



Margaret Thatcher: Power and Personality

By Jonathan Aitken

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A strong and sometimes divisive figure in British and world politics, Margaret Thatcher was the longest-serving British Prime Minister in the 20th century and the only woman to ever hold the office. Drawing from an abundance of new, previously unpublished material from the Thatcher Archive at Churchill College, Cambridge, Jonathan Aitken's fresh and original biography is a lively and perceptive exploration of the personality that dominated conservative British politics for more than 10 years and her profound and worldwide impact on the historical tapestry of her time. At once positive and critical in its assessment of her governance, *Margaret Thatcher: Power and Personality* is crafted from the author's longtime personal relationship with his subject, his eyewitness account of public and private episodes in her life, and more than 100 interviews with the former Prime Minister's political colleagues and close personal friends. Penetrating and insightful, it chronicles one of the most remarkable political lives of our time.

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Editorial Review

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Starred Review The fact that Thatcher's funeral procession was greeted with more cheers than protest, though the reverse was expected, attests to the mixed emotions she elicited in life. She was the only woman to serve as prime minister of Britain and the longest-serving PM in the twentieth century, such a hard-edged conservative that she was known as the Iron Lady. Aitken, a former member of Parliament, served for a time with Thatcher but also dated her daughter and knew the PM on a more personal level. That mixture of professional and personal relationships with Thatcher affords him a close-up, long-term perspective on one of the most powerful women in recent history, with a hand in major economic and geopolitical changes. Drawing on archival material, interviews, and personal knowledge, Aitken chronicles the "metamorphosis from humble beginnings to grandeur; from humility to hubris; from a realistic courage in fighting her corner to a reckless Ride of the Valkyries." He chronicles her strict childhood, marriage, political rise, and relationships with figures including Presidents Reagan and George H. W. Bush and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. A woman of steely discipline and determination, powerful on the international stage, she eventually ran afoul of local politics in a dispute within her party. Aitken admits to a complex admiration of Thatcher, having seen her at her best and her worst, in this thoroughly insightful and compelling look at a remarkable world figure. --Vanessa Bush

Review

"[A] thoroughly insightful and compelling look at a remarkable world figure." ?*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

About the Author

Jonathan Aitken, a former Member of Parliament and cabinet minister, is the author of 12 books, including his award-winning biography of President Richard Nixon. His recent titles include *Pride and Perjury* and *Nazarbayev and the Making of Kazakhstan*. He lives in London.

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