



## THE 2013 KEITH JOSEPH MEMORIAL LECTURE

### “KEITH JOSEPH AND DAVID CAMERON’S CONSERVATISM”

MICHAEL GOVE

#### INTRODUCTION

In the autumn of 1984 Sir Keith Joseph faced one of the most difficult political battles of his ministerial life. He was trying to reform the financing of higher education – by asking for a higher contribution from middle class students and their families – and had encountered entrenched opposition from the defenders of privilege within his own party.

He was wrestling with this question late into the evening of Thursday 12th October 1984 and worked on the submissions in his ministerial red box into the early hours of the Friday.

When an IRA terrorist bomb exploded...

Bringing death and destruction to the Grand Hotel in Brighton where the Cabinet were staying for their Party Conference.

Sir Keith – alone among the ministers in the hotel – had the presence of mind to bring his red box with him as he sought to make it to safety from the hotel wreckage.

And as he descended the fire escape he had but one thought in his mind. He was agitated, pre-occupied, repeating himself.

"How is she?" he asked, "How is she? How is she?"

According to his biographer Morrison Halcrow, "his sang-froid returned only when the police assured him that she was safe".

The She – of course – was Margaret Thatcher – the woman he admired more than any and who admired him in equal measure.

But this story tells us so much more than just the bond between these two reformers – it sums up what was so special about Sir Keith.



His first concern – throughout his life – was always others.

He was always – even in a crisis – a good deal more practical than those who thought his self-effacement was a sign of unworldliness.

His devotion to work in the service of others – hard intellectual effort in pursuit of fairness and opportunity – made him a special politician – always an idealist with a sense of vocation never a careerist with an instinct for power.

And his achievements can never be separated from the achievements of the woman whom he helped into Number Ten and whose course in Government he – more than anyone – helped to set.

It is an honour to be invited to give a lecture in Sir Keith Joseph's honour.

It's a particular honour to be invited by the Centre for Policy Studies – the think-tank he created – and which more than any other organisation laid the intellectual foundations for this nation's revival in the 1980s.

And a pleasure to be able to give this lecture in the Guildhall. Sir Keith was the son of a Lord Mayor, an Alderman of the City of London and took for his title in the House of Lords the place he represented on the City Corporation – Portsoken – the ward where the city meets the East End.

It's a pleasure – not just because the surroundings are sumptuous and the audience august – but also because it gives me a chance to affirm my admiration for the principles of the CPS and the achievements of the City of London.

The Centre for Policy Studies has argued – consistently and bravely – for thirty-nine years – for limited government, lower taxation, greater personal freedom, educational excellence, greater social mobility and national revival. It has been led by men and women of principle and passion it's been my privilege to learn from – Hugh Thomas, Tessa Keswick, Norman Blackwell, Maurice Saatchi and Jenny Nicholson and Tim Knox. I look forward to the CPS playing an even bigger role in the nation's political life in the decades to come. We need to



make the case for limited government and greater individual opportunity more clearly than ever now. For the CPS, I suspect, a new lease of life will begin at forty...

The City of London is an even more venerable institution. But, like the CPS, one we need more than ever now.

It has become fashionable to criticise the City and its workers, deprecate bankers and bash banks, look askance at financial services and look down on those whose trade is in money.

And certainly, given the behaviour of a number of egregiously greedy and foolishly reckless individuals, there had to be a change – of culture, attitude and regulation in the City. That is why George Osborne is introducing comprehensive banking reform – not to punish the city, but to protect an institution tarnished by a series of terrible errors.

But we would be making a grave historic error if we were to allow a determination to cleanse the stables to harden into a prejudice against those individuals and institutions we need to win in the global race.

Britain's financial services are a world-leading industry, a major generator of growth, a significant earner of exports, a massive employer of our citizens and a huge contributor to the Exchequer.

The efficient allocation of capital, the smoothing of access to debt, the prudent investment of savings and the skilful management of risk are all as necessary to growth in manufacturing and services as a skilled workforce and modern infrastructure.

Britain's Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth century depended on the financial innovation of the preceding hundred years or so – the creation of the Bank of England, modern company structures and new methods of debt finance. That is why we have to resist clumsy and ill-thought-out interventions – whether from the EU or the Labour Party – which would impair the power of the City to innovate, attract talent and generate wealth and opportunity for our nation.

But important – vital – as wealth creation is, that is not my subject tonight.

