

PRIME MINISTER

As requested I attach relevant leaders  
from the popular press over the course  
of the last week.

Sp

STEPHEN SHERBOURNE

14.2.86

## THE SUN SAYS

# The House of Maggie

**NO Prime Minister in this century has done more than Margaret Thatcher for Britain and the Tory Party.**

For the Tories, she was the victor in two elections and has a third triumph within her grasp.

For the country, she was the victor in the Falklands war.

She has given back to Britain its pride, its confidence and renewed economic strength.

She has tamed the over-mighty barons and the wreckers inside the unions.

**Rank-and-file Tories ought to be down on their knees in thanks for such a general.**

Instead, many of them are snapping and snarling like a cage full of bad-tempered monkeys.

They gleefully pore over speeches looking for coded messages of rebellion inside the Government.

The future of a small helicopter company; an absurd story of a knighthood bribe—such trivia is turned into long running sagas.

### **Rebellion**

It is understandable that Neil Kinnock and his brothers should make the most out of all this.

*What is beyond belief is that the Tories should play the Socialist game for them.*

Loyalty used to be a Tory quality.

Now they are as suicidal as depressed lemmings.

Just what do these Tory dissidents want?

Ian Gilmour or Francis Pym as standard bearer? Or even Ted Heath back in No. 10? Would they really trade their biggest winner for their biggest loser?

Lincoln said that a house divided against itself cannot stand.

*Those pigmies who would demolish the house of Maggie are Tories neither in spirit nor conviction.*

Why don't they join the Alliance?

**Or even Mr Kinnock's legion of the lost?**

THE SUN

Monday, 10th February  
1986

## Appeasement

IT WAS the scene of a bloody and savage riot in which a police constable was hacked to death.

The Broadwater Farm estate in Tottenham remains an emotional minefield. Any of Britain's more influential politicians, who choose to walk there, have a responsibility to tread warily and to speak with care.

To his credit, Neil Kinnock yesterday was determinedly tactful.

But one compromising gesture he did make: He allowed himself to be pictured shaking hands with Bernie Grant, the Haringey council leader, who declared after the riot that the police had got what they deserved.

Mr Kinnock did at the time condemn Mr Grant for voicing those odious views.

What he did not do then and has not done since is to use his authority to call for Bernie Grant's de-selection as an official Labour parliamentary candidate.

We do not pretend it is an easy predicament for Mr Kinnock. But, somehow, we can't imagine Jim Callaghan, the last Labour Prime Minister, failing to find a way of distancing himself from such a one as Mr Grant.

Neil Kinnock still has much to learn.

That handshake appeared more like appeasement than tact.

## HEADING IT IS TIME THE TORIES GOT THEIR ACT TOGETHER

**T**HE Tory party at Westminster urgently needs to take stock of itself. Contrary to received wisdom, electors are much influenced by the *impressions* they get from a party, not merely its leadership, and this especially in hard times.

On that count parliamentary Tories have not been scoring well. On sunny days they cheer Mrs Thatcher to the echo. On cloudy days they squirm or sulk, and tell lobby correspondents in unattributable asides that they want decent, collective Cabinet government, which stands for fudge.

It is now made to appear a party reappraising its leadership—rather in the style of a man casually eyeing horses in the paddock before a race. "That horse from mid-Oxon there... lot o' leverage behind..."

True, the Tory party has always been severe on its leadership; in truth far more ruthless than Labour. But it usually contrives to make it look part of a measured inner judgment rather than fodder for News at Ten.

The Select Committee which has been milling round the Westland entrails under a Tory chairman has—how shall we put it without invoking privilege?—has not looked *distinguished*.

No fault of the luckless chairman, Atkins. His twin problems are some Tory MPs who feel in no way indebted to Mrs Thatcher and the ardent Dr Gilbert, anxious about reselection and excited by the notion that if he could topple Mrs Thatcher, Kinnock would have to watch out.

The fact is, in passing, that Select Committees are becoming too opportunist and publicity conscious for their own good, too easily drawn into juicy witch hunts. They need to recover *gravitas*. But back to the Tory party.

