

PRIME MINISTER.

Speeches

THERE IS SOME MERIT IN THIS.

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(F)

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LESSONS FROM THE PERTH SPEECH
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1. The Prime Minister should not use "the trade unions" as a collective term of abuse. There are 11m. trade union members, a goodly proportion of whom voted Conservative last time round and may do so again. If we want to attack the worst features of British trade unionism, the distinction should on every occasion be made between the membership in general, with whom we have few quarrels, and certain politically-motivated, insufficiently-accountable trade union leaders, with whom we and their members have many quarrels.

2. The Prime Minister should not use "Marxist Socialism" as a description of what the Labour Party stands for unless she has previously made specific references to the precise points of comparison between what Marx said and what the Labour Party proposes. In Das Kapital and the Communist Manifesto there are plenty of close parallels, and there are even closer parallels in Mein Kampf and "Tomorrow We Live", Oswald Mosley's 33,000-word manifesto published in 1933. Making detailed and fair comparisons is one thing; generalised abuse is quite another.

3. In general, the tone of the Prime Minister's utterances should be statesmanlike and eirenic, to provide a contrast with the squalid belligerence of the Opposition. Her personal following, even among her natural enemies, owes much to her statesmanship. We must not allow that quality to be thrown away.

4. Yet the Prime Minister must be hard-hitting. We should keep in mind the distinction between attacks on individuals and institutions (which are not only wrong but counter-productive) and attacks on their policies. The Prime Minister should be willing to demolish what the opposition parties propose, but unwilling to stoop to personal abuse.

5. Apart from the foregoing, the Perth speech was an excellent launch to the campaign.

CM.

CHRISTOPHER MONCKTON
16 May 1983.

Where was the
personal abuse in that
speech? Please give
me one example
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