PART 1: VICTORIAN AND EDWARDIAN BRITAIN, C1851–1914

1 Reform and challenge, c1851–1886

In this chapter we will examine political, economic and social conditions in Britain and Ireland in the third quarter of the 19th century. In particular, we will look into:

- the political system: Parliament and the workings of mid-19th-century democracy: the Queen and Parliament; ruling elites; prime ministers; parties and party realignment

- political developments under Gladstone and Disraeli: liberalism, conservatism and the bases of their support; the extension of the franchise

- economic developments: agriculture, trade and industry; economic ideologies; boom and 'the workshop of the world'; the onset of the Depression

- society and social changes: class and regional division; prosperity and poverty

- social movements and policies: self-help; trade unions; education and social reform legislation

- Ireland and Anglo-Irish relations: land agitation and the political response; the Home Rule movement.

A/AS Level History for AQA: **Challenge and Transformation: Britain, c1851–1964**

Key terms

First Great Reform Act: Passed in 1832, this gave the vote to middle-class men for the first time, reformed the political system and got rid of many of the smaller constituencies, replacing them with ones that better reflected the new centres of population, among other significant changes.

Chartist movement: A working-class political movement that was active from 1836 to 1848, which petitioned for further political reform following the 1832 Reform Act. Their charter comprised six demands, including universal male suffrage, secret ballots and annual parliaments.

Tory paternalism: An element of Conservative ideology focused on the idea that the elites should look after the lower classes as a parent would look after their children. It was seen as the motivation for social reform and a counter to growing demands for further reform and, later, socialism.

Democracy: 'The rule of the people', from the Greek *demos* (people) and *kratos* (rule). A democracy is a system whereby the people choose the government; this is normally done through the election of representatives. A 'full' or 'true' democracy will have universal suffrage for adults.

House of Commons: The lower house of Parliament in Britain where laws are debated and voted on. The House of Commons is composed of elected MPs from Britain's constituencies. During the 19th century the House of Commons became more powerful than the House of Lords.

The political system: Parliament and the workings of mid-19th-century democracy
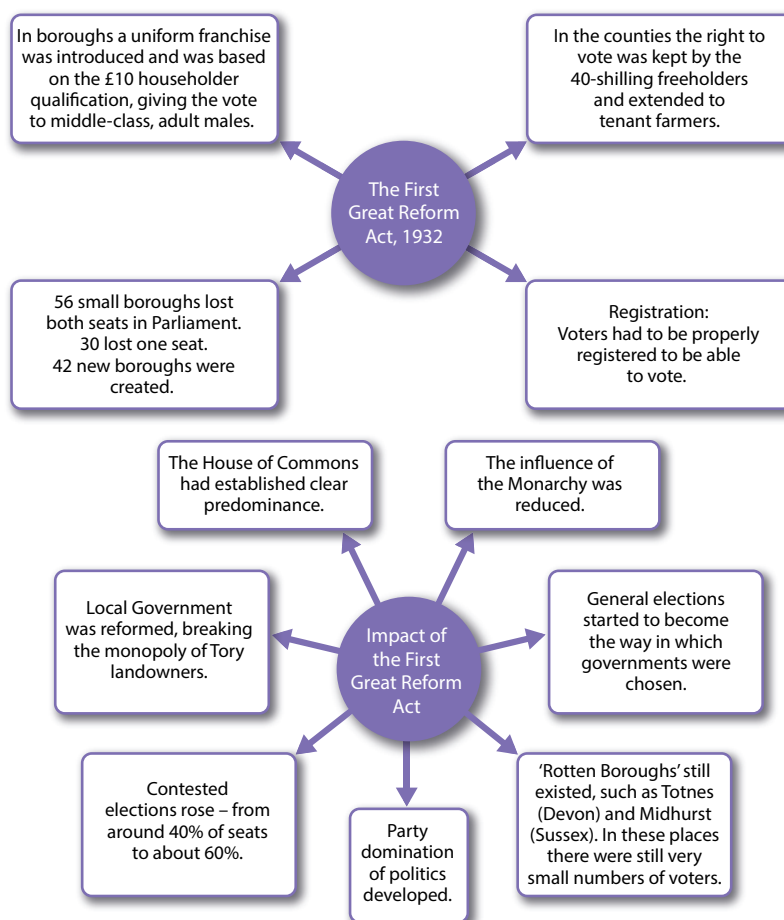