In fairness to them (and with a load of hindsight) the Prime Minister probably did make a bad mistake over Westland, though it has not yet appeared on the charge sheet.

She failed to observe—or if she observed, failed to respond to—the fact that Michael Heseltine was getting dangerously restive. His exclusion as an ambitious man from the handful closest to the Prime Minister wounded him. The red light came on at a mid-December Cabinet, at least two before the walk-out.

Unlucky. Once Heseltine had run amok, as anyone who knows the anatomy of political rows will agree, pretty well everything that has happened was bound to happen in one form or another. It has

long been established that bulls in china shops break china.

Let us, however, avoid vain repetition of the dreary Westland arguments. Let us, for argument's sake, suppose that Mrs Thatcher and Colette Bowe and Bernard Ingham *et al* "erred and strayed like lost sheep," something to which we were once permitted to plead guilty every week.

There then remain two serious questions for the squirming section of the Tory party to answer. First, what charges to be preferred against the Prime Minister?

Is it the "never glad morning again" theme? "Awkward y'know, going to the Carlton now

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### W. F. DEEDES

#### looks at a party

#### which is getting

#### the wrong messages

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Lot of fellows there think she must have known about the Mayhew leak... they eye one rather." Oh, come on.

Too bossy? Alas, this time round she was not half bossy enough. The Joan Collins media-fertilised line? "She's simply over-exposed; people are tired of the face, that's all."

The main and hidden charge which some in the Tory party would like to bring if they had the guts to frame it is on quite other lines:

"Look, you've had a dam' good innings. Not saying you haven't done a good job—unions, inflation market forces and so on. Very grateful. But some of us have got hard seats to fight next time, Alliance and all that. Calm down Stop climbing mountains. Let's have a little more consensus—and caring. Anyway, you've had too many banana skins."

The last point is one historians will examine. The best short-term Prime Minister we ever had was Harold Wilson. He would plan on Monday a popular gambit for Wednesday which was forgotten—though imparting a lingering sense of well-being—by Saturday. During this time the line of U.K. decline on the graph never flickered.

By contrast, Mrs Thatcher, while anything but casual about the menu between Monday and Saturday, is constantly scanning distant and dangerous hills. That is why she occasionally falls over her own feet.

It is surely a fault on the right side, which will cause the Tories no great harm at the next election, partly because the two parties in Opposition are becoming so opportunist. Read the current speeches of Dr Owen and Mr Hattersley closely. They tell us which radical has changed the mould of politics.

However, for purposes of the worst-case scenario, let us assume that one of these charges holds up. The anti-Thatcher wagon starts to roll.

Has any serious thinker in the Tory party worked out what the consequences of dumping Thatcher would be? It would rend the Tory party from stem to stern—and for a long time. Why?

Margaret Thatcher—and here is common ground between her friends and foes—has a character which arouses strong public passions. She has become a romantic figure. Disposing of romantic figures, history tell us, is enormously disruptive.

Reluctant and hitherto silent admirers overnight become ardent and vocal admirers. "Treasonable clerks!" they cry unreasonably. Then messages arrive from abroad. The French, who have never taken to Mrs Thatcher, would perversely be the first to declare that the British had gone off their heads. It would be disconcerting, and not in the least helpful to tremulous Tories in marginal seats.

At a later stage, a battle would open up here "to preserve the best of Thatcherism." That would absolutely guarantee protracted schism in the Tory party.

Brian Walden once observed that Mrs Thatcher was governing the wrong country, because the British want a quiet life. That is not all the truth. Ordinary folk are not unaware of our long decline. They respect a will to halt it. They expect feet to falter on the way.

There is a gap. However, between how ordinary folk see it and the modern news media sometimes present it. It is well illustrated in America, where President Reagan is presented by the best intellectually endowed quarters of the media as an ageing dolt, yet commands affection and respect from most Americans.

Perhaps what frightened Tories need most now is a note of reassurance. It will be perfectly possible to win the next election without rattling on Thatcherism. Well presented, and always given punctual attendance at meetings, it may actually win votes. It will most certainly lose fewer votes than dressing up Mrs Thatcher with a cherrywood pipe and telling her to act like Stanley Baldwin.

