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**HISTORICKÝ VÝVOJ KONZERVATIVNÍ A
UNIONISTICKÉ STRANY**

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Undergraduate Thesis

**HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE
CONSERVATIVE AND UNIONIST PARTY**

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Plzeň 2013

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Juraj Štefančík

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ABSTRACT

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The aim of this thesis is to track the historical development of the Conservative and Unionist party, the most successful political party in Great Britain of all times according to their political success and the oldest political party in the world. The work describes the variations of the name of the party, transformation of Conservative ideology and many important political figures connected to the party and also offers a historical background for the party's major decisions. The focus of this thesis is on 20th century, description of the greatest achievements of the party and as the Conservatives have been the winning party for the most of the 20th century the work also includes description of the biggest electoral defeats. First part of this thesis provides a brief introduction to British politics and furthermore describes the origins of party's ideology and policy. It also presents people, that helped forming the ideology and bases of Conservatism and the most important political acts enforced by the party. Second part of this thesis describes a development of the party in 20th century, shift of opposition, important war decisions and politically influential events. The work also deeply introduces people with the most influential role in 20th century Conservatives such as Winston Churchill and Margaret Thatcher. An important part of this thesis is research. The goal of this section was to discover the awareness about Conservative Party and political matters amongst students in Great Britain.

Keywords: Conservative Party, politics, election, Britain, Privatization,

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1. Introduction

The political system of United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is constitutional monarchy, where the power is divided between a monarch and Prime Minister, who is the leader of the winning party in general elections. The power of Prime Minister in Britain is very wide. Prime Minister with his government appoints and dismisses all Ministers, divides tasks in Cabinet, appoints chairman of Cabinet committees, approves choice of Ministers' Parliamentary Private Secretaries and also he has many other responsibilities. (Ingle, 1989)

The legislative power is divided between the House of Commons consisting of 650 members and the House of Lords. For the House of Commons the Members of parliament (MP) must be elected. In Great Britain there is 650 constituencies each with one MP. The election is FPTP (first past the post) system which means that the number of MPs is not derived from the number of people giving their votes to the party but from the number of winnings in constituencies. The House of Lords is the upper house and serves to inspect decisions of the lower house. (Jones & Kavanagh, 1991)

Since 1920s the two leading parties in Great Britain have been the Labour Party and the Conservative Party. The two main parties scheme had dominated in British politics since the beginnings of the parliament. Before 1920s the Conservative Party was accompanied in the Parliament by the Liberal Party, which rose from the Whig Party.

These two main parties differ in their policy which has been developing and changing through history. The policy of Labour Party comes from the idea of socialism. Socialists believe, that production, distribution and trade should be centralized and controlled by the state and for Marxists the best way for a change is a revolution. Socialism is belief, that cooperation is more important, than competition. The idea of British socialism is different. First of all it is distributed through parliament, not a revolution also they believe, that the change of system is not the only option but the change of morale is. The Labour Party, a left wing party, comes from these ideas and offers a welfare state with the biggest support from the working and middle classes. (Ingle, 1989; Jones & Kavanagh, 1991; Ramsden, 2006)

The Conservative Party was the leading party for the most of the 20th century. Conservative ideology is far more abstract and dependent on the actual state of things. Conservatives promote the traditional way of life, sovereignty of Great Britain, unity of the union, family values and support of business and commerce, which is tightly connected with the party. Most of the party's MPs come from the privileged background and according to British Politics Today attended public schools, approximately half of them also went to Oxford or Cambridge university. Very important prerequisite is their social rank. Conservative Party is highly supported by middle and upper class. A leader has ultimate power in the party as long as he or she is successful. (Ingle, 1989)

2. The roots of the Tory Party

In the 17th century the first political parties were formed during the time of British civil wars (1638-1660). The main two parties were Royalists and Parliamentarians and later changed to Tories and Whigs. The Tories were successful during the Exclusion crisis in 1679-1680 when they stopped the plan of the Whig Party to exclude the catholic brother of Charles II from the line of succession to the throne. At this time the Tories started to be perceived as a patriotic party. For the most part of the 18th century the Tories were not very popular because of the connection of some members to the Jacobite cause. In 1765 Edmund Burke, an Irish philosopher became MP for the Whig party but his ideas set the basis of modern conservatism philosophy. According to Harris (2011) one of Burke's famous quotes is "People will never look forward to posterity who never look backward to their ancestors" (p. 12).

3. 19th Century Conservatives

Even though William Pitt the Younger, according to Cooke, would probably not call himself a Tory he was the longest serving Prime minister connected to the party and he was also the youngest Prime minister of Britain at the age of 24. He was in charge during the Napoleonic wars and French revolution. He engineered the Acts of Union in 1800, which attached the Ireland Kingdom to form United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. While he was Prime Minister Britain almost paid off all of its debt and helped to increase the level of patriotism in Britain. Pitt also opened up free trade, which led to growth of economics. Lord Liverpool, Tory, and Prime Minister in years 1812-1827 who helped building up a New Tory Party considered himself a successor of Pitt. Another successful Tory Prime Minister the Duke of Wellington led the government in years 1828-1830 and shortly in 1834. His government helped to cancel the regulation which banned catholic MPs. (Cooke, 2008)

The Tory Party was slowly losing its power in 1830. In 1832 it experienced the biggest defeat in history. From 658 seats in parliament Tory acquired only 185. The Whig Party led by Charles Grey issued a Reform Act in 1832 that met dislike from the Tories. The Reform Act, which had been proposed many times before, contained electoral changes. It granted seats in the House of Representatives for bigger cities that had developed during industrial revolution and took the right for seats from small villages. It dramatically increased the number of people who could vote, which was the reason for the large defeat. Something had to change in the Tory Party. In the first half of the 19th century the Conservative Party was formed out of the shattered Tory Party and the name Conservative started to be used widely. (Blake, 1985)

After Lord Wellington Robert Peel became the leader of the Conservatives. When Sir Robert Peel worked as a Home Secretary he established the Metropolitan police in Britain. In 1834 he wrote the *Tamworth manifesto* where he set the bases of moderate, progressive conservatism, declared the Reform Act from 1832 as inevitable and important. He also established a Party headquarters at Carlton Club in London. He was a Prime Minister of Britain in years 1834-1835 and again in years 1841-1846. With his government he outlawed the employment of children and women in the mines and set the regulations

for factory hours. With the idea of free trade in his head Robert Peel repealed the Corn Laws in 1846.

