

# MARGARET THATCHER'S UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A LEASEHOLD REFORM BRIEFING BY FREE LEASEHOLDERS



**“Ground-rents are a still more proper subject of taxation than the rent of houses. A tax upon ground-rents would not raise the rents of houses. It would fall altogether upon the owner of the ground-rent, who acts always as a monopolist, and exacts the greatest rent which can be got for the use of his ground ... Ground-rents and the ordinary rent of land are a species of revenue which the owner, in many cases, enjoys without any care or attention of his own.”** – Adam Smith, Book V, Chapter 2, *The Wealth of Nations*, 1776

**“There is in particular all the difference between creating a system within which competition will work as beneficially as possible, and passively accepting institutions as they are. Possibly nothing has done so much harm to the liberal cause as the wooden insistence of some liberals on certain rough rules of thumb, above all the principle of laissez-faire.”** – Friedrich von Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, 1944

**“Fabianism has no desire to see the Duke of Bedford replaced by 500 little Dukes of Bedford under the guise of enfranchised leaseholders.”** – Sidney Webb, *Socialism: True and False*, 1894

**“Half a million more people will now live and grow up as freeholders with a real stake in the country and with something to pass on to their children. There is no prouder word in our history than ‘freeholder’.”** – Margaret Thatcher, speech to Conservative Party conference 1982

## WHAT IS LEASEHOLD?

Leasehold refers to an essentially feudal form of property tenure where an individual buys a saleable right to occupy property for a fixed term – their home is subject to a landlord. In law, a residential leasehold interest is defined as tenancy, even if the homebuyer has paid a premium for the property and thinks they own it. At the end of the lease term, the property reverts back to the freeholding landlord, unless the lease is extended. Costs of services provided by a freeholding landlord are recovered from leaseholders via service charges, over which they have little to no control. Additionally, leaseholders often have to pay ground rent to the landowner, a periodic fee that acknowledges the landowner's ownership of the land. No services are provided in exchange for ground rent. According to freeholder lobby data, these ground landlords typically own just 2.5% capital value of a block, with the overwhelming financial value held by leaseholders.

Over the decades, Parliament has passed various laws aimed at rebalancing the landlord-tenant relationship and making flat living more efficient, but the tension between the two competing interests remains and leasehold controversies have proliferated from the post-Grenfell building safety crisis to spiralling service charges and secret insurance commissions. Calls for a mass shift to commonhold, an arrangement on the statute book since 2002 providing for resident-controlled freehold flats without corporate freeholders, grow louder. Leasehold, with private ground landlords operating blocks of flats and in possession of homeowners' money, is confined in the world to England and Wales. Commonhold equivalents such as condominium, co-operative and strata title are commonplace in North America, Europe and Australia.

Expanding home ownership and property-owning democracy is highly topical as the housing crisis continues to rage on. Just 5% of Britons don't want to own their own home.<sup>1</sup> Owner-occupancy rates in the UK are in decline. We also have the highest housing costs in the whole of Europe.<sup>2</sup> As such, debates about whether those without capital will ever vote for the party of capitalism continue.

Leasehold and commonhold reform is central to making housing more affordable and expanding real homeownership to provide the dignity, security, autonomy and control that flows from land capital. Margaret Thatcher understood this. More recently, the 2017 and 2019 Conservative Party manifestos promised action on leasehold. Polling conducted by Opinium (February 2024) found:

- 56% of all UK adults support abolishing the leasehold system.
- 61% of 2019 Conservative (and Labour) voters support abolishing the leasehold system.
- 65% of people intending to vote Conservative at the next election support abolishing the leasehold system.
- 62% of people intending to vote Labour at the next election support abolishing the leasehold system.
- 59% of Leave voters support abolishing the leasehold system.

In its final session of Parliament, Rishi Sunak's Conservative government are pushing through a timid Leasehold and Freehold Reform Bill. Under pressure from vested interests, Sunak's Conservatives have been hoodwinked into believing that this policy area is too technical, too complex and un-Conservative. Ironically for somebody who is sometimes painted as being sceptical of free markets and enterprise, Secretary of State Michael Gove's vision on leasehold is closely aligned with the attitudes of Margaret Thatcher to leasehold tenure. On this issue, Gove recognises that freer markets really do mean free people. In words eerily reminiscent of Thatcher, he told Parliament in 2022 that "it is absolutely right that we end the absurd, feudal system of leasehold, which restricts people's rights in a way that is indefensible in the 21st century". Most recently, in an interview with the Sunday Times, he set up the simple moral choice on leasehold reform for Sunak's government, again in a clear echo of Thatcher:

"Are we on the side of the already privileged, successful, well connected, who are getting money for nothing out of ground rent? Or are we on the side of the overwhelming majority of people who just want a roof over their head in order to be able to raise their family and to lead a good life?"

"If we cave in to vested interests on the basis that they have big chequebooks and they might go elsewhere, we are both letting down the overwhelming majority of people, but we're also actually saying ... this is the sort of country where money speaks louder than the voices of people who've got all the right values."<sup>3</sup>

Margaret Thatcher sought more perfect markets but, most importantly, she sought popular capitalism. She stood up for the little guy against vested interests, who distort markets from functioning properly and performing efficiently. They prevent prices from being set by their natural interplay between supply and demand. Special interests, including freeholding

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<sup>1</sup> Eir Nolsoe, "A quarter of Londoners, and one in six Britons, say they'll never afford a home", *YouGov*, May 11, 2021 <https://yougov.co.uk/economy/articles/35807-quarter-londoners-and-one-six-britons-say-theyll-n>

<sup>2</sup> Home Builders Federation, *Housing horizons: examining UK housing stock in an international context*, October 2023 (p.5) [https://www.hbf.co.uk/documents/12890/International\\_Audit\\_Digital\\_v1.pdf](https://www.hbf.co.uk/documents/12890/International_Audit_Digital_v1.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Michael Gove in Caroline Wheeler, "If the young can't get housing, they will abandon democracy", February 10, 2024 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/michael-gove-if-the-young-feel-the-system-is-rigged-they-will-abandon-democracy-xbrvhk5xd>

landlords and their appointed managing agents, grow their influence and power through protective legislation and regulation that insulate them from the forces of competition and choice while rendering the real consumers, leaseholders who are meant to be paying for a service, captive.

Fundamentally, the leasehold system stands at odds with the free market economics espoused by Adam Smith and Friedrich von Hayek, both of whom played an important role in shaping Margaret Thatcher's political economy. Ironically, those on the centre-right of British politics who oppose wholesale leasehold reform have more in common with Fabian Socialists, such as Sidney and Beatrice Webb, than their free market forebears.

In 2020, the Competition and Markets Authority described leaseholders as "captive consumers with very little influence over the costs incurred by landlords or their managing agents that will in due course be passed on to them."<sup>4</sup> Leasehold has all the hallmarks of a monopoly. Leaseholders, the consumers paying the bills for the insuring and upkeep of their homes, are unable to easily switch service providers, unlike in other parts of the economy.

