

Západočeská univerzita v Plzni

Fakulta pedagogická

Bakalářská práce

HISTORICKÝ VÝVOJ LABOURISTICKÉ STRANY

Zora Válová

Plzeň 2013

University of West Bohemia

Faculty of Education

Undergraduate Thesis

**HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE LABOUR
PARTY**

Zora Válová

Plzeň 2013

Tato stránka bude ve svázané práci Váš původní formulář *Zadáni bak. práce*
(k vyzvednutí u sekretářky KAN)

Prohlašuji, že jsem práci vypracoval/a samostatně s použitím uvedené literatury a zdrojů informací.

V Plzni dne 26. dubna 2013

.....

Zora Válová

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the supervisor of my undergraduate thesis, Bc. et Mgr. Andrew Tollet, M.Litt., for his patience and guidance of my work.

ABSTRACT

Válová Zora. University of West Bohemia. April, 2013. Historical Development of the Labour Party. Supervisor: Bc. et Mgr. Andrew Tollet, M. Litt.

The object of this undergraduate thesis is to track the historical development of the British Labour Party, one of the two dominating political parties in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland since the early 1920s. The thesis is divided into five main parts based on the historical development. The first part summarizes the political conditions in the UK at the beginning of the 20th century and also describes the start of British socialism. The second part of the thesis describes the historical background and founding of the Labour Party and focuses on the early years of the party and how the members of the Labour Party worked on determining their policies and ideology. The third main part of the historical development concentrates on the post-World War II years which brought a new opportunity for the Labour Party to win the general election. The party's "wilderness years" in opposition and under Thatcherism are described in the fourth part of the thesis and the last part of the historical development describes the major changes and shift of the British Labour Party to the "New Labour" under Tony Blair. Another aim of this thesis is to find out the opinion of the British university students about the Labour Party. For the research the author used a questionnaire and the data were collected online. The results of the research were processed and are presented in a separate chapter of the thesis. Overall the thesis provides a comprehensive view on the development from a left-wing socialist party to a modern democratic socialist party.

Keywords: Labour Party, nationalization, socialism, welfare state, working-class

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND FOUNDING OF THE PARTY	2
3. POST-WWII YEARS – A NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR THE LABOUR PARTY.....	9
4. FROM YEARS UNDER THATCHERISM TO NEW LABOUR	15
5. NEW LABOUR	23
6. RESEARCH.....	27
7. CONCLUSION	31
REFERENCES.....	33
SUMMARY IN CZECH.....	34
APPENDIX A.....	35
APPENDIX B.....	37

1. INTRODUCTION

The political party system of the United Kingdom has been a system of two dominating parties since the early 1920s. These two parties are the Labour Party and the Conservative Party. The political system in Britain assumes that groups or parties compete against each other to gain power according to a set of rules which normally command the support of most competing groups. It is difficult to define precisely the origin of the British political parties; the important point is that they began to be formed by constitutional means and not by an intention to engage in open violence between each other. According to Ramsden (2006), a British political party can be described as an organization of people sharing the same political, religious, ideological, geographical or economic interest to gain political power. One of the important functions of political parties is to work on solving conflicts on the constitutional level. The first mention of a multi-party system in Britain dates back to the end of the 17th century when two parties existed, namely the Tories (today's Conservative Party) and the Whigs (predecessors of the Liberal Party). The development of the British political system rose throughout the next two hundred years to the point of distinguishing the two dominating parties. These two parties were not always the same: at the end of the 19th century the party system of the Tory and Liberal Party changed with the replacement of the Liberals with the Labour Party. By the 1880s the existing Liberal Party was not taking the interests of labour into account sufficiently and this was noticed by an increasing number of labour leaders who were not satisfied with the fact that the party was more interested in Ireland than the domestic politics. A new phenomenon of working-class politics and socialism started to rise in the labour leaders' minds and the Liberals, interested in foreign issues, did not notice it (Ingle, 1989). The founding of a new party was inevitable.

This thesis describes the development of the British Labour Party on the level of the party ideology, beliefs and opinions about the main political issues and it also introduces the party's most influential leaders and members. The development is structured according to the main historical events.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND FOUNDING OF THE PARTY

The concept of British socialism can be easily dated according to the first use of the word “socialist” in November 1827 in Robert’s Owen’s *Co-Operative Magazine*. The main idea was that cooperation was superior to competition and capital should be “socially” owned. Robert Owen was a Welsh radical who endeavoured to improve the level of working and living conditions of his workers; he also stopped employing children under the age of ten years and helped them with their education. The early British socialism is strongly connected to trade unions. Unions in Britain were widely spread over numerous cities in the 19th century. These unions were helping both employers and employees and were looking for a way to reform socio-economic conditions for the working-class in Britain (See Ingle, 1989; Thompson, 2006). The socialist thinkers and activists of the 19th century in Britain attacked the existing society with modern economic arguments against capitalism and also moral arguments in favour of the working-class.

The society in Britain had to face enormous changes during the 18th and 19th centuries when the traditional way of life in villages was replaced by an urban way of life. The working-class started to shape popular opinion into movements for parliamentary reforms. A political party which would represent the interests of the working-class was needed. As a result a group which would coordinate the support of the working-class and their interests was established. The group was known as the Independent Labour Party. This step was not significant for any major success in the parliament but it led the socialists to a new direction (Ingle, 1989).

As Ramsden (2006) explained, socialism is a practical and theoretical attitude based on the fact that manufacturing, sharing and exchange of goods should be rather public than private. Every person involved in society is a member of a cooperative process and everyone who is involved in production should be entitled to share in it. Public ownership puts socialism against capitalism and its private ownership. British socialism is different from the typical model of socialism because it depends on parliamentary changes more than revolutionary and it is based on British traditions of self-improvement, it promotes education, founding of public organizations and local associations. The members of the British Labour Party have had numerous conflicts regarding the character of socialism which they wanted to represent throughout the whole existence of the party.

The British Labour Party was established mainly as a party which would represent the working-class in parliament. Ingle (1989) also claimed that during the early years of the party almost 89% of Labour MPs¹ came from the working-class and it is no surprise that the majority of them had not gone to university. The number of Labour MPs who had not been to university was decreasing in the following years primarily because of the competition with well-educated Tories. Another interesting aspect is that most of the important parliamentary seats tended to be represented by older members but even this has changed with growing competition and need for younger and better educated members. Not only the educational background but also the occupational one was changing. Professionals started to outnumber the workers in the Labour Party in the late 1960s and more professionals can be found in the modern Labour Party than in the Conservative Party. The professionals of the Conservatives are mostly from the armed forces and diplomatic service but for the Labour Party the common core is represented by teachers, doctors or lawyers. The number of trade union officials also presents a stable part of the Labour Party. The structure of Labour Party is in comparison to the Conservative Party much less coherent and stable.

The changing structure of the Labour Party has had substantial effects on the party ideology. The new professionals were more associated with wider issues than the professionals from the older established professions and were also more connected to the principles of socialism than the workers. After World War II the British Labour Party became far less of a working-class party in terms of parliamentary leadership and representation and this trend continues to be seen nowadays (Phillips, 1992).

The Labour Party organization and leadership is strongly affected by socialist principles such as collectivism, social solidarity and collegiality. The favoured leader is assumed to be someone who generates public support but not much excitement towards the party followers and the leader should also be someone who is trusted inside or outside the party. The party needs to be led by someone who is admired by the members and who would be able to represent a strong and an innovative prime minister (Ingle, 1989). The origins of the Labour Party date back to the late 19th century when trade unions who were representing the working-class undertook successful strike action and helped to increase the confidence of the labour movement in Britain. During the 1880s the Liberal Party

¹ Member of Parliament

started to have problems with decreasing political interest in labour and thus started to have problems with the labour leaders. Only a few working-class males were supported by the Liberal Party for elections, even though the party needed them for victory in the election. All of this led the labour leaders and trade unionists to think about leaving the Liberal Party. In 1893 the representatives of trade unions and socialist societies called a meeting in Bradford where the Independent Labour Party was established. The establishment of this group was intended to help with the representation of labour in parliament and to improve its political visibility (Philips, 1992).

In 1900 Thomas R. Steels, a member of the Amalgamated Society of Railway servants, proposed to call a meeting in London to gather all the left-wing organizations, the Independent Labour Party and the members of 70 trade unions in order to establish a stable and strong unit in parliament. This meeting established the Labour Representation Committee (LRC) which was a group with its own whips and its own policies and was ready to co-operate with any party with interests in promoting legislation in the direct involvement of labour. The LRC had no leader but the elected secretary, Ramsey MacDonald was later to become Britain's first Labour Prime Minister. The support for the LRC grew in the next few years because the voters were afraid of strikes and the government which could not protect them from the problems of the industrial proletariat. With the help of a secret pact of the Labour secretary and Liberal leader, the LRC won 29 seats in the election and each of the LRC's leading figures was elected for the first time. During the early years the LRC had major support from the working-class and expectations and confidence helped them to gain power (Ingle, 1989).

