

CONFIDENTIAL FILING

P.M.'s Meeting with Lord Hareford
to discuss his article for The Universe

PRIME MINISTER

S
810

September 1982

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
25.2.83							
PREM 19/1359							



10 DOWNING STREET

Mr. Ingham ^{Sl 26}
2

I agree with your
comment. The phrase
"extended it too far" is meant
to convey the sense that we
have tried to cover too many
people at the cost of discouraging
them from looking after themselves.

FERS

25.2.



10 DOWNING STREET

Note for the
file

Mr Butler

I have passed
these amendments
to Lord Longford's
Secretary.

OK.

FERS

I still think that para,
as amended, oversimplifies
his view, though one is no
point in trying to go far
further amendments.

I suspect that the PM would
not object to more and better
welfare for those in need if
we were creating the
whenever that. But that
complicates the agreement

Butler 25/2

PRIME MINISTER

cc: Mr. Ingham

Lord Longford's Article for "The Universe"

I attach the text of Lord Longford's article about you for "The Universe". As you agreed, it draws on his interview with you unattributably.

The only paragraph which worries me is the third paragraph. There is nothing in Lord Longford's notes of his interview with you (Flag A) which justifies the second sentence; and it would be consistent with the notes to amend the fourth sentence in the way I have shown.

May I suggest these amendments to Lord Longford and say that otherwise you do not wish to object to this article?

*Yes please
me*

F.E.R.B.

24 February, 1983

No Prime Minister in this century has dominated the Cabinet in peace time to anything like the same extent as Mrs Thatcher. What is even more interesting is what she does with her domination. She is a true moralist politician - the first of that kind, on the highest level, since Gladstone. She is deliberately setting out to improve the moral standards of this country.

She has for some years, and long before the Falklands crisis, called for a return to the ancient virtues of self-help, self-discipline and self-sacrifice. No one questions her own powers of self-help and self-discipline. Anyone who renounces, as she has done, a quarter of her salary, must be listened to with respect on the subject of self-sacrifice. But when her moral convictions lead her into the field of social morality, they become extremely controversial. She leaves a clear impression that the principle of self-sacrifice has been distorted for many years, that our attempts to be our brother's keeper has^{ve} dragged down both our brother and ourselves into the pit; that the Welfare State in Britain has been carried forward too far and too fast.

Many of us consider that we in Britain in recent years have failed to develop our welfare provision, in which we were the pioneers, as fully as a number of European countries. Those who think like Mrs Thatcher probably think ^{that we} exactly ~~the opposite~~ ^{may have extended it to far.} Mrs Thatcher, on becoming Prime Minister, quoted from 10 Downing Street Saint Francis of Assisi's prayer for peace. Many of us cannot equate St Francis of Assisi's ideas of compassion with three million unemployed. But she herself utterly rejects the idea that anyone who ^{questions any aspect of} ~~interferes with~~ the Welfare State shows a lack of compassion towards the poor and disadvantaged. That issue will be fought out on a thousand platforms in the not distant future.

She is an exponent of a passionate patriotism. Patriotism has enjoyed a mixed up and down reputation over the centuries, since the Romans said Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori. We are all aware that Dr Johnson defined patriotism as 'the last refuge of a scoundrel'. Since the Falklands victory we are told that a 'new spirit of patriotism is abroad throughout the land'. Mr Peregrine Worsthorne, most eloquent of Sunday journalists, has referred to the 'almost tangible resurrection of Britain as a moral force, as a community with a proud idea of itself, for which many individuals were prepared to die'. That spirit whether or not widespread is incarnate in Margaret Thatcher.

We have heard at different times about various kinds of society -

the permissive society, the civilised society, the compassionate society, to name only three. My own label for her ideal society would be the deserving society. The England she would like to see is one where everyone is rewarded according to their merits, everyone that is, except those so afflicted that they need special assistance. She assumes that the vast majority of us will benefit by feeling 'it's up to me, not the State'. She believes that this will make us better people and will produce a better country. As someone who belongs to a different Party, I concede that she is a remarkable woman, not without greatness.

I told her on one occasion that I had been Personal Assistant to Sir William (later Lord) Beveridge, the 'father' of the Welfare State, though he didn't like that title. She insisted that she was a supporter of the original Beveridge ideas, but complained that the insurance principle by which benefits were paid for contributions had been submerged under the idea of free hand-outs for all. The idea of having to earn one's benefit had been largely superseded. Would Beveridge have agreed with her? Yes and no. He was never a socialist, but never a Conservative either.

