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SPEECH BY THE RT. HON. MRS MARGARET THATCHER AT THE CITY HALL,
CARDIFF ON MONDAY, 16TH APRIL, 1979.

For more than a generation now people have been telling us socialism is inevitable.

We have been told time and again by experts that the drift is bound to be towards state control: towards the new order which turns out to be the old order gone sour, in which people come second and the political boss and the party officials come first.

Resistance, they cry is hopeless. This is the way the world is going. Appeasement and delay, they say, is the best that we can hope for. They claim we can no more hold back the inevitable than corks bobbing on the ocean can turn back the tide.

Mr. Chairman, for too long those defeatists have polluted the atmosphere of public debate.

Change is coming. The slither and slide to the socialist state is going to be stopped in this United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Halted and turned back. It can be done. It will be done - starting from May 4th, 1979.

People are rebelling against the bulging socialist state and its insatiable appetite.

Labour, the self proclaimed party of compassion, has betrayed those for whom it promised to care.

In this campaign we will not only extend and consolidate Conservative support. We will carry the fight right into what were once the castles and strongholds of Labour.

Just as you have begun to do here in South Wales.

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There comes a point in a nation's story when the old slogans and the old illusions crumble and every thinking person comes face to face with reality.

Today there is a stronger sense of resentment at the unfairness of the socialist system than I can ever remember.

After five years of Labour Government our cities and streets are less safe to walk in; our old folk and children more at risk - our faith in the values and beliefs which we used to think held us together more undermined by 'fashionable' theories and official mockery.

Of how many things did one used to hear it said 'Well at least they'll never touch that'.

At least they'll never attack the judges, people said. But they have.

At least they won't let the schools be closed. But they were.

At least they won't support violent mass picketing. But they did.

At least they won't let militants close hospitals, neglect emergencies, even prevent people giving blood. But they did that, too.

Five years ago these things would have seemed incredible. Yet they have happened in our Britain, our supposedly free and tolerant country, with the Labour Government looking on, supine, paralysed, afraid to do what they knew ought to be done in case they offended their "master's voice".

These things will be remembered against Labour for a generation, and so they should be. There used to be in this country a socialism which valued people. It had dignity, and it had warmth. It's methods were those of the collective, which was why it was not my creed. But its aims to raise the living standards of the people were the same.

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What a world away that is from the officious, jargon-filled intolerant socialism practised by Labour these last few years. What a world away that sort of brotherhood is from the flying pickets, the kangaroo courts, the merciless use of closed shop power, and all the other ugly apparatus which has been strapped like a harness on our people and our country, turning worker against worker, society against itself.

Cromwell's words to another demoralised faction come to mind: "You were deputed here by the people to get grievances redressed, and are yourselves become the greatest grievance."

But stop and listen a moment. Listen to what the people are saying today. Listen to the voice deep inside a great and ancient nation.

First, there was a murmur, then a cry, now there is a great shout of anger and determination that we will be free, that we will be strong again, that we too can prosper, so long as we have a Government which serves and does not seek to master.

In a broadcast just before this campaign began the Labour Leader argued that Labour now stood for continuity.

It was the Conservatives who wanted to change things, he said. "Carry on as we are", that was the message.

Well now, I will make no comment on this bizarre transformation of the Labour party which always used to be so proud of its radicalism.

I pass over, too, the well-known fact that the present tenant of the Labour leadership could be evicted any day by forces within the Labour party which are determined to transform our society utterly and, if necessary, violently.

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But what appals me is the shameless appeal to voters to accept our national decline as inevitable and simply make the best of it.

It is a summons to apathy, a clarion call for inertia and indolence. Their campaign slogan is: "Carry on downhill with Labour - carry on wheeling, carry on dealing, carry on declining, carry on down, carry on out."

That is exactly what they have been doing. And the decline is accelerating. What the figures tell in their ominous downwards march we can now see for ourselves. Travel abroad and see how much better our neighbours are doing. Travel round our towns and cities and see the shabby scars of Labour Britain, open and **unhealing**.

Look at the ugly truth the record spells out over the last five years of socialism.

Labour Britain - the worst rate of growth of any industrial country with the sole exception of Luxembourg.

Labour Britain - with the lowest hourly wages of any industrial country with the sole exception of Ireland.

Labour Britain - in income per head not only behind France, Germany, Holland and Austria, but also behind Finland and Libya, and only a whisker above Czechoslovakia.

Labour Britain - leading in only one respect - the fastest **and** highest price increases of any European country except Italy!

Is this the nation that stood alone in 1940 against the collapse of European civilisation?

It is the country we have become under Labour. Try as they may they can't escape the record.

Because of their subserviance to the unions there has been no industrial progress under Labour.

