

In what way did post war prosperity bring social change to britain 1951-1964 pers...

War



Britain as a country in the year 1951 stood as a country widely effected by the Second World War and the country reflected visible damage which the war had caused. Many young men were on the National Service, rationing was only just coming to an end and also social life in Britain felt like it was in the past.

However some felt that the year 1951 was a year of change, they felt as if they were on the way to a new modern world which presented technological and social progress, Children who were born during the “ baby boom” were born into a different society to which their parents grew up in. Leading up to the year 1964 there were many social tensions, changes in attitudes and significant shifts i population which can identify how Britain’s society had changed dramatically.

After 1951 you could say Britain experienced a “ demographic change” . Birth rates ran consistently against death rates, an explanation for this could be the advances in medical treatments which improved under the influence of the welfare state this then led to an increase standard of nutrition and hygiene.

Another factor which could contribute to the demographic change was the increase of inward migration , in the year 1948 around 250, 000 immigrants arrived in Britain from the West Indies Particularly those from the common wealth had become a vital part of British society, and in the process, transformed important aspects of British life although it eventually led tooverpopulation, andimmigrationcaused racial tension and segregation for example the Nottingham riots.

Britain encouraged immigrants to come to the “mother land” to help recover from the ravages of war however this caused racial tension between the immigrants and the British, the tension was more apparent as the lack of housing became a problem as did the competition for jobs. The increase of immigrants led to less scopes for jobs as did the fact people were living longer due to the up and running free service of the NHS which many felt immigrants didn't deserve. Many British people that had a skill in a specific trade were forced to take up trades that required no skill at all which angered them.

Due to immigration, discrimination in jobs was open, for example shop keepers put a sign up saying what kind of workers they were looking for, and this gave many British people the advantage of the immigrants as a confidence trick to govern the country due to being imperial. Excluded from much of the social and economic life the immigrants began to adjust the institutions they had brought with them, for example their churches and the fact they had a British education which meant that the government gave them the right to follow their own traditions and reduced the challenges of schooling.

However this also increased segregation between the immigrants and those who opposed, conflict and discrimination was very common, it became easier to recognise people's origins and social background from their dress scene and accents. The government weren't prepared for the reaction of the public immigration would cause regarding the unhappiness of being restricted in the job market, they then introduced the immigration act which stopped immigrant wanting to come into the country although if left the ones

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already in Britain feeling very isolated and betrayed which sparked their rebellion.

The conservative government had traditional views upon empire and they were objective to change which socially changed the views of the public and changed the country into a closed racist country portraying how uneducated Britain was at the time and how post war prosperity wasn't the only thing that sculpted social change in Britain . On the other hand there was also a strong amount of outward migration. Australia was appealing to British citizens as it had many jobs and a good amount of housing available.

Affluence began to become more apparent in every class, which meant people were becoming a lot wealthier due to the rise in wages. However this lead to competition regarding jobs and housing and even schooling due to people having more money to spend. This created a more distinctive overview between classes meaning that people could recognise immediately what class you belonged to and what your origins and social background was. The class spilt became more evident throughout the schooling system.

Schooling during 1951-64 was a major social problem due to the psychological strain on pupils had to pass their 11+ in order to achieve a better education by their parents as they wanted to avoid the social shame. The technical and grammar schools only took the most capable students which left the working class children with very basic education as they couldn't afford any private tuition and often weren't capable at the age of 11 to enter the grammar schools although after a few years they were ready to undergo more strenuous studying but by this time it was too late.

The natural progression was from the most private boarding schools, to the most prestigious colleges at Oxford or Cambridge and thence into positions of power and influence this in turn led to the working class feeling discriminated. Eden for example went to Eton and Oxford and found himself in the prime ministers position. It was easy by this time to distinguish people's class and social background from their dress sense and their accents, which demonstrates the growing social tensions including immigration and violence.

Post war prosperity brought along social change in education due to the shift in attitude and the ideal that the government wanted to compete with other countries. The government wanted the best education for the new generation so they can go into better jobs in order to boost the economy in the future. But during the conservative government there wasn't any change regarding the removal of social tension until Labour secured dominance in 1964 issuing the Education Act which introduced middle schools (which eliminated the 11+).

The media influenced views on society that escalated tension and competition between classes, the class system split became more distinctive because of this. This was seen throughout various films such as 'Saturday night' and 'Sunday Morning', big hit in the 1960's, it portrayed the alienation of young working class males. The influence of the media led to segregation as many films portrayed the racial tension, for example the theme of the film Sapphire (1959).

The media opened the way for a more individualist and less conformist society, for example the Profumo affair- the girl on the wrong side of the <https://assignbuster.com/in-what-way-did-post-war-prosperity-bring-social-change-to-britain-1951-1964-persuasive-essay/>

tracks. This resulted in people, especially the younger generation, becoming less willing to follow the lead set by the British 'establishment'. The newspapers also influenced the things that people began to believe in, they exaggerated stories and made things out to be worse than they actually were which resulted in the society building their views on lies causing tension between classes and even new "trend" groups like the Teddy Boys.

Due to the more rebellious attitudes there was a sharp increase of crime rates and violence due to the development of a more liberal attitude obtained by youths. Examples of the increase in crime can be seen via the Mods and Rockers who used the influence of music to give them a drive into developing a liberal attitude and their views sometimes sparked violence with other groups seen through the Bristol brawl. Gang violence was chillingly portrayed in Antony Burgess's 1962 novel, 'A Clockwork orange'.

However, the war brought opportunities to allow society to modernise in terms of attitude and social change although it was mainly due to the loss of dominance from the government. The governments weaknesses were exposed via the media, the television portrayed satire, which led many people to gain a more liberal attitudes, which demonstrates that it wasn't just post war prosperity that brought social change to Britain.