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Dr John Cunningham MP
Shadow Secretary of State (Environment)
House of Commons
LONDON SW1A 0AA

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File

Dear Jack,

Quality of Life

I note from yesterday's Guardian that you have been given the task of co-ordinating the Shadow Cabinet's attack on themes relating to Quality of Life. You may be interested in the enclosed transcript of a contribution I made from the floor to the recent Statistics Users' Council Annual Conference on precisely this theme. Full conference proceedings have been published and should be easily available to you as central government was well represented among the delegates.

Your secretary has two key references to articles in Social Trends (Mark Abrams, **Subjective Social Indicators**, 1973 & John Hall, **Measuring the Quality of Life in Urban Britain: some developments and trends**, 1976). These report work at the SSRC Survey Unit where Dr Abrams was Unit Director and I was Senior Research Fellow from 1970 to 1976 until the Unit closed and I came to PNL.

Little direct QL work has been done in the UK since then, but Mark and I have been involved in European initiatives and some cross-national comparisons with the USA and Canada. Our work has underpinned some initiatives at local level (Cleveland and Sunderland) and in working life (Sheffield University) and found its way into the Eurobarometre series and OECD definitions, and into the Gallup World Quality of Life Surveys and into their surveys for the European Values Systems Study Group. Much SSRC research remains unpublished, especially the thinking and design side and some of the multivariate analyses.

I am sure some of our work found its way into ministerial statements from the last Wilson government, but British trade unions have not yet followed the German Metalworkers example of holding a conference on Quality of Life.

At PNL I have been able to introduce QL measures and approaches into various student and community research projects, but principally into a massive DHSS funded study of the elderly in residential care and into two groups investigating European Values.

All data from the SSRC and PNL work are available for secondary analysis, either here or from the ESRC Data Archive at Essex

University. We also have the British Social Attitudes series and the original UK data from the European Values surveys. Although your initiative on quality of life is welcome, I suspect that your most effective line of attack will eventually centre on values.

Both Mark and I would be happy to contribute to the development of your strategy. He says he spends his time these days addressing the Brighton Fabian Society on "Must Labour Lose Again?" Seriously, he is happy for you to contact him at home, 12 Pelham Square, Brighton, BN1 4ET (Tel: 0273-684537).

I can offer access to data and ideas, probably as a private person rather than an academic, although PNL has not particularly endeared itself to the Tory government over the years. The DES were none too pleased when this Unit produced the Undergraduate Income and Expenditure Survey for the NUS in Jan 1984, the last time student loans were being proposed and we have it on good authority that our original proposal for a Community Research Advisory Centre (centred on four Inner London rate-capped Boroughs) had no chance of passing the political advisers at the Home Office.

Although, except at election times, I am no longer active in the Labour Party, my credentials are that I have been a member since 1960 with a history of involvement at student, ward and GMC level in Cambridge, Durham, Manchester and Haringey. Most recently I was Chairman of Governors at Wood Green School (11-18 Comprehensive Mixed) from 1978 to 1983 and an Alderman on Haringey Council from 1974 to 1978.

I shall be sending further QL material under separate cover. If you wish to take my offer further I can be contacted at work on a direct line 359-8478 (24-hour answerphone) or at home, 4 Earlham Grove, Wood Green, London N22 5HJ (Tel:889-3353) I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely,

John F Hall

cc Dr Mark Abrams, Mr Leslie Wagner