

# Terminale OIB

## UK contemporary history sourcebook

### Political, social and cultural evolution 1945-1991

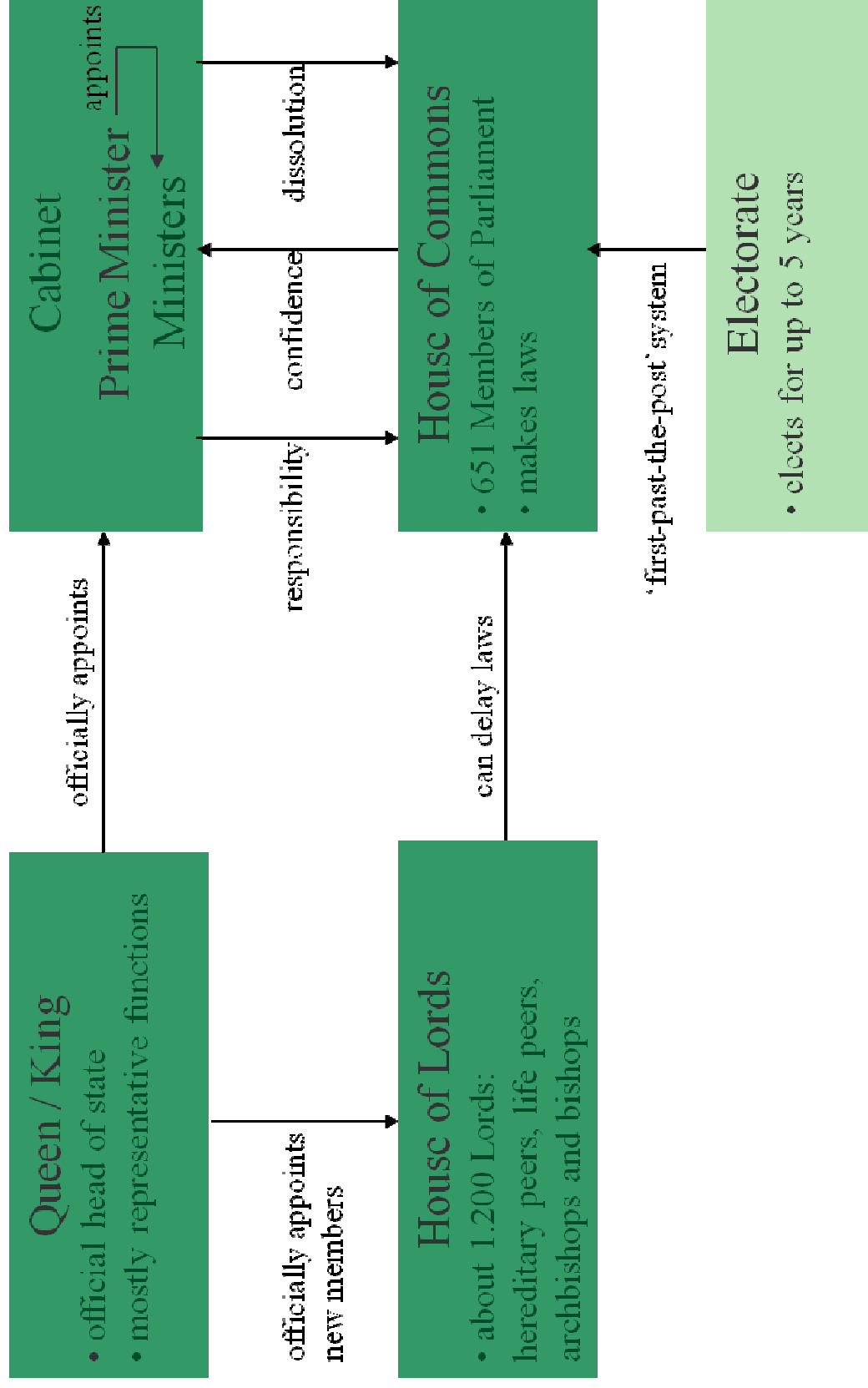


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# **UK political basics**

# The British Political System



## B) Elements on the Monarchy

The [head of state](#), *theoretical* and nominal source of [executive](#), [judicial](#) and [legislative](#) power in the UK is the [British monarch](#), currently Queen [Elizabeth II](#). However, sovereignty in the UK no longer rests with the monarch, since the [English Bill of Rights in 1689](#), which established the principle of [Parliamentary sovereignty](#). None-the-less the monarch is still known as the Sovereign.

The British Sovereign possesses many hypothetical powers, including the right to choose any British citizen to be her [Prime Minister](#) and the right to call and dissolve [Parliament](#) whenever she wishes. However, in accordance with the current uncodified constitution, the Prime Minister is the leader of the largest party in the [House of Commons](#), and Parliament is [dissolved](#) at the time suggested by the PM. Other royal powers called [royal prerogative](#), such as patronage to appoint ministers and the ability to declare war, are exercised by the Prime Minister and the [Cabinet](#), with the formal consent of the Queen.

Today the Sovereign has an essentially [ceremonial](#) role restricted in exercise of power by [convention](#) and [public opinion](#). However the monarch does continue to exercise three essential rights: the *right to be consulted*, the *right to advise* and the *right to warn*. As a consequence of these ideals, Prime Ministers hold weekly confidential meetings with the monarch in which the Queen has got the right to express her opinions.

### The role of the monarchy

The monarchy has existed in its hereditary form since the tenth century AD, if not before. According to Philip Norton, Elizabeth II can trace her own claim back to King Egbert who was said to have united England under his rule in AD829. Although the only break in the reign of monarchs came as a result of the English Civil War and the subsequent execution of Charles I (1649), the last 400 years have seen the gradual transformation from the medieval and early modern monarch, claiming the 'divine right' to rule, to the modern 'constitutional monarch'. The same period has, of course, seen a parallel growth in the power of Parliament as well as the emergence and growth of the power of the Prime Minister. The royal prerogative powers (see Ch 6.1) still offer a monarch considerable, if largely theoretical, powers. The monarch is the head of the executive, a key figure in the legislative process, the head of the judiciary, the Commander in Chief of the armed forces and the Supreme Governor of the Church of England. In reality, however, most of these powers are now exercised by the Prime Minister on behalf of the monarch. Despite this, the monarch still retains key powers:

#### The power to dissolve Parliament

Though the Queen generally dissolves Parliament (resulting in a general election) on the Prime Minister's request, she could refuse if, for example, a minority government was trying to gain an unfair advantage by timing an election favourably against the wishes of a clear majority of MPs. In such an instance the Queen might instead choose to offer the leader of another party the chance to form an administration.

#### The power to appoint the Prime Minister

This is normally straightforward. However, in the event of a 'hung parliament' (where no single party had an overall majority of seats in the Commons), the Queen would have to choose whom she should invite to try and form a government. If two or more parties were equal in strength, this decision could prove pivotal.

### Turning points

- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| 1215  | Magna Carta – King John accepted certain limits on the manner in which he could govern.   |
| 1280s | Edward I needed money regularly for wars. This led to Parliament being called more frequently.  |
| 1327  | Edward II was deposed, partly as a result of his attempts to govern without taking advice from leading nobles.                            |
| 1530s | Increasing legislative role for Parliament (Reformation Parliament, 1529–36).   |
| 1649  | Charles I was executed, after maintaining the 'divine right' and quarreling with Parliament.  |
| 1689  | William and Mary accepted the so-called 'Bill of Rights'. A monarch could not suspend laws or levy taxation without Parliament.           |
| 1707  | Queen Anne became the last monarch to reject a bill.  |
| 1714  | George I did not speak English. The role of the King's 'Prime Minister' emerged (Walpole) and, by the nineteenth century, became central. |
| 1854  | Queen Victoria became the last monarch to give the royal assent in person.  |

## C) Elements on the executive power (Prime Minister and Cabinet)

The [Government](#) performs the [Executive](#) functions of the United Kingdom on behalf of the Sovereign, in whom executive power is theoretically and nominally vested. The monarch appoints a [Prime Minister](#) as the head of Her Majesty's Government, guided by the strict convention that the Prime Minister should be the member of the House of Commons most likely to be able to form a Government with the support of the House. In practice, this means that the leader of the [political party](#) with an absolute majority of seats in the House of Commons is chosen to be the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister then selects the other [Ministers](#) which make up the Government and act as political heads of the various [Government Departments](#). About twenty of the most senior government ministers make up the [Cabinet](#). In total, there are approximately 100 ministers that comprise the government. In accordance with [constitutional convention](#), all ministers within the government are either [Members of Parliament](#) or [peers](#) in the [House of Lords](#).

As in some other [parliamentary systems](#) of government, the executive (called "the government") is drawn from and is answerable to Parliament - a successful [vote of no confidence](#) will force the government either to resign or to seek a [parliamentary dissolution](#) and a [general election](#).

In practice, members of parliament of all major parties are strictly controlled by [whips](#) who try to ensure they vote according to party policy. If the government has a large majority, then they are very unlikely to lose enough votes to be unable to pass legislation.

### The Prime Minister

#### Origins of the office

The office of Prime Minister is based largely on convention. Once the monarch stopped attending Cabinet meetings (under George I, who reigned 1714–27), the First Lord of the Treasury began chairing Cabinet meetings. This is the formal title still held by Prime Ministers today. Robert Walpole is generally regarded as the first Prime Minister (1721–42), though in reality Robert Peel (1841–46) has a better claim as the first modern Prime Minister. The powers of the Prime Minister have evolved gradually, largely as a result of the assimilation of royal prerogative powers (see right). While the monarch still retains these powers in theory, in practice the Prime Minister acts in place of the monarch.

#### The royal prerogative

These powers, formally held by the monarch but – in practice – exercised by the Prime Minister include the power to:

*declare war; make treaties; annex and cede territory; control the armed forces; control patronage; control the workings of the civil service; make use of emergency powers.*

#### The powers of the Prime Minister

##### Patronage and the control of Cabinet

The Prime Minister has massive powers of patronage over the Church of England (archbishops, bishops etc.), senior judges (e.g. the Lord Chief Justice), Privy Counsellors and civil servants. It is in Cabinet and government, however, that the power of patronage becomes crucial. The Prime Minister ultimately decides who gets what at all levels of the government. He or she also controls the timing and agenda of Cabinet meetings as well as 'taking the feeling of the meeting'.

**Limitations:** the seniority of colleagues might demand their inclusion (e.g. Jack Straw), as might a need for balance (e.g. John Prescott) or a need to reward those who have supported your rise (e.g. Gordon Brown). If the Prime Minister excludes or forces out key figures they can often become dangerous enemies on the back benches (e.g. Heseltine under Thatcher). There are also the questions of availability for office, ability and experience. Margaret Thatcher was often criticised – particularly in the latter years of her administration – for passing over or forcing out more experienced ministers in favour of 'yes-men'. Some items also demand inclusion on the Cabinet agenda.

##### Party and Parliament

As the leader of the majority party in the Commons (most often), the Prime Minister has considerable power. They can control the parliamentary timetable and pursue the government's programme. They are the public face of party and government. They control key appointments within their own party as well as within government, and can rely on a certain amount of loyalty from the party simply by virtue of the fact that they are in government. When backs are against the wall, they can even threaten to ask the Queen to dissolve Parliament and call an election (a threat made by John Major in 1992).

**Limitations:** the party will not always remain loyal (back bench support for Thatcher failed in 1990). Parliament can also – in theory – call errant governments to account (e.g. through Prime Minister's Questions on Wednesdays, or debates and motions). Ultimately the Commons can pass a vote of no confidence, bringing down the government, and, by convention, forcing an election.

#### What is the core executive?

The term 'core executive' is a collective term usually taken to refer to the key institutions and processes involved in co-ordinating the work of central government: the Prime Minister, Cabinet, Cabinet Committees and Cabinet Office, Treasury and Foreign Office bodies, law, security and intelligence officers, and certain other top civil servants.

## The Cabinet

### Introduction

As is the case with the office of Prime Minister, the Cabinet has evolved over time; from a group of individuals linking the King and Parliament into what Walter Bagehot (1867) saw as an institution central to the decision-making process. The Prime Minister, it was argued, was merely 'primus inter pares' (first among equals). Even in Bagehot's time, however, this argument would have been open to question, and over the last 20 years the apparent expansion of Prime Ministerial power has led some to question how significant a role the Cabinet still retains in the process of government. The modern Cabinet consists of around 23 paid members and fulfils a number of important functions (see below). Traditionally, Cabinet Ministers have been expected to work within the principles of **collective responsibility** and **ministerial responsibility** (see Glossary).

### The various roles of the Cabinet

#### Decision-making

Traditionally, Cabinet has been seen as central to the decision-making process. The Cabinet's role in this area, however, has been undermined by the development of Prime Ministerial power that has come with the increased centralisation of bureaucratic controls and the increased importance of the media.

#### Co-ordinating departments

Cabinet always had a role in co-ordinating the activities of government departments. While the decision-making role of Cabinet has been diminished somewhat, its position as an arena in which individuals can report on their activities and bring colleagues up-to-date remains significant.

#### Forward planning

Cabinet retains a role in addressing problems arising from policy and/or events. Cabinet provides a 'talking shop' where the direction of policy can, if necessary, be discussed and where the broad direction of policy can be re-focused. It is also a place where ministers can raise genuine concerns.

### What is the Cabinet Office?

The Cabinet Office consists around 2000 staff and is the key player in co-ordinating the activities of government. The Office was strengthened by Labour in 1998. This strengthening involved creating new elements and also bringing together a number of previously independent bodies under the Cabinet Office umbrella. The result was what amounted to a Prime Minister's Department, in all but name; a power base to challenge Gordon Brown's in the Treasury, perhaps. The new Cabinet Office comprised:

*a Cabinet Office Minister (the so-called 'Cabinet Enforcer') as well as the Cabinet Secretary (Sir Richard Wilson), four separate Secretariats (Economic and Domestic, Defence and Overseas, European (EU), Constitution), the Performance and Innovation Unit, the Women's Unit, the Centre for Management and Policy Studies, the Head of the Government and Communication Service, and the Chief Scientific Advisor.*

There was also a physical centralisation of the Cabinet Office, with the staff from around 17 former Cabinet Office buildings being relocated to new accommodation in Downing Street. *The Guardian* saw these bureaucratic developments as a major threat to Cabinet government.

### Cabinet committees

As the pressures on the work of Cabinet increased after the Second World War – both in volume of work and in its complexity – the Cabinet was forced to delegate significant aspects of its work to Cabinet committees and sub-committees. These committees are given authority over specific areas and, as far as possible, decisions are then taken at that level, so as to lighten the burden on full Cabinet meetings. Committees are generally chaired by senior Cabinet members; sometimes the Prime Minister of the day. The rest of the members are drawn from the Cabinet as appropriate. The many committees generally fall into one of three categories: foreign and defence, domestic/home affairs, and economic. Some ministers will attend committees in all three categories (the Leader of the Commons or the Home Secretary, for example), whereas other ministers will only be involved in committees that are more directly linked to their portfolios (the Health Secretary, for example). As a result of the expansion of committee work, the full Cabinet has increasingly become a body for reporting and reviewing decisions taken at committee level rather than making decisions itself. It has also been noted that the full Cabinet only rarely fully debates matters that have already been dealt with at committee level.

### Warning !!! Shadow Cabinet is different

The UK shadow cabinet is the front bench of the official parliamentary opposition party. It seeks to present itself as an alternative government for the next general election. It grew out of the practice that developed in the late nineteenth century of the ex-cabinet continuing to meet after election defeat in order to lead the opposition against the new cabinet. Since the 1950s it has become a key dimension of the formalized process of parliamentary adversarial politics. A Labour shadow cabinet would be based on members elected by the parliamentary Labour Party, whilst a Conservative shadow cabinet is appointed by the party leader.

<http://www.answers.com/topic/shadow-cabinet>

## ***D) Elements on the legislative power (two Houses)***

Parliament is [bicameral](#), consisting of the [House of Commons](#) and the [House of Lords](#).

### **House of Commons**

The UK is divided into parliamentary [constituencies](#) of broadly equal population (decided by the [Boundary Commission](#)), each of which elects a [Member of Parliament](#) (MP) to the House of Commons. Of the 646 MPs there is currently only one who does not belong to a [political party](#). In modern times, all Prime Ministers and [Leaders of the Opposition](#) have been drawn from the Commons, not the Lords. [Alec Douglas-Home](#) resigned from his peerages days after becoming Prime Minister in 1963.

