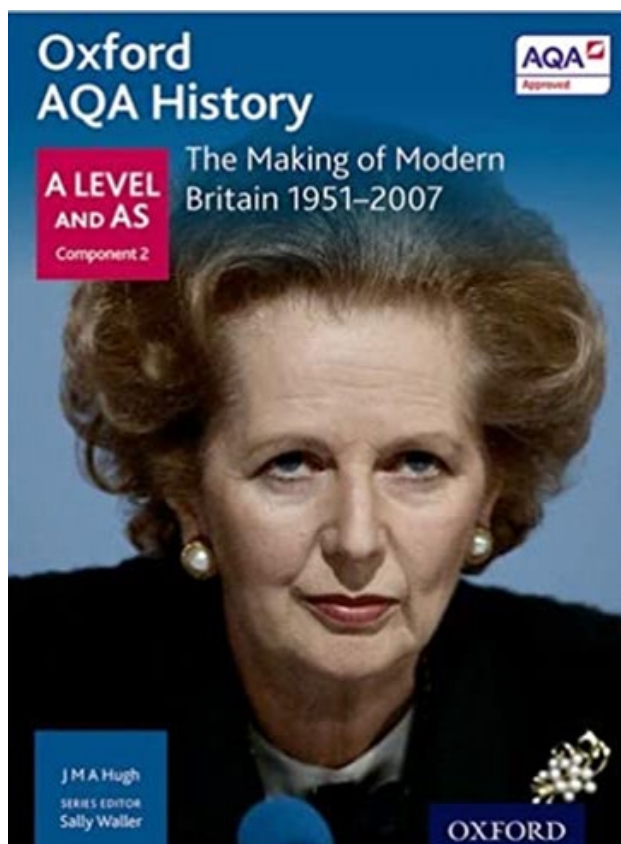


The Making of Modern Britain: Towards a new consensus 1987-1997



Name:

Teacher:

L.O: To know how Thatcher's fell from power and Major rose as leader.

The fall of Thatcher and the rise of Major: The fall of Thatcher

Complete the source evaluation for source one:



SOURCE 1

John Major explained the circumstances in which he replaced Margaret Thatcher as prime minister in his autobiography which was published in 2000:

Within the folklore of the Conservative Party a myth has taken root which so confounds reason and reality that psychoanalysts may understand it better than historians. The myth is that in a moment of inexplicable folly and conspiracy, even madness, Conservative MPs ejected a leader at the height of her powers, presiding over a healthy party, a calm nation and a benign set of outside circumstances. It really was not like that. In the autumn of 1990 the British economy was in deep-seated trouble; huge internal disputes were raging over Europe; the Poll Tax, hated by millions, had proved unworkable; the party was far behind Labour in the opinion polls; and within the parliamentary Conservative Party a sense of exasperation with the leadership was obvious.

Content	
Provenance	<p>KEY PROFILE</p> <p>John Major (b. 1943) was from a working-class background in Surrey. He left school at the age of 16 but worked his way up to executive level in the banking industry. He became a Conservative councillor in the 1970s and was elected as an MP for Huntingdonshire in 1979. He joined Thatcher's cabinet as Chief Secretary of the Treasury in 1987, and was promoted to Foreign Secretary and then Chancellor in 1989 before becoming prime minister in 1990.</p>
Language and tone	

L.O: To know how Thatcher's fell from power and Major rose as leader.

Lesson one - The fall of Thatcher and the rise of Major: The fall of Thatcher

What is the difference between the myth and the reality of Thatcher's fall from power according to John Major?

Do you think John Major provides a valuable account of how he became prime minister? Explain your answer.

SOURCE 1

John Major explained the circumstances in which he replaced Margaret Thatcher as prime minister in his autobiography which was published in 2000:

Within the folklore of the Conservative Party a myth has taken root which so confounds reason and reality that psychoanalysts may understand it better than historians. The myth is that in a moment of inexplicable folly and conspiracy, even madness, Conservative MPs ejected a leader at the height of her powers, presiding over a healthy party, a calm nation and a benign set of outside circumstances. It really was not like that. In the autumn of 1990 the British economy was in deep-seated trouble; huge internal disputes were raging over Europe; the Poll Tax, hated by millions, had proved unworkable; the party was far behind Labour in the opinion polls; and within the parliamentary Conservative Party a sense of exasperation with the leadership was obvious.

L.O: To know how Thatcher's fell from power and Major rose as leader.

Lesson one - The fall of Thatcher and the rise of Major: The fall of Thatcher

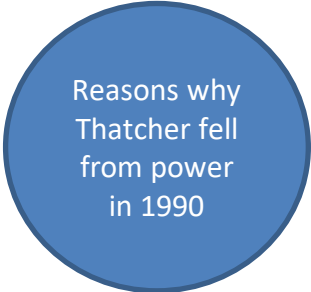
The fall of Thatcher

In some ways the decline of Margaret Thatcher can be traced back to 1987, as it was then that a number of problems began to surface.

Problem one: The first problem was economic. In 1987 the stock market crashed following the 'Big Bang', the deregulation of the City in 1986. The policies of Thatcher's Chancellor, Nigel Lawson, especially his 1988 budget, led to the rapid expansion of the economy in the 'Lawson boom'; this resulted in a balance of payments problem. By 1990, inflation had risen to 10.9 per cent, higher than it had been in 1980. This was a problem for a government that had set as its key economic objective, low inflation.

Problem two: The second problem was political. Many Conservative MPs feared defeat at the next election. Loss of the ultra-safe seat of Eastbourne to the Liberals in a by-election in October 1990 was especially alarming: if the Conservatives could lose Eastbourne, they believed they could lose anywhere.

Problem three: The Conservative Party's unpopularity was partly caused by economic problems. But it was also due to the introduction of the Community Charge or poll tax. Mrs Thatcher was strongly advised to drop the scheme. She ignored the advice and pressed on. After the poll tax riot in March 1990 the government's popularity in the opinion polls fell sharply.



Reasons why
Thatcher fell
from power
in 1990

L.O: To know how Thatcher's fell from power and Major rose as leader
Lesson one - The fall of Thatcher and the rise of Major: The fall of Thatcher

These problems helped to heighten division within the Conservatives: over economic policies, over Europe, over Thatcher's style. At the same time, by 1990, the Labour Party's recovery under Neil Kinnock and John Smith was evident. It led the Conservatives in the opinion polls throughout 1990. At that point tensions within government came to a head when Sir Geoffrey Howe resigned from the government. This proved to be a catalyst.

Howe's resignation speech galvanised Michael Heseltine, who had been a long-standing critic of Thatcher ever since Westland, into action. He announced a leadership challenge. After failing to win on the first ballot Thatcher resigned as prime minister.

Explain how Thatcher fell from power? Who was involved? What happened during the leadership challenge?

A CLOSER LOOK

Thatcher's fall

In the first ballot, Thatcher got 204 votes against Heseltine's 152. Under Conservative Party rules this was not sufficient and a second ballot was needed. At first, Thatcher intended to fight on. However, after meeting with her cabinet ministers, one at a time, she found that most of them advised her that she would not win. This allowed cabinet ministers Douglas Hurd and John Major to enter the race as anti-Heseltine candidates. It would have been seen as disloyal to do this if she was still running.

The Thatcher legacy

Assessing the legacy of Margaret Thatcher's years in power is both difficult and controversial. She undoubtedly changed Britain and British politics. However, she continues to polarise opinion about whether these changes were for the better. In any case, she did not disappear quietly from the political scene. Even when she left office she promised she would be 'a very good backseat driver'. She remained an important influence on the Conservative Party for the next 15 years and her premiership also affected the development of the Labour Party.

Why do people have different opinions on Thatcher's legacy?

5

L.O: To know how Thatcher's fell from power and Major rose as leader
Lesson one - The fall of Thatcher and the rise of Major: The fall of Thatcher

How successful were Thatcher's policies?

Where was the success more limited?

Assess the impact of Thatcher on Britain between 1979 and 1990. Come to an overall conclusion.

L.O: To know how Thatcher's fell from power and Major rose to power
Lesson two - The fall of Thatcher and the rise of Major: Major as a leader

Major as leader

John Major was Thatcher's choice of successor and one key reason for Major's rise to the leadership was that Thatcherites saw him as 'one of them'. In fact, this view of John Major was not especially accurate. Major's natural instincts were to unify the party. This would be a difficult job; there was ongoing hostility to Michael Heseltine and a fierce determination amongst some to take revenge against those who had 'betrayed Maggie'.

Nevertheless the Conservatives jumped ahead in the opinion polls and the tone of the national press was very positive. Some of this was the 'honeymoon effect' experienced by new governments; but it also reflected Thatcher's unpopularity by 1990

What did Major aim to do with the party? Why was this significant?

John Major's first big task involved foreign affairs and Europe. Britain was already fighting the First Gulf War, which reached a successful conclusion in March 1991. Major then turned his attention to Europe, making a speech that set out his aim to see Britain take a place 'at the very heart of Europe'. Major and his supporters hoped that it would be possible to follow a middle way on Europe.

At home Major needed to deal with the poll tax. Many wanted him to scrap it immediately but this risked splitting the party. Only in November 1991, after very lengthy discussions, the poll tax abandoned in favour of the new council tax.

Doing this meant that £1.5 billion had been wasted but it allowed Major to get away from an unpopular policy that could be blamed on his predecessor.

What were Major's main aims?



The Conservative election victory of 1992

Major called the election in March 1992, almost the last possible moment before the end of the five-year parliamentary term. The opinion polls placed the Conservatives on an average 29 per cent, with Labour ahead on 41 per cent and the Liberals at 15 per cent. Most observers predicted a Labour victory. John Major himself, however, was surprisingly upbeat and his optimism was vindicated. Towards the end of the longer than usual election campaign, opinion swung back towards the Conservatives.

What did the opinion polls show? What did Major think about this?

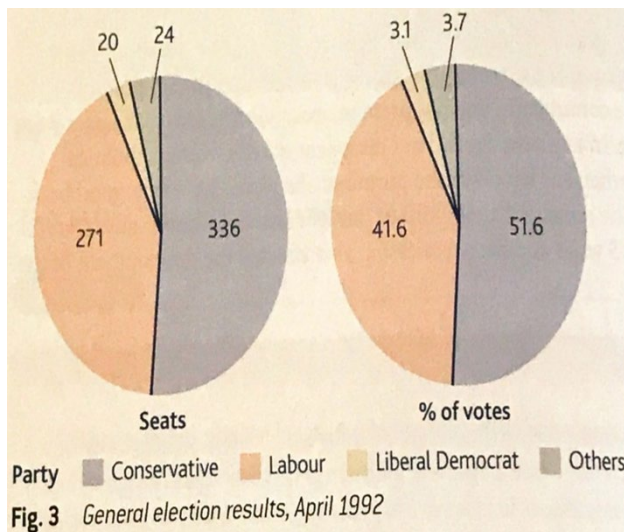
The Conservatives ran a good campaign. John Major won a lot of respect for his old-fashioned 'soapbox' politics, making impromptu speeches on the street in towns like Luton, standing on his soapbox. Although people blamed the Conservatives for the economic recession, they were still seen as the party best able to get the country out of the mess.

Elections are always lost as well as won. In 1992, Labour's weaknesses mattered as much as the strengths of the Conservative campaign. Many voters probably just did not feel Labour had reformed enough; memories of the 1980s were still too strong.

Why were the Conservatives able to win?



Fig. 2 John Major campaigning in the 1992 election



Analyse the election results:

L.O: To know how Thatcher's fell from power and Major rose to power
Lesson 2 - The fall of Thatcher and the rise of Major: Major as a leader

Complete the source evaluation for source two:



SOURCE 2

The political journalist John Sergeant reflected on the 1992 election in 2005. He joined the BBC in 1970, becoming its chief political correspondent in 1992. This meant he had good access to leading politicians:

The two party leaders who fought each other in the 1992 election, Mr Major and Mr Kinnock, are both convinced Mrs Thatcher would not have won. Mr Kinnock argued that Mr Major was able to defuse the row over the poll tax, which she would not have been able to do, and was above all able to present himself as the candidate for change. After eleven years of Mrs Thatcher the country was longing for new leadership and Mr Major was able to capitalise on that feeling. On the day Thatcher resigned, Kinnock is convinced, Labour lost its biggest electoral asset. Mr Major is equally dismissive of the idea his predecessor could have achieved the result he did. But the argument that Mrs Thatcher could have won has at least one important advocate in the Labour Party – Tony Blair. In the summer of 2002 I asked him, 'Could she have won?' He replied, 'I am one of the few people who would unhesitatingly say yes. Although Neil Kinnock made absolutely heroic efforts to change the Labour Party, by 1992 we were not sufficiently, fundamentally changed'.

Content	
Provenance	
Language and tone	

L.O: To know how Thatcher's fell from power and Major rose to power
Lesson 2 - The fall of Thatcher and the rise of Major: Major as a leader

What reasons does this source put forward to explain why the Conservative Party won the 1992 election?

Which reasons do you think are most believable? Explain your answer.

