

PRIME MINISTER

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THE 1979 AND 1983 MANIFESTOS

We can consider Manifestos in terms of their:

- theme
- structure
- policy commitments

with a logical progression from the one to the other.

The 1979 Manifesto

The problems with which the 1979 Manifesto dealt were the national loss of confidence, self-respect and common sense, and in particular:

- the disincentives to wealth-creation;
- the growth of the state and the crippling of enterprise;
- the abuse of freedom by extremists, especially in trade unions.

The theme of the 1979 Manifesto was "Restoring the Balance" and its structure in terms of Chapters followed the five listed objectives.

Our five tasks are:

- (1) To restore the health of our economic and social life, by controlling inflation and striking a fair balance between the rights and duties of the trade union movement.
- (2) To restore incentives so that hard work pays, success is rewarded and genuine new jobs are created in an expanding economy.
- (3) To uphold Parliament and the rule of law.
- (4) To support family life, by helping people to become home-owners, raising the standards of their children's education, and concentrating welfare services on the effective support of the old, the sick, the disabled and those who are in real need.
- (5) To strengthen Britain's defences and work with our allies to protect our interests in an increasingly threatening world.

This is the strategy of the next Conservative government.

THE 1979 MANIFESTO

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The major policy commitments made were:

- a. Control of inflation through monetary and fiscal policy (MTFS) and reduction in the rôle of government.
- b. Reform of trade unions through law, and their rôle in the corporate state (eg Neddy).
- c. Cutting income tax.
- d. Incentive to small businesses.
- e. Fighting crime (police and sentencing).
- f. Sale of council houses.
- g. Improved defence spending.

A detailed list of policy commitments is attached in Appendix A.

In reflecting on the 1979 Manifesto, it is important to note:

- i. It was written against a background of Labour having been in Government for most of the previous 15 years and of it therefore being associated with the "British disease".

- ii. It did not contain any "magic formula or lavish promises" but it did set out specific objectives and specific policies with which they could be achieved.
- iii. We took the offensive, set the agenda for the Election, and put the then Government on the defensive.

The 1983 Manifesto

Having successfully beaten inflation, reduced the growth of government spending, and weakened the power of trade unions, the theme for the 1983 Manifesto was "The Road to Recovery".

The three major challenges against which this Manifesto was written were:

- The defence of freedom.
- Unemployment.
- Care for the old, sick and disabled.

We now have five great tasks for the future. They are:

- to create an economy which provides stable prices, lasting prosperity and employment for our people;
- to build a responsible society which protects the weak but also allows the family and the individual to flourish;
- to uphold Parliamentary democracy and strengthen the rule of law;
- to improve the quality of life in our cities and countryside;
- to defend Britain's freedom, to keep faith with our allies in Europe and in NATO, and to keep the peace with justice.

And the structure was as follows:

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Major policy commitments were:

- a. Zero inflation.
- b. Privatisation (British Telecom, Rolls Royce, BA, parts of British Steel, British Shipbuilders, British Leyaldn, National Bus Company, British Gas's Offshore Oil interests.
- c. A curb on rate increases.
- d. Abolition of GLC and Metropolitan Councils.
- e. Job-creation schemes.

The detailed commitments of which can be seen in Appendix B.

The Next Manifesto

In the 1979 Election, we took the initiative, set a radical agenda with clear objectives and a specific set of policies. There was a clear sense of direction and strong leadership. By 1983 the strength of the leadership had been confirmed by the Falklands War, inflation had come down, the unions weakened, and there was also a strong sense that more time was needed to achieve the key objectives. We could then afford a Manifesto rather short on commitments.

The major issues of concern at present are health, education, jobs and crime. Against this, inflation and taxes are coming down; real income is rising; share-ownership is growing - but a great deal is still taken for granted.

Conclusion

The major lesson is that as in 1979, we need to develop specific policies to deal with the emerging concerns.

BRIAN GRIFFITHS

LIST OF COMMITMENTS IN THE CONSERVATIVE MANIFESTO FOR 1979

Economy

Proper monetary discipline is essential, with publicly stated targets for the rate of growth in the money supply.