Figure 1.1: The 1832 Reform Act

Britain's political system underwent massive changes in the period c1851–1886, in which further steps towards establishing full democracy were made. The first half of the 19th century had seen popular discontent and the enfranchising of many middle-class men in the **First Great Reform Act** in 1832, followed by further political agitation from the **Chartist movement**. As social and economic change continued apace, the political system came under close scrutiny. The political parties needed to adapt to an evolving political system and growing electorate, which essentially changed some of the old rules of the game. The parties competed for political advantage from the changes and sought to guide the newly enfranchised into the political sphere. After 1851, the ruling elites saw their power challenged by the growing electorate and the emerging power of the middle classes, so they needed to find new ways to assert their control, for example through Disraeli's **Tory paternalism**. In Benjamin Disraeli and William Gladstone, Britain had two of its greatest and most famous prime ministers. The Liberal and Conservative parties emerged during this period, following the party realignment over free trade.

Britain was not truly a **democracy** around 1851. Queen Victoria, although not directly involved, held considerable influence. The unelected House of Lords could veto legislation and provided many influential ministers, including prime ministers. Even following the 1832 Reform Act, the **House of Commons** was only elected by about one in six of the adult male population. The distribution of seats did not match the distribution of the population: many small constituencies kept their MPs while the

northern towns and cities remained massively under-represented. MPs were not paid, so a political career remained the reserve of the wealthy. There was no secret ballot, and voters were vulnerable to bribes and threats, further increasing the political power of the ruling elites.
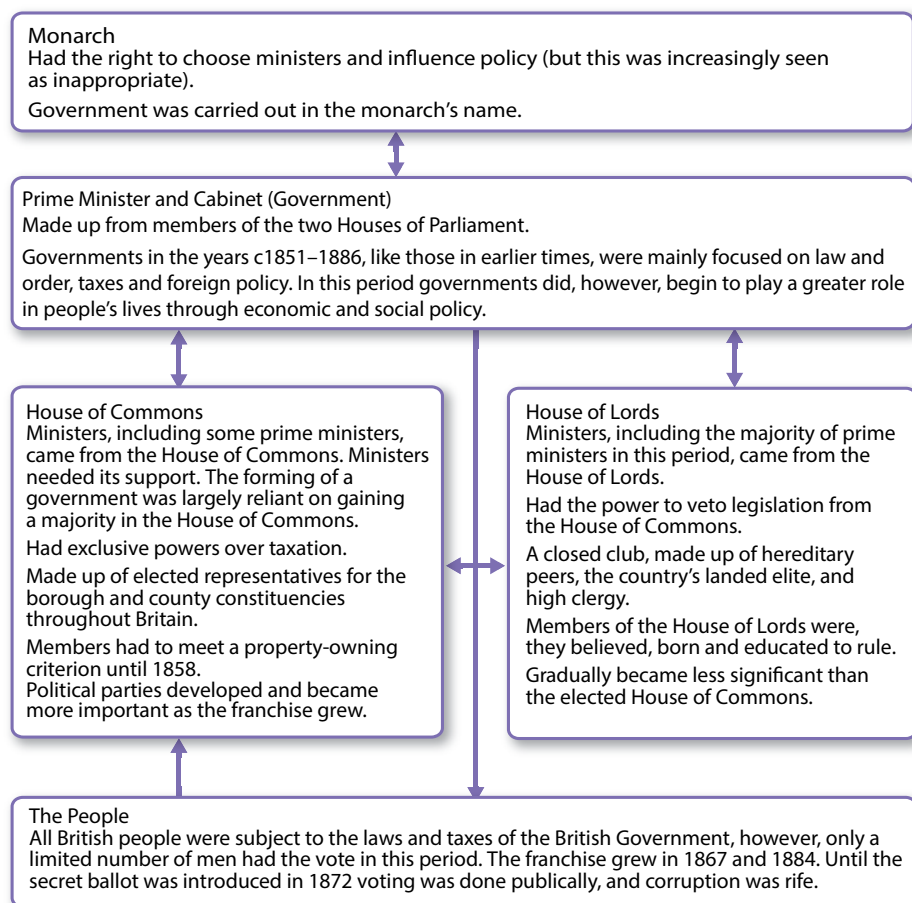
Monarch
Had the right to choose ministers and influence policy (but this was increasingly seen as inappropriate).
Government was carried out in the monarch's name.

Prime Minister and Cabinet (Government)
Made up from members of the two Houses of Parliament.
Governments in the years c1851–1886, like those in earlier times, were mainly focused on law and order, taxes and foreign policy. In this period governments did, however, begin to play a greater role in people's lives through economic and social policy.