**EXPRESS**  **OPINION**

## Kinnock's Old Deal

**Y**OU would need a heart of stone not to have been moved by the sight of Neil Kinnock and Weekend World's Brian Walden solemnly assuring one another that the Labour leader was sounding like Franklin D. Roosevelt.

"I was looking for a little bit of water and obviously struck an oil well," said Walden, after Mr Kinnock had graciously conceded that his aims for a Labour Government were like those of Roosevelt's New Deal.

Alas, Mr Walden had not struck oil, or even water. He had struck what you always strike with Franklin D. Kinnock. Wind.

Moreover, the Labour Party has no New Deal for Britain, just the old deal — higher taxes, higher Government spending, and greater State and union power. This "Deal" has been twice rejected at the polls and will be rejected yet again when the time comes.

Mind you, who wants F.D.R.'s New Deal?

Does Mr Kinnock think that high taxing and high spending pulled America out of depression? It did not.

After five years of Roosevelt's rule, unemployment in the U.S. was 19 per cent. It was the Second World War, not F.D.R., which cured America's economic problems.

One thing about Roosevelt though. Unlike Neil Kinnock, he would not have been seen dead with the likes of Bernie Grant, Marxist leader of Haringey Council.

Nor would he have allowed men of the political stripe of Arthur Scargill, Derek Hatton, Ted Knight and Ken Livingstone to dominate his party.

Let us never forget that Kinnock is merely the smile on the face of the tiger.

# Why Mrs Thatcher deserves more loyalty

GETTING rid of a party leader is a large undertaking. Getting rid of a prime minister with a parliamentary majority of 140, who has no stain on her escutcheon nor a polyp on her colonic tract, is a proposition close to fantasy. Yet that is what significant people in and out of the Cabinet now seem bent on attempting. They are not bringing to the task quite the seriousness of thought or conduct it deserves.

Contrary to popular myth, few recent British leaders have been hounded unwillingly from office. Churchill and Attlee weren't, nor was Eden, although he was slow to notice how ill he had become. Macmillan decided when he'd had enough and so, of course, did Wilson. Neither Callaghan nor Foot were ejected by the Labour Party against their wishes. Only Heath, in fact, fought and lost — having been defeated in three elections out of four.

Mrs Thatcher has lost no elections. On the contrary, from 1979 to 1983 she went from strength to strength. By any standards she has achieved a lot of what the Tories wanted her to achieve when they made her leader exactly 11 years ago. Unions, industry, inflation, tax, homeowners, share-owners: in all these categories, and more, the world has changed dur-

ing her years in power, and most of those who now want to ditch her have been proud enough to associate themselves with what was done.

Whether you like what's happened is beside the point. The point is that this is what the Conservative Party voted for, won elections on, and continues to believe in. Some may have decided that, after all, they do not like the lady who has brought most of it about. Many are horribly worried about unemployment. But there is nothing in the Thatcher record fit to overturn the norm of our politics that leaders stay until they want to leave, or until the electorate removes them, whichever is the sooner.

So what has happened to shift the burden of proof in Mrs Thatcher's case? Why, instead of the party having to justify her removal, does she begin to have to justify her survival? The answer is an absurdity. Westland.

Without this proliferating excrescence, the reversal of Mrs Thatcher's position would not have occurred. She would still have had a long list of enemies. Still have been forced to account for numerous policy failures as well as successes, still have been the object of great pressure to change course before the next election. But it is the cataract of alluring triviality unloosed

## COMMENTARY

### Hugo Young



by Mr Heseltine's resignation that has caught Mrs Thatcher in its path and almost knocked her down.

There were circumstances in which the Westland affair might legitimately have been the end of her. If she had been caught lying to Parliament, she would have had to go. This does not seem to be a likely possibility now, despite the best efforts of the Select Committee on Defence. But were it to be proved, her executioner would be Parliament itself. Her personal degradation would have been enough to turn her massive majority against her.

But this is not what is now happening. Westland merely opened a door. Through it can be seen not the elimination of a prime minister who has forfeited her claim on Parliament's confidence but the tearing to pieces of a leader by some of her once and future captains who, it now emerges, have simply been awaiting their moment to strike.

