

From THE RT. HON. SIR KEITH JOSEPH, BT., M.P.



KJ/MHM

27th May, 1977

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Margaret,

Angus Maude and I have been discussing how we can best get more serious attention for Conservative ideas and arguments, meeting, in the process, criticism that the Party does not have any policies.

What we favour is an occasional series of pamphlets by Shadow Ministers (called, say, "The Shadow Cabinet Papers") setting out our policy on various subjects. We believe it is possible to do this while avoiding becoming over-committed on detail.

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dmr
We would like to start with a restatement of our economic policy, which would be associated with Geoffrey Howe, Jim Prior, possibly David Howell and myself. If this passed muster, we would publish it in September before the Party Conference. However, our request to you at this stage is not about publication but only concerns your agreement that we should set in hand the necessary work over the next couple of months. Much of it would anyway have to be done for ERG but there is a good deal to be said for having deadlines in the background in order to encourage activity. If the finished ~~article~~ is not good enough, or is thought by you and the Shadow Cabinet to be politically risky, then we will not have lost anything, since we should only let it be known that we are going to publish when we know definitely that we have something good to launch.

If a document of the sort we are suggesting was successfully produced, we would envisage further papers on a variety of subjects from Education to Defence. We have a good story to tell, and we think that it can be told in a way which gives the members of your team a bit more national attention without handing any hostages to fortune.

Yours ever,

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher MP,
Leader of the Opposition's Office,
House of Commons.

Keith

c.c. Angus Maude MP