

5 March 1976 (this is from a journal Younger kept when he toured South Africa)

Harry Oppenheimer. Anglo American Corp. Jo burg.

Lunch with him + four colleagues. One Canadian, one called Julian Ogilvy [sic] Thompson¹ (who was very right-wing).

All v. worried about Rhodesia & think Smith is already past the eleventh hour. Maximum pressure on him to settle with Nkomo. Consider the S.A. incursion into Angola was very ill-advised & had put back [John] Vorster's Détente exercise (which he always thought was a lot of wishful thinking anyway). All have good impression of Margaret Thatcher.

22 November 1977

Lunch with Jeffrey Archer² in a superb 7th floor flat on Albert Embankment overlooking the Thames. Others includes Jim Slater³ who talked exclusively about fortune telling in which he strongly believes. Also friends of J from Oxford days, one executive director of *Daily Mail* & another from some similar position in the *Sun*. All very disparaging about the new Editor of *Daily Express* (name unknown to me).⁴ Jeffrey is a millionaire again thanks to Jackie Onassis⁵ resigning from board of her publishers because of J's book "Shall we tell the President?" Actually it was not the book but an article about it in *Boston Globe & Mail* which offended her. J in great demand for TV interviews all over U.S. as a result. He wants the name of a good hotel in Scotland where he can revise his next book.

Meeting (1730) of front-bench spokesmen with Mrs. T. Her view is that Callaghan⁶ can hang on for a long time as he has everything to lose by going early. We must deflate his "all is well" image about the economy, and fight on general philosophical grounds of a left take-over when election comes. It was generally agreed that we produce plenty of good propaganda, but no-one reads it. (Winston⁷ had clearly not even read "The Right Approach".⁸)

23 November 1977

Service in Crypt for Moderator's visit (John R Gray⁹). He preached a short sermon which although neutral was right wing in criticising the threat to family life posed by

¹ Julian Ogilvie Thompson (1934-) had been executive director of Anglo American since 1971. He became chairman in 1990.

² Jeffrey Howard Archer (1940-), Conservative MP for Louth 1969-74. Archer was already a successful writer but stood down from parliament after becoming heavily insolvent after falling victim to a fraudulent investment scheme involving Aquablast, a Canadian company.

³ James Derrick Slater (1929-) was an accountant with Leyland Motors who became famous for writing a column in the *Sunday Telegraph* under the nom de plume of *The Capitalist*. He later performed what became known as 'corporate raids' on public companies through his investment company Slater Walker.

⁴ This was in fact Derek Jameson (1929-), the tabloid journalist and (later) broadcaster.

⁵ Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis (1929-94), widow of President John F. Kennedy. She had married the Greek shipping tycoon Aristotle Onassis in 1968.

⁶ Leonard James Callaghan (1912-2005), Labour prime minister 1976-79.

⁷ Winston Spencer-Churchill (1940-), Winston Churchill's grandson and Conservative MP for Stretford 1970-83, and Davyhulme 1983-97.

⁸ *The Right Approach* was a statement of Conservative aims and values produced by Keith Joseph before the 1979 general election.

⁹ John R. Gray, moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1977. Gray was minister at Dunblane Cathedral.

permissive legislation. His prayer that Parlt should continue its high reputation for running the affairs of the nation sounded strange (particularly, I should think to the S.N.P.

Lunch at the Garrick with Jimmy Macmillan (and Tony Count), very little changed since his days in Stirling. We agreed wholly on the disasters which have befallen the *Scottish Daily Express*, and the reasons for them. He confirmed that they are now disengaging from Nationalism as fast as they can without appearing too obvious about it. I suggested a campaign to regenerate Glasgow & West Scotland by massive sales of houses to create home ownership. He is enthusiastic about this and intends to summon Charlie Graham & Neville Garden¹⁰ to London to discuss it. The *Express* will be strongly for the Union & Scotland within it. They have to find their place again on the right of the popular dailies. He obviously knows all about the strengths & weaknesses of T[eddy].T[aylor].! He thinks I am more for the national scene & was better than Ian Gilmour at Defence!