Furthermore, with its feudal-style provisions, including the threat of forfeiture to seize the home for a debt worth far less, leasehold enables behaviours that are antithetical to the values of those who believe in the benefits of a property-owning democracy. Conservatives know that 'monopolists' are the enemy of capitalism. They abuse their powers of domination to extort from end users and are prone to corruption. Indeed, in her final book, Thatcher issued the following warning about these twin evils when discussing the importance of the rule of law to free enterprise capitalism:

"Everyone involved in the country's economic life has to be protected against extortion and corruption. If these go unfulfilled the complex calculations and the nexus of relationships which lie behind economic growth are disrupted, and prosperity accordingly suffers."<sup>5</sup>

Leaseholders simply want free market forces and competition applied to managing agents and for industry-friendly red tape preventing them from taking control of their homes and service charges to be swept away. Currently, loyalty in the leasehold 'market' is to the person benefiting from increased costs, the freeholder who typically owns just 2.5% of the capital value in a block of flats, not the person actually paying the bills and who has worked hard to buy their home and has paid a premium for that. Contrary to popular belief, Margaret Thatcher abhorred private monopolies as well as public ones, writing in her autobiography:

"Monopolies or quasimonopolies ... [in] the private sector need careful regulation to ensure against abuses of market power, whether at the expense of competitors or of customers."<sup>6</sup>

As such, and as this briefing sets out, it is imperative that the government aligns its policies with the widespread demand for equitable home ownership, embodying Thatcher's ethos of empowering hardworking people against the entrenchments of feudal and monopolistic practices. Failure to act decisively not only undermines the principles of a property-owning democracy but also disregards the evident public consensus and the foundational values of free market competition, which should serve as the cornerstone of housing policy.

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<sup>4</sup> The Competition and Markets Authority, *Leasehold housing: update report*, February 28, 2020 (p.7) [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5e57e4ea86650c53b74fe6e0/Leasehold\\_update\\_report\\_pdf\\_-.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5e57e4ea86650c53b74fe6e0/Leasehold_update_report_pdf_-.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Margaret Thatcher, *Statecraft* (London: HarperCollins, 2002).

<sup>6</sup> Margaret Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years* (London: HarperCollins, 1993).

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: LEASEHOLD REFORM IS CENTRAL TO A THATCHERITE PROPERTY-OWNING DEMOCRACY**

The Conservative Party has a proud but forgotten history of extending the rights of homeownership to leaseholders and, in doing so, expanding the Conservative property-owning democracy. Conservatives have been agitating on leasehold reform since as early as 1884 with Lord Randolph Churchill pushing “leasehold enfranchisement” so that leaseholders could become freeholders and therefore voters (i.e. imbued with the “franchise”). The case for a “property-owning democracy” was, of course, originally propagated by Noel Skelton before being adopted by Harold Macmillan and Margaret Thatcher.

Margaret Thatcher was a leading figure in post-war leasehold reform efforts. Her connection is often neglected in contemporary debates. Tory leasehold reformists and intellectual fellow travellers included William Rees-Mogg, Sir Brandon Rhys-Williams, Hugh Rossi, Michael Heseltine, Ian Gow, Lord Hailsham, Lord Mackay, Dudley Fishburn, Michael Howard and Sir George Young.

This briefing document produced by Free Leaseholders reveals Margaret Thatcher’s linkages to the leasehold reform agenda and sets out the Conservative rationale for a decisive break with the controversial leasehold tenure that denies decent people land capital and real homeownership. This information has only come to light from investigations by Free Leaseholders founder Harry Scoffin and the group’s consultant researcher Wade Barker, who wrote a thesis on these issues at King’s College London. The work draws on archival material at the Bodleian Library, the University of Oxford, retrieved and analysed by Barker. We have not yet had an opportunity to consult The National Archives at Kew.

Key points include:

- Margaret Thatcher’s interest in leasehold reform began in the 1960s as the Conservative Party spokesperson on housing and land.
- Despite Thatcher having a close policy and political focus on the enfranchisement of house leaseholders and it featuring in the 1966 manifesto for the Conservatives, Harold Wilson’s Labour Party stole a march on them and delivered compulsory freehold purchase by changing the law in 1967. However, Thatcher was to breathe down the neck of the Wilson government to deliver leasehold enfranchisement for house dwellers.
- On becoming Conservative Party leader, Thatcher quickly set out her radical property-owning democracy philosophy and agenda, which included an early draft of the 1978 manifesto featuring policy pledges on leasehold reform.
- Thatcher recognised the growing political salience of leasehold housing in private correspondence ahead of the landmark 1979 general election and the need for her Conservative Party to deliver a concrete package of reforms for leaseholders.
- In power, and to the annoyance of the Great Estates (i.e. Grosvenor, Cadogan and de Walden etc), Thatcher quickly embarked upon a programme of radical leasehold reforms to give leaseholders more control over their homes, greater transparency on service charges and new rights to acquire the freehold interest:
  - Nugee Committee of Inquiry commissioned in 1984 to establish the problems of flat living and propose policies to improve block upkeep and service charge transparency.
  - Leasehold reform phase one with Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 to give leaseholders more rights to challenge unreasonable service charges, form recognised tenants’ associations and be consulted on major works.
  - Leasehold reform phase two with Landlord and Tenant Act 1987 codifying Nugee Committee recommendations and going further with Section 24 court-appointed manager scheme for negligent or fraudulent freeholder behaviour

that provides leaseholders with a right to compulsorily buy out the freehold interest after two years. (A “Right of First Refusal” was introduced in an attempt to stop the trade in the freeholds to other people’s homes, providing leaseholders with a ‘first-dibs’ to buy their freehold where a landlord was exiting a block of flats.)

- In 1986, not happy with the “unsatisfactory” leasehold regime governing flats and maisonettes, Thatcher ordered work to introduce a freehold flats scheme that removes corporate freeholders and provides for resident control, inspired by US condominium and Australia strata title, which would eventually lead to the phasing out of the inefficient leasehold tenure:
  - Commissioning of the Law Commission Working Group on condominium, which became known as the Aldridge Committee.
  - In 1987, commonhold proposals come forward in the Aldridge Report.
  - The following year sees work to draft commonhold legislation commence.
  - A Commonhold Bill and consultation goes live on 28<sup>th</sup> November 1990, the very same day Thatcher stands down as PM.
- Thatcher’s commonhold agenda survived her premiership and found its way into the 1992 and 1997 Conservative Party manifestos. Indeed, another draft Commonhold Bill was produced in 1996, although timed out due to the 1997 general election.
- However, Thatcher’s focus on enfranchising flat leaseholders with a “no-fault” right to buy scheme was partially delivered in 1993 by the Major government.
- The Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993 set an important precedent in allowing flat leaseholders to compulsorily purchase the residual freehold interest to their homes *without* needing to provide fault against the freeholder. But it was a heavily watered down piece of legislation. Qualifying criteria was tightly drawn meaning that many flat leaseholders could not avail themselves of “collective enfranchisement”. The neutered legislation was largely shaped by vested interests including the Great Estates and charity freeholders. (The 1993 Act was so poor that the Major government found itself enacting fresh primary legislation three years later to sort out obvious loopholes, unintended consequences and harsh edges.)<sup>7</sup>
- Without concerted action from Conservative-minded actors, Rishi Sunak will do a John Major and bring into law a wishy washy package of reforms that please no one and help no one while missing a once-in-a-generation opportunity to do something akin to a Right to Buy 2.0.
- Failure to take decisive action against leaseholding allows Keir Starmer’s Labour to outflank the Tories on housing and steal the crown as the Party of Homeownership, while locking in a new hegemonic electoral coalition of liberated and grateful homeowners.