In 1906 the LRC agreed to adopt the name "Labour Party" and Keir Hardie was elected the first leader, officially the Chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party. Hardie is also known as one of the founders of the Labour Party. In the same year the Labour Party reached its first legislative success by passing of the Education Act which supported providing school-meals for children (Ramsden, 2006; Thompson, 2006).

Early Years of the Labour Party

The Labour Party created a coalition with the Liberals in order to retain the majority against the Conservatives until 1914 and the start of World War I. The Labour Party was dependent on the Liberals in parliament but Labour in the country had a different approach. The working-class saw a new opportunity in the Labour Party and that brought voters and power. In 1915 the Labour Party experienced ministerial office for the first time and its members had the opportunity to join the wartime coalition with Arthur Henderson being the first Labour member to serve in government.

World War I brought a considerable number of significant changes for the Labour Party. Not only did the party become a part of the parliament but it also accepted new regulations called “Clause IV”. That meant accepting the introduction of socialism and nationalization of industry. Clause IV is a part of the British Labour Party constitution and it is included in the Labour Party Rule Book, the governing document of the party. This element of the constitutional rules has its importance because it states the values and aims of the party. The constitution of the party was re-written in 1918 by Sidney Webb who was a Fabian, a socialist who rather uses reformist than revolutionary means. The new element of the constitution contained the commitment for common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange. Clause IV presented the direction of the party for the future and was not questioned until 1959 when, after three devastating election defeats, the Labour Party member Hugh Gaitskell called for a conference to renounce the clause in order to strengthen the party organization and to find different direction for the party. His intention to abolish this clause was unsuccessful and the party continued to keep it in its main constitution until the year 1995 when the new leader of the Labour Party, Tony Blair, announced his intention to modernize the party ideology and change Clause IV (Ramsden, 2006).

The Labour Party, being more united by the enforcement of socialism, took advantage of the split of the Liberal Party in 1916 and secured its position in the wartime coalition. With problems in the Liberal Party, Labour won 142 seats in 1922 and became the major opponent of the Conservatives and one of the two largest parties in the House of Commons. In 1923 the Conservative Party won the general election but they were unable to form a majority government. This point was significant for the Labour Party because for the first time Labour formed the government, with help from the Liberals.

Ramsey MacDonald was voted the first ever Labour Prime Minister, despite having just 191 MPs. The parliament survived only nine months but had a few important achievements. The government had to rely on the support of the Liberals but legislation was still passed on education, housing, unemployment and social insurance. The Labour Party did not have a secure position in the parliament because of the importance of Liberal support and that led to a defeat in the next general election because of the Zinoviev letter, which was published in the *Daily Mail* and implicated links between Russian communists and the Labour Party. This letter, which is now considered to have been a forgery, led to the loss of Liberal support of the Labour Party and it brought the Conservatives back to parliament and power (Philips, 1992; Ramsden, 2006).

After the defeat in 1924 the Labour Party stayed in opposition for five years with the same leader, Ramsey MacDonald. In the 1925 general election Labour won 287 seats with 37, 1% of popular voice and became the largest party in Britain for the first time. The second Labour government was still reliant on Liberal support in order to form the majority. Ramsey MacDonald was the Prime Minister and his second period lasted longer than the first one. With forming of the government Margaret Bondfield became the first-ever woman cabinet minister of any party.

1929 was marked by the Wall Street crash and subsequent economic crisis. The crisis impacted all industrial nations and it brought deflationary economic policy. MacDonald's government faced a significant problem in rising unemployment but came up with number of measures to avoid it in the future. These solutions did not meet the aimed goal and in 1931 unemployment caused a crisis in the cabinet. The government now faced a problem of choosing between cutting benefits for the unemployed or raising taxes and this led to an inner split of the party. This situation led also to a crisis in the Labour Party after MacDonald's offer to create the National Government with Liberals and Conservatives. He was considered to have betrayed the party and this resulted in his exclusion from the party. In the following election, the Labour Party suffered a significant defeat and won the lowest number of seats in history (Laybourn, 2002).

The Labour Party had suffered a hard hit after the general election in 1931 and it took the party almost ten years to return to power. Ramsey MacDonald who was seen as a traitor in Labour's eyes stayed in National Government for nine months but he was able to vote through reforms helping to avoid rural unemployment and creating a better base for

miners and owners. Ramsey MacDonald was replaced as leader by Arthur Henderson who lost his seat after the election in 1931 and George Lansbury became the new head of the Labour.

The following years were hard for the Labour Party. George Lansbury was unable to form a balanced party structure and the Independent Labour Party (ILP), a part of the Labour Party, started to indicate their different opinions from the direction in which the Labour Party was heading. The on-going problems and inner disorder within the party went on and were strengthened after the acceptance of the new political programme called "For Socialism and Peace". The core of the programme was to bring nationalization of land, coal, banking, iron and steel, power, transport, and water supply. This party programme shifted the Labour ideology more to the left. The party also started to work on planning industrial development. The problems within the party after the acceptance of the new programme caused the resignation of Lansbury in 1935 during Labour conference (Ramsden, 2006).

The general election held the same year was significant for the Labour Party. They won 154 seats and achieved their highest percentage of votes ever. Clement Attlee was elected the new leader of the Labour Party. At the start of World War II, when Neville Chamberlain was replaced by Winston Churchill as the Prime Minister, the Labour was asked to join the government. The previous pacifist policy of the party was changed in accordance with the new prime minister into policy of rearmament. This step was pushed forward by the members of parliament after the invasion of Poland by Germany which brought fear and a need for security (Laybourn, 2002).

World War II hit Britain hard. The Labour Party, being back in parliament, started to return from its low pre-war position. A new generation of members helped with renewing the party ideology along with new breath for the declining attitude to work within the uninterested party members. This new generation was represented by a great trade unions leader Ernest Bevin, the Minister of Labour and National Service, and Hugh Dalton, the Minister of Economic Warfare. Despite being in the minority in parliament, the Labour Party achieved important reforms during the war-time coalition. The party took advantage of being able to push through reforms and focused mainly on achievements offered by national legislation dealing with housing, education and health service.

Basically Labour focused on improving environments of the working-class and it helped decreasing unemployment (Ramsden, 2006).

During World War II the Labour Party was also in charge of taking care of social services, mobilisation of manpower and distributing tax burdens. Ernest Bevin, being a strong trade union leader, helped the unions to secure and improve their position in government and it was he who helped to carry through and prepare the Atlantic Charter, a policy statement that defined the Allied goals for the post-war world and that proved Labour's influence on improved labour standards, economic advancement and social security in Britain. Great Britain's exports and overseas investments were severely impacted by the war and it was the Labour Party that saw an opportunity to use the ideology to help build up the economy. The destruction of housing and infrastructure needed recovery and the best way to reach it was dependent on planning. With the help of Labour all investments were controlled by the government and major social reforms in health, housing and education were planned by the government. This heavily centralized structure of nationalized industries presented a large achievement of the Labour Party which was incomparable to the achievements of Labour at the beginning of the century (Ingle, 1989; Thompson; 2006).

The war-time coalition Labour success is strongly connected to Clement Attlee. He is considered to be one of the most influential and effective British prime ministers of the 20th century (Ramsden, 2006). Attlee did not present a strong and distinctive leader at first but he was responsible for very important achievements. He progressed from starting in the Independent Labour Party in 1907 to becoming a prime minister having a strong impact on the Labour Party for 20 years. Following the end of World War I Attlee started rising inside the Labour Party. After being a private secretary to MacDonald he became a member of the Simon Commission that was dealing with Indian self-government. This issue became Attlee's main interest until he granted independence of India and Pakistan in 1947. During World War II Attlee proved to be a strong man when he adhered to his principles. He pushed the Labour Party in new directions based on collective decisions and principles defined by Dalton and Bevin. He also supported national unity and social change and his power and influence in government rose during WWII (Laybourn, 2002).

