

(47) (UK general election, 1983)

Thatcher: The Russians said that I was an Iron Lady.
Audience: Hear hear.
Thatcher: They were right.
Audience: Heh heh | heh
Audience: | xxXXXXX (TV editor's cut)
Thatcher: Britain needs an Iron Lady.
Audience: Hear | hear
Audience: | xxXXXXXXXXX (TV editor's cut)

In a similar vein, she has not tried to deny the appropriateness of another nickname, which locates her firmly within a long-standing and culturally familiar class of successful women, namely that of 'Headmistress'. In this connection, her answer to a question put to her during the 1983 election by John Cole of the BBC reflects a clear willingness on her part to be identified with such an image. And it is interesting to note that this response came in the context of rebutting complaints formulated in fairly blatantly male-chauvinist terms:

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Cole: Other Prime Ministers after all have been bossy too, but Mrs Thatcher does undoubtedly keep a fussy watch on their [her ministers'] performances with an occasional touch of motherliness. I asked her today what she said to suggestions that she had a headmistress image.

Thatcher: Well I've known some very very good headmistresses who've launched their pupils on wonderful careers. I had one such and was very very grateful. But I am what I am. Yes, my style is of vigorous leadership. Yes, I do believe certain things very strongly. Yes, I do believe in trying to persuade people that the things I believe in are the things they should follow. And Mr Cole I'm far too old to change now.