House of Commons
Ministers, including some prime ministers, came from the House of Commons. Ministers needed its support. The forming of a government was largely reliant on gaining a majority in the House of Commons.
Had exclusive powers over taxation.
Made up of elected representatives for the borough and county constituencies throughout Britain.
Members had to meet a property-owning criterion until 1858.
Political parties developed and became more important as the franchise grew.

House of Lords
Ministers, including the majority of prime ministers in this period, came from the House of Lords.
Had the power to veto legislation from the House of Commons.
A closed club, made up of hereditary peers, the country's landed elite, and high clergy.
Members of the House of Lords were, they believed, born and educated to rule.
Gradually became less significant than the elected House of Commons.

The People
All British people were subject to the laws and taxes of the British Government, however, only a limited number of men had the vote in this period. The franchise grew in 1867 and 1884. Until the secret ballot was introduced in 1872 voting was done publically, and corruption was rife.

Figure 1.2: Parliament and the workings of mid-19th-century democracy

The Queen and Parliament

The monarch

Queen Victoria's government (1837–1901) ruled in her name, but not with her direct involvement. The 1689 Bill of Rights had curtailed royal authority and moved the British system towards parliamentary **government**. In addition, 'Economical Reform' from 1789 reduced royal control of **Parliament**. Queen Victoria did, however, have some important powers and influence – ministers lacking the monarch's confidence, for example, were generally dismissed. She could:

- appoint the prime minister
- summon Parliament
- 'influence' Commons elections through patronage of candidates.

Queen Victoria personally disliked not only political reform and the extension of the **franchise**, but also social reform – yet both of these happened during her reign. Although Victoria had both power and influence it can be argued that this was limited due to the increasing independence of the government from the monarch.

Key terms

Government: This group of politicians, called ministers, is led by the prime minister, and each has particular responsibilities. The two houses of Parliament and the civil service run the government of Britain under the leadership of the government. Senior members of the government, such as the Home Secretary and Foreign Minister, belong to the cabinet. Ministers are, in most cases, drawn from the two houses of Parliament.

Parliament: The legislature (law-making body) of Britain comprising the upper house (the House of Lords) and the lower house (the House of Commons).

Franchise: The right to vote in political elections, also referred to as suffrage.

Figure 1.3: Queen Victoria, Prince Albert and their young family

Two years into her reign, the 1839 Bedchamber Crisis had highlighted the risks of interference by the monarch in government: the Queen had attempted to keep the Earl of Melbourne in power despite Sir Robert Peel's electoral victory, and had been seen as having exceeded her constitutional role. Later in her reign she was criticised for withdrawing from political life following the death of Prince Albert. The public mood did, however, start to change after her son Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, became seriously ill before making a remarkable recovery.

She strongly disliked Gladstone, and she tried to prevent him becoming prime minister for the second time in 1880. She said he talked to her as he would to 'a public meeting' and is even said to have described him as 'half-crazy'. Her politics were much more in line with Conservative than with Liberal views but for the most part she avoided becoming involved in partisan politics, setting a precedent that is still observed. At times she effectively played the role of mediator, most notably over the disestablishment of the Church in Ireland in 1869 and during the arguments over the Third Reform Act in 1884.

In the later part of her reign Victoria's standing with the public grew. Her children married into Europe's royal households, increasing her importance in foreign relations. On a personal level she had a very happy marriage, but seemed not to like her children or grandchildren very much. Prince Albert was a great influence and helped guide her away from political controversy. He persuaded her that the right course was to work with the key politicians of the day, even if she did not like them or support their views.

4

Speak like a historian

Professor Eric Evans

Professor Eric Evans is one of the foremost historians on British political and social history. The following is an extract from *The Complete A–Z: 19th and 20th Century British History Handbook.*

Victoria's early political life was dominated by two powerful men, the Earl of Melbourne, who acted as her first tutor in political matters and whom she adored and, after her marriage, her husband Prince Albert, to whom she was absolutely devoted and to whom she bore nine children. Reasonably intelligent and well-read, though often wilful, prejudiced and opinionated, she was usually happy to take her lead on political matters from Albert. Albert taught her to respect the talents of Sir Robert Peel, whom she had taken strongly against over the Bedchamber Crisis in 1839. There is no doubt that the death of Albert in 1861 was a blow from which she never truly recovered. She attracted considerable criticism both on the grounds of neglect of duty and, among those who knew about it, her ambiguous relationship with a Highland manservant, John Brown (who died in 1883). In the 1860s, a significant republican movement grew up. She was coaxed back into public life from the late 1860s, not least by the efforts of Benjamin Disraeli who flattered her shamelessly, manipulatively and with success.[1]

Discussion points:

1. Using your understanding of the historical context, how convincing are the arguments in this extract, regarding the political influence of Queen Victoria?
2. Why might Queen Victoria's political influence have declined during her reign?
3. What differences were there between the political power of Queen Victoria and the current Queen?
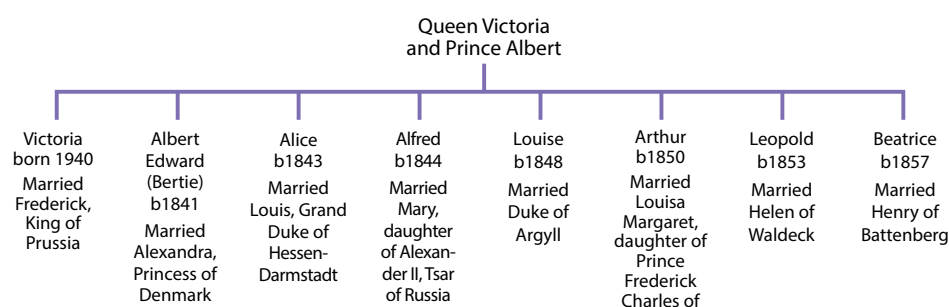

Figure 1.4: Victoria and Albert's children and their links with European royalty

The House of Lords

The **House of Lords** held considerable power during this period. The prime ministers – the Earl of Aberdeen, the Earl of Derby, Earl Russell, the Marquis of Salisbury and Disraeli after 1876 (Earl of Beaconsfield) – sat in the House of Lords, as did a great number of cabinet ministers. The House of Lords could amend or veto any legislation. The aristocrats of the House of Lords often dominated government and in this time of social hierarchy and deference this hold was not significantly dented.

Key terms

House of Lords: The upper house of Parliament in Britain, where laws are debated and voted upon. The House of Lords in the 19th century comprised hereditary peers along with bishops and archbishops from the Church of England.

A/AS Level History for AQA: Challenge and Transformation: Britain, c1851–1964

Key terms

Hereditary peer: Someone who becomes a peer (holder of high social rank such as Duke, Earl, Baron or Marquis) when it is passed to them following the death of a relative who had been the holder of the peerage.

Borough: A town that sends an MP or MPs to Parliament, traditionally a town with a corporation and privileges granted by a royal charter.

Paper duties: Taxes on paper and printing industries, notably on newspapers.

Constituency: An area in which a group of voters live. In the 19th century in Britain there were two types of constituency: boroughs (urban centres) and counties.

County: The main subdivision of the UK (such as Yorkshire and Lancashire). Traditionally counties sent MPs to Parliament to represent the rural community.

Figure 1.5: The six demands of the Chartists (1838)

The House of Lords was made up of **hereditary peers**, bishops and archbishops. Senior churchmen tended to come from the wealthy elites. Charles Longley, for example, who was Archbishop of Canterbury from 1862 to 1868, was from a wealthy family and married to the daughter of a baron. The aristocrats in the House of Lords had further influence on British politics, as in many cases they controlled **borough** seats. In a borough or 'nomination borough', the aristocrat would essentially choose the MP by controlling the voters through bribery and threats. Sir Robert Peel, for example, represented his father's borough of Tamworth.

The balance of power was gradually shifting from the House of Lords to the House of Commons. In 1832, for example, the Commons had forced the unwilling House of Lords to accept the Great Reform Act. Further examples of the Commons supremacy would come with their victory over the Lords in the conflict over **paper duties** in 1860/1861 and a further shift towards democracy with the 1867 Reform Act.

The House of Commons

The House of Commons was made up of members of parliament (MPs), each one elected to represent a **constituency**. The boroughs had been established centuries before and did not accurately reflect where the British people lived. The House of Commons in 1851 reflected the system established by the 1832 Reform Act, and subsequent demands for further reform by the Chartist movement had been rejected. The **county** seats represented the rural areas of Britain. General elections were scheduled to take place every seven years, but at times occurred much more frequently when governments fell because they lost the confidence of Parliament.

Chartist support and activity fluctuated in the 1830s and 1840s. As the economic situation became worse Chartist support grew and when the economic situation of the workers improved the level of support tended to fall. The Chartist movement largely collapsed in 1848.

Thematic link: Legacy of the 1832 Reform Act

In modern Britain the House of Commons is central to our democracy, but in 1851 many aspects of the operation of the House of Commons were far from democratic. There were many in the House and outside who felt that any movement towards democracy would be unwelcome and potentially dangerous. The property qualification (£300 yearly income in boroughs, £600 in counties) required from MPs until 1858 also ensured that MPs came only from the wealthier upper echelons of British society.