3. POST-WWII YEARS – A NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR THE LABOUR PARTY

The political situation in Great Britain was distinctively changed during the war-time coalition. The parties had to cooperate with each other more than ever until the end of WWII in Europe in 1945. Winston Churchill, the Prime Minister, came up with a question whether to stay in the coalition until the end of the war against Japan or to call a general election immediately. Attlee proposed to stay in the coalition but this approach was voted down in parliament and general election was held on July 5, 1945. The Labour Party saw the post-war situation as a perfect opportunity to defeat the Conservatives. It was necessary for the party to come up with a programme that would address the majority of population and convince them to vote for Labour. The party presented their new manifesto “Let Us Face the Future” which perfectly fulfilled the aim. The new programme was a catalogue of nationalization and welfare measures that the party would put in effect during the next five years (Butler, 1995). People in Britain were ready for a change. Their intensions were not to return to poverty and high unemployment. Both these phenomena were strongly linked to the Conservatives. The new Labour programme promised to prevent want, dirty environment, disease and unemployment. The voters moved their political opinions more to the left because they needed social reforms and they sensed security and new opportunities from Labour.

The campaign was affected with the rising power of the media. Both the Conservatives and the Labour Party were able to use new ways of getting their policies to the people all over Britain, especially broadcasting on the BBC. As Freedman (2003) notes, the parties were given ten chances to address the voters and the parties approach to introduce themselves was completely different.

The Conservative Party chose the way of profiting from the strong and well-known leader, Churchill². During the Conservative broadcasting, the party tended to attack Labour, namely in Churchill’s “Gestapo Speech” in which he stated that no socialist system can be established without some gestapo, a political police, and he connected socialism with totalitarianism. The Labour Party came up with an approach leading to a better understanding of the party policies while presenting them to the people and not

² Different approaches to the campaign were also seen on political posters (APPENDIX A)

concerning about the Conservative attacks. The Labour Party's campaign was successful and the party won a landslide victory and majority of seats for the first time in history. This victory brought the party full opportunity for reforms. The defeat of the Conservative Party presented a big surprise for Britain and the rest of the world. Winston Churchill who symbolised the determination to survive during the WWII was suddenly defeated by Labour (Childs, 1992).

Winning the general election, the Labour Party was again able to form the government. Clement Attlee returned to the position of Prime Minister and he stood at the head of one of the most representative political parties in the history of Britain with a wide range of members from different social classes. According to Jones and Kavanagh (1991):

“Labour's huge 1945 majority enabled it to make the transition from abstract to broad practical principles: 1. Keynesian economics had replaced classical economics as the orthodoxy of the age. Keynes argued that various forms of control and intervention made it possible for a capitalist economy to be managed and guided towards a number of desirable goals such as full employment and buoyant production. 2. Centralised planning would iron out the anarchic booms and slumps. 3. Nationalisation. Large areas of economic activity would be taken out of private hands and placed under national boards accountable to Parliament. 4. A mixed economy. Whilst the public sector was to be dominant a vigorous private sector was still thought desirable. 5. Universal social services. Following the recommendation of the Beveridge Report (1943), social services were to be overhauled, made uniform and universally applicable.” (p.37-38)

Attlee's post-war government is considered one of the most successful and it is known for the starting dismantling of the British Empire after the declaration of independence of India and Pakistan, followed by Burma and Ceylon in 1947, development of the nuclear weapons programme and improving the National Health Service in 1948. The last stated was one of the biggest achievements in the history of the Labour Party. The government approved the National Insurance Act, Industrial Injuries Act, National Health Care Act and the National Assistance Board was established. This brought sickness benefits, maternity grants, death grants, retirement pensions and family allowances to the British people. After Aneurin Bevan's significant achievement in home affairs, the

National Health Care Act, half of the hospitals in Britain were nationalized. The life of working-class was rapidly improved (Childs, 1992; Laybourn, 2002).

By 1950 the Labour Party had reached most of the goals contained in its “Let Us Face the Future” manifesto. The party had won the general election but with fewer seats than the elections before. Growing number of problems started to show up within the party and the issues around defence spending caused the government to split and general election was held in 1951. Labour won the highest share of vote ever but the Conservative Party won more seats and a majority. The Conservatives formed the government and Winston Churchill once again became the Prime Minister. According to Childs (1992), the following years of the Labour Party were marked by on-going disputes over policies within the party. A major split was caused by the different opinions of followers of Hugh Gaitskell who were supporting the direction towards a moderate social democratic position and followers of Aneurin Bevan who were calling for radical social reform. Due to the inner split the Labour Party lost the general elections in 1955, Clement Attlee resigned and Gaitskell became the new Labour leader.

The problems within the party continued in the following years: Labour lost the general election in 1959 and Gaitskell had to face different approaches to the nuclear weapons issue and EEC membership; all of which led the party to call for a new leader; however Gaitskell remained as Labour leader until his sudden death in 1963. This brought an opportunity for Harold Wilson to become the new leader of the Labour Party in 1963, marking a shift from the leadership of a well-educated man to the leadership of a man with a grammar-school education. Nevertheless, Harold Wilson stood out in the party because of his good reputation due to experience in economics and notable work during the war-time coalition dealing with trade and his ministerial post for fuel and power. After Wilson’s election as the new Labour leader the party started to shift more to the left. As a result Wilson wanted to forget Clause IV and he focused on rapid scientific progress rather than promoting wider public ownership. He also supported the aim to decrease world poverty and increase trade with the Communist world (Childs, 1992).

Harold Wilson described the era before him as “thirteen wasted years”, thirteen years of the Conservative government. He used this term as a slogan for the following election of 1964. The party sensed that the election was not far away and that there was a possibility to defeat the Conservatives. Due to the on-going growth of mass media

influence the party came up with a completely different advertising campaign. The campaign was presented in a number of national dailies with a portrait of Wilson along with slogan “Let’s go with Labour and we’ll get this done” (Childs, 1992). The Labour Party won the election in 1964 but the percentage of votes indicated that fewer people voted. This led to the question of why the party had lost the support of the working-class. Wilson came up with a new party manifesto “New Britain” based upon a scientific and technological revolution. The vision was to put faith in economic planning, modernize British industry, adopt new technology and improve trade balance. These intentions were ruined after discovering the trade deficit was around £600 million. The government struggled to achieve its objectives and the situation led to a currency crisis (Laybourn, 2002). Despite this crisis the Labour Party won the election in 1966 but the economic growth under the Wilson government stagnated. New problems such as the seamen’s strike and on-going devaluation of currency started to endanger the position of Labour.

Wilson’s government introduced several liberal social reforms, supported by Home Secretary Roy Jenkins, which made progress in legislation of such taboo practices (in the context) as divorce, homosexuality and abortion. Other notable reforms included steel nationalization and comprehensive education development. In 1969 Wilson’s government introduced a proposal of series of reforms connected to the trade unions entitled “In Place of Strife” which proposed wage controls and limited power for the unions. The proposals however faced disapproval of the Trade Unions Congress and led to damaging impact on Wilson’s popularity and the view of voters on the party (Jones, 1991; Laybourn, 2002).

In the general election held in 1970 the Labour Party lost to the Conservatives under a new leader, Ted Heath. After this defeat Labour went into opposition for the next four years. The new Conservative government faced the 1973 miners’ strike which led to adopting of the “Three-Day Week”; introduced in order to avoid a complete outage of power and accompanied with limited consumption of petrol and energy. Wages and produce were impacted mildly which led to people’s misunderstanding of the crisis and miners sharpened their dispute with the employers (Bell, 2004).

As Laybourn (2002) claimed, the situation inside the Labour Party faced re-emerged tensions and “the Hard Left” came up with a radical programme “Labour’s Programme 1973” which called for a major extension to public ownership and state planning. The programme was accepted the same year.

The Conservative government which was challenged by the three-day week policy, rising inflation and unemployment, was defeated after 1974 general election. The Labour Party first formed a minority government with the help of Northern Ireland Ulster Unionists and after a second election held the same year won a majority and returned to government with the same leader, Harold Wilson. The following years of the Labour were marked by continuing splits within the party, caused mostly by the entering of Britain to the EEC in 1973. Wilson tried to avoid the split and he also worked on negotiating with the trade unions about regulating wage bargaining and extending welfare benefits paid out of higher taxes for the rich. The Labour government struggled in 1975 because of the impact of the world economic crisis which led to increased taxation in order to borrow money from the International Monetary Fund. The increased taxation stood in opposition to the Labour social contract. In 1976 Harold Wilson surprised the party by his resignation and was replaced by James Callaghan.

