

Margaret Roberts THATCHER

UNITED KINGDOM

Prime Minister (since May
1979)Addressed as:
Prime Minister

©

Leader of the Conservative Party since 1975, Margaret Thatcher is the first woman ever to serve as Prime Minister of Britain or of any European country. According to the press, she is a self-proclaimed crusader for free enterprise and the economic revival of Great Britain. A member of Parliament since 1959, Thatcher has held several important government positions during her career, including that of Secretary of State for Education and Science (1970-74).

The daughter of a grocer and a seamstress, Thatcher won a scholarship to Somerville College, Oxford, and graduated with honors in chemistry in 1947. While there she was president of the University Conservative Association. After working for four years as a research chemist in an industrial firm, she began to study law, specializing in tax legislation and patents. During her political career she has served as joint parliamentary secretary to the Ministry of Pensions and National Insurance (1961-64) and shadow deputy chancellor of the exchequer (1974-75). Thatcher visited the United States in 1967 on a Foreign Leader Grant. On later trips she met with Presidents Gerald Ford (1975) and Jimmy Carter (1977, 1979). She renewed an acquaintance with President Ronald Reagan, whom she has known for several years, on a state visit to Washington in February 1981. She also received the William J. Donovan Medal, awarded by veterans of the Office of Strategic Services to individuals who render distinguished service to the cause of freedom.

Thatcher, 56, enjoys listening to music by Bach, Beethoven, and Chopin and reading detective stories, historical novels, and biographies. Her husband, Denis, is a retired oil company executive. The Thatchers have 28-year-old twins, Mark and Carol.

CR M 82-12519
18 May 1982