The Corn Laws were a set of laws protecting British farmers from cheap competition from foreign countries. In 1844 a set of weak harvests in Britain led to higher prices of wheat so repealing the laws led to decreasing the prices of food. (Cook, 2005). The Corn laws were a typical example of British mercantilism. The government wanted to control the foreign trade with setting high tariffs on import, creating a network of overseas colonies and banning them trading with any other countries which was typical for the 19th century Western Europe economics. Of course Sir Robert Peel was not the only influential person in the Conservative Party in mid 1800s one of the others was Benjamin Disraeli. (Blake, 1985)

Benjamin Disraeli was another person of great importance for the Conservative Party. He was Peel's main opponent and led the internal opposition. The party had inner disputes mainly about the Corn Laws which led to split of the party into two groups for almost 30 years. The Earl of Derby became Prime Minister and Disraeli was the leader of the House of Commons and proposed laws lowering rents for those farmers who lost their profits because of the repeal of the Corn Law but he did not succeed. He was Prime minister in 1874-1880 and described the current state of British society as two nations: the rich and the poor. He describes this view closely in his novel *Sybil*. He wanted to stop worsening the division in society and claimed that the party should speak for the nation as the whole, not only for one class and introduced party's policy of One-nation Conservatism also called Tory Democracy. He was a strong patriot and promoted national and social unity. (Blake, 1985)

With the Earl of Derby he introduced the Reform Bill in 1867, which gave a vote to working men in towns and cities. The idea of giving electorate power to the hands of often illiterate workers seemed to the noble men a nonsense but Disraeli was preparing his party for inevitable future and started a real democracy. Also with Dwellings Act the Conservatives started a wide slum clearance. He also introduced a Public Health Act and lowered the environmental impact of industrial revolution. He was repeatedly accused of being an imperialist in 1870s after his swift approach in South Africa and Asia expansion became inefficient. (Blake, 1985)

The Primrose was Disraeli's favorite flower and after his death the Conservative Party in 1893 formed an organization in his memory. Creating the organization was an idea of his successor Lord Salisbury and was called The Primrose League and its aim was to share the political ideas of the Conservatives. Within a few years nearly two million Conservative activists joined in there was also a huge participation of women in this movement which brought women to politics for the first time. The Primrose League was terminated in 2004. (Cooke, 2008)

Lord Salisbury was one of the most successful of all the Prime ministers. He won three out of five elections and was PM for 13 and a half years from 1885 to 1902. He was also minister of foreign affairs. He led the Conservative Party for 17 years. He was secretary of state for India in Disraeli's government and after his death he emerged into party's leader. He was a Christian moralist and believed that the power should be spread over the society. He introduced local democracy through country councils in 1888. With his education reform he set up a free primary schooling in Britain. During his years in office the Conservative Party became known as a party of imperialism and a party of property, which both started under Disraeli. Conservatives became known as the guardians of a nation and Empire in contrast to Liberal party's sectionalism. (Green, 1996). During his years in office the United Kingdom fought in Boer Wars in the south of Africa.

The Boer wars were fought between years 1880 and 1902 against Dutch settlers and led to joining Boer republic under British colonies. During these wars Britain even used concentration camps which brought a significant amount of controversy. (Blake, 1985)

4. First half of 20th century

Even though Conservative Party succeeded in majority of general elections it suffered many defeats due to increasing popularity of Labour Party. The chart below indicates the number of seats acquired by each party in general elections in years 1945 - 1997.

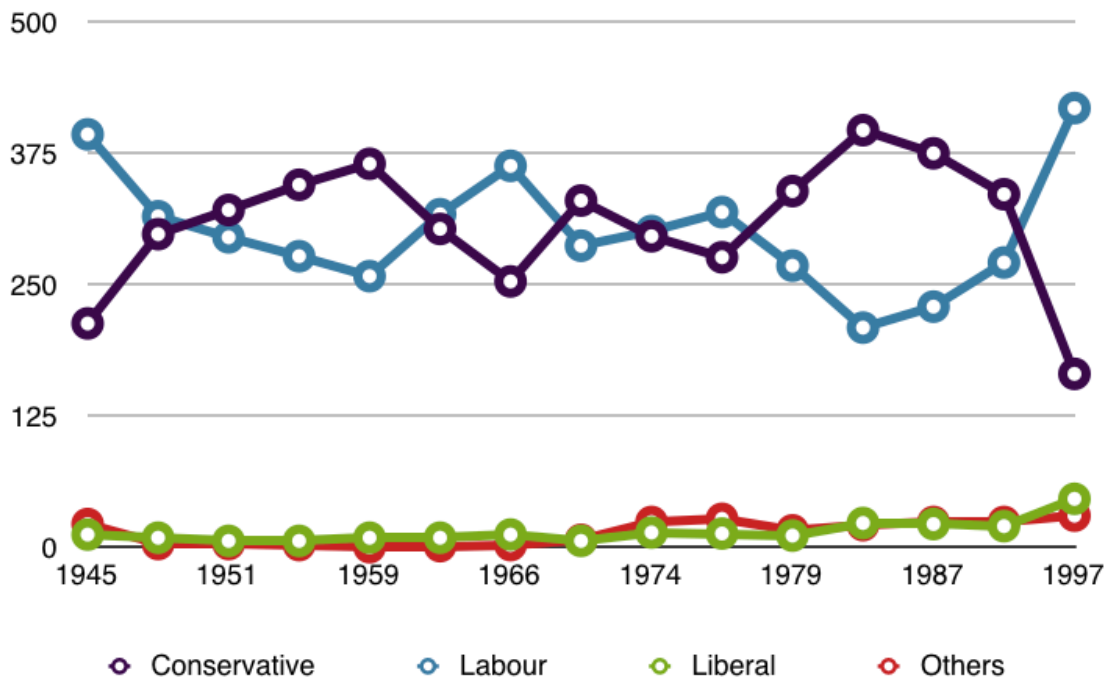


Chart 1: Seats in Commons acquired 1945-1997 Source: Childs D., *Britain Since 1945*

Arthur Balfour

Arthur Balfour was a nephew of Lord Salisbury. He took after his uncle and led Conservative Party from 1902 to 1911. He was also Prime Minister from 1902 to 1905. He was the first unmarried prime minister of Britain. He was a very wealthy noble man but sometimes lacked empathy with British people. He moved the education under local councils, which had no actual impact, but people did not like that, because they felt the government was avoiding fiscal responsibility. He also tolerated the work of Chinese slaves in mines. In 1904 he signed a treaty with France Entente Cordiale. What led him the most to the end of his times as a Prime Minister was the Joseph Chamberlain's Tariff reform which divided the Conservative Party and united the Liberals. The main benefit of

Tariff reform was protection of local industry from competition mainly from the United States by increasing taxes on import. This tariff reform should have united the empire and funded a welfare program for Britain. This disunity led the party to catastrophic election defeat in 1906 with only 157 seats and again in 1910. Among other reasons the increasing popularity of the Labour Party deprived the Conservatives victory. In 1911 a Parliament Act, that limited the power of the House of Lords was proposed by the Liberal party and approved. Which decreased the influence of the Conservative Party, who held majority in the House of Lords. In 1917 when Balfour was Secretary of Foreign Affairs he actively supported the idea of creating Jewish homeland in Palestine. (Ramsden, 2006)