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L.O: To know how Thatcher's fell from power and Major rose to power

Lesson 2 - The fall of Thatcher and the rise of Major: Major as a leader



Summary task: Design an election poster for Major in 1992. What would he want to emphasise? What would he leave out?

A large, empty rectangular box with a dark blue border, intended for the student to design an election poster for Major in 1992.

L.O: To know economic developments under Major and the impact of them.

Lesson 3 - The fall of Thatcher and the rise of Major: Economic developments including Black Wednesday

John Major's government had inherited a difficult economic situation at the end of 1990. The British economy was suffering from a declining manufacturing output, high interest rates, a steep rise in unemployment, and a slump in house prices.

Economic developments before the 1992 election

From mid- 1991 to early 1992, unemployment rose from 1.6 million to 2.6 million. Many homeowners were trapped in 'negative equity' (having to repay mortgages that were higher than the current value of their homes). Many had their homes repossessed. Unlike in the recession of the early 1980s which largely hit working-class and northern communities, this affected traditional Tory voters. With an election imminent, Major's government resorted to high public spending. Half of this spending was forced, as a result of rising unemployment, but huge government borrowing was used for subsidies on transport and increased spending on the NHS.

What problems were there with the economy?

How did Major try to improve this?

Black Wednesday and its impact

Within a few months of winning the general election, Major's government suffered a severe crisis and Britain was forced to leave the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM). What became known as Black Wednesday came to dominate the rest of Major's premiership.

Britain joined the ERM in 1990 when Thatcher was persuaded that it would help to combat inflation which was starting to rise. The ERM required Britain to maintain a fixed rate of exchange (2.95 German marks to the pound) with a narrow band allowed for fluctuations.

What was the ERM?

KEY TERM

Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM):
set up in 1979, it aimed to stabilise the exchange rates between different currencies in the European Economic Community by limiting how much their value could change

A CLOSER LOOK

Black Wednesday

Foreign exchange speculators buy and sell currency. If a lot of speculators want to buy pounds the pound will gain in value in comparison to other currencies. If they sell a currency it will fall in value. In September 1992 there was a wave of speculative selling of the pound on financial markets. The Chancellor, Norman Lamont, announced an increase in interest rates (already high at 10 per cent) to 12 per cent and then to 15 per cent, hoping to persuade foreign investors to buy pounds again. The Bank of England spent huge amounts from its reserves in buying up pounds.

By September 1992, the British currency (together with several other ERM currencies) came under pressure. It reached a climax on 16 September. Major's government was determined to avoid any devaluation of the pound and to remain within the ERM. But despite all the government's efforts, the pound continued to sink. At 7pm, Norman Lamont announced the decision to leave the ERM live on television.

What happened on Black Wednesday?

L.O: To know economic developments under Major and the impact of them.

Lesson 3 - The fall of Thatcher and the rise of Major: Economic developments including Black Wednesday

The effects of Black Wednesday on the British economy proved much less catastrophic than was feared at the time. Within a relatively short time, the economy stabilised and it could be seen that leaving the ERM had many beneficial effects. The political consequences, however, were disastrous for the Conservative government. The long-standing Conservative electoral asset of being trusted on the economy was thrown away. There was a steep drop in support for the Conservatives in opinion polls. John Major's personal authority was badly weakened. He was fiercely criticised by newspapers that had previously supported him. The Labour Party shot ahead in the polls. Many observers, including John Major himself, looked back at the events of 16 September 1992 as 'the beginning of the end'.

What did Black Wednesday mean for the Conservative party?

The British economy after Black Wednesday

Britain's economic situation started to improve almost immediately after Black Wednesday in 1992. Leaving the ERM prevented Britain from having to keep high interest rates to protect the stability of sterling and it allowed exchange rates to float downwards, which helped British exporters. Unemployment rates slowed down and the housing market began to pick up. At the same time the American economy was coming out of recession and world trade was expanding. The British economy was also benefiting from the impact of financial deregulation and flexible working practices which the Conservative Party had introduced since 1979. In comparison, the German economy was struggling with the huge costs of unification and had sluggish growth rates compared with Britain.

What did Black Wednesday mean for the economy?



By 1997 most indicators were positive. Unemployment was down. Productivity was up, though not by much. Consumer spending went up, Car ownership increased. House prices rose and negative equity became a thing of the past. Business was supportive of government policies. Yet people were surprisingly reluctant to give Major's government credit for this. The 'feel-good factor' was missing.

How had the economy changed by 1997?

L.O: To know economic developments under Major and the impact of them.

Lesson 3 - The fall of Thatcher and the rise of Major: Economic developments including Black Wednesday



Summary task: Write a newspaper headline and brief article for the day after Black Wednesday.

[Large empty box for headline]

[Empty box for start of article]

[Empty box for end of article]

[Lined writing area for the first column of the article]

[Lined writing area for the second column of the article]

[Empty box for a second article or sub-section]

[Lined writing area for the bottom of the second column]

[Lined writing area for the bottom of the first column]

L.O: To know how scandal and the media impacted on Major's Conservative party.

Lesson 4 - The fall of Thatcher and the rise of Major: Political sleaze, scandals and satire

Political sleaze, scandals and satire

Part of the reason that Major's government found it difficult to claim credit when things went right is that it became associated with things going wrong. This was partly because of the ERM crisis. But this perception was strengthened by scandals and accusations of 'Tory sleaze' that dogged M in office. There were more than a dozen sex scandals involving Major's years having extramarital affairs including two cabinet ministers, David Mellor and Tim Yeo, both of whom were forced to resign.

Why were extra marital affairs a problem for the Conservative party?

Other scandals centred on corruption. In 1994, the Scott Enquiry, set up by Major to investigate illegal arms dealing, proved that government ministers had broken the rules and been 'economical with the truth' in enabling the arms company Matrix Churchill to supply arms components to Iraq. Two leading Conservatives, the novelist Jeffrey Archer and the former minister Jonathan Aitken, were convicted of perjury. Finally, the so-called 'Cash-for-questions' affair erupted; it was very damaging to the Major government because it lasted such a long time and kept 'Tory sleaze' in the news right through the 1997 election campaign.

Why was the Scott Enquiry significant?

A CLOSER LOOK

Cash for questions

The Cash-for-questions affair arose when Neil Hamilton and other Conservative MPs were accused of accepting money in return for lobbying (asking questions in Parliament) on behalf of the controversial owner of Harrods, Mohammed Al Fayed. Hamilton was ruined by losing a very public libel case, but refused to resign, to the intense irritation of John Major. In the 1997 election, Hamilton was humiliatingly defeated by an independent candidate, the former BBC journalist Martin Bell, who made 'sleaze' the keynote of his campaign.

Why were cash for questions detrimental for the Conservatives?

Research Martin Bell and Neil Hamilton:

Martin Bell	Neil Hamilton

L.O: To know how scandal and the media impacted on Majors Conservative party.

Lesson 4 - The fall of Thatcher and the rise of Major: Political sleaze, scandals and satire

The sleaze and scandals made the Major government ripe for satire. Private Eye created an Adrian Mole spoof, The Secret Diary of John Major aged 47 and three-quarters. The puppeteers of Spitting Image presented Major as dull and boring. The Guardian cartoonist Steve Bell caricatured him as a grey superhero wearing his Y-fronts on top of his trousers. None of this satire was vicious and Major remained personally more popular than his party; but the image of Major as a well-meaning but inadequate leader stuck to him.

What is Satire? What was the impact of this on Major?

A CLOSER LOOK

Adrian Mole was the comic creation of Sue Townsend. His adolescent diaries were bestsellers in the early 1980s. Adrian's diaries showed him to be socially inept and inadequate – although he didn't always realise it.

Make notes on the following video:



Make notes on the following video:



Analyse the following cartoon:

(You may wish to read the next section for context on the cones hotline)

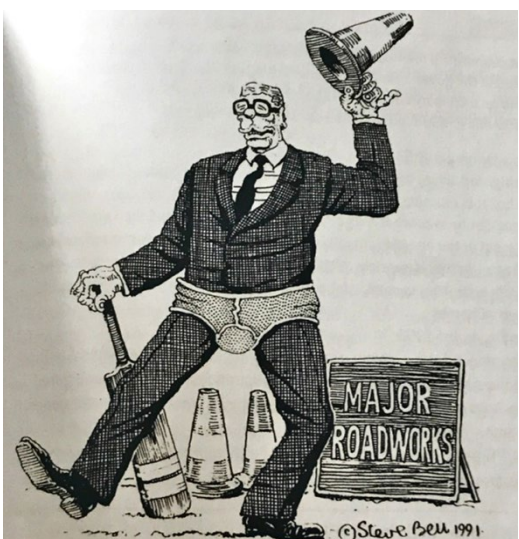


Fig. 4 John Major's 'Cones Hotline' became the subject of much satire.

L.O: To know the different political policies Major brought in during the 1990s.

Lesson 5 - The fall of Thatcher and the rise of Major: Political policies

Political policies

A number of other Conservative policies in the 1990s also proved controversial and confirmed the feeling that the Conservative government was prone to crisis. Major's government continued the policy of privatisation. The coal industry was privatised in 1994, the railways in 1996. The government also set about privatising the Post Office but ran into opposition and eventually abandoned the scheme due to public concern. Major also introduced the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). These were public - private partnerships that meant private companies would fund infrastructure improvements and then deliver public services that the State would pay for over the length of the contract.

What was the Private Finance Initiative?

Bullet point examples on 90s privatisation

Why was the post office initiative abandoned?

Major also introduced the Citizen's Charter in 1991. This was an attempt to give public service users more power over the quality of the services they received by providing information about the standards they should expect. For example, in education there would be more testing and schools would publish the results. However, some elements such as the 'Cones Hotline' - a phone number motorists could call if motorway lanes were closed off without any sign of roadworks — became targets of the satire discussed above.

Define the Citizen's charter:

What was the impact of the Citizen's Charter?

Pit closures continued. In 1991 Heseltine announced the closure of 31 pits including some in Nottinghamshire; this was seen as a poor reward by Conservatives who remembered that it was the Nottinghamshire miners who had stood against Scargill. The outcry forced Heseltine into a U-turn in the short term though eventually the closures went ahead.

Why was the Nottinghamshire pit closures significant?

L.O: To know the different political policies Major brought in during the 1990s.

Lesson 5 - The fall of Thatcher and the rise of Major: Political policies

Major's government also had to deal with the BSE (Bovine spongiform encephalopathy) crisis, better known as 'Mad Cow Disease'. This had been first identified in the mid- 1980s but was recognised as a potential threat to human health in 1996. This led to British beef being banned in Europe.

None of these policies or events in themselves appears to be big enough to undermine a government's reputation. But together, and combined with the other issues discussed in this chapter, they helped to cement an image of incompetence.

Why was mad cow disease damaging to the government?

Read source three. What crises does Brandreth identify? Explain each crisis and comment on the importance it had to Major's government.

KEY TERM
benighted: Using this word, meaning 'overcome by darkness', allows Brandreth to make a pun, comparing Major's situation with Sir David Frost, who had been given a knighthood in 1993

L.O: To know the different political policies Major brought in during the 1990s.

Lesson 5 - The fall of Thatcher and the rise of Major: Political policies

Complete the source evaluation for source three:



SOURCE 3

Gyles Brandreth's diaries, published in 1999, show how Tory backbenchers reacted to the government's problems. Brandreth was a broadcaster who was elected as a Conservative MP in Chester in 1992. He was promoted to a junior minister role in 1995 but lost his seat at the 1997 election:

Sunday January 3 1993

The **benighted** John Major and the newly knighted David Frost got together on the box this morning and the PM admitted that perhaps he hadn't offered sufficient clarity as to what his government is all about – and then proceeded to devote most of the interview to talking about the Prince of Wales' marriage and the Citizen's Charter. Maastricht, Mellor, the ERM, unemployment, the pits; we judder from shambles to catastrophe to disaster and still our leader speaks of the Citizen's Charter.

Palm Sunday April 4 1993

No loud hosannas for the government as we approach our first anniversary. The Sunday papers can't remember another administration that has become mired so quickly. Apparently we won't be fielding senior ministers to talk up our year's achievements.

The 150th Grand National has turned into a farce, with two false starts and the race declared void. Can't Mr Major get anything right?

Content	
Provenance	
Language and tone	

L.O: To know the approach Major took to Northern Ireland.

Lesson 6 - The fall of Thatcher and the rise of Major: Northern Ireland

Approach to Northern Ireland

Thatcher's policy towards Northern Ireland did not change in the final years of her administration. The government banned organisations which were believed to support terrorist activities from broadcasting in Britain; broadcasters got around this ban by employing actors to read the words of those affected.

However the States activities during the Troubles also came under scrutiny. There were accusations of a 'shoot to kill' policy after three IRA members were killed by the SAS (Special Air Service, one of the British military's Special Forces) in Gibraltar in 1988; high-profile miscarriages of justice such as the Birmingham Six and the Guildford Four were revealed. Meanwhile the atrocities continued; loyalists and republicans engaged in 'tit for tat' killings and the IRA started to target mainland Britain.

Why was the government criticised for the Northern Ireland approach?

