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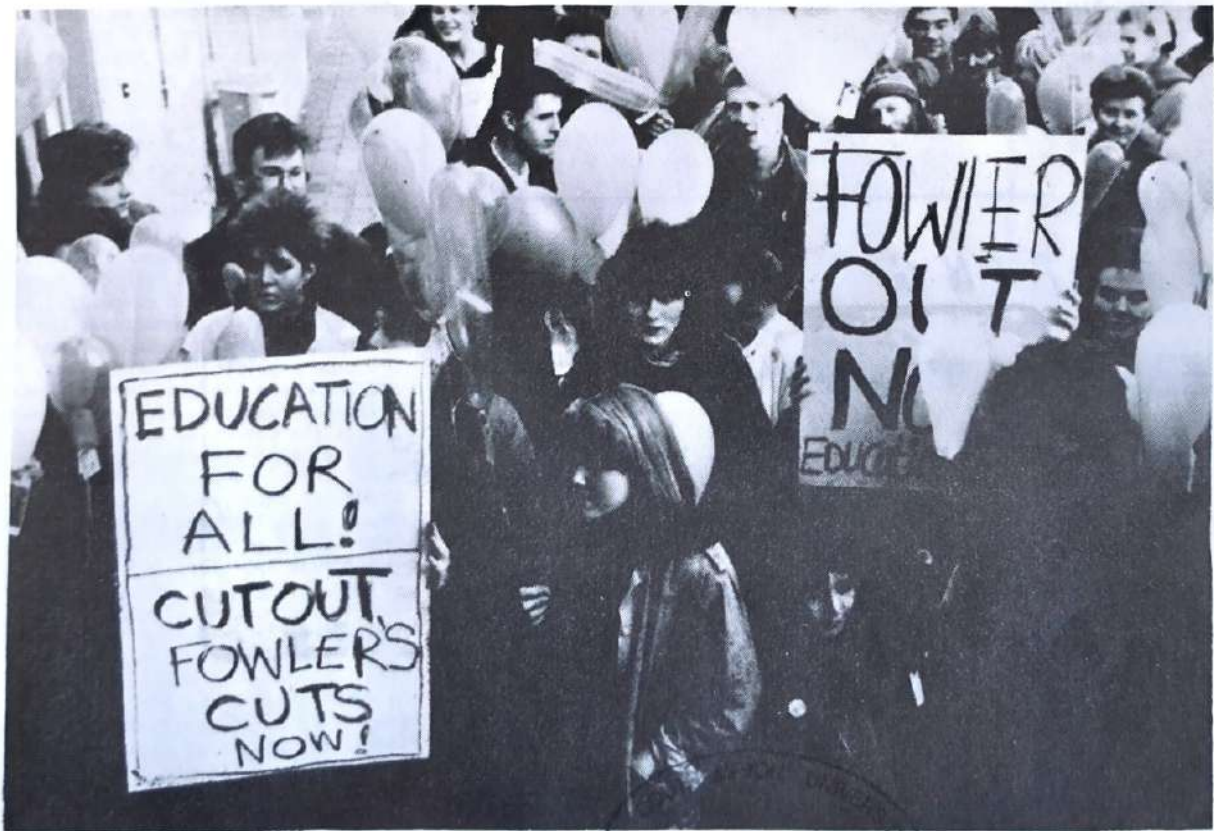
WESSEX STUDENT

THE NO. 1 STUDENT NEWSPAPER IN HANTS. & DORSET

BALLOON BLAST OFF



OVER BENEFIT CUTS ~ page 6



Guy Phillips

110 JUN 1986

Inside

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SHAPE UP FOR SPORTS DAY, ANGRY LETTERS, MATCH 1%,
AND ALL THE NEWS THAT FITS...

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WESSEX STUDENT

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8, Archers Road, Southampton
TEL 0703 37761

Bubbling Under



BY ANDY WHYTE, NUS VICE-PRESIDENT
EDUCATION

The second term is invariably a busy one for student union activists - and 1986 has proved to be no exception.

The Fowler Campaign got the term off to a flying start with the local day of action on January 24th involving literally thousands of students throughout the country in many activities - ranging from lobbies of MPs surgeries to demonstrations and rallies. The Lobby of Parliament on February 12th too attracted around 2000 people and made quite an impact on the MPs. Not just MPs either - the police officer in charge commented to me that this was the best organised and probably most effective he'd seen in five years on the job. As I write this, the demonstration on February 26th is set to be absolutely huge.

On top of all this, local campaigns against cuts in colleges have continued. Sunderland Poly, for example, have been in occupation, while Hull and Birmingham Universities have had successful rallies, and lobbies of key committees which have involved hundreds of students and have won some significant concessions. The NUS Education Roadshow has been visiting colleges organising against the cuts, and at the moment is midway through its tour. A number of visits are still to come, including Keele University Students' Union, which has made a unilateral declaration of independence to express its opposition and disgust at Government policies, Derbyshire College of Higher Education, whose Matlock site is threatened with closure, and De La Salle College in Manchester, which is also still on Keith Joseph's 'hit list'. The last Roadshow event is likely to be a north-eastern regional demonstration, organised by Huddersfield Tech. on March 22nd. The themes of this action are the demands for a £35 per week minimum grant for all students in Further Education, the impact of cuts on F.E., and the nature of the Y.T.S. Messages of support for Huddersfield Tech. would be welcomed!

