

## **UK: THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY SINCE 1945**

### **1. THE LABOUR PARTY AND THE WELFARE STATE (1945-1951)**

In 1945 the Labour Party, born in 1901, won the general elections and created the Welfare State: a system by which the government provided free social services and National Health Service for all citizens. Together with the US, the UK was a founder member of the **United Nations Organisation (UNO)** and of the **North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)**.

### **2. BETWEEN 1950 AND 1970**

Elizabeth II became queen in 1952. In the 1960s new immigrants from the West Indies and India arrived in the country generating racism and hostility. In 1973 Britain joined the European Union.

### **3. TATCHERISM (1979-1990)**

The new Conservative Prime Minister **Margaret Thatcher** was in favour of the free market and denationalised industries to lower government spending. She was hostile to trade unions and destroyed the Welfare State. She was called the Iron Lady.

### **4. TONY BLAIR (1997-2001)**

Tony Blair, leader of the Labour Party, improved the Welfare and the Education System, fought against crime and unemployment. He established a national minimum wage, devolved powers to Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

## **USA: THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY SINCE 1945**

### **1. THE COLD WAR**

In the post-war period, the United States reached a considerable level of prosperity. Henry Truman Administration offered the **Marshall Plan** to help Europe rebuild its economy. In the 1950s, the **Cold War** between America and the Western World on one side and the communist countries reached moments of tensions.

## 2. 1960s

In 1961, John F. **Kennedy** became the first Catholic president. In this period the Berlin Wall was built (1961). Kennedy was assassinated in 1963. Also Martin Luther King, the leader of the nonviolent movement for civil rights, was assassinated in 1968. In this period, America also became involved in the **Vietnam War** against communist North Vietnam.

## 3. NIXON AND CARTER

The Republican President **Richard Nixon** promised to put an end to the Vietnam War, but the war ended only in 1975. At the end of the Vietnam War, inflation was very high, and the Democratic President **Jimmy Carter** was unable to face the situation.

## 4. REAGAN AND BUSH

**Ronald Reagan** and the Soviet President Gorbachev met in Washington in 1987 to sign a treaty to ban land-missiles in Europe. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 took place during George Bush's presidency. In 1991 the USA led a coalition against Saddam Hussein.

## 5. CLINTON

The Democratic Bill Clinton had a progressive plan of social reforms, job creation and reduction of public debit. America enjoyed a new period of growth and prosperity.