A CLOSER LOOK

The Birmingham Six and the Guildford Four

The Guildford Four were jailed in 1975 for life for the bombing of 2 Guildford pubs in which 5 people died. The verdict was overturned in 1989. In 1993 a film, *In the Name of the Father*, starring Daniel Day-Lewis, told the story of the wrongful convictions. The Birmingham Six were jailed in 1975 for life for the bombing of 2 Birmingham pubs in which 21 people were killed. The verdict was overturned in 1991.

A CLOSER LOOK

A selection of events from the Troubles in 1987–93

Mar 1988 Milltown cemetery attack – three people killed at the funeral of one of those killed in Gibraltar by loyalist, Michael Stone

Mar 1988 Two off-duty soldiers killed by IRA mob at the funeral of one of those killed at Milltown cemetery

July 1989 London Stock Exchange bombed by IRA

Feb 1991 Three mortar shells fired at 10 Downing St by IRA

Jan 1992 Teebane landmine attack on Protestant civilians working at a British Army base – eight killed by the IRA

Feb 1992 Bookmaker's shooting – five Catholic civilians shot by loyalists in retaliation for the Teebane attack

Apr 1992 Baltic Exchange, London bombing – three killed by IRA

March 1993 Warrington bomb – two children killed by IRA

L.O: To know the approach Major took to Northern Ireland.

Lesson 6 - The fall of Thatcher and the rise of Major: Northern Ireland

There was, however, a political breakthrough in Northern Ireland under John Major. From 1993, the government received secret messages hinting that Sinn Fein was ready to discuss a peace agreement. There were still big obstacles to be overcome. Unionists were fearful of being 'sold out by the British'. On the republican side, there was deep-rooted hostility to the British. However, the fact that the first steps in the peace process were taken by a Conservative prime minister was helpful. A Labour leader might have found it easier to get the trust of the republicans, but may have struggled against a Conservative and unionist backlash. Major also had a good working relationship with the Irish Taoiseach, Albert Reynolds. The new American president, Bill Clinton, also made a constructive contribution, encouraging Sinn Fein away from armed struggle.

Why was there now a better climate for negotiation?

KEY TERM

Taoiseach: the prime minister of Ireland

Major and Reynolds went public in 1993 with their joint Downing Street Declaration. In 1994, the IRA announced a ceasefire. Loyalist paramilitaries matched this with a ceasefire of their own. There was a strong sense of war-weariness on both sides of the conflict. A former IRA gunman, Eamon Collins, wrote in his memoirs in 1997: 'I like to think that both sides looked down into a Bosnia-style abyss; gulped and then stepped back.'

Getting a final agreement was very difficult. Unionists did not believe in the IRA's commitment to peace. The IRA got impatient and went back to violent methods. Bomb attacks damaged the financial district at Canary Wharf, London and destroyed the centre of Manchester in 1996. But the peace process continued.

How did the troubles start to look at an end in 1993 and 1994? How did this change in 1996?



Fig. 5 Major with the Irish Taoiseach, Albert Reynolds, prior to issuing a joint declaration to bring peace to Northern Ireland

L.O: To know the approach Major took to Northern Ireland.

Lesson 6 - The fall of Thatcher and the rise of Major: Northern Ireland



Summary task: Create a timeline of the key events in the Troubles with the timeframe 1979 to 1997.



L.O: To know why the Conservative party split in the run up to 1995.

Lesson 7 - The fall of Thatcher and the rise of Major: Conservative divisions

Conservative divisions

By the last years of Thatcher's premiership divisions had become apparent in the Conservative Party. While Thatcher was seen as an electoral asset these disagreements did not seem to matter but as her popularity waned they became more open. Thatcher's use of Professor Alan Walters as an economic adviser infuriated her Chancellor Nigel Lawson, who resigned in 1989. Thatcher then alienated Geoffrey Howe by moving him from the Foreign Office to a lesser post and he resigned a year later. These resignations were partly about her style of leadership. In his resignation speech in Parliament, Howe complained that Thatcher's undermining of her ministers over Europe was 'rather like sending your opening batsmen to the crease, only for them to find, as the first balls are being bowled, that their bats have been broken before the game by the team captain'.

Explain the divisions at the end of Thatcher's premiership:

Despite Major's efforts to unify the party, and despite the election success of 1992, the divisions in the Conservative Party worsened. Right-wingers pushed for more radical social policies. Politicians with leadership ambitions saw a chance to advance their claims. Eurosceptics saw an opening to push the government to the edges of Europe, if not out of the EU altogether. Like the scandals and sleaze these divisions had the effect of drowning out any achievements.

Why was there divisions in the Conservative party? Make a list:

Press speculation continued about possible challengers for the leadership from disaffected cabinet ministers. The names of Michael Portillo and John Redwood were frequently mentioned. Comment in the right-wing press was relentlessly hostile, openly calling for a strong leader to replace Major and 'save the party'. By the summer of 1995, Major felt so insecure that he called for a leadership election so that he could be re-elected to his own job. It was a case of 'back me or sack me'.

Read the profiles on the possible leadership candidates. Make notes on each:

Michael Portillo	John Redwood

L.O: To know why the Conservative party split in the run up to 1995.

Lesson 7 - The fall of Thatcher and the rise of Major: Conservative divisions

KEY PROFILE

John Redwood (b. 1951), known to his detractors as 'the Vulcan', was Secretary for Wales in John Major's cabinet. Redwood was a brilliant economic theorist, strongly in favour of monetarism, who had been a policy adviser to Mrs Thatcher. He was also a leading Eurosceptic. In 1995, he ran against Major for the Conservative leadership. In 1997, Redwood surprisingly launched a joint leadership bid with the pro-European Ken Clarke; but the party opted for William Hague instead.

KEY PROFILE

Michael Portillo (b. 1953) was a keen admirer of Thatcher and a Eurosceptic. Despite rumours that he would stand against Major he stayed loyal and served as Defence Secretary between 1995 and 1997. After famously losing his seat in the 1997 election, he won the Kensington and Chelsea by-election in 1999 and served as shadow Chancellor. He stood unsuccessfully for the party leadership in 2001 and in 2005 left the House of Commons to work in television and radio.

A CLOSER LOOK

The re-election of John Major as Conservative leader

On 22 June 1995 John Major initiated a Conservative leadership election to try to silence his critics and to re-establish his authority. **Michael Portillo** decided not to run so the main challenger was **John Redwood**, who was backed by Thatcherites and Eurosceptics. Before the ballot Major met with Heseltine and agreed that Heseltine would become deputy prime minister. Heseltine made sure everyone in the party knew he had voted for Major. The result of the first ballot was decisive: 218 for Major, 89 for Redwood. There was no need for a second ballot.

What happened during the Conservative leadership election?

However, despite this win Major faced problems. Eighty-nine Conservative MPs had voted against him, when his government only had a small majority, and the attitude of the press remained hostile as ever. At Prime Minister's Question Time Major was mocked by Tony Blair, the Labour Party leader: 'I lead my party. You follow yours.'

Adding fuel to the criticism of Major was Thatcher. She encouraged Eurosceptic rebels by demanding a referendum on Europe. Her memoirs, published just after the party conference in 1993, were lukewarm about Major. She gave her support to John Redwood in his challenge to Major in 1995. In the run-up to the 1997 election, her comments seemed to show more approval of Tony Blair than of John Major.

Why despite Major's win did he still face problems in the run up to the 1997 election?

L.O: To know why the Conservative party split in the run up to 1995.

Lesson 7 - The fall of Thatcher and the rise of Major: Conservative divisions



Summary

Compare Major's government with Thatcher's government. What similarities and differences can you identify?

Policy area	Similarities	Differences
Unemployment and inflation		
Deregulation and privatisation		
Poll tax		
Northern Ireland		
Europe		

How successful do you think Major was overall? Write a concluding paragraph.

L.O: To know why the Conservative party split in the run up to 1995.

Lesson 7 - The fall of Thatcher and the rise of Major: Conservative divisions



With reference to these sources and your understanding of the historical context, assess the value of these three sources to an historian studying the problems John Major's governments faced from 1990 to 1997.

SOURCE 1

John Major explained the circumstances in which he replaced Margaret Thatcher as prime minister in his autobiography which was published in 2000:

Within the folklore of the Conservative Party a myth has taken root which so confounds reason and reality that psychoanalysts may understand it better than historians. The myth is that in a moment of inexplicable folly and conspiracy, even madness, Conservative MPs ejected a leader at the height of her powers, presiding over a healthy party, a calm nation and a benign set of outside circumstances. It really was not like that. In the autumn of 1990 the British economy was in deep-seated trouble; huge internal disputes were raging over Europe; the Poll Tax, hated by millions, had proved unworkable; the party was far behind Labour in the opinion polls; and within the parliamentary Conservative Party a sense of exasperation with the leadership was obvious.

SOURCE 2

The political journalist John Sergeant reflected on the 1992 election in 2005. He joined the BBC in 1970, becoming its chief political correspondent in 1992. This meant he had good access to leading politicians:

The two party leaders who fought each other in the 1992 election, Mr Major and Mr Kinnock, are both convinced Mrs Thatcher would not have won. Mr Kinnock argued that Mr Major was able to defuse the row over the poll tax, which she would not have been able to do, and was above all able to present himself as the candidate for change. After eleven years of Mrs Thatcher the country was longing for new leadership and Mr Major was able to capitalise on that feeling. On the day Thatcher resigned, Kinnock is convinced, Labour lost its biggest electoral asset. Mr Major is equally dismissive of the idea his predecessor could have achieved the result he did. But the argument that Mrs Thatcher could have won has at least one important advocate in the Labour Party – Tony Blair. In the summer of 2002 I asked him, 'Could she have won?' He replied, 'I am one of the few people who would unhesitatingly say yes. Although Neil Kinnock made absolutely heroic efforts to change the Labour Party, by 1992 we were not sufficiently, fundamentally changed'.

SOURCE 3

Gyles Brandreth's diaries, published in 1999, show how Tory backbenchers reacted to the government's problems. Brandreth was a broadcaster who was elected as a Conservative MP in Chester in 1992. He was promoted to a junior minister role in 1995 but lost his seat at the 1997 election:

Sunday January 3 1993

The **benighted** John Major and the newly knighted David Frost got together on the box this morning and the PM admitted that perhaps he hadn't offered sufficient clarity as to what his government is all about – and then proceeded to devote most of the interview to talking about the Prince of Wales' marriage and the Citizen's Charter. Maastricht, Mellor, the ERM, unemployment, the pits; we judder from shambles to catastrophe to disaster and still our leader speaks of the Citizen's Charter.

Palm Sunday April 4 1993

No loud hosannas for the government as we approach our first anniversary. The Sunday papers can't remember another administration that has become mired so quickly. Apparently we won't be fielding senior ministers to talk up our year's achievements.

The 150th Grand National has turned into a farce, with two false starts and the race declared void. Can't Mr Major get anything right?

L.O: To know why the Conservative party split in the run up to 1995.

Lesson 7 - The fall of Thatcher and the rise of Major: Conservative divisions



'John Major was an unlucky prime minister'. Assess the validity of this view.

Use the space below to plan an answer to the question

A large, empty rectangular box with a dark blue border, intended for students to write their answer to the question.

L.O: To know how the Labour party reorganised in the run up to 1997 election.

Lesson 8 - The realignment of the Labour party: Realignment under Neil Kinnock, John Smith and Tony Blair

Read source one. What might Tony Blair be referring to when he mentions 'a one term Labour government that dazzles for a moment, then ends in disillusion'?

Why do you think he uses this description?

KEY TERM

Clause IV: one of the iconic socialist principles that had been enshrined in Labour's constitution – the commitment to state ownership of key industries; the rewriting of Clause IV meant that the Labour Party was no longer committed to nationalisation; in effect they had accepted the privatisations of Thatcher and Major

KEY TERM

New Labour: the term used by Labour modernisers after 1994 to demonstrate to the electorate that the party was different to the Labour Party of the past which had failed to attract sufficient voter support to win an election between 1979 and 1992

The revival of the Labour Party in the 1990s seemed to be dominated by the ideas and personality of Tony Blair. But the transformation of the Labour party's fortunes was not only due to Blair. His predecessors, Neil Kinnock and John Smith, also made important contributions.



Fig. 1 Five leaders of the Labour Party Gordon Brown, John Smith, Neil Kinnock, Margaret Beckett, Tony Blair

Lesson 8 - The realignment of the Labour party: Realignment under Neil Kinnock, John Smith and Tony Blair

Complete the source evaluation for source one:



SOURCE 1

Tony Blair became the leader of the Labour Party in 1994. He reflected on the contribution of his two predecessors, Neil Kinnock and John Smith, at the 1995 Labour Party conference. It was at this conference that **Clause IV** was rewritten:

New Labour was born of the courage of one man. We would not be here, proud and confident today, but for that man – Neil Kinnock. And then it grew under the wisdom of John Smith, who guided us through the revolution in our party democracy and whose memory we honour. In this last year we have transformed our party – our constitution rewritten, our relations with the trade unions changed and better defined for today’s world, our party organisation improved, new policy breaking new ground. I did not come into politics to change the Labour Party. I came into politics to change my country and I honestly believe that if we had not changed, if we had not returned our party to its essential values, free from the weight of outdated ideology, we could not change the country. For I do not want a one term Labour government that dazzles for a moment, then ends in disillusion. I want a Labour government that governs for a generation and changes Britain for good.

