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Part 2



MT's speech,
Party
conference



PARTY CONFERENCE SPEECH - BLACKPOOL - 12 October 1979

THANK YOU

Mr President, since we last met there have been one or two changes on the political scene.

On that occasion I spoke to you as Leader of the Opposition.

Today I address you as Prime Minister.

I am - as you may know - the first ./. . research chemist to hold this great position.

I hope that where I have led, other chemists may follow.

But not too soon.

I mean, there's no rush.

In fact, if you're agreeable, I hope to be with you for quite a while.

The job you have given me is at once a supreme honour and the greatest possible challenge.

Now more than ever, my responsibility is not only to the Party but to the nation.

I know you understand this and would not wish it otherwise. //

But before we turn to the tasks that face our country, perhaps we can allow ourselves, at this great Party gathering, a moment or two to rejoice, to say thank you, and to remember.



The Election Victory

On Thursday, 3rd of May, we won a great victory.

~~Yes,~~ It was a victory for realism and responsibility.

It was also a victory for conviction and commitment -

your conviction and commitment.

And it was a victory for loyalty and dedication -

your loyalty,

your dedication.

Through the long years of Opposition you kept faith ; and you will, I know, keep faith through the far longer years of Conservative Government that are to come.



An election victory such as ours is impossible without teamwork.

It's invidious to single out this or that person for praise.

However, one or two special tributes are due.

We owe a tremendous debt to all our agents who did so magnificently.

And I must also thank Lord Thorneycroft. He has been one of the most outstanding Chairmen the Conservative Party has ever had.

This year he added another chapter to his memorable record of service to our Party and our country.

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Finally, I wish to say a personal thank you to someone who was and is always there to give strength and authority to our cause, not least in time of trouble.

No leader of a Party can ever have been given more sound /or more loyal advice/ than I have had from my friend and deputy, Willie Whitelaw.

The victory to which all of you in this hall gave so much was five years coming, but when it came it was handsome.

We won with the largest swing since the war and the largest majority in votes.

I was particularly pleased by the support we attracted: the largest trade union vote in our history; the young people, / so many of whom saw no future under Labour and who turned to us; and all those who have voted Labour before and who, this time, voted Conservative.

Mr President, winning an election is a splendid thing, but it is only the prologue to the vital business of governing. The work that the new Conservative Government has begun is the most difficult, the most challenging that has faced any administration since the war.

Only the Beginning

We have not wasted time.

Already we have raised the pay of our police and armed forces.

We have set in hand the sale of council houses and flats.

In June we introduced our first Budget. We brought down income tax ^{throughout} ~~from top to bottom~~ ~~of~~ the scale.

We took care to protect the pensioners against inflation: / next month's increases will be the largest in cash terms ever paid.

And war widows' pensions have been relieved of tax altogether.

At last / they have received justice.

But all this is only the beginning.



For this Government, it's not the first hundred
days that count; it's the first five years
- and the next five after that.

We have to think in terms of several Parliaments.

We have to move this country in a new direction -
to change the way we look at things, to create
a wholly new attitude of mind.

Can it be done?

Well, the people have taken the first step by electing
us - some with passionate conviction; others,
I don't doubt, more in hope than belief, their
fingers tightly crossed.



I understand their caution.

So much has been promised in the past, so much has come to nothing, no wonder they are sceptical.—

— And impatient

Already I can hear some of them saying:

"The Conservatives have been in five months.

Things don't seem to be that much better.

What's happening?

Do you think the Conservatives can really do it?"

Yes, the Conservatives can do it.

And we will do it.

But it will take time.

Time to tackle problems that have been neglected for years; time to change people's approach to what Governments can do, and to what people should do for themselves;



time to shake off the self-doubt induced
by decades of dependence on the state as master,
not as servant.

It will take time - and it will not be easy.

The world has never offered us an easy living.

There is no reason why it should.