A key role of the House of Commons was approving finance bills. An annual budget, presented by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and combining the passing of a number of finance bills through the House of Commons, was established in this period when Gladstone made up one large bill from a number of separate finance bills for the 1861 budget. This proved to be a more effective and much quicker way of passing financial legislation. Gladstone was determined to have the 'Paper Bill' pass and added it to the budget, calculating that the House of Lords would not reject the entire budget to overturn this single aspect. Gladstone won the day and the Commons still pass an annual budget.

Between 1806 and 1831, fewer than 40% of seats in the House of Commons were contested, but from the Great Reform Act until 1865 it was 59%. Voting was public, so corruption, violence and intimidation were still commonplace.

The evolution of the election system

Elections in the 1850s were characterised by:

- bribery
- **treating**, which gave the impression the borough was having a fete or celebration
- **colourable employment**
- quite possibly violence, or the threat of it, either between the supporters of rival candidates or towards voters – possibly fuelled by the provision of free ale.
- no secret ballot – everyone could see who voted for each candidate.

Ruling elites

British society was highly hierarchical and the country's elites, the landed aristocracy, were educated and groomed to rule. The aristocracy maintained a strong hold on British politics, most notably through their dominance of the House of Lords. The perception remained among the elites that they were born to rule and deference among the middle and working classes was much more marked than in the modern day. In the 19th century, a man who had inherited his title and wealth would be considered socially superior to, and would likely look down on, the man who had worked hard to earn his income. Politics was the largely the reserve of the landed gentleman as wealth was needed to win elections, connections and often patronage, in order to rise through the ranks. Someone seeking a political career needed the income to be able to dedicate themselves to politics without the distraction of having to earn it.

Key terms

Treating: Giving or offering food and, more often, drink in order to influence how people vote.

Colourable employment: Giving people fictitious or nominal jobs as a cover for paying them to vote for a particular candidate.

Voices from the past

Walter Bagehot (1826–77)

Walter Bagehot, a liberal political journalist, wrote *The English Constitution* just before the 1867 Reform Act. He did not believe in universal suffrage and argued that the working classes lacked the intellectual ability and education to be given the responsibility of the vote or make good decisions on their own behalf.

The masses are infinitely too ignorant to make much of governing themselves and they do not know their mind when they see it. Rank they comprehend, and money they comprehend, but, except in the vague phrase, 'He be a sharp hand', their conception of the abstract intellect is feeble and inexpressible.

The existing system … is a very curious one. The middle classes rule under the shadow of the higher classes. The immense majority of the borough constituencies … belong to the lower middle class and the majority of the county constituency is … by no means of the highest middle class. These people are the last to whom any people would yield any sort of homage if they saw them. They are but the 'dry trustees' of a fealty given to others. The mass of the English lower classes defer to the English higher class but the nominal electors are a sort of accidental intermediaries, who were not chosen for their own merits and do not choose out of their own number …

The result of our electoral system is the House of Commons, and that House is our sovereign. As that House is, so will our Cabinet be … We have vested, therefore, the trust of our supremest power in persons chosen upon no system, and who if they elected people like themselves would be unbearable. Yet a simple system would be fatal. Some eager persons indeed who are dissatisfied with what they call the imbecility of our present Parliament – meaning by that, not its want of sense or opinion, but its want of vigour in action – hope to get an increase of energy by a wholesale democratic reform … They think that as there are passions at the bottom of the social scale so there is energy. But ideas are wanted as well as impulse, and there are no ideas among our ignorant poor.[2]

Discussion points:

1. What are Walter Bagehot's views on the different classes in Britain?
2. Where does he say power lies in the British political system?
3. What is his attitude towards reform of the political system?

The writings of Charles Darwin were causing a big stir in mid-Victorian England and his cousin Francis Galton applied Darwin's ideas to people. He wrote a book called *Hereditary Genius* in 1869 in which he produced family trees of Britain's notable families (including his own), arguing that he could prove that ability was inherited. Galton's work was the start of the 'science' of eugenics. In a time of great social and political change it was used as evidence that the 'great' aristocratic families were the 'fittest' to run the country's government and key institutions.

The leaders of business and manufacturing, along with the middle classes started to take an increasing role in British politics. The wealthier middle classes looked to emulate the ruling elites, buying estates in the country and sending their sons to public schools, such as Eton and Westminster, then on to university. The possibility of social mobility was certainly evident in British politics with several leading political figures coming from outside the traditional ruling elites. Probably the best example of social mobility was the Peel family: Sir Robert Peel, 2nd baronet, was prime minister on two occasions. His father Sir Robert Peel, 1st baronet, was a leading industrialist who made his money as a mill owner and later politician. His father Robert Peel was a yeoman farmer who went on to make his fortune as a mill owner. The Peel family therefore moved from yeoman farmer to baronet to prime minister in three generations.