It's not just students who have been taking action this term. The Association of University Teachers held their first ever national one day strike on January 15th. It was reckoned to be the first industrial action by university teachers since 1215!

NEWS BUILDING L.E.A. LINKS

BOURNEMOUTH STUDENTS - An uphill struggle

It certainly has been an up-hill struggle for union officers at Bournemouth and Poole College of Further Education this year. For a few years now relations between the college governors and the students' union have been strained due to the college's dislike of many features of what is a relatively 'developed' further education union - namely the fact that the union boasted two full-time officers.

The right to maintain two sabbaticals and manage union affairs independently has been vigorously defended. However, in the first half of this year the sabbatical President at the Bournemouth site of the college resigned, leaving room for the Local Education Authority to present their demands.

In the second term, the union was confronted by an impossible position; their funds had been stopped and the Authority were pressing for immediate changes. The union were forced to capitulate and enter into negotiations with the Authority, as the college governors refused to have any dialogue with the union.

The discussions proved to be very constructive, and a better relationship has developed in the past few months, although the union were compelled to accept the changes required - notably the reduction in the number of sabbatical officers from two to one.

At a fairly heated union meeting in January, the changes were accepted and are now due to be discussed and ratified by the college governing body.

At a recent meeting of the Dorset County Council Education sub-committee, it was decided that an increase in union funds should be looked into. In a letter to union President Adrian Yates, an Authority spokesperson said that the governing body would be asked to "Accept and support the reasonableness of the present intentions of the students' union."

The union has made major concessions and it is now up to the college administration to reciprocate and build on the goodwill shown by the student union.

Following a largely successful meeting of the Dorset Local Education Authority/Student Union Consultative Committee, which was established last year by Wessex Area NUS, the Local Authority is giving more consideration to the 'housing plight' of students in Bournemouth. A meeting to discuss the issue in greater detail has been arranged and union officers are confident that after consistent attempts to raise the issue, the Local Authority is taking the problem seriously.

Also, at the last meeting a proposal to co-opt a student representative onto the County Council Further and Higher Education Sub-Committee met with a sympathetic reaction from councillors who are likely to be taking a decision in March.

LOCAL BANDS

Winchester School of Art Students' Union is compiling a catalogue of local bands, to be considered for bookings at their venue. Details or tapes should be sent to: the Social Secretary, Student Union, Winchester School of Art, Park Avenue, Winchester.

RED WEDGE, the musicians vehicle for popularising politics, visits Portsmouth Polytechnic on March 1st and will include the 'student union regulars' SKINT VIDEO and acts such as MARK MIWURDZ of the Tube fame.

RED WEDGE describe themselves as a "broad left alliance" and have brought together a wide range of artists to promote politics amongst young people.

At the Portsmouth performance it is likely that 'guest celebrities' will appear and union officers are expecting a lively and successful evening.



IN
PORTSMOUTH

Lesbian and Gay Week provokes discussion

Southampton University Lesbian and Gay Awareness Week (3rd to 8th Feb. 1986) opened with a display in the union concourse, making more public the attitudes of lesbians and gay men and the oppression facing them. This always causes controversy and this year proved no exception.

On Tuesday, the video 'Framed Youth, or Revenge of the Teenage Perverts' was shown twice to a total audience of over 200. This film was commissioned by Channel 4 to show a more realistic and optimistic view of being young and a lesbian or gay man, whilst also dealing with issues such as homophobia and 'gay-bashing'.

On Wednesday, George Cant from the Terrence Higgins trust spoke about AIDS, giving a more balanced and truthful appraisal than the anti-gay propaganda we are used to. After the talk there was a useful discussion.

On Thursday, Anne Neale, from 'Wages due Lesbians', spoke about the links between racism and homophobia (fear of lesbians and gays), and the way in which these issues can be tackled.

The Guest Stars, an all-woman jazz band finished off the week on Saturday night, playing to an enthusiastic audience.

It is hoped that the week helped to bring about more understanding of the situation of lesbians and gay men. Unfortunately, the behaviour of a minority of bigoted students showed that for some at least this was not the case. However, the week was, for the majority, characterised by enjoyable events, informed discussion and increased understanding.

HAMPSHIRE HANGS

The crucial County Council by-election in Fareham, which would dramatically effect education in Hampshire, produced a victory for the SDP/Liberal Alliance candidate Jim Murray; substantially increasing the Alliance vote and pushing the official Conservative candidate in second place, 600 votes behind.