We have always had to go out and earn
our living - the hard way.

In the past we did not hesitate.

We had great technical skill, quality, reliability.

We built well, sold well.

We delivered.

The world bought British and British was best.

Not German.

Not Japanese.

British.



I remember the words written on an old Trade Union banner:

"United to support, not combined to injure".
That is the way we were.

Today we still have great firms and industries.

Today we still make much of value
- but not enough.

Industries that were once head and shoulders above their competitors have stumbled and fallen.

It's said that we were exhausted by the war.

Those who were utterly defeated / can hardly have been less exhausted.

Yet they have done infinitely better in the peace.



It's said that Britain's time is up, that we have had our finest hour and the best we can look forward to is a future fit for Mr Benn to live in.

I don't accept these alibis.

Of course we face great problems.

Problems that have fed on each other year after year, becoming harder and harder to solve.

We all know them.

They go to the root of the hopes and fears of ordinary people:

High inflation, high unemployment, high taxation, appalling industrial relations, the lowest productivity in the Western world.



People have been led to believe that they had to choose between a capitalist wealth-creating society on the one hand and a caring, compassionate society on the other.

But that is not the choice.

^{The}
~~Other~~ industrial countries that can out-produce and out-sell us are precisely those countries with better social services and better pensions than we have.

It is just because they have strong wealth-creating industries that they have better benefits than we have.



What our people seem to have lost is belief in the balance between production and welfare.

This is the balance that we've got to find.

To persuade our people that it's possible, through their own efforts, not only to halt our national decline, but to reverse it ~~and then move forward~~, requires new thinking, tenacity, and a willingness to look at things in a completely different way.

Is the nation ready to face reality?

I believe it is.



People are tired of false dawns and facile promises.

If this country's story is to change, then we must rekindle the spirit which the socialist years have all but extinguished.

Do we have the authority?

Last month, I was accused of "waving a phoney mandate".

In a democracy the word "mandate" does not imply that a voter has read and accepted his Party's manifesto from end to end, and so not only knows, but is voting for, everything it contains.

It would be absurd if it did.



Not everyone who votes for a political party
has read everything in its manifesto.

Indeed, ~~not~~ everyone who votes for a political party
has read anything in its manifesto.

But when a voter makes his decision and slips
his paper in the ballot box, he does
know, broadly speaking, what the party
of his choice stands for.

In this age of mass communication he
can hardly help knowing.



Those who voted Conservative know the principal policies we stood for and that in voting for us they were voting for ~~them~~.
those policies.

That was and is our mandate.
We have every right to carry it out and we shall.

Four economic issues were central to our Conservative campaign:

Inflation

Public spending

Income tax

Industrial relations



Now these are not four separate and distinct issues.

They are very closely related.

You can't cut tax unless you curb public spending.

For it is your tax which pays for public spending:

The Government has no money of its own.

Of course, if we had the money we could all think of good ways to spend it; hospitals which should have been modernised years ago, more help for the elderly, the sick, the disabled.



But Government in one form or another already spends ^{recently} ~~more than~~ half our entire national income.

If Labour's lavish spending solved all problems we would have no problems left to solve.

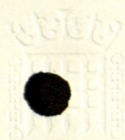
And inflation is a major problem which cannot be cured without curbing public spending. If the Government overspends and borrows or prints money to meet the deficit, then prices and interest rates will go on rising - that's inflation - and the poor, and the pensioners, and the young home-buyers will all suffer.

But there are some who think they have a right to contract out of the effects of inflation. If they are organised in a powerful union with enough muscle to impose their will on a suffering public.



What madness it is, that winter after winter we have the great set-piece battles, in which the powerful unions do so much damage to the industries on which their members' livings depends; the struggles for wage increases, ^{disregards} ~~regardless of~~ output, profit or any other measure of success. They ignore the reality that there is an inescapable link between prosperity and production.