Nor was it the motive force of Sir Keith's political career.



Sir Keith entered politics for the noblest of reasons – as Morrison Halcrow records, he "belonged to the honourable tradition of politicians whose starting point was improving the social conditions of the poor."

### **A POLITICIAN WHO PUT THE POOR FIRST**

As a schoolboy, it was the plight of the disadvantaged that moved his heart.

Sir Keith used to exasperate his family by purloining food from the family breakfast table to share with the homeless. As an undergraduate he joined a Quaker group which worked with the unemployed and he dedicated his time to helping the citizens of a Yorkshire mining community. They were not the only comrades with whom he made common cause. He also helped a group of Republican refugees fleeing from Franco's Spain to find refuge in England.

After his war service, Sir Keith did not gravitate towards power or riches.

He devoted himself to social and charitable work in the East End. He worked with community leaders to help alleviate poverty and support those with physical disabilities. He joined the Howard League for Penal Reform. He became chairman of a Nuffield Foundation on senility – as the debilitating condition of Alzheimers was then termed – as well as throwing himself into the work of the National Council for Carers.

He was – throughout his entire career – concerned with the lives of those whom others overlooked. And he was anxious that they should enjoy the same rights and privileges, dignity and respect, open to those who were more fortunate. That sometimes meant a certain naiveté – or idealism – crept in.

In his earliest years as an MP for Leeds North-East he was concerned that the diet of constituents in an old folks' home was too narrow. Why, he wondered, must their hot meal be just fish and chips? Why could they not enjoy, he thought, a decent boeuf bourguignon?

There was, of course, in these suggestions an innocence about how they might be received. But it was not the innocence of the ingénu, it was the innocence of one who wonders with a clarifying idealism why we as a society settle for misery and mediocrity when sweetness and light are there if we fight for them.



And it is that spirit – the determination to ensure all our citizens have the chance to live fulfilled lives – which I think is the memory of Sir Keith most worth preserving.

### **A ONE NATION GOVERNMENT**

And it is the animating mission of the Conservative Party in Government.

We are fighting to make opportunity more equal, and to ensure that every citizen enjoys the dignity, autonomy and freedom which allow them to become truly fulfilled.

Sir Keith devoted himself to a range of different causes and crusades during his time in Government.

And I want to consider each of them tonight.

In his ministerial career he was involved with the reform of healthcare, the healing of the welfare system, the expansion of home ownership and, of course, radical steps to improve state education.

It is almost uncanny, but in a way inspiring, that the principal energies of Conservatives in Government now are committed to those causes. We are – as Sir Keith was – dedicated to making our society fairer, more open and more civilized for all our citizens.

### **REFORMING THE NHS TO PUT PATIENTS FIRST**

Nowhere is the drive to ensure every citizen is treated with dignity and fairness being more zealously pursued than in the Department of Health.

My colleague Jeremy Hunt leads a dedicated team of ministers whose driving concern is improving the care afforded to the most vulnerable in our society.

Debates on the future of the NHS can sometimes appear to descend into raucous spending auctions or arguments between rival teams of management consultants.

And there are understandable reasons for that. Money – and management – matter in healthcare. That is why it is so reassuring that David Cameron has – alone among party leaders – both promised and delivered absolute protection for health spending. And that is



why we all owe a debt to Andrew Lansley for bravely – and presciently – transforming the organisational structure of the NHS to equip it for massive demographic and cost pressures.

Already we can see the benefits of both sets of decisions. Investment in the NHS by Conservatives in England is leading to improved outcomes for patients while declining health spending in Labour Wales is leading to poorer outcomes for patients. Those trends are reinforced by the decision to reform provision in England which Wales declined to implement.

I know from the doctors I talk to in my own constituency how much better they feel they can discharge their duties now that the Lansley reforms are in place. They can treat more patients more quickly, they can more effectively guarantee their comfort and freedom from infection and they can more rapidly secure the specialist attention they need for more complex conditions.

So getting the cash – and the shape of commissioning groups right – matters.

But what matters even more – and what Jeremy exemplifies – is a determination to transform the NHS so it overcomes its bureaucratic weaknesses and becomes – at every level – a personal service for patients.

The horror of what happened in Mid-Staffordshire under the last Government underlines what can happen when the personal care and respect we owe to every human being are forgotten.

Patients succumbing to dehydration, lying in their own waste, dying in pain and squalor with no one by their side – it is a heart-rending story as well as a terrible reproach to those who were in charge at that time.