The ruling Conservative group on Hampshire Council can no longer maintain a majority in the face of a united opposition and will therefore resign their committee chairs and leading positions, leaving the opposition parties to sort out some form of shared power.

At a debate at Fareham Tertiary College, the Fareham candidates gave their views on education and were questioned by students. Cllr Burstow, of the Labour Party, said that the blame for the problems in education should be laid at "the foot of the Tory Government", whilst the Conservative candidate seemed obsessed by market forces and "saleable skills". Jim Murray contended that students needed "adequate finance".

During the election campaign students from Fareham and Area officers distributed a leaflet, produced by Wessex Area NUS, which urged voters to think about education before they voted.

This year Wessex Area NUS has been working with the Local Authority to try and ensure adequate student representation at a County level.

NEWS

LSU UNION OUT OF TOUCH?

Matt Ashread has been elected student union president at La Sainte Union College in Southampton for the '86/'87 session. Although he stopped short of attacking the current union Executive Committee, he did say in his election manifesto that he feels, "The union has lost touch in recent years with the majority of students who it is supposedly representing."

He also said, "I have been amazed to find out how little they (many students) know about the functions and affairs of the union. I believe that the majority of students would like to know everything they possibly could about the union and what it does. In that way they might start to feel that they are involved in what the union is doing..."

King Alfreds students ~ fighting the cuts

RACIST BAN?

The recent motion put to Southampton University Union on February 13th, calling for "no platform for racists", is likely to be re-submitted in the near future, as the vote on the motion indicated that the meeting had become inquorate.

Speaking for the motion, Julian Saurin argued that the right to freedom of speech must be considered subservient to other human rights, notably the right to live free from fear of physical harm. He outlined many examples of racial attacks and pointed out the need for real, strong action to oppose racism.

The motion was opposed by Tory and Alliance speakers, who said that the motion had dangerous implications for the freedom of speech. Jeremy Sharpe, himself a Monday Club supporter, claimed that racism had to be fought by countering the arguments and not by preventing them getting a hearing.

Although the vote showed the meeting to be inquorate, 108 voted in favour with 149 against and about 20 abstentions.

THE STUDENTS' UNION AT KING ALFRED'S COLLEGE IN WINCHESTER WILL BE FACED WITH SOME UNACCEPTABLE AND STARK CHOICES IF THE PROPOSED CUT IN UNION FUNDING IS REALISED. The college has had a substantial reduction in its overall finances, due to a £200,000 deficit from original estimates, and has taken

the decision to slash union funds by 20 per cent - a cut amounting to £5,000. Milton Barratt, President of KACSU said, "This level of funding means that we are faced with a choice between cutting subsidies to student clubs and societies, or losing a sabbatical officer."

The harshness of these unsavoury options has created widespread concern among students and staff alike, who are united in their condemnation of all cutbacks in public sector education.

At present the union funds are classified as a 'budgetary grouping' of the college, and therefore are susceptible to cuts of this nature. However it is widely recognised in the student movement that student unions are in a unique position in educational institutions, and must be treated as such. It is dangerous and simplistic to allow student unions to be a part of across the board cuts.

Milton Barratt said, "We will increase the pressure for the union to be prioritised as a 'budget heading'".

A recent packed meeting of students and staff made it clear that they deplored the college actions and decided to launch a campaign designed to overturn the decision at a forthcoming Governing Body meeting.

"As the real value of the student grant declines," said Barratt, "it is increasingly the duty of student unions to provide cheap and accessible sporting, recreational and leisure facilities. The union is not prepared to make up the deficit by forcing up prices. It would be irresponsible. We will not make students pay for the cuts."

Milton Barratt concluded that the response of the college administration to national cutbacks was "contemptable".

- KACSU is in need of information concerning union funding in other colleges. Write to The President, KAC Student Union, Sparkford Road, Winchester.

Sex Machines win Bed Race

On a cold, sunny December day last year the quaint town of Lymington was hit by two hundred students from Brockenhurst College, pushing forty beds of all shapes, sizes and colours six miles through hilly, twisting New Forest roads back to the college.

The event was also held in 1984, and money collected through sponsorship was donated to charity. This time the money collected is going to the Children in Need appeal - the Brockenhurst Student Union hope to break the £4000 mark.

The teams met at Lymington Yacht Club car-park, which soon lost its usual guise and erupted into a battle-field of egg-throwing and flour-bombing.

The gun went off at 1.30, and the determination of the teams was surprising, though the sprinted bursts became less numerous as they reached the up-hill stretch just outside Lymington.

Each bed had a particular theme, varying from a group of women who pushed their Southampton Hospital 'Alice in Wonderland' bed, to the eventual winners and most outrageous team captained by Steve McKenzie - The Sex Machines.

The event is covered by local media and press and TV cameras captured moments of the event, but if you really want a head full of flour and egg just walk the six miles and enjoy it!