At first, Callaghan emphasized trade unionism, working-class policies, nationalization and Keynesian politics. He became the fourth Labour Prime Minister and is sometimes considered as the pioneer of New Labour. In 1977 the party created a pact with the Liberals to gain a majority in government. Callaghan proposed cuts in government spending which helped the economy to start recovering. However, in 1978 Callaghan's government proposed the extension of wage restraint that led to an end of positive relations with the trade unions and a serious strike action called the "Winter of Discontent". These strikes in favour of higher pay rises caused significant problems for people in everyday life. Callaghan's negative attitude towards the end of the strikes and negotiating with the workers led to major discontent. The party lost its voters and also the Liberal support and was defeated by the Conservatives in the 1979 general election. The Wilson and Callaghan governments had to face major economic problems throughout the 1960s and 1970s and even though they did not reach the goal to put socialist ideals into practice, they were able to decrease poverty significantly and provide the old, sick and disabled with better social environment. The Labour government under Callaghan also helped with the recovery of the currency, increased gold and dollars reserves and provided a better balance of payments (Childs, 1992; Ramsden, 2006).

In 1979 the Conservative Party came up with a new strategy during the political campaign before the general election. The parties had five weeks to convince the voters

that their political programme was the best for their future. The Conservatives had the advantage of major media support and their campaign emphasizing the strong leader and a promising new future could be found in almost all national dailies. The Labour Party was supported just by the *Daily Mirror*. Labour set up the campaign on promising to stay the same and adhere to their left socialist principles. On the other side the Conservatives promised to bring something new, a change for everybody. This led to a significant desertion of working-class labour supporters who did not want to wait for Labour to finally improve their environment. As mentioned before, the 1979 general election brought a landslide victory for the Conservative Party under a new leader, Margaret Thatcher.

The Labour Party lost a significant number of voters due to not being able to meet the party's promises and main points of its political programme. People still had in mind the situation during the "Winter of Discontent" when the Labour Party failed to help the working-class and let the unions use strike actions as a means of negotiating. Other important aspects of losing voters were the inability to decrease unemployment which reached the number of 1.6mil in 1977, the pact with the Liberals and the on-going disputes within the party over the membership in the EEC. The electorate simply did not see new opportunity and power in the Labour Party and the voters lost their faith in the party that should represent the interests of labour in government. Margaret Thatcher became the first ever woman Prime Minister and the Conservative Party won majority with 339 seats to the Labour 269 seats and 11 Liberal seats in the House of Commons.

4. FROM YEARS UNDER THATCHERISM TO NEW LABOUR

Labour went into opposition and the following years were to bring serious challenges for the party. The 1979 general election was a breaking point for politics in Britain. The new Conservative government brought a shift to an economic and political system containing radical neo-liberal change that would modernize the economy, civil society and state. The Conservative Party took advantage of history and convinced the people that remaining with the old socialist principles would lead just to slow economic growth. These ideas were perfect for the dissatisfied voters and Labour did not have anything to surmount these facts. Margaret Thatcher had great support in Ronald Reagan in the USA. Both of them wanted to shift their countries politics to the right and they attacked socialism and collectivism. Their ideas benefited also from the anti-socialist Friedrich August von Hayek (Fajmon, 2010).

The strongly divided Labour Party was suddenly facing a strong political opponent with new principles, a version of the “New Right”, a party with precisely defined politics. The Conservatives’ programme stated that only capitalism could bring freedom and emphasized the role of an individual in society. The party under Thatcher came up with a massive privatization programme, including a majority of industries run by the government and also selling council houses. People in Britain saw a new opportunity in private ownership rather than public at first, but after government cuts in services and increased taxation, the considerable number of people failed to keep their business/home and this led to higher unemployment especially in Labour areas and the Conservative government faced opposition from the Labour Party, economists and the public (Fajmon, 2010). The early 1980’s were truly difficult for Labour: not only were they losing voters and the support of working-class but the inner split between the more centre and left part was getting worse. Tensions were building up and the decreasing popularity of the Conservative government offered the more centre/right wing of the party an opportunity to change the leader and the socialist policies to modern neo-liberal ones. This intention did not meet its aim and a new leader was elected - Michael Foot, a member of the hard left Labour (Childs, 1992).

The election of the new leader led to the confirmation of left socialist principles and caused even more problems within the party. The party agreed on confirmation of the

mandatory re-selection of the MPs, opposition to nuclear weapons and opposition to membership of the EEC. All of these agreements were promoted by the hard left (Childs, 1992). This move to the left led former cabinet ministers, David Owen, William Rodgers, Roy Jenkins and Shirley Williams, also known as the “Gang of Four” to issue the “Limehouse Declaration” where they declared their intent to leave the Labour Party. The “Gang of Four” presented their positive approach to EEC membership, an open and equal society, decentralization and system of practical democracy at work. Their opinions were supported by many Labour members and the movement resulted in establishing the Social Democratic Party in 1981. This new party gained the support of well-educated former Labour members (having 13 MPs at the beginning) and it also addressed the Conservatives (having 1 former Conservative MP). Under Foot’s leadership the Labour Party moved more to the left during the early 1980s. In the 1983 general election Labour came up with the most left manifesto ever “New Hope for Britain”, which was described by former Labour minister Gerald Kaufmann, as “the longest suicide note in history” (Butler, 1995). The manifesto called for the UK to withdraw from the EEC, as well as unilateral nuclear disarmament, abolition of the House of Lords, an end to selling the council houses and re-nationalization of the privatized industries. The right wing of the Labour Party did not identify themselves with these opinions but they did not have the power to stop or change them. A general election was approaching and Labour members, annoyed by the inner split, did not even see victory as a possibility for the party. The Conservative Party recovered from the unpopularity caused by the higher unemployment thanks to victory in the Falklands War and the party started a strong anti-Labour campaign. Labour also faced a new threat from the Social Democratic Party alliance with the Liberals. These two parties agreed to form a pact in order to survive and entered the election on that basis. With the falling popularity of Labour there was a major possibility for the alliance to create the new opposition for the Conservatives (Jones, 2005; Ramsden, 2006).

Labour suffered a defeat in the 1983 election but still won 209 seats with the new alliance winning just 23 seats. Labour went again into opposition and had lost the support of trade unions and more of the working-class. The main problem of the party was the inner conflict: the members were not even trying to obtain more votes in the election. The leader, Michael Foot, resigned after the hard defeat and the election of a new party leader demonstrated the inner split. The two candidates were Neil Kinnock from the hard left and Roy Hattersley from the right. Kinnock was elected the new leader but Hattersley

surprisingly became the deputy leader which led to a uniting of the party. Suddenly there was a new direction for Labour: members sensed a need for reorganization of the party that could be done under the lead of a young and charismatic leader who was not connected to the previous mistakes and governments. Kinnock had a significant number of ideas for reforms and inner improvements of the party structure but all these intentions were distracted by the miners' strike in 1984 (See Laybourn, 2002).

In 1984, the new conservative government under Margaret Thatcher announced a plan for new savings. This government was different from previous one because it was not afraid of confrontation with the miners who threatened the government with possible strike actions. Coal mining in the UK had been nationalized in 1947 by Attlee's government and mining cost a significant amount of the state finances. The Conservatives also intended to use this plan of savings to decrease the power and influence of the unions. The plan was to close down non-profit-making pits that would result in the loss of 20 000 jobs within a year. The Tories wanted revenge for past humiliations and to achieve capitalist domination. The National Coal Board leader Ian MacGregor accepted this plan and in March 1984 the first 20 pits were closed. Closing of the mines led the president of National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), Arthur Scargill, to an important decision. Being known as a radical left Labour Party member and a Marxist follower, Scargill was a strong president of the NUM but he surprised both unions and government with his omission of a national ballot of the union members on the issue of industrial action. After this decision the miners went directly into strike action which resulted in the longest British national industrial conflict. This action of the NUM brought severe problems for Labour Party under the leader Neil Kinnock (Shaw, 1994; Laybourn, 2002).

Scargill went directly into the strike without having any strategy and it was clear to the Labour Party that the union would sooner or later lose. Having to face challenges in reorganizing the Labour Party, Neil Kinnock attempted to distance the party from the conflict and he criticised Scargill's methods. The Conservatives were well prepared for the strike: coal reserves were high and starting in spring, the amount of coal needed for everyday life was low until the late autumn. Despite all these facts the NUM and Labour Party wanted to fight for the working-class and they said no pits were to be closed for reasons other than insufficient coal supplies. Scargill's methods were right from the beginning under attack for being less than democratic and this caused a split within the

NUM itself, as well as the Labour Party: not only were all the NUM and Labour members not in favour of his actions but also the miners were divided amongst themselves (Laybourn, 2002). There was no coherent structure during the strike and just 75% of the miners were actually not working. The strike ended in March 1845 when miners went back to work without attaining any settlement. Meanwhile the Labour Party had to face a recurrent split within the party caused by these results of the strike.