And what makes the situation all the more intolerable is that we have been here before. When Sir Keith Joseph took over as the Secretary of State for Health and Social Services in 1970, as his biographer records:

“there had been a number of horrific stories about conditions, sometimes reaching neglect and downright criminal cruelty, in hospitals for the old and for the mentally ill.”



Sir Keith, typically, was driven by a desire to help those all too easily, and tragically, overlooked – not just the old and those with mental illness but also those with chronic and immensely painful conditions which were not considered priorities because they lacked the excitement and drama of areas which were the subject of cutting edge research.

Sir Keith lamented the tendency of some to be “remarkably selective in choosing the ills they consider worthy of treatment” and described the reports he received of poor care and neglect as “a running torment to me”.

The same passion to protect the interests of the overlooked and under-served in our society drives Jeremy’s approach to the NHS. His introduction of the “friends and family” test for the quality of patient care in hospital will ensure more attention is paid to ensuring that every patient is treated with dignity and respect. His overhaul of the Care Quality Commission so it operates in a way explicitly modelled on the rigorous school inspection system Sir Michael Wilshaw runs at Ofsted will further drive up the standards of care just as Sir Michael is improving the quality of teaching. And Jeremy’s insistence that nursing training emphasises once again the quality of personal care as essential to the work of healing will help the profession to bring relief from pain and greater comfort to all who suffer.

And if Jeremy is operating squarely in Sir Keith’s tradition – as a minister driven by personal commitment and a strong sense of moral purpose to want to reduce human suffering – then so is another of my cabinet Conservative colleagues – Iain Duncan Smith.

### **REFORMING THE WELFARE SYSTEM TO HELP THE POOREST**

Iain’s welfare reforms are the culmination of a struggle begun by Sir Keith when – as Secretary of State for Health and Social Services – he declared war on poverty.

Sir Keith was pre-occupied throughout his Government career by what he termed “the cycle of deprivation”.

His biographer explained the impetus for reform in the context of Sir Keith’s consistent belief that properly targeted action could help those in our society who were most in need.



“It was about the quality of life, and how that quality was being denied to innocent sufferers. It was about unnecessary suffering passed on from parents with problems to children who perpetuated the problems. He felt stimulated by it as a challenge to the Welfare State, a challenge not only to break the cycle but also to arouse the public conscience.”

As Sir Keith himself argued,

“Deprivation takes many forms, and they interact. It shows itself, for example, in poverty, in emotional impoverishment, in personality disorder, in poor educational attainment, in depression and despair. When a child is deprived of constant love and guidance, he is deprived of that most likely to lead to stability and maturity”.

The passion Sir Keith brought to the fight against deprivation was matched – as one would expect – by an unsparing intellectual honesty about the complexity of the problems society faced.

Deprivation was not just about material poverty – it was also about poverty of ambition, poor personal relationships, poor schools, a deficit of love and support and a lack of structure and order.

One of the most tragic – and least remarked on – failures of the Left (with certain honourable exceptions) has been its reluctance to see deprivation as anything other than mechanistically material.

The last Government’s anti-poverty strategy relied simply on income transfers without any feel for, or passion towards eradicating, the factors which trapped individuals in deprivation.

Of course money matters – but if you simply transfer wealth without addressing the reasons why individuals find themselves in the cycle of deprivation then you will only ever alleviate the symptoms of poverty and never remove the causes.

That is why the changes Iain has introduced matter so much. Few individuals have worked so hard to understand how individuals become trapped in poverty. The work he led at the Centre for Social Justice has transformed the debate. The CSJ directed new, and welcome, attention





on the contribution addiction and substance abuse among adults makes on children's life chances. It explored how poor parenting, and domestic violence, can impair children's cognitive development. It considered how poorly the care system looks after many children and young people in desperate need. It analysed the factors drawing disadvantaged young people into criminality and addiction. And, of course, it outlined how important it is to give meaning and structure – through work – to the lives of young people.

In office Iain's work has been transformative. The welfare system has been reformed – not to save money but to save lives. Instead of incentives for idleness and a culture of dependency, there are powerful incentives to work, to provide for others, to achieve fulfilment.

As the heroic Labour MP Simon Danczuk, himself an escapee from the cycle of deprivation, has pointed out, people can achieve amazing things through their own work; few ever achieved amazing things through dependence on the state.

