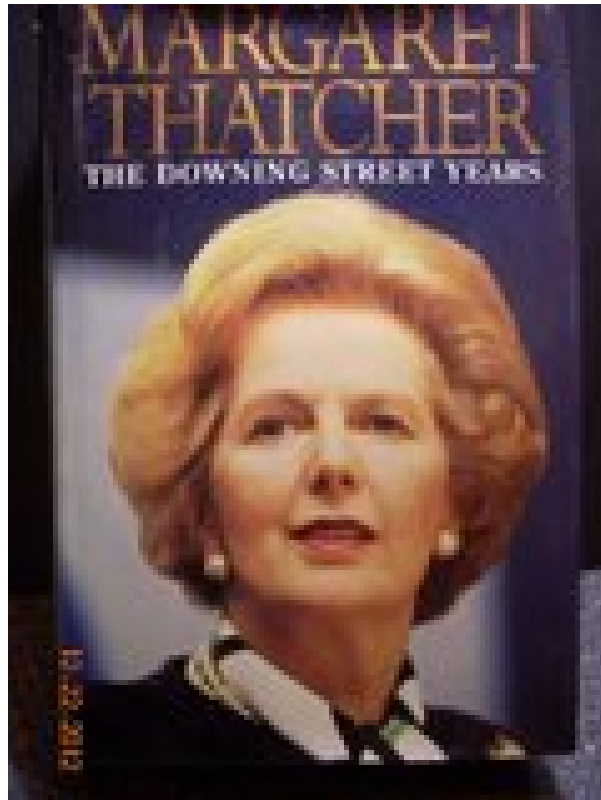
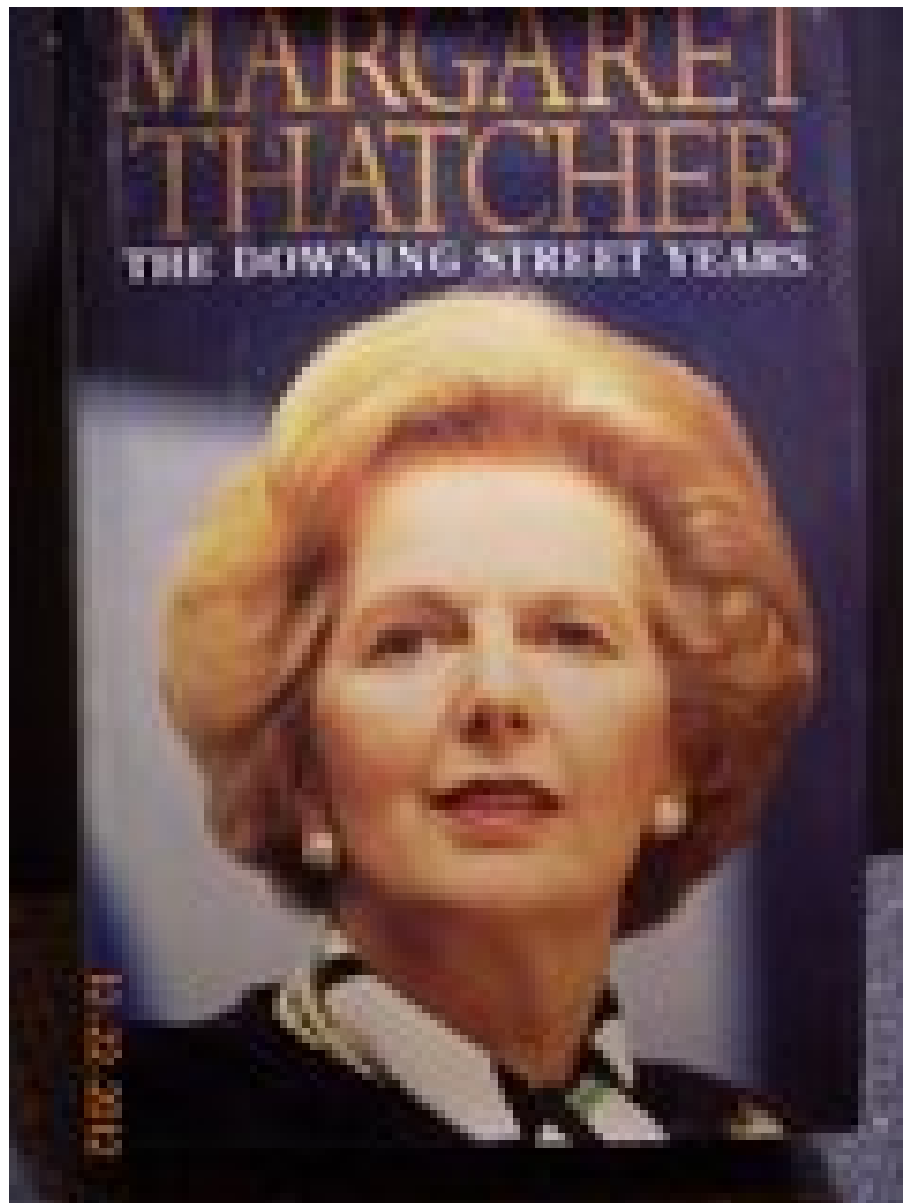