The result of the miners' strike caused voters to identify the Labour Party with the extreme Labour left despite Kinnock's attempts to avoid this by criticising Scargill. The electorate still saw the Labour as a party responsible for the "Winter of Discontent" in 1979 which had undermined the party's fortunes in the early 1980s. The Conservative government presented a neo-liberal movement from authoritarian state socialism to liberal market. This movement should have brought modernization of the economy, state and civil society. All of these aspects along with the strong promotion of enterprise culture presented a major obstacle for the Labour to gain back the majority of voters. In 1985 the Labour Party leader, Neil Kinnock, continued to find a new direction for the party. His attempt to remove the Militant Tendency proved to be a right way to create a new image of the Labour. The Militant Tendency was a group within the Labour Party presenting the hard left. The group was based around the *Militant* newspaper and the members were influenced by Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and Vladimir Lenin. During a conference speech in 1985 Kinnock attacked the Militant leader in Liverpool, Derek Hatton, and started a long run against the radical socialists within the party. These actions to end the Militant influence within the party resulted in exclusion of the most radical members of Militant supporter from the Labour Party (Ramsden, 2006). This presented the beginning of re-uniting of the left and right parts of the party. Having reduced the influence of the radical socialists the party started its modernization in the right direction but there were still issues requiring a significant change. The members of the party did have different opinions towards its major policy areas of nationalization, industrial relations and unilateral nuclear disarmament.

According to Laybourn (2002), in 1985 Kinnock declared that re-nationalization of recently privatized industries by the Conservative government would not be the priority of the Labour Party. This intention was emphasized by the Deputy Leader, Roy Hattersley, when he presented a variety of forms of social ownership. Suddenly there was a major

change from the historical principles of the party promoting nationalization. In order to maintain improving unity within the party “hard and soft left”, compromises about the new ownership were accepted. Industrial relations were changed by insisting that ballots would be held on strikes and that trade unions would have to re-affirm their position. The third major issue, unilateral disarmament, became one of the hardest ideas to carry through. Kinnock was unable to influence the party members on this issue but he decided that a non-nuclear policy would be a step forward towards the North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s strategy (Child, 1992). The late 1980s presented the start of a new direction for the Labour Party. Party members worked on efforts to convince the voters that the party was no longer irresponsible and politically extreme. At the Labour conference in 1985 the party agreed to remain in favour of unilateral disarmament and therefore non-nuclear policy. In 1986 the Labour Party also agreed to change the logo from the old one picturing a red flag to a brand new one with a red rose in it. This was another step during the party’s rebranding. The idea of the rose came from Neil Kinnock who admired the use of the flower logos by other socialist parties. A red rose is also a patriotic symbol in the UK and it is more positive than the red flag which evokes the feeling of the old socialism. The rose logo has also a significant feature: it has no pricks³ (Jones, 2005).

The following year was important for the party because the general election was held and it was a chance to fight the Tories once again. The Labour Party leaders knew that they needed to come up with a strong programme to regain the support of the voters. The party manifesto “Britain Will Win” contained the new views of the party on the main issues and the party emphasized a need to reverse tax cuts introduced by the Conservative Party (Jones & Kavanagh, 1991). The Labour political campaign struggled with extensive press criticism against their policies which influenced the still undecided voters. It was a difficult time to prove that the major changes within the party policies would bring a better environment for the working-class because people sensed the Conservative achievements in their everyday life. Unemployment was decreasing, inflation stayed in the 4-5% range, the currency was strong and economy was growing. Nevertheless, the Labour Party launched a campaign based on a brilliant broadcast led by Neil Kinnock (Freedman, 2003), but eventually the party did not manage to cope with two issues about defence and taxation and the party lost the general election to the Conservatives. According to Childs (1992),

³ New Labour Party logo: see APPENDIX A

the defence issue misinterpreted the Labour Party as committed to pacifism and the taxation introduced by the party in their political programme led to a consequent vision of an enormous tax burden. Regardless of the defeat in the general election the Labour Party advanced to a higher vote percentage gaining 31% and the results proved that the position of the Alliance had weakened. The defeat proved to the party leaders that the reforms within the party had to be more radical and fundamental. Neil Kinnock led the party to a start of the progress from old socialist Labour to New Labour. In 1987 the party agreed to change their policy in employment by rejecting the role of the state to gain full employment and thus save state finances. The party also continued to present them not only as less extremist but also as less divided which was a significant issue of the past decades.

During the 1987 party conference the leaders suggested that there was a need for the party to review the entire Labour's policies which would lead to creating a more moderate social democratic party. In the following years the party issued four policy review reports and the most important one "Meet the Challenge, Make the Change" brought considerable changes within the party ideology. The report presented a new reversed direction towards public ownership which suggested that private industry would have an important part in future British society; no future commitment to nationalization and it also ended Labour's commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament and high taxation. The reforms also included abolishment of state interventionism connected to public ownership which led to reducing of subsidizing the state economy. The Labour Party also sensed a need for fixed and high exchange rates which would lead to a regulated economy and a need for reducing the power of trade unions (not different from the Conservative approach) which would include no mass or flying pickets like those happening in 1970s. The party under the leader Neil Kinnock (1987-1992) managed to remove major symbols of left wing policies like unilateralism, nationalization, private ownership and full employment. All these changes presented a shift to the right and therefore were condemned by the members of the "hard left". The radical left members wanted to fight for their ideology and their leader, Tony Benn, challenged Neil Kinnock for the leadership. His intention to replace Kinnock failed and the party showed its desire to move in a new, less extremist and socialist, direction (Laybourn, 2002).

The party, unified on organization and moderate policies, reached a prospect of possible political success. In 1992 the Labour Party saw a great opportunity to win the general election. Neil Kinnock was asked to step down from his position as leader so that the party could fight with someone else at the head, not connected to the previous defeats but he refused and went into the campaign as the leader. The outcome of the general election was unexpected: the Labour Party lost to the Conservatives for the fourth time in a row. Members of the hard left blamed Kinnock for not stepping down from his position but the more important issue which lost them the election was the political programme: it was too bold and people still did not want to believe that the Labour Party would have funds to accomplish what they promised; moreover the party did not regain the support of the working-class and trade unions who did not believe the party to be more moderate and those who were undecided were influenced once again by a strong anti-Labour press campaign primarily led by the *Sun* (a daily national tabloid owned by Rupert Murdoch). Kinnock's new policies were often criticized from within the party but he still managed to recover the party's image and started the transition to the New Labour (Jones & Kavanagh, 1991).

The Labour Party sensed the need of a new leader and in 1992 John Smith was elected as Kinnock's successor. The party did not want to lose their new breath with the defeat in general election and the leaders continued with the unifying of the party and modernization of the party ideology. One of the most important issues, which in the electorate's eyes connected the Labour Party to the past problems, was the influence and power of trade unions. During the development of the party the percentage of members from the trade unions decreased but still they represented a significant part of Labour. While being in opposition for almost 20 years, the Labour Party witnessed the Conservative intentions to avoid and restrict the influence and power of the trade unions and this led the Labour leaders to a question themselves whether to continue with this intention or to keep the trade unions as an important part of the party.

It was soon obvious that the shift of the party ideology more to the right meant that the trade unions would have to be limited. According to Laybourn (2002), John Smith continued with Kinnock's reforms and during the party conference in 1993 he attacked the trade unions and carried through the "One Member, One Vote" (OMOV) system of electing the party leader. This system allows all the members of the political party to vote

for the new leader. The new system replaced the traditional one including the trade union block vote during Labour Party conferences and therefore the power of the unions was reduced and the direct trade unions representation in parliamentary elections was removed. The following year Labour tried to spread the new ideology over the UK in order to gain the important votes for the general election. The party profited from the decreasing Conservative Party popularity and reputation caused by the impact of the “Black Wednesday Economic Crisis”, the sterling crisis and the exit from the Exchange Rate Mechanism. The results in local elections proved that the change in party ideology started to be successful and Labour’s opinion poll lead reached 23% in May 1994. On 12 May 1994 the members of the party were shocked after hearing that their strong leader had died suddenly after suffering a massive heart attack.