A gradual reduction in the size of the Government's borrowing requirement is also vital.

The State takes too much of the nation's income: its share must be steadily reduced.

Any future Government ... will have to make substantial economies and there should be no doubt about our intention to do so.

There should be more open and informed discussion of the Government's economic objectives.

We shall ensure that selective assistance to industry is not wasted.

The reduction of waste, bureaucracy and over-government will yield substantial savings.

Taxes

We shall cut income tax at all levels to reward hard work, responsibility and success.

Raising tax thresholds will let the low-paid out of the tax net altogether.

We shall deal with the most damaging features of Capital Transfer Tax and Capital Gains Tax, and propose a simpler and less oppressive system of capital taxation in the longer term.

We shall simplify taxes - like VAT - and reduce tax bureaucracy.

We shall tackle the poverty trap. It is especially important to cut the absurdly high marginal rates of tax both at the bottom and top of the income scale.

We shall reduce the burden of the investment income surcharge.

Unions

We believe that picketing should be limited to those in dispute picketing at their own place of work.

People arbitrarily expelled or excluded from any union must be given the right of appeal to a court of law.

Existing employees and those with personal convictions ... if they lose their jobs as a result of a closed shop, must be entitled to ample compensation.

Closed shop agreements must be drawn up in line with the best practice followed at present and only if an overwhelming majority of the workers involved vote for it by secret ballot.

We will not permit a closed shop in the non-industrial civil service. We will resist moves towards it in the newspaper industry.

We are committed to an inquiry into the activities of the SLADE union.

We will provide public funds for postal ballots for union elections and other important issues.

We shall ensure that unions bear their fair share of the cost of supporting those of their members who are on strike.

Pay bargaining in central and local government, and other services such as health and education, must take place within the limits of what the taxpayer and ratepayer can afford.

Privatisation

We shall reduce Government intervention in industry and especially that of the National Enterprise Board.

We shall offer to sell back to private ownership the recently nationalised aerospace and shipping concerns, giving their employees the opportunity to purchase shares.

We aim to sell shares in the National Freight Corporation to the general public.

We shall ... allow new bus services to develop - particularly in rural areas - and we shall encourage new private operators.

Small businesses

We shall make planning restrictions less rigid.

We shall reduce the number of official forms and make them simpler.

We shall provide safeguards against unfair competition from direct labour.

We shall amend laws such as the Employment Protection Act where they damage small businesses ...

We shall undertake a thorough review of the enforcement procedures of Customs and Excise and the Inland Revenue.

We shall introduce an easier regime for small firms in respect of company law and the disclosure of their affairs.

Energy

We shall undertake a complete review of all the activities of the British National Oil Corporation as soon as we take office.

Agriculture

We would aim to devalue the Green Pound within the normal lifetime of a Parliament to a point which would enable our producers to compete on level terms with those in the rest of the Community.

We shall insist on a freeze in CAP prices for products in structural surplus. This should be maintained until the surpluses are eliminated.

Fishing

We would work for an agreement which recognised:

First, that United Kingdom waters contained more fish than those of the rest of the Community countries put together;

Secondly, the loss of fishing opportunities experienced by our fishermen;

Thirdly, the rights of inshore fishermen;

Last ... the need for effective measures to conserve fish stocks

Animal welfare

We shall give full support to the EEC proposals on the transportation of animals.

We shall update the codes of welfare for farm animals and the legislation on experiments on live animals.

We shall halt the export of cows and ewes recently claved and lambed.

The rule of law

The next Conservative Government will spend more on fighting crime even while we economise elsewhere.

We shall implement in full the recommendations of the Edmund-Davies Committee on police pay and conditions.

We shall ease the weight of traffic supervision duties and review cumbersome court procedures which waste police time.

We shall review the traffic laws, including the totting-up procedure.

We shall amend the 1961 Criminal Justice Act, which limits prison sentences on young adult offenders.

We shall revise the Children and Young Persons Act 1969 to give magistrates the power to make residential and secure care orders on juveniles,

In certain detention centres we shall experiment with a tougher regime as a short, sharp shock for young criminals.

For certain types of offenders, we support the greater use of community service orders, intermediate treatment and attendance centres.