One party usually has a majority in Parliament, because of the use of the [First Past the Post electoral system](#), which has been conducive in creating the current [two party system](#). The monarch normally asks a person commissioned to form a government simply whether it can *survive* in the House of Commons, something which majority governments are expected to be able to do. In exceptional circumstances the monarch asks someone to 'form a government' *with a parliamentary minority* which in the event of no party having a majority requires the formation of a [coalition government](#). This option is only ever taken at a time of national emergency, such as war-time. It was given in 1916 to [Andrew Bonar Law](#), and when he declined, to [David Lloyd George](#)..

### **House of Lords**

The [House of Lords](#) was previously a [hereditary](#), [aristocratic](#) chamber. Major reform has been partially completed and it is currently a mixture of hereditary members, [bishops](#) of the [Church of England](#) known as [Lords Spiritual](#) and appointed members (life peers, with no hereditary right for their descendants to sit in the House).

It currently acts to review legislation formed by the House of Commons, with the power to propose amendments, and exercises a [suspensive veto](#). This allows it to delay legislation if it does not approve for twelve months.

However, the use of vetoes is limited by convention and the operation of the [Parliament Acts](#): the Lords may not veto the "money bills" or major manifesto promises. Persistent use of the veto can also be overturned by the [Parliament Act](#) by the Commons. Often governments will accept changes in legislation in order to avoid both the time delay, and the negative publicity of being seen to clash with the Lords.

#### **THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS**

Since its origins as a gathering of feudal magnates and churchmen, the House of Lords has occupied a central role in the United Kingdom's parliamentary system. Members no longer pass on sitting and voting rights to their offspring when they die, although a small proportion of hereditary members remains. Recent and ongoing changes are a continuation of our evolving constitution. Today there are various routes by which members are appointed to the House and four main categories of member.

##### ***Life peers***

Appointed for their lifetime, life peers make up the majority (about 600) of the total membership (currently around 730). The power to appoint belongs formally to the Crown, but members are essentially created on the advice of the Prime Minister. Life peers' titles cease on death.

##### ***Law Lords (Lords of Appeal in Ordinary)***

In effect they were the first life peers. The Appellate Jurisdiction Act 1876 provides for up to 12 Law Lords to be appointed to hear appeals from the lower courts. They are salaried and can continue to hear appeals until they are 70 years old. After they retire they go on sitting in the House. NB The judicial function of the House of Lords will end in September 2008 when a separate Supreme Court is set up.

##### ***Archbishops and bishops***

The Anglican Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Bishops of Durham, London and Winchester and the 21 senior diocesan bishops of the Church of England have seats in the House. This is because the Church of England is the 'established' Church of the State. When they retire as bishops their membership of the House ceases.

<http://www.parliament.uk/documents/upload/HofLBpmembership.pdf>

## E) Quicks elements on the British Party system

### Introduction

Political parties have a long history in Britain, but modern mass political parties have their origins in the waves of electoral reform, starting in 1832, that extended the franchise (right to vote). Before the 1830s the two parties – the Whigs and the Tories – existed not as mass political parties with formal institutions outside Parliament and a mass membership, but merely as groups of like-minded individuals within Parliament, bound together by ideas, friendship or family ties. With electoral reform, however, came a need to organise – to mobilise the (however slowly) expanding electorate in support of one's party. Certainly, by the time the Labour Party was formed at the start of the twentieth century, political parties were organisations that would be more familiar to anyone studying their modern counterparts.

### Different types of party systems

It is often said that Britain operates as a two-party system. The truth or otherwise of this statement will be discussed below, but the statement itself does beg the question 'what other kinds of party systems exist?'

#### The two-party system

Where a two-party system operates, two fairly equally matched parties compete for power. Smaller parties might also be involved in elections but they will have no realistic prospect of breaking the monopoly held by the big two.

Britain is often cited as a two-party system (see debate below). The US would be another good example.

#### The single-party system

In some countries a single party is able to monopolise government, ban other political parties and exercise total control over all candidates, where elections occur at all.

This type of system operated in the USSR and in many Eastern European states after the Second World War and in Nazi Germany.

#### The dominant-party system

This system exists where many parties may exist but only one ever gets elected, or at least forms the senior member in a coalition government.

In Japan the Liberal Democratic Party remained in power for 38 years following its formation in 1955.

#### The multi-party system

In a multi-party system many parties compete for power and the government will often pass between coalitions formed by different combinations of parties.

Prior to electoral reform in 1993, Italy was often seen as a classic multi-party system. Israel is another good example.

### Is Britain a two-party system?

YES

The Labour and Conservative Parties are the only parties that have a realistic chance of forming a government in the near future or being the senior partner in a coalition.

Even in the 2001 general election the Labour and Conservative Parties secured 75% of the popular vote and around 90% of the seats in Parliament.

Despite making progress, the third party (the Liberal Democrats) is still a long way behind the second party (the Conservatives), even when the latter is probably at one of its lowest ebbs.

There is a good deal of stability in the 2001 result when compared to that of 1997. The swing from Labour to Conservative was only 1.8% and numbers of seats for each party hardly changed. Less than 30 seats changed hands.

NO

The Labour Party won 246 seats more than the Conservative Party in 2001, whereas the Conservative Party only won 114 seats more than the LibDems. Do we really have two parties capable of winning power?

Of voters, 25% backed a party other than the big two, and the 90% share of seats gained by Labour and the Conservatives remains artificially exaggerated by the electoral system.

The rise of the Liberal Democrats as a third party ignores the fact that they are often second to Labour in the North and West and the Conservatives in the South and East.

Although there appears to be a good deal of stability in the system, the raw figures mask a lot of localised swing (differential swing) as well as a massive fall in turnout. A party that could mobilise the 41% of the population who chose not to vote could clearly break the two-party system.

## 2) UK three main political ideas and parties through modern history

### A) Conservatism (basics and UK party evolution)

#### Main idea :

Conservatism is a relativistic term used to describe [political philosophies](#) that favour traditional values, where "tradition" refers to religious, cultural, or nationally defined beliefs and customs. The term is derived from the Latin, *conservāre*, *to conserve*; "to keep, guard, observe". Since different cultures have different established values, conservatives in different cultures have different goals. Some conservatives seek to preserve the [status quo](#), while others seek to return to the values of an earlier time, the [status quo ante](#).

#### Origin :

Although political thought, from its beginnings, contains many strains that can be retrospectively labeled conservative, it was not until the [Age of Reason](#), and in particular the reaction to events surrounding the [French Revolution](#) of 1789, that conservatism began to rise as a distinct movement.

[Edmund Burke](#), who argued so forcefully against the [French Revolution](#) (in [Reflections on the Revolution in France](#)), also sympathized with some of the aims of the [American Revolution](#). This classical conservative tradition often insists that conservatism has no ideology, in the sense of a [utopian](#) program, with some form of master plan. Burke developed his ideas in reaction to the 'enlightened' idea of a society guided by abstract reason. Burke was troubled by the [Enlightenment](#), and argued instead for the value of tradition.

Some men, argued Burke, have less reason than others, and thus some men will make worse governments than others if they rely upon reason. To Burke, the proper formulation of government came not from abstractions such as "[Reason](#)," but from time-honoured development of the state and of other important societal institutions such as the family and the Church.

Burke argued that tradition is a much sounder foundation than 'metaphysical abstractions.' Tradition draws on the wisdom of many generations and the tests of time, while "reason" may be a mask for the preferences of one man, and at best represents only the untested wisdom of one generation. Any existing value or institution has undergone the correcting influence of past experience and ought to be respected.

However, conservatives do not reject change. But they insist that further change be organic, rather than revolutionary. An attempt to modify the complex web of human interactions that form human society, for the sake of some doctrine or theory, runs the risk of running afoul of the iron law of [unintended consequences](#). Burke advocates vigilance against the possibility of [moral hazards](#).

For conservatives, human society is something rooted and organic; to try to prune and shape it according to the plans of an ideology is to invite unforeseen disaster.

#### Human nature

This is a phrase used when referring to the natural human state; that is to say, what people are like in their pure state when one removes the influence of the societies in which they live. Some people have a positive view of human nature and believe that society can corrupt individuals. Those with a more pessimistic view would see people as flawed and society as a necessary regulating force.

#### Approach

As a result of this, conservatives often take a different approach to solving problems than those coming from a more traditionally ideological perspective.

##### conservative approach



Looks at the problem  
↓  
Considers existing structures/provision  
↓  
Considers minor adjustments based upon experience  
↓  
Is prepared to accept that earlier policies might have been inadequate

##### ideological approach



Looks at the problem  
↓  
Considers problem within the ideological framework. Tries to make it fit.  
↓  
Applies ideology to process of developing solutions

Conservatives strongly support the right of property.

## Specific evolution of conservatism in the UK

The old established form of English and, after the [Act of Union](#), British conservatism, was the [Tory](#) Party. It reflected the attitudes of a rural land owning class, and championed the institutions of the monarchy, the [Anglican Church](#), the family, and property as the best defence of the social order. In the early stages of the [industrial revolution](#), it seemed to be totally opposed to a process that seemed to undermine some of these bulwarks. The new industrial elite were seen by many as enemies to the social order.

Sir [Robert Peel](#) was able to reconcile the new industrial class to the Tory landed class by persuading the latter to accept the repeal of the [Corn Laws](#) in 1846. He created a new political group that sought to preserve the old status quo while accepting the basics of laissez-faire and free trade. The new coalition of traditional landowners and sympathetic industrialists constituted the new [Conservative Party](#).

[Benjamin Disraeli](#) gave the new party a political ideology. As a young man, he was influenced by the [romantic movement](#) and the then fashionable [medievalism](#), and developed a devastating critique of industrialism. In his novels he outlined an England divided into two nations, each living in perfect ignorance of each other. He foresaw, like [Karl Marx](#), the phenomenon of an alienated industrial proletariat. His solution involved a return to an idealised view of a corporate or organic society, in which everyone had duties and responsibilities towards other people or groups. This "one nation" conservatism is still a very important tradition in British politics. It has animated a great deal of social reform undertaken by successive Conservative governments.

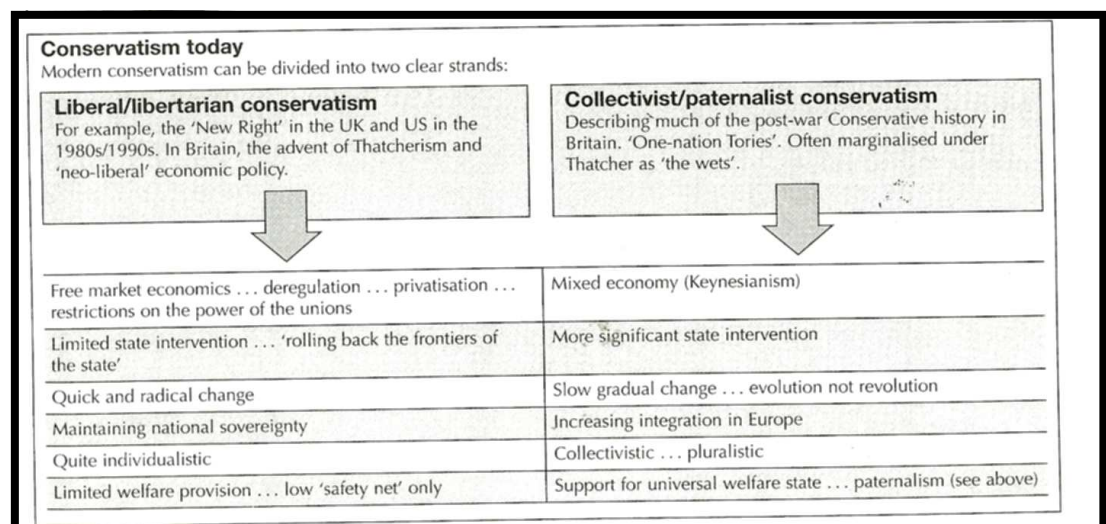
Although nominally a Conservative, Disraeli argued for an alliance between the landed aristocracy and the working class against the increasing power of the middle class, helping to found the [Young England](#) group in 1842 to promote the view that the rich should use their power to

protect the poor from exploitation by the middle class. The conversion of the Conservative Party into a modern mass organisation was accelerated by the concept of "tory Democracy" attributed to Lord [Randolph Churchill](#).

A Liberal-Conservative coalition during [World War I](#) coupled with the ascent of the [Labour Party](#), hastened the collapse of the Liberals in the 1920s.

After [World War II](#), the Conservative Party made concessions to the socialist policies of the Left. This compromise was a pragmatic measure to regain power, but also the result of the early successes of [central planning](#) and state-ownership forming a cross-party consensus. This was known as 'Butskellism', after the almost identical [Keynesian](#) policies of [Rab Butler](#) on behalf of the Conservatives, and [Hugh Gaitskell](#) for Labour.

However, in the 1980s, under the leadership of [Margaret Thatcher](#), and the influence of Sir [Keith Joseph](#), the party returned to [classical liberal](#) economic ideas, and [privatisation](#) of many state enterprises was ordained..



## B) Liberalism (basics)

### Main idea

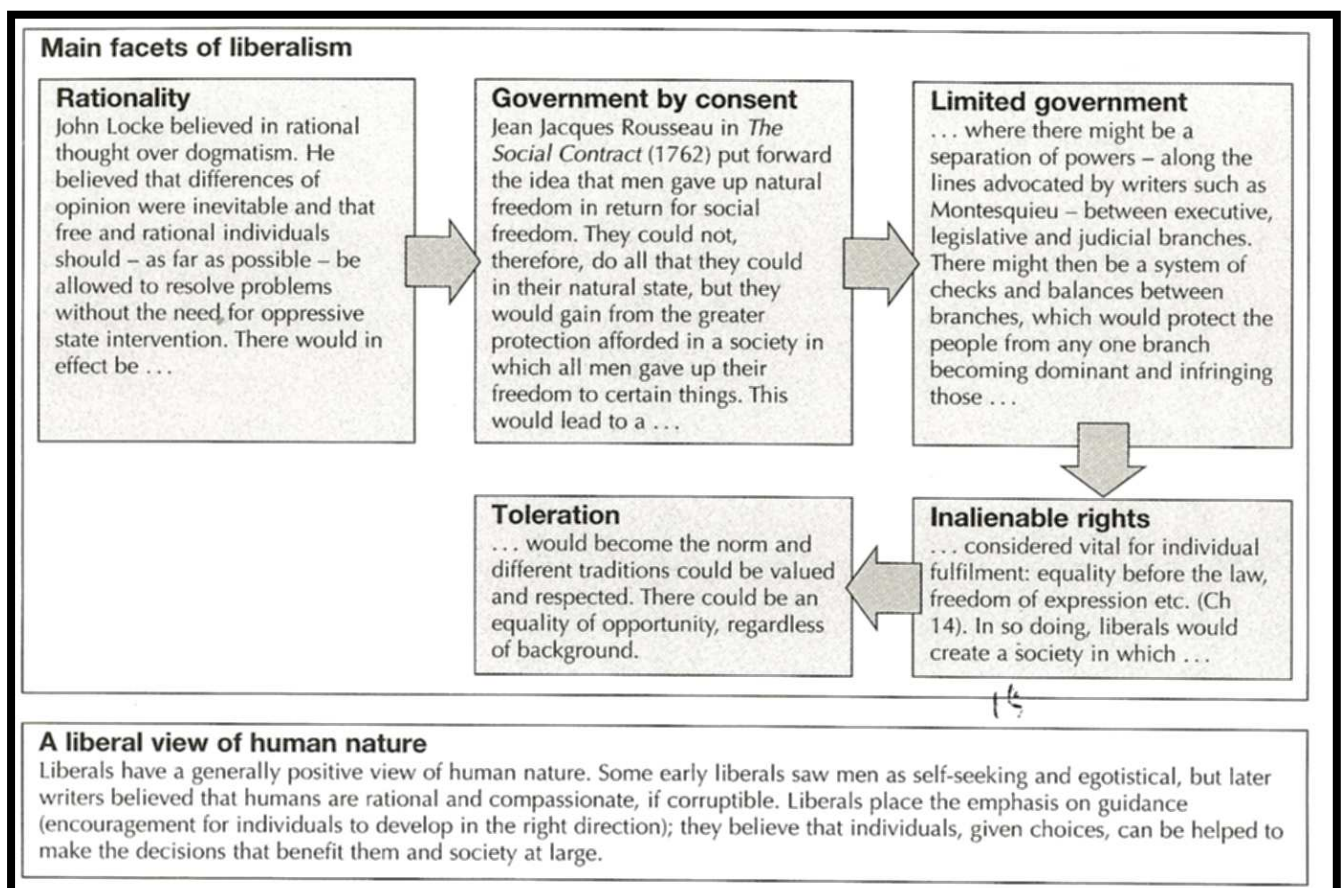
Liberalism refers to a broad array of related [doctrines](#), [ideologies](#), [philosophical views](#), and political traditions which advocate [individual liberty](#). Liberalism has its roots in the Western [Age of Enlightenment](#), but the term has taken on different meanings in different time periods.

