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The Editor of  
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Sir, - Watching from a distance I find it surprising that the dispute in the Tory party in the face of an impending elections should puzzle so many British commentators. It seems to me inevitable that at this stage genuine differences should appear within the party.

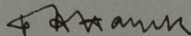
I have no way of knowing Mrs. Thatcher's mind. But from her public statements it seems to me clear that Mrs. Thatcher takes the statesman-like view that it is more important to be placed in a position in which she can save Britain from accelerating economic decline than to win the next election. There can be little doubt that her high aim would require decisions as Prime Minister of which we still do not know whether the general public would yet be prepared to support them.

The majority of the prospective Tory candidates are naturally and understandably primarily concerned about winning a seat in the coming election and feel that their chances may be reduced by what I have seen described as Mrs. Thatcher's "extremism". There may be some foundation for this. But nothing could damage the long-run prospects of the Tory party more than being elected with a large majority without the authority of throwing round the rudder of policy.

If the country is not yet prepared for this, a statesman and patriot should prefer being defeated in the election to being charged with a task in which he has not the support of the public. This is perhaps not a view one can expect the run of members of Parliament to take. But I still hope that the British people will honour Mrs. Thatcher for putting the long run interests of the nation above the short run prospects of her party.

The country will not be saved by the Tories being elected, but it may be saved by what they can do, but not a party dependent on the trade union leaders who owe their power to the very privileges which the law has granted them but which must be revoked. To hope for the necessary change from negotiations with the trade union leaders is a phantasma. But the mandate for the necessary action may be obtained by appealing over their heads to the workers at large. The world belongs to the courageous and not to the timid.

Yours faithfully,



F.A. Hayek