We shall give the new House of Commons an early opportunity for a free vote on capital punishment for murder.

Immigration and race relations

We shall introduce a new British Nationality Act to define entitlement to British citizenship and right of abode.

We shall end the practice of allowing permanent settlement for those who come here for a temporary stay.

We shall limit entry of parents, grandparents and children over 18 to a small number of urgent compassionate cases.

We shall end the concession .. to husbands and male fiancés.

We shall severely restrict the issue of work permits.

We shall introduce a register of those Commonwealth wives and children entitled to entry for settlement under the 1971 Immigration Act.

We shall introduce a quota system, covering everyone outside the European Community, to control all entry for settlement.

We shall take firm action against illegal immigrants and overstayers and help those immigrants who genuinely wish to leave this country, but there can be no question of compulsory repatriation.

We shall encourage the improvement of language training in schools and factories ...

The supremacy of Parliament

A strong Second Chamber is necessary not only to revise legislation but also to guarantee our constitution and liberties.

Northern Ireland

We shall maintain the Union of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in accordance with the wish of the majority in the Province.

There will be no amnesty for convicted terrorists.

We will seek to establish one or more elected regional councils with a wide range of powers over local services.

Property-owning democracy

We shall encourage saving and the wider ownership of property.

We shall expand and build on existing schemes for encouraging employee share-ownership.

Housing

Our plans for cutting government spending and borrowing will lower mortgage interest rates.

We shall give council and new town tenants the legal right to buy their homes.

We shall ensure that 100% mortgages are available for the purchase of council and new town homes.

At the very least, we shall give housing associations the power to sell to their tenants.

Those council tenants who do not wish to buy their homes will be given new rights and responsibilities under our Tenants' Charter.

We intend to introduce a new system of shorthold tenure which will allow short fixed-term lettings of properties free of the most discouraging conditions of the present law.

There should be more flexible arrangements covering accommodation for students.

We must try to achieve a greater take-up in rent allowances for poorer tenants.

Protecting the environment

We shall pay particular attention to the improvement and restoration of derelict land, the disposal and recycling of dangerous wastes and reducing pollution of our rivers and canals.

We attach particular importance to measures to reduce fuel consumption by improving insulation.

Education

We shall keep schools of proven worth.

We shall repeal those sections of the 1976 Education Act which compel local authorities to reorganise along comprehensive lines and restrict their freedom to take up places at independent schools.

We shall promote higher standards of achievement in basic skills.

The Government's Assessment of Performance Unit will set national standards in reading, writing and arithmetic.

The Inspectorate will be strengthened.

Our Parents' Charter will place a clear duty on government and local authorities to take account of parents' wishes when allocating children to schools.

The Direct Grant Schools, abolished by Labour, gave wider opportunities for bright children from modest backgrounds. The Direct Grant principle will therefore be restored with an Assisted Places Scheme.

The Arts

We will strengthen ... relief from CTT ... on assets placed in a maintenance fund for the support of heritage property.

We favour the establishment of a National Heritage Fund to help to preserve historic buildings and artistic treasures for the nation.

Health and welfare

It is not our intention to reduce spending on the Health Service.

We will simplify and decentralise the NHS and cut back bureaucracy.

We shall allow pay-beds to be provided where there is a demand for them.

We shall restore tax relief on employer-employee medical insurance schemes.

We shall wish to move towards our original tax credit objectives as and when resources become available.

The rules about the unemployed accepting available jobs will be reinforced.

We shall act more vigorously against fraud and abuse.

The elderly

We shall honour the increases in retirement pensions which were promised just before the election.

The Christmas bonus ... will continue.

We shall exempt war widows' pensions from tax and provide a pension for pre-1950 widows of 'other ranks' who do not receive one at present.

Defence

It is already obvious that significant increases in defence spending will be necessary.

We will bring servicemen's pay up to full comparability with their civilian counterparts immediately and keep it there.

We must maintain the efficiency of our reserve forces.

The European Community

National payments into the budget should be more closely related to ability to pay.

Rhodesia

The next Government will have the duty to return Rhodesia to a state of legality, move to lift sanctions and do its utmost to ensure that the new independent state gains international recognition.

