

Whig and Tory

historical political party

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Whig-Party-England>

Whig and Tory, members of two opposing political parties or factions in [England](#), particularly during the 18th century. Originally “Whig” and “Tory” were terms of abuse introduced in 1679 during the heated struggle over the bill to exclude James, duke of York (afterward [James II](#)), from the succession. Whig—whatever its origin in Scottish Gaelic—was a term applied to horse thieves and, later, to Scottish [Presbyterians](#); it connoted nonconformity and rebellion and was applied to those who claimed the power of excluding the heir from the throne. Tory was an Irish term suggesting a papist outlaw and was applied to those who supported the hereditary right of James despite his [Roman Catholic](#) faith.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Anglicanism>

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/archbishop-of-Canterbury>

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Jacobite-British-history>

whig - began to take shape only after 1784,

The Conservative and Unionist Party (usually shortened to Conservative Party, or informally as the **Tory Party**) is the main centre-right political party in the United Kingdom. Their policies usually promote conservatism. They are the largest party in the House of Commons after the 2019 United Kingdom general election, with 365 out of a possible 650 seats.

The party has generally had liberal economic policies. that favours free market economics, and deregulation, privatisation, and marketisation. The party is British unionist, opposing Irish reunification, Scottish and Welsh independence, and is generally critical of devolution.

After a leadership election in the Conservative Party in June and July 2019, Boris Johnson became the leader of the party. He became Prime Minister on 24 July 2019 by default, and as of 13 December 2019 was made Prime Minister after the 2019 general election

The Labour Party is a centre-left political party in the United Kingdom that has been described as an alliance of social democrats, democratic socialists and trade unionists.[11] In all general elections since 1922, Labour has been either the governing party or the Official Opposition. There have been six Labour prime ministers and thirteen Labour ministries.

The party was founded in 1900, having grown out of the trade union movement and socialist parties of the 19th century. It overtook the Liberal Party to become the main opposition to the Conservative Party in the early 1920s, forming two minority governments under Ramsay MacDonald in the 1920s and early 1930s.

The Liberal Party was one of the two major political parties in the United Kingdom with the opposing Conservative Party in the 19th and early 20th centuries.[2] The party arose from an alliance of Whigs and free trade-supporting Peelites and the reformist Radicals in the 1850s. By the end of the 19th century, it had formed four governments under William Gladstone. Despite being divided over the issue of Irish Home Rule, the party returned to government in 1905 and then won a landslide victory in the following year's general election.

Under prime ministers Henry Campbell-Bannerman (1905–1908) and H. H. Asquith (1908–1916), the Liberal Party passed the welfare reforms that created a basic British welfare state. Although Asquith was the party's leader, its dominant figure was David Lloyd George. Asquith was overwhelmed by the wartime role of coalition prime minister and Lloyd George replaced him as prime minister in late 1916, but Asquith remained as Liberal Party leader. The pair fought for years over control of the party, badly weakening it in the process.[3] In The Oxford Companion to British History, historian Martin Pugh argues:

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The UK Government has also developed decentralisation in England. This is through the transfer of powers, budgets and responsibilities to mayors and through city deals. They have many powers to make laws and deliver public services. These are often called devolved powers.

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The British Political Parties

I. History

3 main political parties since 1918:

- The Conservative Party
- The Labour Party
- The Liberal Party

Concept of two-party politics which grew up around the Whig and the Tory Parties which became the Liberals and the Conservatives even though the philosophical links are at best tenuous.

Definition of a political party at the end of the 18th century by Edmund Burke, a prominent Whig MP: “a body of men united for promoting, by their joint endeavour (effort), the national interest, upon some particular principal in which they are well agreed.”

Opposition: the largest alternative grouping in Parliament.

II. The Parties Today

A. The Conservative and Unionist Party

Divided into three branches:

- The Party in the constituencies (voting districts),
- The professional organization based at Central Office,

- The Parliamentary Party of MPs.

Leader chosen by a secret ballot of all MPs.

Ideology: flexible, open approach to doctrine, preferring to adapt or adjust to trends rather than provide ideological commitment.