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<sup>7</sup> “Leaseholders”, *Hansard – UK Parliament*, January 18, 1996 [https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/written-answers/1996/jan/18/leaseholders#S6CV0269P0\\_19960118\\_CWA\\_18](https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/written-answers/1996/jan/18/leaseholders#S6CV0269P0_19960118_CWA_18); “Housing Legislation”, *Hansard – UK Parliament*, January 19, 1996 [https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/written-answers/1996/jan/19/housing-legislation#S6CV0269P0\\_19960119\\_CWA\\_20](https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/written-answers/1996/jan/19/housing-legislation#S6CV0269P0_19960119_CWA_20)

## APPENDIX

### THATCHER'S INTEREST IN LEASEHOLD HOUSING SPARKED IN THE 1960S

Margaret Thatcher was first exposed to the problems of leasehold tenure and the desirability of letting leaseholders “enfranchise” themselves to become freeholders, bonafide property owners, in the 1960s. (Leasehold “enfranchisement” was historically linked to the right to vote in this country as leaseholders for many years had no right to choose who governed them and so the right to compulsorily buy the freehold interest to one’s home was seen as a mechanism for creating more electors and more Conservative-supporting voters, spreading the franchise at a time when land ownership was tied to suffrage and preparing Conservatives for mass democracy by locking in voters with a new stake in society and the established order). Despite the relatively small population of leasehold homes (certainly compared to the 5 million in England today), Thatcher astutely recognised the moral and electoral imperative of liberating leaseholders so that they had land capital and the dignity, security, autonomy and control that flows from real homeownership.

As noted by historian Roland Quinault, “after the Labour victory at the 1964 general election, Thatcher became the Opposition housing and land spokesperson and championed the policy of leasehold enfranchisement, which, she claimed, would create a property-owning democracy. It was, however, mainly the urban middle class who stood to benefit from the right to buy the freehold of their homes. In any case, Harold Wilson’s Labour Government stole a march on the Tories by passing a Leasehold Reform Bill in 1967.”<sup>8</sup>

In 1965, Thatcher correctly observed that leaseholders were clamouring to be enfranchised and wanted to know how much it would cost, an issue that today dogs the Rishi Sunak Government’s flagship Leasehold and Freehold Reform Bill, which curiously omits the valuation methodology that will underpin the Online Calculator for leasehold enfranchisement, saved for secondary legislation at some time in the future:

“From the former Gracious Speech it would seem that everyone would have been entitled to leasehold enfranchisement, but now the emphasis is put, not on enfranchisement, but on reform of leasehold. This seems to be different.

“What people really want to know is how much they will have to pay or how much they will get, and under what circumstances. Undoubtedly the majority of interest has been evinced in this by people who want to purchase the freehold reversion. They want to know how much they will have to pay under the Bill, and it will not be an easy formula to decide, because obviously it will depend on the amount of ground rent payable, and when that amount was fixed.

“The other point they really want to know is whether, if the lease is held by a charity, or by the Crown, or by the Church Commissioners, they will also have the opportunity to purchase it. At the moment Ministerial announcements with regard to residential property seem to imply that the leasehold system is rather wicked except when it is created by the Crown. Obviously people want to know whether everyone who holds a lease for residential property will be entitled to purchase the reversion, and roughly for how much.”

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<sup>8</sup> Roland Quinault, *British Prime Ministers and Democracy: From Disraeli to Blair* (London: Continuum Publishing Corporation, 2011), p.176.

“I understood that part of the function of the debate on the Gracious Address was to elicit information on Bills mentioned in the Address, but we shall not get very much information during the debate if we are not to hear more about the details of leasehold enfranchisement.”<sup>9</sup>

Thatcher would keep pressing the Wilson government on its plans to bring forward leasehold enfranchisement (this was for houses).<sup>10</sup>

## **PREPARING FOR GOVERNMENT: LEASEHOLD AS PART OF THATCHER'S HOMEOWNERSHIP CRUSADE**

In “The Right Approach”, a Conservative policy statement released in October 1976 to flesh out Thatcher's philosophy, there is an acknowledgement that should a Thatcher government be formed, “restoring sense in housing will take time. But unless we make a start soon, the jungle of nonsense and unfairness will become impenetrable. We should aim to let people have what they most want, a home of their own”.<sup>11</sup>

Against this statement, we can make sense of the slow but purposeful build-up of leasehold and commonhold reform during the Thatcher administrations:

- In February 1984, the Nugee Committee of Inquiry is established to investigate the problems of flat living and the leasehold system.
- Leasehold law reform phase one with Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, receiving Royal Assent 30 October 1985.
- October 1985 also sees the release of the Nugee Report.
- Leasehold law reform phase two with Landlord and Tenant Act 1987, pushed through by Number 10 ahead of the general election to win over swing voters and disaffected Conservatives in leasehold developments.
- In May 1986, a Law Commission Working Group on condominium, which became the Aldridge Committee, is announced.
- In July 1987, commonhold proposals come forward in the Aldridge Report.
- In June 1988, work to draft commonhold legislation is announced.
- A draft Commonhold Bill and public consultation goes live on 28<sup>th</sup> November 1990, the same day Thatcher stands down as PM.