She, a strong Conservative, has no desire to see the Social Services used as a re-distributive agency, except for those in real distress at the bottom.

She made appreciative reference to Churchill's phrase 'the safety net'. I, as a Labour person, am convinced on the other hand that income redistribution through the Social Services and other means is a Christian duty.

Many years ago Lord Lothian, later Ambassador to the United States, formulated the slogan 'patriotism is not enough' (Nurse Cavell), nor pacifism either'. There is no danger of Mrs Thatcher overdoing the pacifism. Patriotism must still be deemed a Christian virtue. I sat in Westminster Cathedral while the Pope pleaded for peace and the British forces were just beginning their main assault. But that does not provide an easy answer to the question whether the Falklands war was justified. We can be sure of this at least that whatever Mrs Thatcher does, she will do from moral conviction.

INTERVIEW WITH MRS THATCHER at NO.10 Downing Street October 15th 1982
3.15 - 5 p.m.

Mrs. Thatcher had read the draft extract from my book concerning her ^{and} ~~from~~ the fact that she had granted me an interview I had assumed that she did not think it too unfair. She did not comment on it except to say that I had made her out rather like a Methodist missionary. Having ~~been~~ brought up a Methodist she may not have minded this.

She tackled me quite severely about my suggestion, or implication, that anyone who interfered with the Welfare State showed a lack of compassion. In my draft, and in the House of Lords, I had spoken of her attachment to St. Francis. I sent her my book about him after she declaimed his prayer for peace on becoming Prime Minister. She ~~had written~~ ^{wrote} back to say that he had always been one of her favourite Saints. I was also aware, though I did not mention ^(it) that on one occasion last year she had said privately of compassion: 'It always seems to me so patronising a word'. A remark which could be understood to illustrate her sense of the dignity of fellow humans, her desire not to look down on them. One can't imagine that she would welcome pity directed towards herself. Now she 'ticked me off' in a friendly, intimate kind of way, in the manner of / ^{my} family governess, for suggesting that she herself was guilty of any lack of compassion towards the poor.

The argument ^{raged} vigorously. I said that I was there to listen rather than hold forth, but I obtained her permission to counter-attack on occasion which she seemed to enjoy (we are both fast talkers!). It happens that this morning (October 16th ¹⁹⁸²) Sir John Hoskins, her former Economic Advisor ², spells out at some length in The Times more than one of the main points she was making: 'As ever,

those who ^{question} question any aspect of the Welfare State are assumed to be less concerned about human suffering than those who defend it. No one is proposing that the state disowns responsibility for those who genuinely cannot help themselves. The question is whether the state should also provide large amounts of goods and services "free" for almost the entire ~~pop~~ population.

This is only partly a matter of economics. It is also, and perhaps more importantly, about the effect on attitudes and behaviour of transferring responsibilities to the state, from people who could perfectly well discharge those responsibilities for themselves. Has this transfer tended, at the margin, to prevent people from maturing into resourceful and independent individuals ?

When she argued on those lines yesterday I submitted that ~~those~~ ^{that} were ^{was} a middle ^{class,} / or upper class, point of view; that the great mass of the people could not help themselves to anything like the extent that the ^{welfare state} ~~working class~~ helped them. I did not add that when I was Chairman of the National Bank, with branches both in England and Ireland, the middle class officials of the Bank in Ireland suffered ^{markedly} ~~by~~ ^{pronouncedly} (at that time) as compared with their English counterparts because ~~the~~ ^a National Health Service was much more freely available to the latter.

But the points made by Sir John Hoskyns were not her only criticisms of the Welfare State. I told her that for three years I had been Personal Assistant to Sir William, later Lord, Beveridge when he produced a report that had much to do with the Welfare State's establishment. She insisted that she was a supporter of the original Beveridge ideas, but complained that the insurance principle, ~~under~~ ^{under} which benefits were paid in return for contributions, had been submerged under 'free handouts for all'. The idea of having to earn one's benefit had been largely superseded. I admitted that the

insurance principle had been fundamental to Beveridge's thinking, though he made large exceptions to it especially in regard to family allowances and, to a considerable extent, the proposed health service.