World War I

Andrew Bonar Law was the only British Prime minister who was not born in Great Britain. He led the party in 1911-1921 and again in 1922-1923. In this period of time the name of the party changed from the Conservative Party to Unionist Party until 1920s. He knew that the party had to overcome inner disputes about the tariff reform. Under Law the party fought against the constitutional changes, that Liberal government wanted to approve, for example reduction of power of the House of Lords and welfare reform that required sharp tax rises. In 1914 World War 1 started and the Unionist Party created a coalition with Liberals lead by Asquith to win the war. In 1916 he helped his friend Lloyd George to replace Asquith and became the secretary of finance and a spokesman of the coalition. After the war he believed that the best way to protect Britain from socialism is to maintain in the coalition but in 1922 he stood against the coalition. He became a Prime minister but died in 1923. In 1920 the Irish Home Rule established the Northern Ireland and was meant to establish The Southern Ireland but eventually led to partition of Ireland. (Ramsden, 2006)

Stanley Baldwin became the leader of the Conservative Party because Andrew Bonar Law was not healthy enough to continue in his office. He also became the Prime minister of Great Britain three times between years 1923 and 1937 and led Britain for the most of the inter-war period. During his years in office he had to face many problems. In 1922 the Labour Party received 4.2 million votes and over 140 seats in the House of Commons and it was gaining more power. As it had been perceived more as a satellite of the Liberal party it broke the pact with them and detached and had a specifically socialist

constitution. The Labour Party electorate consisted mainly of the working class. In 1924 Baldwin returned to the office of Prime minister after the failure of the first Labour leader Ramsey MacDonald. In 1926 a general strike started.

The 1926 General Strike

Convoked by the British trades union congress is was the largest conflict in the history of the industry in Great Britain and it lasted for nine days. The reason for the strike was wage reduction for mineworkers evoked by the mine owners. There was a real risk, that Britain would be without coal delivery. Baldwin refused to negotiate with labour until the strike was called off and even assembled a group of volunteers called the Organization of the Maintain of Supplies to ensure the basic services. Baldwin's government agreed to finance the increase of the wage for the workers for nine months and established the Royal commission lead by Herbert Samuel to watch over this matter. A report from the Royal commission led to lowering the financing and putting a general strike leading against the Government outlaw. (Ramsden, 2006)

As a Prime minister Baldwin had to deal with the Italian seizure of Corfu and increasing unemployment causing strikes in Great Britain. In 1931 as a result of economy crisis a coalition was created to form a National Government. To fight the unemployment he was thinking about bringing up the Tariff reform, which would be a huge risk. As a Conservative leader he set the main tasks for the party ideology to fight socialism and defend the constitution. He was the first British politician to widely use the television and mainly radio broadcasts to communicate with the people of Britain. During his years in office he created the Pension System Reform to ensure unemployment benefits, and health benefits. He ensured also equal vote rights for men and women. He received huge amount of criticism for the situation in India, rise of Nazi Germany, remilitarization of the Rhineland, Hoare Laval Pact and the Spanish civil war.

The remilitarization of the Rhineland was a problem because it broke the Treaty of Versailles and the Locarno Treaties signed in 1925 in Switzerland by Britain, Germany, France and Belgium and covered a control of the demilitarized Rhineland, and created an alliance which did not include Eastern Europe.

The Hoare Laval Pact was pact with Benito Mussolini, and allowed Italy to take part of today's Ethiopia. The act was widely criticized. A group of Conservative MPs

called Backbenchers including Winston Churchill, Lord Beaverbrook and Lord Rothemere criticized Baldwin strongly and forced him to resign. (Ramsden, 2006; Laybourn, 2002)

World War II

Neville Chamberlain

The person who replaced Stanley Baldwin was Neville Chamberlain. With his government he introduced the Factory Act to prevent children labour and improved the working conditions, he also brought rent controls which ensured cheaper housing. He was in office from 1937 to 1940 and was a very controversial Prime minister. While Adolf Hitler was gaining power in Germany Chamberlain's tactic was to secure peace through the appeasement of the dictators in Europe. In March 1938 Hitler's Germany peacefully took over Austria to create so called Greater Germany to create Lebensraum a living space for German people in the Europe. He also wanted to take a part of Czechoslovakia, the Sudeten, for the same reason and wanted the League of Nations to allow it. Neville Chamberlain took part in the Munich conference and in September 1938 he signed the Munich agreement with Hitler, that allowed the annexation of the Sudeten. For Czechoslovakia this agreement was a betrayal because its military alliance with the UK and France was not honored. The agreement was also signed by Italy and France.

A year later in 1939, after Hitler's Blitzkrieg in Germany, Britain declared war on Germany and World War II began. Chamberlain was widely criticized because he failed to stop Hitler, both the Labour Party and the Liberal party refused to serve in his ministry because of his pacifist attitude. The British army was weak in this time and Chamberlain did not want to make an alliance with Soviets. In 1940 he was removed and replaced by Winston Churchill. (Ramsden, 2006, Laybourn, 2002)

Winston Churchill

Winston Churchill became the Prime minister twice. First during the war in 1940-1945 and again in 1951-55. He led the campaign for rearmament, and in the time the Britain stood alone to face Hitler he encouraged people by his strong speeches spread especially through radio broadcasts. He never admitted a the possibility of losing the war or any compromises. He wanted unconditional surrender of the axis (Germany, Italy, Japan). Churchill strengthen the good relationship with the United states and ensured

material help for Britain. Franklin D. Roosevelt, the American president helped pass the legislative change for the Lend-Lease actions. Lend-Lease was an Act to Further promote the defense of the United states and changed typical American post World war I non interventionist policy.

During World war II he attended a number of conferences with foreign representatives, for example the Cairo Conference discussing the situation with Japan with USA and China, Tehran Conference about opening the western front, Yalta conference and others dealing with both the process of war and the future of Europe after war. He was a very popular prime minister and one of few things he was criticized for was bombing of Dresden, where a significant number of civil population was killed.

The war in Europe ended in May 1945. After the war the coalition ended and even though the parties had been in a coalition their antipathy was very strong and many Labour members very strongly anti Tory. On 4 June Winston Churchill delivered a speech criticizing socialist systems. He said that no socialist political system can be establish without a political police: Gestapo. This theme played a major role in the Conservative Party campaign for the 1945 general elections. The speech brought up significant displeasure from Labour members. The Labour Party in 1945 led by Clement Attlee issued the *Let us Face the Future* manifesto for the 1945 general elections. The manifesto was very radically socialistic and very close to communism. It was based on nationalization and welfare. In the manifesto Labour Party was promising decreasing of unemployment and better social conditions. Both parties were allowed to deliver ten broadcasts. Labour Party focused more on their policy than criticizing Conservatives. Support from press was also equal. Labour Party was openly supported by influential Daily Herald, New Chronicle and Daily Mirror, Conservatives were supported by Daily Express, Daily Mail, Daily Sketch and Daily Telegraph. Churchill was influenced by his right hand Lord Beaverbrook, Conservative Member of Parliament, and war time minister of Aircraft Production and Minister of Supply. The outcome of 1945 general election was very surprising: Winston Churchill did not succeed even though he was very popular. For British population he was primarily a war leader. Labour Party gained 393 seats in contrast to Conservatives and their allies' 213 seats. People simply did not believe, that Churchill was capable of dealing with the post war problems such as housing and new working positions. (Childs, 1992)