I am not concerned with the morality or even the

fairness of this, but strictly with the politics. There is no abiding morality about the pursuit of political ambition. All politicians must be, in one part of themselves, loners and opportunists. The top job comes round only once, or possibly twice, a lifetime. As Mr Heseltine said so very poignantly on Sunday: "All my life I have taken whatever offer the Conservative Party has made to me."

But these people need to think more carefully about what they are doing. As Mr Walker sets out his stall, and Mr Heseltine declines to offer Mrs Thatcher even the most ritual of endorsements as the ongoing leader, and even the cryptic Mr Biffen

gives her only conditional solace, where are their games meant to get them?

Plainly, there are valid political reasons for anxiety, if you are a Tory MP, about the Thatcher style. And as an unorthodox leader, she may have less of a claim than others on the orthodoxy that grants leaders their tenure.

Having dominated her time, must she not personally pay the price when things go wrong? Having dealt brutally with ministers who have opposed her, what tolerance does she deserve now? And if, as Mr Biffen states, the greatest threat to the Conservative position comes from the Alliance, can the Thatcher personality not be deemed inappropriate to the battle the party has to fight?

These are serious questions. But are they serious enough, and are the answers clear enough, for the Conservative Party to profit from the bloodletting that Mr Heseltine now has no other purpose than to pursue?

Most Conservative voters would find the removal of Mrs Thatcher incomprehensible. As far as they could see, it would have been done entirely without just cause. There would be no reason of health or record to make it connect with what they understand to be the rights of the leader to whom they

give their loyalty.

It would, instead, have been a putsch precipitated by greying men who have been in politics a long time and cannot wait much longer. Caprice, vanity and hatred would be their motives, overlaid by some high-flown stuff about the need for a broad church where the caring rich worship only a little ahead of the cared-for poor.

The putsch would be the reverse of principled. It would be entirely against a personality. It is not even clear that, if successful, it would result in any significantly different a version of Conservatism from that into which Thatcherism has evolved. Wets and dries have each made so many adjustments over the years that most of the talk about fresh starts and new departures is bogus. The Heseltines and the Walkers sound increasingly like men who argue, as was so sweetly said of another group of revisionists, for a better yesterday — without that bloody woman.

The fact is that the party is stuck with her, for better and for worse. The party chose her. The party followed her. She is its visible past and its accountable record. All those who would displace her were her accomplices. None of that can be unwritten or undone by

some manufactured pretext for unseating her.

This may well be very uncomfortable. The thought of fighting the Alliance with Mr Tebbit's tuneless clarion ringing in their ears must frighten a lot of Tory MPs in marginal seats; and it would be sensible of Mrs Thatcher to shift him out of the chairmanship. He, after all, could claim reasons of health which everyone would believe.

Health, however, will not be Mrs Thatcher's undoing. She is so rudely full of it. Were she to go, that could never be an acceptable reason. Her exit would, instead, have been brought about by a parliamentary party that had lost its head, under the influence of men whose insatiable ambition had led them to cast fraternity and judgment to the winds.

A party of that description might reasonably be thought ineligible for office: too easily panicked, too divided against itself, too readily seduced by the illusion of a new beginning. Not only Tories would find this difficult to understand. The country at large would have to question the sanity of a party that had allowed the minor accident of Westland to be parlayed into a reason for disposing of its most commanding leader in modern times.

# THE SUN SAYS

**WATCH OUT**

**BEHIND**

**YOU, NEIL**

**CLOSE the door, they're coming through the window.**

Neil Kinnock should be warbling the old tune in his Welsh tenor.

It exactly mirrors Labour's sad situation.

The party national executive make a great show of delaying the endorsement of Militant Pat Wall as Labour candidate for Bradford North.

Comrade Wall's misfortune is that he cannot conceal his tendencies.

He helped to found the movement.

**Already inside the Labour camp are whole battalions of extremists who are Militants in everything but the name.**

Remember Ken Livingstone's

boast that there would be 120 left-wing MPs after the next Election?

