

Abschrift der Dankesrede von Margaret Thatcher zur Verleihung des Internationalen Preises der Friedrich-August-von-Hayek-Stiftung:

October 2003

I am profoundly grateful to have been honoured by this award. Friedrich von Hayek was an inspiration for me in the 1980s, when the government which I led sought to reverse the malign effects of socialism on Britain`s economy and society. Hayek did not offer a set of policies: that, he considered, was for politicians themselves to devise. Rather, he offered an account of what was fundamentally wrong and he described how a better system would work. Thus he gave us the commodity which was then in shortest supply: he gave us hope.

For that very reason, Hayek`s writings have not dated with the years. They remain a star by which the governments of free nations everywhere would be well advised to steer their course.

Hayek`s analysis of the perils of the planned society and the command economy is, indeed, unrivalled. He shows how attempts to defy markets are doomed to be self-defeating. He warns us that beneath the seductive slogans and the simplistic targets of the utopians who promise heaven on earth there frequently lurks the reality of a totalitarian hell. He reminds us that we must value the habits, rules and institutions of liberty for their own sake if we are to enjoy for long the benefits that freedom brings. And all these messages are as relevant to our own age as when he first spoke to the West about that *Road to Serfdom*.

Perhaps more so. This is because Hayek is still the preeminent modern philosopher of ordered liberty – something that in every continent is today under threat from dark forces of anarchy, hatred, revolution, fanaticism and violence. Against such ideologues, he encourages us to have faith in the peaceful, subtle processes by which people co-operate in fulfilling their requirements under a rule of law; to rely on an extended, spontaneous order; in short, to promote the system generally known as capitalism.

Hayek is, therefore, the prophet not of doom and disaster, but of peace and plenty. His is a voice of wisdom for our time, and for all time. We should listen to him.

Margaret Thatcher