

Sara Keays talks to The Times of 'loving relationship'

I implored him to tell Thatcher

By Richard Dowden

Miss Sara Keays, former secretary to Mr Cecil Parkinson, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, who is expecting his child in January, told *The Times* last night that he had first proposed to her four years ago and had repeated the proposal again on election day.

But seven weeks later, after a holiday abroad with his family, Mr Parkinson had told her that he no longer intended to marry her.

Speaking at her father's home in Bath, Miss Keays said that she had "implored" Mr Parkinson to tell the Prime Minister during May and June of this year, but he had refused.

He had finally told Mrs Margaret Thatcher on the 9-polling day, that he intended to marry Miss Keays and she agreed to leave her job at the House of Commons at the end of June.

She said she had met Mr Parkinson in secret on September 1 at an office in London where he had told her that he no longer intended to marry her. "Later that day I telephoned him to say that I thought it essential that he should inform the Prime Minister", she said.

When it became apparent during the following weeks that the affair was being discussed in political circles and pursued by newspapers she told Mr Parkinson that if he did not issue a statement through his solicitors she would be obliged to defend herself.

Miss Keays said she had decided to speak only because of her "duty to do so."

Telephone calls from Miss Keays's family to *The Times* yesterday afternoon were followed by an invitation from her for members of the staff of *The Times* to go to Bath, where she gave them the following statement:

I agreed for the sake of my family that we would not discuss with the press the statement made by Mr Parkinson last week. I hoped that it would not become necessary for me to say anything. However, I now feel that I have a duty to do so.

On Friday, October 7, *The Times* said that "Mr Parkinson has made a sad and silly blunder". Like the Government, the editor believes this should have remained a "private matter".

For the *Daily Telegraph* (Monday, October 10) "the moral logic is that a quiet abortion is greatly to be preferred to a scandal". I was

not aware that political expediency was sufficient grounds for an abortion under the 1967 Act, quite apart from the fact that I could not have contemplated it.

On Monday night, in spite of the understanding expressed in his statement, Mr Parkinson saw fit to answer questions about the matter in a much publicized *Panorama* programme. It appeared from that programme that the Prime Minister had been kept fully informed and that the statement issued by Mr Parkinson contained the full facts.



Mr Cecil Parkinson: conference support

The full facts have not been made public. Press judgment and public opinion have been influenced by inadequate information, speculation and the Government's desire to restore Mr Parkinson's position - as someone else put it, to "rehabilitate" him.

1. It has been implied that I tried to trap Mr Parkinson into marriage;

2. that I sought to destroy his reputation; and

3. that the matter should have remained private.

This last presumes that I should hide from public view and declare on the baby's birth certificate "father unknown", so casting further doubt on my reputation and denying the child his fundamental right to know the identity of his father.

According to the view expressed in the *Telegraph*, I should have sacrificed my baby's life for Mr Parkinson's career and the Government's reputation.

I wish therefore to make known the following chronology of events:

1. My baby was conceived in a long-standing, loving relationship which I had allowed to continue because I believed in our eventual marriage. It has

been suggested that Mr Parkinson only asked me to marry him after I became pregnant, when in fact he first did so in 1979.

2. In May, when I knew of my pregnancy, Mr Parkinson decided he no longer wished to marry me.

I told him that, while I had to accept the fact that he was not going to marry me, I could not deny my baby his right to know the identity of his father.

3. I did, however, implore Mr Parkinson, during May and early June, to inform the Prime Minister because his name and mine were sufficiently linked in political circles for speculation to be inevitable and it was essential that the Prime Minister was made aware of the situation before forming her new Government. He would not agree to this.

4. On polling day, Mr Parkinson sought a reconciliation and asked me to marry him. I gladly accepted. He said that he was about to see the Prime Minister to inform her of our relationship and to tell her that he would be obtaining a divorce in order to marry me. That evening he told me he had so informed her.

He also told other members of my family of his intention. He asked me to give him time to arrange matters and to leave my job at the House of Commons, which I did at the end of June. I and my family assured him of our full cooperation and that we would give him such time as he needed.

5. On August 5, Mr Parkinson was on holiday abroad with his wife and family, having reassured me of his intention to marry me.

6. On August 23, I was visited at my London home by reporters from the *Daily Mirror* who demanded to know if it was true that I was pregnant by Mr Parkinson. At that very moment others from the same newspaper called on my father and younger sister.

Later that night, as I was driving a girl friend to her home, I was pursued by two cars which I believed to be driven by reporters from the *Daily Mirror*, who tried to force me to stop and one their cars collided with mine. I had to take refuge in Rochester town Police Station.

7. On August 24, I informed Mr Parkinson, who was still abroad, of the incident with the *Daily Mirror*. I assured him

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Family group: Miss Sara Keays (right) leaving her Wiltshire cottage with her twin, Mrs Elizabeth Dalton (centre) and their sister, Mrs Flora Giles, yesterday.