Broadly speaking, liberalism emphasizes [individual rights](#). It seeks a society characterized by [freedom of thought](#) for individuals, limitations on power (especially of government and religion), the [rule of law](#), the free exchange of ideas, a [market economy](#) that supports free [private enterprise](#), and a [transparent system of government](#) in which the rights of all citizens are protected. In modern society, liberals favor a [liberal democracy](#) with open and fair elections, where all citizens have equal rights by law and an equal opportunity to succeed.

Liberalism rejected many [foundational](#) assumptions that dominated most earlier theories of government, such as the [Divine Right of Kings](#), hereditary status, and established [religion](#). Fundamental human rights that all liberals support include the right to life, liberty, and property.

### Some principles liberals generally agree upon:

[Political liberalism](#) is the belief that individuals are the basis of law and society, and that society and its institutions exist to further the ends of individuals, without showing favor to those of higher social rank. [Magna Carta](#) is an example of a political document that asserted the rights of individuals even above the prerogatives of monarchs. Political liberalism stresses the [social contract](#), under which citizens make the laws and agree to abide by those laws. It is based on the belief that individuals know best what is best for them. Political liberalism enfranchises all adult citizens regardless of sex, race, or economic status. Political liberalism emphasizes the [rule of law](#) and supports [liberal democracy](#).



However, some trends within liberalism reveal stark differences of opinion:

**Economic liberalism**, also called [classical liberalism](#) or [Manchester liberalism](#), is an ideology which supports the individual rights of property and freedom of contract, without which, it argues, the exercise of other liberties is impossible. It advocates [laissez-faire capitalism](#), meaning the removal of legal barriers to trade and cessation of government-bestowed privilege such as subsidy and monopoly. Economic liberals want little or no government regulation of the [market](#). Some economic liberals would accept government restrictions of [monopolies](#) and [cartels](#), others argue that [monopolies](#) and [cartels](#) are caused by state action. Economic liberalism holds that the value of goods and services should be set by the unfettered choices of individuals, that is, of market forces. Some would also allow market forces to act even in areas conventionally monopolized by governments, such as the provision of security and courts. Economic liberalism accepts the economic inequality that arises from unequal bargaining positions as being the natural result of competition, so long as no coercion is used.

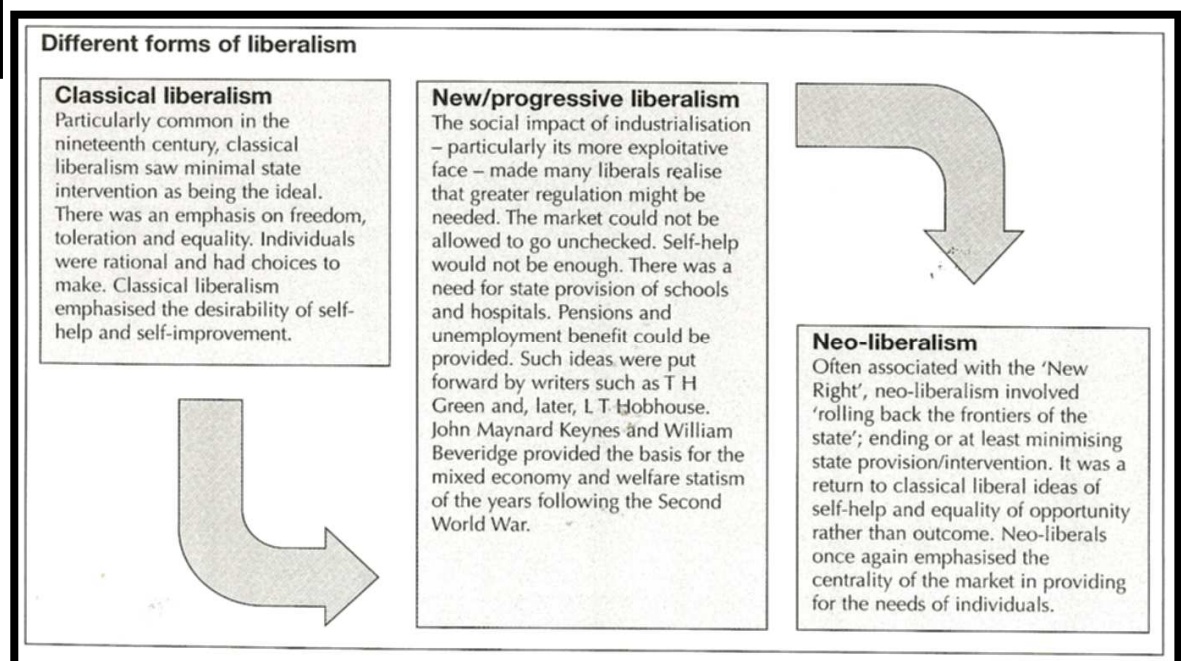
**Social liberalism**, also known as new liberalism (not to be confused with 'neoliberalism') and reform liberalism, arose in the late 19th century in many developed countries, influenced by the utilitarianism of [Jeremy Bentham](#) and [John Stuart Mill](#). Some liberals accepted, in part or in whole, [Marxist](#) and [socialist](#) exploitation theory and critiques of "the profit motive", and concluded that government should use its power to remedy these perceived problems. According to the tenets of this form of liberalism, as explained by writers such as [John Dewey](#) and [Mortimer Adler](#), since individuals are the basis of society, all individuals should have access to basic necessities of fulfillment, such as education, economic opportunity, and protection from harmful macro-events beyond their control. To social liberals, these benefits are considered rights. These [positive rights](#), which must be produced and supplied by other people, are qualitatively different from the classic [negative rights](#), which require only that others refrain from aggression. To the social liberal, ensuring positive rights is a goal that is continuous with the general project of protecting liberties.

**Neoliberalism**: Neoliberalism is a label for some [economic liberal doctrines](#). The swing away from government action in the 1970s led to the introduction of this term, which refers to a program of reducing trade barriers and internal market restrictions, while using government power to enforce opening of foreign markets. Neoliberalism accepts a certain degree of government involvement in the domestic economy, particularly a central bank with the power to print fiat money.

While neoliberalism is sometimes described as overlapping with [Thatcherism](#), economists as diverse as [Joseph Stiglitz](#) and [Milton Friedman](#) have been described — by others — as "neoliberal"

It should be noted that, in the 1990s, many social democratic parties adopted "neoliberal" economic policies such as privatization of industry and open markets, much to the dismay of many of their own voters. Sometimes "Neoliberalism" is used as a catch-all term for the anti-socialist reaction which swept through some countries during the period between the 70s and 90s. "Neoliberalism" claimed to move from a bureaucratic welfare-based society toward a meritocracy acting in the interests of business. In actuality, these governments cut funding for education and taxed income more heavily than wealth, which increased the influence of big business and the upper class.

## Sum-up



## C) Socialism (basics and UK party evolution)

### Main idea

It refers to a broad array of doctrines or political movements that envisage a [socio-economic](#) system in which property and the distribution of wealth are subject to control by the community. This control may be either direct—exercised through popular collectives such as [workers' councils](#) and [direct democracy](#)—or indirect—exercised on behalf of the people by the state with a system of [representative democracy](#) for the [working class](#).

As an [economic system](#), socialism is often characterized by [state](#) or community ownership of the [means of production](#). However, this characterization is controversial as there are forms of socialism, such as [libertarian socialism](#) that do not advocate state ownership (or advocate very limited state ownership) in favour of direct ownership by workers and consumers.

The modern socialist movement had its origin largely in the [working class](#) movement of the late-[19th century](#). In this period, the term "socialism" was first used in connection with European social critics who condemned [capitalism](#) and [private property](#). For [Karl Marx](#), who helped establish and define the modern socialist movement, socialism implied the abolition of [money](#), [markets](#), [capital](#), and [labor](#) as a [commodity](#).

A diverse array of doctrines and movements have been referred to as "socialist." Since the 19th century, socialists have not agreed on a common doctrine or program. The various adherents of socialist movements are split into differing and sometimes opposing branches, particularly between [reformist](#) socialists and [communists](#).

Since the 19th century, socialists have differed in their vision of socialism as a system of economic organization. Some socialists have championed the complete [nationalization](#) of the means of production, while [social democrats](#) have proposed selective nationalization of key industries within the framework of [mixed economies](#).

### The impact of capitalism from a socialist perspective

#### Human cost

Capitalism is exploitative. Workers are not rewarded for the full value of their labour and are often exposed to unacceptable levels of harm.

#### Human spirit

Capitalism encourages greed, jealousy and an unhealthy form of competition. It acts against co-operation and altruism.

#### Democracy

Democracy is illusory. It appears to offer real hope of change but merely acts to preserve the capitalist order through minor concessions and incentives.

#### Inequality

Capitalism entrenches inequality. Its main motivation is the accumulation of wealth and – given limited wealth – this ensures that there will always be losers as well as winners.

#### Resources

Capitalism is wasteful of resources. Products are designed to fail or be superseded at a certain points (fail-rates and inbuilt redundancy). The desire for ever-cheaper raw materials and ever-cheaper energy sources encourages the destruction of natural environments. Capitalism acts against long-term environmental planning in favour of short-term profits.

### A socialist agenda

Socialists, therefore, have the desire to remould society rather than allowing it to evolve through interaction. Socialists favour: the redistribution of resources resulting in greater equality of outcome, an emphasis on co-operation and common goals rather than competition and individualism, state provision of education and welfare, and collective control of the means of production.

## Division between moderate socialism and communism

In 1864, Marx founded the [International Workingmen's Association](#), or [First International](#), which held its first congress at [Geneva](#) in 1866. The First International was the first major international forum for the promulgation of socialist doctrine. However, socialists often disagreed on the proper strategy for achievement of their goals. Diversity and conflict between socialist thinkers was proliferating.

Despite the rhetoric about socialism as an international force, socialists increasingly focused on the politics of the [nation-state](#) in the late 19th century. As universal male [suffrage](#) was introduced throughout the Western world in the first decades of the twentieth century, socialism became increasingly associated with newly formed [trade unions](#) and political parties aimed at mobilizing working class voters.

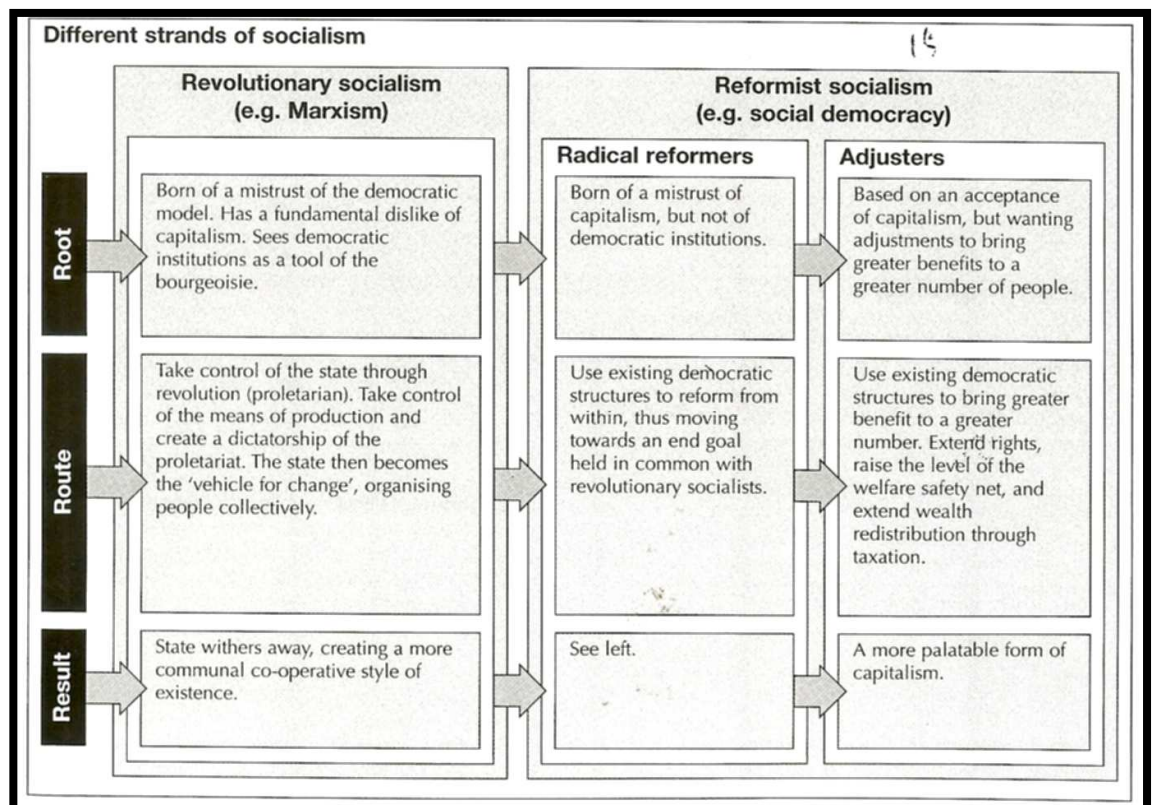
The most notable of these groups was the [Social Democratic Workers' Party of Germany](#) (today known as the [German Social Democratic Party](#)), which was founded in 1869. These groups supported diverse views of socialism, from the gradualism of many trade unionists to the radical, revolutionary agendas of Marx and Engels. Nevertheless, although the orthodox Marxists of the party, which were led by [Karl Kautsky](#), managed to retain the Marxist theory of revolution as the party's official doctrine, in practice the SPD became more and more reformist.

As socialists gained more power and began to experience governmental authority first-hand, the focus of socialism shifted from theory to practice. Within government, socialists became more pragmatic, as the success of their program increasingly depended on the consent of the middle and wealthy classes who largely retained control of the bureaucratic machinery of the state. Moreover, with the beginnings of the modern [welfare state](#), the condition of the working class began to gradually improve in the Western world, thus delaying further the socialist revolution predicted by Marx for Western Europe.

As social democrats came to power and moved into government, divisions between the moderate and radical wings of socialism grew increasingly pronounced.

On one hand, many socialist thinkers began to doubt the indispensability of revolution. Moderates like [Eduard Bernstein](#) argued that socialism could best be achieved through the democratic political process (a model increasingly known as [social democracy](#)).

On the other hand, strong opposition to moderate socialism came from communists in countries such as the [Russian Empire](#) where a parliamentary democracy did not exist, and did not seem possible. Russian revolutionary [Vladimir Lenin](#) argued that revolution was the only path to socialism



After the Second International, in the first decades of the twentieth century, moderate socialism became increasingly influential among many European intellectuals. In 1884 British middle class intellectuals organized the [Fabian Society](#). The Fabians in turn helped lay the groundwork for the organization of the [Labour Party](#) in 1906. The French [Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière](#) (SFIO), founded in 1905 under [Jean Jaurès](#), and later [Léon Blum](#), adhered to Marxist ideas but became, in practice, a reformist party.

# **UK History**

**1945 - 1990**

## A) Influence of the war : Beveridge Report and the economic consensus

### Introduction

A lot of what was done in 1945 was based on the « new liberalism » of men such as William Beveridge and John Maynard Keynes. By 1945 it was clear that classical liberalism and its emphasis on the individual though laissez faire policies (the free market) had failed because it had not offered sufficient protection to the individual. There was therefore a need for greater government intervention than might have been considered necessary by liberals in the nineteenth century.

### William Beveridge and his report

Beveridge, a liberal civil servant, was commissioned by Churchill to produce a report on welfare provision and make suggestion for change. The Beveridge report that followed in 1942

His *Report on Social Insurance and Allied Services* was published in December 1942 and it created much public interest at the time.

**The Beveridge Report was designed to counter the five giants of illness, ignorance, disease, squalor, and want**

It was this report that had such a large influence on Labour's reforms after 1945. In essence, Beveridge advocated that all people in work would pay a single weekly flat rate contribution into the state insurance fund.