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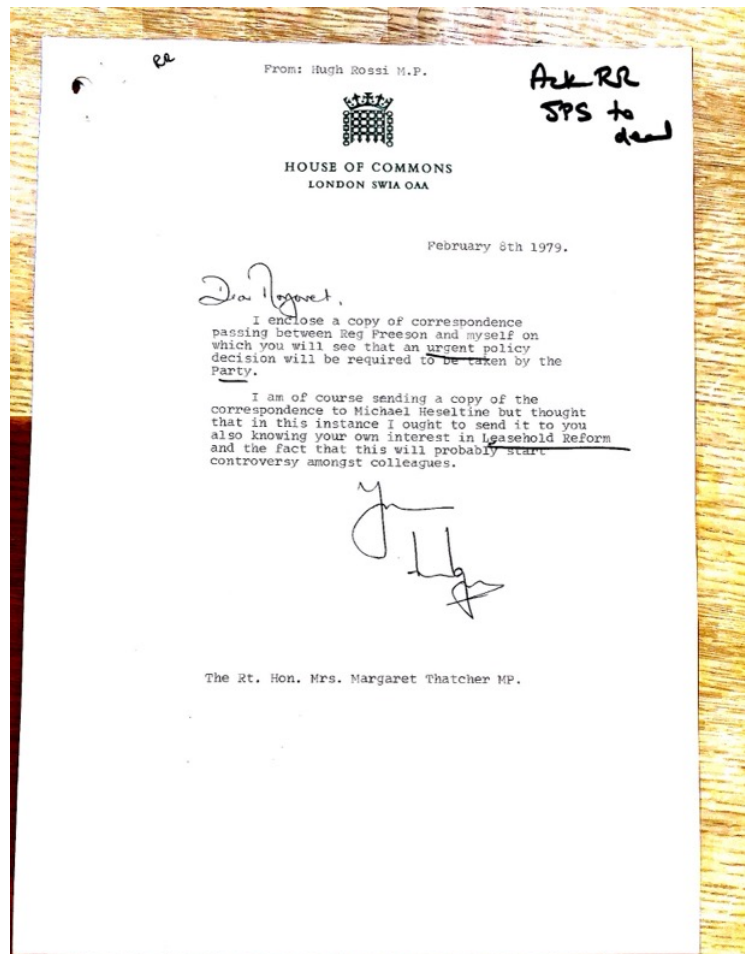
<sup>9</sup> “Land Commission And Housing”, *Hansard – UK Parliament*, November 11, 1965 <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1965-11-11/debates/87e0e20e-a349-4431-9160-4057a9093bca/LandCommissionAndHousing>

<sup>10</sup> “Leasehold Reform”, *Hansard – UK Parliament*, December 20, 1965 [https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1965/dec/20/leasehold-reform#S5CV0722P0\\_19651220\\_HOC\\_9](https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1965/dec/20/leasehold-reform#S5CV0722P0_19651220_HOC_9)

<sup>11</sup> Conservative Party, “The Right Approach (Conservative policy statement)”, *Margaret Thatcher Foundation*, 1976 <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/109439>



We also know that Sir Hugh Rossi, then the MP for Hornsey and Wood Green, wrote directly to Margaret Thatcher in 1979 to flag to her the growing problem of leasehold housing and said that “an urgent policy decision will be required to be taken by the Party”, with the words “urgent” and “Party” underlined by Thatcher. He added that he was also sending her the letter “knowing your own interest in Leasehold Reform”, with “Leasehold Reform” also underlined by Thatcher in the document found at the Bodleian Library.



A 1978 manifesto draft from the Leaders Consultative Committee box at the Bodleian makes crystal clear that “the Conservative Party has a deep commitment to *the extension* of home ownership” (emphasis added). Leasehold reform should naturally be seen in that vein. Indeed, in this manifesto draft, there is a commitment to “tighten[ing] up provisions relating to service charges to protect tenants of mansion blocks and give them a first option to buy at the market price”.



SECRET

I. Housing

Home Ownership

1. The Conservative Party has a deep commitment to the extension of home ownership.
2. To this end we will enable first time buyers to purchase homes by making a grant of £1 for every £2 saved. This will let them raise the deposit for a mortgage they would otherwise be unable to obtain. It will also save taxpayers' and ratepayers' money by reducing the demand for council houses.
3. We will experiment with shared purchase schemes for first time home buyers which will enable them to buy a house or flat even though they cannot raise all the money initially needed.
4. If mortgage rates rise sharply again, we reserve the right to step in and impose a maximum rate.
5. We will keep house prices down by ensuring a steady supply of houses and development land.
6. We will legislate in our first Parliament to give council and new town tenants the right to buy their own homes. Generous discounts of 30 per cent to 50 per cent for tenants of 3 or more years standing would be given. Taxpayers and ratepayers will benefit financially from this too by being relieved of the burden of council house subsidies.
7. We will encourage private and housing association tenants to buy their homes too.
8. We will discourage costly municipalisation programmes which do not produce one single extra home.

Council Housing

9. Those council tenants who do not wish to buy their own homes will be encouraged to take on greater responsibilities for the management of their estates and houses.
10. We will also introduce a Tenants' Charter to free council tenants from petty interference in their lives by council bureaucrats and to reinforce their rights.
11. The waste of public money through the indiscriminate subsidy of public housing, at present running at about £2 bn. a year will be checked. We would concentrate on new building in limited stress areas and helping special groups like the old and the disabled.

Private Landlords and Tenants

12. We firmly intend to attack the problems of homelessness and the shortage of flats and houses to let by encouraging more private rented accommodation to be brought on to the market.
13. To do this, we will see that regulated rents allow landlords fair return on their capital and end the absurdities of the "controlled" rent system.
14. We will bring in "shorthold tenure" which would allow short fixed term lets to operate outside the provisions of the 1974 Rent Act.
15. We will not generally abolish security of tenure but more accommodation would be made available to students by drawing up registers of properties to let to them which would not be subject to protected tenancies. Similarly, we would exempt flats over shops from security of tenure.

16. Tenants will be encouraged to take up their rights to rent allowances and landlords will receive generous improvement grants provided they keep their property to let.
17. We will tighten up provisions relating to service charges to protect tenants of mansion blocks and give them a first option to buy at the market price.
18. We believe that housing associations have a vital part to play in the provision of choice in housing and accommodation for special groups. We would remove the unnecessary red tape which, at present, restricts their operation.

#### Construction Industry

19. We believe that a healthy building trade is essential to keep the supply of houses up and their price down.
20. We will remove the threat to nationalise the industry which has crippled its output and prevent Labour's proposed expansion of inefficient direct labour departments.
21. We will disband the bureaucratic manpower board and rely on closer liaison with the industry.
22. To reduce unemployment and the uncertainty that has caused it, we will stabilise the workload of the industry by drawing up and publishing regional programmes for public sector construction work for 5 year periods.