Parkinson given a warm reception

From Julian Haviland
Political Editor
Blackpool

The Conservative Party, in conference at Blackpool, yesterday warmly received its former chairman, Mr Cecil Parkinson, while reserving judgment on his political future.

A hostile reception from the 5,000 representatives would have forced him to leave office, in spite of the Prime Minister's support, and the conference organizers took every caution to prevent it.

Mr Parkinson, whose role as Secretary of State for Trade and Industry was to wind up a debate on free enterprise and industry, was brought on stage with the Prime Minister so that he shared the applause with her.

His wife, Ann, who saw it as her duty to share his ordeal, earned some extra applause for herself, and a welcoming kiss from Mr Denis Thatcher.

There was some booing from the back of the hall when Mr Parkinson was introduced by the chairman, Mr Petr Lane, but the clapping almost drowned it.

Mr Parkinson's ministerial

Minister resigns in shekel crisis

From Christopher Walker, Jerusalem

The new Government of Mr Yitzhak Shamir was plunged into political turmoil last night, less than a week after taking office, with the dramatic resignation of Mr Yoram Aridor, the Finance Minister. It came as Israel was enduring the most acute economic crisis in its history.

Mr Aridor's decision to quit followed a storm of protest both inside and outside the Government caused by the publication of a secret and sweeping Treasury plan to link the entire economy to the US dollar, which would eventually have become legal tender.

The so-called dollarization scheme was leaked by the Tel Aviv newspaper, *Yedioth Aharonot*, and within hours led to angry calls for Mr Aridor to go. He submitted his resignation shortly before an emergency Cabinet session, the second since the Government was sworn in on Monday.

In a television interview last night, Mr Shamir appealed for calm in the country and dismissed Mr Aridor's scheme as "unrealistic and unworkable", insisting it had never been discussed at Cabinet level.

Under the scheme - worked out behind closed doors - the

basis for the Israeli economy, and gradually replaced the ailing shekel, which was introduced in 1980. One leading Cabinet member, Mr Yitzhak Moda'i, the Energy Minister, dismissed the proposal as "tantamount to changing the national anthem, or the national flag".

After his resignation, the main opposition Labour Party announced that it will press at the earliest opportunity for legislation in the Knesset to bring about an early general election. A simple majority in the 120-seat Parliament is needed to bring polling day forward from 1985.

The first coalition supporter to voice criticism was Mrs Genia Cohen, a leading member of the extreme right-wing Tzehiya party. "I thought it was a joke", she said. "Why not put a picture of Abraham Lincoln on our shekel, and start teaching American history in our schools."

After submitting his resignation, and refusing a suggestion that he become Minister without Portfolio, Mr Aridor said that he stood by his scheme which had been designed to remedy Israel's near 150 per cent inflation - but said that there was no chance to imple-

Mirror papers for sale

By Derek Pain
City Correspondent

Reed International is to sell Mirror Group Newspapers to investors in the first half of next year.

Sir Alex Jarratt, Reed chairman, said yesterday that the group, which also has packaging and do-it-yourself activities,



intends to float shares of Mirror Group Newspapers on the Stock Exchange.

Reed will not retain any financial interest in the national newspaper business and will not have a representative on the board.

Sir Alex said: "It will be a free-standing publishing group with its own board of directors and its own shareholders." Reed bought IPC, publishers of *MGN*, 13 years ago for £115m.

MGN consists of the *Daily Mirror*, *Sunday Mirror*, *Sunday People* and *Sporting Life*, based in London and Manchester, and the *Daily Record* and *Sunday Mail* in Glasgow.

Labour MPs will be watching the sale to try to ensure that *The Daily Mirror*, the only news

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that neither I nor any member of my family had told them anything, but I was concerned that the press would shortly confront him.

He advised me to leave London, which I did, and he said he would speak to me again on his return to England the following week. He gave me no indication that matters between us had in any way changed.

8. On September 1, Mr Parkinson asked me to meet him secretly at an office in London, where he informed me that he had decided while abroad that he was not going to marry me after all. Later that day I telephoned him to say that I thought it essential that he should inform the Prime Minister.

9. I subsequently instructed solicitors with a view to Mr Parkinson and myself issuing a joint statement. In the ensuing weeks it became clear that other newspapers were pursuing the story and that it was being talked about in political circles.

10. On Wednesday, October 5, when I was informed of what had been published in *Private Eye*, I telephoned Mr Parkinson and told him that if he did not issue the statement which solicitors had been discussing for some weeks, then I would be obliged to defend myself.

Press comment, government pronouncements, and the continued speculation about this matter have put me in an impossible position. I feel that I have both a public duty and a duty to my family to put the record straight.

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By Richard Dowden.

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