

Margaret Roberts THATCHER

UNITED KINGDOM

Prime Minister (since May 1979)

Leader of the Conservative Party since 1975, Margaret Thatcher is the first woman ever to serve as prime minister of Britain or of any other European country. In 1987 she became the first British prime minister in 150 years to be elected to a third successive term in office. Thatcher is a self-proclaimed crusader for free enterprise, free trade, and economic revival. She has frequently declared her support for a strong NATO, an independent British nuclear deterrent, and the need for balanced and verifiable arms control measures. In the spring of 1987 Thatcher made an official visit to Moscow, the first British prime minister to do so in more than a decade.



The daughter of a grocer and a seamstress, Thatcher was born on 13 October 1925. She 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. A member of Parliament since 1959, Thatcher held several important government and party positions before becoming Prime Minister, including those of Secretary of State for Education and Science (1970-74) and shadow deputy chancellor of the exchequer (1974-75).

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

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