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TORY DISAFFILIATIONISTS TROUNCED

CHALLENGING THIRD WORLD POVERTY



In January King Alfreds College Students' Union launched its 'Match 1% Week', aimed at highlighting the stark reality of international famine, its causes and consequences and raising financial aid to be channelled through the progressive aid agency War on Want.

The objective of the week was to raise 1% of the union's income, a target which was achieved with great success. Milton Barratt said, "we raised well over 1% and we haven't finished yet..." The various activities, including 'Soup Aid' and 'Disco Aid', raised a total of £337. The Union is planning further activities for the future.

Tarzan

The charities chosen by La Sainte Union students for their recent Rag Week were St. Dimas (Hostel for the homeless) and Mencap. The money raised is to be shared equally.

During the week students took part in various sponsored events, and the Rag Ball featured Tarzan's Milkmen as the main band.

The week raised over £400 for the charities.

Southampton University students voted overwhelmingly to remain affiliated to NUS earlier this term. Voting on a motion put forward by S.U.C.A., the union Conservative Association, the proposal to pull out was rejected by more than three votes to one.

The debate attracted a record number of students, and had to be relayed to a second hall to allow as many as possible to take part.

Defending the record of the National Union, Andy Whyte, NUS Vice President, spoke out about the work of NUS in defending education against a Government intent on cutting courses, institutions and student financial support.

Conservative speakers came across as inept and nervous, their main criticisms being levelled at NUS services, and the fact that they see the NUS as being "too political". And they appeared to be bad losers, blaming their defeat on the fact that "outside speakers" had to be brought in to make the case for the NUS. But with their record of promoting the freedom of speech in recent weeks for exponents of racist views, it seems ironic that the University Union should be criticised for allowing representatives of the National Union to put their case to students.

Later Conservative students were allegedly spotted burning copies of National Student outside the Union. Said Union Treasurer Aaron Cahill, "I think they should go back to play in their public schools, because that's obviously where they think they are..."

WIN

Win a £5 record token. Just send the answer to the question below to WESSEX STUDENT, and you could win this prize.

Who is the lead singer of U2???

Closing date for entries is April 25th and the draw will take place on this day. Don't forget to include your name, address & college with your entry.

* The answer to the last WESSEX STUDENT competition was 'a clock'. Frances Caynes from Winchester School of Art won the Art Set.

Please note that the competition is open to all students from affiliated colleges.

GENERAL MEETING

THE NEXT WESSEX AREA GENERAL MEETING WILL FEATURE PRESIDENTIAL HUSTINGS FOR NUS NATIONAL PRESIDENT. COME ARMED WITH QUESTIONS..... WINCHESTER SCHOOL OF ART SU, PARK LANE, WINCHESTER. MARCH 12TH, 2 PM, EASY ROAD AND RAIL ACCESS, CHECK WITH YOUR S.U. FOR UP TO THE MINUTE DETAILS, OR RING 0703 IF YOU'RE OUTSIDE SOUTHAMPTON, 37761. IF YOU CAN'T GO MAKE SURE YOUR NUS CONFERENCE DELEGATES CAN.....

GEDDES GETS IT!

Ian Geddes 'stormed home' in the Presidential election at Southampton University Students' Union, with a convincing margin of 500 votes separating him from the rest of the candidates. Ian, a modern history and politics student, has been actively involved in a variety of union concerns and campaigns during his years at University and has played an up-front role in the sporting side of college life.

Ian told WESSEX STUDENT that his main priorities for union work in the future are "fighting education cuts" and combatting the "prejudices which exist in the University." He believes that positive action is needed in order to make sure that student concerns are represented effectively and also wishes to see more "open discussion" within the union.



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FOWLER



Guy Phillips

Thatcher's victorian values....DIHE students set up a soup kitchen to make their point to the local media, through this symbolic stunt.

The campaign against Norman Fowler's proposed benefit cuts has been gaining steam, both across Wessex Area and nationally, over the past month. In mid December the Government announced major changes to the welfare benefits system with the long term aim of totally excluding students from claiming at all, and making students and parents pay through the nose for callous state cutbacks.

Students, angry and frustrated by these proposals, have been responding through imaginative local campaigns in the colleges and communities, through a massive lobby of Parliament on February 12th, attended by over 2000 people, and through the national demonstration on February 26th.

Perhaps the most striking feature of the campaign to date is the high level of support which has been shown to exist for the student case. Not only have the three major opposition political parties given their backing, but students have also succeeded in mobilising parents and all those interested in the future of education. The Government is isolated and feeling the pressure.

Here we take a look at some of the activities and local campaigns, national initiatives, and the facts and figures affecting your finances: and it's all down to Fowler...