24 November 1977

Took deputation of all Ayrshire, Dumfries & Galloway members to see Bruce Millan¹¹ in House at 1400 about Craigie College.¹² We repeated the overwhelmingly strong case for retention & he indicated he would be announcing his decision very soon. W. Ross¹³ & I agreed afterwards that our impression is that Craigie will be saved, as will Craiglockhart, but Callander Park is more doubtful. Press speculation that Harry Ewing¹⁴ would resign if this happened, but I doubt it.

Large majority for European Elections Bill¹⁵ (390 – 99 approx) but under half of Labour Party voted for it. Doubtful if it could ever be guillotined.

25 November 1977

Good result in Bournemouth East bye election¹⁶ (9% swing to Cons). Liberals disastrously down to 3rd place and only just saving deposit. Another nail in Lib-Lab pact. How long can Steel¹⁷ keep with it? Down to Chichester for the weekend.

P.S.

24 November 1977

¹⁰ Charles Graham and Neville Garden were both journalists with the *Scottish Daily Express* in the 1970s.

¹¹ Bruce Millan (1927-), Labour MP for Glasgow Craigton (later Glasgow Govan) 1959-88. He was Callaghan's secretary of state for Scotland 1976-79.

¹² Craigie College of Education finally closed in 1993, when it became part of the University of Paisley.

¹³ William Ross (1911-88), Labour MP for Ayr Burghs 1945-79. He was secretary of state for Scotland 1964-70 and 1974-76. He was created Lord Ross of Marnock in 1979.

¹⁴ Harry Ewing (1931-), Labour MP for Stirling and Falkirk 1971-74, Stirling, Falkirk and Grangemouth 1974-83, and Falkirk East 1983-92. He was an under-secretary at the Scottish Office 1974-79 with responsibility for devolution and home affairs. Callander Park was within his constituency.

¹⁵ The European Parliamentary Elections Act 1978 established direct elections for UK MEPs to the European Parliament.

¹⁶ David Atkinson (1940-) won the seat for the Conservatives, holding it until 2005.

¹⁷ David Martin Scott Steel (1938-), Liberal MP for Roxburgh, Selkirk and Peebles 1965-97. Steel was leader of the Liberal Party 1976-88 and negotiated the so-called 'Lib-Lab Pact' to keep Callaghan's government in power.

Long talk with John Smith¹⁸ after Division. He does not care about details of Scotland Bill¹⁹ – they will now get it one way or another. He is confident that referendum vote will be ‘Yes’. Thinks Alick has been courageous. He is against “umbrella” organisations for referendum as Labour will not work with SNP. I stressed that we don’t want to fight it as a Party as this will embarrass pro-devolutionists in Tory Party & anti’s in Labour Party. He agreed & thinks campaign should be fairly low key anyway. He is very scornful of Alex Fletcher²⁰ who he thinks is very shallow and a ‘trimmer’.

5 December 1977

1615 steering ctte for Scotland Bill. Francis Pym²¹ in charge. I arrived a little late to find I am to do clauses 24-32. Only a minimum of instructions as I just make my own rules. Old Wok dinner²² in H[ouse] of L[ords] (Cholmondeley Rm). Martin Scott deputising for John Thorne.²³ Sen Co Prae [head of school for commoners] Murray MacPherson son of Rory²⁴ & Aul Prae [head of school for scholars] Peter Godfrey Fausset son of Tom.²⁵ Both very nice.

Late night debate re sacking of Sheriff Peter Thomson (*sic*)²⁶ for promoting the Scottish Plebiscite. Robin Maxwell Hyslop²⁷ & the hard-line Tories determined to support the sheriff in order to spite Foot²⁸ who has handled it very badly. He should never have arrogated to himself the decision as to whether to hear Thomson. I, and most Scots Tories supported the Govt as Bruce Millan has carried out the law (1971 Act) with complete correctness. We won, but the Press tend to support Thomson, in absolutely blissful ignorance of the facts.

7 December 1977

Two very boring days on Scotland Bill. Poor attendance and no meaningful dialogue with govt. who need give way on nothing now they have a time-table. Discussion on European Elections at business ctte. Govt now wants (next week) to finish clause 1 & then move to Cl. 3 so as to deal with the voting method. I can’t make out if our anti Europe lot are going to filibuster or not. After much argument, we decided to have a 3 line whip to be there but we can actually vote either way.