So confident are Militant Tendency that they are challenging the titular Socialist leaders with an alternative Labour Party conference.

They expect 3,000 delegates to attend.

Way-out Tony Benn (remember him?), always eager to jump on a winning bandwagon, chooses this time to launch a major attack on the Kinnock policies.

*Neil Kinnock is said to fancy himself as another Franklin D. Roosevelt.*

F.D.R. won four presidential elections and dominated his party and country.

If—God forbid—Mr Kinnock ever got to Downing Street, it would be as a Marxist puppet.

Another F.D.R.? More likely, another Groucho Marx.

**He talked a lot, too. But no one ever took him seriously.**

THE SUN

Wednesday, 12th February 1986

## **Socialism with a pasty face**

**A** GOOD guide to judging political parties is: Why look into the crystal ball when you can read the book?

On that count, the Liberal-SDP Alliance is far from being the radical alternative to Socialism that many people hoped for.

In Devon, where the Alliance has linked with Labour, the county's nine remaining grammar schools are to be abolished and replaced with discredited comprehensives. This is Socialism with a pasty face.

But what else should we expect? One of the founders of the SDP is Shirley Williams, prime executioner of grammar schools when she was Labour's Educational Secretary.

We have been warned.



## Daily Mail COMMENT

### Now leave the couple alone

**DO YOU** Westland take this Sikorsky to be your lawful wedded partner?

'We do, we do, we do,' chorus shareholders, workers and board. And about time, too. This must be the end of the affair and the beginning of the marriage.

Surely, everyone will now leave the happy couple alone.

Neither Alan Bristow at his most patriotic nor Michael Heseltine at his most paranoid can any longer convincingly claim that the issue as to whether or not a small British helicopter firm in Yeovil should link up with the Americans or the Europeans has not been adequately ventilated.

Ventilated? It's blown a gale for months.

Never have the shareholders of a company on the verge of bankruptcy been so ardently and so sumptuously wooed by rivals.

They have been deluged with argument. Two Cabinet Ministers have bitten the backbench dust for them.

They have been propositioned by City slickers. Beaten over the head by rolled-up bundles of banknotes. Relieved of their shares and voting responsibilities by mysterious figures, masked in anonymity.

If the background to yesterday's Westland vote in the Connaught Rooms was lurid, the result has to be good news for the company.

The European consortium had a case and one which, as the Daily Mail argued initially, was worth putting. But latterly the rearguard action it has fought has merely served to prolong Westland's agony.

Now the only sensible reaction can be: Thank heaven it's over — especially as far as the workers are concerned. They can be left to make helicopters, not news.

The mercy is that the teacup was not smashed to smithereens in the political storm.

DAILY MAIL

Tuesday, 13th February 1986

# Daily Mail COMMENT

## Mr Lawson's Budgetary frost

SO WE have it on the authority of Mrs Thatcher herself that there are to be virtually no tax cuts in this year's Budget.

This will be a shattering blow to the many Government supporters who have been looking forward to the day when the Tory promises to reduce the burden on the taxpayer would be redeemed.

Expectations have been dashed this time by the dramatic fall in the oil price which has shrivelled the revenue accruing to the Exchequer from the oilfields of the North Sea.

There are some including the Institute of Directors who cannot be accused of being inflation-mongers, who believe that the Chancellor is setting too low a target for Government borrowing and could still afford to cut taxes.

After all, they say, a bit more borrowing doesn't have to be inflationary — we borrowed plenty during the miners' strike without any harm being done. Perhaps they are right but it is a nice matter of judgment because it is hard to decide the effect of more borrowing on the confidence of the City of London which, if lost, could have dire results for sterling.

What this episode really underlines is how far the Government has fallen short of its frequently-proclaimed aim of controlling State expenditure.

The burden of public spending on ordinary people is great.

It is not so long ago that Mrs Thatcher was waxing indignant, and rightly so, about the fact that a nurse earning £140 a week pays £40 of it in tax.

The aim of changing that situation for the better and letting more of the money that is earned fructify in the pockets of the people must not be abandoned.