A deeper difference lurked behind our exchanges of which I think she was conscious. She, a strong Conservative, had no desire to see the Social Services used as a redistributive agency in favour of the poorer classes except for those in real distress at the bottom. She made appreciative reference to Churchill's phrase 'the safety net'. I, as a Labour person, am convinced on the other hand that income redistribution through the Social Services and otherwise is a Christian duty.

The talk with her cleared my mind here. When I demand compassion the words 'social justice' would somehow, though not always, be more appropriate. In regard to social justice Christians of different parties must necessarily differ.

She spoke about 'freedom' in more than one context. This Conservative Government, under her potent leadership, genuinely believes (but also considers it good political business) that the sphere of the State must be reduced to 'free' the individual, to give him or her a much wider range of choices.

I agreed with her insofar as more freedom can be given, ^{for instance} ~~e.g.~~ in education, without disrupting the State system. Religious freedom of choice is an instance, but not by any means the only one. But no one could seriously suggest that, again taking education as an example (very much her subject as she was a former ^{Education} Minister), that the great mass of the population ever had freedom to choose in the middle class sense, or could attain it under any system in the

forseeable future. I mentioned, incidentally, that her new ^{Party} ~~Ferdie~~ Mount, Personal Advisor was my nephew and had been Captain of the School at Eton. She spoke about him with obvious warmth. In this whole connection I did not make the ^{obvious} ~~obvious~~ point that many social services can be supplied much more cheaply and efficiently on a 'mass' scale.

Under the head of 'freedom' I reminded her that Lloyd George's original health insurance scheme (1911) had been objected to on just that ground ~~i.e.~~ because it was compulsory and therefore an interference with freedom. The same argument could be raised against any scheme of compulsory insurance. I reminded her of Sir Winston Churchill's defence of such schemes and his reference to the 'magic of averages'. But she seems determined (and no doubt we shall hear a lot of this from her Party) to make the State and high taxation the scapegoats. I ventured to point out ^{that:} 'you can't reduce State expenditure without someone losing'. She retorted that a great deal of money was being wasted in the Social Services at present. I could not gainsay her there though the point has been made repeatedly in past years without much practical consequence.

She deplored the heavy figures of unemployment. She said that the Coalition White Paper at the end of the war in which a 'high and stable level of employment' was postulated was still her Bible. I did not venture to ask how far her government's policies were responsible for the present figures. She placed much of the responsibility, though not by any means all of it, on the Trades Unions' demands for 'more and more'. I submitted that collective greed was just as manifest among the higher professional people and businessmen. She did not dissent and picked out for criticism the demands of the Chairmen of nationalised industries. I did not press the question further. ^{Wentley} The Heads of private business were not just as grasping.

Our whole discussion, I should mention, was conducted against ^{the background of} my acceptance (in the ^{draft} paper she had seen) that she was the first moralist ^{Prime Minister} ~~politician~~ in this century, even though I did not agree with many of her policies. I had also mentioned in the Lords and in the ^{my} draft paper my recognition that she herself had shown self-sacrifice by giving up a quarter of her salary. I told her that if I had not resigned from the Labour Cabinet in 1968 my deciding vote would have been given in favour of a reduction in Cabinet salaries, which would then have taken place. Why could ~~it~~ she ^{not} promote a general spirit of self-sacrifice without appearing to confine herself to expecting sacrifices from the Trades Unions? She seemed to turn it over in her mind. There was not time for me to raise the question of the family, which she appears to be devoting much attention to, and on which ^{Ferdus} ~~Ferdus~~ has recently published a book. I told her that I applauded her powerful support for the Atlantic system of defence. I did not raise the question of the Falklands.

OF MONETARISM SHE SAID:
YOU MEAN HONEST MONEY

Have I anything to ^{add} in retrospect? Just this. We have heard at different moments about various kinds of society: 'the permissive society', 'the civilised society', 'the compassionate society', to name

only three. My own label (not hers) for her society would be 'a deserving society'. The England she would like to see is one where everyone is rewarded according to their merits. Everyone, that is, except those so afflicted, avoidably or unavoidably, that they need special assistance. She assumes that the vast majority of us will benefit by feeling that 'It's up to me, not the state'. She believes that this will make us better people and will produce a better country. John Nott recently said of himself that he was 'a nineteenth century Liberal', and added, 'So is Margaret Thatcher'.

After my talk yesterday I feel that what ^{Nott} ~~he~~ said was as good a ^{description} ~~category~~ as any now in use. But I prefer my own picture of her as the champion of a deserving society.