Content	
Provenance	
Language and tone	

L.O: To know how the Labour party reorganised in the run up to 1997 election.

Lesson 8 - The realignment of the Labour party: Realignment under Neil Kinnock, John Smith and Tony Blair

The Labour Party under Neil Kinnock 1987—92

Despite Kinnock's changes between 1983 and 1987 the Labour Party was heavily defeated again in the 1987 general election. Kinnock then sought to further reorganise the party and moved its policies towards the centre ground. The party organisation was overhauled and the party became much more professional in its presentation. The mastermind of this was Peter Mandelson, who became Kinnock's director of communications in 1985. John Smith, who became the shadow chancellor of the exchequer in 1987, gave Labour a more reassuring image of moderation and competence. A policy review was launched after the election defeat of 1987, and by 1988 much of the 1983 manifesto had been ditched, including withdrawal from the EEC, unilateral nuclear disarmament and rises in taxation on high incomes.

What was Labour's new image by the end of the 1980s?

KEY PROFILE

Peter Mandelson (b. 1953) became famous as the **spin doctor** who was behind the slick presentation of New Labour. He entered Parliament in 1992 and became a close adviser to Tony Blair. He was twice a cabinet minister but on each occasion had to resign after a scandal; as industry minister in 1998 and as Northern Ireland secretary in 2001. He then left British politics to become an EU commissioner but returned to join Gordon Brown's cabinet in 2008.

KEY TERM

spin doctor: a spokesperson employed to give a favourable interpretation of events to the media, especially on behalf of a political party

Who was Peter Mandelson? Why was he a significant figure?

Read source two. How does Kinnock convey his message?

Explain why he is putting forward this argument in 1988:

L.O: To know how the Labour party reorganised in the run up to 1997 election.

Lesson 8 - The realignment of the Labour party: Realignment under Neil Kinnock, John Smith and Tony Blair

Complete the source evaluation for source two:



SOURCE 2

At the 1988 Labour Party conference Neil Kinnock explained the purpose of the policy review:

When we make those arguments about individuals and consumers and competitiveness it is not long before we hear people saying that we are proposing 'to run the capitalist economy better than the Tories'. Even after that has been the implemented programme of a Labour government for years, there will still be a market economy. What will be different will be the condition of the people who have had the chance to train, who will have been engaged in the new industries, who will have benefited not just from the greater production but from the fairer distribution that it finances. That will be applying our values, our vision in practice instead of just talking about it. There is no 'slide to the right' in that. There is no 'concession to Thatcherism' in any of that. In any case, let me tell this party what so many in this party tell me: the greatest concession to Thatcherism is to let it win again. That is the ultimate concession.

Content	
Provenance	
Language and tone	

L.O: To know how the Labour party reorganised in the run up to 1997 election.

Lesson 9 - The realignment of the Labour party: Realignment under Neil Kinnock, John Smith and Tony Blair

Many on the Left of the party were concerned about the proposals. Furthermore, Kinnock signalled a split with the trade unions by ending the Labour Party's support for closed shop union agreements in 1989. As the Conservative government became more unpopular, Labour started to look like an alternative government. They were ahead in the polls before Thatcher left office and even after John Major became prime minister the Labour Party was still the favourite to win the 1992 election.

Why did Labour look to be in a good position in the run up to the 1992 election?

KEY TERM

closed shop: workers all have to be members of a particular union in order to work in a particular job

Given this, some therefore blamed Kinnock for losing the 1992 election and he resigned as leader four days later. At an election party rally in Sheffield, shortly before election day, he had been greeted as a conquering hero and was later accused of over-confidence. It is certainly true that some voters had difficulty seeing Neil Kinnock as prime minister. The Sun's headline on election day was: 'If Kinnock wins today will the last person to leave Britain please turn out the lights'. Nevertheless, the Labour Party Kinnock left behind in 1992 was infinitely stronger than it had been in 1983.

Why did some blame Kinnock for losing the 1992 election?

John Smith 1992-94

Kinnock's successor was John Smith, his shadow chancellor. As the Conservative Party's troubles grew after Black Wednesday, Smith seemed ideally suited to lead Labour towards victory. He was seen as serious and someone to be trusted on the economy. John Smith signalled a shift in the Labour Party by moving to abolish the trade union block vote by introducing 'One Member, One Vote' (OMOV) for parliamentary candidates in 1993.

John Smith's death from a heart attack in 1994, at the age of 55, was a shock to the whole nation. Many people have argued that Smith might have achieved all that Blair did, perhaps more. Others have argued that Smith was innately very cautious and would not have acted as boldly and decisively as Blair did. He was wary of extending OMOV to conference motions that decided Labour Party policy, which frustrated modernisers like Tony Blair.

Using the information create a fact file on John Smith?

KEY PROFILE

John Smith (1938–94) was MP for Monklands East, a Labour stronghold in the west of Scotland. He was popular and respected at Westminster, with a political style that was calm and reassuring; he was a skilful performer in Parliament and on television. Smith became Labour leader in 1992, succeeding Neil Kinnock. Smith might well have become prime minister but for his sudden death from a heart attack in 1994.

KEY TERM

One Member, One Vote (OMOV): individual members of the Labour Party would vote on the selection of parliamentary candidates. This lessened the influence of the trade unions

L.O: To know how the Labour party reorganised in the run up to 1997 election.

Lesson 9 - The realignment of the Labour party: Realignment under Neil Kinnock, John Smith and Tony Blair

Tony Blair 1994-2007

After John Smith's death in 1994, the danger of a divisive leadership contest was avoided by a deal between Tony Blair and his main rival, Gordon Brown.



Fig. 2 Blair led Labour to a landslide victory in 1997

Tony Blair (b. 1953) was educated at a Scottish private school, Fettes College. He was much more typical of the 'Middle England' he wanted to win over than he was of Labour loyalists. Blair had few hang-ups about political ideology; he argued that what matters is what works and because he did not join the Labour Party until after university he had fewer ties to its history. He was prime minister from 1997 until he stepped down in 2007.



Fig. 3 Brown was the longest-serving Chancellor of modern times

Gordon Brown (b. 1951) was elected MP for Dunfermline in 1983 and was a protégé of John Smith. He had a key role in modernising the Labour Party and in planning for the 1997 election. After Labour came to power, he was Chancellor of the Exchequer for ten years, longer than any other chancellor in modern times. His relationship with Blair was often tense but they made a powerful and effective team. Brown succeeded Blair as prime minister in 2007.

A CLOSER LOOK

Blair and Brown had both entered Parliament in 1983. They shared an office and were both modernisers in the Labour Party. At the time of John Smith's death, Brown would have been regarded as the more experienced of the two but it was agreed at a dinner at the Granita restaurant in Islington that Blair would stand as leader and work in close partnership with Brown who would act as a strategist and policy expert. Afterwards, it was widely believed that Blair had agreed to step down at some point in the future to allow Brown to have his turn as leader. The question of when exactly Brown would take over later caused tensions between 'Blairites' and 'Brownites' within the Labour government.

L.O: To know how the Labour party reorganised in the run up to 1997 election.

Lesson 10 - The realignment of the Labour party: Realignment under Neil Kinnock, John Smith and Tony Blair

Complete the source evaluation for source three:



SOURCE 3

The Labour Party manifesto in 1997 spelt out what was 'new' about 'New Labour':

In each area of policy a new and distinctive approach has been mapped out, one that differs from the old left and the Conservative right. This is why new Labour is new. New Labour is a party of ideas and ideals but not of outdated ideology. What counts is what works. The objectives are radical. The means will be modern. We believe in the strength of our values, but we recognise also that the policies of 1997 cannot be those of 1947 or 1967. More detailed policy has been produced by us than by any opposition in history. Our direction and destination are clear. The old left would have sought state control of industry. The Conservative right is content to leave all to the market. We reject both approaches. Government and industry must work together to achieve key objectives aimed at enhancing the dynamism of the market, not undermining it.

Content	
Provenance	
Language and tone	

L.O: To know how the Labour party reorganised in the run up to 1997 election.

Lesson 10 - The realignment of the Labour party: Realignment under Neil Kinnock, John Smith and Tony Blair

How valuable is source three for an understanding of New Labour?

Tony Blair himself was a skilful communicator, particularly effective in presenting an air of moderation and winning over 'Middle England'. He was also attractive to women and young voters. The Labour Party had all-women shortlists leading to a record number of female candidates. The Labour Party appeared fresh and vibrant, especially in comparison to the Conservative Party which, mired down in sleaze and scandal, appeared tired and out of touch. It was no coincidence that the Labour Party chose a modern pop song Things can only get better as its campaign theme in the 1997 election.

How did Tony Blair make himself and the Labour party attractive to voters?

These contrasting images were reflected in the national press. In the past, the Conservatives had enjoyed greater support from the national press; negative press coverage of Neil Kinnock in the 1992 election campaign was just one example of this. Blair's press secretary, Alastair Campbell, used his experience as a former journalist to change Labour's relationships with the press and media. Journalists and newspaper owners, many of them unenthusiastic about John Major anyway, were won over. One of the Conservative Party's most powerful weapons had been neutralised.

Who was Alistair Campbell? Why was his work with the media important for New Labour?

KEY PROFILE
Alastair Campbell (b. 1957) was Tony Blair's press secretary from 1994 to 2003. He had worked as a journalist for several newspapers including the *Daily Mirror*. Campbell had great success in improving Labour's press coverage through well-organised briefing to journalists. He was particularly effective in rebutting hostile news stories as soon as they appeared.

In addition, the Labour campaign was run by a disciplined 'spin machine' that was very effective in dealing with the media and the press, both in refuting Conservative attacks and in selling Labour policies. Labour spokespeople were always 'on message' with access to up-to-date information. Peter Mandelson ran the efficient machinery coordinating public statements and keeping all elements of the party 'on message'.

L.O: To know how the Labour party reorganised in the run up to 1997 election.

Lesson 10 - The realignment of the Labour party: Realignment under Neil Kinnock, John Smith and Tony Blair



Summary: Design a poster for New Labour – think about how you highlight the ‘New’:

A large empty rectangular box with a dark blue border, intended for designing a poster.

L.O: To know what happened during the 1997 election.

Lesson 11 -The realignment of the Labour party: The 1997 election

Complete the source evaluation for source four:



SOURCE 4

John Major, the Conservative Party leader from 1990 to 1997, gave his interpretation of why Labour won the 1997 election in his autobiography which was published in 1999:

'You never stood a chance.' 'It was always inevitable.' 'Nothing more you could have done.' After the election was over, these were the common refrains. People believed that new Labour was bound to win before the campaign even started. They were right. But why did the fight look (and feel) so much a struggle against the tide, even from the start? The longer you've been around, the longer the list of failures which attaches to you. With every reform, somebody had inevitably lost out. People had suffered high interest rates and the pain of recession. Voters did not balance the harsh decisions of earlier years against the buoyant economic conditions that were now all around them. All they heard was the daily message on sleaze and Europe. All they saw were the exotic follies of a handful of MPs. And they knew that we had made our fair share of policy mistakes. But in one respect Labour did indeed create their victory. The party managed not to seem frightening any more.

Content	
Provenance	
Language and tone	

L.O: To know what happened during the 1997 election.

Lesson 11 - The realignment of the Labour party: The 1997 election

How valuable is John Majors assessment of the reasons for the Labour Party's victory in 1997?

Although opinion polls during the campaign showed a large Labour lead, many Labour supporters still genuinely feared that the power of the Tory electoral machine might cause yet another disappointment like 1992. Tony Blair secretly discussed the possibility of a coalition with the Liberal Democrat leader Paddy Ashdown. The Labour Party manifesto included pledges such as referendums on devolution which had been longstanding Liberal aims.

The Labour Party also created a pledge card which contained five Promises. These were clear, easy to understand and designed to attract a range of potential voters.

Look at the pledge card. Why would this appeal to voters? What is the benefit of a card like this?

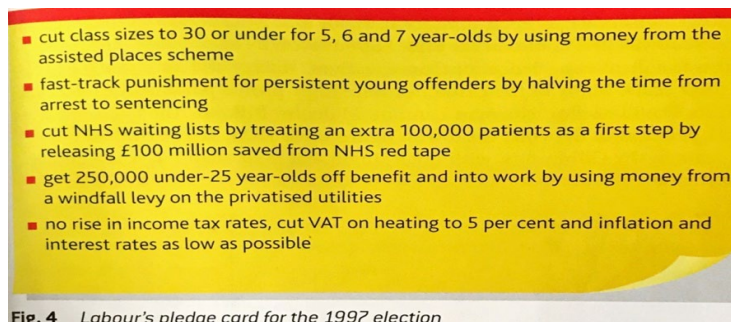


Fig. 4 Labour's pledge card for the 1997 election

The Labour Party was no longer an easy target for attack. Both its organisation and its policies meant that previously successful Tory tactics of frightening voters away from Labour's 'socialist extremism' simply did not work any more. In fact the Conservative message was confused as it veered between, on the one hand, complaining that Labour had 'stolen Conservative policies' and, on the other, that 'New Labour' was just 'Old Labour' in disguise. Neither argument worked.