💬 Speak like a historian

Norman Gash

Norman Gash's book *Aristocracy and People, Britain 1815–1865* is considered a seminal work on the changing position of the ruling elites. He argues that in 1865, despite the social and economic transformation of Britain, the elites still had real strength:

In the structure of the state, in government, in parliament and the electoral system, in the church, the armed forces, civil service in local government and in society. They had shown themselves on most occasions intelligent and flexible; they had made political concessions and yielded privileges when public opinion clearly demanded such surrenders … They had played a useful and sometimes prominent role in the social, religious, educational and other philanthropic movements of the period and had been rewarded by the moral approval of the public in addition to their existing social and political advantages. What was remarkable was not that British society was slowly slipping beyond the elites control, but that by a process of astute adaptation they had maintained that control so long and with so little resentment on the part of the rest of the community.[3]

Discussion points:

1. What is Gash arguing about the power of the ruling elites in 1865?
2. According to Gash how did the rest of society think about the ruling elites?
3. Gash is writing about 1865. Using details from the rest of Chapter 1, evaluate how accurate Gash's view would be if applied to 1886.

The repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 appeared to signify a loosening on the grip of power by the ruling elites. The Corn Laws had protected the income of the landed classes at the expense of the labouring classes and urban population as a whole. The repeal of this law seemed to suggest that the interests of the ruling elites would no

longer be allowed to override those of the wider population. Peel was in fact setting out to justify aristocratic rule and reduce class division by showing that aristocratic government would work in the national interest, not self-interest.

There were increasing worries among the ruling elites about whether their wealth and dominance would continue. The Earl of Derby stated on 23 August 1885 that his family's wealth was down to 'chance rather than our work' and questioned whether the family's prominent position and wealth would last.[4]

Prime ministers

There were significant issues within the political parties which led to frequent changes in government, for example:

- There were divisions over the Corn Laws among the Tories leading to Russell and the **Whigs** coming to power in 1846.
- A breakdown in relations between Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston led to an effective vote of no confidence, which brought down Russell's government in 1852.
- Earl Derby's short-lived minority government in 1852 illustrated the continued divisions within the emerging **Conservative Party** between traditional Tories, **Peelites** and a group of around 100 MPs who favoured free trade being extended beyond wheat, known as 'free traders'.
- The Earl of Aberdeen formed a government in 1852 that was made up of Whigs, Peelites and 'free traders'. His government included the feuding Lord Russell (Foreign Minister) and Lord Palmerston (Home Secretary).
- Palmerston's government saw tension between the traditional Whigs and Radicals such as Cobden and Bright over issues of foreign policy.
- The Earl of Derby's second short-lived minority government proposed an extension of the franchise and fell when it was defeated. It was at this point that the Willis's Rooms meeting took place and it is said that the **Liberal Party** was formed.
- Palmerston died in 1865 and was replaced by Lord John Russell.
- Lord Russell in his short second term as prime minister again saw splits between the Whigs, Liberals and Radicals in his party as he sought to extend the franchise.
- Lord Derby became prime minister with Disraeli as his key man in the House of Commons. This government pushed through the Second Reform Act in part to strike a blow against Gladstone and the Liberals.

The frequent changes shown in the timeline illustrate the challenges faced by governments in the period.

Timeline of prime ministers, 1846–86

Years	Prime minister	Party
1846–52	Lord John Russell	Whig
1852	Earl of Derby (Edward Smith Stanley)	Conservative
1852–55	Earl of Aberdeen (George Hamilton Gordon)	Whig
1855–58	Viscount Palmerston (Henry John Temple)	Whig
1858–59	Earl of Derby (Edward Smith Stanley)	Conservative
1859–65	Viscount Palmerston (Henry John Temple)	Liberal

ACTIVITY 1.1

Research and write detailed profiles of:

- The Earl of Derby
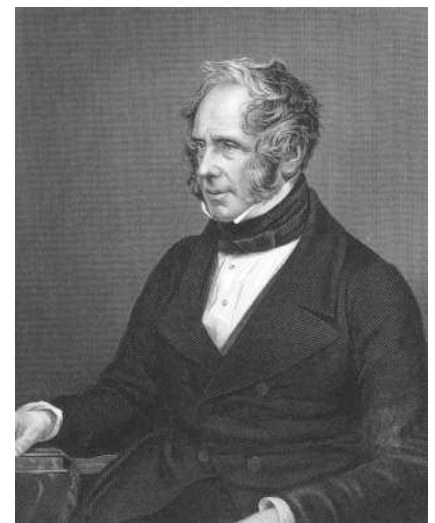- Viscount Palmerston
- William Gladstone
- Benjamin Disraeli.