Frank Lloyd

010
'SEMPER ALIQUID NOVI'

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Registered Office:

1 Tavistock Chambers
Bloomsbury Way, London WC1A 2SG

22nd February 1983

Dear Mr. Buckler

I enclose the draft of a short article I have written about the Prime Minister for The Universe. They are anxious that I should let them have a version to which no exception is taken by you, by next Monday morning, February 28th. That would enable them to publish the article in next week's issue.

If there was any difficulty about securing clearance, it could be held over in the last resort for another week.

I will give you a ring on Thursday afternoon, to see how things are going. Perhaps you would leave word with your secretary, if you are not available.

You will notice that I have indicated that I have at least talked to Mrs Thatcher, but there is no suggestion that I ever had an interview.

I hope therefore that you will be able to 'pass' the article without you or the Prime Minister being in any way committed to the views expressed.

For my own use
Rach
Earl of Longford, KG. PC

F E R Buckler, Esq
Principal Private Secretary to
the Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON S.W.1

Loyd

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2.6 -

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

cc Mr Ingham

I spoke to Lord Longford on the telephone about his request for the Prime Minister's permission to use the interview she gave him in October as the basis for an article in the Catholic paper "The Universe".

I said that the Prime Minister was agreeable to his using the material in this way as non-attributable background, off the record, rather than on an interview basis. I also asked Lord Longford to let me see a copy of the article in draft, and he agreed to do so.

F.R.B

18 February 1983

RA

PRIME MINISTER

cc Mr. Ingham

Lord Longford telephoned me to say that he has abandoned the book for which you gave him an interview in October. He would like instead to write an article for the Catholic paper "The Universe", using the material either on a non-attributable basis or by saying that it was derived from an interview. He would send us a copy of the article prior to publication.

I believe that the material (copy attached) is quite harmless. May I say that you are content for him to draw on the material for his article, saying that it is based on an interview, provided that you have the chance to see the article in draft and to make any amendments you consider necessary?

FER.B
I would rather not do it
on an interview basis. I had always
intended it to be background
non-attributable.

11 February 1983

mb

LONGFORD

File
F.

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Registered Office:

1 Tavistock Chambers

Bloomsbury Way, London W.C.1A 2SG

18th October 1982

Adam Butler Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
W1

Mr M. Butler

Thank you so much for being so kind to me on Friday.
I enclose a short letter of thanks to the Prime Minister.
Perhaps you would be kind enough to show it to her in due
course.

I now have the task of supplementing and, where necessary,
correcting the section of my book of which you and she have
already seen a draft. That will take a little time. In any
case the book does not have to go to the publishers until
the end of January, by which time there will obviously be
many developments. I venture to enclose, however, a note
that I made of the meeting which, unless you tell me that
I have misunderstood what she said, I would propose to use
as a basis in revising the chapter. I hope that the
reference to 'my family governess' will not jar. I was
devoted to my governess, who taught me far more than
anyone else did subsequently.

I do not expect reciprocation in sending you my notes.
I always enjoyed reading the somewhat different accounts
given by the British Ambassador and the German Chancellor
before the outbreak of war in August 1914. The British
Ambassador represented the German Chancellor as 'bursting
into tears'. The German Chancellor reported of the British
Ambassador that he was the one in tears, and had to ask
leave to compose himself in the ante-room! I am so glad
that you find Ferdy so congenial. He might be amused to
see this report. So possibly might Carol Thatcher, as I
am appearing on her show on November 20th. Whether you
show all or any of it to the Prime Minister, I naturally
leave to you. She has much more important things to
study.

*Yours sincerely
Frank Longford*

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Our whole discussion, I should mention, was conducted against ^{the background of} my acceptance (in the ^{draft} paper she had seen) that she was the first moralist ^{Prime Minister} ~~politician~~ in this century, even though I did not agree with many of her policies. I had also mentioned in the Lords and in the ^{my} draft paper my recognition that she herself had shown self-sacrifice by giving up a quarter of her salary. I told her that if I had not resigned from the Labour Cabinet in 1968 my deciding vote would have been given in favour of a reduction in Cabinet salaries, which would then have taken place. Why could ~~it~~ she ^{not} promote a general spirit of self-sacrifice without appearing to confine herself to expecting sacrifices from the Trades Unions? She seemed to turn it over in her mind. There was not time for me to raise the question of the family, which she appears to be devoting much attention to, and on which ^{Ferdus} ~~Ferdus~~ has recently published a book. I told her that I applauded her powerful support for the Atlantic system of defence. I did not raise the question of the Falklands. ^{OF MONETARISM SHE SAID: YOU MEAN HONEST MONEY}

On the way out her Private Secretary said with some satisfaction, 'A formidable lady,' ^{with} in which I heartily concurred. He thought that her demand for a new spirit of 'giving rather than getting' was well attuned to the present moment. I said: 'So long as she doesn't antagonise forty per cent of the population by the way she sets about things! He was confident that this would not happen. 'He would be, wouldn't he?' as Mandy Rice-Davies ^{might} ~~would~~ have said. But I know he meant it.

