

MURRAY



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THE PRIME MINISTER

25th June, 1987

*Dear John,*

Thank you so much for your message of congratulation following our success in the General Election. It was good of you to write in the way you did and I want you to know how much I appreciated it - *especially your typical frankness!*

We will now be able to continue with our work in government knowing that we have the support of the British people, together with renewed international confidence in Britain.

With every personal good wish.

*Yours ever*

*Royals*

Dr. John Murray

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18<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1987

Dear Margaret,

Congratulations on an historic victory. Your friends know that you made a unique contribution to that victory by your years of dedicated stewardship. But does anyone else know that? It would not be the fault of Central Office if they did. The Tory campaign was awful, touching bottom on the eve of the Poll with that televised adoration-of-the-leader-with-musical-accompaniment which made the toes of your friends curl with embarrassment and caused your enemies to fall about laughing.

So if the campaign was so awful why did we win? The simple answer is that largely due to your efforts there are now more 'haves' than 'have-nots' in Britain — and no one who has been dealt four aces calls for a new deal. The newly arrived 'haves' do not think to thank you for their new-found prosperity; like all human beings they tend to attribute success to their own efforts. I seem to remember a story of the young Margaret Thatcher being congratulated on her good luck in achieving some success and retorting sharply: "It was not good luck. I deserved it." On the other hand your "uncaring" image, which the Opposition aided by the media have so successfully propagated, has provided a scapegoat for the plight of every 'have-not' in the country. And this not only in the ~~Tory~~ <sup>Opposition</sup> Parties. Last night on the Robin Day Any Questions TV programme the Editor of the

Sunday Times (with such friends who needs enemies) said that much of the defection of Torres in Scotland was attributable to dislike of you personally.

Leaving such speculations aside and looking to the future it is clear that we have much fence-mending to do in Scotland, Wales and the North. It is time to start recognising and cultivating the right people in the regions and to stop listening to and promoting people whom you think serve you as local ears and influence bearers but who, in fact, seek, and are seen to seek, only to ingratiate themselves with the London Establishment, hoping thereby to get into the Honours List; and who actually cut no ice at all on their own home ground. The authentic Northern voice is not seen to be better represented when you promote David Waddington who, whatever virtues you may discern in him, is widely regarded by senior Lancashire Tories who have known him all his life, as a pompous ass; and you jettison Rhodes Boyson who, whatever shortcomings you may have found in him, is a local folk-hero, a most effective purveyor of your cause and greatly in demand as a speaker. The Economist, in an otherwise favourable article, suggested recently that you have a marked preference for sleek good-looking, whizz-kids in your entourage. This would of course exclude Rhodes, who is no oil-painting. But in the mill-stone grit valleys of East Lancashire from which I come they do not judge the goods by the package. There is a saying attributed to some American President who, when discussing a proposed new policy with his colleagues would always ask: "But will this play in Peoria" (a typical town in Illinois) I suggest that in future, before you choose emissaries to revive support

in the disaffected provinces, you ask yourself: "Will this person go down in Boggart-Hole-Clough, Harrison-Tweed, or Blodwenferfechan?" as the case may be. Such a criterion would rule out most of your Cabinet. What made you send Peter Walker to Wales I cannot imagine. You might as well make Ian Paisley, Ambassador to Dublin. Thank God you have brought back Cecil Parkinson. He could be the axle on which you could turn this situation — certainly in Lancashire where he is universally well received.

The Liberal MP Cyril Smith, last night on TV, made the generous remark that the Torres had, in fact, achieved some remarkable things in tackling Northern problems but had received little credit for this, because the Tory Party organisation was so inept in acquainting the public with knowledge of these achievements. In fact, he said, the Tory organisation in the North West failed on almost every criterion. Cyril is no amateur critic of Party organisation for prior to becoming a Liberal MP he was the Labour Party agent for Rochdale and played a considerable part in building up the Labour Party organisation in the North West at that time.

I offer two specific proposals for immediate action:—

- ① Get a new Party Chairman, preferably from one of the afflicted regions, NOT an M.P. but someone who knows how to dynamise an organisation.
- ② Set up Task Forces in each of the Regions, coordinated by the new Chairman, to record with camera and pen the actual evidence

of Tory achievement in the Region concerned. Nothing will do more to shut up carping critics than to throw a book of evidence at them. How much breath might have been saved, how much heated argument resolved if we had had such a book illustrating the reality of Tory achievement available during the Election.

Forgive me if this letter is not devoted to singing your richly deserved praises. I have assumed that you have not recently been starved of such communications. My intention is to give you an objective worm's-eye view of the regional problem and to propose some practical measures for resolving it. There is little wrong with our policies which better presentation could not remedy. Choosing more barbarian pro-consuls to the barbarian hordes beyond the Watford Pate would help.

With every good wish to you  
both, As ever,

John

P.S. Denis was magnificent in discharging a role which he must want like a hole in the head!