The Conservatives had to make some changes because even though they had financial advantage they did not succeed in general election. Conservative electorate consisted mainly of the older generation and in the 1945 general elections Conservatives lost many of their young voters. People were tired of the Tories and the party seemed too old fashioned. Lord Butler, conservative member of parliament and a person who was to succeed Churchill had earned all three important positions but the positions of Prime minister: Chancellor of the Exchequer, Home secretary and Foreign secretary. He criticized the style of the conservative campaign, especially the Gestapo speech. He believed that it lacked credibility. He was the person who started the rebuilding of the party after the lost elections. Polls revealed that people in Britain thought that some form of socialism in inevitable for Britain which Conservatives were not offering. The party started to lose its middle class voters and the majority of servicemen voted Labour too. Conservatives were to face the greatest electoral defeat since 1906 and the fact that left oriented parties were gaining popularity all over Europe. Lord Woolton, the war time Minister of Food, succeeded to the position of Conservatives chairman and brought a plan to modernize the party. He modernized the organization inside the party and established the Young Conservatives which helped to raise new members. Woolton and Maxwell Fyre democratized the view of the party in the House of Commons. Before this change members had been appointed to important positions based on their financial contribution to the party which practically led to buying positions. Conservatives also changed the party's policy and committed to a mixed economy and the welfare state. Some people on the party regarded word Conservative in the name of the party harmful and even Woolton preferred *the Union Party*. (Childs, 1992)

Attlee's 1945-1951 government was focused on nationalization. Labour Party planned to nationalize many industries starting with coal mining, railways, canals, electricity, gas, iron and steel also Bank of England. Even though Tories opposed nationalization acts their attitude was not consistent. Some conservatives perceived nationalization as disastrous and evil; other were more tolerant. It varied from case to case; even Churchill conceded that morally nationalization did not have to be a bad thing regarding sufficient compensations. The biggest concern for Conservatives was the nationalization of steel which was also crucial for Labour and Attlee did not want to compromise. Along with nationalization Labour Party proposed National Care act,

National Insurance act and Industrial Injuries act. Conservatives agreed with the principles of the acts, and even Churchill had committed to supporting the idea of the public health system, but criticized Labour methods. Even more criticism came from the British Medical Association.

In 1950 elections Labour Party achieved only 6 seats lead which aimed Britain to another election in 1951. In 1951 general election Conservative Party won more seats in Commons despite Labour having much more votes and Winston Churchill returned to the office. Conservatives recognized people's want of new houses and included this topic to their election strategy. Conservatives also acquired measure of new voters from suburbs of bigger town and especially London. In his third mandate Churchill presented the Mines and Quarries Act helping to control the mines and quarries to secure safety of the workers, the Housing Repairs Act in 1955 and with Harold MacMillan, minister of housing his government built thousands of new houses. For Churchill Britain was more part of so called Anglo-sphere than a part of Europe and this idea persisted in the Conservative Party. (Childs, 1992; Laybourn, 2002; Ramsden, 2006)

5. Second part of 20th Century

The most important event for the second part of 20th Century politics was a Cold War. Cold war is an expression for the tension between the Eastern block and Western block after the World war II when the world divided politically into two parts. Cold relationships from the era of the Cold war were also intensified with the thread of Nuclear war that could easily destroy nations from big distance. The exact beginning and end is not official usually it is the creation of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) by United states, United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Italy, Norway, Denmark, Island, Portugal and Canada in 1949 with more countries joining later and the Warsaw pact consisting of countries from the USSR. The end of Cold war begun with the fall of the Berlin wall followed by the breakup of the USSR.

A person who took Winston Churchill's place in the office in 1955 was Sir Anthony Eden. He was a Prime Minister from 1955 to 1957. The most important international affair during his time in office was the Suez Crisis of 1956. The Suez crisis was one of the affairs showing political bipolarity of the world after the World war II. The crisis began when Egypt led by Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal Company. Great Britain and France felt that their interests in that area are threatened and especially a transport of oil from Middle East could be complicated also for Britain it was taken as a violation of Anglo Egyptian agreements. Britain failed in organizing a quick military response and negotiated in the United Nations but the Soviet Union put a veto on any sanctions against Egypt. In October 1956 Britain organized a military action with France and Israel but it was not supported by the United States and had to be ended. Combined with his medical problems this led to the demission of Anthony Eden. (Laybourn, 2002; Ramsden, 2006)

After Anthony Eden resigned his post of Prime minister, the person who took his place was Harold Macmillan. Former Minister of Housing in last Churchill's government and a key figure in Eden's government. When he took the lead in the Conservative Party, it was full of strifes mainly about the Suez withdrawal and the humiliation connected with it and there was an actual risk of party crisis. Luckily for the Conservatives the Labour Party

had inner disputes as well and in general election of 1959 the Conservatives won again after the campaign focused on the growing prosperity of Britain under famous election mottos *Life's better with the Conservatives* or *You have never had it so good, Don't let Labour ruin it*. An important task for him was to restore relationships with United States.

Macmillan did very well and with the reliability of safe majority in the House of Commons he could define the future of Britain. He believed that the future of Britain is in European integration and not the colonies. He applied for the membership of the Britain in European Economic Community but it was denied by French president Charles de Gaulle because of the obvious Atlanticism of Britain after Cuban crisis.

According to Blake (1985)

What affected the party's fortunes was far more than any of these was the government's failure in the very field where its success had led to victory in 1969. Economic management. The four desiderata - full employment, stable prices, a favorable balance of payments and rising productivity - have never been achieved since 1945 other than for fleeting periods which soon came to an end (p.286).

The level of unemployment in Great Britain reached historical top of 3.9% and inflation was also increasing which led to great criticism of Macmillan who resigned in 1963 on the post of leader of the Conservatives also because of his policy of state intervention.

1963-1975

The Labour Party was gaining more power and stopped inner struggling over nuclear disarmament and privatization and in 1961 was again united. (20.stol). After Macmillan's resignation the Conservative Party was divided into two fractions: the centrist who offered R.A.Butler as a leader; and constituencies offering Lord Hilsham. Macmillan preferred Alec Douglas Home who became the new Prime Minister. In October 1964 after defeat in general election Home recommended Edward Heath for his position and resigned.

In the same year Heath replaced Home the Conservatives failed in the General election after 13 years. For the Labour Party led by Harold Wilson it was a close victory

but Wilson's government was not very successful. The country was in economic crisis and his struggle about devaluation of the pound was not helping.

In 1965 the Conservative Party issued a manifesto departing the party from the paternalistic progressivism. It had 4 main points including lowering the direct taxation, decreasing governments interference, reduction of spendings and a shift of burden of social services from Treasury to employers.

In 1970 general election the Conservatives surprisingly won under Heath. Heath had bad relations with the press and was often caricatured. His government achieved admission of the Great Britain to the European Economic Community after signing the Treaty of Access in 1972, it also brought the country the decimal coinage system and issued the Immigration Act of 1971. During Heat's government new departments were created such as Department of Environment and Department of trade and Industry. Margaret Thatcher was under Heath the Minister of Education and science.

The party changed its focus from the upper class to middle class and introduced the Housing Finance act of 1972 which brought fair rent policy, but eventually brought rent increase to many families and increased the price of the houses which led to higher inflation. The aim of the act was to set an environment for local council to give a chance to tenants to buy the houses they lived in under the flag of Tory *Property owning democracy* and also to bring new funding to Local councils.