LIST OF COMMITMENTS IN THE CONSERVATIVE MANIFESTO FOR 1983

* This list sets out all the specific commitments to introduce new policies or to continue existing policies.

Economy

We shall endeavour to bring inflation lower still. Our ultimate goal should be a society with stable prices.

We shall maintain firm control of public spending and borrowing.

We shall ... gradually reduce the growth of money in circulation.

We are committed to fair and reasonable levels of pay for those who work in the public services.

We must continue to resist unreasonable pay claims in the public sector.

Unions

We shall give union members the right to hold ballots for the election of governing bodies of trade unions.

We shall give union members the right to decide periodically whether their union should have party political funds.

We shall curb the legal immunity of unions to call strikes without ... a fair and secret ballot.

We intend to invite the TUC to discuss the steps which the trade unions themselves can take to ensure that individual members are freely and effectively able to decide for themselves whether or not to pay the political levy.

We shall consult further about the need for industrial relations in specified essential services to be governed by adequate procedure agreements, breach of which would deprive industrial action of immunity.

Employment

We shall encourage ... Part-time Job Release ... and the Job Splitting Scheme.

We shall ensure that Wages Councils do not reduce job opportunities by forcing workers to charge unrealistic pay rates, or employers to offer them.

We shall continue to provide for, and improve, the special employment and training needs of the disabled.

Privatisation

We shall transfer more state-owned businesses to independent ownership. Our aim is that British Telecom - where we will sell

51% of the shares to the private sector - Rolls Royce, British Airways and substantial parts of British Steel, of British Shipbuilders and of British Leyland, and as many as possible of Britain's airports, shall become private sector companies.

We also aim to introduce substantial private capital into the National Bus Company.

We shall also transfer to the private sector the remaining state-owned oil business - the British Gas Corporation's offshore oil interests.

We shall seek other means of increasing competition in, and attracting private capital into, the gas and electricity industries.

Technology

We shall promote, in partnership with industry the Alvey programme for research into advanced information technology.

We shall accelerate the transfer of technology from the university laboratory to the market place, especially by the encouragement of science parks.

We shall help firms to launch new products through pilot schemes and public purchasing.

We shall sanction the launch of new cable networks.

Our Data Protection Bill will meet public concern that computers pose a particular threat to privacy, and will enable us to ratify the European Convention on Data Protection.

Regions

We shall secure more effective co-ordination between central and local government and the European Community's Regional Development Fund to ensure that their actions offer the greatest help to communities in need.

We shall further develop local self-help initiatives, the 24 Enterprise Zones and, our latest innovation, duty-free trading zones, which will be established in certain experimental Freeports.

Planning

We shall use our powers to bring derelict land on the Land Registers into use.

We shall bring open-cast coal-mining within normal proper planning control, and we shall establish more control over intensive livestock units near residential areas.

Energy

The interests of the whole country require Britain's massive coal industry ... to return to economic viability.

We shall press ahead with the development of safe nuclear power.

Transport

The national motorway and trunk road network will continue to be developed and improved to high-quality standards. We will push ahead our bypass programme.

We shall further relax bus licensing to permit a wider variety of services.

We shall set up a new London Regional Transport Authority for the underground, buses and commuter trains in the London area.

We shall ensure better use of school and special buses for local communities. Restrictions on minibuses will be cut.

There is scope for substantial cost reductions in British Rail which are needed to justify investment in a modern and efficient railway. We shall examine ways of decentralising BR and bringing in private enterprise to serve railway customers.

Agriculture

We shall help the glasshouse industry to sell more fruit and vegetables and to make the best possible arrangements for heating and ventilation.

We shall legislate to make more farm tenancies available for young people at an early opportunity.

We shall introduce measures to restructure the fishing industry and to encourage investment and better marketing.

We propose to introduce legislation to update the Cruelty to Animals Act 1876 which will ensure more humane treatment of laboratory animals in scientific and industrial research.

