

MOUNT

MR FLESHER

MC
Home Affairs

FAMILY POLICY

Line to be taken on Guardian leak

The existence of a Family Policy Group is well known; it is also known that Mr Mount has been closely involved.

Indeed, I have frequently told Lobby correspondents Mr Mount's arrival as Head of Policy Unit had given new impetus to this aspect of policy.

Having said that, we naturally deplore the leak of confidential papers which simply should not occur and is wrong. I assume inquiries will be made to see if source can be traced.

But it should not surprise anyone that the Government, especially at this stage of its life, is looking ahead to further developments of social policy.

Nor, given the last manifesto, should it come as any surprise to anyone that the Government is examining how people can be encouraged to make more private provision for themselves whether in the field of health, welfare, education etc.

Nor should it be any surprise that the Government is seeking to promote greater parental choice or higher standards in education.

Nor should it be any surprise that this Government is in the business of generating more individual responsibility.

Nor should it be any surprise that this Government is seeking to make the concept of wealth creation more acceptable; the only words I would quarrel with are more acceptable. The Government is in fact in the business of getting over how essential - indeed crucial - it is.

But what should come as a surprise is that the Government is in the business, as the Guardian asserts, of dismantling the welfare state. It isn't. And for anyone to suggest it is simply indulging in party political clap-trap.

This Government is already responsible for spending 5% more in real terms on the health service.

It is not possible to argue that the Government is dismantling the welfare state by seeking better value for the consumer's money by encouraging, for example, the putting out of services to competitive tender.

Nor can it be argued that the Government is dismantling the welfare state by helping people to exercise their right to spend their money as they wish. We are not a Marxist state yet, you know.

I do not propose to go into details as revealed by the Guardian. Except to say this:

What permeates the Guardian's revelations is a concern for people.

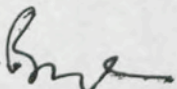
It is not a State concern for people; but a people concern for people..

We all need to get out of our heads the view, apparently implicit in the ^{Guardian} assertion that all this adds up to a dismantling of the welfare state, that only the State, spending taxpayers' money, can show a proper concern for people.

Private people, spending their own private money, can, do and long have shown a deep concern for people.

Background

The membership of the FPG, as set out in the Guardian, is broadly correct, but incomplete. But they picture the "wrong" John Sparrow; its not the head of CPRS they show but the Warden of All Souls.



B. INGHAM

17 February 1983

Home Agg



10 DOWNING STREET

BERNARD

Tim rang to say that

DHSS are seeking advice on whether

Norman Fowler should agree to

the many media requests to talk

about Family Policy Group stuff.

~~Michael~~
Yes. *[Signature]*

Debbie Green

17/2

~~Bernard~~

After consulting

PM I told DHSS

NOT to agree - but

to go if nec on the like you
look at Lobby etc look in the HoC
OK? Mrs 17/2