• Middle class voters were against its commitment to nationalisation
• Immigration was a sensitive issue.
• Wilson seemed to personify new, progressive Britain in which talented people could thrive
• Majority of only 4 increased it to 96 in 1966 election
• Wilson was very skilled at managing his cabinet.

Liberal revival
• many middle class turned from Conservative to Liberal- more publicity, funding and recruits- 3 more seats but doubled their vote.

Social change-
• Murder Act 1965- temporary death penalty ban made permanent
• Race Relations Act 1965- discrimination in public facilities illegal (Enforcing was weak)
• Family Planning Act 1967- made contraception available to all on the NHS
• Sexual Offences Act 1967- legalised homosexual acts that occur privately
• Abortion Act 1967- legalised
• Voting Act 1969- lowered age from 21 to 18
• Equal Pay Act 1970
• Education- 1965 Crosland, sec. for education, began process of replacing the system with new comprehensive schools for children of all abilities, continued period of expansion in higher education- Open University.

Foreign issues
Vietnam-
• Refused to send troops but stood with America
• 1966 he publicly criticised heavy US bombing- irritated LBJ and did not fully satisfy the left

Southern Rhodesia
• left and Commonwealth wanted to send troops to crush the rebellion after illegal independence in 1965
• Wilson tried economic sanctions; didn’t work so tried to compromise if majority vote is given eventually- infuriated left was rejected anyway
• EEC membership- failed to persuade De Gaulle to overturn his veto.

Britain criticised USSR of Czech crisis of 1968
British participation in peacekeeping force in Cyprus since 1964

Economic policies: balance of payments deficit of £800 million- believed it to be lack of competitiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Why was it adopted?</th>
<th>What was it?</th>
<th>How successful was it?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deflation</td>
<td>Wilson did not intend to do devaluation:</td>
<td>Foreign loans.</td>
<td>Did reduce the balance of payment deficit and prevented a run on the pound.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It reduced savings of his core support, it had destroyed previous Labour governments (1931/1949), did not want to annoy Americans, seen as easy way out</td>
<td>Series of deflationary methods- higher taxes on tobacco and alcohol, temporary import surcharge.</td>
<td>Critics suggested that the government struggled to impose wage constraints and the DEA and the Treasury wanted different measures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gulf War, 1991: Britain sent forces as part of US-led coalition to liberate Kuwait after an Iraqi invasion in order to:

- Show solidarity with USA, its vital Arab allies in the Gulf, and the UN.
  - Britain provided 1/3 largest contingent of troops
- Prevent further invasions from Saddam Hussein, Iraq leader
- Protect oil supplies
- Support international law and order
- Show that Britain was still a major power and that John Major was not weaker than Thatcher had been in 1982- even though Kuwait was not a British colony
  - Coalition forces succeeded in liberating Kuwait, British air force provided a key role
  - Ongoing commitment to maintaining peace in region
  - British relations with USA were strengthened
  - Action in Kuwait indirectly led to further war in Iraq in 2003, which had far greater consequences

Reforms which brought the end of Communism and the break-up of the USSR in 1991 were also welcomed in Britain

Deployment of British troops in the former Yugoslavia from 1992 to 1995 to prevent ethnic cleansing by Serbian troops in Bosnia and Croatia

By 1991, Britain had fewer than 200 weapons all assigned to the 4 Trident submarines which came into service 1994-1998

Why were the Conservatives defeated so badly in 1997?

- Labour-43.2% and 418 seats
- Con- 30.7% and 165 seats
- Lib-Dem- 16.8% and 46 seats
  - Lack of track of authority
    - Elected as MPs preferred him to Heseltine
    - Thatcher recently marked him as successor
    - Affable, reliable, and conscientious- appealed to MPs who didn’t like Thatcher’s bossiness
    - Lack of experience- Only in cabinet since June 1987- briefly foreign sec. from June to Oct 1989 and then chancellor
    - Uncharismatic personality
      - Although Major did get some credit for surprise win in 1992- vigorous campaigning
        - Reduced majority to only 21
      - Cash for questions- Mohamed Al-Fayed, owner of Harrods, and MP Neil Hamilton
      - Sex scandals
  - Conservative divisions about Britain’s role in Europe
    - Eurosceptics loathed EEC moves towards greater monetary and political union
      - Major got some British opt-outs: the Social Chapter and the currency
      - Parliament vote- Conservative rebels twice got defeats
        - Had to force by threatening dissolution
  - Black Wednesday