Since 1979 began, scarcely a week has passed without some group calling for higher pay: Listening to the chorus of pay demands, you might imagine that a one-hundred per cent pay rise for everyone in the country would solve all our economic problems. But ^{we} all know that the only result would mean doubled prices. No one would have more food, more clothing, more anything.

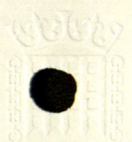


The key to prosperity lies not in higher pay
but in higher output.

In 1979 you have all heard endless
discussions about pay.

How often have you heard similar discussions
about how to raise output?

The reason why Britain is today the third
poorest nation in the European Community
has little to do with pay but it has
everything to do with production.
We hanker after a West German standard of
living. But we fail to recognise that
you cannot have a West German standard
of living with a British standard of output.
The truth is very simple:
West German pay plus British output per man
equals inflation.



And that is exactly what has been happening.

The unions win pay awards their members haven't earned:

the company pays out increases it can't afford:

the prices to the customer go up:

Government prints the money to make it all possible, and everyone congratulates it on its success as an honest broker, with or without beer and sandwiches at Number Ten.

It has been happening

[We have] been ~~doing it~~ for years.

The result has been the most uncompetitive industry, the lowest economic growth rate and the highest rate of inflation in the industrialised world.



And in the trade unions the lesson is drawn that militancy paid again, that the company did have the money.

Bw. ~~it~~ didn't.

The Government just printed its way out of trouble - until next time round.

This Government wants the greatest possible co-operation with both sides of industry and we will go a long way to get it.

But we will not - repeat not - print money to finance excessive pay settlements.



Conquering inflation, controlling public spending and cutting taxes are the first three stages of a long journey.

The fourth is to make certain limited, but essential, changes in the law on industrial relations.

THE UNIONS

We have to make these changes in the law because, as we saw last winter, it is out of keeping with the needs of the time.

When the trade union movement began it set out to secure for its members a fair return for their work from employers.


Today the conflict of interest is not so much between unions and employers as between unions and the nation, of which trade unionists and their families form a large part.

It is the British people who have to bear the brunt of the suffering strikes impose on society.

We have to bring about a fair and just balance between
a man's right to withhold his labour and a ~~small~~ ^{or a small number of} ~~the~~
~~minority's~~ determination to impose its will
upon the majority.

As a Government we cannot and will not coerce people,
but we can and we must protect people against
coercion.

And so, before the year is out, we shall introduce
legislation concerning secret ballots, secondary
picketing and the closed shop.
Let there be no doubt about that.



The majority of the unions' own rank and file, so many of whom helped to elect this Government, welcomed our proposals.

I hope that the union leaders, who have said that they will work with the elected Government of the day, will accept them too.

The days when only employers suffered from a strike are long since past.

Today strikes affect trade union members and their families just like the rest of us.

One union can deprive us all of coal, or food, or transport easily enough.

What it cannot do is defend its members against similar action by other unions.

If schools and hospital wards are closed, if there is no petrol at the pumps, no raw materials on the factory bench, the trade unions are as powerless as the rest of society, and when the bills come in for the stoppage they have to pay up too.

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Recently there was a strike which prevented telephone bills from being sent.

The cost of that strike to the Post Office is £110 million.

It will have to be paid for by everyone who uses the telephone.

£110 million caused by a strike of only 150 people in the public sector.

a service.



The recent two-days-a-week strike by the Engineering Union lost the industry £2,000 million in sales.

We may never make up those sales and we shall lose some of the jobs which depended on them. And who will send up a cheer?

The Germans, the Japanese, the Swiss, the Americans.

So instead of exporting engineering goods, we shall have exported engineering jobs.

I think the nation recognises - indeed has recognised for a long time - that trade union power is out of balance.

That is why ^{people} ~~they are~~ supporting us in legislating for trade union reform.



We place special emphasis on the secret ballot.

We believe that the great power wielded by unions calls for greater accountability to their members.