¹⁸ John Smith (1938-94), Labour MP for North Lanarkshire (later Monklands East) 1970-94. Smith assisted Michael Foot with the government’s devolution proposals from 1976 until he became trade secretary in November 1978. He was elected leader of the Labour Party in 1992 but died of a heart attack in 1994.

¹⁹ The Scotland Bill sought to create a directly-elected Scottish Assembly, subject to a referendum.

²⁰ Alexander MacPherson Fletcher (1929-89), Conservative MP for Edinburgh North 1973-83, and Edinburgh Central from 1983-87. Fletcher became an under-secretary at the Scottish Office in 1979.

²¹ Francis Leslie Pym (1922-), Conservative MP for Cambridgeshire 1961-83, and Cambridgeshire South East 1983-87. Pym became defence secretary in 1979 but frequently spoke on devolution during the 1974-79 Parliament.

²² A dinner for former pupils at Winchester College, so-called ‘Old Wykehamists’ or ‘Old Woks’.

²³ John Thorne was the headmaster of Winchester College.

²⁴ Rory Macpherson had served in the Argylls with Younger.

²⁵ Tom Fausset was...

²⁶ Thompson was sheriff of South Strathclyde, Dumfries and Galloway. He had campaigned for a referendum on devolution and the Scottish secretary moved a motion for him to be sacked, which required a majority of both houses of parliament.

²⁷ Robin Maxwell-Hyslop (1931-), Conservative MP for Tiverton 1960-92.

²⁸ Michael Foot (1913-), Labour MP for Plymouth Devonport 1945-55, and Ebbw Vale 1960-92. He was leader of the House 1976-79 and was elected leader of the Labour Party in 1980.

Many Tories hate PR²⁹ & anyway they think embarrassing the govt is more important than believing in Europe. I think that sort of trick usually bounces back!

Mrs. T³⁰ just back from yet another tour – NATO, Brussels, & Yugoslavia. She seems in good form.

8 December 1977

So the miners will observe 12 month rule & allow productivity deals in the areas! Good news for us all, but it makes a mockery of their ballot which voted against any productivity. Now the Agricultural Wages Board insists on the farmers getting 12-13% & the firemen are offered 10% + some sort of guarantee that they will get more next year. Govt has been defeated twice this week – once on Cl. 40 of Scotland Bill & once in Lords over defence. But this doesn't matter any more, they soldier on!

7 February 1978

11am. A blazing row in the smoke room between Teddy & Russell Fairgreave³¹ because of letter by Charles Bell³² to M.T. re a possible join-up with 'Scotland is British' for the referendum. T.T. feels very threatened because C.B. has been cooking this up since Nov. and has told R & M.T. but not T.T. It is quite understandable that T.T. was not told as in the past he is thought to have told the Press everything too often. The row rumbled on all day & eventually TT insisted that he & I & Alex Fletcher went to see M.T. at 1030p.m. T.T. very emotional saying his authority being undermined etc. M.T. v. conciliatory & more or less admitted he should have been told (without actually saying so). But still T.T. went on. Eventually after ½ hr or so M.T. told him he must learn to accept knocks & be more resilient. "We all have knocks. I have had many especially over Scotland etc. Finally he was forced out of the room & Alex & I took him for a coffee. He will never stand the strain of SofS job if he flaps as badly as this. I can't imagine what M.T. thought of it – she had had a busy day & looked exhausted.

14 March 1978

Another row – this time Humphrey Atkins³³ v. T.T. over a vote on a minor Local Govt Bill. T.T. wanted to vote because we had won in ctte but Russell told H that the Party in Scotland did not want this amdt. (putting local elections on to Tuesday). TT again thinks R is working against him but he is wrong. Russell Fairgreave merely answered questions (correctly). Truth is that H does not want to keep Party to vote on anything Scottish, because they get bolshie. It makes me mad when remembering how the English block all devolution & then won't bother to work the present system. T.T. again v emotional in the lobby & H had heated argument with him. Eventually he simmered down & we won't vote!

²⁹ Proportional Representation. In the event, the 1979 European parliament elections were conducted under a first-past-the-post system in the UK.

