

United Kingdom

Rice

In 1919, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom was David Lloyd-George, a member of the Liberal Party (Lib), in coalition with the Conservative Party (Con). This government, which had begun in 1918, lasted until 1922, when the Conservatives formed their own government under Andrew Bonar Law (SOLS change). Bonar Law was in failing health at the time that he assumed office, and in 1923 was replaced as the leader of the Conservatives (and thus, as Prime Minister) by Stanley Baldwin (no SOLS change). Baldwin was only in power for a short time, until elections in January 1924 led to a government formed under the leader of the Labour Party (Lab), Ramsay Macdonald (SOLS change). Macdonald's government, however, only lasted until November of 1924, when Macdonald lost a vote of confidence and was forced to dissolve his government. Baldwin and the Conservatives were then invited to create a government (SOLS change) that would last until 1929.

In 1929, elections brought Macdonald and Labour back into power (SOLS change). However, in 1931, the arrival of the Great Depression in Britain resulted in a crisis for Macdonald's government, and he resigned in the summer of 1931. However, encouraged by King George V, Macdonald broke with the Labour party and placed himself at the head of the new governing coalition of the Conservative Party along with parts of the Labour and Liberal parties (SOLS change). Macdonald therefore remained Prime Minister, but at the head of a new "National Government" coalition. The part of the Labour party that followed Macdonald to the coalition became known as the National Labour (NLab) group. This is coded as a minor SOLS change on August 24, 1931 (National Archives -b; "Ramsay MacDonald" 2012). (NLab, MacDonald's new party, was a splinter of his old party.) The National Government coalition would remain in power for the remainder of the 1930s, though the leader of the group changed. In 1935, Macdonald retired, and was replaced by Baldwin (SOLS change). Baldwin retired in 1937 and was replaced by Neville Chamberlain, also a Conservative (no SOLS change).

In 1940, as World War II began in Britain, Chamberlain attempted to reshape the National coalition and include more of the Labour Party. When this failed, Chamberlain resigned and the new Conservative leader, Winston Churchill took over the government and persuaded Labour to join (minor SOLS change). Churchill would remain in power until 1945 (Jeffreys 1998; National Archives -a).

Churchill governed a wartime coalition until May 23rd, 1945 (Pelling 1980, 404). He remained in office heading a conservative caretaker government until his party was ousted by elections on 26 July 1945 (Cahoon 2000). In 1945, elections were held which led to a Labour Party majority and the subsequent election of Clement Richard Attlee to the position of PM (Cannon 2002e; "1945 General Election"; Woldendorp et al. 2000). Considering Churchill and Attlee's party membership, we code a major SOLS change since the former was from the Conservative party and the latter was from the Labour party. This SOLS change is coded for July 26, 1945. In 1950, another general election was held, however, Labour once again won a majority of seats, no leadership change occurred, and accordingly, no SOLS change (Woldendorp et al. 2000; "1950 General Election"). Another general election was held in 1951 which resulted in a narrow win for the Conservative party still led by Winston Churchill ("1951: Churchill wins general election"). On 26 October 1951, Churchill returned as PM and remained there until his resignation in 1955. The transition from Attlee back to Churchill was a transition from the Labour party back to the Conservative party. This constitutes a major SOLS change since the parties of the two PMs were different.

As a result of failing health, Winston Churchill resigned from the premiership on 6 April 1955. Later that year, on May 27, 1955, an election was held which further extended the Conservative party's majority and, accordingly, no SOLS change need be coded ("1955: Election victory for Tories under Eden"; "1955 General Election"). As a successor, fellow Conservative party member Robert Anthony Eden became the new PM (Cannon 2002a; Cahoon 2000). Since Eden was a member of Churchill's party we code no SOLS change. Eden remained as PM until he resigned due to failing health on 10 January 1957 (Cannon 2002a). Eden was replaced by fellow party member Maurice Harold Macmillan, so we code no SOLS change for 1957 (Cahoon 2000).

The 1959 general election resulted in another win for the Conservative party and maintenance of Macmillan as PM. As a result of controversies within his cabinet, Macmillan resigned as PM on 19 October 1963 (Cannon 2002d; Knowles 2006). Macmillan was succeeded by fellow Conservative party member Alexander Frederick Douglas-Home. We code no SOLS change since both men were from the same party. General elections were held in 1964 which resulted in the Conservative party losing its majority to the Labour party ("1964 General Election"). James Harold Wilson of the Labour party became the new PM on 16 October, 1964 and served in that capacity until 1970. The transition from the premierships of Douglas-Home and Wilson was a SOLS change since the two men were from different parties.

The general elections of 1966 did not compromise the Labour majority; however, a 1970 election resulted in a victory for the Conservative party and a new PM in the person of Edward Heath from the Conservative party ("1970: Shock election win for Heath"; "1970 General Election"). Douglas-Home and Heath were from different parties so we code a SOLS change for 1970.

Following domestic disputes and economic problems, Heath called a special election in February 1974 to gain a clearer majority and its complementary mandate. The Labour party won that election so, as a given, Heath did not receive the desired support and resigned on 4 March, 1974 (Cannon 2002b; "1974 General Election"). His successor was James Harold Wilson, the former PM, from the Labour party. The transition from Heath to Wilson constitutes a SOLS change since the two men were from two different parties. A second election was held in October 1974. However, the Labour party maintained their majority and no leadership change occurred ("1974 General Election"; Cahoon 2000). On April 6, 1976, Wilson resigned and was replaced by fellow Labour party member Leonard James Callaghan. Since both men were from the same party, we code no SOLS change. In 1979, general elections were held which resulted in a Conservative party win and a new PM ("1979 General Election"). Margaret Thatcher of the Conservative party became the new PM on 4 May 1979 and served until 1990. The 1979 transition constitutes a SOLS change since Callaghan and Thatcher were from two different parties.

Due to internal political conflicts within the Conservative party, Thatcher resigned in 1990 and was replaced as PM by fellow party member John Major on 28 November 1990 (Cannon 2002c). Since the transition was from one Conservative party member to another, we code no SOLS change for 1990. The Conservative party won elections from 1979 through 1997. However, in 1997, Labour party member Tony Blair became the new PM after his Labour party won the May 1, 1997 general election ("May 1st, 1997 General Election Results - United Kingdom Totals"). We code a major SOLS change for May 2, 1997 since Major and Blair were from two different parties. Blair survived as PM through 2001 and 2005 general elections but resigned as Labour party head and PM on 27 Jun 2007 ("June 7, 2001 General Election Results - United Kingdom Totals"; "May 5, 2005 General Election Results - United Kingdom Totals"; "Blair, Tony"). Gordon Brown became the new PM in 2007 and remained in that capacity through the end of this project's temporal domain. We

code no SOLS change for 2007 since the Blair resignation led to a leadership change within the Labour party.

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