Because of their commitment to equality - rather than equality of opportunity - there has been no social progress under Labour.

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Because of the strength of the Left, there has been no economic progress under Labour.

Half a dozen world recessions can't absolve Labour from the major responsibility for Britain's decline.

Its full magnitude has been concealed by one thing only : North Sea Oil. Here was the windfall of the century. It should have been husbanded and deployed in long-term investment, to break out of the spiral of low productivity and low wages. Instead, it has been treated like a win on the Pools, an invitation to 'Spend, spend, spend!'

The government has used it to hide the collapse of our industrial performance, and as an excuse to postpone the remedies we all know are so urgent. During the lifetime of the coming Parliament, oil production is expected to reach its peak, and thereafter lose its power to conceal our predicament.

What would happen then if by any mischance Labour scraped back to power? What would they do when the spending had to stop? The answer is to make certain it doesn't happen. The answer is to return a Conservative Government now - before time runs out.

One of the strengths of Conservatism is that we are not mesmerised by the present.

We honour the past and what it has to teach, we look to the future and prepare for it. And we see history in human terms.

If I had to sum up Conservatism in a phrase I would say it means : "A sense of Responsibility", responsibility for one's family and responsibility towards others.

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It is precisely that sense of responsibility which leads us to reject the supine 'let's go on as we are' invitation.

How can I, in good conscience, say to retired people: 'I have no plans to change an economy which every single year reduces the value of your savings by at least a tenth'?

How can I say to the young man or woman wanting to start up a business and employ a few others 'We plan to go on with the tax rates which will make every risk financially foolish, which will dog your efforts to expand at every turn'?

I would be ashamed to say to my children and grandchildren: 'Our society may not be much good, but it's the best we can do. Be thankful it isn't worse'.

We are the people that in the past made Great Britain the workshop of the world, the people who persuaded others to buy British, not by begging them to do so but because British was best.

We are the people who have received more Nobel prizes than any other nation except America.

With achievements like that who can doubt that Britain can have a great future? But is that future going to happen?

Only if we have change. We must have change.

The way to put Britain back into the international race is by giving new life and strength to principles which made our country the great trading nation it used to be.

That is the way to restore security to the old and hope to the young.

We can go on as we have been going and continue down, or two weeks on Thursday we can stop and, with a decisive act of will, say "enough".

But recovery can only come about through the work of individuals. We must not forever take refuge behind collective decisions. Each of us must assume our own responsibilities.

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What we get and what we become depends essentially on our own efforts.

For what is the real driving force in society? It is the desire for the individual to do the best for himself and his family.

How is society improved? By millions of people resolving that they will give their children a better life than they have had themselves.

There is no substitute for this elemental human instinct. And the worst possible thing a Government can do is to try to smother it completely with collective alternatives.

They won't work. They can't work. They crush and destroy something precious and vital in the nation's spirit. The proper role of Government is to set free the natural energy of the people. That means real rewards for effort and skill. It means restoring a wide degree of freedom to the forces that make up human society.

Now we are re-learning one of the oldest lessons of history - that freedom cannot be divided into compartments.

What use is freedom of speech and of the Press in a Closed Shop world? What value has a vote if all the real decisions in our lives are taken for us by the State?

If economic freedom is denied, political freedom will soon perish.

Our socialist opponents lecture us about the acquisitive society. They preach that individual ambition must be replaced by communal benevolence.

But what is more heartless than the all-powerful State? And don't the industrious and the farsighted, by creating new jobs, benefit society as much as themselves?

Charity begins at home; it does not end there. The urge to save and to invest are powerful and natural engines of wealth creation, which work efficiently and silently for every one of us, if only we will let them.

The truth is that, individually man is ~~creative~~ ^{THRIFTY}, collectively he is spendthrift.

Governments in general, and Labour Governments in particular, simply love spending other people's money. Give the State control of 60 percent of what we produce - as we have been doing - and wealth melts away like winter snow. Tilt the balance towards freedom of choice, and the wealth-producing process begins again.

Freedom we must have if this nation is to prosper. But it must be freedom under the law.

The greatest gift any Government can bestow on its citizens is the rule of law. No Government can ensure equality. The road to the Communist state is paved with such fallacies.

But what Government can provide is equality before the law and thereby justice.

I am a reformer, and I am offering change. No melodramatic overnight solutions, but a fresh and invigorating approach to our affairs.

As Conservatives we are under no illusions about the ability of government to transform the moral climate of society, let alone bring about that change quickly.

But what human folly can destroy, human wisdom can restore. Quite modest changes in the law, and still more the conduct and example of government, can tilt the balance back towards the creative, and away from the destructive elements in our midst.

The first - the creative - we shall encourage and reward; the second - the destructive - we shall pursue with relentless and unremitting hostility.