And we are particularly concerned about the working of the closed shop.

The closed shop, together with secondary picketing, makes it possible for small groups to close down whole industries with which they have no direct connection.

Cross the picket line to do your job - and you risk losing both your union card and your job.

During the engineers' strike news reached London of a new resistance movement in East Anglia. Whole factories were actually working but so afraid were the employees of the consequences that they daren't reveal their identity, or that of the company, to the media.



Millions of British workers go in fear of ^{union} ~~that~~ power.

The demand for this Government to make changes is coming from the very people who experience this fear.


It is coming from the trade unionists themselves. They want to escape from the rule of the militants.

We heard it in the Conference Hall yesterday. They look to us to help them.

Today trade unions have more power over working people and their families than any boss ~~ever had.~~

Yes Unions can only exist in a free society. Those who seek freedom for their own purposes should not deny that freedom to others.

~~_____~~



I have been speaking of the deep and difficult problems of industry - most of it big industry.

But the future of this country depends largely on the success of small businesses.

I would like to read to you a letter which I have received from a small businessman in the West Midlands.

I asked him whether I might read his letter and here it is:-

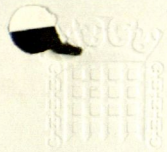
"I thought I would write to you about the profound effect the change of Government has had upon one small businessman.

In 1977, at the age of 38, I was so disillusioned with the Socialist regime and its policies that I could see no future for the small to medium business and sold my company to a large group and virtually retired.

Financially, this was a satisfactory state of affairs, but ^{he wanted} I yearned to get back into what I knew best. When your Government was elected, I hoped there would be a change of emphasis and indeed that is what has happened.

The letter-head on which I write to you is of a new company which I have formed recently, and the biggest factor in its creation has been the steps which you have taken to restore incentive to work at all levels of the community.

Not only can self-employed proprietors of small businesses keep more of the profits of those businesses but, more important, those good and productive employees who are patently worth a high level of wages are also feeling the benefit of more cash in the pocket and it is now worth their while to work that bit harder or longer as the case may be.



He went on

Please stick to your policy.

It is the only way that we shall eventually solve our problems.

It may be hard to bear in the short term but I truly believe that the bulk of public opinion is now behind a return to the basic common sense fact that the country as a whole cannot continue to be paid more and more money for less and less work."

This is exactly the kind of ^{*person*} ~~man~~ whom our Government seeks to encourage.

It is small businessmen like ^{*this*} ~~Mr. Lanson~~ who, given the chance will provide more jobs and more wealth.

So far I have spoken of matters of vital concern to us here at home.

But we have important responsibilities overseas as well, particularly Rhodesia.



RHODESIA

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In his speech on Wednesday, Peter Carrington described the progress which has been made in our efforts to bring Rhodesia to independence with the widest possible international recognition.

I understand and share your impatience to bring this about.

There have been too many wasted opportunities.

It is Britain's responsibility and Britain's alone to bring Rhodesia to legal independence. But it is also in Rhodesia's interests that we should [redacted] bring as many other countries as possible along with us in recognising an independent Rhodesia.

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

We undertook to give to Rhodesia the kind of independent^{ENCE} constitution which we had given to our other former colonies. Those constitutions had certain fundamental principles in common. Each also contained provisions designed to meet the country's own particular circumstances.

The same is true of the Constitution under which we are ready to give independence to Rhodesia. Bishop Muzorewa has already accepted that Constitution.



It must also be in Rhodesia's interests, and it is an inescapable duty for the British Government, to do everything possible to bring an end to a war which has caused the most cruel suffering.

What is the purpose of continuing this war?

It cannot be to bring about majority rule; that has already been accomplished.

If it is to win power, then those who wish to do so must be prepared to proceed democratically through the ballot box.



At Lusaka the Heads of Government called for free and fair elections, supervised under the British Government's authority. We stand ready to do this.