## THATCHER'S LEASEHOLD ENFRANCHISEMENT AND COMMONHOLD REFORMS

It is worth noting that, historically, opposition to leasehold enfranchisement – the right to compulsorily buy out one's freeholder to become a true homeowner – was held most deeply by the Fabian Socialists, with Sidney Webb proclaiming:

“Fabianism has no desire to see the Duke of Bedford replaced by 500 little Dukes of Bedford under the guise of enfranchised leaseholders.”<sup>12</sup>

An anti-enfranchisement leaflet by the Fabians explains why a fair few Conservatives at the time backed law change to allow leaseholders to become outright owners: “The more widely spread, and the larger the number of persons interested in the ownership of property, the better it is for the rights of property.”<sup>13</sup> That quote attributed to the Conservative disposition on leasehold enfranchisement complements the quote of then Conservative MP for Dulwich, John Blundell Maple, who believed that leasehold enfranchisement “would make tenants better citizens and consequently stronger Conservatives”, and thereby, “do an enormous amount of good”.<sup>14</sup>

Thatcher conceived of Right to Buy as the “enfranchisement” of council house tenants, elevating them to fully paid-up members of the property-owning democracy, standing tall as a Freeholder, the proudest word in our history, she said:

“Half a million more people will now live and grow up as freeholders with a real stake in the country and with something to pass on to their children. There is no prouder word in our history than ‘freeholder’.”<sup>15</sup>

“We were elected to extend home ownership, and we gave council tenants the right to buy their own homes. And never let it be forgotten that Labour fought it tooth and nail in their local councils, in Parliament and through the courts. It was not part of their philosophy that council tenants should acquire the rights and dignity of freeholders. It is because of Conservative conviction and persistence that nearly three quarters of a million more council tenants have either bought or are buying their homes, and with Ian Gow as Minister of Housing there will be many, many more.”<sup>16</sup>

In 1984, alarmed by the litany of problems that leaseholders, freeholders and managing agents had with blocks of flats in this country and the arcane and unwieldy legal structure organising multi-occupancy buildings, Thatcher had her housing minister, Ian Gow, who

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<sup>12</sup> Sidney Webb, *Socialism: True and False* (London: Fabian Society, 1899), p.7 [https://lse-atom.arkivum.net/uploads/r/politics-economics-and-social-science-collections/f/1/a/fla1f8d218f98b1e0a5584e98f3f1b801727b6df14f6855f23c326cc3da6dd94/d247414e-ad6d-4b3d-b4a3-cdf802857f39-UKLSE\\_DL1\\_FS01\\_002\\_001\\_0101\\_0001.b39e7cc1-9354-4606-9be0-c8e8e4e6276f.pdf](https://lse-atom.arkivum.net/uploads/r/politics-economics-and-social-science-collections/f/1/a/fla1f8d218f98b1e0a5584e98f3f1b801727b6df14f6855f23c326cc3da6dd94/d247414e-ad6d-4b3d-b4a3-cdf802857f39-UKLSE_DL1_FS01_002_001_0101_0001.b39e7cc1-9354-4606-9be0-c8e8e4e6276f.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Sidney Webb, *The truth about leasehold enfranchisement* (London: Fabian Society, 1891), p.2 [https://lse-atom.arkivum.net/uploads/r/politics-economics-and-social-science-collections/d/5/5/d559b727f3c83d401f13fbd2b23bee9d6cca591e7287394cb345d02c5d2c26cc/397b40e4-5e69-4537-8b61-7bf407844ea1-UKLSE\\_DL1\\_FS01\\_002\\_001\\_0044\\_0001.03476b95-170a-4124-a1ee-ac268af5d340.pdf](https://lse-atom.arkivum.net/uploads/r/politics-economics-and-social-science-collections/d/5/5/d559b727f3c83d401f13fbd2b23bee9d6cca591e7287394cb345d02c5d2c26cc/397b40e4-5e69-4537-8b61-7bf407844ea1-UKLSE_DL1_FS01_002_001_0044_0001.03476b95-170a-4124-a1ee-ac268af5d340.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Alex Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism in Imperial London 1868-1906* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007), p.74.

<sup>15</sup> Margaret Thatcher, “Speech to Conservative Party Conference”, *Margaret Thatcher Foundation*, October 8, 1982 <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/105032>

<sup>16</sup> Margaret Thatcher, “Speech to Conservative Party Conference”, *Margaret Thatcher Foundation*, October 14, 1983 <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/105454>



delivered Right to Buy, commission the eminent Edward Nugee QC to investigate the issues alongside a panel of tenant, landlord and legal interests. Its recommendations to empower leaseholders, including via a “Right of First Refusal” (a ‘first dibs’, as it were) on the freehold should the landlord choose to exit the block, morphed into the Landlord and Tenant Act 1987, which went further in a number of key aspects, including a right to compulsorily buy out the freehold should it be demonstrated in court “that the landlord has persistently failed in his duties”.<sup>17</sup> The acquisition order provisions for leaseholders in the 1987 Act would, of course, give way to a “no-fault” scheme of “collective enfranchisement” in 1993.

The Landlord and Tenant Act 1987 was famously rammed through Parliament ahead of the general election, a decision understood to have been driven by Thatcher. “The LTA 1987 was rushed through Parliament before the 1987 general election by a government keen to be seen to be tackling the well-publicised problems of lessees in large mansion blocks, many in key constituencies in Central London,” writes foremost leasehold enfranchisement lawyers, Anthony Radevsky and Wayne Clark.<sup>18</sup>

“As the bill was going through Parliament in 1987, Margaret Thatcher announced a general election. This generally causes all unapproved legislation to fall, but quite remarkably all parties unanimously accepted the provisions of the bill and it was rushed through Parliament and into law. We were very fortunate, as were the hundreds of thousands of affected tenants and long leaseholders, whose interests have been further protected by subsequent legislation to buy the freehold of their home even if their landlords are opposed. To this extent, the legislation opened the door to a raft of later reforms that have modernized antiquated real property law in Britain,” writes Professor Chris Hamnett, who served on the Nugee Committee of Inquiry on which the 1987 Act was based.<sup>19</sup>

Peers were highly critical of the Thatcher government’s 1987 leasehold reforms being sped through the system onto the statute books before the polls – hereditary crossbencher Lord Monson wryly observed:

“After all, the Government cannot have thought that this Bill was particularly urgent. They did not give it a very high priority in their legislative programme this Session and a June general election has been an odds-on probability for several months now. Why then the new-found sense of extreme urgency?

“I suspect that the answer lies in the fact that the beneficiaries of the Bill are, to a large extent, articulate middle-class or upper middle-class people who live in marginal constituencies and who are sophisticated enough to know how to vote tactically. If those with similarly valid grievances had been inarticulate working-class people living in constituencies with rock-solid Labour majorities, I doubt very much whether a complicated, 62-clause Bill would have been rushed through in a single afternoon.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> “Flats (Nugee Committee Report)”, *Hansard – UK Parliament*, April 8, 1986  
[https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1986-04-08/debates/044c747d-ddd9-4a73-beeb-ddc7cfc4a508/Flats\(NugeeCommitteeReport\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1986-04-08/debates/044c747d-ddd9-4a73-beeb-ddc7cfc4a508/Flats(NugeeCommitteeReport))

<sup>18</sup> Anthony Radevsky and Wayne Clark, *Tenants’ Right of First Refusal Third Edition* (Bristol: LexisNexis), p.1  
[https://www.lexisnexis.co.uk/store/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/433287/TFFR-Introduction.pdf](https://www.lexisnexis.co.uk/store/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/433287/TFFR-Introduction.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> Chris Hamnett, “Flat Break-Ups: The British Condominium Conversion Experience,” in *WorldMinds: Geographical Perspectives on 100 Problems*, ed. Donald G. Janelle, Barney Warf, and Kathy Hansen (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004), p.160