³⁰ Margaret Hilda Thatcher (1925-), Conservative MP for Finchley 1959-92. Younger – as did many other MPs – always called Thatcher 'Mrs T' or 'Madam Tango' in private. She was elected Conservative Party leader in 1975 and became prime minister in 1979.

³¹ Thomas Russell Fairgreave (1924-99), Conservative MP for West Aberdeenshire February 1974-83.

³² Charles W. Bell was a Scottish Conservative activist. He was knighted for political service in Scotland in 1979.

³³ Humphrey Edward Atkins (1922-96), Conservative MP for Merton and Morden 1955-70, and Spelthorne 1970-87. He was Conservative chief whip during the passage of the Scotland Bill and became Northern Ireland secretary in 1979.

15 March 1978

TT's 'policy document' for the Conference is somewhere in Mrs. T's office. I asked Adam Butler³⁴ to find out what procedure it is going through as it will be very unacceptable in its present form. T.T. says it is coming before an all-day 'shadow' after Easter. It is a good effort but is full of pledges the Shadow have never heard of and is written in T.T. 'journalese'. T.T. says to collect all my amendments & put them in late en bloc.

10 November 1978

A major row took place at the 1922 Ctte last night led by Amery,³⁵ Macmillan,³⁶ Hastings³⁷ & Co. because Winston and John Biggs Davison³⁸ has been sacked from the Front Bench. They voted to end sanctions in Rhodesia instead of abstaining as per the Shadow Cabinet line.

Humphrey Atkins was present and took much criticism although mostly veiled. He replied at the end rather feebly saying he would report all views to the Leader. He has handled it badly, as a free vote would have been adequate, and avoided this mess. On the other hand it was a Shadow Cabinet decision so perhaps not his fault. It is basically the same nonsense as took place in 1976 over the Scotland & Wales Bill second reading.³⁹ That too would have avoided much bloodshed if a free vote had been allowed.

Fortunately (for the Leadership) Amery & Co so overdid it that most uncommitted opinion in the Party was against him even among many who themselves voted to end sanctions. The Macmillan, Amery, Churchill clique has had far too much influence with Leadership on a 'family pressure' basis for too long. It is to be hoped that this episode will lessen their influence at least for a time.

Winston behaves very badly. He is big-headed, uses his grandfather's name in rather an odious way (Kenneth Lewis⁴⁰ referred to this) and always suits himself rather than the Party. He has a lot to learn.

16 November 1978

Dinner at Cal[edonian] Club with Francis Pym, Russell Sanderson⁴¹ and Alistair Smith⁴² to discuss referendum. We talked round and round the problem of how to

³⁴ Adam Courtauld Butler (1931-), Conservative MP for Bosworth 1970-87. He was the second son of RAB Butler and served as a Conservative whip.

³⁵ Harold Julian Amery (1919-96), Conservative MP for Preston North 1950-66, and Brighton Pavilion 1969-92. He was the son of the Conservative politician Leopold Amery and was also Harold Macmillan's son-in-law. Together with Maurice Macmillan, he led anti-devolution Conservative MPs in the 1970s.

³⁶ Maurice Victor Macmillan (1921-84), Conservative MP for Halifax 1955-64, Farnham 1966-83, and South West Surrey 1983-84. His father was the Conservative prime minister Harold Macmillan.

³⁷ Stephen Lewis Edmonstone Hastings (1921-2005), Conservative MP for Mid Bedfordshire 1960-83.

³⁸ John Alec Biggs-Davison (1918-88), Conservative MP for Chigwell 1955-74, and Epping Forest 1974-88. Like Julian Amery, he was a leading member of the right-wing Conservative Monday Club.

³⁹ The Scotland and Wales Bill was the Labour government's original attempt to legislate for devolution in Scotland and Wales. The Conservatives originally supported the Bill but later decided to vote against. Alick Buchanan-Smith, shadow Scottish secretary in 1976, resigned over the U-turn.

⁴⁰ Kenneth Lewis (1916-97), Conservative MP for Rutland and Stamford 1959-83, and Stamford and Spalding 1983-87.