Alongside Iain's reforms to support people into work he has led – through the Cabinet's Social Justice Committee – a wider programme of reform to help break the cycle of deprivation. The establishment of an Early Intervention Foundation to establish a proper research base into which policies help vulnerable young children flourish, the strengthening of the Child Poverty and Social Mobility Commission and policies to improve the lives of children at risk of neglect and children in care all flow from the leadership Iain has given.

Across Cabinet the cause of social justice is embedded in every policy area. At the Home Office, Theresa May has put the elimination of domestic violence and violence directed towards women and girls at the heart of radical crime prevention measures. She is improving how we investigate cases where children are exposed to harm and abuse as well as bringing leadership to the co-ordination of all the agencies charged with the prevention of child exploitation. Most notably, she has also developed a more robust set of policies than ever before to deal with gang violence and drug abuse and trafficking. And in the Queen's Speech there are new measures to tackle the anti-social behaviour which blights lives in many of our most disadvantaged areas. This programme of reform is the most progressive to come from the Home Office since the Sixties.



And it is matched by an equally progressive approach from the Ministry of Justice, where Chris Grayling is putting education and rehabilitation at the heart of penal policy, ensuring young offenders learn the skills they need to reintegrate into society and reforming probation services to fit them more closely to the needs of ex-prisoners who want a better life.

Work in all these areas is – by definition – the very opposite of glamorous. So it is perhaps unsurprising that so much of it goes unreported. But the work of Conservatives in Government to tackle deprivation is at the heart of David Cameron's mission for our party. And central to everything we do at the Department for Education.

We have extended the number of hours all young children spend in education before they attend school and ensured the most disadvantaged two year olds benefit for the very first time from high quality pre-school education.

We have freed social workers from overweening bureaucracy so that they are better able to intervene in families where children are at risk of abuse or neglect – so those children can be rescued.

We have acted to ensure that if children are taken into care they are better protected and better prepared for the future.

We now ensure that if they are in residential care, information is shared to ensure they are better protected from predatory adults or other dangers.

We ensure that their quality of education is better – by giving every child in care additional money to improve their schooling through the pupil premium – and requiring every local authority to appoint a responsible adult – a virtual school head – to guarantee they receive the attention they need.

We are also guaranteeing – through the junior ISA scheme – that care leavers have savings to help them adjust to adult life.

At the same time we are making it easier for children in care to find stable and loving homes by making adoption quicker, fairer and more efficient.



The courts and local authorities have been instructed to work together to reduce the time children in care spend waiting before they are placed with adoptive families.

The rules which prevented children from black and minority ethnic backgrounds finding adoptive parents as quickly as other children have been reformed.

And we have written into law the same rights for adoptive parents as other parents so they can enjoy the parental leave – and subsequent support – they require to give children love and stability.

All this and a programme of social work reform which includes overhauling training, getting more top graduates into the profession and putting social work practice onto an even more rigorous footing.

Social workers spend their lives with those whose lives are the most fragile and whose voices are most faint. They do wonderful work but are not given the credit they deserve.

This Government – following the lead set by the Prime Minister – wants to change all that by making sure those public servants who work with the most vulnerable are society's most valued professionals. And I hope the changes that we are making to child protection, the care system and social work practice will ensure that thousands more at last escape the cycle of deprivation which so concerned Sir Keith.

### **GIVING EVERY INDIVIDUAL A SOLID STAKE IN OUR SOCIETY**

Ensuring that individuals could free themselves from dependency and hopelessness was a pre-occupation of Sir Keith's that governed his ministerial life. But it also permeated his life outside politics. Out of office he was an activist director of the family construction firm Bovis. And when in Government – including a period as housing minister – he was a dedicated proponent of wider home ownership.

Sir Keith understood instinctively, as Margaret Thatcher did, that wanting to own your own home was as natural an instinct for the British as wanting to complain about the weather or laugh at politicians.



And the home-owning instinct was not just an aspect of our national character, it was a promoter of other virtues. Owning your own home makes it easier to bring up the next generation in stability and security, it insulates you from economic vicissitudes, it enables you to pass on capital to your children. Home owners have an interest in economic prudence – they want low interest rates and therefore support policies which promote low inflation rates.

Home owners know in their hearts what Locke articulated in his treatises on Government. Property ownership is the foundation of a free society. Indeed the more dispersed the ownership of property in any society the more resilient it will be against assaults on liberty.

