

# Margaret thatcher - emancipated woman



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Even today in the year 2009 the top political positions in most countries are still male-dominated. Emancipation has made a lot of progress during the last decades, but woman in the prime political positions such as the president or the prime minister are still a rare sight. For example when Angela Merkel became the first female Chancellor of Germany in 2005 it was regarded as a milestone in German politics; and the USA, the country of freedom and sophistication has yet to experience a female president. One of the exceptions in this context is the UK. Not because of the UK itself but because of Margaret Thatcher. She took office as the first female Prime Minister of the UK as well as the first female leader of the Conservative Party already 30 years ago, when women in such high political positions were basically non-existent. She was one of the forerunners for the emancipated women in today's world. She was nicknamed " the Iron Lady" and the term Thatcherism was invented to describe her distinctive style and content of her politics. So what set her apart from the others; how was it possible for her to become Britain's first female Prime Minister, a feat that no other woman so far could duplicate? One reason for her inimitable success was definitely her steadfast character. She had a strong opinion and did not let others dissuade her from doing her thing. A prime example for this is her behavior in October of 1984 when the IRA made an attempt on her life, which became known as the Brighton hotel bombing. In the night of October 12, 1984, the IRA detonated large bombs in the Grand Hotel in Brighton/UK, where many high-level politicians were staying because of the British Conservative Party Conference the next day. The bomb detonated at around 3 o'clock in the morning, when Margaret was in her hotel room, still awake preparing a conference speech that she gave on the same day. The bomb badly

damaged adjacent rooms and killed several of her fellow politicians, but she came away uninjured, spending the rest of the night at a police station for security reasons. The IRA claimed responsibility the next day, part of their statement was: " Mrs. Thatcher will now realize that Britain cannot occupy our country and torture our prisoners and shoot our people in their own streets and get away with it. Today we were unlucky, but remember we only have to be lucky once. You will have to be lucky always. Give Ireland peace and there will be no more war." (IRA, 1984). One would assume that she needed a day off to assimilate the shock of the bombing, but Margaret continued to do business as usual, attended the Conference punctually at 9:30 (a mere 6 hours after the attack) and gave her speech which included the following statement "...the fact that we are gathered here now...is a sign not only that this attack has failed, but that all attempts to destroy democracy by terrorism will fail." (Thatcher, 1984) Besides her resolute character, the other key component of her success was her political and economic philosophy. Thatcher was a firm supporter of democracy. She was anti-communism and in favor of free markets with little government intervention. In January 1976, as the leader of the opposition (before she became Prime Minister), she criticized the Soviet Union in a speech that included: " The men in the Soviet Politburo do not have to worry about the ebb and flow of public opinion. They put guns before butter, while we put just about everything before guns. " (Thatcher, 1984). Other key elements of Thatcher's philosophy included entrepreneurialism, monetarism, opposition to trade unions and privatization of state-owned industries Margaret Thatcher really was of the precursors of today's emancipated women. She is one of the most influential British politicians of the last decades and the fact that she is a

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woman makes this even more impressive. Her incredible success was mainly due to her unwavering character and the content of her politics and economic policies. The fact that Thatcher's politics had a long-lasting effect becomes especially clear in a statement of Peter Mandelson, member of Parliament belonging to the British Labour Party: " we are all Thatcherites now." (Mendelson, 2002) References Taylor, Peter. (2001). Brits : The War Against the IRA. 265-267. London: Bloomsbury Publishing. ISBN 0-7475-5806-X. Thatcher, Margaret. (1984). Speech to Conservative Party Conference, 12 October 1984 Mendelson, Peter. (2002). Mandelson: we are all Thatcherites now. retrived on April 7, 2009 from: The Guardian, Website: <http://politics.guardian.co.uk/labour/story/0,9061,730718,00.html>