▶ NO CHANCE

FOWLER

Check List

1. HAVE YOU WRITTEN TO YOUR MP YET? IF NOT, DO SO NOW. EXPLAIN HOW THE FOWLER PROPOSALS WILL AFFECT YOU, AND URGE HER/HIM TO OPPOSE THE PROPOSALS. ALL MPS CAN BE CONTACTED AT: THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, WESTMINSTER, LONDON. YOUR STUDENT UNION WILL BE ABLE TO TELL YOU WHO TO WRITE TO IF YOU DON'T KNOW.
2. HAVE YOU WRITTEN TO YOUR PARENTS YET? AGAIN, DO SO NOW, AND EXPLAIN HOW THE FOWLER PROPOSALS WILL AFFECT THEM AND YOU, AND URGE THEM TO PROTEST TO THEIR MP. TELL THEM THEY CAN GET MORE INFORMATION FROM NUS IN THE FORM OF A 'PARENT PACK'; SEND S.A.E. MARKED PARENT PACK, TO: NUS, 461 HOLLOWAY ROAD, LONDON N7 6LJ

Local campaigning against Fowler got under way in Wessex Area on January 24th, when DIHE and Bournemouth Art College held a day of action to make both students and parents aware of the implications of the White Paper.

Students from Winchester took to the streets on February 5th, in a successful day which achieved front page coverage in The Southern Evening Echo and the Winchester Extra, as well as coverage in the Hampshire Chronicle.

Passers-by were petitioned and leaflets aimed at parents were distributed. Balloons were again used to attract the local media and the attention of the public.

On February 12th representatives from almost all Wessex Colleges were in London to lobby local MPs, and to try and encourage them to come to the colleges and openly debate the issues of student financial support.

To add pressure letter writing campaigns have been in full swing...



Balloonists from DIHE stand poised to release their message into the sky. Tags attached to the balloons urged those that found them to support the campaign.

Guy Phillips

Guy Phillips



Petitioning the public: Winchester School of Art students met with a favourable response during their Day of Action in February and are presenting their petition to Winchester MP John Browne on Feb 28th. John Browne has agreed to debate the issue of Student Financial Support in Winchester on May 9th and also in Southampton, Chris Chope MP will be taking part in a debate in March.

Fowler & Your Finances

After the announcements in December, further details regarding student exclusion from the benefit system were disclosed on January 7th. The Government intends to implement the benefit cuts in two stages. The first phase will prevent students from claiming Housing Benefit while they are away from term-time accommodation, and those students who currently rent accommodation from 'educational establishments' will have their rights to claim Housing Benefit removed.

The first stage, which will come into effect from the summer of this year, will also withdraw student rights to Supplementary and Unemployment Benefit during the short vacations - Christmas and Easter, irrespective of whether they are in receipt of a grant or not. Students stand to lose at least £1,105 per year, which amounts to approximately a 50% reduction in financial support.

The second phase aims to completely disentitle all students from the benefits system. Although the DHSS have yet to make any detailed statement, it is clear that they intend

to achieve total student exclusion in 1987/88.

How do the Government intend to compensate for these huge losses in student income? The Department of Education and Science have made it plain that they wish to see students financially reliant on their grants, vacation work and their parents.

What a joke. In the last six years the real value of the student grant has deteriorated by 20%. At the same time, living costs have escalated, with the cost of housing rising by a staggering 68%. With at least four million unemployed it is unlikely and often unreasonable for students to take work in vacations. Parents, since 1979, have seen their slice of student financial support increase by 170%!

What all this means is that students and their parents will be footing the bill for the Government's benefit cuts. It's obvious that students are unable to compensate for a loss of over £1000, so that leaves parents. However at the present time at least 43% of parents do not pay the full contributions to the grant! Only those students with wealthy and generous parents will be able to continue or enter education in the future.

A South Eastern View

BY SARAH GILMORE

The No Chance Fowler Campaign is the first major campaign I've worked on since joining the NUS in November, and as such it's certainly jolted a lot of preconceptions about that oft quoted word "apathy".

If you didn't know, the South East Region covers Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Berkshire and part of Wessex Areas, along with three London boroughs. The political composition of the Local Authorities is overwhelmingly Conservative, with one being almost living! In such a situation you could be forgiven for thinking that students would feel that they were up against such enormous odds and consequently would not bother to work for change. However you would be utterly wrong! South East students are working together with Trade Unions, unemployed groups, child care groups and pensioners, and doing it with style, publicity and wit.

The most instantly

striking factor about the No Chance Fowler campaign is the way the Further Education Sector is getting involved - often putting their more wealthy and better resourced counterparts to shame. The political consensus is certainly getting a rough ride... and we are getting results!

The Day of Action saw an occupation of the Tory Club organised by Kent Area; lobbying of parents and 6th form students in Guildford; student fasts; a rally and demo in Brighton; balloon launch protests and soup kitchens in Bournemouth... the list goes on. The vice chancellor of Surrey University has given his support to our work and written to local landlords asking them to keep any rent increases below the level of increase in the student grants. He is joined by other college and university principals and vice chancellors in supporting NUS's stand.

■ SARAH GILMORE IS THE NUS SOUTH EAST REGIONAL OFFICER. SHE CAN BE CONTACTED C/O SURREY UNIVERSITY, GUILDFORD, SURREY GU2 5XF 0483 - 575189

WASF

THE VITAL LINK...