I think we have some reason to be proud of what has been achieved since Lusaka. I trust that no one will now put that achievement in jeopardy. In view of what has been accomplished on the Independence Constitution the time for lifting sanctions cannot be far off. There is no longer any vestige of excuse for the conflict in Rhodesia to continue.

EUROPE

Nearer home in Europe we are part of a Community of some 250 million people.

Its no use joining anything half-heartedly.

Five months after taking office we have done much to restore the trust and confidence that the last Conservative Government enjoyed with our partners in Europe and the Labour Government did not.

We are a committed member of the Community.

But that does not mean that we are content with the way all its policies work.



If nothing is done, we are faced in 1980 with the appalling prospect of having to pay £1,000 million more to our European partners than we receive from them even though we have almost the lowest income per head in the Community.

The hard pressed British taxpayer will not stand for paying still more in order to reduce the tax bills of our wealthier Community partners.

At the European Council in Strasbourg in June, we persuaded the other heads of government to agree to tackle this problem.



We shall expect to make very real progress at the next European Council at the end of November.

I do not underestimate the problems that face us on the Budget, in fisheries or in ^{REFORMING} performing the Common Agricultural Policy.

But equally we must not underestimate our opportunities as members of the Community. The future of Western Europe is our future too.

What in the end are the objectives of the states which have come to make up the Community?

The three most important are:

international peace and justice;
economic prosperity;
freedom under the law.



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DEFENCE

We in Europe have unrivalled freedom.

But we must never take it for granted.

The dangers are greater now than they have ever been since 1945.

The threat of the Soviet Union is ever present. It is growing continually.

Their military spending goes up by 5 per cent a year.

A Russian nuclear submarine is launched every 6 weeks.

Every year the Russians turn out over 3,000 tanks and 1,500 combat aircraft.

Their military research and development is enormous.

The Soviet forces are organised and trained for attack.

The Russians do not tell us why they are making this tremendous and costly effort to increase their military power.



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But we cannot ignore the fact that this power is there.

So far the North Atlantic Alliance has preserved our freedom.

But in recent years the Soviet Union's growing strength has allowed them to pull ahead of the Alliance in many fields.

We and our allies are resolved to make the effort that will restore the balance.

~~The need is plain.~~

~~Whether it is met is a question of political will.~~

~~NATO countries, including Britain, have already agreed to increase their spending in defence.~~



We must keep up all our defences, whether nuclear or conventional.

It is no good having first class nuclear forces if we can be overwhelmed by an enemy's conventional forces.

Detering aggression cannot be piecemeal. If it is, our effort is wasted.

Recently we and our allies have all become more and more alarmed at the number of modern Soviet nuclear weapons targetted on Western Europe.

At the same time, NATO's own nuclear forces in Europe are out of date.

~~A gap is developing.~~

We and our friends in NATO will soon have to decide whether to modernise our nuclear weapons.

These will be difficult decisions for some of our allies, and we must expect to see the Soviet Union mount a powerful psychological campaign to prevent the Alliance from redressing the balance.



We shall be looking very closely at President Brezhnev's recent speech to see whether it is the opening shot in that campaign or whether it is a genuine attempt to reduce tension in Europe.

Our Conventional Forces

Nor will we neglect our conventional forces.

~~We will improve their equipment.~~

~~But~~ Our most precious asset is the men and women who serve in our Forces.

We faced a grave situation on taking office. Recruitment was poor, and many of our most skilled and experienced Servicemen were leaving the Forces.

We immediately restored the pay of the Services to its proper level.

We will keep it there.



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We have also taken steps to encourage the rebuilding of our Territorial Army and other reserve forces.

After so much neglect it will take time to put right the weaknesses. Nonetheless we must see that it is done. We owe it to our Servicemen and women who give our country such magnificent service.

Northern Ireland

Nowhere has that service been more magnificent than in Northern Ireland.