⁴¹ Charles Russell Sanderson (1933-), president of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Association 1977-79. As Lord Sanderson of Bowden he was minister of state at the Scottish Office 1987-90 and then chairman of the Scottish Conservative Party.

⁴² Dr Edward Alistair Smith (1939-), a lecturer at the University of Aberdeen and later president of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Association 1979-80.

express a 'No' as 'no – but' to avoid being too negative. It is very difficult as there is only agreement between the various strands in the Party to be not too negative. There is no agreement at all about what alternative we could devise to the govt's Scotland Act. T.T. is being amenable as he is very depressed at our failure in Berwick & E Lothian⁴³ & the polls this week show us 23% Lab 51% & SNP 21%.

Francis is still to make speeches on devolution and will try to keep a positive lead. We all expect a clear 'Yes' vote and only hope we may have a respectable 'No'. Only TT still thinks we might get the noes off the ground and win. I think the present scheme is very bad and dangerous, but we must have an end to this business and a 'Yes' is probably the best way.

20 November 1978

A very depressing meeting with M.T. about the Scottish situation after Berwick & E. Lothian, and before the referendum. Francis Pym, Leon Brittan,⁴⁴ Peter Thorneycroft,⁴⁵ Alex Fletcher & Russell Fairgreave were present. Mrs T. seemed v. edgy and is clearly feeling the strain of adverse polls (particularly re herself), divisions in the Party (Ted⁴⁶ on incomes policy plus the revolt on Rhodesia sanctions etc). She is not a good chairman & there was no structure to the meeting. Everyone just kept on saying their piece. Alex Fletcher talked much nonsense – Russell Fairgreave very thick & T.T. his usual self with many trivial headline-grabbing suggestions to make. Peter Thorneycroft is the best as he does actually carry out what he says he will do, and the details of referendum literature etc. are in hand. He will see that they actually happen.

No Scots had any worthwhile solutions to our poor showing but I (and Russell) emphasised that our negative attitude to devolution & other Scottish issues undoubtedly have their effect. The referendum is to be fought constructively & Mrs. T. will take part. She wants Alec D-H⁴⁷ and Harold Macmillan⁴⁸ to appear with her as those Scots ex-PM's cannot be matched by Labour.

M.T. jumped at detailed points & did not seem to be able to look objectively at the situation. She sees it all in personal terms, possibly because of the conflicting advice which the Scots always give.

29 November 1978

A quiet week in Parliament, with the only interest caused by Govts announcement of sanctions against Ford for breaking the 5% pay limit & giving 17½%. We are, as usual, in difficulty as to whether we have an all-out attack on Govt for this next week

⁴³ Labour held the seat of Berwick and East Lothian following the death of John P. Mackintosh in 1978.

⁴⁴ Leon Brittan (1939-), Conservative for Cleveland and Whitby February 1974-83, and Richmond 1983-88.

⁴⁵ George Edward Peter Thorneycroft, Lord Thorneycroft (1909-94). Thorneycroft was a former Conservative MP and minister and was appointed chairman of the Conservative Party when Thatcher became party leader in 1975.

⁴⁶ Edward Richard George Heath (1916-2005), Conservative MP for Bexley 1950-2001 and prime minister 1970-74. Since losing the party leadership to Thatcher in 1975 Heath had frequently rebelled, particularly over devolution.

⁴⁷ Sir Alexander Frederick Douglas-Home, Lord Home of the Hirsel (1903-95), Conservative MP for Lanark 1931-45, 1950-51, when he succeeded his father as the Earl of Home. He became prime minister in 1963 when Younger agreed to vacate his candidacy at the impending Kinross and West Perthshire by-election.

⁴⁸ Maurice Harold Macmillan, Lord Stockton (1894-1986), Conservative MP for Stockton-on-Tees 1924-29, 1931-45, and Bromley 1945-64. Macmillan was prime minister 1957-63.

or not. The media (exc *Mirror*) very critical of arbitrary nature of sanctions, but some Tories think the public likes to see Jim standing up to the Unions even if they do it by clobbering management!

In the end, we are to have a supply day next week not about Ford but about the arbitrary nature of sanctions.