This would cover all possible contingencies that might befall people throughout their lives. In return for these contributions, a new Ministry of Social Security would provide people with subsistence in the form of sickness, medical, maternity, old age, unemployment, widows, orphans, industrial injury and funeral benefits. A new national health service to be established

### John Maynard Keynes

Keynes believed that limited state intervention in the economy was necessary in order to avoid a spiral of recession. Keynes favoured intervention: a cash boost that might kick-start the economy. He did not believe, however, that the aim should be state-engineered equality. The inequalities of capitalism were a necessary incentive to hard work. This mixed economy would retain the benefits of the free market, while removing its worst tendencies.

### The post-war consensus

Following the Second World War there was a broad agreement on the basis of future policy. In the social sphere, for example, there was an acceptance that:

- full employment should be the goal;
- unions should be consulted over economic/ industrial policy;
- there should be public ownership of key industries;
- there should be public provision of welfare – covering health care, education, unemployment etc.

This 'post-war consensus' clearly had its origins – in part – in the national coalition government in office during the war years.

**The Consensus** was made possible by the establishment of a central government throughout the period in which the Marxist left-wing of the Labour Party and the reactionary right wing of the Conservative Party had been marginalised.

The economic policy was based on Keynesianism and the aim was to move from a manufacturing model into a service one. Therefore, the main line of this policy was to adjust their political approaches in keeping with the changing economic situation.

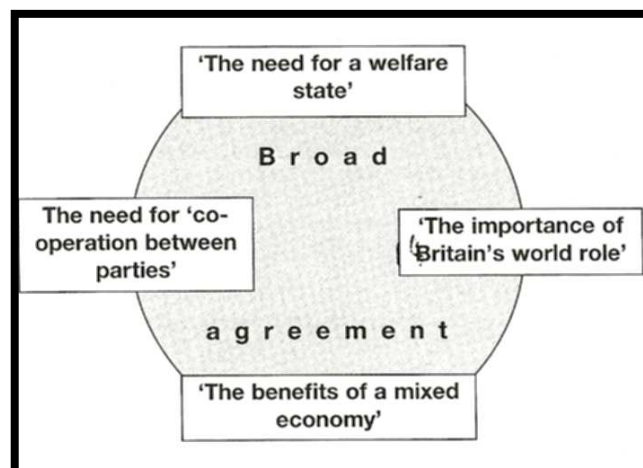
This led to Bustkellism and the mixed economy :

- The word Bustkellism comes from the association of the names of R.A Butler from the Conservative party and Hugh Gattiskell who was a key figure of the Labour right. Bustkellism refers to the common ground between the major parties on such matters as finance, the economy and the welfare state.

- The Mixed Economy refers to the government choice to combine two opposite view points on economy :

- the combination of public ownership and private enterprise
- the combination of free market with a considerable state intervention

This Consensus Age was broken by the arrival of Margaret Thatcher in 1979



## B) The Labour years : 1945 - 1951

### I / The election of 1945

#### 1 ) The election results

The Labour Party won the election with a great advance over the Conservatives whereas in 1935, the LP only got 154 seats for 37.9% of the votes.



	Votes	Seats	% Vote
Conservative	9,988,306	213	39.8
Liberal	2,248,226	12	9.0
Labour	11,995,152	393	47.8
Communist	102,780	2	0.4
Others	751,514	20	3.0

#### 2 ) Reasons for Labour's landslide victory in 1945

- A broad feeling that the interwar political establishment had not understood the needs of ordinary people and had outlived its time
- The mismanagement of the economy by Conservative politicians
- The inglorious appeasement policy of the National government which had failed to prevent war occurring
- The memories of the failure of the interwar governments to provide 'a land for heroes'.
- The attractive image of the Labour Party as representing the progressive spirit of the times
- Churchill's inability to carry his wartime popularity into peacetime
- The Conservative Party's ill-judged and unconvincing election campaign
- Leading Labour figures had gained invaluable experience as ministers in the wartime Coalition and had gained the respect of the electorate.

### II / The leading members

**Clement Attlee** was the leader of the LP from 1935 to 1955 and took the office of Prime minister from 1945 to 1951. Compared to his predecessor, Winston Churchill, he might appear weak but it's under his office that the Nationalisation, the Welfare State, NATO and the Indian Independence were established.(see files in the third part of the handbook)

**Ernest Bevin** is one of the most influential British statesman of the age and was quite active between the wars since he fought against the Communist infiltration of the unions and the party. From 1945 to 1951, he was Attlee's Foreign Secretary and established the basic lines of British foreign policy which lasted throughout the Cold War period.

**Herbert Morrison** was the Home Secretary during the war and was Attlee's second after 1945 since he served as Deputy Prime Minister between 1945 and 1951, Foreign Secretary in 1951 and became the deputy leader of the party between 1951 and 1955.

**Hugh Dalton** had been Minister of Economic Warfare and President of the Board of Trade under Churchill. He made a major contribution to the planning of Labour's nationalisation programme. Dalton had to resign as Chancellor of the Exchequer, an office that he was occupying since 1945, in 1947 after incautiously leaking some of his Budget plans.

**Aneurin Bevan** was the dominant figure on the left of the Labour Party in Attlee's time. He has a Welsh background and represented the Ebbw Vale constituency from 1929 to 1960. As Minister of Health ( from 1945 to 1951 ), his main achievement was the creation of the National Health Service ( NHS ). He was the Minister of Labour in 1951.

**Stafford Cripps** took the post of Minister of Aircraft Production between 1942 and 1945 and was sent to India from 1942 to 1946 to prepare the Independence. From 1945 to 1947 he was the President of the Board of Trade and in 1947, he took the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer which he kept until 1950 and played an important role during the period of austerity.

### III / Key events and main achievements

#### 1) The Welfare State

The concept of the welfare state refers to the state's provision of public measures and support to achieve basic living standards and help those in need across society. Ideally, the welfare state aims to relieve poverty, reduce inequality, and achieve greater social integration and solidarity. Labour's reforms were based on the Beveridge Report so it could not claim that it had created the ideas itself and it began tackling the five giants identified by Beveridge.

#### **WANT**

Poverty was seen as the key social problem which affected all others. In 1946 the **National Insurance Act** was passed which extended the Liberal Act of 1911 to include all adults. This provided comprehensive insurance against most eventualities. It provided sickness and unemployment benefit, retirement pension and widow and maternity benefit. It was said that social provision was made for citizens from the 'cradle to the grave', catering for their needs from their time of birth to their death. In the same year the **Industrial Injuries Act** was passed. The act made insurance against industrial injury compulsory for all employees. Under the terms of the act, industrial injury benefits were to be paid at a higher rate than for ordinary sickness. In 1948 the **National Assistance Act** was passed which provided benefits for those not covered by the National Insurance Act. National Assistance Boards were set up to help citizens whose resources were insufficient to meet their needs. However, benefits were set too low which resulted in many citizens remaining below the subsistence level.

#### **DISEASE**

In 1946 the **National Health Service Act** was passed and for the first time every British citizen could receive medical, dental and optical services free of charge. Treatment by GPs and in hospitals was free also. These benefits were free at point of use, no patient being asked to pay for any treatment.

However, the development of the NHS was hampered by the number of old and out of date hospitals. Costs were high and by 1950 the idea of free treatment for all was undermined when charges were introduced for spectacles and dental treatment.

#### **SQUALOR**

Most of Britain still had slum areas and overcrowding was a serious problem made worse by bomb damage during the war. To deal with the problem of squalor the government concentrated on the building of decent homes for the working class after the war. The government aimed at building 200,000 houses a year and many of these were prefabricated houses which were assembled quickly onsite. The **New Towns Act** passed in 1946 laid the plans for 14 new towns in Britain, including Glenrothes and East Kilbride in Scotland. However, the Labour Government's record in this area does not compare favourably with pre-war levels of house building or with the achievements of the Conservatives in the 1950s.

#### **IGNORANCE**

In 1944 the war time Coalition government passed the **Education act**. The act was actually proposed by the Conservatives, but after the 1945 general election, it was the Labour government that implemented its measures.

The act made secondary education compulsory until the age of 15 years and provided meals, milk and medical services at every school. An examination at age 11 years (called the '11+') placed children in certain types of school, according to their ability. Those who passed this exam went to senior secondary schools and were expected to 'stay on' after 15 years and possibly go to university and get jobs in management.

#### **IDLENESS**

After the war, there seemed to be work for everyone as Britain rebuilt itself. The Labour Government succeeded in its commitment to maintain high levels of employment after the war. By 1946, unemployment was reduced to 2.5 % and this was in spite of huge post-war problems such as shortages of raw materials and massive war debts. One way in which the government kept almost full employment was through nationalisation.

#### 2 ) The Nationalisation Programme

Labour believed that nationalisation would bring greater productivity and efficiency. Therefore, it constituted a major part of its programme. This involved bringing the major private industries under public control after compensating their former owners.

The coal, gas and electricity industries were taken into state control in 1947 as well as the transport infrastructure. The iron and steel industry was nationalised in 1950 as was the Bank of England in 1946. By the way, several smaller industries and services like cables and telecommunications and parts of the hotel and catering trade were also in state hands by 1951. By then roughly 20 % of the national economy was controlled by the state employing a workforce of over 2 million people.

However, only decaying and unprofitable sectors were taken into state control in order to 'make possible the organisation of a more efficient industry' in the interests of the nation as a whole. This and the fact that astronomical sums in compensation payments were given to the former owners helps explain why there was so little opposition to nationalisation

**Table 2 Nationalisation measures 1945–1951**

<i>Industry</i>	<i>2nd reading of bill</i>	<i>Vesting day</i>	<i>Numbers employed</i>
Bank of England	29 October 1945	1 March 1946	6,700
Coal	29 January 1946	1 January 1947	765,000
Civil aviation	6 May 1946	1 August 1946	23,300
Cable and Wireless (telecommunications)	21 May 1945	1 January 1947	9,500
Transport (railways, canals, road haulage)	16 December 1946	1 January 1948	888,000
Electricity	3 February 1947	1 April 1948	176,000
Gas	10 February 1948	1 April 1949	143,500
Iron and steel	15 November 1948	15 February 1951	292,000

Source: Kevin Jeffrey, *The Attlee Government*, 1992.

### **3 ) The Economic crisis in 1947**

1947 saw a very harsh winter, a fuel shortage and a financial crisis - the gravest since 1931. Labour embarked upon a series of 'austerity' measures which effectively transformed it from a party of reforming zeal into one of retrenchment and economic orthodoxy. An attempt was made to reduce the balance of payments deficit by cutting down on imports. This affected imported foodstuffs especially and led to shortages and rationing. The 'black' market provided extra rations for those who could afford it. Domestic spending on social services was cut drastically and in 1948 the government introduced a wage freeze. Finally, in an effort to ease the situation the pound sterling was devalued from \$4.03 to \$2.80 in 1949.

## **IV / Foreign policy and International policy**

- Independence of India 1947 ( Decolonisation )
- Greek crisis – Truman doctrine – Marshall Plan 1947 ( Cold War )
- NATO 1949 ( Cold War )

## **V / Balance sheet**

### **1 ) Summary of Attlee's government's main achievements**

- the Nationalisation programme
- the Welfare State
- convincing the USA of the need for the Marshall Plan
- Independence of India
- Housing programme that created one million homes by 1950
- NATO

### **2 ) Critiques**

#### **a ) Left-wing critiques**

The Labour government made no attempt either to disrupt the capitalist system in Britain or to destroy the social structure.

The nationalisation programme was not a really an attempt to take central control of the economy.

By borrowing heavily from the USA, Attlee's government lost its freedom of action in foreign policy.

#### **b ) Right-wing critiques**

The LP has thrown away a historic opportunity to reform Britain by doing too much

LP didn't give priority to the essential reconstruction of Britain's industrial base (financial recovery and investment in nation's infrastructure) but to social welfare.

Expensive side of the welfare state lead to Britain's low economic growth

### **3 ) Positive points**

Labour had created the welfare state

It had carried into peace time the notion of State-directed planning

It had established Keynesianism as the basic British approach to economic planning

## C) Thirteen years Conservative government : 1951 - 1964

### I / The elections

#### 1) The election results

	1950			1951		
	Votes	Seats	% Vote	Votes	Seats	% Vote
Conservative	12 502 567	298	43.5	13 717 538	321	48.0
Labour	13 266 592	315	46.1	13 948 605	295	48.8
Liberal	2 621 548	9	9.1	730 556	6	2.5
Others	381 964	3	1.3	198 969	3	0.7

	1955			1959		
	Votes	Seats	% Vote	Votes	Seats	% Vote
Conservative	13 286 569	344	49.7	13 749 830	365	49.4
Labour	12 404 970	277	46.4	12 215 538	258	43.8
Liberal	722 405	6	2.7	1 638 571	6	5.9
Others	346 554	3	1.2	255 302	1	0.9

#### 2) Reasons for Conservative victory

Even if Labour won more votes, because of the way its support was distributed across the constituencies it gained fewer seats than the Conservatives. What might explain this Conservative revival :

#### • Conservative Party transformation

Defeat of 1945 was seen as a crushing blow : overall majority of 146 seats in the House of Commons for the Labour and won 8 % more votes than the Conservatives. Need to reorganize the party structure and policies to have a fighting chance for the next elections. It was made over 1948 : party has regained confidence and seen as a serious Party of Opposition ; during the elections of 1951 regain the majority only 6 years after their defeat

#### Structural reorganisation and recovery :

Basic functioning of the party had been disrupted by the war (basic tools of a political party) had to be reconstructed (handbooks, lists of members)

Role of Lord Woolton after 1946 organizing fundraising and membership drives :

Beginning of the 50's : membership 3 M

Restoration of the finances with sponsorship from industry and wealthy patrons >>> extension of the staff and public relations machinery

Attempt to project a more youthful and democratic image :

Creation of the Youth Conservative Movement (functioning as a social club)

Democratisation through the 1949 party selection procedures

#### Policy development and propaganda :

- The Labour domestic programme stressed the nationalisation of key industries and the implementation of a welfare state which was universal (everybody and not only the poor) >> very popular
- Choice first done by Churchill not to make any specific policy commitments.
- Change with the action of Richard Austen Butler who was responsible for the development of a policy after the defeat :
- Idea of a property owning democracy but most important was the **1947 Industrial Charter** :
  - Not a revolutionary document : emphasis on the need for cooperation within industry and acknowledgment of the valuable role of the trade unions.
  - Called for the reduction of taxations and public spending but also conceded that the economic policy should be used to encourage high level of employment
  - Attacks on monopolies and restrictive practices
  - Important : it made clear that Conservatism did not stand for **Laissez faire**, but rather for a reduction in the role of the state and a greater part for individual enterprise
- Other charters have followed on policy toward women and agriculture
- First general statement in 1950 : **"the right road for Britain"** which stressed that the C would protect the welfare state and not undo the reforms of the Atlee government

- **Labour's problems :**

- financial and economic difficulties
  - Continuing eco. problems faced by the Labour government after 1945 (almost bankruptcy after the war)
  - Spending still high after the war (preserving the Empire, occupying Germany, welfare state, rebuilding)
  - Post war age of austerity (restriction of individual consumption money) >> unhappiness of middle class
  - Argument used by the C of reducing the control and bureaucracy of the war
- tight majority after 1950
- weary after long period of government
- right – left divisions

- **Impact of Cold War**

- USSR had been nicely portrayed during the war as it was an ally (even its socialist economic choices)
- Debate over the way to deal with the USSR and communism >>> brought into domestic debates
- Association of the Labour with such ideas by the C to discredit them

## II / Leading members

**R.A Butler** was the Minister of Education in Churchill's Coalition (Education Act 1944) and played a major part in restoring the Conservative Party's morale during the Attlee years. He was the Chancellor of the Exchequer between 1951 and 1955, and Home Secretary from 1957 to 1962. He was one of the most progressive conservatives of the period.

**Winston Churchill** was one of the Conservative Party's main leader. However, when he took the Prime Minister office for the second time ( from 1951 to 1955 ), he was already 77 and was more a symbolic figure with a great reputation than an effective minister.

**Anthony Eden** had been Foreign Secretary three times (1935 – 1938, 1940 – 1945, 1951 – 1955) and succeeded to Churchill as Prime Minister in 1955 and considered foreign affairs as his special area of expertise. However, he was forced to resign in 1957 because of the Suez Canal crisis and the illness that followed.

