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The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act of 1994 was an extremely controversial piece of
 legislation which received widespread condemnation as a infringement on human rights and a
 step backwards in the treatment of juvenile crime. But it's author, Michael Howard, was
 unrepentant and continued his crusade to prove that a harsher regime would eventually make
 an impact on crime figures.

Also, in 1994 the Police and Magistrates' Courts Act was past. This made changes in the
 management of the police. It involved an even greater level of central control over police
 policy for the Home Office. By reducing the influence of local authorities, Howard hoped that
 he could ensure a fair and affective police service. It marked the end of the experiment with
 community policing. More significantly, the Act introduced performance targets for police
 authorities. It was hoped that a system of targets for clearing up crime would concentrate minds
 and result in better detection rates.

Finally, the Crime Sentences Act of 1996 allowed for much higher minimum sentences,
 especially for repeat offenders, and those convicted of violent, drugs or sexual offences. For
 those already in prison the parole and early release system was severely reduced. More
 prisoners would now serve there full term. For younger offenders a system of curfews was
 allowed, permitting the police to impose movement restrictions of juvenile offenders.

The result of these measures was to increase the prison population from 47,000 in 1993 to
 sixty thousand in 1997. On the positive side there were signs in 1997 that the rise in crime
 was slowing down and, in the case of some offences, was falling. Clear-up rates by the

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- police also began to improve.
- The post-1997 policies of the Conservative administration also have to be scene in the
- context of a marked shift in the party's moral outlook. Prime Minister John Major had
- announced in the early 1990s a new moral initiative which he stated was a matter of principal
- and was titled 'back to basics'. The policy was designed to restore a stronger sense of moral
- responsibility and to try to re-establish Christian and family values. Criminals where seen as
- responsible for their own actions and the liberal notion that the causes of crime are
- predominantly social was rejected. The term 'New Right', which has been applied to the more
- authoritarian policies of the Conservatives in the 1980s and 1990s, could be applied most
- directly to the law and order policies of Michael Howard.
- They can also be viewed as a direct attack on many civil liberties which had been closely
- guarded in the United Kingdom for many years, even centuries. When added to the more
- draconian measures of the 1980s, they also mark a significant increase in the powers of the
- police. Citizens can be prevented from demonstrating in public or from forming any large
- gatherings which caused the police to believe there might be breaches of the peace. This
- increase in police powers on gatherings was also complimented by the ability for individuals
- to be routinely stopped and searched by police officers. Young people are much more likely
- to be given custodial sentences and these sentences may be for substantial periods. It is more
- difficult to obtain bale and prisoners are often denied the opportunity for parole or early release
- if they show signs of rehabilitation.

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- The Labour Party, whos law and order policies were largely formulated by Tony Blair, the
- shadow Home Secretary until 1994, and his successor Jack Straw, opposed many of these
- policies. They, along with the resurgent Liberal Democrats, criticised the attack on civil
- liberties and the neglect of the social causes of crime. But it was clear that a new Labour
- government would not abandon all the Howard policies. For example, aware that a tough
- stance on law and order was a vote winner, Blair promised to be as hard on criminals as the
- Conservatives had been. But the traditional Labour view that crime has mainly social causes,
- meant that Blair had to promise that these too would receive the parties attention.
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- This dual approach was reflected in Tony Blair’s 1993 repeated statement that ‘Labour would
- be tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime. However, when the party unveiled its
- programme of action on crime in 1995, the measures looked to be as severe as Michael
- Howard’s had been.

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