Housing

We shall give many thousand more families the chance to buy their homes. For public-sector tenants, the present Right to Buy scheme will be improved and extended to include the right to buy houses on leasehold land and the right to buy on a shared ownership basis. The maximum discount will be increased by 1% a year for those who have been tenants for between 20 and 30 years.

We shall help first-time buyers who are not council tenants through our various low-cost home ownership schemes: homesteading, building for sale, improving for sale and shared ownership.

We shall extend our Tenants' Charter to enable council tenants to get necessary repairs done themselves and be reimbursed by their councils.

Housing improvement grants have been increased substantially in the last two years and will continue to play an important role.

Welfare

In future, pensions will be related to actual price increases and not estimated price increases.

We shall continue to protect retirement pensions and other linked long-term benefits against rising prices.

It remains our intention to continue raising the earnings limit and to abolish the earnings rule as soon as we can.

The Christmas bonus, which Labour failed to pay in 1975 and 1976, will continue to be paid every year.

We will consider how the rights of early leavers, people who change jobs, can be better protected.

Child benefit and one-parent benefit are to be raised in November to their highest-ever level in real terms.

Health

The treatment of the elderly, the mentally handicapped and the mentally ill will continue to command our particular attention.

We shall continue to make extra provision for those parts of the country in the North and the Midlands which have always been comparatively short of resources.

To release more money for looking after patients, we will reduce the costs of administering the Health Service.

Charity

We shall develop new ways to encourage more private giving.

Education

We shall continue to seek ways of widening parental choice and influence over their children's schooling.

We shall defend Church schools and independent schools alike against our opponents' attacks.

We shall switch the emphasis in the Education Welfare Service back to school attendance, so as to reduce truancy.

We shall encourage schools to keep proper records of their pupils' achievements, buy more computers and carry out external, graded tests. The public examination system will be improved and O-level standards will be maintained.

Over the next three years, we will provide for more teaching and research on information technology, with new posts for lecturers, and 2,200 new places for students.

We shall urge every local education authority to make school and college premises available for use outside school hours and in the holidays.

We shall keep up the level of government support for the arts, including a fair share for the regions.

Family

We are reviewing the family jurisdiction of the courts, including their conciliation role, with a view to improving the administration of family law.

We shall reform the divorce laws to offer further protection to children and to secure fairer financial arrangements when a marriage ends.

Order

Our Police and Criminal Evidence Bill will help the police to bring criminals to justice.

We shall build more courtrooms to cut delays in criminal cases.

We shall set up more compulsory attendance centres to which the courts can send young hooligans.

We shall respond to the increasing public concern over obscenity and offences against public decency, which often have links with serious crime.

We accept the case for an independent prosecution service and will consider how it might best be set up.

We intend to extend substantially the grounds that disqualify those with criminal records from serving on juries.

We propose to amend the Civil Defence Act 1948 to enable civil defence funds to be used in safeguarding against peacetime emergencies as well as against hostile attacks.

Ireland

There will be no change in Northern Ireland's constitutional position in the United Kingdom without the consent of the majority of people there, and no devolution of powers without widespread support throughout the community.

Councils

We shall legislate to curb excessive and irresponsible rate increases by high-spending councils, and to provide a general scheme for limitation of rate increases for all local authorities to be used if necessary.

We shall require local authorities to consult local representatives of industry and commerce before setting their rates. We shall give more businesses the right to pay by instalments. And we shall stop the rating of empty industrial property.

The Metropolitan Councils and the Greater London Council have been shown to be a wasteful and unnecessary tier of government. We shall abolish them and return most of their functions to the boroughs and districts.

Pollution

We intend to remove lead from petrol ... at the earliest possible date. We will press ahead with our plans to reduce lead in paints, food and drinking water.

We will continue our policy to reduce river pollution.

We shall tighten up the controls on the disposal of hazardous waste.

In some areas the levels of smoke and sulphur dioxide need to be reduced.

We intend to make sure that the safety record of the British nuclear industry continues to be second to none.

Europe

We shall continue to try to shift the Community's spending priorities away from agriculture and towards industrial, regional and other policies which help Britain more.

We shall continue to oppose petty acts of Brussels bureaucracy and to seek the removal of unnecessary restrictions on the free movement of goods and services between member states.