In addition the accusations of 'Tory sleaze' were damaging. In Tatton, Martin Bell's campaign for clean politics against Neil Hamilton dominated evening news bulletins, reminding voters of the sleaze and scandal. The Labour and Liberal Democrat parties did not run candidates there so the spotlight was fully on the Conservatives.

Why was there problems for the Conservative party in the run up to the election?


A photograph showing a man in a light-colored suit (Martin Bell) surrounded by a crowd of people, some holding microphones, in what appears to be a public square or street. The scene is crowded and chaotic, with many people looking towards the man in the suit.

Fig. 5 The independent candidate, Martin Bell, confronts the Conservative MP, Neil Hamilton, over 'Cash for questions' during the 1997 election campaign

L.O: To know what happened during the 1997 election.

Lesson 11 - The realignment of the Labour party: The 1997 election

The battles over Maastricht and Europe continued to resonate. The Referendum party was set up, by Sir James Goldsmith, specifically to fight the 1997 election on the sole promise to hold a referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union. It won no seats but kept the Conservative splits on Europe in the news and may have attracted enough voters to cause Conservative defeats in some marginal seats, such as in the defeat of David Mellor in Putney.

Why was Europe still an issue in the 1997 election?

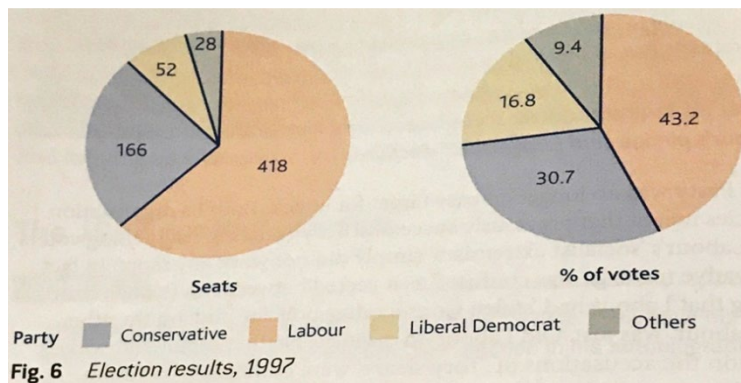
Most Conservatives, including John Major and Michael Heseltine, accepted that defeat was inevitable. In the end, Labour won by a landslide. Election night was a grim experience for Conservatives. Half of all Conservative MPs lost their seats. Many of the casualties were high-profile personalities: Michael Portillo, David Mellor, Norman Lamont, Malcolm Rifkind. The Conservatives got 31 per cent of the vote, the lowest figure since 1823. They now had only 165 seats in the Commons, with not a single seat in Scotland. It was a bigger disaster than 1945.

For many people, the symbolic image of election night came from Enfield, where a previously unheard of young Labour candidate, Stephen Twigg, defeated one of the Conservative 'big beasts', Michael Portillo. Portillo's losing of his seat went on to have a longer-term impact on the Conservative Party in opposition.

Use the information and the election results to explain what happened during the 1997 election:

A CLOSER LOOK

A 'Portillo moment' has now become shorthand for a senior politician losing their seat. Michael Portillo himself acknowledged in 2010 that his name 'is now synonymous with eating a bucketload of shit in public'. The question, 'Were you still up for Portillo?' (which became the title of a book about the 1997 election), indicates that it was also symbolic as the moment when the scale of the Conservative defeat became apparent.



L.O: To know what happened during the 1997 election.

Lesson 11 - The realignment of the Labour party: The 1997 election

The election results also indicated widespread tactical voting, with Labour supporters voting Liberal Democrat (and vice versa) according to how the anti-Conservative vote could be maximised. This behaviour by the electorate neutralised another advantage that the Conservative Party had had in the 1980s — the split on the Left/centre-Left which had existed since the formation of the SDP in 1981. In one sense, explaining the Conservative defeat in 1997 is easy. In a democracy, no government lasts forever. Sooner or later the pendulum of party politics always swings and the voters decide it is 'time for a change'. This happened to the Conservatives in 1964 and to Labour in 1979. But there were particular reasons that explain the election result in 1997.

What does the information above tell us about the 1997 election results?

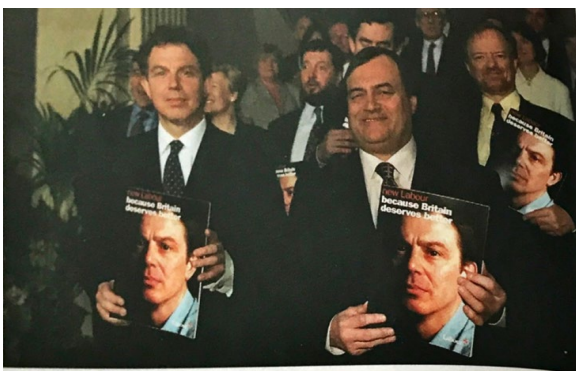


Fig. 7 Tony Blair launching the 1997 Labour manifesto with his shadow cabinet

The Labour landslide of 1997 ended 18 years in opposition. A Labour government had a strong parliamentary majority for the first time since 1966. Many people thought of 1945 and the hopes of a new era. The fact that so many new Labour MPs were youthful or female was in tune with the ideas of a new beginning. The Conservative Party had suffered its worst defeat since the nineteenth century. John Major did not hang around. On the day Tony Blair moved into 10 Downing Street, Major made it clear he was resigning as party leader and then went to the Oval to watch cricket.



Using the table below, find the reasons identified in this chapter and number them in order of importance. Justify your choice.

Reasons for the 1997 general election results	Comment	Order of importance
Conservative splits over Europe including the impact of the Referendum party		
Accusations of Tory sleaze		
Memories of Black Wednesday		
Attitude of national press		
Labour's discipline and organisation		
Labour's policy messages		
Tony Blair's leadership of the Labour party		
Anti-Conservative tactical voting		41

L.O: To know what happened during the 1997 election.

Lesson 11 - The realignment of the Labour party: The 1997 election



Look back at Sources 1, 2 and 3. With reference to these sources and your understanding of the historical context, assess the value of these three sources to an historian studying why the Labour Party changed in the period 1983 to 1997.

SOURCE 1

Tony Blair became the leader of the Labour Party in 1994. He reflected on the contribution of his two predecessors, Neil Kinnock and John Smith, at the 1995 Labour Party conference. It was at this conference that **Clause IV** was rewritten:

New Labour was born of the courage of one man. We would not be here, proud and confident today, but for that man – Neil Kinnock. And then it grew under the wisdom of John Smith, who guided us through the revolution in our party democracy and whose memory we honour. In this last year we have transformed our party – our constitution rewritten, our relations with the trade unions changed and better defined for today's world, our party organisation improved, new policy breaking new ground. I did not come into politics to change the Labour Party. I came into politics to change my country and I honestly believe that if we had not changed, if we had not returned our party to its essential values, free from the weight of outdated ideology, we could

SOURCE 2

At the 1988 Labour Party conference Neil Kinnock explained the purpose of the policy review:

When we make those arguments about individuals and consumers and competitiveness it is not long before we hear people saying that we are proposing 'to run the capitalist economy better than the Tories'. Even after that has been implemented programme of a Labour government for years, there will still be a market economy. What will be different will be the condition of the people who have had the chance to train, who will have been engaged in the new industries, who will have benefited not just from the greater production but from the fairer distribution that it finances. That will be applying our values, our vision in practice instead of just talking about it. There is no 'slide to the right' in that. There is no 'concession to Thatcherism' in any of that. In any case, let me tell this party what so many in this party tell me: the greatest concession to Thatcherism is to let it win again. That is the ultimate concession.

SOURCE 3

The Labour Party manifesto in 1997 spelt out what was 'new' about 'New Labour':

In each area of policy a new and distinctive approach has been mapped out, one that differs from the old left and the Conservative right. This is why new Labour is new. New Labour is a party of ideas and ideals but not of outdated ideology. What counts is what works. The objectives are radical. The means will be modern. We believe in the strength of our values, but we recognise also that the policies of 1997 cannot be those of 1947 or 1967. More detailed policy has been produced by us than by any opposition in history. Our direction and destination are clear. The old left would have sought state control of industry. The Conservative right is content to leave all to the market. We reject both approaches. Government and industry must work together to achieve key objectives aimed at enhancing the dynamism of the market, not undermining it.

L.O: To know what happened during the 1997 election.

Lesson 11 - The realignment of the Labour party: The 1997 election



How significant was Neil Kinnock in the development of 'New Labour', 1983 to 1997?

Use the space below to plan an answer to the question

A large, empty rectangular box with a dark blue border, intended for students to plan their answer to the question above.

Lesson 12 - The Major government: Society

Complete the source evaluation for source one:



SOURCE 1

At the Conservative Party conference in 1993, John Major launched what became known as his 'Back to Basics' campaign. In 1992 he had won the election but also suffered the ERM crisis:

We live in a world that sometimes seems to be changing too fast for comfort. Old certainties crumbling. Traditional values falling away. And people ask, 'Where's it going? Why has it happened?' And above all, 'How can we stop it?' Let me tell you what I believe. For two generations, too many people have been belittling the things that made this country. We've allowed things to happen that we should never have tolerated. We have listened too often and too long to people whose ideas are light years away from common sense. The truth is as much as things have changed on the surface, underneath we're still the same people. The old values – neighbourliness, decency, courtesy – they're still alive, they're still the best of Britain. They haven't changed. It is time to return to those old core values, time to get back to basics, to self-discipline and respect for the law, to consideration for others, to accepting a responsibility for yourself and your family and not shuffling off on other people and the state.

Content	
Provenance	
Language and tone	

L.O: To know how society changed in the 1990s.

Lesson 12 - The Major government: Society – Social liberalism

What do you think John Major meant when he suggested that it was 'time to get back to basics'?

Why do you think Major wanted to convey this message in his speech?

What impact does this knowledge have on your assessment of the value of this source?

The extent of social liberalism

John Major's speech reflected a period of time when there was substantial changes in society that many found disconcerting. The beginning of this period was, in many ways, socially conservative but over the ensuing decade this was challenged and Britain seemed to become a more socially liberal country.

The social conservatism of Thatcherism and the changes in attitudes in this period can be exemplified in attitudes to homosexuality. Negative attitudes grew during the 1980s, reaching a peak in 1987. Part of this may have been because of the identification of AIDS. The first case in the UK was recorded in 1981 and because gay men seemed to be particularly at risk, it was referred to as a 'gay plague'.

How was society challenged at the end of the 1980s and 1990s?

A CLOSER LOOK

The fact that gay men and intravenous drug users were most at risk of contracting the HIV virus which caused AIDS meant that involvement by the government was considered controversial. Nevertheless the government started a prevention campaign in 1985; needle exchanges were set up and leaflets were distributed to all households and schools. Billboards and TV and radio advertisements advised people: 'Don't die of ignorance'. In 1987 Diana, Princess of Wales challenged these popular prejudices about AIDS by shaking hands with a patient with AIDS at the Royal Middlesex Hospital, a hugely significant move in de-stigmatising AIDS patients.

A CLOSER LOOK

AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is caused by HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus). It is estimated that over 40 million people worldwide have died of AIDS since 1981. There is no cure or vaccine although anti-viral drugs are increasingly effective at limiting the disease's impact.

Read the information above. Explain the government intervention:



Fig. 2 The Princess of Wales meeting an AIDS patient in 1987

L.O: To know how society changed in the 1990s.

Lesson 12 - The Major government: Society – Social liberalism

There is no doubt that fear of AIDS stirred up greater prejudice about gay people. 'Loony left' councils were accused of 'promoting' homosexual 'lifestyles' by funding support groups. There was a tabloid outcry in 1986 over a book, *Jenny Lives With Eric And Martin*, which was stocked in some London school libraries. In response to this, Section 28, a law which banned the promotion of homosexuality by local authorities, was passed in 1988. Although it was not directly aimed at schools, many people believed that it made it illegal to discuss homosexuality in schools.

What does section 28 tell us about society?