<https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/WorldMinds/9G1Qc56ea3EC?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=leasehold+law+1987+thatcher&pg=PA160&printsec=frontcover>

<sup>20</sup> “Landlord and Tenant (No. 2) Bill”, *Hansard – UK Parliament*, May 13, 1987  
<https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/lords/1987/may/13/landlord-and-tenant-no-2-bill>

The Landlord and Tenant Act 1987 was a radical piece of legislation, allowing leaseholders of flats, for the first time, the right to purchase the freehold if they could prove in court that freeholder management was truly awful. This wasn't "full" or "no-fault" enfranchisement of flat leaseholders, but antagonised ground landlords, such as the Duke of Westminster, and would pave the way for the introduction of "collective enfranchisement", the no-fault right to buy scheme, under the Major government in 1993, a policy which had been promised in the 1992 Conservative manifesto. (Unfortunately, the 1993 Act was watered down due to ferocious sector lobbying, especially from the Great Estates, and many flat leaseholders could not take advantage of freehold purchase because they were deemed ineligible due to tightly drawn qualifying criteria or had to pay the other side's considerable legal and professional costs, in addition to their own.)

In May 1986, Lord Hailsham, Thatcher's Lord Chancellor, announced that a Law Commission Working Group had been set up to study options for introducing to England and Wales a system of flat ownership and common interest properties based on condominium schemes in other parts of the world, to remove the problematic role of middle-men freeholders. This became known as the Aldridge Committee which, in July 1987, provided proposals for 'commonhold' in its Report.<sup>21</sup> In June 1988, the Thatcher government announced it "had arranged for draft legislation to be prepared at the Law Commission to give effect to the proposals contained in the report of the working group on commonhold".<sup>22</sup>

On Commonhold, it is important to stress it is a Conservative invention. Indeed, the word was coined by then MP for Kensington, Sir Brandon Rhys-Williams, in the late 1970s.<sup>23</sup>

On 25 January 1990, in response to a question from Dudley Fishburn, Thatcher recognised the "unsatisfactory" arrangements faced by flat leaseholders and, as such, promised that she would be bringing forward Law Commission commonhold proposals.<sup>24</sup>

We can also link Commonhold to Thatcher because on the day she was forced out of office, a public consultation on a draft Commonhold Bill went live.<sup>25</sup> This initiative of Lord Mackay would have had Thatcher's sign-off. Pushing commonhold legislation so that flats could be owned on a freehold basis (and so an Englishman's home would finally be his castle, not the mighty landlord's, in multi-occupancy buildings) was literally one of her last acts in power.

Like with Right to Buy, Thatcher wanted to turn yet more tenants into Tory-voting freeholders and to stop the rent-seeking that defined leasehold which was sucking money out of the real economy and causing misery for leaseholders, 'second-class' citizens as beautifully explained by Christopher Howarth, a senior researcher in the House of Commons and 2019 Conservative candidate for Houghton and South Sunderland: "These new 'owners' form a miserable third tier in terms of property rights, below that of freeholder and Social Housing Tenants, but above renters, who as a consolation can at least move on with their capital

<sup>21</sup> Law Commission, *Commonhold: Freehold Flats, Report of a Working Group, Chairman Mr T.M. Aldridge*, July 1987 <https://s3-eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/cloud-platform-e218f50a4812967ba1215eaccede923f/uploads/sites/30/2018/12/Aldridge-Report-Cm-179.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> "Leaseholders", *Hansard – UK Parliament*, June 18, 1990 <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/1990-06-18/debates/e41a562a-a8fd-46f2-8fca-7427ea4bf055/Leaseholders>

<sup>23</sup> "Commonhold", *Hansard – UK Parliament*, October 28, 1987 <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1987-10-28/debates/3d3bd074-4111-4161-96ff-68fed8f98c7c/Commonhold>; The Federation of Private Residents' Associations, *Newsletter: June 1978*, p.1 <https://www.fpra.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/newsletters/1973-1980/Newsletter%20Issue%2012%20summer%201978.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> "Prime Minister: Oral Answers to Questions – Home Department – in the House of Commons at 12:00am on 25 January 1990", *TheyWorkForYou*, January 25, 1990 <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/debates/?id=1990-01-25a.1045.0&s=law+commission+unsatisfactory+speaker%3A19284#g1045.8>

<sup>25</sup> "Commonhold", *Hansard – UK Parliament*, November 28, 1990 <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/written-answers/1990/nov/28/commonhold>; Lord Chancellor's Department, *Commonhold: A Consultation Paper (with draft Bill annexed)*, November 1990 <https://s3-eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/cloud-platform-e218f50a4812967ba1215eaccede923f/uploads/sites/30/2018/12/1990-Consultation-Paper.pdf>

intact ... There is a big political prize to be had for the Conservative Party to improving the rights of millions of property owners and bringing them up to equality with those who own their own house free from the hold of a Lord.”<sup>26</sup>

## **INTO THE 1990S: CONTINUING THATCHER’S PROJECT FOR LEASEHOLDERS**

Commonhold was very much seen as a Thatcherite policy and was pledged in the 1992 Conservative manifesto.<sup>27</sup> Of course, the party would go on to win a shock majority!

- **We will introduce 'Commonhold' legislation, giving residential leaseholders living in blocks of flats the right to acquire the freehold of their block at the market rate. Leaseholders of higher rated houses will also be given the right to buy the freehold of their property. Leaseholders who live in a block which does not qualify will have a new right to buy an extended lease.**

Lord Mackay, who became Thatcher’s point man on commonhold, would remain as Lord Chancellor to continue working on commonhold under her successor, John Major. There was another commonhold draft Bill and consultation paper in July 1996.<sup>28</sup> However, despite Michael Howard, then the environment secretary, “commit[ing] the government to introducing a bill on a new form of flat tenure, commonhold, later in th[e] parliament” in November 1992, a commonhold bill fell from the final Queen’s Speech in October 1996.<sup>29</sup>

Ensuring that flats could be held as freehold without interfering ground landlords, via commonhold tenure, was a core objective of the Conservative Party in the Thatcher and Major eras and hence the policy reappeared in the 1997 manifesto.<sup>30</sup>

***We will also carry through our draft Bill, creating the option for those buying flats to choose a new form of commonhold ownership.***

In an interview with The Finchley Thatcher in 1988, Thatcher said she had shunned buying a leasehold home.<sup>31</sup> In her September 1992 Korea speech, “The Principles of Thatcherism”, she also criticised Russia’s democratisation for its politicians having failed to reform its law so that homes could be held as freehold, not leasehold.<sup>32</sup>

