

DRAFT BY STEPHEN SHERBOURNE

11,30 am, Monday, 21st May 1984

Extract from remarks by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher FRS MP, to a meeting of Conservative candidates in the European Election

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The Conservative Party is the only Party in these elections which wants to see a strong Britain in a strong Europe.

We need a strong Europe because of the increased trade, new jobs and greater prosperity which membership brings and to safeguard the democratic ideals which we share.

But we need a strong British voice in Europe to protect Britain's interests and to make sure that the system of finance is fair to Britain and all members.

Since the Conservative Government was elected in 1979 we have won back for Britain refunds from the Community of over £2 billion. Contrast this with the record of the last Labour Government which won back the princely sum of zero.

Nobody should doubt our determination to stand up for Britain. But nor should they doubt our determination to stand up for the ideals of the European Community. Since 1945, the nations of Western Europe have enjoyed a peace, more stable and more durable than could ever have been envisaged by those returning from a Europe ravaged by war.

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So great were the horrors of that war that we resolved to bury old enmities and work together for peace. The European Community stands as testament to that resolution. Today in Europe we settle our differences not by the bullet but by the ballot.

In these elections the Socialists want to destroy the achievements of the Community and in the process destroy the jobs and prosperity which membership has brought.

The Liberals and Social Democrats want to weaken Britain's voice in the Community, by severely restricting the use of the veto, and so weaken our defence of British interests. What is more, they want to give the European Parliament powers to impose taxes on the British people.

The Conservatives alone will stand up for Britain and for Europe.