**Harold Macmillan** held key posts in Churchill's Coalition between 1940 and 1945 and in his government from 1951 to 1955. He was Prime Minister between 1957 and 1963 and during his office, he commit Britain to entering the EEC, was for the independence of African colonies and supported the USA in the Cold War conflicts. (See file in the third part)

## III / 1950s : stability and conformity

### 1 ) Stability and the end of austerity

Improving economic conditions and rapid rates of growth in the middle of the 50's helped ensure the party reelection in 1955 and 1959. This was much more due to the international context result than the C policy (after the end of the Korean War) >>> **possibility for the government to reduce taxes and even increase the spending of the welfare state** (voters happy). **Programme of house building** and objectives of the gov. fulfilled (300 000 houses pledge in 1953)

Capabilities of ending the rationning and the controls characterizing the war period >> **era of affluence**

The 50s were a period of stability for Great Britain, firstly because it was ruled by the same party all along. Moreover, rationing ended at the beginning of the decade. A policy of regulation of the economy ( stop-go ) was settled to avoid the extremes of inflation and deflation.

Only problem the statue of Churchill and his bad health >>> finally leaving the place to Eden (resignation in April 1955, new election held at the end of May)

### 2 ) Conformity : Butskellism ( see Economic Consensus )

Conformity came from the fact that the Conservative government followed grosso modo Labour's policy. Infact, in terms of economy, the Conservatives continued to operate the mixed economy ( public ownership / private enterprise, free market / state intervention ).

Moreover, the Conservatives had been converted to welfarism since during their mandate, they put rising amounts of revenue into the NHS and the social security system and only the steel industry was fully denationalised.

### **3) « Supermac » and the affluent society**

Years of 1957-1959 seen as the high point of the decade's affluence, while the previous period had only been used to lower taxes and higher public spending without serious consequences

Speech of Bedford from Macmillan in 1957, warning that high public spending, rising standards of living, full employment and low inflation were not simultaneously possible.

Harsh reality of economic management with arguments inside the government (resignation of the Treasury team) over the principle of economic orthodoxy (willingness of cutting the budget refused by colleagues) with the necessity to deflate the economy

#### **But more confidence :**

through winning the face of with the trade unions during the London bus strike (1958)

**Plus another period of boom of the economy. People's attention was not to the dismantlement of the Empire and the foreign policy, but to the domestic record >>> feeling of affluence and well being sufficient to carry the party through general elections**

**Years of « Supermac »**, nickname, as it seemed the PM was a clever politician (master of television speeches and interest in his own image in the visual media). Popularity growing to even 70 % in the polls (technics more used during the C campaigns)

Victory in the 1959 elections with a growing advance of 100 seats in the House of Commons

Macmillan star continued growing in the sixties

### **4) The reasons of Conservative Party losing the general elections of 1964 ?**

The success of the C administrations of the 50's rested in large part on the material conditions of those years. The period had been criticised as a period of missed opportunity and growth but the record of the party in office was strong . But the party lost its way with great speed after 1959. By 1964, no one was surprised when Labour came back to power. The C now looked out of date and uncertain.

#### **The establishment factor :**

Macmillan was tired (10 years in cabinet) ; seemed also out of touch with the socially mobile affluent age that the party had been at pains to cultivate in the previous decade.

½ of the cabinet were fellow Etonians ; symbol affair around the nomination of a peer, Lord Home to the Foreign office in 1960 (undemocratic)

Use of high numbers of politicians from the Lords (difficult to accept in a modern democracy) ; C MP's (Public School + Oxford or Cambridge : 1945 48 % ; 1964 48 % ; 1992 32 %)

C leadership labelled as the « Establishment »

Problem also inside the Party, as it was difficult to maintain inside the sense of passion for doing voluntary work, which is needed for a healthy grass roots organization. Even with changes at the head of the party the job of rescuing the party organisation seemed hard to achieve.

#### **The problem of affluence**

Party officials sensed that the voters had come to expect too much and grew angry when the objectives could not be met. And the country was hitting serious economic problems.

Sense of unease in British society in these years :

Unpopular series of deflationary policies >>> poor local and by elections results at this time.

But also Britain seemed to be losing its place in the world (ending of empire and decolonisation in Africa)

#### **Macmillan fight back**

Decision to apply for membership of the EEC in July 1961 should be seen in this context :

European integration set as a new and modern agenda in British politics and economic policy (for C)

Would force a cold shower of modernisation and competition on industry that the gov could not impose in isolation

Other decision, new economic strategy in the early summer of 1962, that was far more interventionist than the C had ever tried before, hoping the voters would think the gov was back in control and that controlled expansion of the economy could revive the party's fortune.

#### **The « Night of the Long Knives »**

Willingness of McM to reshuffle the Cabinet : July 1962 abrupt change in the composition of the gov (39 of the 101 ministerial posts). Idea of injecting fresh air into an administration which had come to look old.

Miscalculation : revolution in the Party as he had dismissed many of his colleagues without adequate warning. >>> low morale in the Party got worse. Personal reputation of McM lowered.

Example of the PM's prerogative or power but in fact not a position of strength but rather out of an increasing sense of political desperation.

LT damages have been probably exaggerated as it for example cleared the way for McM eco ideas to be implemented.

### Europe, scandal and the fall of McMillan

McM's new approach took serie of beatings in 1963.

**January 1963, G de Gaulle famously said « no »** to the EEC application ; it was blocking the C strategy of looking for the modernisation and efficiency promised by the EEC (while the Labour look insular)

**Profumo scandal >>>** June the PM was fighting for his political life.

War Minister rumoured to have had an affair with a woman named Christine Keller in 1961. She was in turn said to have an affair with a Russian diplomat >>> spy scandal

Hysterical press coverage ; Profumo was forced to admit his lies and to resign.

### The Changing of the Guard »

- Growing speculations about McMillan's position as leader of the party.
- McM ill at the C Party Conference and resigned
- The week degenerated into one undignified jostling between the contenders, Butler, Hailsham and Lord Home (compromise candidate)
- Selection process really controversial >>> Home chosen even if he was hardly anyone first choice
- His action was hampered by his aristocratic background, when the party was vulnerable to the charge of being led by the upper class
- Difficulties for the party in the elections to follow the lines of 1959 in such conditions
- They choose to postpone the time of the elections as possible to give the gov the maximum amount of time to gather support and to recover from the serie of disasters of the previous year. Finally vote announced for 15 October.
- Home did not so bad as a campaigner but the Party lost by 1.75 millions voters >>> even if it meant only a majority of 4 seats for the Labour

## **IV / Foreign and International policy**

Suez Canal crisis, 1956 ( Conflict in Middle East )

European Free Trade Association ( EFTA ) 1959

Commonwealth Immigration Act 1962

Cuban Missile Crisis 1962 ( Cold War )

Nuclear Test Ban Treaty 1963 ( Cold War )

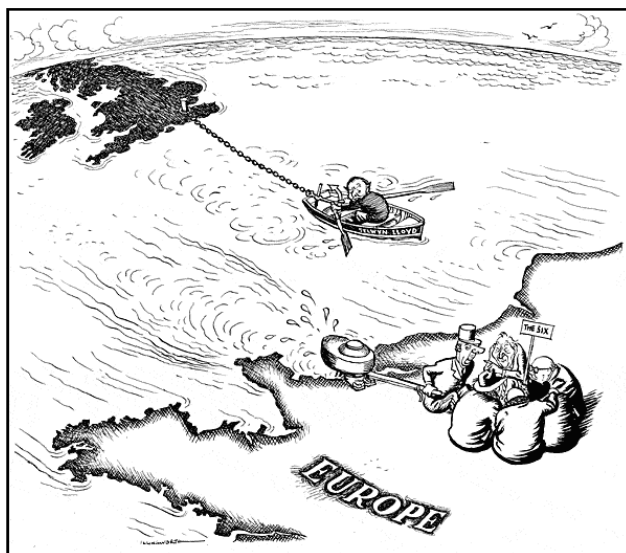
## **V / Balance sheet**

### 1 ) Critiques

- Use of budget as short term measures to buy votes
- failure of the governments to develop policies that produced a constantly performing economy ( stop-go )
- Failure of the government to invest in industrial research and development + not making efforts to improve Britain's poor employer-worker relations ( stagflation )
- Fiasco in foreign affairs ( Suez Canal and EEC ) + Decolonisation

### 2 ) Positive points

- Period of stability
- Under Conservative governments : higher wages, healthier people, better educated people, better housed people
- Heavy defence burden



## D) *The Age of consensus : 1964 - 1979*

### Introduction :

#### **Back to the main changes since 1945:**

- Introduction of the welfare state
- Rise of the standard of living of the people
- Heavy defence commitments and expenditure
- Shift from a manufacturing to a service economy
- The decline in trade union strength reflecting this economy change
- Significant level of immigration which change Britain in a multi-racial society
- The weakening of the parliament as an institution with the growing power of central government
- The retreat from Empire and the abandonment of Britain's economic ties with the Commonwealth
- A loss of sovereignty entailed by Britain's entry in the EEC

These are the issues which dominated politics in the second half of the century and distinctive feature of the years before 1979 was how close the political parties were in their response to these issues. Even if they were criticizing each-other fiercely they were making very little changes in the policies they inherited from the other.

Governments :

- Wilson 1964-1970
- Heath 1970-1974
- Wilson 1974-1976
- Callaghan 1976-1979

### I/ "Britain in decline" the economy

- Change of the economy into a post-industrial economy
- Shrinking of the manufacturing industries, rise of finance and services
- Transition harsh with considerable social disruption

Major difficulties : adjustment in its economy and social structures

Question which was not really on the role of the state (Keynesian) as the central and local government has a marginal influence in shaping this transformation

Britain seen by some as in decline as it was not able to reach the same level of growth as other countries in Europe or elsewhere (UK 1.9 % ; Germany 3.4 % , USA 2.8 %)

Main argument idea : too much spending in defence, too little on invs in industry (1/3 of the budget of R&R spent in defence, Japan less than 1 %)

#### 1) Industrial relations

- Vision of some analysis **as if trade union (TU) were a powerful obstructive force :**
  - Strike action or go-slow tactics to force weak employers into granting rights, wages or preservation of jobs supposed to be scrapped
  - Result refusal to cooperate in industry modernisation
- Feeling that strikes were politically motivated and damaging for the economy
- In a retrospective this can be seen as a **distortion based on a misunderstanding of the TU strength :**
  - Reaction to economic circumstances, not creating them
  - U not powerful in a weak economy ; basically a conservative force
  - U were fighting a rear guard action to keep job losses to a minimum
  - Most of it was done through responsible employer union negotiation
  - Then only going to confrontation if negotiations broke down
- TU were seen as easy scapegoats for the press talking about the disputes

- **Both parties made moves toward introducing statutory rules into industrial relations but neither was pushing too hard to risk unpopularity**

○ Labour **feared to antagonise its chief supporters and financial backers by interfering in their right to bargain with employers.** Example Wilson tries to outlaw unofficial strikes (white papers 1969)

**Conservative failed to reconcile the thought of impositions on employers and workers with their belief in free market.**

Attempt by Heath to do the same as Wilson but start of a running battle with the TU. In 1972, loss of 23 M working days ; worse in 1974 with the industrial crisis and 14 M working days loss

- **Unemployment :**  
1960 : 461, 1968 : 631, 1971 : 868, 1975 : 1 152, 1978 : 1 608

## **2) Consumerism**

- Period of continuous rise in living standards, and especially the purchasing power of the population
  - Critics asserted that it was achieved by ignoring reality ; wages and purchases were increasing while the basic economy was going into decline
- Consumerism was not helping manufacturing industries as goods on which earnings were spent were mainly imported products

## **3) The international oil price rise**

- crisis in 1973 which shows how British economy was susceptible to events in the outside world
  - Before supply of cheap oil by large Western TNC's
  - But creation of OPEC in the 60's with greater control over their own oil industries
  - 1973 use of oil as a weapon in the conflict with Israel : reduction of the oil supplies to Western states and rise of the prices (rise from 2 \$ to 35 \$ between 1972 and 1980)
  - Pressure on the USA but also on other economies dependent on oil (for example for plastic)
- **The immediate effects in Britain**
  - **Balance of payments deficit rose to 1 billion of £**
  - **Annual inflation rose to 16 %**
  - **Drop in the value of sterling to 1.57 \$**
  - **A record budget deficit**

**Between 1974 and 1976 unemployment doubled to 1.44 M**

- Paradox as oil will also offer economic salvation : North Sea oil, discovered in 1974 began to be extracted at the end of the 80's. By 1980 UK was exporting more than importing

### **Summary of first part : reasons for economic difficulties**

Costly military and defence commitments  
 Legacy of the two WW with GB financially exhausted  
 High costs of running a welfare state  
 Troubled industrial relations with lessened productivity  
 Problems of going through a transition in the economy to a service-based one  
 Heavy costs by joining the EEC in 1973  
 Oil price rise in 1973

## **II/ Harold Wilson governments, 1964 - 1970**

Difficult situation of Home replacing MC Millan in 1963 and impression of non modernisation of the conservative party.  
 Narrow defeat result (only 13 seats of difference 43.6 – 44.1 % ; overall majority of 4 seats)

- Reasons for Labour victory :
  - **Presented a more youthful image** (not only age of Wilson but also connection with the progressive ideas of the youth) >>> Notion of the swinging sixties ; willingness of the Labour politicians not to appear unfashionable
  - **Wilson played on the contrast between him and Home** (huntin', fishin', shootin' aristocrat) not in touch with the real people and their wants
  - Successfully stand as the forces of progress standing against the political establishment
  - Critics of the conservatives electors who wanted a change from their position of a planned economy and no distinction from the Labour Party
- Wilson first two years were relatively successful :
  - Creation of a new department of Economic Affairs under George Brown : National Plan
  - New Ministry of Technology >> **intention of modernism**

New majority in 1966 a majority of 110 seats

- Then problems :
  - opposition inside his own party on his financial strategy
  - **long strikes of the seamen's and dockers' unions >>> balance of payments deficit**
  - **New loan to the IMF >>> financial difficulties which pushed Wilson to call for the devaluation of the pound**
  - Devaluation introduced late and in theatrical manner (on TV) ; could not pass as a technical financial adjustment >>> **political and economical failure of the government**
- Perception not only inside but also outside the party
- **TU angered by Wilson blames on the strikers**

When he introduced the set of proposals aimed at preventing future strikes the TU in the party rebelled and forced it to be withdrawn

- End feeling that the first Wilson government had not lived up the expectations
  - The worse was inside the core and traditional Labour supporters
  - Felt Gov had promised much and done little ; contrary to Atlee unimpressive record of reforms ; same content if not the style from the Conservative before
  - Reforms in the industry were done but globally the modernisation of the industry was not achieved
  - On the other hand some historians are **bringing back the social reforms :**

○ **Legalisation of abortion**

○ **Decriminalisation of homosexual acts**

○ **Abolition of death penalty**

○ Issues which are controversial as people called this period the “permissive age”

○ In any case seen as isolated in the global perception of the gov achievements

Left of the party and the youth which were the more disillusioned as it seemed it was not a new departure but the continuation of the same. For the leftists, Wilson was accused of :

○ Rising unemployment, inflation, wage control

○ Restriction of TU freedoms

○ Immigration control, reintroduction of prescriptions charges

○ Retention of UK nuclear weapons, support of the Vietnam war

- Belief by Wilson that despite these criticisms his basic support was solid : Surprise of the result :
- loss of the moderate voters (economic policies and failure to control the unions  
5 % swing from Labour to Conservative ; majority of 30 seats (46.4 v 43.0 %)

### **III/ The Heath Government, 1970-74**

- Quite the same process as Wilson in 1964 :
  - **Declared his was adopting a new style of government ; aimed to reduce the rise in prices, increase productivity and reduce unemployment**
  - **By 1974 he was not successful in none of these goals**

- Rapid inflation after 1973 made the holding down of prices impossible

- The wage demands of the unions and the working days lost declined more productivity

This meant that unemployment couldn't be reduced (1972, worse year since the Depression of the 30's)

- 4 years in office overshadowed and ended by the problem of industrial relations :
  - First try in having discussions and agreements with the U : offered a package in which in return for cooperation in imposing wages policy they would be directly involved in gov economic policy. U suspicious
  - First gov measure **1970 Industrial Relation Act** : based upon the proposals of the Labour
    - Restricted the right of workers to strike by introducing the concept of “unfair industrial practices
    - A National Industrial Relations Court (NIRC) with authority to judge validity of strike action was created and TU were required to put themselves on a register if they wanted to retain their legal rights
    - **The National Union of Miners forced the issue**
    - **1972 willingness to increase wage and to highlight the increasing of pit closure** they called for a strike which used pickets to stop the movement of coal.
    - Disruption of the fuel and electricity supplies and reduced industries production
    - The gov introduced a series of restriction on the use of fuel, which recalls the austerities of the 40's to pressure the union