5. NEW LABOUR

The start of the 1990s brought major changes within the party. By 1994 the Labour Party left and right wing were united, disciplined and modern. The modernization process had purged the Trotskyist Militant faction and the socialist “hard left” was marginalized. Labour Party members were ready to continue with restructuring of the party policies and the voters started to renew their trust and interest in the new political programme. At the party conference in 1994 Tony Blair was elected the new leader and “New Labour” was presented. The rise of Tony Blair and New Labour has been understood as a result of the Conservative Party rule under Margaret Thatcher and John Major. The term “New Labour” first appeared as a conference slogan but soon it became a new unofficial name for the Labour Party (Shaw, 1994). Tony Blair was the modernizer of the party who did not want to look back to the past. He followed the shift started by Neil Kinnock who was determined not to be limited by the old Labour policies and it was he who sensed the significant need of a change while industry moved from the traditional mass industrial base to modern more service-oriented one. This change caused a decrease in the number of the working-class and therefore a decreasing number of voters (Laybourn, 2002).

The electorate in the UK noticeably changed during the second half of the 20th century. Table 1 below indicates important aspects of the political and social change in the United Kingdom during the years 1950-1992 (Butler, 1995).

No. on electoral register	34m (1950)	43m (1992)
Owner-occupied homes (%)	29 (1951)	67 (1991)
Adults owning shares (%)	7 (1958)	22 (1991)
Households with television (%)	10 (1950)	98 (1991)
Car in household (%)	12 (1950)	65 (1990)
Telephone in household (%)	12 (1950)	87 (1990)
Still at school over 14 (%)	38 (1938)	100 (1992)
17-19 age group entering full time higher education (%)	6 (1950)	22 (1992)
Population over 65 (%)	10 (1950)	18 (1990)
One-person households (%)	11 (1951)	26 (1991)
Of New Commonwealth origin (%)	0.5 (1950)	5 (1992)
Employed in manual jobs (%)	64 (1951)	45 (1991)
Working population in manufacturing and mining (%)	39 (1951)	19 (1990)
Unemployed (%)	1.5 (1951)	10 (1992)
Voting Labour (%)	49 (1951)	34 (1992)
Voting Conservative (%)	48 (1951)	42 (1992)
Voting for other parties (%)	3 (1951)	24 (1992)

Table 1

With all the changes within the British population the Labour Party needed a major change to regain the majority of votes and people's trust. The party required a move away from the connections with trade unions, nationalization and the members of the hard left wing of the party.

As mentioned previously, the change of the party started under Kinnock's and Smith's leadership and was continued by Tony Blair. Even before he was elected the leader of the Labour Party, Blair was not satisfied with the original version of Clause IV and in 1993 he wrote a pamphlet to the Fabian Society where he criticized the wording of the Clause. During the party conference in 1994, he presented his view on the new direction for the Labour Party. He introduced the modification of Clause IV that included a significant alteration - abandonment of nationalization and embracing market economics. The modification also presented the intention to determine set aims and values for the party and for the first time it officially declared the Labour Party as a "socialist" party. The new version of Clause IV was accepted during a special conference in 1995. According to the Labour Party Rule Book (2010):

"The Labour Party is a democratic socialist party. It believes that by the strength of our common endeavour we achieve more than we achieve alone, so as to create for each of us the means to realise our true potential and for all of us a community in which power, wealth and opportunity are in the hands of the many not the few; where the rights we enjoy reflect the duties we owe and where we live together freely, in a spirit of solidarity, tolerance and respect." (p.9)

New Labour in government

The general election held in 1997 brought a landslide victory for the Labour Party after almost two decades in opposition. The Labour Party lost a considerable number of former voters because the party had distanced itself from its traditional principles but, on the other hand, it made significant gains in the “middle England” presented by the higher social classes and also in support from young voters. New Labour won a majority with 418 seats, the largest victory in the party’s history. The party succeeded in reassuring the public of the new plans for the future government and therefore regained their confidence. The connections to the past were overshadowed also because of the hard work of Alastair Campbell, the Labour Party’s Press Secretary, who installed an organisation that coordinated the party’s media relations and worked on delivering a clear and unified message to the press and the readers (Laybourn, 2002).

Tony Blair is one of the key figures of New Labour. Before being the party leader, he was named the shadow home secretary in 1992 and continued with his career in Labour’s National Executive Committee. After being elected head of the party, Blair was able to continue to support the commitment to Europe, rather multilateral than unilateral nuclear disarmament and wider democratic involvement. He also praised compromise between capitalism and socialism and pursued his Third Way philosophy. This philosophy refers to a political position where the parties try to combine right and left-wing politics. Blair claimed that he supported a different socialism from the Marxist version which is based on determinist and collectivist tradition and that the socialism he supported is based on recognizing individuals in society, social cohesion and justice and equal opportunity. The Third Way presented modernized social democracy and supported the centre-left of the Labour Party. One of Blair’s most significant triumphs was the acceptance of the altered version of Clause IV (Ramsden, 2006). After he presented his intention to change the core of the party’s ideology he had to convince other party members to support him. He arranged several rounds of intensive meetings and the most important goal was to persuade the members of trade unions to vote for the change. According to Laybourn (2002), Blair showed great political and social abilities during the meetings and as a result he won just under two-thirds of the votes for his intention to change the Clause IV. Trade union members represented 70% of the necessary votes and Blair convinced 56, 4% of TU members to vote in favour of the change. This support helped the Labour Party to have a

better political future and Blair confirmed his power and influence as the party leader. The task for him and New Labour was to modernize Britain socially, politically, economically and start from the point where the Conservative government mainly under Margaret Thatcher had stopped, not to concentrate on changing everything. Laybourn (2002) presents the New Labour approach to future politics:

“They further suggested that New Labour’s approach was based upon five insights: the need for people to feel secure; investment, partnership and top-quality education for all; recognition of the potential government; “One Nation socialism” going beyond the battles of the past between private and public interests; and the need to unite public and private activities in the ideal of social co-operation.” (p. 45)

New Labour also presented its approach to the welfare state which included spending on policies towards education, health care, social security, housing and personal social services. There was a need for reform after the long Conservative government attempts to control public spending and introducing cuts and restrictions. In 1997 Labour manifesto the party promised not to increase income tax and try to reduce income inequality. The Labour Party needed to lose the “tax and spend” image and focused on assuring people that their money paid in taxes would be used on “popular” areas such as the National Health Service, education, housing, pensions. Labour also developed the “New Deal” programme to reduce unemployment (Jones, 2005). The deal offered work with subsidized private employers, training and voluntary jobs for the unemployed. The party applied its renewed philosophy of modern socialism and focused on several main areas: New Labour emphasized social justice rather than the traditional attachment to equality; the party sought to communicate with the public and present a better image of Labour; pro-European and pro-American policies were essential; the party strived for applying market-led forces to its economic and social strategies; emphasis on Northern Ireland peace negotiations; New Labour also stressed the need for constitutional reform (Laybourn, 2002). The support of voters and popularity of Tony Blair helped the party to win the general election in 2001; subsequently, after Blair’s alliance with the USA and support for the Iraq War the party suffered from a major decrease in support but still won the 2005 general election (Ramsden, 2006). The on-going drop in support continued to damage the Labour Party position in government and after Blair’s resignation from the leading post the party reached its lowest point since 1979 and is in opposition since 2010.

6. RESEARCH

As a part of this thesis a survey was conducted in order to discover and gather data about political opinions of students in the United Kingdom. The main aim of the survey was to ascertain the students' opinions about the Labour Party politics and their general political opinions. The survey was carried out as an online questionnaire via online survey software.

The questionnaire consisted of 12 questions that could be divided into two different areas and all the questions were not based on any work or research published before. The first set of questions focused on the politics of the Labour Party and the answers presented the students' views on the party's political orientation, important party members, election strategy and the party policies. The other set of questions concentrated on discovering the view of the students on the political situation in their country and their own approach to election. As mentioned before, the survey was conducted online and therefore it was not complicated to answer the questions. Each of the questions had three explicit answers with the exceptions of the answer "other" in question no. 5 and a yes/no answer in question no. 12. The respondents of the survey were all students of Plymouth University in Plymouth, UK. Six of the respondents were students who visited the Czech Republic under the Erasmus programme with University of West Bohemia and who shared the link to the online questionnaire with their schoolmates. After receiving the link, the other students had a direct access to the survey and the answers were collected online and were accessible just for the author of the survey. The questionnaire was completed by 14 students who were all currently studying at the university and the resulting age group was from 23 to 26 years old. After gathering all the answers the data was analysed and further commented in the next section of this work.

Results and discussion

The questionnaire consisted of 12 questions related to British politics. The following text presents an analysis of all the answers gathered online from the university students. The results are structured according to the content of the question, not the order in the survey. The full reading of the survey and tables with the results are attached in the appendix B.

