

Labour Weakness

Labour had been in power since the '45 election, and had to deal with most of the post-war recovery - including crippling debt, rationing, and a major housing shortage. As a result, many people attributed 'austerity' & 'rationing' towards Labour, and wanted to return to a normal way of life with a strong economy & being able to afford the essentials without rationing.

Internally, Labour was incredibly divided - the party had been split into two. The more radical & left-leaning of the party wanted Britain to become more socialist by nationalising more & making more services free to use. However this wasn't popular with the electorate since they couldn't come up with a way to pay for it. They also got into arguments with the more center-leaning side of the party, who opposed these policies.

However, this wasn't the main reason why Labour lost - they beat the Conservatives with the number of votes & got the highest number of votes until '92 & '19.

Conservative Strengths

The Conservatives were shocked after their loss in '45. As such, they were forced to restructure the party. This was led by Lord Woolton, who reformed party finances & local organisation, which allowed them to take advantage of Labour's weaknesses: they criticised Labour's nationalisation of steel & iron, and promised to build 300k new houses a year compared to Labour's 200k. However, they knew that Labour's policies were popular, so the Conservatives committed to expanding the Welfare State & the end of rationing through offering more 'red meat' (*this was a popular item that was still rationed until 1954*).

Electoral System

While Labour did increase their number of voters, this was typically in 'safe' areas which already had a majority of Labour voters - which meant that there wouldn't be an increase in the number of seats. In contrast, the Conservatives focused on flipping swing states, which gained them a lot of seats. Also, Labour reformed boundary changes for voting, which led to them requiring more votes for the same number of seats.

The collapse of the Liberal party helped contribute to this. Due to poor finances, they could only afford to contest 109 seats, which left many Liberal voters unable to support their party. As a result, many of these voters switched & voted for the Conservatives.

Conservative Strengths

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