In 1971 the government introduced the Industrial regulation bill, which eventually cost Heath the leadership in the Conservatives. Even though the act would bring many advantages for the Trade unions including statutory right and protection from unfair dismissal the act was widely criticized by the Trade Union mainly for its inspiration from the different industrial environment of United states and the probability of harming the relations between unions and government which led to demonstrations in London and strikes.

The government under Heath also introduced the Local Government Act which innovated the old act for the different needs of the present-day Britain, it solved the fragmentation of services and set up 46 counties in England, 8 counties in Wales and 6 new metropolitan counties. The outcome of the act was not so desirable. The act did not find a solution for either the relations between local and central government or the finance issues. Also the low competition in local governments led to corruption.

Heath's government also had to face the Northern Ireland conflict. In 1969 20,000 British troops were sent to Northern Ireland to search for weapons, in 1973 the number of troops increased to 20,000.

After Egypt crossed the Suez canal in 1973 to seize back its area the Oil crisis started. A war between Israel, supported by USA and Egypt, supported by the Soviet union, began. Heath's government did not want to support any of the parties because the sovereignty of the Israeli state was not threatened. For this policy the government was criticized by Conservative backbenchers. In October the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting countries announced 5% decrease in oil production and threatened to go lower every month until the end of the conflict. In 1973 the price of oil increased 4 times because of the Arab Israeli war. The government introduced a three day working week to deal with the fuel prices.

1974 Defeat

In 1974 General Election the Conservative Party lost against the Labour Party. Even though the Conservatives gained more votes, the Labour Party gained more seats. The main events that influenced the election was entering European Community, miners strikes, and conflicts in Northern Ireland. Enoch Powell's recommendation not to vote for the Conservatives was also influential. Enoch Powell recommended to vote for the Labour Party as the only way to get out of the European community. Enoch Powell was a member of parliament from the Conservative Party. He was an imperialist, a strong English nationalist and strongly anti European politician. He was against immigration and surely not a person according to Tory's pragmatism. The Labour Party led by Harold Wilson led their radical campaign with a motto *You can change the face of Britain* and according to Blake (1985) it promised shift in balance of power and wealth. The Conservatives led their campaign under a motto *Firm Action for Fair Britain*. In 1975 Heath was replaced in the position of the Leader of the Conservative Party by Margaret Thatcher. (Butler, 1995; Childs, 1992; Ramsden, 2006)

The Thatcher Years

Margaret Thatcher replaced Heath as the leader of the Conservatives and led the party in 1979 General election. There was a divide in the Labour Party led by James Callaghan over the remaining of Britain in the EEC, which was partly calmed after 1975 referendum and the party did not succeed in solving the problem with unemployment and disappointed its left wing voters with the pact with Liberal party. The Conservatives were also divided over remaining in EEC and also slightly divided over the topic of Devolution of Scotland and Wales which was widely discussed in the previous government and rejected. Pro devolutionist wanted to give more rights to the Scottish parliament and the National Assembly for Wales. Margaret Thatcher calmed these disputes and In 1975 she became the first woman leader of a major political party in Britain and in 1979 under the motto *Labour isn't Working* she became the first woman Prime minister of Great Britain after the Conservatives won with the *Conservative manifesto 1979* promising reduction in public spending and strict control of money supply. Thatcher was supported by the Scottish National Party after supporting the Scottish Assemble and over the idea of selling houses to tenants for half the price.

(Butler, 1995; Childs, 1992)

Margaret Thatcher was Prime Minister of the Great Britain three times in a row from 1979 to 1990. The political policy of Margaret Thatcher's government is known as Thatcherism. Thatcherism represents limited but firm government and comes from the basics of traditionalism, patriotism and protestant morale. According to Thatcherism a person deserves freedom and opportunities and has to be responsible. Thatcherism requires people to show responsibility between each other and responsible to the state. (Fajmon & Joch 2010) Another important feature that comes from these basis is that wealth and success cannot be a bad thing and comes from the right use of the person's freedom. Thatcherism also represents anti European and independent Britain. For her rough approach she deserved many nicknames, for example Iron Lady, Westminster Ripper, Thatcher the Milk Snatcher, and others. (Laybourn 2002)

1979 general elections followed the winter of discontent. James Callaghan, a Labour Prime minister, did not call the general elections in 1978 which along with high inflation and controlled wage rise brought up a strike in public services. The strike led to piles of garbage in the streets, closed hospital emergency stations and even the dead bodies were not buried. In 1979 when Margaret Thatcher became a Prime minister Britain was dealing with enormous inflation, high public spending, high unemployment and too high taxation for a peace time. She approached the problems actively and successfully. According to Childs Her Cabinet consisted of mostly Oxbridge graduates and was regarded as a strong one. The focus of the party's ideology shifted from the old *One Nation* to the *New Right*. They separated from the Butskellism of the post war period, represented by mixed economy, and focused on the Hayek's idea of capitalism. Friedrich Hayek was a British economist who was strongly against collectivism and socialism. He believed that only capitalism can ensure real freedom of an individual because it is his choice where man spends the finances he acquired.

The means of realization of this idea were in deregulation, privatization, for the Conservatives typical, property ownership, self help and trade union reform. Privatization was used to cope with non profitable companies owned by Britain, for example British Telecom, British Airways and British Steel. Private owners brought new balance to these companies leading to stronger industry, more working positions and more tax incomes. The sale of council houses below the market price increased the property ownership after the Housing Act in 1980. Government also encouraged small businesses. (Childs, 1992)

Thatcher's first government increased taxes and started to become unpopular but in 1982 Argentina attacked the Falkland Islands held by Britain. Argentina conquered the Falklands easily and brought a national humiliation for Britain. Diplomacy did not solve anything and Britain sent their troops to seize the Falklands back. Military mission succeeded which led to increase of popularity for the Conservative Party. (Ramsden, 2006)

Along with the success in Falkland war Thatcher's government increased its popularity also for the dramatical decrease in inflation and was unsurprisingly reelected in 1983 general elections. Labour Party, led by Michael Foot, was weakened by some of their members leaving for Social Democratic party and Liberal Democrats Alliance. Labour Party's manifesto promised leaving European Community, expanding public

spendings, nationalization, centralization and non nuclear defense policy. The Conservative Party gained 43% of the votes in comparison to Labour 28% and 26% of the Alliance which almost replaced Labour Party in the position of main opposition. It is estimated that in 1983 only 39% of the members of unions voted for Labour. (Butler, 1995; Childs, 1992)

In Thatcher's second government Sir Geoffrey Howe shifted from the position of Chancellor to the position of Foreign minister. For the position of Lord Chancellor Nigel Lawson was chosen. Both men were regarded as Thatchers protégés. Her major opponents inside of the party were Francis Pym and James Prior. Prior was a secretary of state for employment and did not agree with Thatcher's approach regarding Trade Unions. Francis Pym was one of the backbenchers criticizing Thatcher, who were called Wets. In the second term Thatchers government focused on cuts in public spending, especially on the welfare state and also on reducing the power of the Trade Unions with Trade Union Act 1984. The act required a secret ballot before every strike and led to decrease of the industrial action which brought democratization of the Trade Union.