When Sir Keith was Housing Minister he described himself as a “more” man. He wanted more homes for more people more quickly. Which is admirable.

But for what it’s worth, I would add one caveat. I believe that we cannot think of our built environment without thinking of beauty. Many of the most beautiful vistas in the United Kingdom are beautiful because of building. Whether it’s Chatsworth or the Nash terraces of Regent’s Park, Edinburgh’s New Town or Salisbury Cathedral, the man-made environment is as capable of inspiring awe as anything in nature. So when we think of new building we should not think only of losing some undeveloped land – we should also think of the potential to create something of grace and beauty, to ravish the eye and lift up the soul. That too few modern buildings can aspire to real beauty is a challenge to the architectural profession. But it is not an argument against development per se. As Charles Moore has said, if you fear there are too many houses built in the countryside, which ones would you pull down? Easton Neston? Cliveden? Waddesdon? The sandstone homes of Stamford or the limestone cottages of Berwick St John? We have built homes of transcendent beauty in the past. We can do so again.

And we do – in the spirit of Sir Keith – need more, many more, of them.

For generations now we have built too few homes, and the constricted supply has contributed to the growth and bursting of property bubbles. Because we have not had an equilibrium between housing demand and supply we have not had a proper housing market. Over time, prices have risen faster than earnings at such a rate that the proportion of first time buyers



who do not rely on financial assistance from others has fallen from 69% in 2005 to 34% in 2011. Increasingly, access to home ownership has become the preserve of those with family wealth. And many of the homes which have been built in the last two decades have been unnecessarily cramped – among the smallest in Europe – making it more difficult to raise and support a family.

But now, thanks to the political courage and policy clarity of Eric Pickles, Greg Clark and Nick Boles, things are changing. Local plans are being drawn up in consultation with local communities which free up more land for development, in a way which respects environmental concerns but also meets our desperate need for new housing. These planning reforms have not been without their critics but no one who believes in social mobility, in aspiration, in pro-family policies, in thrift and in freedom can be anything other than delighted by the release of more land for housing.

Hand-in-hand with planning reform, the Chancellor has also helped free up the credit market to ensure that first-time buyers can get access to the finance they need in a more sustainable way. And an expansion of shared equity schemes makes it easier for those on modest incomes to get on the property ladder.

It is a perhaps forgotten feature of Sir Keith Joseph's political past that he was an admirer of Harold Macmillan – not least because of Macmillan's success in spreading home ownership. And Sir Keith helped carry on that tradition – as of course did Margaret Thatcher. It is heartening that after a period of Labour Government when the historic trend towards increasing home ownership went into reverse that – at last – we are extending property ownership once more. It confirms the Conservatives as the party which helps every individual to live a life more fulfilled.

But critical as extending home ownership must be in any drive to make opportunity more equal, nothing is as important as extending access to high quality education.



## **EDUCATION REFORMS WHICH PUT THE POOREST FIRST**

The ministerial job to which Sir Keith devoted the lion's share of his time in Government was Education Secretary. Looking back to his time in that office, from my position now, is to be humbled by what he achieved against the odds.

Schools – and those who run them – are supposed to act in loco parentis. But before Sir Keith became Education Secretary the occupant of the office acted more like a sugar daddy than a responsible parent. His or her job was to fight for a larger and larger budget and then hand it over to local authorities to do as they wished.

Sir Keith was the first Education Secretary to respond effectively to the concerns about the quality of England's schools which had inspired Jim Callaghan's famous Ruskin speech.

Sir Keith believed there needed to be a greater element of parental choice in education, to drive up standards. He believed that choice needed to be informed, so he published Inspectors Reports which had hitherto been restricted. And he sought, above all, to set higher aspirations for all students, especially the poorest.

As his biographer records, "the emphasis was on what the Department could do to raise the quality of education. To use the metaphor that floated around in the educationists' world at this time, he began to push open the door to the "secret garden" where every previous Education Minister had been reluctant to walk. The secret garden was the content of education."

At the time Sir Keith began to push open that door there were all too many on the other side trying to bar his way. For the trade unions, and local authorities, scrutiny of what was taught and how schools performed was profoundly unwelcome.

But the easing open of that door has now allowed parents and taxpayers to see just what is being delivered in their name. From the decision to publish inspection reports more than twenty years ago, to decisions this Government has taken to publish much more data than ever before on school performance, especially the performance of disadvantaged pupils, greater transparency has helped to drive up standards and make opportunity more equal.