Meantime the referendum campaigns are launching themselves. We held a lobby conference yesterday (T.T., AF & me) to explain why & how Tories would campaign for a 'no'. A very dim response & not much in the Press to-day exc the *Scotsman* saying we are trying to get M.T. to come up in the campaign!

What actually happened was that Press referred to a (wrong) report that M.T. was not going to campaign. TT said this was not true – no decision had been taken. Press then said 'do you want her' & we couldn't say any other than yes!

A dreadfully stupid Scottish Members Meeting where Fletcher Sproat⁴⁹ & others tried to blame Atholl Cres⁵⁰ for being lukewarm for the 'no' vote. I defended them as such accusations are quite untrue.

4 December 1978

Attending 'Shadow', as Teddy was in Scotland and subject of dispersal⁵¹ was on Agenda. I had to battle hard to avoid them abandoning dispersal altogether. They were in a great panic about how many English marginals were "in danger" (e.g. Bath, Gloucestershire and in London) because Defence workers from there did not want to go to Glasgow or Cardiff. A very anti-Scottish attitude was shown and no-one showed any sign of being sympathetic at first. I pointed out that work was well advanced at East Kilbride with the O[verseas].D[velopment].M[inistry]. offices, and that St. Enoch site was also under preparation for the 4000-odd to go to Glasgow. This cooled them a bit and they eventually agreed not to abandon the principle but to say we would review the actual detail of which departments would go. Mrs. T. said that if Scotland rejects the Assembly we would have to try to be as helpful as possible. But if Scotland chose an Assembly they would get nothing. That just shows the attitude of hostility we now have to counter.

Once more I doubt Mrs. T's coolness. She rattles on, arguing everything & is a bad chairman. She gives me the impression of being very much under strain and is no doubt feeling that everything is going wrong for her just now.

There was also a long argument about whether we should co-operate with the Govt over an Inquiry into Bingham Report⁵² (which revealed that H. Wilson & others had known all along that Rhodesia Sanctions were being used), Callaghan wants an 'outside' Tribunal to take evidence in private & does not want it to be confined to Privy Councillors (*sic*). Mrs. T. would go along I think, but is against anyone but P.C.'s having access to Cabinet Papers or even the Judge who is to be the Chairman. It was eventually agreed that she should see Jim privately & tell him this plan of his is not on, as it would do great damage to the already shaky image of Public Life. He probably will have to go ahead anyway, but he should be told it is his duty to avoid this further nonsense.

⁴⁹ Iain MacDonald Sproat (1938-), Conservative MP for Aberdeen South 1970-83, and Harwich 1992-97.

⁵⁰ The Scottish Conservative Party's central office was then based at Atholl Crescent in Edinburgh.

⁵¹ Dispersal was a policy whereby workers, particularly at the Ministry of Defence, were to be 'dispersed' to new government offices in Glasgow and Cardiff to aid regional development.

⁵² The Bingham Report was produced by Thomas Henry Bingham, QC (1933-) a senior barrister. The report created a political storm after its much delayed publication.

7 December 1978

At lunch in H[ouse] of C[ommons], Mrs. T was expressing determination to defeat Govt over Ford sanctions and to vote against the Xmas adjournment to expose them for clearly trying to get rid of Parl[liament] for as long as possible. In the event the left staged a revolt on the formal estimates motions (defence spending was a prominent feature) & talked until closure at 1745. They then voted on all 5 resolutions. Thereafter there were more points of order, the House was nearly out of control. The Govt had completely lost control of its own supporters & Mrs. T and Norman St John Stevas⁵³ laid into them so effectively that they abandoned the Ford Sanctions debate at about 2030. On the whole a win on points for us. They avoided the sanctions vote which they would have lost, but will now have to face it again by some means next week. It has exposed the left-wing to public view again & this must help us.

The 1922 Cttee was in a very stupid mood, and objected to the idea of voting against the Xmas adjournment on the grounds that this would be an incursion into a backbenchers realm by the front bench. I should have intervened (but didn't) to defend the idea. Peculiar situations often need peculiar remedies, and Mrs. T's idea was worth while.

