

Meeting held at Chequers on Wednesday 5th January 1983

Present: The Prime Minister
 The Chairman
 Mr Ian Gow
 Mr Michael Spicer
 Mr David Wolfson

The Prime Minister's Team

The following was discussed and agreed:

Prime Minister's Tour

Parliamentary Private
Secretary:

Mr Ian Gow would accompany the
Prime Minister; when Mr Gow
was in his Constituency, Mr Michael
Spicer would substitute.

Administrative:

David Wolfson

Research Assistant:

Subject to the approval of the
Prime Minister, Mr John
Whittingdale would be appointed
from Research Department.

Press:

Mr Derek Howe
and
subject to the Prime Minister's
approval and the timing of the
European Elections, Mr Colin Hart
would be appointed.

Advance arrangements:

Mr and Mrs Harvey Thomas

Prime Minister's London Office
based at Central Office:

Speechwriters:

Mr Ferdinand Mount to head this
Unit, and the following names
were suggested as part of this
Unit and were to be discussed:
Sir Ronald Millar
Mr Peter Utley
Mr Alfred Sherman
Mr Paul Johnson
Lord Thomas
Mr David Wood
Mr David Hart
Sir Douglas Hague

Correspondence and
Administration:
(based at Central Office)

Manager:

Sir John Eden to be
considered

Correspondence:

Headed by Chris Butler

Briefing for the Prime
Minister (radio/tv)

Mr Scott Hamilton

Tour Organiser:

Mr Roger Boaden

Questions of Policy

The Chairman would see Sir Angus Maude to see if
he would be willing to Chair this Committee.
Lord Cockfield also to be approached to be asked if
he would be a Member of the Committee.

Press and Television

David Boddy

Gordon Reece

Chris Lawson

CEP/SO
January 1983

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Present : The Prime Minister
 The Chairman
 Mr Gow
 Mr Spicer
 Mr Bell
 Mr Boddy
 Mr Cropper
 Mr Dobbs
 Mr Garner
 Mr Lawson
 Sir Ronald Millar
 Mr Reece
 Mr Ryder
 Mr Wolfson

Papers prepared by the Directors, outlining preparations for a General Election were circulated. The Chairman asked for each Director to comment briefly on their paper, and during the ensuing discussions the following points were made :

Mr Spicer

Mr Spicer reported that the Party Organisation was paying its way. This year expenditure should be matched by income. Depending upon when the General Election took place, expenditure projection for next year ranged from £8 million - £10 million.

The Party had taken its first step into mechanisation. Direct mailing operations were underway. By mid-year these would cover all 85 critical seats to raise money and membership, and to get out "our message". Word processing machines were in use at Central Office, and would be introduced into the Downing Street Political Office. Briefing Conferences were being held at Central Office on the techniques of mechanisation to which Agents, Members of Parliament and Members of the European Parliament had been invited.

IT WAS ESSENTIAL FOR THE MEMBERS OF
PARLIAMENT TO BE MADE AWARE OF THE
FACT THAT CERTAIN ASSOCIATIONS WERE
NOT MEETING THEIR QUOTA

ACTION

The Chairman

Mr Cropper (Research Department)

Mr Cropper reported that the Research Department had recruited twelve new staff and that they were experimenting with information technology. A computer library of political quotations was about to be started, designed particularly with an eye to the requirements of Prime Minister's Question Time, and the Department was already subscribing to a computerised Hansard service designed originally for the House of Commons library.

It was agreed to adhere to the date of July 8th for publication of the Campaign Guide, which would be a compendious record of four years work.

Mr Cropper confirmed that, in addition, a bumper 'Politics Today' entitled "Four Years Work" would be sent out for the anniversary of the Government on May 4th. This could serve as a proxy Campaign Guide in the event of an early summer General Election.

Loose-leaf Speakers Notes would be prepared in readiness for a June election, and revised later in the year if necessary. The Prime Minister suggested that the Speakers Notes and Political Statistics, which had been sent out in separate bundles in 1979, should be combined. This was agreed.

The briefing material on the Conservative and other Parties' Manifestos could only be prepared at the last minute.

Meanwhile, the Research Department would continue to produce the weekly Briefing Note, the fortnightly series of Politics Today, the green and pink pages of quotations from the Opposition and a series of briefs for Parliamentary debates.