In 1984 the miners strike begun. The coal mining was nationalized in 1947 under Attlee's government and led by National Coal Board represented by Ian Mac Gregor. The consumption of coal decreased because of the shift of the economy to services and NCB needed to close several mining pits which would lead to wide lost of working positions. The National Union of Mine Workers led by Arthur Scargill, socialist and marxist was strongly against. Thatcher's government supported NCB because of a strong representation of the free market conservatives in the cabinet. The strike resulted in victory for firm Thatcher's government and a big defeat for the NUM. (Childs, 1992; Laybourn, 2002)

One of other question Margaret Thatcher's government had to face, as well as many governments before, was the situation in Northern Ireland. In Thatcher years Britain was under terrorist attacks from the Irish Republican Army(IRA). IRA demanded the whole Ireland to be independent including the Northern Ireland, belonging under United Kingdom. Margaret Thatcher's was strongly against it. IRA was using bomb terrorist acts both in public and military bases and after 1982 attacks in Hyde park, Regents park and even in Harrods in 1984 attacked on the Conservative Party conference and killed many members of parliament. Thatcher refused to negotiate with terrorists even when prisoned members of IRA were holding a hunger-strike and died.(Fajmon & Joch, 2010).

Margaret Thatcher had to face a huge amount of criticism from her own party, possibly bigger than from opposition and the biggest since Neville Chamberlain. A person

who criticized her the most was former prime minister Edward Heath. The reasons for the criticism was not only her authoritative style of government but also the privatization of the Royal Ordnance factories and naval dockyard and cuts in student grants and diplomatic services. In September 1985 she announced wide changes in ministerial positions. Along with Heath also Pym and Walker were her strong opposition inside of the Conservative Party. The state of Britain in 1985 was on a good way. More people owned homes and consumer goods, the economy was recovering after recession and even though the unemployment had risen, Thatcher's second government was successful. The rise of unemployment was caused mainly by the baby boom of 1960s and majority of women seeking for jobs instead of being at home. Thanks to Geoffrey Howe the relations with Soviet Union improved. (Childs, 1992)

In 1986 the trust in Conservative Party was weakened by the Westland Affair caused by government disputes over the future of British helicopter industry. Westland company was the last helicopter manufacturer in Britain and experienced existential problems. Michael Heseltine, Conservative Defense secretary was in favor of European solution: merging the company with Italian and French companies. Thatcher and Industry Secretary Leon Brittan preferred the Atlantic solution: merging the company with an American company Sikorsky. The affair escalated with the resignation of Heseltine and showed inner disputes in the Conservative party. (Thatcher, 1993)

For 1987 general election the unemployment had fallen, the economy started rising, and the pound was strong and the Conservative Party was facing the Labour Party led by Neil Kinnock. Kinnock was a strong leader known for his broadcasts. According to Butler the election brought a significant increase in press advertising especially by the Conservative Party, which attacked Labour for its policy over taxes and defense. Conservatives won a majority of 102 seats under the slogan *The Next Moves Forward*. Margaret Thatcher was the first in 20th century to seize the office of Prime Minister three times in a row. (Butler, 1995)

Thatcher's third term in the office started with October 1987 Stock Market Crash, known as Black Monday, when Dow Jones index fell by 508 points that changed the Thatcher years economic contentment.

As Childs(1992) describes

The Thatcher era had coincided with the exploitation of North Sea oil and with low commodity prices which brought in turn low inflation. Technical innovations such as the auto bank and credit cards gave many a feeling of being better off as they often got deeper in debt. The period must also have seen the transfer of modest wealth, by inheritance from the first generation, who had experienced full employment for most of their working lives, to their children. Videos, microwave ovens, computers, radio cassette recorders and, to a lesser extent, mobile phones and satellite television all helped to create demand and give an air of excitement. Eight years of strongly rising share prices also helped. Without that rise very many would have been put off buying shares in the privatized undertakings. On “Black Monday”, 19 October 1987, things started to go wrong. Over £50 billion was wiped off the value of shares in London. By the end of the week values had fallen by nearly £102 billion(p.341).

The outcome of Black Monday was inevitable. The rise in prices, staff dismissals, the rise of fraud and forgery followed by financial scandals and bankrupt of many firms not only in Britain.

Another catastrophe for Thatcher’s government was the community charge, publicly known as a poll tax, that Thatcher had enforced in April 1988. The poll tax was a way of financing local government and changed the way of collecting taxes. Before the poll tax, taxes had been paid according to the size of dwelling so only the householders had to pay; after the community charge the tax was equal for everyone: wealthy man living in a mansion or an unemployed student. Poll tax brought wide criticism not only from the Labour Party and Liberal party, but also from the inside of the Conservatives. Former PM Edward Heath was against and even Nigel Lawson, Chancellor of Exchequer and Geoffrey Howe, the Deputy Prime Minister, resigned in a protest. People of Great Britain did not agree either. A significant number of demonstrations was held especially in 1990 and especially scottish refused to pay it simply by not registering themselves; unregistered citizen lost their vote which paradoxically harmed The Labour Party. (Laybourn, 2002)

In 1989 election for European Parliament Conservatives failed dramatically. The number of seats acquired in comparison to previous elections in 1984 changed from 45 to 17 while Labour Party acquired 45 seats.

The government of Margaret Thatcher also made variety of changes in Education and Health Care. In 1986 corporal punishment was banned with a majority of only one vote. With 1988 Education Reform Act National Curriculums were brought to schools for major subjects bringing more testings for children; some schools were allowed to leave local authority control over a vote of parents and 1990 Education Act brought student loans as an alternative to school grants. This move was strongly opposed by Labour for lowering opportunities to study for children from a poor background. These acts brought market principles to education and forced universities to compete against each other for public finances. These principles were brought also to healthcare with an option for hospitals to separate from the regional health authority control and became private and responsible for their budget. For patients this generally meant more charges in hospitals. In 1990 Thatcher's government agreed to join European exchange rate mechanism. (Childs, 1992)