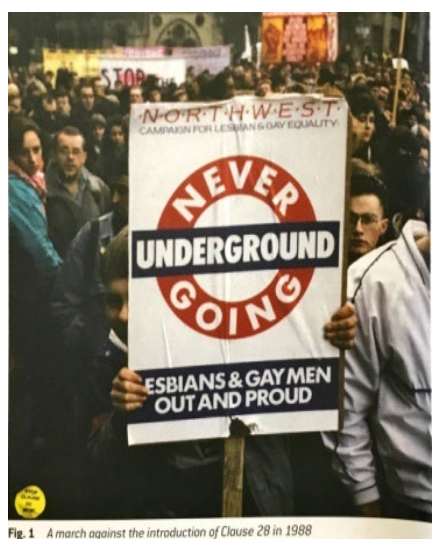
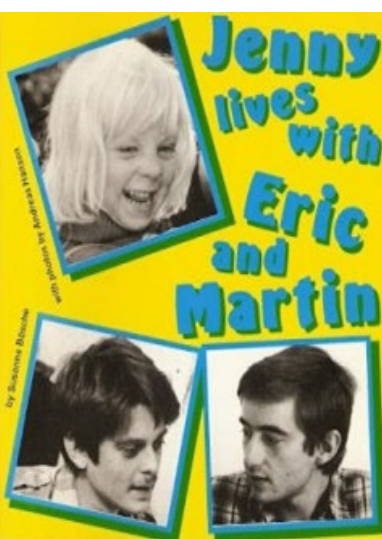


Fig. 1 A march against the introduction of Clause 28 in 1988

Read source two: Find out what is meant by 'Victorian values':

Read source two: What links can you make between Victorian values and Thatcherism? Looking back may help you.

Read source two: How valuable is Source 2 by Peter Tatchell for an understanding of social attitudes in the 1980s?

L.O: To know how society changed in the 1990s.
Lesson 12 - The Major government: Social liberalism

Complete the source evaluation for source two:



SOURCE 2

The human rights campaigner Peter Tatchell was one of the co-founders of the pressure group Outrage! He recalled the experience of the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) community in the 1980s in 2012 in an introduction to a debate about life in the 1980s:

The 1980s were a period of intensified homophobia, sanctioned from the top of society. The Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher was at war with the LGBT community. She launched a series of homophobic and sexist moral crusades under the themes of 'family values' and 'Victorian Values'. Labour councils that supported local LGBT communities were denounced by the Tories. On top of all this, the AIDS epidemic was demonised as the 'gay plague'. It was manipulated to blame and vilify LGBT people – and to justify increasing homophobic repression. At the 1987 Tory party conference Thatcher attacked the right to be LGBT. The following year, her government legislated the notorious Section 28, which banned the so-called 'promotion' of homosexuality by local authorities; leading many authorities to impose self-censorship to avoid prosecution. Unexpectedly, this was the making of the LGBT community in Britain. It mobilised people as never before. The 1988 London Pride parade was double what it had been in previous years increasing to 30,000 marchers. Stonewall and OutRage! exploded into existence and began the successful fight back.

Content	
Provenance	
Language and tone	

L.O: To know how society changed in the 1990s.

Lesson 12 - The Major government: Society – Social liberalism

Outrage! used direct action, threatening to 'out' gay clergy and MPs. Stonewall backed test legal cases at the European Court of Human Rights, challenging the unequal age of consent and the ban on homosexuals in the armed forces. This led to a reduction in the age of consent for gay men from 21 to 18 in 1994. However, equality wasn't achieved until 2000 when the age was lowered to 16; similarly it wasn't until 2000 that the lifting of the ban on homosexuals in the military was eventually passed.

What was the impact of the pressure group Outrage?

The 1980s saw a series of other moral panics, many of which had subsided by 1997. Family campaigners feared for the future of marriage as the divorce rate hit record highs in the 1990s and the percentage of babies born to unmarried parents more than doubled from 12 per cent in the early 1980s to 30 per cent by the early 1990s. Single mothers and absent fathers were particularly criticised. In 1992 Peter Lilley, the Secretary of State for Social Security, sang a song to the Conservative Party conference including the words: ' There's young ladies who get pregnant just to jump the housing queue / And dads who won't support the kids / of ladies they have ... kissed'. To counter this, the Child Support Agency was set up in 1993 to try to ensure that absent parents paid maintenance for their children.

How did the idea of family change in the 80s and 90s?

KEY PROFILE

Peter Lilley (b. 1943) was first elected as a Conservative MP in 1983, after working as a stockbroker. He was a cabinet minister under both Thatcher and Major and stood in the leadership election of 1997. He was a strong Thatcherite, although he later became more socially liberal, advocating the legalisation of cannabis.

Concern about under-age sex was seen in the campaign, led by Victoria Gillick, against the availability of contraceptive advice to girls under the age of consent without their parents' knowledge. Initially the high court ruled that this advice could only be given with the consent of a parent or guardian, though this was overruled in 1985 by the House of Lords. Mary Whitehouse, the moral campaigner, continued her work until the late 1980s, coining the phrase 'video nasty' and influencing the passing of the Video Recording Act in 1994 which ensured that videos had British film classifications attached to them. It is also clear from the impact of the scandals that enveloped Conservative MPs during the 1990s that public expectation about the behaviour of public figures was still high. Extramarital affairs, illegitimate children and issues of sexuality all led to MPs resigning as ministers or stepping down.

Why was the work of moral campaigners seen in the 80s and 90s?

L.O: To know how society changed in the 1990s.

Lesson 13 - The Major government: Society – Anti- establishment culture

Anti-establishment culture

When John Major became prime minister in 1990 he outlined an aim to create a classless society in Britain. Certainly this period did see an increase in people's willingness to challenge traditional sources of authority, especially if they did not live up to expectations. This can be seen in the increasing criticism of the monarchy. Some commentators see this as an inevitable consequence of Thatcherism; Thatcher herself was an outsider and Thatcherism had championed the questioning of much of the received wisdom of the post-war period.

Why was Major's aim a big change?

Read source three: What does 'annus horribilis' mean? Find out why the Queen described 1992 like this.

Is a speech by the Queen, such as Source 3, a valuable source for an historian? Explain your answer.

The changing attitude to the royal family reflected a general decline in deference to the establishment. The period 1987 to 1997 was a difficult one for the monarchy. The marriages of three out of four of the Queen's children broke down. Details of extramarital affairs including recordings of telephone conversations were splashed all over the tabloids. The shift in attitude can be seen in the public disquiet about the financing of the restoration of Windsor seen castle after a devastating fire in 1992. The debate led to the Queen agreeing to pay tax on her private income and a reduction in the civil list. Nevertheless, damaging revelations, especially from the Princess of Wales about her treatment at the hands of the royal family, continued to damage the monarchy's reputation. The trough of public support for the monarchy was reached in 1997, in the aftermath of the death of the Princess of Wales in a car crash; the Queen was accused of not caring, while the country was in mourning.

Why did the attitude of the public change towards the royal family in the years 1987 and 1997?

KEY TERM

civil list: the members of the royal family who are supported by public funds

Lesson 13 - The Major government: Society – Anti- establishment culture

Complete the source evaluation for source three:



SOURCE 3

On 24 November 1992 the Queen gave a speech at the Guildhall to the Lord Mayor and City of London Corporation. This speech was given to mark the fortieth anniversary of her accession:

1992 is not a year on which I shall look back with undiluted pleasure. It has turned out to be an 'Annus Horribilis'. No section of the community has all the virtues, neither does any have all the vices. There can be no doubt that criticism is good for people and institutions that are part of public life. No institution – City, Monarchy, whatever – should expect to be free from the scrutiny of those who give it their loyalty and support, not to mention those who don't. But we are all part of the same fabric of our national society and that scrutiny can be just as effective if it is made with a touch of gentleness, good humour and understanding. Forty years is quite a long time. I am glad to have had the chance to witness, and to take part in, many dramatic changes in life in this country. One unchanging factor which I value above all is the loyalty given to me and to my family by so many people throughout my reign.

Content	
Provenance	
Language and tone	

L.O: To know how society changed in the 1990s.

Lesson 13 - The Major government: Society – Anti- establishment culture

Anti-establishment culture can also be seen in the arts. The Young British Artists (YBA) led by Damian Hirst, Sarah Lucas and Tracey Emin, challenged ideas about what art was. YBA created art from materials and processes not usually associated with art such as dead animals or ephemeral detritus. Charles Saatchi, the advertising executive, was an important patron and it was his collection of YBA work that formed the basis of the Sensation exhibition held in 1997.

What was YBA? Explain your answer

Youth culture also challenged the Establishment. In the late 1980s 'acid house', dance music with a psychedelic edge, arrived from the USA. 1988 and 1989 have both been nicknamed the 'Second summer of love' and they saw an explosion of raves and free parties. These were linked to the use of ecstasy (MDMA), which provoked a moral panic about drug-taking and a tabloid backlash.

In response, the government passed the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act in 1994 which gave more powers to the police to break up these free parties; in it rave music was famously defined as including 'sounds wholly or predominantly characterised by the emission of a succession of repetitive beats'.

How did the youth challenge the establishment? What was the government response? Explain your answer

The free party and rave movement also overlapped with the growing direct action environmental movement. A series of protests against road developments started at the Twyford Down M3 extension in 1992 and spread to other sites such as the Newbury bypass and the M11 link road. They brought together a wide range of people, ranging from local residents, often middle-class first-time protesters, to new-age travellers, to dedicated environmental campaigners. The protesters used a variety of innovative direct action measures to delay or block work, including climbing and chaining themselves to trees which were due to be uprooted, and building tunnels and living underground.

What was the significance of the environmental movement in the 90s? Explain your answer



Fig. 3 The protest against the development of the M11 link road

L.O: To know what happened during the 1997 election.

Lesson 13 - The realignment of the Labour party: The 1997 election



How significant was the anti-establishment challenge of 1987 to 1997 to the established order?

Use the space below to plan an answer to the question

Lesson 14 - The Major government: Society – The position of women

The position of women

The beginning of the 1990s saw the start of what has been termed 'third-wave feminism'. This was both a critique and a step forward from the second-wave feminism of the 1960s. It was broader than just legal and financial equalities including more emphasis on breaking down stereotypes about Women involving race, gender and sexuality. Out of this grew the underground Riot Grrrl movement: female bands such as Bikini Kill and Huggy Bear which had a punk sensibility and sang about feminist issues. By the mid-1990s the message of 'girl power' had become a more mainstream one, led by the pop group the Spice Girls.

Define third wave feminism. Use examples to explain your answer:

A CLOSER LOOK
The phenomenon of girl power has also been linked to the emergence of powerful female characters on TV such as in *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*. At the same time the 'ladette' became a cultural phenomenon exemplified by women such as Ulrika Jonsson and Zoe Ball: ladettes talked openly about sex and drinking in the same way as men did.



Thatcher's position as prime minister showed that women could achieve highly. However, Thatcher's own relationship with feminism is more difficult to measure. Spice Girl, Geri Halliwell, described Margaret Thatcher as 'the first lady of girl power' after Thatcher's death in 2013. Critics argued that she did little for women when she was in power; she had only one female cabinet minister and did nothing to encourage other women into Parliament. She herself said: 'I owe nothing to Women's Lib' in an interview in 1982.

Nevertheless, there were further indications of progress in women's rights in this period. The first female Speaker in the House of Commons, Betty Boothroyd, and the first female head of M15, Stella Rimington, were both appointed in 1992. The first ordination of women as priests in the Church of England came in 1994. In 1994 rape within marriage became a criminal offence. It also became increasingly normal for women to work; by 1993 68 per cent of women of working age were in employment and by 1996 50 per cent of employees were women. Women's pay also improved relatively in the period (even though it remained at 80 per cent of men's earnings) and married women were able to be taxed separately from their husbands.

What was Thatcher's attitude to women's liberation? Make a list of advances for women in the

1 KEY TERM
M15: the British agency responsible for national security

L.O: To know how society changed in the 1990s.

The Major government: Society – Race relations

Race relations

By the later 1980s there appeared to be good progress in race relations and Britain started to be seen as more comfortable with multiculturalism. Unlike in the period between 1979 and 1987 there were no mass outbreaks of disorder with a racial component as were seen in 1981 and 1985. A series of riots that happened in 1991 and 1992 in towns and cities across the country from Oxford to Newcastle to Burnley involved mainly young white men on deprived council estates. Moreover, in the 1987 general election four non-white MPs were elected, the first since the 1920s; all held their seats in 1992. Nevertheless, progress was not always consistent. In 1992 the black Conservative candidate for Cheltenham, John Taylor, lost to the Liberal Democrats amid rumours of racism from some local Conservatives. Similarly, there remained tensions between young black men and the police. This was best exemplified by the murder of Stephen Lawrence.

How did race relations change during this period?

A CLOSER LOOK

In 1993, a black A-level student, Stephen Lawrence, was murdered by a gang of white youths at a bus stop in southeast London. The identity of the youths was believed to be known but the **Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)** decided that there was not sufficient evidence to convict them. The actions of the police were widely criticised for failing to investigate the case properly and for assuming that a black teenager was likely to be a perpetrator of crime rather than a victim. After failing to get any convictions in a private prosecution, Stephen's parents, Neville and Doreen, continued to campaign for justice. The murder and the failure to convict became a national issue and eventually a landmark in race relations. Following a campaign in the *Daily Mail*, in 1998 the Labour government ordered a public enquiry into the case chaired by a High Court judge. The MacPherson Report concluded that the Metropolitan Police, while not corrupt, had been incompetent and was **'institutionally racist'**.