5 April 1979

At last the end of this Parliament and all have gone home. We stayed for a 1922 meeting in Central Hall Westminster for Mrs. T to address us plus candidates. A very successful occasion except that Peter Thorneycroft spoke for too long. Presentation was made to John Marling⁵⁴ who has just retired & he got a very warm reception. Peter told us of his strategy for the Campaign. He will let Labour start on Monday 9th & we will start in earnest later in the week. He believes Labour will do anything to keep off their record & will keep Benn⁵⁵ & Co under wraps. Uncle Jim Callaghan is their best hope with this mornings MORI Poll still giving us a lead of 13%.

Mrs. T. was without notes and therefore at her best. There will be no 'bribes' except the main pledge to reduce direct taxation. The theme is to restore the balance in (a) taxation (b) Rights and duties of Trade Unionists (c) Law and Order (more police & better pay) (d) Incentives (e) Defence.

We will be attacked over cuts in public spending, but what is the alternative? It is to make private citizens cut their standards [therefore] less to spend on the family etc.

The big issue is our free society as against the Socialist one. You cannot have personal freedom without economic freedom. She was v. warmly received and I think we all hope she can sustain her line when the bullets start flying.

It will be interesting to look back on this day. The general opinion of all is that we shall win this election although some think by a fairly small margin. As of now I agree. There has been a fundamental shift of attitude over the past 3 years, and I believe the people want a change. The left, with an appalling record are on the defensive and no Labour MP to whom I have spoken genuinely expects to win.

As many friends have said to me, if we can't win in these conditions, can we ever? One thing is certain; if we lose, Britain will become a basically Socialist state, and one wonders if one would want to live in it.

⁵³ Norman Anthony Francis St John-Stevas (1929-), Conservative MP for Chelmsford 1964-87.

⁵⁴ John Marling...

⁵⁵ Anthony Neil Wedgwood Benn (1925-), Labour MP for Bristol South East 1950-1960, 1963-83, and Chesterfield 1984-2001. He was secretary of state for energy before the 1979 general election.

26 July 1979

End of session and we look back on three months of hard running by the new Government. Mrs. T. very dominant and leading all the way. She is not a very good chairman of Cabinet as she talks too much herself, and never lets an argument develop without her steering it all the time. But she doesn't bear grudges and after hammering at you for an hour in a very aggressive way, she can see your point of view and even change her own.

An example is Dispersal, just announced to-day. Four weeks ago she heard me talking about it to Christopher Soames,⁵⁶ and snapped "You're not going to get it, none at all". However we have got it, the key was a deputation of Scots Tory MP's led by Sproat who came to see her 2 weeks ago. She was so impressed that in Cabinet she backed me all the way. So did Willie,⁵⁷ Heseltine⁵⁸ and (just) Prior, also poor Nick Edwards.⁵⁹ They wouldn't listen to him over Wales & he will have a tough time.

Looking back over three months Scotland has done well in very bad circumstances. I beat Keith Joseph⁶⁰ over Regional Policy by [getting] a reasonable deal for Scotland – also on shipbuilding, by 2 years cash plus I hope some "orders" for Govan [shipyards]. Presentation of the Scottish Office has been v. successful so far in the Press & TV etc, and the family have been a great help. Now for a 2 week holiday & back to the mêlée!

⁵⁶ Arthur Christopher John Soames, Lord Soames (1920-87), Conservative MP for Bedford 1950-66. From 1979 he was interim governor of Southern Rhodesia and leader of the House of Lords. Soames married Mary Churchill, the youngest daughter of Winston Churchill, and his son Nicholas Soames also became a Conservative MP.

⁵⁷ William Stephen Ian Whitelaw (1918-99), Conservative MP for Penrith and the Border 1955-83. From 1979 he was home secretary and deputy prime minister, and a close friend of Younger since 1963.

⁵⁸ Michael Ray Dibdin Heseltine (1933-), Conservative MP for Tavistock 1966-74, and Henley (later Henley-on-Thames) 1974-2001. From 1979 he was secretary of state for the environment.

⁵⁹ Roger Nicholas Edwards (1934-), Conservative MP for Pembroke 1970-87. From 1979 he was secretary of state for Wales.

⁶⁰ Keith Sinjohn Joseph (1918-94), Conservative MP for Leeds North East 1956-87. From 1979 he was secretary of state for industry.