



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Press Secretary

LORD PRESIDENT

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICY - CAMPAIGN

I attach a paper for the first meeting of the Ministerial meeting you are calling on Thursday.

The paper's objective is to elaborate on your letter of November 20 to the Home Secretary (Anne I), and to pave the way for further work. It is intended to promote a general discussion on the basis of which more specific action can be devised,

I suggest you call a further meeting the following week, if possible, to consider:

- drafts of the short, crisp briefing material which is already in course of preparation;
- the identification and briefing by Departments of groups of Backbench MPs who might spearhead presentation of individual subjects in the context of a wider understanding of the caring message.
- how and when the first shots in the campaign might be fired and what those shots might be - ie the establishment of a timetable for a campaign launch early in the New Year.

Content?

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Bernard Ingham'.

BERNARD INGHAM
26 November 1984

CONFIDENTIAL

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICY

PRESENTATION

1. This paper sets out a plan of campaign to:
 - meet the charge that the Government does not care
 - enable the Government to take due credit for its economic and social policies; and
 - try to change for the better current public perceptions of those policies.

Background

2. The Government has acquired a hard and uncaring reputation not merely because of the level of unemployment but also because it is widely portrayed by its opponents and vested interests as an inveterate cutter of programmes.

3. Yet it spends well in excess of £2bn a year on job creation, training and schemes to prevent people from joining the unemployment register. And, far from cutting programmes, its achievement so far has been confined to holding overall public expenditure to planned levels. Inevitably there has been a re-ordering of priorities but there are nonetheless good stories to tell about, for example:

- educational standards
- pupil/teacher ratio
- doctor and nurse provision
- patient service
- protection of social security benefits
- council house sales.

4. In the jobs field, community programmes, the impressive successes in placing youth trainees in jobs, hi-tech training and the Training and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) are examples of solid achievements.

5. The reality does not square with the public's impression of the Government's approach to the major economic and social issues.

RMPABO

CONFIDENTIAL

2.

6. At the same time, concern about the persistently high level of unemployment is growing, even though it remains high in Europe. The new concern about the jobless cannot be ignored. But neither can the Government's uncaring reputation. The two are interlinked.

7. There is, of course, no substitute for reversing the trend of unemployment. This would probably bring about a steady improvement in the public's regard for the Government's economic and social policies as a whole.

8. But this only serves to underline the need now, in advance of any sustained fall, to demonstrate that the Government does care and to take greater credit for what has already been done, in difficult circumstances, across the whole field of economic and social policy.

Approach

9. In developing a campaign to achieve the objectives stated in paragraph 1, the Government's approach will be conditioned by:

- i. its conviction that its existing policies are broadly right and its determination to persevere with them;
- ii. the failure of the Opposition to develop a credible alternative;
- iii. the media's hypersensitivity to anything approaching a U-turn; and
- iv. the opportunity to tell many good, positive stories which demonstrate that, for this Government, people count.

10. This argues for a carefully co-ordinated campaign which

- progressively presents Government policies and measures in a better light, avoiding if possible allegations that the Government has launched a "we care" campaign
- nails misconceptions and misrepresentation
- informs the entire presentation of Government policy so that the need to put over a more caring impression is built in
- exploits opportunities offered by initiatives or the introduction of new measures to put over the caring message.

CONFIDENTIAL

3.

11. In this way both the Government's record will be more favourably regarded and future policies and measures better received.

Campaign Proposals

12. The proposed campaign will require a sustained effort. It should have the following elements:

- a. attitude research to guide the choice of themes - eg People Count or People Matter - and presentation: It is proposed that the Chief Press Secretary should secure this by forming an unofficial advisory group.
- b. a job element which
 - identifies this Government's achievements in the fiscal, economic, industrial/commercial training, job creation and unemployment avoidance areas
 - brings those achievements alive with local examples.
- c. a wider economic and social policy aspect, linking the Government's concern about people and jobs with its wider concern for the welfare of people through competition policy, the opportunity to own their house, educational standards and provision, and patient care;
- d. preparation of crisp briefing material which would be made available widely to supporters;
- e. identification of a very specific issue, within the overall theme, and a plan of campaign designed to achieve a specific objective each week, possibly linked with a Government initiative, statement or speech;
- f. mobilisation of Backbench MPs by individual Departments and of supporters in their constituencies and elsewhere to reinforce the propagation of the weekly message and overall theme and the correction of misrepresentation.

13. A longer term aim should be to build on established local groups - eg supervisory boards for the Community Action Programme - in order to extend and deepen the effectiveness of the presentational programme. But if a quick impact is to be made we must concentrate on resources readily available:

CONFIDENTIAL

4.

- Ministers
- the Government Information Service, including the COI in the regions
- Backbench MPs who, evidence this year suggests, greatly welcome the opportunity to do positive presentational work
- local supporters who can do much to reinforce the campaign, with the encouragement of their MPs and Conservative Central Office
- supportive organisations such as the COI.

Action

14. Agreement is now sought to:

- i. preparation of short, crisp speaking briefs on employment, enterprise, housing, education, health and social service and welfare policies;
- ii. preparation of a campaign programme for launching early in the New Year;
- iii. identification of campaign themes, with the help of research, which seem likely to achieve greatest impact;
- iv. consideration by Ministers of the formation of widely spread groups of Backbench MPs, covering all regions, to spearhead the more positive presentation of their policies; NB the mobilisation of the groups must await the availability of a campaign plan and briefing material;
- v. consideration by Conservative Central Office of how it might mobilise constituencies in support of the general campaign;
- vi. weekly decision/monitoring meetings at Ministerial level for the purpose of considering work prepared and recommendations made by officials, including the target topic of the week.

BERNARD INGHAM
CHIEF PRESS SECRETARY
November 27, 1984