More than three hundred of our servicemen have given their lives.

Their bravery is matched by the courage of the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the Prison Service.

It is hard to speak of Northern Ireland without emotion. One thinks of Warrenpoint, of Lord Mountbatten, of Airey Neave.

To any who seek to advance their cause by violence, and who claim to be soldiers of an army fighting for freedom, let me say in the words of the Lord Chancellor, ~~Lord Hailsham~~:-

"Such men are not soldiers. They are not an army. They are not fighting for freedom. They are fighting for chaos."

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We who believe in the one true freedom - freedom under the law - far outnumber and outweigh, in the strength of our resolve, those who set out to murder and to maim.

Could
No end ~~justifies~~ such means.

~~The act of murder can have no moral basis.~~

The British Government is doing everything possible to strengthen the security forces in the fight against the men of violence.

Our goal is the same peace for which the Pope appealed so movingly during his visit to Ireland.

To all the people of the Province of Ulster I repeat this pledge: we do not forget you, we will not abandon you. We must and we will find a way of restoring to you more control over your own affairs.



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We must and we will find a way to peace for your
deeply troubled part of ^{our} ~~the~~ United Kingdom.

~~And to all the members of our Security Forces, who
strive night and day to keep the peace and hold
the balance with such patience, such perseverance
and such courage, let this message go out once
again from this Conference Hall:
our thoughts are with you and our pride is with
you too.~~



PERORATION

We come to the closing moments of our victory
Conference.

It has been a Conference to remember.

It was ~~was~~ a victory to remember.

Throughout most of my life, the chief complaint
made against politicians has been that they
shrank from telling the truth when the
truth was in the least unpleasant or
controversial, that they were inclined
to woo when it was their duty to warn,
to please when it was their business to
prophecy.

Early in my career, I decided that was one
mistake I would not make.



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My harshest critics will perhaps agree that I have succeeded in that modest ambition; for the complaint they have against me is the opposite one - that I am inclined to speak my mind, even occasionally to nag!

Today, I have again pointed to the dangers as I see them and I have said what I believe the source of those dangers to be.

But let us remember that we are a nation, and that a nation is an extended family.

Families go through their hard times; they have to postpone cherished ambitions until they have the means to satisfy them.



At times like these, the strength of the family is truly tested.

It is then that the temptation is greatest for its members to start blaming one another and dissipating their strength in bitterness and bickering.

Let us do all in our power to see one another's point of view, to widen the common ground on which we stand.

As we close our Conference, a ^{caring} ~~compassionate~~ and united Party, I think of last week's events at Brighton.

I think of those members of the Labour Party and trade unionists (including some leading ones) who see the Movement they serve abandoning the ideals to which they have devoted their lives.

They do not ^{you} share our Conservative ideals - at least they think they don't - but they do want free and responsible trade unions to play an honourable part in the life of a free and responsible society.

So do we.

I give them my pledge that, ~~however often we may be rebuffed,~~ my colleagues and I will continue to talk to them, to listen to their views, ~~to give these views due weight in shaping national policy,~~ so long as it is understood that national policy is, ~~in the last resort,~~ the ~~sole~~ responsibility of Government and Parliament.

In return I would ask every man and woman who is called on in the next few months to take part in disruptive industrial action, ~~to recognise that he or she is faced with a decision of conscience.~~

~~We shall do our best to make this decision as free as possible, but there is nothing which can absolve those who have to take it from the obligation~~ to consider the consequences - for themselves, their children and their fellow-countrymen.

~~It is not easy to change the habits of a lifetime, but there are times when we have to weigh one loyalty against another.~~

Our supreme loyalty is to our country and the things for which it stands.



OK 57.

Let us work together, in hope and above all in
friendship.

On behalf of the Government to which you have
given the task of leading this country
out of the shadows, let me close with these
words:

You gave us your trust.

Be patient.

We shall not betray that trust.