KEY TERM

Crown Prosecution Service (CPS): the state organisation which presents to the court the arguments needed to prosecute someone for criminal activity; it is independent of the police who investigate crime, and it is independent of anyone who is a victim of crime

Institutional racism: the failure of an organisation to deal with people appropriately because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin; this might lead to discrimination through unthinking prejudice and racist stereotyping

Read the information about the murder of Stephen Lawrence. Explain the impact of this murder:

New stresses on social cohesion also arose. In the 1990s, there was a sharp increase in the number of asylum seekers, fleeing from violent upheavals in places such as Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq. As well as this, migration into Britain continued to include many immigrants from New Commonwealth countries such as India, Pakistan and Bangladesh; these were often relatives of people already living in the UK. Many of these immigrants were Muslims and concerns started to be raised about Muslim integration into British society. In 1988 the British Indian author Salman Rushdie published a novel, *The Satanic Verses*, which was considered blasphemous by many Muslims. The Iranian Ayatollah issued a fatwa, a death threat, and Rushdie had to go into hiding. Some British Muslims accepted that publishing the book was acceptable in British culture; others protested and burned the book. It was clear that there was a tension between British societal values and Islamic beliefs which some Muslims found difficult to reconcile.

L.O: To know how society changed in the 1990s.
The Major government: Society – Race relations

What changes were there in race relations in the 1990s?

In his book, historian Alwyn W. Turner argues that the 1990s were greatly influenced by the social liberalism of the 1960s. He claims that this was, in part, because the people who had grown up in the 1960s were now the people in power.



EXTRACT 1

It was the 1960s that seized the nation's attention. The phenomenon was initially cultural, but it swiftly acquired a social and political dimension. For if Major's talk of society, however classless, could be seen as a repudiation of Thatcherism, this public embrace of the 1960s was even more so. In one of her

last speeches as prime minister, Thatcher had talked of 'the waning fashions of the permissive 1960s', but she spoke too soon. Even at the height of her popularity, she had been unable to convince the nation of her perspective; a Gallup poll conducted in 1986 found that 70 per cent of the population thought the 1960s were the best decade of the century, and much of the 1990s would see coming to fruition seeds that had been planted a quarter of a century earlier.

A Classless Society: Britain in the 1990s by Alwyn W. Turner (Aurum Press, 2013)

Content	
Provenance	
Language and tone	

L.O: To know what happened during the 1997 election.

The realignment of the Labour party: The 1997 election



Look back at Sources 1, 2 and 3. With reference to these sources and your understanding of the historical context, assess the value of these three sources to an historian studying the consequences of social change between 1987 and 1997.

SOURCE 1

At the Conservative Party conference in 1993, John Major launched what became known as his 'Back to Basics' campaign. In 1992 he had won the election but also suffered the ERM crisis:

We live in a world that sometimes seems to be changing too fast for comfort. Old certainties crumbling. Traditional values falling away. And people ask, 'Where's it going? Why has it happened?' And above all, 'How can we stop it?' Let me tell you what I believe. For two generations, too many people have been belittling the things that made this country. We've allowed things to happen that we should never have tolerated. We have listened too often and too long to people whose ideas are light years away from common sense. The truth is as much as things have changed on the surface, underneath we're still the same people. The old values – neighbourliness, decency, courtesy – they're still alive, they're still the best of Britain. They haven't changed. It is time to return to those old core values, time to get back to basics, to self-discipline and respect for the law, to consideration for others, to accepting a responsibility for yourself and your family and not shuffling off on other people and the state.

SOURCE 2

The human rights campaigner Peter Tatchell was one of the co-founders of the pressure group Outrage! He recalled the experience of the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) community in the 1980s in 2012 in an introduction to a debate about life in the 1980s:

The 1980s were a period of intensified homophobia, sanctioned from the top of society. The Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher was at war with the LGBT community. She launched a series of homophobic and sexist moral crusades under the themes of 'family values' and 'Victorian Values'. Labour councils that supported local LGBT communities were denounced by the Tories. On top of all this, the AIDS epidemic was demonised as the 'gay plague'. It was manipulated to blame and vilify LGBT people – and to justify increasing homophobic repression. At the 1987 Tory party conference Thatcher attacked the right to be LGBT. The following year, her government legislated the notorious Section 28, which banned the so-called 'promotion' of homosexuality by local authorities; leading many authorities to impose self-censorship to avoid prosecution. Unexpectedly, this was the making of the LGBT community in Britain. It mobilised people as never before. The 1988 London Pride parade was double what it had been in previous years increasing to 30,000 marchers. Stonewall and OutRage! exploded into existence and began the successful fight back.

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L.O: To know how society changed in the 1990s.

The Major government: Society – Race relations



To what extent was Britain a tolerant, multicultural society in the 1990s?

Use the space below to plan an answer to the question

L.O: To know Britain's place in European relations.

The Major government: Foreign affairs- Relations with Europe

Complete the source evaluation for source one:



SOURCE 1

In September 1988 Margaret Thatcher gave a speech to the College of Europe in Bruges, Belgium. She took the invitation to speak here as an opportunity to set out her attitude towards Europe and how she thought the EEC should develop in the future:

Let me be quite clear. Britain does not dream of some cosy, isolated existence on the fringes. Our destiny is in Europe as part of the Community. But to try to suppress nationhood and concentrate power at the centre of a European conglomerate would be highly damaging. Europe will be stronger precisely because it has France as France, Spain as Spain, Britain as Britain, each with its own customs, traditions and identity. It would be folly to try to fit them into some sort of identikit European personality. Indeed it is ironic that, just when countries such as the Soviet Union are learning that success depends on dispersing power away from the centre, there are some in the EEC who seem to want to move in the opposite direction. Certainly we in Britain would fight attempts to introduce collectivism and corporatism at the European level – although what people wish to do in their own countries is a matter for them.

Content	
Provenance	
Language and tone	

L.O: To know Britain's place in European relations.

The Major government: Foreign affairs- Relations with Europe

Read source one: Explain why Thatcher might want to define her understanding of Britain's place in Europe at this time?

KEY CHRONOLOGY	
Oct 1988	Margaret Thatcher's speech in Bruges
July 1990	British entry into the ERM
Nov 1992	Britain withdraws from the ERM
Feb 1992	Treaty on European Union, Maastricht, extending inter-government cooperation
June 1993	Maastricht ratified
Jan 1995	Expansion of EU from 12 states to 15: accession of Austria, Finland and Sweden
Jun 1995	Major's 'back me or sack me' resignation

Relations with Europe, including the impact of the Single European Act and Maastricht Treaty

Relations with Europe, including the impact of the Single European Act and Maastricht Treaty
Although Thatcher had, in 1986, signed the Single European Act (SEA) which had appeared to be pro-European, she seemed to become more negative about Britain's relationship with Europe after this. Thatcher wanted a single market as this reflected her economic philosophy. She later claimed that she had not fully understood how the SEA would be used to change Britain's relationship with Europe. It soon became apparent that the SEA limited the influence of individual nation states. This worried Thatcher and a growing number of Conservative MPs.

Why did the SEA start to concern some MPs?

To counter the direction Thatcher feared the EEC was moving in she made a speech in Bruges in 1988 to set out her vision of the future of Europe (see Source 1). Thatcher wanted to emphasise that the EEC was a trade association between sovereign states. She was resolutely opposed to federalism and the idea of 'ever closer political union', whereas there were elements of the European Commission, including its president, Jacques Delors, who thought that was precisely the direction in which the EEC should be going.

What was federalism?

KEY TERM

federalism: a political system in which power is distributed between a central government and the smaller parts of the nation state; the USA has a federal system in which power is divided between central government and the individual states

L.O: To know Britain's place in European relations.

The Major government: Foreign affairs- Relations with Europe



Fig. 1 Thatcher frequently clashed with Delors, egged on by the mainly Eurosceptic tabloid press

1. What do you think the Sun's editor's intention in creating this front cover was?
2. Explain how you think this front cover might reflect the mood of the British public at the time.

While her speech was intended to be positive it infuriated other European leaders and raised doubts about Britain's commitment to further European integration. Meanwhile, in Britain, the Bruges speech so enthused the Eurosceptics MPs that the Bruges Group was formed to focus opposition to any European federal state.

Thatcher's more negative line on Europe caused tension within her government. People like Geoffrey Howe and John Major thought she was backtracking from positions she had already agreed to since 1985. On the other hand, Eurosceptics, such as the Bruges Group, argued that it was the federalists in Brussels who were changing the EEC into something different from the Common Market that Britain had joined in 1973.

What were the consequences of Thatcher's speech back in Britain?

L.O: To know Britain's place in European relations.

The Major government: Foreign affairs- Relations with Europe

After the collapse of communism, Thatcher was enthusiastically in favour of expanding the EEC to include the new states in Eastern Europe. This was to extend free trade and to ensure that communism was truly defeated. However, it was also partly to weaken the power of the European Commission in Brussels; she favoured a wider and shallower union instead of a deeper union. However, it is also true that Thatcher was never openly anti-European before she left office; that was something that developed later.

What were the two sides of Thatcher's thinking?

Side one

Side Two

Major and Europe

John Major inherited a Conservative government that was starting to be openly divided by the issue of Europe. There were still many supporters of Britain's involvement in Europe, with Europhile cabinet ministers such as Ken Clarke and Chris Patten. However, the Eurosceptics were becoming increasingly important and vocal; these included cabinet ministers like Michael Portillo and John Redwood and influential backbenchers such as Iain Duncan Smith and Bill Cash. They were encouraged by Thatcher's increasingly anti-European interventions. The Maastricht Treaty of 1992 gave them the opportunity to voice their concerns about the direction of the European Union.

Using the information above and the key profiles create a fact file for Europhiles and Eurosceptics?

Europhiles

Eurosceptics

L.O: To know Britain's place in European relations.

The Major government: Foreign affairs- Relations with Europe

Europhiles



Fig. 2 Clarke's pro-Europe stance was at odds with most Conservatives

Kenneth Clarke (b. 1940) served in Thatcher's cabinet as the Secretary of State for both health and education, and was John Major's Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1993 to 1997. He stood for the Conservative Party leadership in 1997, 2001 and in 2005, losing each time, partly because of his pro-European stance.



Fig. 3 Patten is one of Britain's most influential Roman Catholics

Chris Patten (b. 1944) was Conservative chairman between 1990 and 1992, overseeing Major's election victory. However, he lost his seat at the 1992 election. He was appointed as the governor of Hong Kong and oversaw the handover to China in 1997. He later became a European commissioner and chairman of the BBC.

Euroscptics

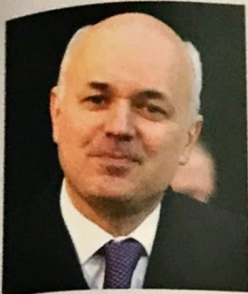


Fig. 4 Duncan Smith was Conservative leader for two years

Iain Duncan Smith (b. 1954) came from a military background, and was educated at HMS Conway and the army college at Sandhurst. He was one of the original Maastricht rebels against John Major. He became leader of the Conservative Party in 2001 but made little impact in the opinion polls and was ousted in 2003.



Fig. 5 Portillo is also a journalist and broadcaster

Michael Portillo (b. 1953) was a Thatcherite Eurosceptic and is believed to have been one of the 'bastards' that Major referred to. However, he stayed loyal to Major during the leadership election of 1995. After leaving Parliament in 2010, he advocated that Britain leave the European Union in 2013.

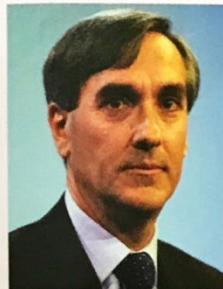


Fig. 6 Redwood stood for election in 1995

John Redwood (b. 1951) was another of the alleged 'bastards' in Major's cabinet and he stood against Major in the 1995 leadership election as the Eurosceptic and right-wing candidate. He was supported by *The Sun* newspaper and by Thatcher.

The Maastricht Treaty was designed to set up new structures to deal with the expansion of the EEC. Under the terms of the treaty, the EEC became the European Union and the conditions were set up for a single currency to come into being in 1999. The treaty was agreed in December 1991 and signed in February 1992 by European member states. Major's style had enabled him to establish good personal links with other heads of government, particularly with the German chancellor, Helmut Kohl, and his diplomatic skills enabled him to secure opt-outs for Britain from the plans for a single currency and from the Social Chapter. Selling the deal to sceptical political and public opinion at home was much harder. While the opt-outs won over most doubters in the Conservative Party, they did not eliminate them all.

KEY TERM

Social Chapter: part of the Maastricht

Treaty which aimed to regulate working conditions such as maximum hours for the working week and employment rights for part-time workers; the Conservatives opposed it because they favoured deregulation

reaty mean for the EEC? What deal did Major get?

L.O: To know Britain's place in European relations.

The Major government: Foreign affairs- Relations with Europe

A CLOSER LOOK

Major and the Maastricht rebels

In July 1993, rebel MPs blocked Major's attempt to get Parliament to ratify the Maastricht Treaty. Major won the vote by threatening a vote of no confidence which, if he had lost, would have led to the dissolution of Parliament and a general election. The Conservatives were far behind in the polls so this threat made sure he got sufficient support. But it damaged Major's authority and made him appear weak. His inability to silence the rebels was shown when he was asked 'off the record' by a TV reporter why he did not sack them. Thinking the microphone was switched off, Major replied: "Think from my perspective, a prime minister with a majority of eighteen. Do we want three more of the bastards out there?" The quote leaked to the *Daily Mirror*, became headline news and made it harder for Major to position himself with the Eurosceptics.

