

<b>Agrégation interne d'anglais</b>
<b>Session 2018</b>
<b>Épreuve ESP</b>
<b>Explication d'un texte extrait du programme</b>

<b>ESP</b>
<b>211</b>

### **Explication de texte**

Thatcher, Margaret, Speech to the Institute of SocioEconomic Studies in New York, September 15<sup>th</sup>, 1975.

Source: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/102769>

### **Explication de faits de langue**

Le candidat proposera une analyse linguistique des segments soulignés dans le texte.

Only a week or two ago, Vermont Royster wrote that – and I quote – “Britain today offers a textbook case on how to ruin a country.” I do take some consolation that there’s only one small vowel sound between ‘ruin’ and ‘run’ a country. The small vowel sound is ‘I’. [Laughter and applause]

5           However, the rather fatalistic tone of much of what is written about Britain by commentators on both sides of the Atlantic is, I believe, misplaced. So I’m very grateful to the SocioEconomic Institute for giving me a splendid opportunity to try and put one or two things straight.

10           I think most outside observers have noticed that, amid our very well published difficulties, a new debate is beginning—or perhaps I should say an old debate is being renewed—about the proper role of government, the Welfare State, and the attitudes on which both rest. And may I stress that the attitudes are extremely important? Of course, many of the issues at stake have been debated on countless occasions in the last century or two  
15           and some are as old as philosophy itself, but the Welfare State in Britain is now at least thirty years old. So, after a long period in which it was unquestionably accepted by the whole of society, we can now do more than discuss its strengths and weaknesses in the abstract language of moral and political principles. We can depart from theory and we can  
20           actually look at the evidence and see how it has worked, what effect it has had on the economy, how we ought now to assess it, before we decide what to go on and do next.

25           The debate centres on what I’ll term, for want of a better phrase, the ‘progressive consensus’. I should perhaps say here that things that are called progressive are not always progressive in practice – but of course some of them are. And the progressive consensus, I think, is the doctrine that the state should be active on many fronts: in promoting equality, in the provision of social welfare, and in the redistribution of wealth and incomes.

30           That philosophy is well expressed in a quotation, quite well known in my country, about social justice. Again, I pause for a moment to point out that if ever you see a word with ‘social’ in front of it, I think you ought to analyse it fairly carefully and see precisely what it means. Because one of the reasons, I think, we’ve got some things a little bit ... not quite straight  
35           is that we haven’t always been precise in our use of language. And if you’re going to think straight, you really must talk straight and be very precise in the way in which you use words. There is a quotation on social justice and it says this: ‘It’s just because market forces tend towards growing inequality in incomes and property that massive redistribution is  
40           necessary if political freedom and other civilised values are to be preserved. So it should be the aim of the democratic state,’ the quotation continues, ‘to re-share out these rewards, to socialise the national income,

45 if you like to call it that [...]. There can be no doubt that by far the most effective method has proved to be, and is likely to prove increasingly in the future, the instrument of public finance and in particular progressive direct taxation and centrally financed public services.'

50 Now, that's the end of the quotation on social justice and the means by which that person proposed to bring it about. It so happened that that was written by a former Labour cabinet minister in 1962, but I'm not particularly interested in party politics tonight, because these views have been held in varying degrees by all political parties, in schools and universities, and among social commentators generally. It's interesting that they're now being questioned right across the same broad spectrum.

55 Now, it's not that our people are suddenly reverting to the ideals of *laissez-faire*. Nor are they rejecting the social advances of recent decades. It's rather that they are reviving a constructive interest in the noble ideals of personal responsibility, because in some respects the concepts of social responsibility have turned sour in practice. And we are making an attempt to identify and eliminate errors and fallacies and to consolidate and  
60 retrench before advancing further. And it's in that constructive spirit, and as a former Secretary of State for Education and Science myself, that I'm speaking to you tonight. [...]