Have I anything to ^{add} in retrospect? Just this. We have heard at different moments about various kinds of society: 'the permissive society', 'the civilised society', 'the compassionate society', to name

I agreed with Lord Longford that this paragraph should be deleted.

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1 Tavistock Chambers

Bloomsbury Way, London WC1A 2SG

18th October 1982

The Rt Hon the Prime Minister Mrs Margaret Thatcher
10 Downing Street
W1

To Her Prime Minister

I cannot thank you enough for your kindness in finding time to see me at such length on Friday, and for taking such trouble to explain your ideas. I have sent Adam Butler some notes I made after the meeting, but as I say in my letter to him, you have much more important things to study. I have suggested that Carol might care to look through the notes before my participation in her show on 20th November. If I may say so respectfully, I am glad to find that our Prime Minister is in such excellent health and spirits.

Yr faithfully

Paul Taylor

no reply I could

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10.12
Subject

2.6 A4

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

cc: Mather Set

NOTE OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND LORD LONGFORD
ON FRIDAY 15 OCTOBER

The Prime Minister saw Lord Longford on Friday 15 October at 3.15 pm at his request, about the book which he was writing.

The Prime Minister said that she had read the material which Lord Longford had sent, and was concerned that he appeared to portray her as something similar to a Methodist preacher. She would come immediately to an area of difference between herself and Lord Longford, and that was in their attitude to the welfare state. She knew that Lord Longford had been an assistant to Lord Beveridge and she warmly admired the principle in the 1944 White Paper that people should put in to the national insurance system before they took out from it. The original purpose of the welfare state was to help people in difficulty through unemployment, old age and sickness: in some cases it was no longer fulfilling that purpose but people were manipulating it to their advantage. She found it infuriating to hear people say that it was not worth working when they only earned £2.00 more in work than they received through unemployment benefit. She held to the principle that if people could work, they should not expect to be maintained by their neighbours.

The Prime Minister said that the second point she wanted to make was that there appeared to be an impression gaining ground that compassion was equivalent to maximum state spending. She felt that to take an increasing proportion of people's income to spend it on their welfare was an affront to their individuality and undermined their character. She thought that it would be deplorable if we became a "pocket money society" where the state looked after everyone's needs and merely left them with pocket money for them to spend on their own luxuries.

Lord Longford commented that most people looked at it, not from the view point of the Government, but from that of the people in need. He ran a centre in Soho for young people, many

of whom were rogues; but that had to be accepted in order to help the minority in real need.

The Prime Minister asked whether he had ever thought of the American system of "workfare", under which young people were required to do something to improve the life of the community as a condition for benefit. The unions had opposed this as they had opposed other measures. She had been struck by the fact that if Britain had kept the same share of home and overseas markets as we had twelve years ago, we would have one and a half million extra jobs.

Lord Longford said that he admired the lead given by the Prime Minister in surrendering part of her salary. Just before he had resigned as a member of the Labour Cabinet, that Cabinet had almost taken a similar decision. Eight years ago he had had taken an initiative designed to encourage people in authority to give a lead and felt that the present Government could do more to ask business people to make sacrifices. The trade unions were selfish, but business leaders often appeared selfish.

The Prime Minister agreed. Business leaders often got into difficulty through refusing increases to their work force and then giving themselves more.

Returning to the main theme, the Prime Minister said that she saw state provision in the last resort as a supplement for what people could do for themselves, not as a substitute. She believed in the national health service but thought that people, when working, should make provision for their sickness. Only by making decisions did people develop their characters.

Lord Longford said that many people would regard this as a middle or upper class point of view; ordinary people were not in a position to take such decisions.

The Prime Minister said that she felt that one consequence of the state trying to do too much was that those who contributed to services through their taxes were pushed around. She was concerned with increasing people's dignity.