Figure 1.6: Viscount (Lord) Palmerston

Key terms

Whigs: A political faction that became a political party. They supported the powers of Parliament and the rights of Nonconformists. In 1859 the Whigs combined with the Radicals and Peelites to form the Liberal Party.

Conservative Party: The political party that emerged from the Tory Party in the 1830s under the leadership of Robert Peel.

Peelites: Supporters of Robert Peel's repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, which caused the Conservative Party to split.

Liberal Party: A political party many agree was formed in 1859 at the Willis's Rooms meeting. It was a coalition of Whigs, Radicals and Peelites who united together.
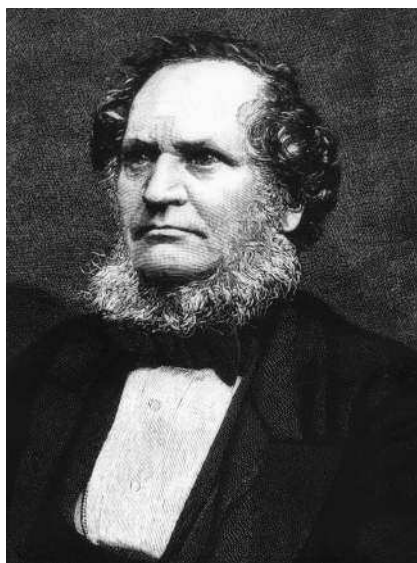
Figure 1.7: The Earl of Derby

| Years	Prime minister	Party
1865–66	Lord John Russell	Liberal
1866–68	Earl of Derby (Edward Smith Stanley)	Conservative
1868	Earl of Beaconsfield (Benjamin Disraeli)	Conservative
1868–74	William Gladstone	Liberal
1874–80	Earl of Beaconsfield (Benjamin Disraeli)	Conservative
1880–85	William Gladstone	Liberal
1885–86	Marquis of Salisbury (Robert Gascoyne-Cecil)	Conservative

Parties and party realignment
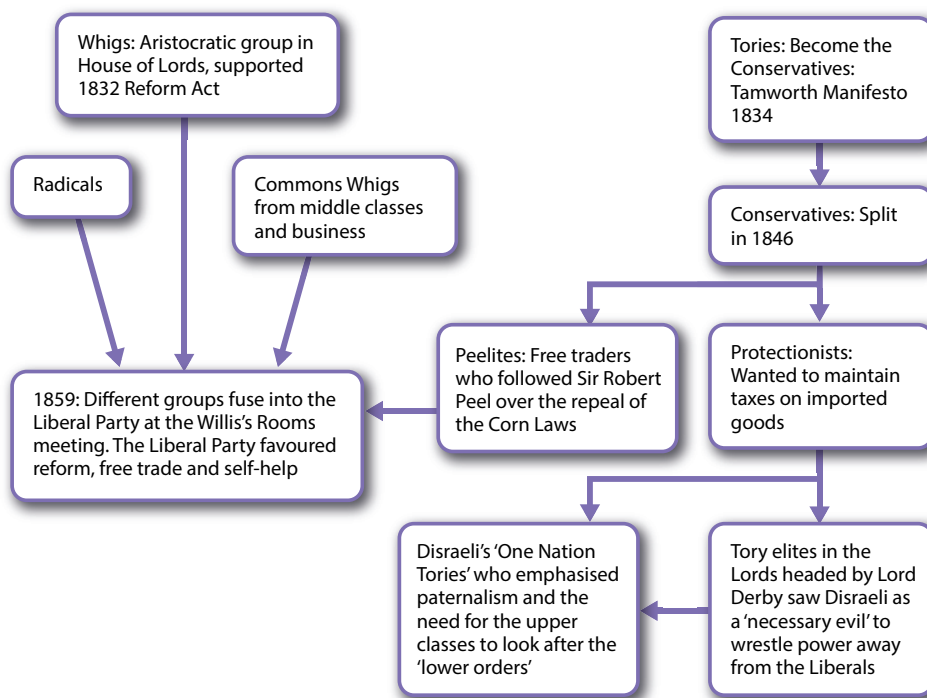
Figure 1.9: The development of the main political parties

Figure 1.8: William Gladstone

The period until 1867 and beyond was one of rapid and dramatic political change. As the franchise and key aspects of the political system changed the political parties had to adapt and evolve. The aristocrat-dominated political groupings from before 1832 started to develop into something approaching modern political parties. This process would not be complete until after later changes to the franchise and voting system but during this period the central ideologies and new party lines came to the fore. In 1867 two main political parties – the Liberals and the Conservatives – were emerging, which would go on to dominate British politics, though it was not the case that they had fully formed by 1867. The Liberals emerged from a coalition of groups including the Whigs, while the Conservatives had emerged out of the **Tory** party.