SPEAKERS NOTES AND POLITICAL STATISTICS,
PRODUCED SEPARATELY IN 1979, WOULD BE
COMBINED IN ONE COLLECTION OF LOOSE LEAF
PAGES THIS TIME

ACTION
Mr Cropper

A SERIES OF CONFERENCES SHOULD BE HELD
TO ACQUAINT CANDIDATES AND AGENTS WITH
THE CONTENTS OF THE PARTY'S GENERAL
ELECTION BRIEFING MATERIAL

ACTION
The Chairman
Mr Cropper

Mr Garner (Organisation and Community Affairs Dept)

Parliamentary Redistribution

Stress was made of the importance of the Orders in Council being approved by Parliament as soon as possible in order that new Associations could be formed by the end of March or the beginning of April - prior to the local government elections.

Constituency Campaigning

The Prime Minister referred to the difficulties of constituency Associations in obtaining sufficient canvassers for doorstep work and stressed the need for punchy leaflets which would have an impact on the doormat. She stressed the need to ensure that voluntary workers were properly briefed on what was required and used to best advantage, including the use of telephone canvassing techniques where personal visits were not practical.

The Prime Minister also referred to the need for political points to be made available to constituencies for distribution on the doorstep. Reference was made to the "bullets" briefing papers which were circulated to Agents, MPs, etc. on a regular basis and which were suitable for this purpose.

Critical Seats

The distribution of the proposed critical seats showed a concentration in the London, West Midlands and North Western Areas. Everything possible must be done to ensure the maximum back-up from the centre for the critical seats and particularly in those areas where victory was essential.

Speaking Campaign

The principles outlined in the paper for the use of speakers were agreed. Reference was made to the Queen's Park by-election where, because of three line Whips and other reasons, Ministers and Members of Parliament had been unable to visit the constituency during the campaign. Unfavourable press publicity had ensued.

Speaking Campaign cont..

The importance of Ministers being seen to support candidates in by-elections was underlined.

Concern was expressed that Ministers did not always notify the Party Organisation in advance of visits to Areas on Government business and that this often caused annoyance and embarrassment within the Party Organisation.

THE PRIME MINISTER OFFERED TO DRAW
MINISTERS' ATTENTION TO THIS IMPORTANT
ASPECT IN ORDER THAT PARTY ENGAGEMENTS
COULD BE INCLUDED IN FUTURE MINISTERIAL
VISITS

The Prime
Minister

Election Agents

Plans were outlined for the provision of an adequate supply of trained Agents in the critical seats prior to the General Election. The Prime Minister stressed the importance of newly trained Agents and others understanding election law and procedure.

MR GARNER WAS TO ENSURE THAT PROPER
TRAINING AND GUIDANCE WAS PROVIDED FROM
THE CENTRE

Mr Garner

Mutual Aid

Regarding the proposals for the implementation of Area mutual aid schemes the Prime Minister underlined the importance of the local government elections in May and thought it essential that Area mutual aid schemes be activated before these elections. The result of these elections would be taken as an indicator for the general election.

Mr Boddy (Press and Broadcasting Department)

It was essential that the person who headed the FEATURE FACTORY UNIT had political sensitivity; Anthony Shrimpsley or George Gardiner were suitable persons. However, Mr Mount was now a member of the Prime Minister's Office and should also be consulted.

The Prime Minister's Election Campaign

Suggestions (1) and (2) were not thought suitable; the Chairman favoured (3).

Breakfast television

Mr Boddy said if the Prime Minister and other Ministers appeared on Breakfast Television it could set the theme for the day. Breakfast Television would be extended during the period of the Election Campaign. The Prime Minister, if appearing on Breakfast Television would not use this as a platform for a speech. It should be remembered that when the Prime Minister appeared on television, equal time would be offered to other Party Leaders.

The Prime Minister gave consideration to making comments as she departed from Downing Street for the Press Conferences held at Central Office.

IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT EARLY MORNING
RADIO AND TELEVISION PROGRAMMES BE
MONITORED THROUGHOUT THE CAMPAIGN

ACTION
Mr Boddy

Press Releases

For her speeches, the Prime Minister was in favour of issuing a different 400 word press release on each occasion. Subjects would be The Economy, Disarmament and Foreign Policy, Industrial Relations, Trade Union Law, Creating Wealth and Employment.

