

POST MORTEM MEETING NOTES

Report from Ian

We were right with our list of Untouchables, but there were clearly other people who might have been added to that list. Quite a number of people voted for the Prime Minister with considerable reluctance, although I was agreeably surprised by the result. We would be mistaken if we thought that there was enthusiasm from everybody who voted for Mrs Thatcher.

If, in eleven months time, which I think will be the case, the economy is still in difficulties, with inflation still relatively high, interest rates high and the Balance of Payments responding slowly, with the opinion polls probably worse, all of which I predict, then I think the mood of the Party will be difficult and not least because MPs in marginal seats will be that much closer to the Election and more anxious about holding their seats. They may say to themselves we are doing badly enough to lose our seats under the present Leadership, might we do better under a different Leader.

Particular issues in people minds: even I cannot say that the style of leadership, although I am a strong supporter, commands universal assent. I don't think we can change that style, although I do think there is some feeling that perhaps the Prime Minister is not as accessible as she might be. We appreciate the pressures on her and if it were possible to diminish the other burdens on the Prime Minister so she could see more of her backbenchers that would be a help. I sometimes wonder if we make the best use of getting MPs to Receptions, lunches and dinners because people are flattered if they are asked to No 10. Are we now able to get Officers of Committees over, but I certainly think we could have more backbenchers at lunches and dinners and if that meant fewer Ministers I think it would be a help.



Europe is the second factor and there is anxiety about what I feel have been mistakes as far as the economy is concerned. Also possibly inflation. We have to continue with the economic policy. Nothing more can be done about the Community Charge; privatisation of water is not universally acclaimed, but it is happening today. Privatisation of electricity is also going to go ahead. Therefore the things with which we can deal are European policy.

I do not mean to be gloomy because I think the question of the perception of the Prime Minister in seeing the backbenchers enough can be put right and I believe that the economic prospects will improve before we have to go to the country. I think it is very important that amongst those who might be described as wholly committed to the Prime Minister there is no atmosphere of triumphalism now and that in so far as there are wounds, that we should do all in our power to bind up the wounds.

GY pointed out that we must positively seek out those who are doubtful about the Prime Minister. GY asked Ian for his feelings as to what can be done about Europe.

Ian said he thought we should just ensure that the Prime Minister is aware that there is considerable anxiety in the Parliamentary Party concerning this matter.

#### Report from Richard

Organisationally I think this team has worked very well and I do not think we have many lessons to learn from what we have gone through. I think, ideally more use should have been made of the Apostles. We know that many of them were slow in reporting to us and our major handicap has been the lack of peripheral information. Ideally Apostles should be reporting on conversations which they have generally. Apostles should also be more carefully instructed in their way of canvassing. A man should never know that he has been canvassed and I am not quite sure that that was done as effectively as it may have been.



As far as policies are concerned and the lessons we should learn from the Election. There is, and always has been, a band of people who are dissatisfied with the Prime Minister, but I think this Election would not have happened had there been 4% inflation and 9% mortgage rates because we would have been ahead in the polls. I share Ian's view that a year from now inflation will be high, interest rates will be high, local elections will have been rough and by-elections may have been difficult so spirits of the Party will not be any higher next year.

As far as policies are concerned, there is no advice about how we can run the economy save to say that the arguments over the ERM have been robust and damaging enough and they will cause more damage the nearer we get to 1st July. The French and Italians are already breaking down their exchange barriers and the majority of the Party is in favour of joining the ERM. They may not understand the issue, but they are told by their small businessmen that it would be a good thing so they believe it. The danger is that the Prime Minister will be confronted by Members of the Cabinet again and again, either by speeches outside in the country, or even they might possibly present Cabinet with a paper. News of the circulation of that paper might leak and the Cabinet and the Prime Minister would be placed in a very awkward position.

GY asked whether Richard felt there had been a lot of moans about the ERM.