The survey was completed by 14 students including 5 males and 9 females. The explicit age range was: 23 years old-5 respondents, 24 years old-4 respondents, 25 years old-2 respondents and 26 years old-3 respondents. The first set of questions focused on the view of the university students on the Labour Party. All the answers are rounded to whole numbers to present more explicit results. In the first question the respondents were to give their opinion if the Labour Party is a left, centre-left or right-wing party. 43% of the respondents saw the Labour Party as a left-wing party, another 43% saw it as a centre-left wing and 14% answered that Labour is a right-wing party. The first question was strongly connected to question no. 6. There the students had to answer if the Labour Party gives them the impression of being a socialist, social democratic or a democratic party. Here 21% of the respondents answered that they saw Labour as a socialist party, 72% as a social democratic party and 7% as a democratic party. The Labour Party is officially a centre-left/social democratic party. From the results it is obvious that the students know the basic policies and ideology of Labour but there are significant differences in choosing the party as a left-wing and then referring to it as a social democratic party. Also, two respondents answered that Labour is a right-wing party but just one respondent saw it as a democratic party. These answers show whether deficiency in concentration or ignorance of the basic political division of the British political parties.

In question no. 2 were the respondents given three names from which they had to choose the most famous and successful leader of the Labour Party. 72% of the respondents selected Tony Blair, 14% Gordon Brown and Clement Attlee also gained 14% of the answers. These answers show that the majority of the students selected a person whose politics they were able to experience in their own lives and also choosing Tony Blair before Gordon Brown shows that they are aware of Brown's fewer political achievements and popularity. Question no. 7 ascertained the opinion of the students on what was the main reason why the Labour Party won the 1997 general election. 29% of the respondents

answered that the way to success was having a strong leader and renewed party ideology, 14% thought it was the innovative form of campaigning and 57% thought it was the declining popularity of the Conservative Party. These answers indicate that the students do not see the significant changes and effort to win within the Labour Party as the main reason of their landslide victory in 1997.

Questions no. 8 and 10 were connected to important political issues that the Labour Party was or should be involved in. Question no. 8 had these results: 36% of the respondents would like to see the Labour Party to be involved in solving the problem with aging population, 43% would like the party to solve the issue of remaining in the EU and 21% were mostly concerned with the problem of funding foreign military missions. In question no. 10 the respondents selected these answers: 14% of the students think that the most important thing Labour does is increasing the level of social housing, 21% think the most important is that the party helps the long-term unemployed back to work and 65% of the respondents selected as the most important believing in equality of opportunity. From the results it is obvious that the university students are concerned with the position of the UK in Europe and also are aware of growing diversity within the population and are in favour of the equal opportunity for everyone.

The other set of questions focused on more general political opinions of the university students. Questions no. 3 and 12 were both based on making a decision in the elections. In question no. 3 the respondents selected what was the main reason for determining their vote. 36% of the respondents answered that it was their family's opinion, 57% chose that the most important aspect for their choice was the political programme of the party and 7% answered that it was their friends opinion. In question no. 12 the students answered whether it would be easy for them to make a decision which party to vote if there was general election held at the moment. 43% answered that they were decided and therefore the vote would be easy for them and 57% of the respondents selected the answer "no". These answers indicate that the respondents were interested in the politics of the particular party more than their parents' or friends' opinion but still the majority of them were not sure which party they would vote at the moment.

Question no. 9 was dealing with the issue of tax rate. In Britain the income tax presents the single largest source of revenues collected by the government and cutting taxes is one the most important political issues. 21% of the respondents from the university

thought that the taxes should be same for everybody, 65% thought that they should be higher for people with superior income and 14% would like higher taxes for employed people. These results indicated that the students would like the political system to be set for higher taxes for the wealthy people in order to help the poor ones. Question no. 11 presented the view of the students on the party's policies. They were to select a party which would, in their opinion, help to avoid the ongoing growth of public debt in the UK. 14% of the respondents selected the Liberal Party and also the Labour Party and 72% the Conservative Party. These results showed that the popularity of the Labour Party gained during the 1990s weakened after their defeat in 2010 (they gained the same number of answers as the Liberal party that is not even one of the two largest parties in the UK) and the students would rather choose the Conservatives to help their country from deepening the public debt.

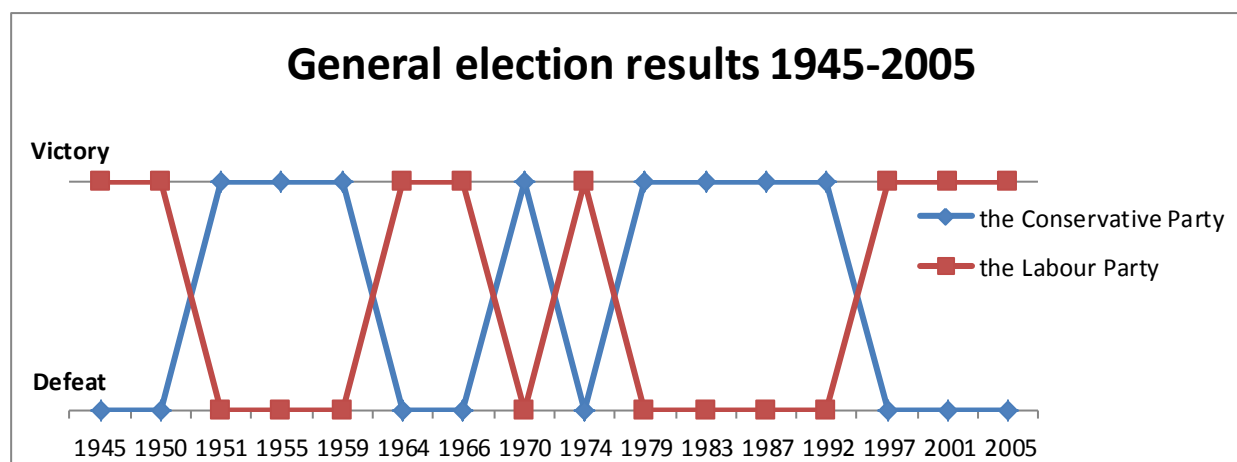
In questions no. 5 of the survey the students had to select who represents, in their opinion, the most influential person in the government of the UK. 29% of the respondents answered that this person was Queen Elisabeth II., 57% selected the prime minister and 14% answered that it was somebody else. These answers indicate that the respondents see the prime minister as a representative of the government and someone who has more power and influence within the government than the Queen. The last question, no. 4, was based on the power of media and the respondents had to select what kind of mass media is the most important to address young people. 21% answered it was TV, 72% answered "social networks" and 7% "radio". These answers only proved the trend of the modern society where social networks have significant influence within the young people.

7. CONCLUSION

The major purpose of my thesis was to track the historical development of the British Labour Party. The history of the party follows the development from its emergence in 1900s from the trade union movement and socialist political parties and continues until the transformation into New Labour in the late 1990s. The historical development of the party is based on my background reading of books related to British politics, the Labour Party and its most famous leaders and members. The thesis provides an overall summary of the past 100 years of the development of the party ideology, structure and position in parliament.

The Labour Party was at first established as a parliamentary pressure group, later the Labour Representation Committee, that would represent the interests of the working-class. The new organization struggled to assert itself in the British political system for many years but the endeavour of the members to fight for the rights of the working-class led the party to its achievements and replaced the Liberal Party as the main opposition to the Conservatives in 1920s. The Labour Party has developed as a mass membership organization during the 1920s and 1930s and that led to several periods in government, twice as a minority under Ramsey MacDonald and then as a partner in the wartime coalition during WWII. The post-WWII years brought several opportunities to form the government but the declining popularity and inner splits within the party brought a need for major changes for the Labour Party that ended up by the transformation into New Labour. The Labour Party's political engagement led to several significant achievements as the historic establishment of the National Health Service, emphasizing the law of equality of opportunity and the creation and maintenance of an empowering welfare state. The party had to be confronted by the constant rivalry of the Conservative Party and also the division and disunity within the party. All these factors caused the declining popularity of Labour and defeats in general elections. The Labour Party was in government just for 23 out of its first 100 years but still it presents on of the two most powerful parties in the UK and since its formation it has grown into a party which has achieved major social and political reforms during the 20th century. The party's aim for the future is to achieve lasting social, economic and political change in Britain.

The following graph 1 illustrates the results of general election from 1945 to 2005 and it summarizes the victorious years of the Labour Party.