The Conservative Party is largely seen as emerging from the old Tory Party with Peel's Tamworth Manifesto in 1834. In this manifesto Peel and his supporters accepted the

Key terms

Tory: A parliamentary party that supported the established church and political order. The term has continued to be used in reference to the Conservative Party and its supporters.

1832 Reform Act and moved forwards into the new era where the middle-class vote become key. Peel was significant in the formation of the Conservative Party and he was also responsible for a major split in the party in the 1840s. The Conservative Party split when Peel repealed the Corn Laws. The party split between the free traders headed by Peel (known as Peelites) and the protectionist rump of the Conservative Party. The years 1846 to 1865 were poor for the emerging Conservative Party, with only two short-lived minority governments, in 1852 and from 1858 to 1859.
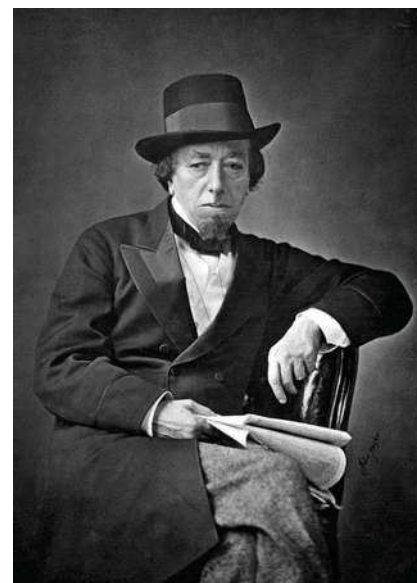
> **Cross-reference: Economic ideologies**

The historical debate about Peel and his role in the collapse of the Conservative Party has raged for a long time. Within the Conservative Party at the time there was a debate about a new way forward to re-establish themselves as a political force. At this time a new star of Conservatism emerged in the form of Benjamin Disraeli. His leadership of the Conservatives in the House of Commons and rivalry with Gladstone, the leader of the Liberal Party, did much to shape British politics. Disraeli stealing a march over Gladstone over reform in 1867 and his ideology of 'one nation' Conservatism, based on the principle of paternalism, helped revive the Conservatives' fortune. He was, however, not universally liked in his own party, in part due to his Jewish background. His skill as a speaker and debater did, in fact, increase distrust of him among many of the old-school Tories in the House of Lords. Despite this distrust Disraeli proved to be vital to Conservative development in the 1850s and 1860s.

The Liberal Party emerged largely out of the old aristocratic Whig Party, but also contained Radicals and Peelites. This diverse group fused together over time and the key moment that most historians pick out is the Willis's Rooms meeting in 1859. The Whigs in the House of Lords were from aristocratic families. They were, generally speaking, in favour of controlled political reform and extension of the franchise, which differentiated them from the Tories. After 1832 a distinctive Whig group emerged in the House of Commons, made up of both the landed classes and middle classes (both business and professional) who pushed for more progressive policies on freedom of religion (many were Nonconformists), press and trade. These would become important underpinning principles of the Liberal Party.

Radicals in the House of Commons pushed for much greater political reform and extension of the franchise. They sought policies that would shift the balance of the power away from the traditional elites and towards the ordinary people. The leading light of the Radical movement was John Bright.

The Peelites were a key component of the emerging Liberal Party, in particular William Gladstone who, first as Chancellor of the Exchequer and then as the Liberal leader, did more than anyone else to shape the new Liberal Party. The term 'Gladstonian liberalism' is often used to describe the party's ideology at this time. The Liberal Party was, however, far from united at this period with the ideas of free trade and self-help clashing with the doctrine of utilitarianism. This promoted the idea that the central aim should always bring the 'greatest pleasure to the greatest number of people', which often led to calls for more government intervention to help the poor.

> **Thematic link: The extension of the franchise**

Figure 1.10: Benjamin Disraeli

ACTIVITY 1.2

Using the information in this section, and any other sources available, write a profile of Radical minister John Bright.