CHANCE FOWLER ON

For the most up-to-date information from Wessex Area, ask your President for a copy of The Vital Link: information for union officers from Wessex Area Student Federation.

WHERE THE STUDENT VOTE REALLY COUNTS —

A view from the Labour Party

IN THE SECOND OF THREE EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS, FEATURING THE PROSPECTIVE PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES FOR THE 'STUDENT MARGINAL' CONSTITUENCY OF SOUTHAMPTON ITCHEN, TONY SAMPHIER, WESSEX AREA NUS CONVENOR, TALKS TO JOHN DENHAM OF THE LABOUR PARTY.

JOHN IS A COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND PRESIDENT OF SOUTHAMPTON LABOUR PARTY. HE WORKS FOR WAR ON WANT.



TONY SAMPHIER -

The Fowler White Paper on Social Security presents some quite major challenges to the rights and independence of students and indeed to education in this country. The affects upon student finances are quite obvious, however, what do you see as the social and political implications of the White Paper?

JOHN DENHAM -

I think the most obvious aspect is that any cut back in student financial support is going to push more students over the margin between being able to go on into full-time education and not being in full-time education. We already have the most socially distorted higher education system in Western Europe - in terms of the appallingly low numbers of black people; women are 20 per cent under represented in higher education; working class students are dramatically under-represented. Every cut back in funding means that those distortions will become worse.

The affect on society as a whole is quite obviously that a large pool of talent is left unused, underdeveloped and wasted - that will have its own effect on Britain's economy.

The fight back against these benefit cuts is just getting underway. What part do you think the Labour party will play in the campaign?

I think the Labour Party has always had two roles in this sort of campaign: the first is as the opposition within Parliament. Labour MPs will be leading the parliamentary opposition, pointing out all the detailed consequences of every aspect of the Fowler proposals and making sure that every part is scrutinised. With the current state of Parliament, that opposition isn't enough on its own.

The other role the Labour Party and the wider labour movement is to be campaigning through petitions, letter-writing, demonstrations, lobbying and giving full backing to the sort of initiatives that the NUS have taken - so that there's a wide public campaign. The fact is that you've got to get the message across, on the one hand to parents and future students who are the next generation of students and the ones who won't get in

- you've got to lobby and mobilise that group - but you've also got to go to the trades union movement and employers too. If we're talking about influencing the Tory Government, we must make sure that employers are aware that their future employees will not be there, due to these Government measures.

The Labour Party has recently published the Glermarra Report on student financial support. The Report itself seeks to tackle the inadequacies of the present system; what are these inadequacies and what changes do you propose?

I think the first thing to say about the Glermarra Report is that it is an important stage in turning Labour's general commitment to extending student financial support into a set of detailed priorities and policies. So that as soon as we come to power at the next election we know exactly what we are doing when it comes to student support, and I know that the actual report is now being discussed with NUS and other bodies to sort out the various options which are in it. The obvious shortcomings of the present system are that there is a bewildering array of different levels of financial support for 16 - 18 year olds which need to be brought into one adequate level of funding for all students and young worker trainees. From 18 upwards, again you need to have a uniform system and one which, so far as possible, provides the maximum independence for students. Certainly they ought to achieve full independence from their parents at the age of 21, which doesn't happen at the moment. You also need to have more funding available to enable mature students to re-enter education, because at the moment the compensation for loss of earnings is inadequate and is a real barrier to older people who have missed out on education. In providing this sort of finance it is one of the most important ways whereby more working class people, more women, more black people can get into higher education.

You mentioned that students should achieve full independence at the age of 21. Why 21, what's the rationale behind it?

This is an initial target and the report makes it quite clear that the aim must be 18 because that's the age of majority. But what I think the report has done quite realistically is say that even with Labour's commitment to substantially increase the money going into Higher Education, there will be choices. You've got to open up the possibility of more students coming into education at the same time as you extend and improve the quality of education and range of courses. What the Glermarra report has done well is to set out those priorities.

It would be probably quite wrong to say, looking at the next five years of a Labour Government, that at the end of that five year period you could realistically achieve full independence at the age of 18.

Giles Radice, Labour Party Education Spokesperson, commented upon the Glermarra Report by saying that it gave priority to extending the opportunities open to working class young people. But I think it's quite apparent, looking at the present system, that the system itself is heavily weighted against the full participation of women within education - surely the needs of women must be a priority?

In fact within the Labour Party Higher Education document which was published in January, one of the five key aims for education is having an education system which effectively challenges sexism and racism on the questions of participation and what is delivered and what is taught. I think there is no doubt that this is an equal priority. Although the ending of discrimination within education is not prioritised between different groups - we have to tackle it right across the board.

On the question of implementation of Labour Party policy, it was Giles Radice again who said that this may depend upon economic importance and spending priorities of a future Labour Government. In the past the student movement has seen Labour Governments not delivering the goods, and therefore it could be reasonable to assume that Labour, if elected, would not make immediate changes. Would you agree?