Two strands of thoughts:

- A strong state, the establishment of authority and the maintenance of law and order as the basis for society.
- Acceptance of the notion of free enterprise capitalism, favouring the market as a leading force for organization of the economy and society.
- Centre-right cohering = “One Nation” party before Margaret Thatcher.
- Image of the “nasty party” since the Thatcher years.

Membership: decreasing since the 1980s from 2 million to 150,000 in 2016.

Criticism: lack of female and ethnic minority representation.

B. The Labour Party

“The Labour Party was built up from below in protest against a Parliament unresponsive to working class concerns... it took the form of an elaborately structured federal constitution, on which the Party born in 1906, had to be awkwardly grafted”. Phillip Williams, Hugh Gaitskell, 1982

Labour Party = federation of trade unions, constituency parties and socialist societies.

Official beginning according to the Labour Party: 1900 Labour Representation Committee but it has a source in the late 19th century with the development of socialist ideas. > Left wing party.

Labour Party was and is still sponsored by the Trade Union movement which played and still play a major role in the affairs of the present-day party.

The leader of the party is now chosen by an electoral college composed of 30% of constituency parties (électeurs), 30% of MPs and 40% of Trade Union.

Leaders of the party since 1981:

- Neil Kinnock (1981-1992)
- John Smith (1992-1994)
- Tony Blair (1994-2007) moved to New Labour Party with a turning point to center left.
- Gordon Brown (2007-

Ideology: Traditional Labour doctrine: equality of outcome and re-distribution of wealth.

Membership: largest political party in Europe > 545,000 members in 2016.

C. The Liberal Democrats

Created around 1859.

1980s: SDP (Social Democratic Party) – Liberal Alliance that merged into Lib Dem in 1988.

Commitment to European Union, concern for civil liberties and human rights

D. UKIP (United Kingdom Independence Party)

Started in the early 1990s: single-issue, anti-EU party.

Right wing alternative to the Tory party thanks to its strong anti-EU and anti-immigration stance.

E. The Nationalist Parties

Small but powerful voices in general elections but more oriented towards their new devolved parliaments.

Scotland: Labour with an opposition from the nationalists.

Wales: coalition cabinet even though Labour is the largest party still.

Northern Ireland:

- Protestant side: Democratic Unionists over the Ulster Unionists
- Catholic side: Sinn Fein over the SDLP

III. Elections

A. History

Less than 3% of the British population are members of political parties (www.surrey.ac.uk/surveys)

Every British subject over 18 has the right to vote (exceptions: peers of the realm, long-term prisoners, lunatics and those found guilty of electoral corruption).

Before 1832: right to vote and political power based on the ownership of land.

1832: Reform Bill: more people could vote but it was still based on the ownership of the land.

1867: the vote was extended to all male householders with one year's residence in urban areas (still the concept of property ownership was there!)

1872: secret ballot

1884-1885: vote to all male householders

1918: women over 30 got the right to vote

1928: parity between men and women regarding the right to vote.

1969: voting age lowered from 21 to 18.

B. Elections today

650 evenly balanced constituencies (voting districts) in the UK today.

MPs for each country of the UK:

- England: 533
- Scotland: 59
- Wales: 40
- Northern Ireland: 18

Fixed-Term Parliaments Act of 2011: since 2015, Parliament's elections must be held every five years (the Prime Minister can no longer call an early election).

After the election, the party with the most MPs forms the government. In each constituency the candidate with the higher number of votes is declared MP for that area.

a. Weaknesses of the system

- No account is taken of the size of majorities in the constituencies.
- The winner requires only a simple majority to be elected.
- Some parties get important results in the polls but only a few seats in both houses.
- Usually, victory of one party over the other > two party mould.
- Votes casted for the losing MPs become irrelevant.

b. Strengths of the system

- Clear victory of the winning party.
- Encourages positive voting.
- Tactical voting is rare.
- Political stability, few governments fall during their term.
- Dual role of the MPs: member of a party/government and neutral local representative.
- Few coalition governments.
- Parties are elected on their electoral pledge and not under pressure of coalition.

c. Possible alternatives

- The Additional Member system
- The Hansard Society
- Single Transferable Vote system