overnight won't solve all our problems, the right wingers snort!

Feudal

Indeed it won't. But if the Labour Party, after 80 years' opposition to the House of Lords, can't summon up the will to scrap it overnight, then how can we hope to do anything bigger?

Socialism without abolishing the House of Lords is an absurdity, like workers' control in a factory with the workers tugging their forelocks to the manager.

The monarchy, another remnant of feudalism, also needs to be abolished.

And Tony Benn points out that the civil service bureaucrats have more real power than elected governments. Through them, "most real power in Britain still resides outside Parliament, with those who control finance and industry."

Dismantle

The Freedom of Information Act proposed by Tony Benn should be a start in dismantling this undemocratic power. The top civil servants should be replaced by elected and accountable officials, and the existing armed forces, dominated by class warriors like the notorious General Frank Kitson, should be disbanded.

Tony Benn also says: "It is strange that we should accept as normal that the electorate can hire and fire a Prime Minister but that workers can't hire and fire their management." Nationalisation needs to be combined with workers' control, through regularly elected and recallable delegates.

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June 1945: Healey speaks at Labour conference on foreign policy: "Its crucial principle must be to help the social revolution in Europe... The upper classes in every country are selfish, depraved, dissolute and decadent."

1946: Healey takes a job as secretary to cold-war Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin.

October 1980: Tory Party chairperson Lord Thorneycroft tells the BBC: "Actually Denis Healey is my candidate... he is in fact much nearer to me and Mrs Thatcher than he is to Wedgwood Benn... he is a worthy leader of any party... There is enormous common ground between Denis and the Tory Party..."

"Now there's a man after my heart."