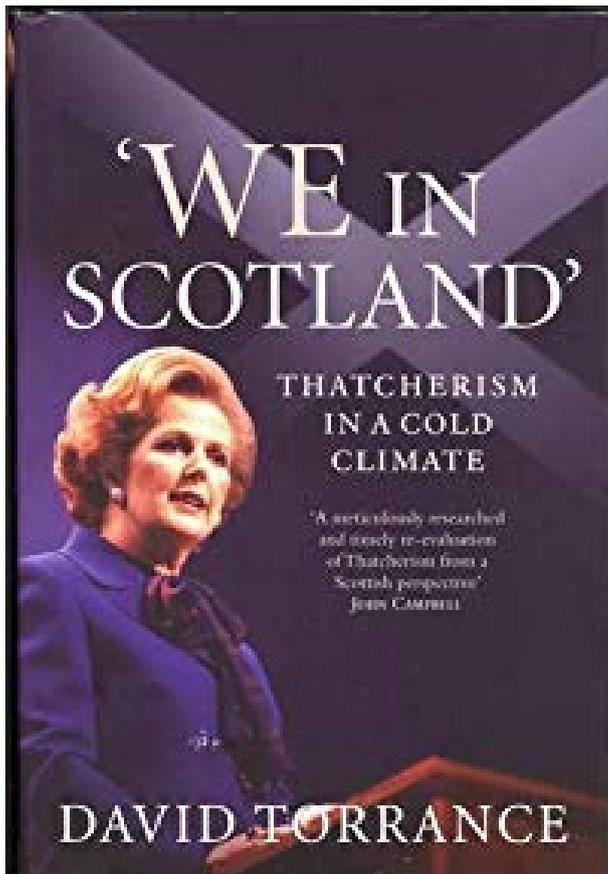


# 'We in Scotland': Thatcherism in a Cold Climate



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<b>Author:</b>	David Torrance
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Love her or hate her, there is no escaping the impact Margaret Thatcher had on post-war Scottish politics. The 1980s are indelibly marked as the Thatcher decade, and although her first visit to Scotland just days after becoming Conservative leader in 1975 was a success, her relationship with Scots quickly turned sour. She U-turned on a long-standing commitment to establish a Scottish Assembly, and on being elected Prime Minister in 1979 Scotland found itself disproportionately affected by the decline of heavy manufacturing—a phenomenon hastened by a new economic policy dubbed monetarism.

Thatcher frequently espoused the free market values of Adam Smith in an attempt to win over Scotland, while harking back to the Victorian era in which enterprising Scots thrived at home and abroad.

But instead of inspiring allegiance to her dismantling of the post-war consensus, Scotland seemingly resisted most aspects of what became known as Thatcherism. Industrial decline was followed by striking miners and teachers, while Thatcher's fight back following a disastrous result in Scotland at the 1987 general election backfired spectacularly. She was shown the red card at Hampden, snubbed by the Church of Scotland after her infamous 'Sermon on the Mound', and accused of 'testing' the controversial Poll Tax on hostile Scottish guinea pigs. Since she was ousted from power in 1990, biographers and historians have been busy reassessing Thatcher's legacy, but none have focused on that legacy in Scotland. David Torrance, whose first two books

on the Scottish Office and George Younger touched on these themes, has now turned his meticulous research on one of the most tumultuous decades in Scotland's recent history.

Did Margaret Thatcher really care about or understand Scotland? Why did Scots apparently reject her and Thatcherism? Torrance examines this curious dynamic and confronts many myths about Thatcherism and Scotland, most notably Ravenscraig and the Poll Tax.