The End of Thatcherism

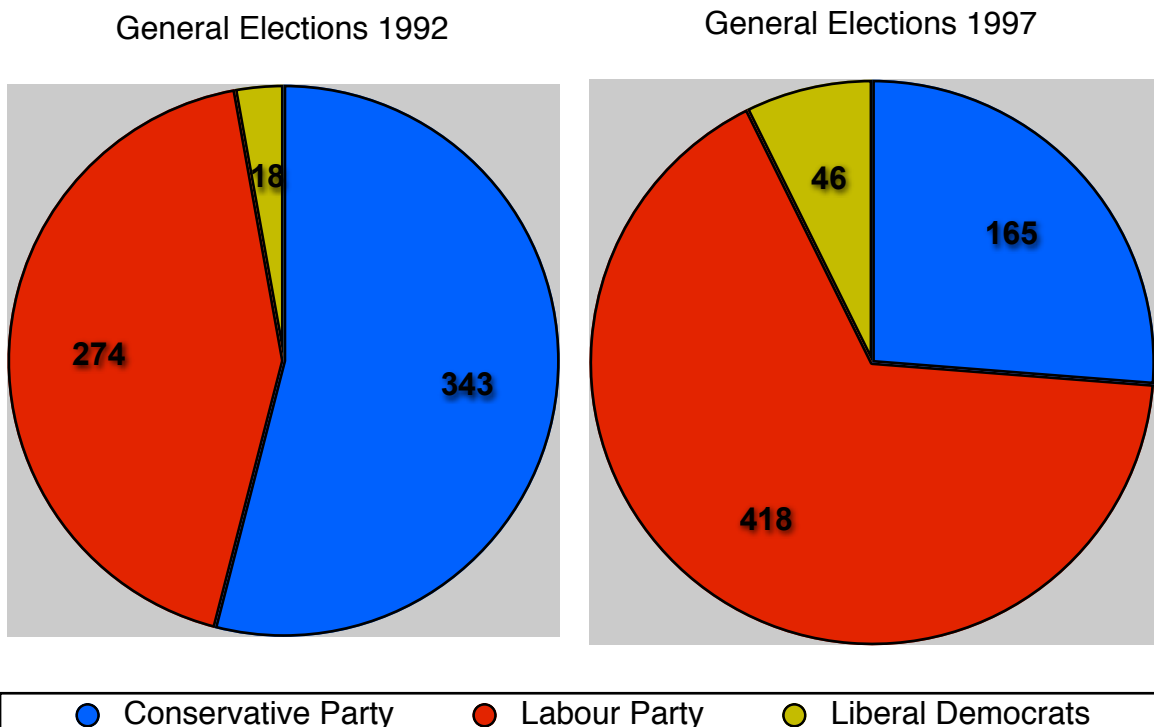
The position of Margaret Thatcher was threatened. Since her first government she had removed 14 of her cabinet ministers, 21 had resigned and she also very often shuffled ministers. She was widely criticized for her style of leadership and her attitude towards the poll tax and European Community. While she was strongly pro American other Conservatives saw a shift of power from the United States to Europe and Japan. (Childs, 1992) Thatcher was for bigger sovereignty of Britain while Kenneth Clarke, conservative Secretary of State for Health and the leader of internal opposition, supported Britain's position in Europe. In 1989 Anthony Meyer, a not very significant Conservative, tried to replace her. Meyer failed, but initiated Thatcher's replacement. Heseltine also challenged her and in the second round of ballot he was defeated by John Major. Margaret Thatcher resigned as a Prime Minister on November 28 1990 replaced by John Major, who brought back the property based tax system. (Laybourn, 2002)

John Major became Prime Minister of Great Britain with very little political experience in November 1990 and according to Laybourn it was Thatcher who had unwittingly chosen her successor by appointing Major to important position of Foreign secretary in 1989 and later on Chancellor of Exchequer. John Major followed the policy of rolling back the welfare and decreasing inflation; he had to face many internal disputes over Europe; there was still many eurosceptics inside of the Conservatives and Major did not support the idea of one joined currency under European Monetary Union. He believed it would cost Britain its sovereignty. He supported Gulf War in 1991 helping to protect Kuwait from Saddam Hussain's forces and signed Maastricht Treaty that opened door to further European integration. (Laybourn, 2002). For 1992 General Elections Major led the Conservatives with manifesto *The Best Future for Britain*, with only few new themes. Conservatives supported the privatization of British Coal and parts of British Rail and also setting up Urban Regeneration Agency. The leader of the Labour Party was Neil Kinnock with his moderate pro-European program supporting European Community and European exchange rate mechanism. In their election campaign the Conservatives attacked Labour for increasing taxes; Labour attacked Conservatives over employment and health service. Polls had predicted Labour victory but failed. Conservatives won their fourth term with 42.2% of the votes followed by the Labour party with 30.8% and Alliance with 22.6%.

With a majority of 21 seats over the other parties combined winning only 10 out of 72 seats in Scotland and 8 of 38 in Wales. (Butler, 1995)

The disputes over a single European currency amongst Conservatives widened and in 1994 Major's government was defeated in a vote in Commons over VAT on domestic fuel. This humiliating defeat and various affairs connected to his government forced him to resign as a party leader in 1995. In an election for new party leader Major's only opponent was John Redwood. With 218 votes to 89 Major obtained his position back. For 1997 General Election the Conservatives and Unionist Party was not united and Labour Party was led by new and strong leader Tony Blair, who separated the party from their old socialist program and nationalization. The Conservative Party was weakened after series of affairs, unpopular after withdrawing the pound sterling from the European Exchange Rate Mechanism and divided over European integration. For the Conservatives the outcome of 1997 general election was disastrous since they acquired only 165 seats in the Commons in comparison to 418 seats for the Labour Party. The electoral difference between 1992 and 1997 is presented in the chart below. This defeat led Major to resign and brought the Conservatives to opposition for long 13 years. (Laybourn, 2002)

Chart 2: Change of seats in Commons



6. Research

An important role in this thesis belongs to a research. My research is represented by an online survey. I have created an online survey and the first attempt to share it was emailing it to random university departments in Britain asking them to share it among their students. The first attempt was unsuccessful with literally no response. My second attempt was asking for a help from six students from Great Britain, who participated in Erasmus program in Czech republic. Within approximately a month 14 students replied to the survey. Providing the six Erasmus student replied and shared it, only eight more students dedicated their time to fill in the survey. My estimation of the amount of responses was higher but I believe 14 is still a sufficient number of answers. The aim of the research was to discover the opinions of today's British university students on both present and historical political matters. The survey consists of four questions focusing on the opinion on present political life in Great Britain followed by seven questions focusing on the Conservative Party present, past and major decisions. These eleven questions are accompanied with three more minor questions providing closer information about the object. All respondents were university students between 23 and 26 years; 12 females and 2 males, 8 of which has voted before and 6 have not.

The aim of the question number 1 was to determine the person perceived as the most important in present British politics. Respondents were not given any options to choose from. Eleven people wrote the name David Cameron, a present Prime Minister. One respondent wrote just Prime minister. Two responses were different. One of them was Boris Johnson, a present Conservative Major of London. This response indicates the influence of the major of capital city. The other unusual response was Michael Gove, the Secretary of State for Education and Conservative MP. This response can be explained by the fact, that respondents are all university students. 100% of responses pointed to members of the Conservative party, showing the influence the Conservative party has nowadays. Second question was a simple yes/no question whether is the person satisfied with the situation in British politics. Only four students are satisfied with the current state of things which means more than 71% of respondents are not satisfied. Question number 3 was an open question asking student about the area they think is the most important to improve. Seven people responded education. This response was expectable providing the research was done among university students. Four people responded the problem to solve is immigration. This response is typical to the Great Britain's mixed culture. Two people