CONTINUED

ON PAGE 10

No Platform for NUISY?

Dear Wessex Student,

As you may be aware, for some years NUS has operated a policy of "No Platform" against the National Union of Iraqi Students and Youth (NUISY - formerly NUIS). At the time, this measure was taken on the basis of reports of verbal and physical attacks by NUIS members upon fellow Iraqis of the Iraqi Student Society (ISS). At the 1985 Christmas Conference the Portsmouth Polytechnic S.U. delegation gained first-hand experience of the conflict between the two groups, although events did not follow the course that one might have expected, given the leaning of the existing national policy.

Throughout the week in Blackpool a Portsmouth delegate, who is a member of NUISY, was subjected to constant harassment and intimidation from a group of individuals who were identified as members of the ISS. The majority of this group held only visitor status at conference and refused to heed requests to leave seats designated for Portsmouth delegates and observers. Instead they spent the proceedings "shadowing" the delegate in question. Violence was threatened against him and continued attempts were made to provoke him into physical retaliation. Such a response would, of course, have led to his dismissal from the conference. Our colleague made it clear that he was afraid to enter or leave the conference hall alone, and had to be escorted at all times by members of our delegation.

A member of Steering Committee was alerted to the situation, and he himself witnessed two instances of intimidation. The response to these events from the platform was, in contrast, unhelpful and unrealistic; conference was warned of the presence of "Iraqi agents with cameras" (meaning NUISY) and urged to "protect Iraqi dissidents" (meaning the ISS) from attack. No mention was made of the aggressive attitude of ISS delegates, nor of the dangerous predicament in which our colleague found himself. There were no reports of attacks or threats against ISS members before or after these announcements.

To the best of my knowledge, present NUS policy on Iraq dates back to the beginning of the decade when violent attacks against opponents of the Iraqi government were reported to have occurred in Swansea and Newcastle. At this time the configuration of the power-blocs dominant in NUS was very different from today, and it was as members of one of the most influential groups of the era that the bulk of ISS members participated in student politics in the UK. It is therefore not surprising that the ISS position on Iraq was adopted as policy of the National Union. Portsmouth, along with other unions, was advised by NUS to "No Platform" the NUIS; although no such motion was passed, allegations were made of "verbal attacks" by NUIS against other Iraqi students in Portsmouth. However, an investigation by

sabbatical officers could find no evidence of such attacks; indeed it transpired that all 12 Iraqi students registered at the Polytechnic were members of the NUIS (leading one to ponder upon the identity of those attacked!), and that furthermore, those who reported the "attacks" were identified, not as Iraqis, but as nationals of a neighbouring Middle Eastern State.

This letter is not a recruitment sheet for the NUISY, nor is it an attempt to cultivate favour for the Iraqi Government. Certainly it is not a condemnation of the concept of "No Platform". Rather, it is an earnest request for you to re-examine the issue of Iraqi students' groups in Britain in the light of our own experiences and to surmise whether NUS has just cause to continue to deny members of the NUISY a forum to air their own views on Iraq, and other areas of debate.

I look forward to your comments on this matter.

Yours fraternally
Iain Case
President
Portsmouth Polytechnic S.U.
Museum Road,
Portsmouth PO1 2QH

MORE LETTERS

PAGE 10

John Hansard Gallery

The University, Southampton.

CANVASS: NEW BRITISH PAINTERS I

Work by Pauline Allwright, Lucy Jones, Alain Miller, Diane Roberts, & Paul Stork.

3 March - 12 April (closed over Easter)

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Work by David Austen, Stephen Chambers, John Kirby, Ruth Rosengarten & Mark Wallinger.

21 April - 24 May (closed May 5)

Open 10-6 Monday-Saturday
Admission Free.

Remember Rugby?

Dear Wessex Student,

As you may know, Stockport City Council have refused to include lesbians and gay men in their equal opportunities policy. Three times the issue has been taken to a full meeting of the council; three times it has been refused. We cannot allow this to happen again!

A group of people in and around Stockport and Manchester have formed a local branch of 'Stop the Lesbian and Gay Ban', to monitor and act upon and developments that may occur. We have decided that it is necessary to stage a national demonstration to protest against this disgusting discrimination, and so are in the process of organising one for March 15th in Stockport itself. More details will be available through your SU soon, but for the moment make a note of the date and spread the word around- we expect thousands of people to turn out on the day. Make a point of being one of them!

Every day, lesbians and gay men fall victims to oppression and police harassment; every day emotional and legal battles are being fought for people's basic rights; every day millions of people the world over are being discriminated against on the grounds of their sexuality.

It is essential that we stand together and fight in situations such as Stockport. I cannot stress enough that this is not just an issue for the people living in the pretty, sleepy town of Stockport; it is a very basic human rights issue and of great importance to the lesbian and gay community as a whole.

Let's fight this one together!

