

Unit 3: The end of the post-war consensus

Social developments

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Women and feminism



- High point of 2nd wave feminism in 1970s - Women's Liberation groups sprang up - even disrupted 1970 Miss World contest in London and marched for equal pay
- Feminism split between radical and social - not unified movement
- Reproductive rights advanced - pill available through NHS from 1971
- Attempts made to tackle violence against women - 1976 Domestic Violence Act
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975 - aimed to ensure equality in employment, education and outlaw harassment. Set up Equality Opportunity Commission - only launched 9 investigations 1976-83.
- Economic situation improved for women - could get a mortgage, Equal Pay Act came into force 1975, pensions improved, paid maternity leave, wages increased.
- Still inequalities - trade unions male dominated; Equal Pay Act didn't solve all concerns.

Race and immigration

- 1971 - Immigration Act: restricted rights of people from New Commonwealth (needed guaranteed job and one grandparent born in Britain)
- Increase in immigration from Pakistan, India and Uganda - by 1974 1million New Commonwealth immigrants had come to Britain: Immigrant communities formed - under-represented in politics/economy however
- 1976 Race Relations Act - set up Commission for Racial Equality
- National Front became very active in London - 20,000 members by 1976 - held marches and demonstrations - led to anti-Nazi League set up in retaliation. Some skinheads attracted to NF.
- Late 1970s Conservatives pledged to toughen up immigration policy if elected
- Rock against Racism - started 1976 - protest against institutional racism.
- Mistrust of police after events like death of Blair Peach and Notting Hill Carnival
- Popular culture saw developments - black footballers (e.g. John Barnes), reggae and ska popularity - however racism at football and comedians still made racist jokes

Youth



- Punk movement began - nihilistic philosophy, bands like The Clash and Sex Pistols. Image shocking - piercings, ripped clothes, spikey hair. Violent concerts. Anti-establishment ideas e.g. 'God save the queen' song.
- Skinheads developed from Mod culture - working class, influenced by Jamaican music/culture - some linked to National Front/football hooliganism
- Football hooliganism increased - worsened and became well-organised.

Environmentalism

- Political philosophy linked to the planet, nuclear technology, protection of wildlife and organic produce
- Pressure groups formed: Friends of the Earth (1971), Greenpeace UK (1977), Animal Liberation Front (1976) - ALF extremists who used letter bombs
- CND focus changed to campaign against use of nuclear power after 5 incidents at Sellafield on the Cumbrian coast.
- TV programmes increased awareness - David Attenborough's 'Life on Earth'; 'Watership Down' - book about destruction of rabbit's homes; 'The Good Life' - TV comedy about small-holders.
- The People's Party set up in 1973, became the Ecology Party in 1975 and put up 53 candidates in the general election in 1979. In 1985 it changed its name to the Green Party.

Europe and the EEC

- 1973 Britain finally joined EEC. Several reasons why:
 - Heath was pro-European
 - Charles de Gaulle had been replaced by Georges Pompidou in France - favoured UK
 - Negotiations had been completed in the 1960s - all in place by 1973
- Some divisions in UK over joining - Enoch Powell in Conservative Party; Labour split over joining (e.g. Jenkins favoured it, Foot against it). Labour campaigned against it saying the terms were not good enough and promised a referendum if elected.

European referendum 1975

- Wilson allowed all in the party to campaign as they saw fit - to unite divisions. Yes, campaign was well-financed by business leaders and most of the cabinet supported Yes.
- No campaigners argued bad for British workers/loss of British independence
- 68.3% voted yes and 32.5% voted no. Very decisive margin.
- Issues over Europe remained within both parties however - though debate closed for now

The 'special relationship' with the USA

- Heath less inclined to strengthen Atlantic Alliance - rejected attempts by Kissinger to use Britain as a link to Europe. However, Heath personally got on well with US president Nixon and supported his policy in Vietnam.
- Relations worsened over Yom Kippur War in 1973 - US wanted to use NATO bases in Europe to airlift supplies to Israel. Most states, including Britain, said no as feared oil supplies from Middle East. Strained Anglo-American relations.
- Wilson and Callaghan still favoured Atlantic Alliance - Callaghan had good relationship with Kissinger and negotiated replacement of Polaris nuclear missiles with Trident in 1979 - yet still completed withdrawal from Suez despite US concerns.



The USSR and China

- 1970s was a period of détente - an easing of tensions in the Cold War.
- Georgi Markov, a Bulgarian defector was assassinated in London in 1978 supposedly by the KGB - showed tension remained.
- Britain exchanged ambassadors with China and Heath made many visits from 1974 to China. In October 1979, the Chinese Premier Hua Guofeng visited Britain. This was the first visit of a Chinese leader since the communist revolution.