It was thought the Opposition would run a 'scare campaign' on Pensioners, the National Health Service, the Welfare State, and Energy; we had a good track record on these issues.

THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD STUDY THE
RESEARCH PRODUCED ON THESE SUBJECTS

ACTION
Mr Britto

Party Political Broadcasts

Mr Boddy said our Party Political Broadcasts at the moment were four minute 40 second slots, which was of our choosing. The Whip and Mr Boddy, had been attending meetings with representatives from the Broadcasting Authorities. The Broadcasting Authorities were suggesting that during the Election Campaign period the allocation should be : Conservatives 5, Labour 4 and the Alliance 4; we did not agree with this allocation. It was thought the Alliance should get 3 slots.

THE PRIME MINISTER ASKED TO BE BRIEFED
ON THE ELECTION LAW IN RESPECT OF PARTY
ELECTION BROADCASTS

ACTION
Mr Boddy

Television confrontation with Opposition Leaders

A discussion followed. Mr Reece was in favour of a confrontation for the next Election, although admitting he had not been in favour of it for the 1979 Election. Mr Reece suggested the following: two programmes with Mrs Thatcher and Mr Foot, one programme with Labour (Mr Foot) and the Alliance (Mr Jenkins), and one programme with Mrs Thatcher and Mr Jenkins. One of the Mrs Thatcher - Mr Foot programmes would major on defence, foreign affairs disarmament issues, and one on the domestic issues. While Mr Foot was Leader it would be to our advantage to participate in these programmes.

MR REECE SAID IF AGREEMENT WAS REACHED
HE WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING
THESE PROGRAMMES WERE TO OUR ADVANTAGE
e.g. PEAK VIEWING TIMES AND SIMULTANEOUS
SHOWING ON ITV AND BBC.

ACTION
Mr Reece

No decisions would be taken on the subjects in this Paper until a further, smaller meeting had been held.

Mr Lawson (Marketing)

A range of charts was shown, and the following points arose in discussion :

- (a) Confirmation that by the end of June, Marketing Department will have the capability to send communications to 700,000 supporters in critical seats.
- (b) It was forecast that Newsline would make a profit of £120,000 in the current year. Sales are increasing.
- (c) Marketing Department were working closely with Winston Churchill, Research Department and the Ministry of Defence to co-ordinate the campaign against CND.
- (d) Dial-a-Minister : this would enable callers to have up-to-date information on major issues by telephoning Central Office; a 3-minute tape would deal with the issue of the day. Appropriate subjects would be the National Health Service, disarmament and the Conservative Party's policies in key areas.

A discussion followed as to whether a Minister should be at Central Office on a Friday evening, available to respond to telephone enquiries, but as this could also invite journalists to call, the idea was thought not to be practical.

- (e) A television training facility had been established for candidates and Members of Parliament. Good candidates would be the coal-miner candidate, Mr Patrick McLoughlin and Mr Anthony Paterson, who had fought Barnet-Finchley as a Liberal at the last election.

PARTY ELECTION BROADCASTS COULD
BE VIDEO-TAPED FOR USE IN CON-
STITUENCIES DURING THE CAMPAIGN

ACTION

Mr Lawson

Mr Bell (Saatchi and Saatchi)

Mr Bell gave a commentary on his Paper "Communications and Advertising Strategy", the qualitative research was commissioned and paid for by Central Office, the work being shared between Saatchis and Mr Britto, and the quantitative research was commissioned and paid for by Central Office, and the work was done by Mr Britto.

Comments were made on this presentation and included :

- (a) We were holding support from women, although there should have been an improved showing.
- (b) We had lost support from old age pensioners.
- (c) 60% of people showed dissatisfaction with our views on taxation.

Burst 1 of an advertising campaign could commence in June; Burst 2 in October and Burst 3 in 1984.

The Chairman pointed out that these would cost respectively :

£1.5 million £2.5 million £3.5 million

Mr Bell showed a range of posters which received comments. Mr Bell did, however, make it clear that these were not firm proposals, just a range of suggestions.

The Prime Minister would hold another meeting at Chequers, perhaps over a weekend. A smaller meeting would be held to discuss the Prime Minister's Campaign.