Your notes

GCSE History: revision notes

Diversity, rights and equality in Britain, 1914–2010

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The fight for recognition, 1914–28

- In 1914 no women and about 4 in 10 men could not vote in general elections. The class system was rigid, disabled people were often kept in workhouses or asylums, and small Black and Asian communities lived mainly in port cities.
- The First World War brought change: women worked in munitions factories and other jobs, shell shock forced doctors to rethink mental illness, and many disabled ex-servicemen needed work. In 1919 there were race riots in ports such as Liverpool and Cardiff.
- The Representation of the People Act (1918) gave the vote to all men over 21 and women over 30 who met a property test; the Equal Franchise Act (1928) gave it to all women over 21. The Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act (1919) opened professions such as law to women.
- The Education Act (1918) made school compulsory to 14 and ended elementary school fees. The Aliens Restriction (Amendment) Act (1919) kept wartime controls on foreigners.

Depression and war, 1928–45

- The Depression brought mass unemployment, worst in industrial areas. In the Jarrow Crusade (1936), 200 men marched about 300 miles to London to ask for work. **Eugenics**, the idea of "improving" the population, had supporters, but a 1931 bill for sterilisation failed.
- Jewish refugees arrived from Nazi Germany, including about 10,000 children on the Kindertransport. Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists (BUF, 1932) stirred up anti-Jewish hatred; it was blocked at the Battle of Cable Street (1936), and the Public Order Act (1936) banned political uniforms.

- In the Second World War, men were conscripted, and from 1941 unmarried women too. Germans and Italians in Britain were interned as "enemy aliens" in 1940. Black servicemen and workers faced a "**colour bar**".
- In 1943 the West Indian cricketer Learie Constantine was turned away from the Imperial Hotel in London because of his race. He sued and won in 1944, a landmark case. The Disabled Persons (Employment) Act (1944) made larger employers take a quota of disabled workers.

The end of empire, 1944–62

- The Butler Education Act (1944) gave free secondary education to all, and the NHS (1948) gave free healthcare.
- The British Nationality Act (1948) gave Commonwealth citizens the right to live in Britain. The Empire Windrush brought Caribbean migrants in 1948, and many more came from the Caribbean, South Asia and Africa to work in transport, the NHS and factories, but faced racism in housing and jobs and the Notting Hill riots (1958).
- Claudia Jones founded the West Indian Gazette (1958) and organised a Caribbean Carnival (1959), forerunner of the Notting Hill Carnival. The Commonwealth Immigrants Act (1962) began limiting immigration.
- Sir Ludwig Guttmann used sport to treat spinal injuries at Stoke Mandeville, starting the games in 1948 that grew into the Paralympics. The Wolfenden Report (1957) recommended ending the law against private sex between men.

Civil rights and opportunity, 1962–2010

- The Bristol Bus Boycott (1963) ended a bus company's **colour bar**, and the Race Relations Act (1965) banned discrimination in public places. Enoch Powell's "Rivers of Blood" speech (1968) stirred anti-immigration feeling, and the Immigration Act (1971) tightened controls.
- The Dagenham women's strike (1968) led to Barbara Castle's Equal Pay Act (1970), followed by the Sex Discrimination Act (1975). The Sexual Offences Act (1967) decriminalised private sex between men over 21 in England and Wales.
- The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act (1970) improved services and access. The Warnock Report (1978) led to more disabled children learning in mainstream schools. Comprehensive schools and university grants widened education.
- From 1986: the Stephen Lawrence case (murdered 1993) led to the Macpherson Report (1999), which found the police "institutionally racist". Section 28 (1988) banned councils from "promoting" homosexuality until its repeal in 2003. Groups such as the National Council for Civil Liberties, the LGBT Foundation and the British Council of Organisations of Disabled People campaigned for rights.
- The Equality Act (2010) brought earlier equality laws together. Diversity also shaped British music, writing and the arts, while religious intolerance and inequality remained barriers.

Your notes

Key terms

Colour bar	Refusing people jobs, housing or service because of their race.
Suffrage	The right to vote.
Eugenics	The idea of "improving" a population by controlling who has children.
Windrush generation	Caribbean migrants who came to Britain from 1948.
Institutional racism	Racism built into the way an organisation works.
Pressure group	A group that campaigns to change laws or attitudes.

Quick questions

Cover the answers and test yourself: remembering is what makes it stick.

1. What did the Representation of the People Act (1918) do?
2. What did the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act (1919) do?
3. What was the Jarrow Crusade (1936)?
4. Who led the British Union of Fascists?
5. Why was Learie Constantine's case important?
6. What did the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act (1944) do?
7. Which ship brought Caribbean migrants to Britain in 1948?
8. Who organised the 1959 Caribbean Carnival?

Answers

1. Gave the vote to men over 21 and some women over 30
2. Opened professions such as law to women
3. A march of 200 unemployed men to London
4. Oswald Mosley
5. He won a court case against a hotel that turned him away because of his race
6. Made larger employers take a quota of disabled workers
7. The Empire Windrush
8. Claudia Jones

What to do next

Practise 11 questions on this topic

Try 3 exam questions, with mark schemes

Read the lesson, one step at a time

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