- Finally dispute settled in 1973, with a 21 % wage increase gained by the U.
- They went again on strike in 1974 in order to regain wage increase
- **Heath called an immediate election on the issue of who run the country : miners or gov**
- Answer was not what he was expecting

Labour majority of 4 over the Conservative + support of the 14 liberal MPs, Wilson embarked on his second mandate

## **IV/ Labour in office, 1974 - 1979**

- From the beginning of the Labour gov, three restrictions :
- **Thinness of its overall majority in the Commons**
  - After 10/74 elections, majority of 42 over the C. but overall majority of only 3 seats
  - This meant influence of the Liberal party which it had not enjoyed since the 20's
- Normal as they got only 13 seats while having half of the votes of Labour or C which had 319 seats
- Held office at the worse time when UK began to **suffer the worse effects of the economic crisis**
  - **1976 : loan from the IMF of 4 billion £, with an obligation to cut public spending** ; by 1979, cut in public spending was approximately from 1 billion £ >>> Cost was an increase of unemployment which reached 1.6 million in 1978. >>> TU embittered and loyalty to L. weakened. >>> "Winter of discontent"
  - **Struggle to come to terms with the unions was related to inflation**
  - Credit for repealing the IR Act was lost by the failure to push the U to cooperate
  - Quite the same troubles as during the Heath gov.
  - People believed in his good relations with some of the moderate unions and ability to end the stop and go policies, but the economic crisis destroyed that hope (rising prices and IMF injunctions forced the gov to follow the same policies)
  - Action of especially the public service workers

<b>KEY EVENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS, 1964-70</b>	
<b>1964</b>	the newly created Ministry of Technology and Department of Economic Affairs drafted a National Plan; IMF loaned the UK £1 billion;
<b>1965</b>	Southern Rhodesia made a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI); Redundancy Payments Act provided financial settlements for laid-off workers; Race Relations Act;
<b>1966</b>	election extended the Labour majority to 110 over the Conservatives; prices and incomes freeze introduced; industrial Reorganisation Corporation set up; three-month seamen's strike.
<b>1967</b>	a special parliamentary officer – the Ombudsman – appointed to protect ordinary citizens from misuse of authority by government departments; dockers' strike; the idea of a National Economic Plan dropped; France vetoed Britain's second EEC membership application; the pound devalued; the Abortion Act legalised the termination of pregnancy for health reasons; the Sexual Offences Act permitted homosexual acts in private;
<b>1968</b>	the Immigration Act prohibited new immigrants from settling in Britain unless they had family connections already established; Race Relations Act;
<b>1969</b>	Open University established; <i>In Place of Strife</i> introduced but then withdrawn; voting age lowered from 21 to 18; the death penalty abolished;
<b>1970</b>	Conservatives gained a majority of 30 in general election.

Short chronology extracted from Modern British History 1900-1999 by Michael Lynch; Hodder and Stoughton, 2001, p161

## ***E) The Thatcher revolution : 1979 - 1990***

### **I/ How Margaret Thatcher managed to take the leadership of the Conservative Party in 1975 ?**

**Emergence as a party leader was a landmark in the history of British conservatism.**

Supporter of the **New Right thinking** and she seemed to be marking a real break with Heath and the moderate pragmatism for which he stood. Importance also as she was the only second woman to achieve a position in a C Cabinet. **Her election** took nearly everyone by surprise as no one has considered her campaign as a serious one until it was all over.

#### **1) Changes in the party**

**gloom within the party at this point was evident on a number of level :**

- **membership levels had fallen dramatically** since the 50's and organisation such as the Young C had almost collapsed
- **evolution of the character and profile of the Party :**
  - Time of McM : C MP had been to a Public S, had a private income, and a paternalist sense of civic responsibility
  - By the mid 70's : a C MP would have studied in a grammar S, coming from a middle class suburb and to have a more professional and ideological approach to politics
  - Growing frustration about the « Front Bench » approach to economic and social policy ; beginning of questions toward the moderate choices. Heath and followers were seeking kind of domestic appeasement when what was needed was strong and principled leadership.

**This atmosphere saw the ideas of the right wing thinkers beginning to gain widespread support.**

- Radical alternative which seemed increasingly plausible with the failure of the traditional approaches
- In 1974 foundation by two Cabinet members Keith Joseph and Margaret Thatcher of the Center for Policy Studies
- Idea of breaking with the consensus politics that has dominated public life since 1945

#### **2) Margaret Thatcher's coup d'état**

**Heath reluctant to resign the leadership** after the October election defeat, on the ground that it will be taken by right-wing extremists. He finally called for election for February.

**No real opponents**, even Joseph who was making gaffes, ruled himself out. M. Thatcher put herself forward

She was able to settle with Heath, who had patronized her in Cabinet and the two of them disliked each other from the moment they had to work with each other.

- **Heath underestimated her chances on the ground that the Party** will not elect a woman to be leader.
- **And she had done a strong impression as Minister for the Environment and the Shadow Finance Minister in the autumn.**
- Clearly seen as a **fighter with strong C beliefs**
- **But she really made the point during the campaign facing Heath** showing courage and determination her male colleagues lacked. She gained admirers and turned her gender to her political advantage.

**Her campaign was not only luck and grit. It was skillfully managed by Aire Neave** with an interesting strategy.

On 4<sup>th</sup> of February she came first with 130 to 119 to Heath. Heath withdrew immediately. In the second ballot, several candidates entered the fray but Thatcher was in a strong position and she won the second ballot.

### **II/ In what her action is considered to be revolutionary ?**

#### **1) Ideological basis and mentors**

★ Methodist upbringing and influence of the ideas of F. Von Hayek and Keith Joseph

○ **F Von Hayek** major critic of Keynes, was criticizing the state direction of the economy. The proper role of the state was not to be involved in the welfare of its citizens but simply provide the conditions of liberty in which individuals were free to make their own choices. Defender of the free market, seen as a guaranty of political and economic liberty. TU seen as the direct cause of unemployment and destroyer of democratic freedoms

○ **K. Joseph** : leading C intellectual of the time ; he introduced M. Thatcher to the ideas of Von Hayek and encouraged her to adopt monetarism (theory of M. Friedman for whom the basic cause of inflation is the increase in money supply : policy aimed at reducing the amount of money and cut public expenditure.

## 2) Main changes

Revolution as she ended the consensus politics operating since 1945 (seen as a creeping socialism).

- On the economic aspects :
  - OCritics of the increase of the power and control of the state
  - OLimitation of the free market
  - OSubsidies to private and public companies
  - OExpansion of the undemocratic power of the unions
  - OTHIS RESULTED in inefficiency and low growth
- Welfare system :
  - OWhich undermined personal responsibilities
  - OCreated a dependency culture
  - Ohard-working members of society were subsidising the work-shy.
  - OInitiative was stifled
- Furthermore Idea of a return to the principle of individual accountability : the state should not reward the incompetent and the half hearted >> Bad social practice
- It can more seen **as an ideology based on a set of moral values** (faith in individual responsibility, importance of hard work, the importance of the traditional family, the need to limit the role of the state, the importance of patriotism, and the revulsion against socialism)
- **Determination to restore these moral values to the centre of British political culture.** In that sense not a radical reforming PM, but much more a “reaction period to the reforms of the previous generation, seen as a period of moral and economic decline
- People were thinking she would be tamed by the pressures of office, as its election manifesto was not extreme (promises of inflation reduction, trade union reform, sale of council housing, reduction of taxation and public spending, firm handling of immigration and a strong defence policy). **Programme successful especially among the skilled workers**  
C majority of 30 seats in the Commons, which was enough to govern comfortably but not to survive great controversy. She was also surrounded by moderate C in the Cabinet as well as moderate influence of the civil servant.

## **III/ key features**

### 1) Global policies

Has to be understood as a set of aims which she sought to achieve :

- **Keynesian has to be abandoned and the free market allowed to operate**
- **Monetarism** would end wasteful government spending
- **The undemocratic power of the TU to be broken and the union leaders to be made fully responsible to their members**
- **Companies to be removed from government control and privatisation to be introduced**
- **Government subsidies** for unprofitable industries to end and the competition spirit to be promoted
- **Income tax and corporation tax reduced** so that individuals and companies could keep their money
- **Public institutions and bodies in particular local government to be made truly accountable** to the public they existed to serve
- **Welfare dependency to be discouraged** by targeting benefit on those who genuinely needed it.
- **The maintenance of law and order** to be given priority : provide greater protection to ordinary citizens
- **British independence and sovereignty to be enhanced by resisting EEC encroachments**
- **Britain would promote the cause of world freedom** in the face of the Communist oppression

The first real actions were **the privatisation of 50 enterprises sold during the Thatcher years** :

- Larger were British airways, British Steel, British Coal, Cable and wireless, British Telecom, and the regional electricity and water boards
- Government revenue derived from privatisation :  
1979-80 : 377 M £ ; 1985-86 : 2.6 B £ ; 1988-1989 : 7 B £

## 2) The Falklands War 1982

- War with Argentina which is seen as enhancing Thatcher popularity and staying in the office
    - Critics with her monetarist measures and fear among the C of an eco recession which would be fatal for the coming elections ; The popularity from the war enabled her to gain the election of 1983 and 1987
    - Causes : the legal ownership of the islands which has been disputed for long by the two countries on the question of sovereignty (British dependency since 1833) but the main Thatcher argument was that 98 % of the 2000 inhabitants were in favour of the British crown.
    - On April 2d, 1982, Galtieri, the Argentine dictator, ordered the seizure of the islands and overcame the resistance the garrison of 80 Royal Marines
    - Thatcher ordered immediately the re-seizure of the islands, refusing to follow a diplomatic channel first. A fleet left England on the 5-8 of April and the operations begun on May 1st.
    - Fights with the destruction of the only Argentine cruiser and of three British frigates ; British troops landing on the 21st and surrender of the Argentine troops on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June.
- The conflict had claimed the lives of 255 British and 665 Argentine servicemen

## 3) The Miners' strike 1984-1985

- She stopped the subsidies which were used to shore up the ailing industries,
  - money was coming from public purse and other areas were deprived from this money used to help failing ones
  - Robbing Peter to pay Paul made no sense economically if Peter was productive and Paul unproductive, rewarding the inefficient at the expense of the efficient.

This led to the crisis with the miners :

- Through the century **British coal had become increasingly costly and difficult to mine and nationalisation in 1948 had not altered it**, and lack of public invs might have worsened it.
- With exception of few pits producing particular types of coal, **the mines were running at a loss**
- **Thatcher gov announced its unwillingness to an industry with quite no chance to recover and that not to take these hard measures were delaying the inevitable.**
- **Opposite argument** of the TU and other analysts was that a proper invs programme backed by a commitment to use coal as a long term energy source could keep the industry in a profitable manner. Further arguments were concerning the **social consequences** of such closure
- Opposing view points personalised in the leading protagonists in the coal strike :
  - **Ian McGregor, Canadian manager** appointed by the National Coal Board, whose remit was to cut non profitable parts of the coal industry
  - **Arthur Scargill, Marxist** president of **the NUM** opposed to any closure of the pits
  - The gov claiming its neutrality was in fact fully backing McGregor
- It was said that this policy was part of a **campaign to brake the power of the TU**. They had anticipated a long strike and had made careful plans
  - Norman Tebbit, Employment Minister has past the **Employment Act** which reduced TU effectiveness : it forbade mass picketing and outlawed the “closed shop” (the obligation that all workers in a particular plant or factory had to be member of a U) ; it also declared that industrial action was illegal unless the members had voted for a strike in a formal union ballot
  - They also stockpiled coal and coke at the fuel stations and emergency plans were drawn up for importing further stocks
- **Strike begun in 1984, lasted for a year and saw violent clashes between miners and the police but the Union knew they had very few chances of success.** Furthermore they were not backed by other Union such as the power workers
- **Strike ended early in 1985 leaving a legacy of bitterness and recrimination**
- It was a gov success and it meant the start of resistance from other employers to TU demands

#### 4) The fall of Margaret Thatcher

Two issues are explaining the end of Thatcher period in office : **The European question and the Poll tax**

- The European question :
  - At Bruges, Belgium, in 1988, Thatcher made a speech in which she outlined her opposition to proposals from the European Community for a federal structure and increasing centralisation of decision-making.
  - Although she had supported British membership, Thatcher believed that the role of the EC should be limited to ensuring free trade and effective competition, and feared that new EC regulations would reverse the changes she was making in the UK.
  - "We have not successfully rolled back the frontiers of the state in Britain, only to see them re-imposed at a European level, with a European super-state exercising a new dominance from Brussels".
  - She was specifically against Economic and Monetary Union, through which a single currency would replace national currencies, and for which the EC was making preparations.
  - The speech caused an outcry from other European leaders, and exposed for the first time the deep split that was emerging over European policy inside her Conservative Party.
- The second is due to Thatcher will to bring local gov into lines with her ideas of public accountability
  - **Replacement of the existing system of local rates based on property values with a flat-rate charge for services set by each local authority. The charge was to be paid by all the adults resident in the local area.**
  - **Idea which came from the Adam Smith Institute (ASI) which suggested that 38 M poll-tax payers would be better than 14 M rate-payers. People being also more conscious of the quality of the services provided.**
  - **It was used by the gov as a way to break the control of socialist groups over boroughs and areas such as in London or Liverpool, and to push the people getting out Labour local gov for high spending.**
- Prelude was the elections of 1987 which showed an overall majority of 100 seats to the C, even if they lost 22 from the 1983 majority. Thatcher saw it as a new mandate given to her for further reforms.
  - **Start with Standard Spending Assessments (SSAs)** system enabling the central gov to control local authority spending levels. These local authorities had also to contract out their services to the companies which would provide the best services at the lower price.
  - **Gov thought this will attract the people to the next step which would be the poll tax**
  - **Misjudgement** : people have looked at this new tax as a regressive tax imposed by a grasping gov trying to trap the people in a same net. There were a list of exceptions from payment but the people were furious against the principle.
  - **Opposition to the tax was immediate and organised : millions of people refusing or avoiding payments.** Furthermore when the tax entered in 1990, it was doubling the estimate >>> unhappiness of the middle class
  - Further irony was that the poll tax cost twice and a half more to collect than the rates, due to the resistance it aroused.

Finally and in order to limit the charge of the tax , the gov pushed the local authorities to reduce their budget even if it meant reducing the services they provided >>> it looked like it was a measure even going against the interest of the customer and not increasing the local government services.

Failures associated with the Thatcher's years :

- \* **Years of social exclusion** for the one who did not benefit from the economic policies.  
Example through **social unrest in the cities**, especially in 1981 in Brixton  
Consequence of the high unemployment touching the inner cities
- \* Thatcher handling of the **miners strikes in 1984-85** was not well seen by all  
Extent of police powers used during the strikes and the weakness of the miners as the result of the new reforms convinced many that the C had gone too far.
- \* **Little regard for civil liberties**  
Disaster of the Government Finance Act 1988 culminating in the "Poll Tax riots" of 1989 was a crucial turning point.
- **C lost all 4 by-elections in 1989 and 1990, and the Labour in the polls had gained a 20 % lead over the C, with Thatcher popularity the worse ever in her 11 years.**
  - Doubts inside the party on the possibility to gain the elections with her as a leader
  - **Thatcher treatment of her senior colleagues** had made her powerful enemies by the end of the 80's and in 1989 she became the victim of the same amended rules which she had been using against Heath.
  - Challenge for the leadership by an obscure pro-european MP and she lost 1/5 of the C MP support.
  - Next year, more serious challenge from M. Heseltine and as it seemed she **had lost the support of most of her Cabinet colleagues she resigns.** Thatcher after the first turn withdraw in favour of John Major, her choice as a successor.

## 5) The impact of Thatcherism

- **In many ways policies failed**

Difficulties to roll back the state than what had been foreseen (in 1980 gov spending 43.2 % of the GDP, 1995, 42.5 %)

Paradox is that under Thatcher the gov became increasingly centralised and interventionist at a number of level.

Series of new powers over local gov spending (while authorities remained controlled by Labour)

In education policy, national curriculum which set clear limits to freedom in state schools.