Yes. A lot of ignorant moans. Basically the Party is in favour of joining the ERM. The Prime Minister's words have not been believed. But there are many supporters who have said that the result of this Election has been a vindication of her European policy. She should be told that this is not so. Young people tend to be better disposed to the Community and they cannot understand the apparent isolation of Britain and I believe that this is not in our interest.

Peripheral moans: when we are doing badly, everyone will say we are handling things badly, but when we are doing well the opposite is the case.



The Apostles cannot meet together for a party, but I think the Prime Minister should see them one at a time for a cup of tea.

As far as the Dodgies are concerned, I do not take the view that 12 people should be brought in to see the Prime Minister. It does not work because it becomes terribly impersonal. Only very small groups can be seen together. The Monday lunches at Downing Street are a waste of time. Some members of the cast are the same every Monday. They talk about the topic of the day in a superficial manner. One or two outsiders are brought in but they realise they are not part of the furniture. I would cut down on the regulars and bring in more outsiders to those lunches. I agree with Ian on the receptions and dinners. I do not know the value of the Prime Minister being seen in the Tea Room and the Dining Room.

Relationships between her and her colleagues: If the colleagues feel they are not being consulted and their relationship is weak it gets out and adds to the unhappiness. I think that it is important for her in particular to establish a good working relationship with Douglas Hurd. Whether that relationship can ever be as good as it should be so long as Bernard and Charles remain at No 10, but they have got to be lived with. The relationship with Geoffrey is never going to be easy again, but he is the Deputy Prime Minister, he is quite easily reassured and I think the occasional meeting with Geoffrey would help to diminish the number of forays that he makes into the European field. Other Members of the Administration - I think she should, wherever possible, have meetings and listen as much as possible with them and let them have their say. What she cannot afford a year from now is the Ministerial Cabinet Colleagues telling the press that things have got worse not better, because the Party might then be tempted to vote another way. There are about 40 who voted for the Prime Minister but reluctantly.

Overall I think this result is very much as I would have expected, but the campaign has confirmed the number of people who have given her the benefit of the doubt, but only just, and she should know this and should know that if these people are still unhappy in a year then she will be in trouble.



Report from Mark

GY should present his paper for the weekend box, prior to his meeting on Monday.

It would be helpful to gather together some of the articles which have appeared in the press this week - for example Ferdinand Mount's and Robin Oakley's. She will know, then, what other people have said. You should also speak to all Apostles because some of them are a bit disappointed.

You should, on Monday, also suggest that you see her again in January.

We should also have as accurate a figure as possible of those who voted without enthusiasm.

We are going to have a terrific row about the rules. Her greatest supporters are likely to do her a disservice. This could raise fury in the anti-Thatcher camp.

Accessibility of the Prime Minister: she is terribly close to Charles Powell and he thinks the best thing for her to do is to get on as many trips as possible. We have got to put a stop to it. She was a great success on East/West side with Reagan. She is not such a success with Bush. It is very important that she only does the foreign trips which she must do. Also because she has become such a world figure, every Minister etc from every country in the world wants to have half an hour with her. She must be told that she must not take on these foreign commitments to the detriment of her time in the House of Commons.

Report from Tristan

I do not dissent from anything anyone has said. We are talking about the beginning of the end of the Thatcher Era. We have to try and ensure that that is managed in a way that enables her to go to the end of her Prime Ministership with dignity and honour. The most we can achieve is that she wins the next Election. I think that is possible, but not certain.



I think the tone of what she should be doing was set by the way you conducted her campaign. Meyer went out of his way to say how charming you had been to him. This is not something she should discuss with anybody, she should just register it at the back of her mind and not discuss it. She is in a minority of the Party on Europe. The issues are being narrowed and there is a piece of ground emerging where we can all stand. Her tone is very important. Somehow we have to find a role of leadership for her and Britain in the Community. This may mean using Chequers at the weekend to entertain potential allies in Europe. Young people are important here because young people believe we are the Party of Europe.

GY mentioned that the Prime Minister believes she is totally in tune with the views of the country on Europe.

TGJ continued: we must find a role of leadership for Britain so that other countries and senior politicians are prepared to rally behind us so that she is not so alone.