answered Healthcare and the last one coalition government. Forming a coalition government is common, when none of the parties is able to reach majority or in the time crisis in the country. This type of government also brings the risk of disharmony and for many voters betrayal of political promises. Question number 4 was a closed question asking respondents whether they perceive the Conservative Party as left or right oriented. Majority of 13 respondents claimed the Conservative Party to be right oriented. One person claimed it left. This might show person's ignorance of the basic political division of Great Britain. Question number 5 asked about the most influential person of the Conservative Party. 100% respondents claimed David Cameron, showing the ultimate power of the leader of the party. Question number 6 was similar to the previous question asking about the most influential person for the Conservative party historically. Majority of 10 people responded Margaret Thatcher followed by two people answering David Cameron and two respondents were not sure about their answer. The most common answer Margaret Thatcher was not surprising considering her influence on 20th century politics. Sadly six respondents misspelled her name. The aim of question number 7 was to discover whether students know about law and acts pushed by the Conservative Party asking students what law pushed by the party they consider the most important. Majority of eight respondents claimed to be unsure. five respondents chose privatization showing how it is connected to the party. One respondent answered Benefit changes showing person's knowledge of present political issues and Conservative Party's limitations to welfare state. Question number 8 was a simple yes/no question asking about the importance of Margaret Thatcher to the life in Britain. 100% of respondents claimed that life in Britain would be different without the influence of Margaret Thatcher. Since the name of the Conservative and Unionist Party has been changing over the years question number 9 serves to obtain information about perception of the name. It was a closed answer with given options. The results for this question were very equal with four people choosing the option I find it old fashioned, four people choosing the option It gives me feeling of certainty, four people choosing the option I do not care about the name and two people with different opinion. Mixed results show that there is no opinion, that predominate. Question number 10 was a yes/no question searching for opinions whether the privatization was the right thing to do in the second part of 20th century. Majority of eight people responded no, six people chose yes. From the answers it is not clear whether eight people are against privatization or the timing. Question number 11 was a closed question asking about very present issue:

possibility of leaving European Union. Majority of eight respondents claimed that they are against leaving EU, followed by five people supporting leaving EU and one person who does not care. The disunity about European Union is not only typical for political parties but for the whole society. The last question was a yes/no question and aimed to discover more information about the respondents. The question was whether the respondent had ever voted. Only approximately 57% of respondent had voted before the survey followed by 42% who had not. Considering the survey was done among university students the number is very low.

7. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to cover historical development of the Conservative Party, describe the most influential political figures connected to the party, provide changes in the policy of the Conservatives Party and sum up the most important decisions and laws pushed by the party accompanied by descriptions of the most important General Elections And all of this the final work contains. From the Tories to Conservative Party, Unionist Party to today's Conservative and Unionist Party; from strong support of the King in 17th century through 18th century forming of the ideas of Conservatism to 19th century mercantilism and 20th century patriotism and Thatcherism. From Pitt through Peel to Balfour followed by Chamberlain, Churchill and Thatcher. The work describes the laws forming Britain from Corn Laws to work regulations, free basic education and ban of corporal punishment; and also less fortunate years of 1832, 1945, 1966, 1974, 1997 when the Conservatives had to face the biggest electoral defeats. Major part of this work deals with the 20th century Conservative Party. The party went through significant change since its roots and had to adapt to the needs and wants of the people of Britain and to be competitive. The survey at the end of my thesis showed the importance of Margaret Thatcher to British politics and partially low interest of british students in politics.

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9. Summary in Czech

Cílem této práce je sledování historického vývoje Konzervativní a Unionistické Strany, vzhledem k politickým úspěchům nejúspěšnější strany ve Velké Británii a také nejstarší politické strany na světě. V této práci jsou popsány různé variace jména strany, vývoj politického programu a také nejznámější politické osobnosti spjaté s touto stranou. Práce nabízí také historické souvislosti k nejdůležitějším rozhodnutím Konzervativní Strany. Tato práce je soustředěná na 20. století, popisy největších volebních úspěchů strany a ,jelikož byla Konzervativní Strana vítěznou stranou po většinu 20. století, práce obsahuje i popisy největších volebních proher. První část práce přináší krátký úvod do Britské politiky a navíc popisuje původ ideologie strany. Tato část také obsahuje popis lidí, kteří pomohli ke vzniku Konzervativní Strany a Konzervatismu následovaný popisem nejdůležitějších politických činů strany. Druhá část této práce popisuje vývoj strany ve 20. století, změnu v hlavní opozici, důležitá válečná rozhodnutí a nejdůležitější události. Také je zde hlubší popis nejvlivnější lidí v Konzervativní Straně 20. století jako je Winston Churchill a Margaret Thatcher. Důležitou roli v této práci zastává i výzkum. Cílem výzkumu bylo zjistit povědomí o politických záležitostech a Konzervativní straně mezi studenty ve Velké Británii.

10. Appendix

Conservatives survey

The purpose of this survey is measure the knowledge of British students about the history of Conservative Party and British politics.

1. Who do you think is the most influential person in today's British politics?

2. Are you satisfied with the situation in British politics?

3. Which area do you think is the most important to improve?

e.g. healthcare, education, immigration,

4. Do you see Conservative party as left or right oriented?

5. Who do you think is the most influential person of the Conservative Party these days?

6. Who do you think has been historically the most influential person for the Conservative Party?

7. What do you think is the most important law the Conservative Party brought to citizens of United Kingdom?

8. Do you think if it haven't been for Margaret Thatcher the life in today's Britain would be different?

9. Does the name of the Conservative Party bring up any feelings in you?

10. Do you think privatisation was the right thing to do in the second part of the 20th century?

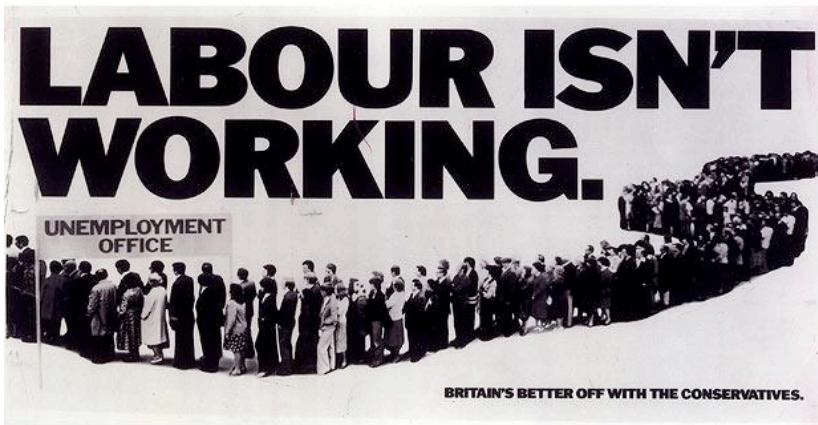
"Privatisation: changing something from state to private ownership or control."

11. What is your opinion on the possibility of United Kingdom leaving the EU?

12. Have you ever voted?

Age

Gender



Labour isn't working:
Thatcher's moto for
1979 General Elections



1929 General Elections Poster warning about Socialism



1987 Conservative Party poster
ridiculing Labour's policy of
diarmament



**The new Conservative Party
logo since 2006: Oak Tree**



**An old Conservative Party logo:
Freedom Torch**



1979 Conservative poster