Privatisation of industry was accompanied by the introduction of regulatory bodies

**At other levels, accomplishments were more impressive :**

Power of the trade unions drastically reduced ; number of working days lost to strike drop from 30 M in 1979 to 2 M in 1990.

Pattern of housing ownership has changed even with the collapse of the Housing market in the late 80's.

>>> shift toward the private sector

Changes in the Britain's political culture :

Modernisation of the left : end of socialism as a force in domestic politics among middle class voters and skilled workers.

Killing socialist alternative had been successful in the long term according to the Tony Blair election in 1997.



## ***F) The 1960's social revolution***

This period known as the “Swinging Sixties” or the “Long Sixties” covers the period from 1958 to 1974 during which important social changes in Great Britain occurred. Harold Macmillan even said that “some of our people have never had it so good”, regarding to this.

### **I / Revolution in the Youth**

In the early 1960's, almost 40% of the population was under 25. The increasing affluence of Britain's youth provided them with greater personal choice and freedom, creating the youth culture which rejected the established values and traditions, focusing itself instead on music, drugs, sex and fashion. ( with the Rolling Stones, Jimi Hendrix for music and gangs such as Teddy-Boys, Mods and Rockers )

But youth culture not only challenged tradition, but also authority, organising strikes on key issues of the time such as nuclear disarmament, environmental issues, women's rights and anti-Vietnam War protests.

Therefore, an irrevocable change in the youth culture of British society occurred in this period.

### **II / Revolution in the condition of women**

During the sixties, several reforms regarding the condition of women took place. These reforms concern several issues :

Contraception	( Family Planning Act 1967 )
Abortion	( Abortion Act 1967 )
Divorce	( Divorce Reform Act 1969 + Legal Aid )

Moreover, the feminist movement had a great influence on Britain, since it was combined with an increasing numbers of women entering higher education. This led to the increasing awareness of the repression of women in the traditionally patriarchal society. On the other hand, the introduction of labour saving devices meant that women were no longer tied to the household and had greater amounts of free time.

Therefore, women's role in society changed a lot during this period, moving from the role of mother and wife to the status of salary-earner so that the society moved from a patriarchal one to a more egalitarian model.

### **III / Revolution in Education**

After the failure of the Tripartite system, based on the Butler Act of 1944 which aimed to a more egalitarian educational system, giving students from working-class families the same chances as the ones from a wealthier background, Harold Wilson established the Comprehensive school system.

This system is based on meritocracy and had a great success from 1957 to 1967 with an increase of 130 % of people attending Universities from working class backgrounds. The Labour government tried to keep with this demand through creating the Polytechnics and in 1969, Royal Charter introduced the Open University which is a unique academy institution : it is a government-funded place of higher education.

### **IV / Revolution in Religion**

The sixties were a period of decline for the Church which can be explain by the rising emicence of New Age spiritualism and the exponential growth in alternative lifestyles. This have several consequences on the social level which are :

- an important step in personal liberation
- a change in the nation religious structure
- a cultural revolution

### **V / Other issues**

This period has also seen a lot of reforms regarding to other issues such as :

Homosexuality	( 1967, the Sexual Offences Act )
Immigration	( 1968, Immigration Act + Race Relations Act )
Death penalty	( 1965 - 1969, Abolition of the Death Penalty )
Election	( 1969, voting age reduced from 21 to 18 )

It is also a period during which there was a rediscovery of poverty linked to the establishment of the Welfare State programme.

# **Main political personalities 1945 - 1990**

# *-Profile-*

## WINSTON CHURCHILL (1874-1965)



In many ways Churchill was a radical, but he was loathed by the Left because of his strike-breaking and fierce anti-Bolshevism. He was too individualistic to be entirely at ease in any one party. In 1904, after only four years as a Unionist MP, he left the party to join the Liberals. His radical approach to social questions made him the great ally of Lloyd George in their creation of the pre-1914 social service state. Twenty years later, having established an impressive record as a Liberal social reformer, he returned to the Conservative fold, but in a strange relationship. He called himself a 'constitutionalist' and despite being Chancellor of the Exchequer in Baldwin's government between 1924 and 1929 did not formally rejoin the Conservatives until 1929. Churchill remained out of office for the next ten years. His demand that Britain rearm, and his outspoken attacks on appeasement and on the idea of independence for India made him unpopular with the Conservative establishment and he despaired of ever playing a major role in politics again. It is certainly hard to think that, had the Second World War not intervened, he would have reached the pre-eminence he then did.

Clement Attlee described him as 'the greatest citizen of the world of our time'. As well as making history Churchill also wrote it. His deep historical sense was evident in his many books and in his brilliant speeches in which he used his speech impediment to great effect. One example was his deliberate mis-pronunciation of the word 'Nazi', with a long 'a' and a soft 'z', in order to show his contempt for the movement to which it referred. His feel for the dramatic and his ability to use elevated language without losing the common touch is evident in the extract from his first broadcast to the nation as Prime Minister:

- 1874** born the son of Randolph Churchill, a leading Tory radical;
- 1898** fought in the Sudan under Kitchener;
- 1900** taken prisoner by the Boers in South Africa; entered the Commons as a Conservative MP;
- 1904** left the Conservatives to join the Liberals;
- 1908** President of the Board;
- 09** of Trade – showed himself to be a progressive social reformer;
- 1910** Home Secretary;
- 11**
- 1911** used troops against striking Welsh miners;
- 1911** First Lord of the
- 15** Admiralty;
- 1916** served on the Western Front;
- 1917** Minister of Munitions;
- 18**
- 1919** Fiercely anti-Bolshevik, he supported British intervention in Russia;
- 1921** Secretary for the
- 22** Colonies;
- 1924** left the Liberals and declared himself a 'Constitutionalist';
- 1924** Chancellor of the
- 29** Exchequer;
- 1926** strongly opposed the General Strike;
- 1929** formally rejoined the Conservatives;
- 1939** First Lord of the
- 40** Admiralty;
- 1940** Prime Minister and
- 45** Minister of Defence;
- 1945** his party heavily defeated in the General Election;
- 1947** helped to define the Cold War by his 'iron curtain' speech;
- 1951** Prime Minister;
- 55**
- 1965** died.

### **Winston Churchill, election broadcast (May, 1945)**

I must tell you that a socialist policy is abhorrent to British ideas on freedom. There is to be one State, to which all are to be obedient in every act of their lives. This State, once in power, will prescribe for everyone: where they are to work, what they are to work at, where they may go and what they may say, what views they are to hold, where their wives are to queue up for the State ration, and what education their children are to receive. A socialist state could not afford to suffer opposition - no socialist system can be established without a political police. They (the Labour government) would have to fall back on some form of Gestapo.

Source : <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/TUattlee.htm>

### **Sir Winston Churchill (1874-1965): Conservative Party Principles, 1946**

*Churchill made this speech to the Conservative Party Conference in 1946, after he had been replaced at British Prime minister by the Clement Atlee, whose Labour government was in the process of creating the modern British welfare state. Churchill rejects socialism, but not that he does not adopt a radical free market approach either.*

[...] It certainly would be an error of the first order for us to plunge out into a programme of promises and bribes in the hopes of winning the public favour. But if you say to me: "What account are we to give of the policy of the Conservative Party? What are we to say of our theme and our cause and of the faith that is in us?" That is a question to which immediate answer can always be given.

Our main objectives are: To uphold the Christian religion and resist all attacks upon it. To defend our Monarchical and Parliamentary Constitution. To provide adequate security against external aggression and safety for our seaborne trade. To uphold law and order, and impartial justice administered by Courts free from interference or pressure on the part of the executive. To regain a sound finance and strict supervision of national income and expenditure. To defend and develop our Empire trade, without which Great Britain would perish. To promote all measures to improve the health and social conditions of the people. To support as a general rule free enterprise and initiative against State trading and nationalisation of industries.

To this I will add some further conceptions. We oppose the establishment of a Socialist State, controlling the means of production, distribution and exchange. We are asked, "What is your alternative?" Our Conservative aim is to build a property-owning democracy, both independent and interdependent. In this I include profit-sharing schemes in suitable industries and intimate consultation between employers and wage-earners. In fact we seek so far as possible to make the status of the wage-earner that of a partner rather than of an irresponsible employee. It is in the interest of the wage-earner to have many other alternatives open to him than service under one all-powerful employer called the State. He will be in a better position to bargain collectively and production will be more abundant; there will be more for all and more freedom for all when the wage-earner is able, in the large majority of cases, to choose and change his work, and to deal with a private employer who, like himself, is subject to the ordinary pressures of life and, like himself, is dependent upon his personal thrift, ingenuity and good-housekeeping. In this way alone can the traditional virtues of the British character be preserved. We do not wish the people of this ancient island reduced to a mass of State-directed proletarians, thrown hither and thither, housed here and there, by an aristocracy of privileged officials or privileged Party, sectarian or Trade Union bosses. We are opposed to the tyranny and victimisation of the closed shop [*note: a unionized workplace where all workers must join the union*]. Our ideal is the consenting union of millions of free, independent families and homes to gain their livelihood and to serve true British glory and world peace.

Freedom of enterprise and freedom of service are not possible without elaborate systems of safeguards against failure, accident or misfortune. We do not seek to pull down improvidently the structures of society, but to erect balustrades upon the stairway of life, which will prevent helpless or foolish people from falling into the abyss. Both the Conservative and Liberal Parties have made notable contributions to secure minimum standards of life and labour. I too have borne my part in this. It is 38 years ago since I introduced the first Unemployment Insurance Scheme, and 22 years ago since, as Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer, I shaped and carried the Widows' Pensions and reduction of the Old Age Pensions [*note: the British version of the American "social security"*] from 70 to 65. We are now moving forward into another vast scheme of national insurance, which arose, even in the stress of war, from a Parliament with a great Conservative majority. It is an essential principle of Conservative, Unionist, and Tory policy-call it what you will-to defend the general public against abuses by monopolies and against restraints on trade and enterprise, whether these evils come from private corporations, from the mischievous plans of doctrinaire Governments, or from the incompetence and arbitrariness of departments of State. Finally, we declare ourselves the unsleeping opponents of all class, all official or all Party privilege, which denies the genius of our island race, whose sparks fly upwards unceasingly from the whole people, its rightful career, reward and pre-eminence alike in peace and war. [...]

Source : <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1946churchill-conservatism.html>

## CLEMENT ATTLEE (1883–1967)

In his own time and for years afterwards, Clement Attlee tended to be underrated. He suffered by comparison with Winston Churchill. Attlee's unprepossessing physical presence and limited skills as a public speaker did not create the grand image. Churchill described him as 'a modest little man with much to be modest about'. However, in the 1970s, Attlee began to be reassessed. Stress was laid upon his skill in surviving six years of one of the most difficult periods of twentieth-century government. Nor was it merely survival. His record as Prime Minister was truly remarkable. Nationalisation, the welfare state, NATO, Indian independence: these were the striking successes of this unassuming man. His ordinariness was, indeed, a positive virtue in that he came to typify the very people whose well-being he did so much to advance. Attlee's achievements would have been impressive at any time, but when it is appreciated that they were accomplished in a post-war period dominated by the most demanding of domestic and international crises they appear even more striking.

In an interview in 1960, Attlee summed up his own practical, down-to-earth style of conducting government business:

A Prime Minister has to know when to ask for an opinion. He can't always stop ministers offering theirs; you always have some people who'll talk on everything. But he can make sure to extract the opinion of those he wants when he needs them. The job of the Prime Minister is to get the general feeling – collect the voices. And then, when everything reasonable has been said, to get on with the job and say, 'Well, I think the decision of the Cabinet is this, that or the other. Any objections?' Usually there aren't.

*Source B* From *A Prime Minister on Prime Ministers* by Harold Wilson, 1977.

## -Profile-



- 1883** born in London into a comfortable middle-class family;
- 1901** read law at Oxford;
- 04**
- 1907** became manager of a boys' settlement in London's East End;
- 1914** served as an officer in
- 18** the war;
- 1919** became Mayor of Stepney;
- 1922** elected Labour MP for Limehouse;
- 1930** served in Ramsay
- 31** MacDonald's Labour government;
- 1935** leader of the Labour
- 55** Party;
- 1940** Deputy PM in Churchill's
- 45** Coalition government;
- 1945** Prime Minister;
- 51**
- 1955** retired as party leader and went to the House of Lords;
- 1967** died.

### **Clement Attlee, election broadcast (May, 1945)**

The Prime Minister made much play last night with the rights of the individual and the dangers of people being ordered about by officials. I entirely agree that people should have the greatest freedom compatible with the freedom of others. There was a time when employers were free to work little children for sixteen hours a day. I remember when employers were free to employ sweated women workers on finishing trousers at a penny half-penny a pair. There was a time when people were free to neglect sanitation so that thousands died of preventable diseases. For years every attempt to remedy these crying evils was blocked by the same plea of freedom for the individual. It was in fact freedom for the rich and slavery for the poor. Make no mistake, it has only been through the power of the State, given to it by Parliament, that the general public has been protected against the greed of ruthless profit-makers and property owners.

Forty years ago the Labour Party might, with some justice, have been called a class Party, representing almost exclusively the wage earners. It is still based on organised labour, but has steadily become more and more inclusive. In the ranks of the Parliamentary Party and among our candidates you will find numbers of men and women drawn from every class and occupation in the community. Wage and salary earners form the majority, but there are many from other walks of life, from the professions and from the business world, giving a wide range of experience. More than 120 of our candidates come from the Fighting Services, so that youth is well represented.

The Conservative Party remains as always a class Party. In twenty-three years in the House of Commons, I cannot recall more than half a dozen from the ranks of the wage earners. It represents today, as in the past, the forces of property and privilege. The Labour Party is, in fact, the one Party which most nearly reflects in its representation and composition all the main streams which flow into the great river of our national life.

Our appeal to you, therefore, is not narrow or sectional. We are proud of the fact that our country in the hours of its greatest danger stood firm and united, setting an example to the world of how a great democratic people rose to the height of the occasion and saved democracy and liberty. We are proud of the self-sacrifice and devotion displayed by men and women in every walk of life in this great adventure. We call you to another great adventure which will demand the same high qualities as those shown in the war: the adventure of civilisation.

We have seen a great and powerful nation return to barbarism. We have seen European civilisation almost destroyed and an attempt made to set aside the moral principles upon which it has been built. It is for us to help to re-knit the fabric of civilised life woven through the centuries, and with the other nations to seek to create a world in which free peoples living their own distinctive lives in a society of nations co-operate together, free from the fear of war.

We have to plan the broad lines of our national life so that all may have the duty and the opportunity of rendering service to the nation, everyone in his or her sphere, and that all may help to create and share in an increasing material prosperity free from the fear of want. We have to preserve and enhance the beauty of our country to make it a place where men and women may live finely and happily, free to worship God in their own way, free to speak their minds, free citizens of a great country.

### **Clement Attlee, *As It Happened* (1954)**

Differences of opinion arose in the Government. The immediate cause was a proposal in the Budget to make charges for certain of the Health Services in order to prevent abuse. There were other differences of a more personal nature. I endeavoured to effect agreement, but the disagreement spread to some other matters, notably to the effect on the economy of the country of the level of armaments on which we had embarked. I had, as a matter of fact, pointed out in public speeches that the achievement of our programme was conditioned by various factors such as the availability of raw materials and machine tools, and the level of prices. There was, therefore, in my view, no real difference of principle. However, the upshot was that Aneurin Bevan, Harold Wilson and John Freeman insisted on resigning from the Government.

Source : <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/TUattlee.htm>

## HAROLD MACMILLAN (1894–1986)

Macmillan's appearance was that of a typical English gentleman. Yet by birth he was half Scottish, half American. He had a gallant service record in the 1914–18 war, an experience which gave him a particular respect for the working class. This was deepened by his witnessing, as MP for a Durham constituency, the grim effects of the Depression in the North-East. He expressed his unorthodox Conservatism in 1938 in his book, *The Middle Way*, which may be regarded as an early appeal for consensus politics. He argued for the acceptance of Keynesianism and pressed the case for extending the direction by the State of a broad range of services. Having held key posts in Churchill's 1940–45 Coalition and in the 1951–55 government, he became PM in 1957. Although he was Chancellor of the Exchequer at the time of the Suez affair in 1956, Macmillan was generally regarded as not being deeply implicated in the government's failure. This left him well placed to heal the wounds in the party. He was the first PM to commit Britain to entering the EEC and was an outspoken supporter of independence for the African colonies. He proved himself a keen Cold Warrior by supporting the USA in its conflicts with the Soviet Union.

