

THATCHER



KENNETH HARRIS

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Margaret Thatcher is known throughout the United States as probably the most powerful woman in government today, a staunch ally of our country, and a world leader. Yet when she became British Prime Minister in 1979, few people, including most of her senior Cabinet colleagues, would have predicted the ascendancy which she enjoys today over her government, the House of Commons, Great Britain, and the world. How has she done it? Why has she been able to impose upon her country economic and social policies that, when she came to power, were fairly universally regarded as out of date, discredited, and politically unacceptable? How has she survived upheavals in her Cabinet, the resignation or retirement of many leading Conservative statesmen, and gone on to become, in 1987, the first British Prime Minister in 160 years to win three general elections in a row?

Margaret Thatcher is the only British Prime Minister who has given her name to an "ism," who has made one the basis of a regime. What is Thatcherism? Margaret Thatcher was the daughter of a small grocer in a Lincolnshire country town. Her childhood, youth, and family background, with a strong Methodist influence, were very different from those of most Conservative Party leaders. How much of that is the basis of Thatcherism? What has Thatcherism done? What is it doing? Is it giving Britain a new lease on life or, as others say, giving it the kiss of death?

Kenneth Harris has written a widely praised biography of Clement Attlee, the Prime Minister who, between 1945 and 1951, led the Labour Administration that nationalized Britain's basic industries, established the Welfare State, substantially changed social

To the other great Prime Ministers,
who like Margaret Thatcher lead

"The Way Forward"

for Kenneth Hamel

April 2, 1998



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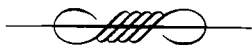
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CONTENTS



List of Illustrations	vi
Acknowledgements	vii
1 Perspective	1
2 Doubts about Heath	7
3 Consensus is Out	13
4 The Leadership Contest	25
5 Mrs Thatcher Takes Charge	34
6 Alfred Roberts's Daughter	40
7 Uphill Struggle	59
8 Prime Minister	86
9 The Falklands War	123
10 In Control	145
11 Showdown with the Miners	156
12 The Use of Power	180
13 Mrs Thatcher and the Future of Britain	214
Some Biographical Notes	220
Source Notes	236
Bibliography	238
Index	240