THE DOWNING STREET YEARS BY MARGARET THATCHER



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Fans of Britain's first woman prime minister may have already purchased this fact-filled but ultimately self-serving memoir. Key events of Thatcher's 11-year reign--the alliance with Reagan, the Falklands/Malvinas War, the 1984-1985 miners' strike, conflict within the European Community, and so on--are described in exhaustive detail. There is little attempt to provide a balanced or subtle portrait of a controversial administration. Although, for the most part, the book's prose style is rather pedantic, Thatcher's unique personality nevertheless shines through. The gist of her approach is conveyed in the chapter titles--"The World Turned Right Side Up," "Disarming the Left," "No Time To Go Wobbly." Yet even Thatcher's harshest critics will find this book informative and revealing. The book contains over 50 photographs, some in color. A second volume, devoted to her life prior to the 1979 election that brought her to No. 10 Downing Street, is promised. Previewed in Prepub Alert, LJ 6/15/93.

- Kent Worcester, Social Science Research Council, New York

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From Booklist

The Iron Lady tells all. Well, not exactly all; her memoirs reveal little of her personal life and, chronologically, cover only those years during which she was prime minister. Her book has already caused a stir in the U.K. and will be read with great enthusiasm on this side of the Atlantic not only by people involved in government, but also by general readers keen on foreign affairs. The first woman prime minister of Britain was never known for sugarcoating, and her remembrance of her 11-year tenure at No. 10 Downing Street is defined not only by its wealth of details about her activities as head of the government, but also by her unequivocal opinions about world-important events she participated in and history-changing individuals she encountered. Would we expect anything else but outspokenness from Thatcher as she reviews, analyzes, explains, and defends her policies and procedures, domestic and foreign, during her controversial presiding over Britain's disestablishment of socialism and resurgence as a world power? Highlights of her recollections include her comments on the Falklands War ("The significance . . . was enormous, both for Britain's self-confidence and for [its] standing in the world") and the reunification of Germany ("Germany is . . . by its very nature a destabilizing rather than a stabilizing force in Europe"). One has to admire her for her honesty, integrity, and stick-to-her-guns attitude. Brad Hooper

About the Author

In 1979 Margaret Thatcher became the first woman British Prime Minister. A decade later she became the first premier for 160 years to win three consecutive general elections. In 1990 she resigned her leadership of an increasingly divided and turbulent government. She is the only PM to have given her name to a branch of political philosophy, and arguably the most important figure in postwar British politics.

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The first volume of memoirs by Margaret Thatcher frankly recalls the former British prime minister's dealings with U.S. presidents, the Falkland War, and her election victories in 1983 and 1987. 150,000 first printing. \$150,000 ad/promo. Tour.

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Remarkable Lady

By Elijah Chingosho

"The Downing Street Years" is an interesting, informative, enlightening and fascinating account of Margaret Thatcher as the Prime Minister of Great Britain for 11 years. Lady Thatcher was clearly a brilliant politician with a sharp intellect who has left an enduring legacy and indelible mark in British and world politics. Readers can get an insight on how she made certain decisions.

My political views are very different from hers but I greatly admire her achievements for Britain. She had the courage, perseverance and decisiveness to stand up for her beliefs and not just to please some people. Her rise to power in a male dominated society and Conservative Party is nothing short of remarkable. Things to her were in clear black or white, no grey areas, which generated either intense loyalty or deep seated dislike of the lady. She was truly an "Iron Lady".