Lord Longford commented that, if the Prime Minister's approach was to save public expenditure, someone would have to lose: who would that be ?

The Prime Minister said that she felt that the Government was too ready to take people's money: for example the national health service was overmanned. The Government had to take a more rigorous approach and remind people that it was their own money which was being used. One area which was wrong in Britain was housing: she did not know of any other country with so much public housing provision.

Lord Longford said that he applauded efforts to get better value for public money. But he was not himself concerned about complaints that wealthy people were too heavily taxed. The sort of people who made that complaint were the sort of people whom the country could afford to lose. The Prime Minister commented that she did need the best people to provide jobs through building up businesses.

Lord Longford said that he agreed with much of what the Prime Minister was doing in the country's interest, including her stance on defence. On economic policy he was worried about monetarism. The Prime Minister said that monetarism simply meant sound money, and people did not like the discipline which keeping sound money involved. Lord Longford said that he applauded that sentiment but was anxious to see unemployment coming down: he expected that the Prime Minister had the same wish. The Prime Minister confirmed that a reduction in unemployment was what she wanted most.

F.R.B.

18 October 1982

I see no harm in this but I do not know how you feel personally about Lord Longford. ^{FRB}

1. MR. BUTLER ^{FRB}
2. PRIME MINISTER

How would you like me to react to this letter from Lord Longford? *I have acknowledged it.*

es.

~~Marjorie~~ Stephen
Pl. arrange - over an evening drink? ^{FRB}

Will do -

1 October, 1982.

*Will do -
arranged Fri
15 = October.
will need Meeting
Folder with this
letter in it. C.P. 6/10*



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

1 October, 1982.

I write on behalf of the Prime Minister to thank you for your letter of 29 September.

Your letter is receiving attention, and a reply will be sent to you as soon as possible.

CAROLINE STEPHENS

The Rt. Hon. the Earl of Longford, K.G.

LN

From the Earl of Longford KG PC

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Bloomsbury Way, London WC1A 2SG

29th September 1982

The Rt Hon The Prime Minister Mrs Margaret Thatcher
10 Downing Street
WC1

I dear Prime Minister

I hesitate to approach you for obvious reasons, but I venture to hope that you will give sympathetic attention to my request. I am now engaged on a book, intended to be popular, for Rainbird Publications, entitled THE DECLINE AND FALL AND RESURRECTION OF THE WEST. I am summoning up courage to ask you whether you could spare time to see me some time before the end of November. I shall, of course, understand if you are much too busy for this to be possible. I enclose a draft of something that I have written about you for the purposes of this book, which I hope will show you how deeply interested I am in your new approach to national and international problems. It would be quite wrong to conceal from you the fact that I am very unhappy about the impact on the social services of Government policy. I speak as someone who has been, and is, much concerned with voluntary social service in a number of different ways, and was personal assistant to Beveridge when he drew up the Beveridge Plan.

On the other hand I have spoken out several times favourably in the House of Lords about the general defence policy of the Government. I persuade myself that you would be not uninterested in making sure that in a book of this kind your ideas and ideals were properly represented. But, as I say, you have so many preoccupations that it is hard for me to claim a high priority for this one.

I suppose that I am a little bit encouraged by your great kindness to Elizabeth in connection with her book on the Queen. We were very pleased with Carol's article about her, and still more with Carol herself when she came to lunch, and occupied the place at table which you honoured by your presence some years ago.

*With very great respect to Debra
The Secretary
Frank
Loyd*

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Mrs Thatcher's philosophy and politics matter even more than would usually be the case in a Prime Minister, for two reasons. In the first place no Prime Minister in this century has dominated a Cabinet in peace-time to anything like the same extent. One has to go back to Gladstone, or before him to Robert Peel for comparison; and in those days the area of life covered by Government policies was much smaller. In the second place, her policies represent a far more drastic break with the past, including the immediate past of her own party, than any since the Labour rule of 1945-51, when after a world war far-reaching changes were generally expected.

Indeed, there is a third reason why Margaret Thatcher is specially significant even among Prime Ministers. She must be described (in a complimentary rather than a pejorative sense) as a moralist politician, the first of that kind since Gladstone. I take for granted her private life with is exemplary, like that of all our leaders as far as we can tell since Lloyd George, who had other merits. I am suggesting, however, that Mrs Thatcher is a preacher of morals. She is deliberately setting out to improve the moral standards of this country by exhortation and where possible by government action. It goes without saying that no more than in the case of Gladstone are her political opponents prepared to accept her sermons as inspired text.