Robert Pacitti
On behalf of 'Manchester & Stockport Stop the Lesbian and Gay Ban'
Contact: 061-273-5111.

LETTERS

Lesbian & Gay Soc.

Dear Wessex Student,

I would like to inform your readers that there is presently a Lesbian & Gay Society which meets every Tuesday at 8 pm in the Welfare Office at the Students' Union, Portsmouth Polytechnic. We are very much aware that there are not many places which have a Gay Society; thus our meetings are open to anyone who wishes to attend. Our meetings enable people to meet others, we organise visits to 'Gay' places, and we hope to get some films for our members to see. Other ideas are organising links with other gay societies especially locally, but also nationally.

A 'Gayline' telephone service is also in operation, run by men and women on Thursdays 6 pm - 10 pm Portsmouth (0705) 828667. Membership of the Lesbian & Gay Society is strictly confidential, and all enquiries are treated in confidence. If anyone wishes

to contact us you can do so via our Welfare Officer, Carrie Fentum at the Students' Union, or via Gayline. Publicity Officer Portsmouth Polytechnic Lesbian & Gay Society, c/o Alex House, Museum Road, Portsmouth.

Ireland

Dear Wessex Student,

Except when something really sensational happens to hit the news headlines, the vast majority of people of all political colours conveniently ignore the present situation in Northern Ireland.

The article in the pre-Christmas edition of your paper, about the visit of LSU students to a college in Northern Ireland, exposed some interesting attitudes. The protestant students there were at pains to point out that life was pretty normal in the troubled province. Discrimination against

catholics in jobs, housing and many other areas is not surprisingly ignored. There is also no mention of the deprivation of basic human rights inherent in the Diplock courts system, or in the strip-searching of women in Armagh jail, or the killing of children by 'real' and plastic bullets.

The illusion of privilege felt by protestant workers ignores the worsening of conditions due to the incompetence of loyalist administration.

Of course, the Anglo-Irish accord has done nothing to change the situation, as both governments have been at pains to point out. Only by the dismantling of the gerrymandered state, and the establishment of a non-secular united Ireland which protects the human rights of all citizens regardless of sex, race, class, sexual orientation or religion can there ever be peace

and justice for the people of Ireland.

Yours,
Andy Rathbone,

Southampton University.

GET ANGRY. SEND YOUR HATE MAIL TO WESSEX STUDENT 8, ARCHERS ROAD SOUTHAMPTON

YOUR LAST CHANCE TO SPEAK OUT THIS YEAR! LETTERS FOR OUR SUMMER ISSUE MUST BE RECEIVED BY FRIDAY APRIL 18TH, AND INCLUDE WRITER'S NAME, ADDRESS AND COLLEGE. IF YOU DON'T WANT THESE DETAILS PUBLISHED, SAY SO AND THEY WON'T BE INCLUDED. WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO SHORTEN LETTERS, DEPENDING ON SPACE AVAILABLE.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

To conclude, undoubtedly Labour students have had a vast impact upon the student movement. What do you see as their role in the future?

I think that Labour students have at least two roles. First, and obviously their prime responsibility as Labour students is to ensure that NUS, at a local and national level, operate as effectively as possible as representative bodies of their members.

Secondly, as the student wing of the Labour Party, then I hope that they will continue what they did very effectively in 1983, despite the generally bad Labour election result, which was produce a very high student response to Labour. I hope that Labour students will continue to organise for Labour support. As a local parliamentary candidate - both the seats in Southampton can be determined by the student vote

NEXT ISSUE:

WESSEX STUDENT TALKS TO CHRIS CHOPE, CONSERVATIVE MP FOR SOUTHAMPTON ITCHEN.

Taunton Cider

TAUNTON DRY BLACKTHORN CIDER
COOLED ON DRAUGHT

TAUNTON Autumn Gold Cider
MEDIUM SWEET
COOLED ON DRAUGHT

TAUNTON Traditional Draught CIDER

Where the cider maker's art is still recognised...

THE LABOUR PARTY

Well of course the last Labour Secretary of State for Education is now President of the SDP so perhaps some questions about the last Labour Government should be directed at that Party. I think the answer to this is that a Labour Government creates the means whereby Britain's wealth, and therefore spending on education, can be increased. Labour is committed to putting a greater financial investment into education, both for its own value and because we believe that it is economically essential. Labour has made it clear that a major aim is to rebuild Britain's manufacturing base and to be at the forefront of the use of new technology and new industries. The simple economic objective isn't possible without greater investment in Higher Education. I don't want to give the impression that Labour sees education only as a tool for economic recovery, but if you want to know what the guarantee is that Labour will carry through its policies, it's because we recognise that investment in education is essential for economic recovery.

**MAKE IT A SPORTING
BANK HOLIDAY
ON MAY 5th 1986**

at the

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NUS

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Squash
Tug of War
Table Tennis**

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**Make a day of it!
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Kick Off: 10.00 a.m.**

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