

PRIME MINISTER

Party Conference Speech

I attach two contributions.

One, unsolicited, from Alfred Sherman
and one from John Redwood.

Work is going on and there will be a
lot more contributions from other people
next week.



Stephen Sherbourne

27.9.85

FROM: JOHN REDWOOD

J.R.

25 September 1985

CONFERENCE SPEECH

Every person has in them some little spark of genius. Each individual has a private magic that we wish to release. We seek a world where those energies and talents can be harnessed for society as a whole. Some achieve satisfaction from academic success; some from practical virtues; many from activities outside their place of work; some even from politics! All of us wish to belong to a flourishing and varied community.

Belonging to a satisfying community is about more than economic success. Prosperity helps. For more national wealth gives us more leisure time, more money to spend on pleasures, pastimes, charities and our communities. But so too does living in a society where independence, self-respect and freedom flourish.

Creating one nation is not achieved by demolishing differences and removing choice. You cannot legislate to make people happy or to enforce classlessness.

But you can create a climate where people look to themselves and their neighbours. Where heads are held high and individuals lead their own lives without fearing the controls of the state.

Oh yes, we've tried to legislate for happiness. Our statute books are crammed full of noble middle-class ideals; full of laws to improve the lives of others. Laws to rebuild our inner cities, only to build far bigger problems into the very fabric of concrete municipal housing.

Laws to run the economy, controlling prices, wages and foreign exchange which led to massive inflation, unemployment and a plummeting pound. Laws to nationalise our industry, which took rights and hopes away from the very workers they intended to help. Laws to remove poverty without thinking about how to create and generate wealth to carry it through.

But happiness has often eluded our legislators. It need not escape our people. For as a free and spirited people, we often do better with less interference and more independence.

You don't have a landscape which works for people until people can own their own home and look after their own garden. You don't have harmony in industry until managers and men come to be partners in a common enterprise, often through buying shares or taking a joint interest in serving customers.

You don't have a community which is worth living in until friends and neighbours join together in voluntary associations, clubs, fêtes, activities.

Communities are not made in Whitehall or cobbled together in some local authority planning department. People are not kept in neat boxes invented by some sociology professor or erudite civil servant. Women, graduates, youth, pensioners - we are all one people, British at core, willing in spirit, looking for the moral challenge of life, not expecting government to give us every answer and every instruction.

FROM: SIR ALFRED SHERMAN

Conference-Speech Module.

What does the Alliance stand for?

Because we believe in party democracy as the only form of democracy known to us, we try to be fair towards our opponents. Note that unlike Labour leaders, we do not consider them enemies, but partners in the democratic system, albeit sparring partners.

This sense of partnership rising above party differences ought to hold good all the more for the Social Democrats, who broke away from the Labour Party in protest against its inexorable leftward swing, and for their Liberal partners, who might conceivably be seen as heirs to a great tradition.

How good it would be - we all thought - to return to a party system with two parties committed to moderation, democracy and patriotism as we know them. For we Conservatives do not put party first, we put Britain first. For us, the party is merely a means to an end of working out acceptable policies in the national interest, winning support for them, and getting them put into effect.

That was what we hoped when the Social Democratic Party emerged. But what have they come to stand for?

More.

Module, Alliance, Page Two.

The Social Democrats claim to be something new in British politics. We should all welcome novelty, but what is new about them? In what do the Dr. David Owen, Mrs. Shirley Williams and William Rodgers of today differ from their old selves when they fought the 1979 election as cabinet ministers? What new idea has Mr. Roy Jenkins acquired since he left for Europe? I know of only one difference, they now favour proportional representation, for obvious reasons. If they have any other second thoughts, they are keeping them to themselves.

When Keith Joseph and I back in the Spring of 1974 engaged in a critical review of our own party's performance, we admitted frankly that we had made serious errors. Our party and the British public appreciated this. I think that successive Labour governments up to 1979 made serious errors. The SDP's leaders apparently do not.

We believe taxation has been too high for a long time, stifling enterprise and thereby diminishing employment, growth and the well being which depends heavily - though not exclusively - on material resources. We have yet to find ways of cutting suffocating public expenditure in order to lower it. But we shall. By contrast, the SDP believes that taxation is too low and should be made higher still. Surely they are Bourbons; they have learned nothing and forgotten nothing since they lost power in the Labour Party.

More.

Module, Alliance, Page Three.

We believe that the state sector is too large, and that it should therefore be reduced by privatisation where possible, and by closures of uneconomic plant and disposal of their assets for other productive uses where privatisation is not possible. By contrast, the SDP has declared itself against privatisation and against closures. It wishes to preserve the handiwork from its Labour past as a dead hand on the present.