## **OTHER CONSERVATIVE LEADERSHIP ON LEASEHOLD REFORM**

Two major Conservative proponents of commonhold included Sir Brandon Rhys-Williams, who coined the term some years before the Aldridge Report, and his successor as

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<sup>26</sup> Christopher Howarth, “It’s time to end the great leasehold service charge rip-off”, *ConservativeHome*, August 8, 2017 <https://conservativehome.com/2017/08/08/christopher-howarth-its-time-to-end-the-great-leasehold-service-charge-rip-off/>

<sup>27</sup> 1992 Conservative Party General Election Manifesto: The Best Future for Britain <http://www.conservativemanifesto.com/1992/1992-conservative-manifesto.shtml>

<sup>28</sup> Lord Chancellor’s Department, *Commonhold: Consultation Paper*, July 1996 <https://s3-eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/cloud-platform-e218f50a4812967ba1215eaccede923f/uploads/sites/30/2018/12/1996-Consultation-Paper.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> Anthony Bevens, “Not the Queen’s Speech”, *The Independent*, October 22, 1996 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/not-the-queen-s-speech-1359678.html>

<sup>30</sup> 1997 Conservative Party General Election Manifesto <http://www.conservativemanifesto.com/1997/1997-conservative-manifesto.shtml>

<sup>31</sup> Margaret Thatcher, “Interview for Finchley Times”, Margaret Thatcher Foundation, February 19, 1988 <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/107176>

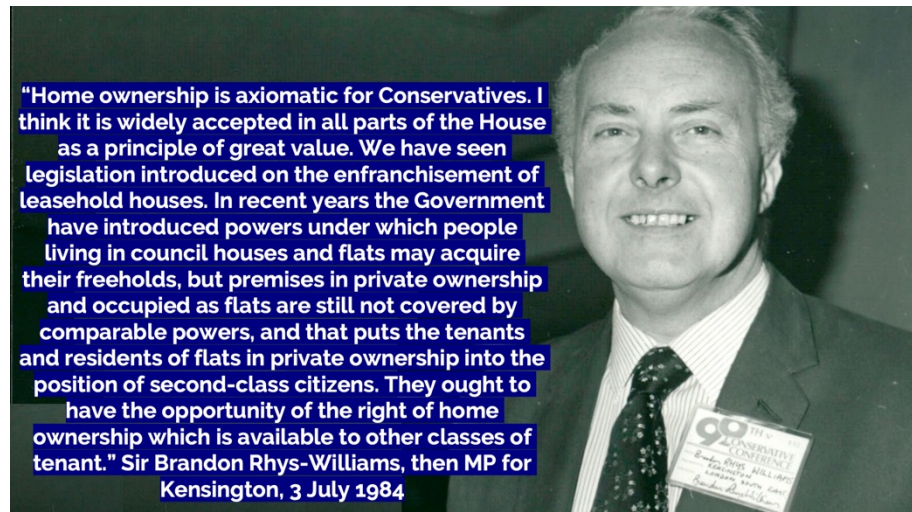
<sup>32</sup> Margaret Thatcher, “Speech in Korea (‘The Principles of Thatcherism’)", September 3, 1992 <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/108302>



Kensington MP, Dudley Fishburn, who by 1996 had introduced eight commonhold or leasehold reform Bills in eight years. In 1992, Fishburn was made “Radical of the Year” as a result of his tenacious campaigning on these issues. Fishburn was responsible for drafting the leasehold and commonhold reform policy for the Conservative Party’s 1992 manifesto.

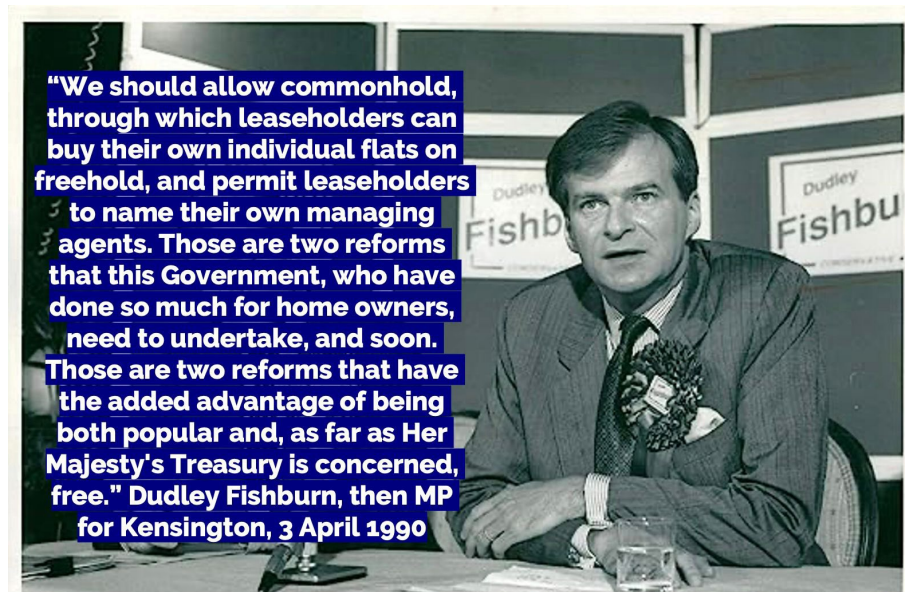
In a statement that could easily be repeated by a Conservative MP today given a commonhold-less Leasehold and Freehold Reform Bill despite a blueprint having been provided by the Law Commission four years ago in July 2020, Fishburn told Parliament on heavily delayed commonhold legislation:

“One has to ask why the Bill has taken so long and why, alas, we fear that it may take longer still. I hope that I shall not be described as cynical, but perhaps the answer is that the House enjoys adversarial politics so much that any measure that is not widely opposed does not get noticed. Perhaps if the hon. **Member for Greenwich (Mr. Raynsford), who has done so much to advance the cause of commonhold, were to say that the Bill was an evil Tory plot to extend the rights of home ownership, Conservative Members would get a little more excited about it.** However, I know that the hon. Gentleman would not say such a thing. Perhaps the proposal has been in the doldrums for so long precisely because no one is criticising it.”<sup>33</sup>



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<sup>33</sup> “Leasehold (Reform) Bill”, *Hansard – UK Parliament*, March 8, 1996  
[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/1996-03-08/debates/7d33689a-c4a0-4849-acc0-6bc563e07261/Leasehold\(Reform\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/1996-03-08/debates/7d33689a-c4a0-4849-acc0-6bc563e07261/Leasehold(Reform)Bill)



Perhaps the then Conservative MP for Battersea, John Bowis, put it best in 1991 when he said:

"There is virtual unanimity in the House about the proposition that an Englishman's home should become a commonhold castle rather than a feudal one."