In her memoirs, the reader will learn how she dealt with various significant events during her tenure in office such as the Falklands War, the USSR, the Miners Strike, and the privatization of nationalized industries, her encounters and opinions on various world leaders as well as how she won three elections (1979, 1983 and 1987). Her close friendship with Ronald Reagan played a significant role in the collapse of the USSR. She also reveals the challenges she often encountered in politics including betrayals and dealing with government officials steeped in bureaucracy.

This is excellent reading for executives and politicians of all political persuasions.

21 of 23 people found the following review helpful.

Daunting, but worth the effort.

By CJ

Mrs. Thatcher's memoirs of her decade-plus as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom are a very illuminating look at the 1980s, which were perhaps the most critical decade for Britain - and the rest of the Western world - since the Second World War. This is a massive, 800-plus page tome. But if you're interested in recent British history, or in the 1980s or the late Cold War, this book will reward your time and effort. Mrs. Thatcher may have been controversial - loved by many and hated by nearly as many - but one thing you can't accuse her of is failure to lead.

All of the important events of her tenure as PM are covered. Some of it is tedious - such as minute details about tax policies, for example. (Though these do, however, illustrate Mrs. Thatcher's impressive ability to

understand the complexities of important issues.) But the wonderful thing about this book is that it's organized simultaneously chronologically and topically, which means you can skip over parts you're not interested in and go ahead to something else. (I admit I did this more than once.)

I particularly liked the parts dealing with the Falkland Islands War and those dealing with the Cold War. In the case of the former, I've read several military accounts of the conflict, but Mrs. Thatcher's detailed chronicling of the diplomatic aspects added greatly to my understanding of it. It was amazing how much the US, in the form of Secretary of State Al Haig, meddled in it to try to achieve "compromise," despite the fact that Argentina was clearly the aggressor.

The parts on the last phases of the Cold War were the strongest parts of the book. It's neat to get an insider's account of all the personalities and the diplomatic wrangling. Mrs. Thatcher was the Churchill of her time - she was instrumental in using real leadership skills to help hold together an alliance against aggressive dictatorships. The combination of her leadership with that of Ronald Reagan, Pope John Paul II, and Mikhail Gorbachev - the first Soviet leader who seemed to genuinely have good intentions, despite his continuing belief in communism - was a major factor in bringing about the end of the Cold War. I believe that as time goes by, Mrs. Thatcher will only be more vindicated, both for her contributions to the West's Cold War victory, and for starting the process of revitalizing Britain. (A former professor of mine who specialized in modern Britain and was - of course - a dedicated left-winger always gave Mrs. Thatcher a lot of credit for making some tough decisions that had positive long-term effects on the British economy; in fact, my professor even said that the prosperity Britain enjoyed in the '90s probably had more to do with Thatcher than with Blair. Coming from a leftist, that's saying something!)

Yes, this book is biased and one-sided; Mrs. Thatcher, atypically for a European leader, speaks (and writes) in a very straightforward, tell-it-like-it-is, here's-what-I-think-and-why-I'm-right fashion. (She almost seems like an American, with a habit like that!) But remember, these are memoirs. Memoirs, especially by former political leaders, are ALWAYS biased; they're not meant to be objective. Instead, they're meant to be one person's account, one person's case. If you keep that in mind, this is a very good book - huge and dense, perhaps, but worth the effort if the subject matter interests you.

18 of 22 people found the following review helpful.

Lover her or hate her, she was UNIQUE

By madmanxman

This first volume of memoirs by Margaret Thatcher frankly recalls the former British prime minister's dealings with U.S. presidents, the Falkland War, and her election victories in 1979, 1983 and 1987. She also details the back-stabbing and eye-gouging that the British call politics. It may be a little less corrupt than politics in some other countries I could name, but it sure ain't an arena for the feint of heart. There were never any gray areas with Thatcher. The British either worshipped the ground she walked on, or detested her every word. There was nothing in the middle, because Thatcher was not given to taken the middle course. 'There's nothing I like more than a lively discussion' she would say. What she meant, of course, was that she loved a damn good argument! This first part of her autobiography is as outspoken as she was. She pulls no punches, and her unequivocal opinions about world events she participated in and world leaders she encountered leave you wondering how she survived eleven years as Britain's Prime Minister. But would we expect anything else from Thatcher as she explains and defends her controversial policies, which caused the dismemberment of socialism and Britain's resurgence as a world power after many years of liberal misrule.

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