The SDP claims to be against the class-based mould of British politics. But who introduced class warfare into British politics in the first place? The Labour Party. We Conservatives always resisted it. We have always tried to be a one-nation party; In the past ten years we have begun to make headways in this direction because we sincerely believe in it.

But if the SDP leaders now repent of their former class-based politics, let them show true repentance by critical second thoughts on the policies into which their class-based mentality had led them when they were part of the Labour Party, when they shaped post-war Britain for the worse. Let them honestly assess and pass judgment on the costly nationalisation spree which they continued right on until their electoral defeat of 1979.

More.

Let us hear their present view on the lavishing of privileges onto the trade unions in which they engaged until their defeat of 1979, without one contrary word, which have cost us all so dear.

Let Mrs. Shirley Williams tell us if, in retrospect, she is still proud of joining the Grunwick picket line?

The SDP will not purge itself from the taint of class-based socialism merely by reciting the words "market", or "social market economy", now that we have restored these ideas to public consciousness. They may have swallowed their previous disdain for the market, but one swallow does not make a summer. How can the market work when taxation squeezes everything out of the market sector and when the privileged state sectors strangles it by swallowing the lion's share of our national resources.

They say that one reformed socialist causes more joy in heaven than ninety-nine Tory veterans. But I have yet to see sincere repentance on the part of the SDP leaders. I shall believe it, and applaud it, when I see it.

from Alfred Sherman

P7

SPEECH-MODULE, CONFERENCE 1985.

RIOTS.

This year, there have been terrible scenes on the streets of our cities, reminiscent of other countries, other centuries, times we thought we had left long behind, the Gordon riots of 1780, when a politically-ambitious but demented demagogue, Lord George Gordon, incited the mob to wreak his own fantasies.

There are basically two explanations of what happened: the Christian and the Marxist. The Marxist interpretation of called materialist determinism. It explains human behavior by people's material conditions. It has now been adopted almost throughout the Socialist spectrum in this country, as well as others who ought to know better, including some of our fellow Christians.

For Christian teaching places moral responsibility firmly on the individual. We are created with the capacity to distinguish right from wrong, and our instruction at school and place of worship should develop this awareness. Poor or rich, we have the same duty towards our fellow-humans, because we are all God's children.

Riots, Page two.

Some people grow up in poverty, but live virtuous lives, make the best use of their talents, ensure that their children enjoy better opportunities. Others begin life with greater opportunities but do not take advantage of them.

It is now fashionable to slander the English people, with blanket accusations of racism. I reject this. The English people are universally acknowledged to be among the kindest, most decent and fairest in the world. That is why so many people will do almost anything to get into this country. We admitted millions of people we did not need to admit. Gave them instant citizenship and all the rights generations of Englishmen and women had worked and fought for.

At all times and in all countries, the immigrant has had to adapt. The immigrant will invariably find customs and way of life different and difficult to adjust to; in many cases he must master the language, even if he speaks a similar one. Those who tell immigrant communities that they need not make the effort to adapt themselves to the way of life in Britain, in which they chose to make their homes, no one was obliged to come, are doing them the greatest disservice. They are storing up seeds of trouble.

Many of the immigrants to this country have seized their opportunities with both hands, and good luck to them. A minority have not. That is not due to racism on our part. We provide a very expensive education system. An ILEA comprehensive school costs more than a public school. If ILEA and other Labour-controlled education authorities have shortcomings, which I readily admit, they do not stem from racism but from socialism.

There is work available for willing hands, particularly in London, where employers speak of a labour shortage. People are still coming into this country to jobs. But if you watched the riot scenes on tv or press, let me ask all of you: would you have wanted to employ any of those rioters in your shop, factory, home?

And what about those who incite young people to riot, telling them that everything is stacked against them instead of encouraging them to make the best of their opportunities. What about those who encourage them to hate the English and see the worst in us, who encourage drug cults and anti-social behaviour. How long can we tolerate such incitement? How long can we finance it on the part of a minority of teachers, so called community workers and race-religioners?

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It is in everyone's interest, not least the majority of law-abiding citizens among ethnic minorities, for the law to be applied and be seen to be applied equally to all. If not, whole areas of our cities will decline, as shopkeepers and businessmen, of what ever ethnic group, leave.

I shudder to think what could happen were our citizens, particularly the less educated and less well off, to gain the view that some ethnic minorities are allowed to be above the law, that the Englishman is put second in his own homeland, that his security and well being are sacrificed to a strange creed which puts the minority above the majority.

Equality before the law has always been the standard of liberal democracy. We must ensure that it remains so.

End of speech-module on riots.