I do not have a lot of faith in wheeling in the colleagues, but if she really wants to devote time to the Parliamentary Party she has to shed some of her load and give it to some of her colleagues. Is there any section of her work where she would be prepared to trust Geoffrey Howe - Cabinet Committees, etc. She has got to deliberately turn her back on certain major sections of Government policy. Or maybe John Major or Douglas Hurd. All this green stuff perhaps.

On the advisers: Charles must go. Someone has to say you are actually damaging this chap. Bernard is the one they all really hate. So Bernard has to go as well.

On the information we have about colleagues who are discontented, the papers will go to Mark. One of the things we have to do in the Whips Office is to get out the names of the 100-150 who are difficult.



Report from Gerry

I agree with what Tristan has said. It does not matter what organisation one is in, it is listening which is so important. If someone wishes to get a message through it is important that they are given the impression that they have been listened to. At the moment too many people feel that if they raise anything it is countered and that what they say does not get to her.

I agree with Ian on Europe, that there is this feeling that the wickets have moved on Europe and that the Prime Minister is trying to move back again. In terms of tone, she has to reflect that the wickets have moved. She has to be aware that in the early stages of any change of tone, that every two she gains there is at least one she will lose in the Party.

We won't have another stalking horse. ERM is going to be the stalking horse and it is through ERM that we are going to hear displeasure.

Two further points - I think the way you have led the campaign has been superb and the way that you have been promoting it in the media. We cannot do the same again next year. Some of the Apostles have been blown as well. We would have to be very wary of using the same people again.

- The most striking comments which I have had made to me: on Tristan's comment that this is the beginning of the end of Thatcherism. "She has been magnificent in the 80s but she is not for the 90s". But she has every chance of promoting herself into the 90s. Every thought should be given to how she appears at the beginning of the new decade. It is actually associating herself with the new world in which we now live. She could build into that a number of changes of attitude which various colleagues have asked for. We have a tremendous opportunity for her at the turn of this decade. The listening point was best put to me when they said in 79-83 that then we had a much more biddable Chairman of the 1922, we had Whips who had a much smaller majority and were keeping more closely in touch with individual Members. The 1922 Chairman is not so approachable, whips are not so good at keeping in touch and it has made Mark's position so much more difficult. I don't think that



Mark has had a fair chance. It is this listening thing which I think we can get.

Richard said

Tristan argued that for the Prime Minister's own good Bernard and Charles should go because they are perceived by the Parliamentary Party as being sentries in the bunker and the more she is seen to have the bunker mentality the less easy it is for Mark. I don't think you can say it. You have to compromise on that. Everybody understand, Prime Minister, that you must have the advisers of your choice, but there is a feeling that your advisers have served you with loyalty but they are seen to have more influence with you than your Ministers and there is concern that they are not fulfilling their constitutional role.

Mark said

The Prime Minister is not unaware of this. Robin Butler is going to speak to her about Charles.

Ian said

George should simply report that there is anxiety about this matter. This anxiety is widespread and deeply held.

Mark reported that there is a row between Charles and Bernard.

George pointed out that Charles is the nearest thing she has to a close confidante. She will feel lost without Charles.

Richard said

Foreign trips - I agree with Mark. But you should sell it the other way by saying the Foreign trips, you are much in demand but on the other hand there is a view that you are not doing enough in the constituencies. It may mean fewer trips. She is at her best when she is meeting people. She is then seen to be in touch with people. She is very good on the hoof.



Mark said

Although you spend time in the constituencies, your time spent abroad would be better spend in the constituencies.

Richard said

Articles from the Prime Minister should be available for publication in the 90s. A relaunch. Work should start on that now. Good imaginative writers should be given positive messages byher.

Rules: no encouragement should be given to change the roles and Cranley must defuse it all by setting up a great commission which should have as its memebtrs some people who are known not be friendly to the Prime Minister.

Ian said

There are 8 Apostles and we are agreed that we cannot bring them together. Ian will write and the Prime Minister should also write. Ian will take each out to lunch so that he can get the vibes back.