



FROM: DAVID HOWELL, M.P.

3.2.76

Dear Margaret,

You said at your meeting with the 'second eleven' that you were looking for themes. May I offer some thoughts.

1. If I may start on a personal note the best 'theme' we have, and the one to which our whole publicity machine should be (and no doubt is) geared, is the contrast between your own clarity of thought and purpose and the shuffling evasiveness and squirming ambiguity of the Wilson entourage, with their penchant for rubber statistics and their habitual inclination to try and bypass the truth about our situation. This should be first and foremost.

2. Subordinate to this, however, there are some promising themes to be developed, both negative and positive, some of which I tried to set down in my little pamphlet, which you have. They could be set out in shorthand as follows:

3. a) On the negative side

- i) The final failure (and consequent internal crisis) of British socialism and in particular the fiasco of the 'new socialism' as set out in the 1974 Labour manifesto and embodied in the NEB and the nationalisation measures.
- ii) Overswollen government to the point of bureaucratic paralysis, leading, inter alia, to wickedly insensitive and costly public and social 'services'
- iii) Overtaxation (although we have to make quite plain that if we are not to damage the fisc the initial cuts must come in the 'political' taxes)
- iv) Shaky public finances resting on an appalling accumulation of debt. A need to end the era of 'high spending politics'.
- v) Too much power in the hands of the Labour party and union bosses, and of the bureaucracy, brought about by the nationalisation measures and a string of new 'rules' which enhance union and executive power at the expense of individual freedom



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and following from this

- vi) Outright Labour hostility towards the smaller enterprise millions (see below for figures)
- vii) Growing damage to the basic interests of working people - their jobs, their savings, their opportunities to do better and their freedom to choose for themselves.

4. These lead on automatically to some strong positive themes

- i) The Conservative party has a natural majority and is closer to the interests of the workers than socialism can ever be.
- ii) By 'workers' we mean all the workers (24½ million) who get up and go to work each day, not just the unionised minority. (The question is not whether the unions would work with the Tories but how much longer the vast majority of workpeople will put up with the Socialists).
- iii) Less and better government, including less legislation through the parliamentary sausage machine
- iv) Fairer, clearer and lower taxation, with the return of incentive to work and build up something for the family.
- v) A climate for profits - for all business but with special attention to the 1½ million worker-owners (that is what they are) in unquoted enterprises and the 9.65 million workers in these enterprises. (Patrick de Lazlo tells me that he estimates half a million of these work in large unquoted companies, still leaving a staggering 9 million in the small enterprise sector)
- vi) Ownership -
 - a) of the home, combined with the ending of the council estate tyranny
 - b) of other assets - this includes bringing home to people the already vast spread of assets in the form of pension rights and life policies

(Nobody cares for what nobody owns)

5. All these themes need the attention of our publicity people. Perhaps we might have the chance to discuss them in due course.

Yours ever

David

(*This of course is where the growth of jobs should come, not in the public sector or the motor industry)