Why did Major have difficulty trying to deal with the Maastricht rebels?

The Maastricht Treaty was eventually ratified by Parliament after 18 months. However, this did not bring an end to the divisions over Europe. Conservative Eurosceptics continued to oppose Major on European issues. Losing the party whip or being threatened with deselection did not stop the rebels. Even Major's 'back me or sack me' resignation did not really strengthen his position.

In addition, the debate mobilised anti-Europeans outside Parliament. The Anti-Federalist League, the forerunner to the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), was set up in 1993, and in 1994 the wealthy financier Sir James Goldsmith set up the Referendum Party to fight the 1997 election on the single issue of demanding a referendum of Britain's relationship with Europe.

What were the consequences of the Maastricht treaty?



Write a paragraph that explains why the Conservative Party was so divided over Europe by 1994.

Write two newspaper headlines, one in favour of the Maastricht Treaty and one against it.

L.O: To know Britain's place in the end of the cold war.

The Major government: Foreign affairs- The end of the Cold War

Contribution and attitude to the end of the Cold War

When the final end of the Cold War came it was not how anyone predicted. The peoples of Eastern Europe voted with their feet. 1989 became known as the 'year of miracles' as communism collapsed across Europe.

A CLOSER LOOK

Collapse of communism in Eastern Europe

Mikhail Gorbachev was a reformer. By the mid-1980s it was obvious that the Soviet economy was in deep trouble. Although he had introduced some market reforms with glasnost and perestroika they had had limited impact, except in allowing people to be more critical of the government. When Poland announced it was going to hold free elections, Gorbachev made it clear that the Soviet Union would not intervene, even when the anti-communist trade unionist Lech Walesa won the presidency. This was a repudiation of the Brezhnev Doctrine whereby the Soviet Union had interfered in the domestic affairs of other communist states. Realising the Soviet Union would not intervene led to a domino effect across Eastern Europe.

How did communism collapse in Eastern Europe?



Fig. 7 Victory in the Cold War: celebrating the end of the Berlin Wall, 10 November 1989

It was Reagan's and Thatcher's insistence on taking a strong line with the USSR which forced Gorbachev to realise that the USSR was no longer strong enough to compete; at the same time Reagan's and Thatcher's willingness to negotiate with Gorbachev meant that the Cold War came to a peaceful end. However, in bringing about the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s, all the key players failed to see it through to the end. Ronald Reagan's second presidential term finished in 1988 so it was his successor, George Bush Senior, who oversaw the end of the Cold War. Mikhail Gorbachev was overtaken by events as the Soviet Union fell apart in 1991; he effectively lost power in a coup in August and resigned at the end of the year. Margaret Thatcher fell from power in November 1990.

What happened to Reagan and Thatcher as the Cold war came to an end?

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The Major government: Foreign affairs- The end of the Cold War

Thatcher had feared a German superstate dominating Europe, but she was unable to stop it. Helmut Kohl became the hero of the hour, at the head of the new unified Germany, now with a population of 80 million. Because of her strained relationship with Germany and her opposition to its reunification, unlike Gorbachev and George Bush Senior, Thatcher was not invited to the tenth anniversary of the fall of the Wall in 1999. In the new Eastern European states, however, there were no such divided opinions. In these newly independent states, Margaret Thatcher was widely admired.

What was Thatcher's relationship with Germany?

Assess the roles of Thatcher, Reagan and Gorbachev in bringing an end to the Cold War. Write a paragraph explaining who you think was the most important. Look back to help you:

KEY CHRONOLOGY

Key events in the ending of the Cold War

June 1987	USA and USSR agree to limit ballistic missiles
Feb 1989	USSR withdraws from Afghanistan
Nov 1989	The fall of the Berlin Wall
Dec 1989	Gorbachev and Bush announce the end of the Cold War at the Malta Summit
Aug 1990	USSR and USA work together to end the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait
Dec 1991	USSR officially dissolved

Read source two. How valuable is Charles Powell's view to a historian studying Thatcher's success in foreign policy

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Complete the source evaluation for source two:



SOURCE 2

Charles Powell was Thatcher's private secretary from 1983 to 1990. He was her key foreign policy advisor during this period. In 2007 he gave an interview to an international conference where he reflected on her success:

Margaret Thatcher's policy towards East and Central Europe and the Soviet Union was a huge success. Of course it wasn't all down to her; the Americans had by far the greatest role in relation to the Soviet Union. But she worked extremely closely with President Reagan, shared his outlook on almost everything, and indeed had briefed him from her very first meeting with Mr Gorbachev, that here was a different sort of man. And therefore the negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union on arms control, which had been broken off, were restarted, and you see all the subsequent steps which were taken towards reducing nuclear weapons. So I can't believe anyone can see this other than a great success for American, British and to some degree other European diplomacy, in which she played an extraordinarily prominent part, because of the very hard line she had taken against communism and the Soviet Union at the beginning, and because of the relationship she had forged with Mr Gorbachev, and because of her approach to Eastern Europe.

Content	
Provenance	
Language and tone	

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The Cold War had dominated international relations since the Second World War. No one at the time knew what the new world would look like. In fact, even as it was ending, war broke out in the Middle East. Saddam Hussein, the President of Iraq, sent forces to conquer the oil-rich state of Kuwait in the Arabian Gulf in August 1990. In 1991, an American-led coalition, including Britain, which was backed by a United Nations resolution, expelled Iraqi forces from Kuwait in a short military campaign. Although Iraq lost the war, Hussein remained the leader of Iraq.

What happened as the Cold War ended? Explain in detail.



Fig. 8 *The First Gulf War: oilfields burning in Kuwait, 1991*

The Major government: Foreign affairs- Interventions in the Balkans

Interventions in the Balkans

Although some feared that the end of the Cold War would lead to new arenas of conflict, others were optimistic that the expanding European Union would now play a bigger part in world affairs, setting up new arrangements for collective security and the peaceful resolution of disputes. This optimism was shattered by the problems of the Balkans as Yugoslavia disintegrated.

The crisis in Yugoslavia was not a sudden one and it stemmed from the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe. From 1989, the Yugoslav president, Slobodan Milosevic, was transforming from Communist Party leader to an extreme Serbian nationalist and threatening violent action against the Albanian population in the province of Kosovo.

In 1991, the prosperous northern republic of Slovenia declared independence and the Yugoslav state began to break up. There were Violent clashes between the two largest republics, Serbia and Croatia, between people of different ethnicities and religions.

What were the causes of the trouble in the Balkans? Explain in detail.

Both the EU and the UN began urgent diplomatic efforts to maintain the peace. The British Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd, was optimistic that international mediation would be effective and that Britain could make a major contribution. However, the efforts of European diplomats failed. It was not clear whether the aim was maintaining a multi-ethnic Yugoslavia, or allowing it to break up altogether. War began in Bosnia in April 1992. The Muslim population of eastern Bosnia was driven out by violent 'ethnic cleansing', carried out by Bosnian Serb paramilitaries backed by Milosevic's government.

Why did diplomatic efforts fail? What happened next?

KEY PROFILE

Douglas Hurd (b. 1930) became Foreign Secretary in 1991, in John Major's government, after standing in the 1990 leadership election. He was an experienced Conservative politician from the pro-Europe wing of the party, loyal to Mrs Thatcher in many respects but very different in his approach to Britain's role in Europe. He was closely involved with European attempts to mediate in the Balkan conflicts between 1992 and 1995 but these efforts met with little success as Slobodan Milosevic consistently went back on the agreements.

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In August 1992 John Major hosted a joint EU and UN conference in London and a UN peacekeeping force was put in place. In October 1992, the Vance-Owen plan, by Cyrus Vance, a UN representative, and the former British Foreign Secretary, David Owen, set out a framework for a lasting settlement. At the time, Major was widely praised for his actions but there was no concerted European pressure. The United States remained reluctant to intervene in Europe. Serb aggression continued. The war in Bosnia carried on for three more years, with Sarajevo under constant siege. British and European mediation was seen as ineffectual, especially after the massacre of Srebrenica in July 1995.

Why was Major's attempt at collective intervention not completely successful?

KEY PROFILE

David Owen (b. 1938) was the British Foreign Secretary between 1977 and 1979. He was also one of the 'gang of four' who left the Labour Party in 1981 to form the SDP.

A CLOSER LOOK

The massacre at Srebrenica

In 1995, Bosnian Serb forces entered Srebrenica. There was a small force of Dutch UN peacekeepers stationed at Srebrenica but they had orders not to intervene. More than 7000 Bosnian men and boys were massacred in one of the worst atrocities to occur in Europe since the end of the Second World War. Srebrenica was not important just because it was an atrocity; there were many atrocities in the Balkan wars, committed by all sides. Its importance lay in the recriminations that followed about the failure of UN peacekeeping missions. It showed the limits of EU diplomacy and UN peacekeeping.

Explain the impact of the massacre at Srebrenica:



Fig. 9 *The price of the failure of diplomacy in the Balkans: UN forces removing dead bodies after ethnic violence, Vitez in Bosnia, 1993*

L.O: To know Britain's role in the Balkans.

The Major government: Foreign affairs- Interventions in the Balkans

Events in the Balkans, 1995—97

After the horrors of the siege of Sarajevo and the Srebrenica massacre, Britain turned to the United States and NATO. President Clinton was persuaded to intervene; the central command and the military power of NATO were seen as essential to force the warring Balkan political leaders to negotiate. American air strikes on Serb forces led to a peace conference at Dayton, Ohio. A peace treaty was signed in Paris in December 1995. This guaranteed Bosnian independence, protected by a UN force and with substantial economic support from the international community.

There is no doubt that Britain's place in the world was changing after 1987. Europe's centre of gravity was shifting eastwards as states in Eastern Europe broke free from Soviet domination and moved towards the EU. And at the same time Britain's place in the EU was increasingly being questioned. The end of the Cold War meant that NATO had to find a new role. Post-Soviet Russia was weak, both economically and politically. The dominance of the United States seemed to be unchallenged and Britain, with its special relationship with the United States still strong, expected to play a role in the new world order.

Read and highlight the information. Think about the influences on Britain's foreign policy between 1987 and 1997. Make a list of instances when Britain got involved in foreign affairs.

A CLOSER LOOK

NATO

Involving NATO in peacekeeping in the Balkans was far more effective than using the United Nations, because the UN depended on member states to provide troops, whereas NATO had a unified central command under American leadership.

Identify the advantages and disadvantages of Britain intervening in the Balkans.

Advantages	Disadvantages

L.O: To know Britain's role in the Balkans.

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Summary task: Identify the ways in which Britain's place in the world had changed between 1987 and 1997.

Which do you think were the most significant changes? Explain your answer.

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Look back at Sources 1 and 2. With reference to these sources and your understanding of the historical context, assess the value of these two sources to an historian studying Thatcher's impact on British foreign policy between 1987 and 1997.

Consider long term as well as short term impact.



SOURCE 1

In September 1988 Margaret Thatcher gave a speech to the College of Europe in Bruges, Belgium. She took the invitation to speak here as an opportunity to set out her attitude towards Europe and how she thought the EEC should develop in the future:

Let me be quite clear. Britain does not dream of some cosy, isolated existence on the fringes. Our destiny is in Europe as part of the Community. But to try to suppress nationhood and concentrate power at the centre of a European conglomerate would be highly damaging. Europe will be stronger precisely because it has France as France, Spain as Spain, Britain as Britain, each with its own customs, traditions and identity. It would be folly to try to fit them into some sort of identikit European personality. Indeed it is ironic that, just when countries such as the Soviet Union are learning that success depends on dispersing power away from the centre, there are some in the EEC who seem to want to move in the opposite direction. Certainly we in Britain would fight attempts to introduce collectivism and corporatism at the European level – although what people wish to do in their own countries is a matter for them.

SOURCE 2

Charles Powell was Thatcher's private secretary from 1983 to 1990. He was her key foreign policy advisor during this period. In 2007 he gave an interview to an international conference where he reflected on her success:

Margaret Thatcher's policy towards East and Central Europe and the Soviet Union was a huge success. Of course it wasn't all down to her; the Americans had by far the greatest role in relation to the Soviet Union. But she worked extremely closely with President Reagan, shared his outlook on almost everything, and indeed had briefed him from her very first meeting with Mr Gorbachev, that here was a different sort of man. And therefore the negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union on arms control, which had been broken off, were restarted, and you see all the subsequent steps which were taken towards reducing nuclear weapons. So I can't believe anyone can see this other than a great success for American, British and to some degree other European diplomacy, in which she played an extraordinarily prominent part, because of the very hard line she had taken against communism and the Soviet Union at the beginning, and because of the relationship she had forged with Mr Gorbachev, and because of her approach to Eastern Europe.

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**'John Major was more successful in foreign affairs than he was in domestic policies'
Assess the validity of this view.**

Use the space below to plan an answer to the question. Identify the successes and failures of both policies