



The Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

3rd April, 1979

Dear Mr. Cox

Thank you for your letter suggesting that Mr. Callaghan and I should appear on television together during the General Election campaign.

You make it clear that the objective is to bring together "the leaders of the two main political parties, one of whom will form the next Government....."

As you may know, the B.B.C. put a similar proposition to Mr. Callaghan and myself in a letter dated July 10th last year. At my request Lord Thorneycroft discussed it with the B.B.C. I do not know how the Prime Minister replied.

We came to the conclusion that if the debate was to be between the leaders of the two main parties, as you now suggest, no special additional time should be allotted to the leaders of any of the other parties.

The alternative was that we should not move to this Presidential-style of debate, which is alien to this country. Instead, we should continue with the traditional broadcasting arrangements of presenting the whole policy of a party to the nation.

During our talks with the B.B.C. it became obvious that the two approaches are irreconcilable. Personally I believe that issues and policies decide elections, not personalities. We should stick to that approach.

We are not electing a President, we are choosing a government.

Yours sincerely
Margaret Thatcher

David Cox Esq.