Despite his seemingly relaxed style Macmillan worked extremely hard and could be ruthless on occasion: in 1962 in the 'Night of the Long Knives' he dismissed half his Cabinet. Despite considerable unhappiness in his private life he maintained an 'unflappable' air in public. He had a dry sense of humour and took particular delight in the satirists' portrayal of him as 'Supermac', originally intended as an ironic reference on his government's uncertain economic performance. His own comment on this was famously that under Conservatism Britain had 'never had it so good'. The last years of his premiership were marred by the Profumo affair.

## -Profile-



- 1894** born into the Macmillan publishing family;
- 1917** badly wounded in action;
- 1924** elected as Conservative MP;
- 1930s** opposed appeasement policy;
- 1938** published *The Middle Way*;
- 1940** Minister of Supply;
- 42**
- 1942** Minister with special responsibility for the war in North Africa;
- 45**
- 1951** Minister for Housing and Local Government;
- 54**
- 1954** Minister of Defence;
- 55**
- 1955** Foreign Secretary;
- 1955** Chancellor of the Exchequer;
- 57**
- 1957** Prime Minister and leader of the Conservative Party;
- 63**
- 1984** became the Earl of Stockton;
- 1986** died.

## **Harold Macmillan's "Wind of Change" Speech**

Made to the South Africa Parliament on 3 February 1960:

It is, as I have said, a special privilege for me to be here in 1960 when you are celebrating what I might call the golden wedding of the Union. At such a time it is natural and right that you should pause to take stock of your position, to look back at what you have achieved, to look forward to what lies ahead. In the fifty years of their nationhood the people of South Africa have built a strong economy founded upon a healthy agriculture and thriving and resilient industries.

No one could fail to be impressed with the immense material progress which has been achieved. That all this has been accomplished in so short a time is a striking testimony to the skill, energy and initiative of your people. We in Britain are proud of the contribution we have made to this remarkable achievement. Much of it has been financed by British capital. ...

... As I've travelled around the Union I have found everywhere, as I expected, a deep preoccupation with what is happening in the rest of the African continent. I understand and sympathise with your interests in these events and your anxiety about them. [...]

In the twentieth century, and especially since the end of the war, the processes which gave birth to the nation states of Europe have been repeated all over the world. We have seen the awakening of national consciousness in peoples who have for centuries lived in dependence upon some other power. Fifteen years ago this movement spread through Asia. Many countries there, of different races and civilisations, pressed their claim to an independent national life.

Today the same thing is happening in Africa, and the most striking of all the impressions I have formed since I left London a month ago is of the strength of this African national consciousness. In different places it takes different forms, but it is happening everywhere.

**The wind of change is blowing through this continent, and whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact. We must all accept it as a fact, and our national policies must take account of it.**

Well you understand this better than anyone, you are sprung from Europe, the home of nationalism, here in Africa you have yourselves created a free nation. A new nation. Indeed in the history of our times yours will be recorded as the first of the African nationalists. This tide of national consciousness which is now rising in Africa, is a fact, for which both you and we, and the other nations of the western world are ultimately responsible.

[...] As I have said, the growth of national consciousness in Africa is a political fact, and we must accept it as such. That means, I would judge, that we've got to come to terms with it. I sincerely believe that if we cannot do so we may imperil the precarious balance between the East and West on which the peace of the world depends.

The world today is divided into three main groups. First there are what we call the Western Powers. You in South Africa and we in Britain belong to this group, together with our friends and allies in other parts of the Commonwealth. In the United States of America and in Europe we call it the Free World. Secondly there are the Communists – Russia and her satellites in Europe and China whose population will rise by the end of the next ten years to the staggering total of 800 million. Thirdly, there are those parts of the world whose people are at present uncommitted either to Communism or to our Western ideas. In this context we think first of Asia and then of Africa. As I see it the great issue in this second half of the twentieth century is whether the uncommitted peoples of Asia and Africa will swing to the East or to the West. Will they be drawn into the Communist camp? Or will the great experiments in self-government that are now being made in Asia and Africa, especially within the Commonwealth, prove so successful, and by their example so compelling, that the balance will come down in favour of freedom and order and justice? The struggle is joined, and it is a struggle for the minds of men. What is now on trial is much more than our military strength or our diplomatic and administrative skill. It is our way of life. The uncommitted nations want to see before they choose.

**Source : [http://africanhistory.about.com/od/eraindependence/p/wind\\_of\\_change2.htm](http://africanhistory.about.com/od/eraindependence/p/wind_of_change2.htm)**

## MARGARET THATCHER (1925– )

Margaret Thatcher scored two remarkable historical 'firsts' – she was the first woman to become a party leader in Britain and the first woman to become a Prime Minister. Her three election victories in a row – 1979, 1983 and 1987 – meant that she held continuous office for 11 years from 1979 to 1990, the longest unbroken period for any Prime Minister in the twentieth century. Arguably the most controversial Prime Minister since Lloyd George, she was like him in being 'a populist', that is she claimed to have a special understanding of ordinary people that by-passed party politics. One example of this that she often quoted was her experience as a young woman helping to run her father's grocery shop; this, she felt, had given her an insight into the problems of the housewife having to make ends meet every week without getting into debt. She regarded this as appropriate training for running the national economy.

It is not easy to give exact definition to her politics. Some critics dismiss her simply as a right-wing Tory ideologue, but her strong belief in financial probity – the nation paying its way and balancing the books – made her much more a nineteenth-century liberal in the Gladstone tradition. So, too, did her wish to reduce the power of the State and give greater opportunity for people to live their lives without government interference. After Britain's victory over Argentina and the recovery of the Falkland Islands she was likened by some observers to Winston Churchill in her ability to arouse the nation. Others, who believed that she had deliberately provoked the war, found her triumphalism after the British victory in 1982 repellent.

As a staunch anti-Communist, she sided with President Reagan in his condemnation of the Soviet Union as the 'evil empire'. Republicans in the USA suggested that her uncompromising attitude helped to bring about the end of the Cold War. Interestingly, for many people in Eastern Europe she became a symbol of freedom. In Poland, for example, chapels and shrines were dedicated to her. This was in gratitude for her support of 'Solidarity', the Polish anti-Communist trade union movement. There was a bitter irony in this for those in Britain who believed she had trampled on the rights of trade unionists at home.

One of Margaret Thatcher's most controversial statements was 'There is no such thing as society'. Her critics seized upon this as evidence of her lack of compassion and her willingness to ignore the consequences of unbridled individualism. She defended herself by quoting the statement that followed that sentence: 'There are individual men and women, and there are families. And no government can do anything except through people, and people must look to themselves first. It's our duty to look after ourselves and then to look after our neighbour.' She claimed that her purpose had in fact been to emphasise the individual's responsibility towards society.



## *-Profile-*

- 1925** born the daughter of a shopkeeper in Grantham, Lincolnshire;
- 1943** read Chemistry and Law at Oxford;
- 47** trained as a lawyer;
- 50**
- 1950** stood unsuccessfully as Conservative candidate;
- 51**
- 1950** married Denis Thatcher, a millionaire businessman;
- 1959** elected Conservative MP for Finchley;
- 1964** became Opposition spokeswoman on pensions;
- 1970** Secretary of State for Education and Science under Heath;
- 74**
- 1975** Leader of the Conservative Party;
- 90**
- 1979** became Prime Minister after election victory;
- 1982** her declining popularity was reversed by the Falklands victory;
- 1983** won second election victory;
- 1987** won third election victory;
- 1990** resigned as PM and party leader;
- 1992** became Lady Thatcher of Kesteven.

**Margaret Thatcher, article in the Daily Telegraph (30th January, 1975)**

I was attacked (as Education Secretary) for fighting a rear-guard action in defence of 'middle-class interests'. The same accusation is levelled at me now, when I am leading Conservative opposition to the socialist Capital Transfer Tax proposals. Well, if 'middle-class values' include the encouragement of variety and individual choice, the provision of fair incentives and rewards for skill and hard work, the maintenance of effective barriers against the excessive power of the state and a belief in the wide distribution of individual private property, then they are certainly what I am trying to defend ... If a Tory does not believe that private property is one of the main bulwarks of individual freedom, then he had better become a socialist and have done with it. Indeed one of the reasons for our electoral failure is that people believe too many Conservatives have become socialists already. Britain's progress towards socialism has been an alternation of two steps forward with half a step back. And why should anyone support a party that seems to have the courage of no convictions?

Source : <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/COLDthatcher.htm>

**Extract from Margaret Thatcher Speech at Kensington Town Hall  
("Britain Awake") ; 1976 Jan 19**

[...] Part of Britain's world role should be to provide, through its spokesmen, a reasoned and vigorous defence of the Western concept of rights and liberties: [...] But our role reaches beyond this. We have abundant experience and expertise in this country in the art of diplomacy in its broadest sense.

It should be used, within Europe, in the efforts to achieve effective foreign policy initiatives.

Within the EEC, the interests of individual nations are not identical and our separate identities must be seen as a strength rather than a weakness.

Any steps towards closer European union must be carefully considered.

We are committed to direct elections within the Community, but the timing needs to be carefully calculated.

But new problems are looming up.

Among them is the possibility that the Communists will come to power through a coalition in Italy. This is a good reason why we should aim for closer links between those political groups in the European Parliament that reject Socialism.

We have a difficult year ahead in 1976.

I hope it will not result in a further decline of Western power and influence of the kind that we saw in 1975.

It is clear that internal violence—and above all political terrorism—will continue to pose a major challenge to all Western societies, and that it may be exploited as an instrument by the Communists.

We should seek close co-ordination between the police and security services of the Community, and of Nato, in the battle against terrorism.

The way that our own police have coped with recent terrorist incidents provides a splendid model for other forces.

The message of the Conservative Party is that Britain has an important role to play on the world stage. It is based on the remarkable qualities of the British people. Labour has neglected that role.

Our capacity to play a constructive role in world affairs is of course related to our economic and military strength.

Socialism has weakened us on both counts. This puts at risk not just our chance to play a useful role in the councils of the world, but the Survival of our way of life.

Caught up in the problems and hardships that Socialism has brought to Britain, we are sometimes in danger of failing to see the vast transformations taking place in the world that dwarf our own problems, great though they are.

But we have to wake up to those developments, and find the political will to respond to them.

Soviet military power will not disappear just because we refuse to look at it.

And we must assume that it is there to be used—as threat or as force—unless we maintain the necessary deterrents.

We are under no illusions about the limits of British influence.

We are often told how this country that once ruled a quarter of the world is today just a group of offshore islands. Well, we in the Conservative Party believe that Britain is still great.

The decline of our relative power in the world was partly inevitable—with the rise of the super powers with their vast reserves of manpower and resources.

But it was partly avoidable too—the result of our economic decline accelerated by Socialism.

We must reverse that decline when we are returned to Government.

In the meantime, the Conservative Party has the vital task of shaking the British public out of a long sleep.

Sedatives have been prescribed by people, in and out of Government, telling us that there is no external threat to Britain, that all is sweetness and light in Moscow, and that a squadron of fighter planes or a company of marine commandos is less important than some new subsidy.

The Conservative Party must now sound the warning.

There are moments in our history when we have to make a fundamental choice.<sup>[fo 35]</sup>

This is one such moment—a moment when our choice will determine the life or death of our kind of society,—and the future of our children.

Let's ensure that our children will have cause to rejoice that we did not forsake their freedom.

Source : <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/speeches/displaydocument.asp?docid=102939>

**Other speeches : G. R. Strauss, Minister of Supply:**

**Speech Delivered on Nationalising the Iron and Steel Industry, November 15, 1948**

It is a platitude, perhaps, to talk of the importance of the steel industry. All parties agree upon that. Without steel the life of Britain would collapse. So far as I can see there is not one trade of importance that could be carried on without it. All our capital equipment depends on steel. Steel, and steel-using industries, account for nearly half the value of our exports. This proportion has grown considerably since the War and may well grow further. Our future dependence on these industries in achieving solvency and prosperity Will then become even greater. Not only our prosperity, but our security and influence on World affairs will depend largely upon our iron and steel industry; on whether it is efficient enough over a long period to produce cheap steel in ample quantities, and responsive enough to national requirements. It is because we believe that it cannot become either of these things as long as it remains in its present private ownership that we have introduced this Bill. We should have been failing in our duty if we had not done so.

There are, as far as I know, only three ways in which this industry can operate, -Its ownership and control can be left in the hands of the steel masters as in the early pre-war years; or ownership can remain with the steel masters subject to a certain amount of State supervision through a body such as the Import Duties Advisory Committee or the Steel Board. Alternatively, and this is the only solution which appears to us satisfactory, ownership and control can be combined in the hands of the State. . . .[...]

I come now to the question of the industry's capacity. It is naturally more advantageous for private owners of the steel industry to have a total productive capacity below potential demand. They would rather be reasonably certain of being able to sell limited quantities of products at good prices than risk heavy expenditure on new plants which might from time to time prove redundant. On the other hand, it is in the interests of the country and of consumers of steel that productive capacity should be capable of meeting industrial requirements in peace, and military requirements in war. I am far from saying that the steel industry should be expanded, regardless of economics, to meet the peak demand which the most optimistic can foresee in the next decade or so.

But in estimating the steel demand for which we should cater, we cannot -we dare not-be conservative and cautious as the steel industry has been and is bound to be, as soon as the present boom conditions fall off. Moreover security against possible aggression is, unfortunately, still a problem for us, and iron and steel capacity is still the best single index of the war potential of a modern state. For all these reasons it must be for the nation and not for private owners to decide what the capacity of the British iron and steel industry should be, and this again can only be done effectively if the nation becomes the owner. . . .

We, therefore, propose in the Bill that there shall be an Iron and Steel Corporation of Great Britain owning all the securities of the major concerns at the core of the industry-that is, the sections of the industry responsible for the production of iron ore, pig iron, ingot steel or the hot rolling of steel. These are the activities defined in the Second Schedule. The Corporation is empowered to enter the business of steel production and its ancillary activities, but it is intended that it shall normally operate through the companies it will own. The Corporation will inherit all the powers the companies possess in their memoranda of association, but none of the companies can alter its own memorandum without the consent of the Minister.

The Minister can give the Corporation directions of a general character which appear to him to affect the national interest. It is, of course, essential that there shall be the closest co-operation between the Minister and the Corporation on all matters of general concern. The Corporation must have the national interests, as seen by the Government of the day, constantly before it. The Minister is able to order that any of the activities of the Corporation or any, of its companies be stopped or restricted. . . .

The Corporation will be the sole shareholder of every company that on the average of the years 1946 and 1947 produced more than 50,000 tons of iron ore, produced More than 20,000 tons of pig iron, or 20,000 tons of ingot steel, including alloy steel, and shaped more than 20,000 tons of steel by hot rolling. . . .[...]

It will enable our steel industry, which through its key position could do so much to lessen the severity of trade depressions, to become an effective national instrument for planning full employment. It will offer greater security to those who work in it. It will enable our home consumers to get the steel they require at low cost. It will enable the Colonies to get the steel called for by their development plans. It will enable us to co-operate the better with the peoples of Europe in the revival of the industrial prosperity of that continent and the strengthening of its democratic foundations. It is for these great ends that we are asking Parliament to Make Britain's iron and steel monopoly the servant rather than the master of the British people.

**Source:** Hansard, Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons, Official Report, 5th Series), Vol 458, (London: HMSO, 1948), cols. 53-78 ; <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1948-ironsteel-nationalisation.html>

# Bibliography / Sources

- Informations for the first part on the British institutions are mainly taken from Wikipedia, while the scanned documents are coming from the « **AS & A Level Government and politics through diagrams** » (Paul Fairclough, Oxford revision guides, Oxford University Press, 2002)
- Informations for the second part are summary and mix of informations from two books :
  - **Modern British History 1900-1999** by Michael Lynch; Hodder and Stoughton, 2001
  - **Britain 1914 - 2000** by the Institute of Contemporary History, University of London, Collins Educational , 2000
- The drawing of the front page and page 18 and 21 are from Illingworth and coming from the <http://www.llgc.org.uk/illingworth/> website
- Finally the speeches and extracts of the last part were found in various internet websites

## Interesting websites and sources :

- Modern History sourcebook : <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/>
- English school resources website : <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/>
- A timeline : <http://web.archive.org/web/19970719180220/http://www.keele.ac.uk/depts/po/table/time/timeline.htm>