As it is we can only hope that the Government's oft-repeated resolve to bring down the taxes will still bear fruit before its term runs out.

## Realism at last

YESTERDAY the TUC bosses as good as decided not to expel member unions for defying their ban on accepting Government money for holding ballots.

This was a humiliating retreat and signalled the end of their attempt to make this part of the Government's union legislation unworkable.

It foundered because of the obstinacy of the engineers and the electricians who insisted on letting their members decide on whether they should take the Government's cash.

Their members voted in favour and the General Council threatened to kick them out of the TUC, but to no effect.

Indeed at one point it looked dangerously as if these two major unions would break away and start up a rival TUC.

That has now been avoided but the TUC leaders, who have bungled this whole business ought at least to have learnt their lesson.

This is that they should now concentrate on their original role of furthering the prosperity and welfare of their members. The plain truth is that it was the union barons' abuse of their power which was the main original cause of Mrs Thatcher being elected. They would now be wise to give politics a rest.

DAILY MAIL

Friday, 14th February 1986

# Man to blame

FIVE weeks ago Mr Michael Heseltine stormed out of the Cabinet proclaiming to the nation that he "could not serve with honour" in Mrs Thatcher's administration. As a direct result, a simmering public squabble between Mr Heseltine and Mr Leon Brittan over the destiny of a small West Country helicopter firm exploded into a huge political crisis for which there was no precedent in modern British politics.

What was his reason for abandoning his post, precipitating all manner of political damage to himself, his colleagues, his party and government? Simply, it was that Mrs Thatcher had engineered Cabinet proceedings so that in his view the Sikorsky bid was favoured rather than the European consortium.

This was "unconstitutional," added to which Britain was in danger of becoming the metal-bashing subsidiary of America, felt Mr Heseltine, conveniently forgetting all his campaigning to spend £10 billion and more on the U.S. Trident nuclear missile.

As an experienced political operator, Mr Heseltine can be judged on the fruits of his tactics. Westland is to be rescued by the American deal after all, to the great delight of the work-force who never had any doubt where their future lay.

The lid on the inner workings of Downing Street and Whitehall has been lifted to reveal a sorry sight of intrigue, confusion, backstabbing and incompetence. Mr Brittan has been forced to resign.

Mrs Thatcher's image as a strong leader in total control of her Cabinet has been severely dented, with the lingering impression left that not all was revealed about her role.

Her personal popularity has slumped to pre-Falkland levels. The Fulham by-election is almost certainly lost, and a hammering can be expected in May's local elections, whatever the Budget brings.

Mr Heseltine would no doubt claim that by acting on a constitutional issue of principle, success or failure are irrelevant concepts.

But his walk-out was really no more than a fit of pique at not being allowed his own way. Perhaps he got out just in time to avoid having to apply savage cut-backs to his defence budget, which would have put an end to his obvious leadership hopes. If so, he might as well have stayed put. He has failed so spectacularly to achieve anything positive since that fateful Cabinet day, we doubt if Tory MPs will ever feel themselves so hard up for choice that they would turn to him to head their party.

EVENING STANDARD

Thursday, 13th February

1986

**EXPRESS**  **OPINION**

## **Taxing time for Kinnock New Deal**

**G**ENEROUS and helpful man that he is, Mr John MacGregor, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, has been costing some aspects of Franklin Delano Kinnock's proposed New Deal for Britain.

One of the Labour leader's sparkling "new" ideas is to clobber the "rich"—whom he defines as those earning £30,000 or more a year—with higher taxes.

In this way, he reckons, he can leave the basic rate of direct tax alone and still raise the money he wants for the extra public spending he has promised.

Mr MacGregor has worked out the cost of Labour's proposed spending at £24 billion, and has warned Mr Kinnock that his plans for direct tax would bring in precious little towards that huge sum.

He has further pointed out that the only way a Labour Government could thus finance its "new" deal would be to impose a rate of VAT of 41 per cent—a 26 per cent increase.

Such an increase would hit jobs and boost inflation. Moreover it would bear hardest on the poor.

**This is the New Deal?**

Mr Kinnock needs to deal himself a better hand if he is to stand any chance of winning power.