Graph 1

A research that is a part of this thesis shows the current view of young people on the politics of the Labour Party and their opinion about other political issues. The majority of the respondents saw the Labour Party as a left or centre-left party but while choosing whether it is a socialist or social democratic party, more of them selected social-democratic. This shows that the effort of New Labour succeeded in trying to recede from the traditional socialist view on the party. This intention was presented and promoted by Tony Blair who is considered, by the respondents, as the most famous and successful leader of the party. The development of the party in 1990s was significant but the respondents still think that the major reason why Labour won the 1997 election was the declining popularity of the Conservatives. On the other hand, the students appreciate the enshrining in law of equality of opportunity for all that has become one of the main achievements during the development of the party. The EEC membership has caused several crucial splits within the party and nowadays the respondents would like to see the party to solve the problem in remaining in the European Union. From the other data gathered by the research it is obvious that the young generation is aware of the history of the political parties and that they are more interested in the political programme than being influenced by their families or friends while selecting their vote.

REFERENCES

- Bell, P. (2004). *The Labour Party in opposition (1970-1974)*. London: Routledge.
- Butler, D. (1995). *British general elections since 1945* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Wiley, John & Sons, Incorporated.
- Childs, D. (1992). *Britain since 1945: A political history* (3rd ed.). London: Routledge
- Fajmon, H., & Joch, R. (2010). *Margaret Thatcherová a Ronald Reagan*. Lysá nad Labem: Petr Kopecký.
- Freedman, D. (2003). *Television policies of the Labour Party 1951-2001*. London: Frank Cass Publishers.
- Ingle, S. (1989). *The British party system* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Jones, B., & Kavanagh, D. (1991). *British politics today* (4th ed.). Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Jones, T. (2005). *Remaking of the Labour Party* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Labour Party Rule Book. (2010). Retrieved April 2, 2013 from:
<http://www.leftfutures.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/Labour-Party-Rule-Book-2010.pdf>
- Laybourn, K. (2002). *Fifty key figures in twentieth-century British politics*. London: Routledge.
- Leonard, R.L. (1991). *Elections in Britain today: A guide for voters and students* (2nd ed.). Houndmills: Macmillan.
- Philips, G. (1992). *The rise of the Labour Party*. London: Routledge.
- Ramsden, J. (2006). *Oxfordský průvodce britskou politikou 20. století* (A. Skřivan et al., Trans.). Prague: Prostor. (Original work published 2002).
- Shaw, E. (1994). *The Labour Party since 1979: Crisis and transformation*. London: Routledge.
- Thompson, N. (2006). *Political economy and the Labour Party: The economics of democratic socialism, 1884-2005* (2nd ed.). Oxon, OX: Routledge.

SUMMARY IN CZECH

Cílem této bakalářské práce je popsat historický vývoj britské Labouristické strany, která tvoří jednu ze dvou hlavních politických stran Velké Británie od dvacátých let devatenáctého století. Práce je rozdělena na pět hlavních částí, které jsou založeny na historickém vývoji strany. První část popisuje pozadí vzniku strany z historického hlediska; shrnuje politické podmínky ve Velké Británii na začátku dvacátého století a také popisuje začátky britského socialismu. Druhá část práce je zaměřena na vývoj v letech následujících po založení strany a také na utváření ideologie a politických postojů. V třetí části je text zaměřen na vývoj strany v letech po skončení druhé světové války, které přinesly novou příležitost pro Labouristickou stranu k pokusu vyhrát volby. Roky pod nadvládou konzervativců vedených Margaret Thatcherovou jsou popsány ve čtvrté části práce a historický vývoj postupně přechází k momentům, kdy došlo k zásadním změnám politiky labouristů a transformaci strany k tzv. „nové labouristické“ v čele s Tony Blairem. Dalším cílem této práce je popsat výsledky online dotazníku. Otázky výzkumu měly přiblížit názor studentů z univerzity v Plymouthu na Labouristickou stranu a politiku Velké Británie. Tato práce poskytuje komplexní pohled na historický vývoj Labouristické strany od silně socialistické strany k moderní centristicko-levicové straně.

Klíčová slova: Labouristická strana, znárodnění, socialismus, sociální stát, pracující třída

APPENDIX A



This widely used poster underlined the extent to which the Conservative campaign in 1945 focused upon the leadership of Winston Churchill. (Butler, 1995)



The *Daily Mirror* put on a very effective campaign for Labour with cartoons and headlines evoking the ills of the inter-war years. (*Daily Mirror*, June 1995)



The new Labour Party logo accepted in 1986 under Neil Kinnock. The red rose replaced a red flag.
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Old_Logo_Labour_Party.svg)

APPENDIX B

Research

1. The Labour Party is:
 - a) a left-wing party
 - b) a centre-left party
 - c) a right-wing party

2. Who was, in your opinion, the most famous and successful leader of the Labour Party?
 - a) Tony Blair
 - b) Gordon Brown
 - c) Clement Attlee

3. Making a decision in general election is very individual. What will help you determine your vote the most?
 - a) Family opinion
 - b) Political programme
 - c) Friend's opinion

4. In your opinion, what kind of mass media is the most important for a political party to address young people?
 - a) TV
 - b) Social networks
 - c) Radio

5. Who do you think is the most influential person in the government of the UK?
 - a) Queen Elizabeth II
 - b) The prime minister
 - c) Other

6. The Labour Party ideology gives you the impression of being:
 - a) Socialist
 - b) Social-democratic
 - c) Democratic

7. What do you think was the most important thing which helped the Labour Party to win the general election in 1997?
 - a) Having a strong leader and renewed ideology
 - b) Innovative forms of campaigning
 - c) Declining popularity of the Conservative Party

8. Imagine being a Labour Party voter. What kind of current political issues solving would you like the party to be involved in?
 - a) Aging population
 - b) Remaining in the EU
 - c) Funding of the foreign military missions

9. Cutting taxes is one of the main issues in the UK. In your opinion, do you think taxes should be:
 - a) Same for everybody
 - b) Higher for the wealthy people
 - c) Higher for the working families

10. Which of the bellow mentioned answers is in your opinion the most important thing the Labour Party does:
 - a) Increasing the social housing
 - b) Helping the long-term unemployed back to work
 - c) Believing in "Equality of opportunity"

11. The staggering level of public debt is scaring the UK population. Based on your own knowledge of the UK political parties, who would you vote to avoid the on-going growth?
- a) The Liberal Party
 - b) The Labour Party
 - c) The Conservative Party
12. If you had a chance to vote at the moment, would it be easy for you to decide which party to vote?
- a) Yes
 - b) No

Results

The Labour Party is:		
a left-wing party	a centre-left party	a right-wing party
43% (6 respondents)	43% (6 resp.)	14% (2 resp.)

Who was, in your opinion, the most famous and successful leader of the Labour Party?		
Tony Blair	Gordon Brown	Clement Attlee
72% (10 resp.)	14% (2 resp.)	14% (2 resp.)

Making a decision in general election is very individual. What will help you determine your vote the most?		
Family opinion	Political programme	Friend's opinion
36% (5 resp.)	57% (8 resp.)	7% (1 resp.)

In your opinion, what kind of mass media is the most important for a political party to address young people?		
TV	Social networks	Radio
21% (3 resp.)	72% (10 resp.)	7% (1 resp.)

Who do you think is the most influential person in the government of the UK?		
Queen Elisabeth II	The prime minister	Other
29% (4 resp.)	57% (8 resp.)	14% (2 resp.)

The Labour Party ideology gives you the impression of being:		
Socialist	Social-democratic	Democratic
21% (3 resp.)	72% (10 resp.)	7% (1 resp.)

What do you think was the most important thing which helped the Labour Party to win the general election in 1997?		
Having a strong leader and renewed ideology	Innovative forms of campaigning	Declining popularity of the Conservative Party
29% (4 resp.)	14% (2 resp.)	57% (8 resp.)

Imagine being a Labour Party voter. What kind of current political issues solving would you like the party to be involved in?		
Aging population	Remaining in the EU	Funding of the foreign military missions
36% (5 resp.)	43% (6 resp.)	21% (3 resp.)

Cutting taxes is one of the main issues in the UK. In your opinion, do you think taxes should be:		
Same for everybody	Higher for the wealthy people	Higher for the working families
21% (3 resp.)	65% (9 resp.)	14% (2 resp.)

Which of the bellow mentioned answers is in your opinion the most important thing the Labour Party does:		
Increasing the social housing	Helping the long-term unemployed back to work	Believing in "Equality of opportunity"
14% (2 resp.)	21% (3 resp.)	65% (9 resp.)

The staggering level of public debt is scaring the UK population. Based on your own knowledge of the UK political parties, who would you vote to avoid the on-going growth?		
The Liberal Party	The Labour Party	The Conservative Party
14% (2 resp.)	14% (2 resp.)	72% (10 resp.)

If you had a chance to vote at the moment, would it be easy for you to decide which party to vote?	
Yes	No
43% (6 resp.)	57% (8 resp.)