She has for some years, and long before the Falklands crisis, called for a return to ancient virtues such as self-help, self-discipline and self-sacrifice. No-one questions her own powers of self-help and self-discipline, and anyone who renounces, as she has done, a quarter of her salary must be listened to with respect on the subject of self-sacrifice. But when her

moral convictions lead her into the field of social morality they become extremely controversial. She leaves a clear impression that she considers that the principle of self-sacrifice has been undervalued for many years; that our attempts to be our brother's keeper has dragged down both our brother and ourselves into the pit; that the welfare state in Britain has been carried forward too far and too fast.

Having acted as personal assistant to Sir William (later Lord) Beveridge when he drew up the plans from which so much of the welfare state derives, I am well aware that his ideas were much less popular in Conservative circles than it was thought politic to acknowledge at the time. Sir Winston Churchill, who knew him well and admired his earlier work, refused to receive him. After the war I was trying to secure support for the Anglo-German Association from a high-minded merchant banker of great eminence. He told me that it was fatal to include Beveridge as a Patron: 'Beveridge! He is the cause of all the trouble'. For Beveridge, then and since, read welfare state.

Many of us consider that one example of the decline of Britain in recent years is our failure to develop our welfare provision, in which we were the pioneers, as fully as a number of European countries. Those who think like Mrs Thatcher would probably ~~not~~ believe exactly the opposite. We like to feel that in this country, compared with before the war, we have created a compassionate society. ^{Mrs Thatcher} ~~She~~/herself on becoming Prime Minister quoted from ~~Not~~ 10 Downing Street St Francis of Assisi's prayer for peace. We cannot equate St Francis of Assisi with ^{over} three million unemployed. It may be remembered that when Mr Norman St John Stevas, the Leader of the House

of Commons, was dismissed from the Cabinet, he ~~drawn~~ pointed out the contrast between the caring Conservatism which he stood for and the actual policies of the Government. All this is relevant if an attempt is to be made to unite Britain on a common path of recovery.

One of Mrs Thatcher's most powerful speeches was an address she gave in commemoration of the hundredth anniversary of Dame Margery Corbett. I touch elsewhere on its bearing on the family and the women's movement. I mention it here as one of the best examples of her passionate patriotism. It was no surprise to find her quoting President Kennedy's famous inaugural speech in which he called on Americans to ask themselves what they could do for their country. My mind goes back to a speech delivered by Lloyd George in celebration of victory in 1980 though I was a young boy at the time:

'Let us not demobilise the spirit of patriotism in our ranks. That spirit alone won us the war. That spirit alone can bring us a real and lasting triumph.'

Patriotism has enjoyed a mixed, up and down, reputation over the centuries since the Romans said: 'Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori'. After the Falklands victory a hundred writers were persuaded to express their views on the policy of the Government (more of them were hostile than favourable). As the editors of the volume point out, many of them quoted Dr Johnson's definition of patriotism as the last refuge of a scoundrel.

But since the Falklands victory we are told that a 'new spirit of patriotism' is abroad throughout the land. At this point we must pause for a moment. Sunday after Sunday Mr Peregrine Worsthorne, Deputy Editor of The Sunday Telegraph, has delivered a panegyric on patriotism. He is ready to accept his role

as a lone voice among intellectuals, but he can point to the extraordinary improvement of the standing of the Government, and Mrs Thatcher in particular, since the short, successful war over the Falklands to justify his claim that it is he who at the moment speaks for the people. How, he cries out eloquently, could so many writers live through that period without sensing the almost tangible resurrection of Britain as a moral force, as a community with a proud idea of itself, for which individuals were prepared to die? For so many ordinary people it was an ennobling experience, even a religious one, transcending anything which they had ever felt before. For the first time, says Peregrine Worsthorne, they were conscious of belonging to something larger than themselves - other than a football club - something greater and immeasurably more significant. Time alone will show whether this new sense, real or alleged, of national identity will have any effect on conduct and thus play a part in the desiderated resurrection of Britain. At this stage I postulate only that a scheme of things depending on the restoration of the ancient virtues will achieve nothing, or less than nothing, unless it preserves and enhances the new humanity which Lord Denning admitted was the redeeming feature of a Britain in which so much else has gone wrong.

(Frank Lloyd)