Our country is rich in natural resources, in imagination, in talent; but regulation and taxation have blunted initiative; poverty of incentive has diminished enterprise. Government has done too much and done it badly, squandering resources that could have been used to halt the downward trend.

Production has fallen under Labour. Prices have more than doubled under Labour.

Business has lacked the confidence to expand under Labour. Labour has dragged our country down. Labour must go.

/No easy prospect lies ahead..

No easy prospect lies ahead. When we arrive in office, we shall find the place littered with post-dated cheques, unpaid invoices and final demands left behind by Labour.

Yet with a new Parliament and a new government with a clear mandate for a change of direction, I see signs of hope.

Provided we face up to those who make free with the taxpayers' money, practising inefficiency and waste.

Provided we ~~face up to the people who claim it is wrong for~~ ^{enable} those who work more to earn more, and those who earn more to keep more ^{of what they can}

^{have no truck with} Provided we face up to the bogus democrats who glibly demand that political power and influence should decide everything, from who gets a house to the price of beer and what's printed in your daily paper.

Many traditional Labour supporters want the same things we want, believe the same things we believe, but are held back by old loyalties and old prejudices.

To them I say : 'We understand these things. After all we too are conservative.'

You know in your hearts that Britain must take a different road.

Let's take that road together. We need your help. The more we can gain your co-operation and draw on your knowledge and experience the more we shall be able to achieve. We understand the deep-rooted loyalties and affections that make you hesitate to cross the Rubicon. We know it's not easy to forsake the habit of a life-time.

But the modern Labour Party is no longer the Party of Clement Attlee, Hugh Gaitskell, and Roy Jenkins.

Labour today is like a pub where the mild is running out. Soon all that's left will be bitter - and all that's bitter will be Left.

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The present Labour Leader may not relish or approve (I'm sure he doesn't) the way the wind is blowing. But last week's events in Newham North East show yet again the growing size and power of the extreme Left-wing of the Labour Party.

The many similarities between the Labour and Communist Manifestos, further underline what is happening.

"All that is necessary for the triumph of evil" said Burke, "is that the good men should do nothing."

May I say to Labour's traditional supporters: All that is necessary for the triumph of Marxist Socialism in this country is that a majority of you who normally vote Labour should believe that the Labour Party of today - and even more of tomorrow - is the same as the Labour Party of yesterday.

If you care deeply for your country and you do not care for the way your Party is going, come with us.

We offer you a political home where you can honourably realise the ideals which took you into the Labour Party in the first place.

When Paul Johnson resigned from the Labour Party he wrote: "I have come to appreciate, perhaps for the first time in my life, the overwhelming strength of my own attachment to the individual spirit. The paramount need to keep ^{it} alive, I now see, is so great as to override any other public principle whatever."

Today Labour in office stands for the ever-growing dominance of the State with all its despotism and frustration of human happiness. That will never be the Conservative way.

The Britain we want is a country where Parliament remains supreme but acts in the spirit of British law and custom. The Britain we want is a country where the individual, however weak, still has definite rights which can never be taken from him, and where the minority, however small, cannot be crushed out of existence by majority power.

The Britain we want is one where the rule of law is upheld, impartially, even against the most powerful bodies in our community. And where those entrusted with upholding the law, whether policemen or judges, are given respect, support^{and}/encouragement.

We want a Britain where children are taught that there is a real and absolute difference between right and wrong and that there are certain acts which, by their very nature, are wrong and must be outlawed by society.

In our Britain, those who pursue violence as a way of life, whether armed professional thieves or back-street muggers, or terrorists, or thugs, will be treated solely for what they are - dangerous criminals, to be resisted by civilised society with all its power.

Our Britain is a country where the honest, peaceful and hardworking citizen is valued and prized, and above all defended and supported, by all the institutions of the land.

The spirit of our Britain will^{be}/one of hope and endeavour, where all are equal in votes and before the law, but where this equality is a springboard for those who wish to strive for a better life.

These are the values which endure, which will bind together again a wounded nation.

These are the values which will again be to the fore in the Conservative Britain that lies ahead, which will guarantee our liberties through dangerous and difficult times and ~~which will ensure~~ that we become, once again, a powerful partner rather than a weak and lagging passenger amongst the free nations of the earth.

In politics, I've learnt something you in Wales are born knowing: if you've got a message, preach it.

~~I am a "conviction" politician.~~ The Old Testament prophets didn't ^{merely} say "Brothers, I want consensus". They said: "This is my faith and vision. This is what I passionately believe. If you believe it too, then come with me".

Tonight I say to you just that. Away with the recent bleak and
dismal past. Away with defeatism: Under the twin banners, choice
and freedom, a new and exciting future beckons the British
people.

Let us join hands and go forward to meet it together.

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