In February 1993, Lord Young, then Sir George Young, who was the housing and planning minister in the Major government, wrote a punchy letter to the Spectator on leasehold reform and said: "The very nature of a lease is such that the majority of the interest in the property passes to the leaseholder when he buys it. It is only reasonable that he should be given the ability and the right to determine the future of what is effectively his property by buying out the residual interest of the freeholder. That is not confiscation. It is liberation ... It is another step in the creation of a Conservative property-owning democracy. No other country in the world, apart from Hawaii, has leasehold as a form of tenure." Hawaii has since enfranchised its leaseholders and yet, England and Wales now as true outliers in the world for persisting with leasehold tenancies to organise flat living, are having the same debate 30 years later as to whether we should phase out this essentially feudal land tenure that denies people real homeownership and the dignity, security, autonomy and control associated with that. It is understood a political decision was made by Sunak's Number 10 to drop a second generation commonhold, as per the Law Commission 2020 proposals, from the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Bill.

As early as 1884, Conservatives were pushing for the enfranchisement of leaseholders, with Lord Randolph Churchill telling the House of Commons that **"nothing acted as such a powerful stimulus to socialism and popular discontent, or favoured conditions that were likely to bring about revolution, more than enormous accumulations of land in single hands either in the country or in towns, but especially in towns ...** It had been calculated that if the House legislated on the principle of this Bill 2,000,000 freeholders would be created in a short time. It was proposed to add 2,000,000 to the electoral roll: would it not be better that that number of electors should be freeholders than that they should be men liable to be turned out of their houses and subjected to every kind of injustice and extortion? ... **Who was the more likely to be a contended and patriotic citizen – the man who was a**

**freeholder and who was safe in his property, or the man who are at the mercy of a colossal landowner?”<sup>34</sup>**

Acting to end the scourge of leasehold tenancies has been a key part of Tory thinking on property-owning democracy and Lord Churchill’s intervention to support leasehold enfranchisement was picked up by James Vitali, of Policy Exchange, in his December 2023 policy report “The Property Owning Democracy”.<sup>35</sup> Vitali’s report would result in a further contribution to the leasehold reform debate with his oral evidence to the Public Bill Committee on the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Bill in January 2024.

In 1962, Jacob Rees-Mogg’s father, William Rees-Mogg, wrote to Iain Macleod, then deputy chairman of the Conservative Party, to express deep concern about leasehold and urge the party to support leasehold enfranchisement, saying “as you know there are serious defects in the leasehold system which seems to me to cut across our broad social purpose of encouraging responsible home ownership. The majority of leaseholders would have much more incentive to improve their property if they were freeholders, and they would also be much better protected.” He implored Macleod to form “a Sub-Committee to examine the case for a major reform of the present leasehold system”. This happened and Macleod became one of its members. No doubt Rees-Mogg’s leadership on leasehold played a critical role in the 1966 manifesto pledge of leasehold enfranchisement for house dwellers.

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<sup>34</sup> Pall Mall Gazette, “Lord Randolph Churchill: Radical or Renegade?”, Extra No.31, December 31, 1886, pp.13-14 [https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/Lord\\_Randolph\\_Churchill\\_Radical\\_Or\\_Reneg/f2B3e-Ia61sC?hl=en&gbpv=1](https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/Lord_Randolph_Churchill_Radical_Or_Reneg/f2B3e-Ia61sC?hl=en&gbpv=1)

<sup>35</sup> James Vitali, *The Property Owning Democracy* (London: Policy Exchange, 2023) <https://policyexchange.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/The-Property-Owning-Democracy.pdf>

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The Sunday Times,  
2nd January, 1962

Dear Mr. Macleod,

I have been thinking about the housing problem and I feel that we ought to look into the question of leasehold enfranchisement for private houses. I believe the Labour Party is nominally committed to leasehold enfranchisement already. As you know there are serious defects in the leasehold system which seems to me to cut across our broad social purpose of encouraging responsible home ownership. The majority of leaseholders would have much more incentive to improve their property if they were freeholders, and they would also be much better protected.

I do not want to argue the case in length in this letter, but I should like to propose that we set up a Sub-Committee to examine the case for a major reform of the present leasehold system.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) WILLIAM REES-MOGG

The Rt. Hon. Iain Macleod, MP,  
Conservative Central Office,  
32 Smith Square,  
London, S.W.1.



CONSERVATIVE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

24 Old Queen Street, S.W.1.

H/PE/10

MEMORANDUM

From Mr. Fraser

To Mr. Block

11th January 1962

RMF/DEL

LEASEHOLD ENFRANCHISEMENT

At the next meeting of Mr. Macleod's Chairman's Committee (the equivalent in this Parliament of his Policy Study Group in 1955-59) we will be discussing among other things the question of leasehold, as a result of an initiative by William Rees-Mogg, who is a member of the Committee. I attach a copy of a letter of his of 2nd January to Mr. Macleod. Mr. Macleod has replied saying by all means let us discuss it at the meeting, and suggesting that William Rees-Mogg might meanwhile expand his ideas in the form of a paper, which he would discuss with Iain Macleod and myself before then.

I am very doubtful myself if we want to re-open the leasehold question, and would like a short paper from you, setting out your views, before I speak again with Iain Macleod in a week's time.

RMF

The 1966 Conservative Party manifesto notably promised enfranchisement for house leaseholders.<sup>36</sup>

Legislate to allow ground leaseholders to buy or rent their houses on fair terms except where the property is to be redeveloped.

<sup>36</sup> 1966 Conservative Party General Election Manifesto: Action Not Words: The New Conservative Programme <http://www.conservativemanifesto.com/1966/1966-conservative-manifesto.shtml>

The 2017 Conservative Party manifesto also pledged action to help leaseholders.<sup>37</sup>

We will also act in specific markets. A Conservative government will reform and modernise the home-buying process so it is more efficient and less costly. We will crack down on unfair practices in leasehold, such as escalating ground rents. We will also improve protections for those who rent, including by looking at how we increase security for good tenants and encouraging landlords to offer longer tenancies as standard. We will make billing for telecoms customers fairer and easier to understand,

The 2019 Conservative Party manifesto, which helped deliver the party its biggest majority since 1987, once again promised leasehold reform policies.<sup>38</sup>

- ▶ We will continue with our **reforms to leasehold** including implementing our ban on the sale of new leasehold homes, restricting ground rents to a peppercorn, and providing necessary mechanisms of redress for tenants.

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<sup>37</sup> The Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto 2017: Forward, Together: Our Plan for a Stronger Britain and a Prosperous Future <https://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/wmatrix/ukmanifestos2017/localpdf/Conservatives.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> The Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto 2019: Get Brexit Done: Unleash Britain's Potential [https://assets-global.website-files.com/5da42e2cae7ebd3f8bde353c/5dda924905da587992a064ba\\_Conervative%202019%20Manifesto.pdf](https://assets-global.website-files.com/5da42e2cae7ebd3f8bde353c/5dda924905da587992a064ba_Conervative%202019%20Manifesto.pdf)