And it was the performance of disadvantaged pupils which pre-occupied Sir Keith most of all during his time in the Department for Education. The forgotten forty per cent who constituted what became known as “the Tail” – the underachievers concentrated in areas of disadvantage – were his greatest concern.

And they are mine.

Which is why so much of the Department’s work has been concentrated on helping to eliminate the achievement gap which exists between children from poorer homes and their better off peers.

England is one of the most unequal nations in the developed world in terms of educational achievement.

Just five schools – four independent and one sixth-form college in Cambridge – get more students into Oxbridge than 2,000 state schools and colleges put together.

More boys get to Oxbridge from Eton alone than from the entire cohort of children – 100,000 or so – eligible for free school meals.

Our reforms are explicitly targeted at ending this scandal.

That is why we have instituted the pupil premium – investment rising to £2.5 billion per annum by next year – which is directed towards the poorest children to raise their attainment.

Every school is held accountable for how it spends that money to eliminate the achievement gap – and philanthropic organisations such as the Sutton Trust provide detailed guidance on how to use that money to best effect.

We have also set up an independent foundation – at arm’s length from Government, managed by the Sutton Trust – to fund research into new teaching methods and educational innovation which will help eliminate the attainment gap. The Education Endowment Foundation is run by Kevan Collins – formerly chief executive of Tower Hamlets, one of the best performing local authorities in the country educationally – and provides rigorous evaluation of those teaching methods which help disadvantaged children succeed.



We are funding three times as many participants on Teach First – the wonderful charity which attracts top graduates from our best universities and deploys them to teach in areas of disadvantage. Thanks to this increased funding Teach First are expanding their reach into more schools across more areas of the country than ever before.

And thanks to the excellent work by Charlie Taylor to improve teacher training, we are now attracting more highly-qualified graduates into teaching to strengthen the workforce, particularly in our most disadvantaged areas.

The changes we are making to rigid pay structures will now allow heads to pay good teachers more and schools in poorer areas can use this flexibility, alongside the additional money which comes from the pupil premium, to recruit and retain the best teachers for the most disadvantaged communities.

Research in America confirms that allowing pay flexibility for teachers in the most challenging schools does help keep the most talented professionals in the communities which need them most.

We have also increased the number of under-performing schools which are taken out of local authority control, given academy status, and placed with sponsor organisations with a proven track record of raising attainment. More than 200 of the weakest primaries in the country are now sponsored academies. One of those – Downhills Primary in Tottenham – was the target of a vigorous campaign from union militants who were determined to prevent students benefiting from academy sponsorship. But the school, and its students, are now flourishing as part of the superlative academy chain run by Lord Harris of Peckham and Sir Dan Moynihan.

More and more high-performing schools are taking weaker schools in disadvantaged areas under their wing, with brilliant head teachers such as Barry Day of the Greenwood Dale academy chain and Michael Wilkins of Outwood Grange extending their reach into some of our most challenging communities, taking over schools which were once thought to be desperately poor and providing new hope.





At the same time, teachers, parents and philanthropists are taking advantage of our reforms to start up wholly new schools – free schools – again, often in areas of real need. Whether it's established head teachers such as Patricia Sowter in Enfield or Liam Nolan in the heart of inner city Birmingham or the pioneers behind new schools in Bedford and Greenwich, we are allowing visionaries with a commitment to the highest possible standards the chance to transform the lives of our poorest children.

The changes we are making to the national curriculum and our examination systems reinforce this dynamic. They entrench a culture of higher standards for all and clear more space in the school year for proper teaching rather than repetitive testing.

I would hope these changes might have commended themselves to Sir Keith, had he been still around to see them.

As his biographer stated, summing up his career,

“Lord Joseph did throw himself powerfully into the cause of helping the underprivileged as an Education Secretary – and bore the scars, inflicted collectively by the teachers unions among others. But his work there provides a marker for his party when it tries to work out a social philosophy”.

Twenty years on, thanks to the leadership shown by David Cameron, our party has a social philosophy imbued by the spirit of Sir Keith's great work – consciously in the tradition of compassionate conservatism he incarnated.

That is why I believe the best memorial we can erect to him is a society in which opportunity is more equal, the needs of the most vulnerable are our first priority and the greatest fulfilment any of us can have is in service to others.