

Britain since 1960

By the same author

GEORGE ELIOT: Godless Woman

JOSEPH CONRAD: Text and Context

HOW TO STUDY A JOSEPH CONRAD NOVEL

Britain since 1960

An Introduction



BRIAN SPITTLES



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*For Rod and Ann
more than relatives, good friends*

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Selected Chronology

	Primarily international	Primarily political/economic	Primarily social
1942			Beveridge Report
1944			Butler Education Act
1945	Second World War ends (beginning of atomic/nuclear weapons)	Labour Party wins election with 146-seat majority Attlee becomes PM (creation of Welfare State and nationalisation of central industries follows)	
1947	Intensification of Cold War splits world into USSR/USA polarisation		
1949	Communists win civil war in China		
1950	Korean War begins	Labour Party wins election with 5-seat majority Conservatives win election with 17-seat majority	
1951		Churchill becomes PM	
1953	Korean War ends		Coronation of Elizabeth II
1955		Eden becomes PM	Commercial television begins

	Primarily international	Primarily political/economic	Primarily social
1956	Britain and France invade Suez Canal area USSR invades Hungary		<i>Look Back in Anger</i> begins new phase in British theatre <i>Rock Around the Clock</i> disturbances Anti-Suez war demonstrations CND formed
1957	USSR launches Sputnik I	Macmillan becomes PM. 'Never had it so good' speech signals 'age of affluence' (TV sets, car ownership, foreign holidays, etc.)	
1958			First outbreak of race riots
1959		Conservatives win election with 100-seat majority	
1960			<i>Lady Chatterley's Lover</i> court case Female contraceptive pill developed Film version of <i>Saturday Night and Sunday Morning</i> starts British 'new wave'

	Primarily international	Primarily political/economic	Primarily social
1961	Berlin Wall erected First manned space flight	Britain's application for EEC membership	
1962	Cuban missile crisis brings world to brink of nuclear war	Macmillan's 'night of the long knives' First Commonwealth Immigrants Act	<i>A Taste of Honey</i> wins film awards
1963	de Gaulle vetoes British membership of EEC Kennedy assassinated	Profumo and Philby sex and spy scandals Macmillan resigns; Home becomes PM	<i>Lawrence of Arabia</i> wins film Oscars
1964		Labour Party wins election with 4-seat majority Wilson becomes PM	BBC2 TV begins
1965	USA sends combat troops into Vietnam War	Heath replaces Home as Conservative leader Southern Rhodesia UDI crisis First Race Relations Act	Capital punishment abolished
1966		Labour Party wins election with 96-seat majority Welsh Nationalists win by-election	England win football World Cup

	Primarily international	Primarily political/economic	Primarily social
1967	Kenyan Asians expelled de Gaulle vetoes British membership of EEC Nigerian civil war begins	Devaluation of sterling Scottish Nationalists win by- election	Influx of Kenyan Asian immigrants Laws on homosexuality relaxed Colour TV begins
1968	British withdrawal from 'east of Suez' begins USSR invades Czechoslovakia	Commonwealth Immigrants Act Race Relations Act	Mass demonstrations against Vietnam War
1969	USA land men on the moon	British troops sent to Northern Ireland (temporarily) Attempts to regulate trade union power begin	<i>In Place of Strife</i> Divorce laws relaxed
1970	Nigerian civil war ends	First general election at which 18–20-year-olds vote Conservatives win election with 30-seat majority Heath becomes PM Industrial Relations Act	<i>The Female Eunuch</i> First Women's Liberation conference

	Primarily international	Primarily political/economic	Primarily social
1971		Immigration Act	
1972	Ugandan Asians expelled	(London)derry 'Bloody Sunday' tragedy escalates Ulster crisis Ulster Assembly abolished NUM strike defeats government's pay restraint policy Unemployment reaches one million	Influx of Ugandan Asian immigrants <i>Spare Rib</i> begins publication
1973	Arab–Israeli War	Parliament debates EEC membership Britain joins EEC	Acute oil/petrol shortage Three-day working week imposed Minimum school-leaving age raised to 16 Virago begins publishing

	Primarily international	Primarily political/economic	Primarily social
1974	Cyprus crisis between Turkey and Greece	NUM strike No party wins an overall February election majority Wilson becomes PM Labour wins October election with 3-seat majority Inflation reaches highest ever peak of 28% IRA bombing in Birmingham Local Government reorganised	
1975	Vietnam War ends	Monetarism formally replaces Keynesian economics EEC membership referendum Equal Pay Act Sex Discrimination Act Thatcher becomes Conservative leader	Commission for Equal Opportunities
1976		Wilson resigns Callaghan becomes PM Race Relations Act	<i>The Right Approach</i>

	Primarily international	Primarily political/economic	Primarily social
1977	Prague 'Charter 77' proclaimed for human rights	Employment Protection Act (for women)	Commission for Racial Equality
1979	ERM formed First Euro-elections (subsequently held every 5 years) USSR invades Afghanistan	'Winter of discontent' sees widespread strikes Welsh and Scottish referenda reject national devolution Conservatives win election with 43-seat majority Thatcher becomes PM Income Tax reduced VAT virtually doubled Thatcher causes crisis with EEC	
1980	Solidarity movement in Poland begins	Act of Parliament restricting trade unions Foot becomes Labour Party leader Southern Rhodesia crisis resolved	Bristol riots
1981		Social Democratic Party formed (leading to later SDP/Liberal Alliance)	Brixton and Liverpool riots

	Primarily international	Primarily political/economic	Primarily social
1982	Falklands War	Act of Parliament further restricting trade unions	Channel Four TV <i>Chariots of Fire</i> wins film Oscars
1983		Conservatives win election with 154-seat majority Kinnock becomes Labour Party leader	<i>Gandhi</i> wins film Oscars
1984		Ban on GCHQ trade unions Act of Parliament further restricting trade unions NUM strike begins IRA bomb Conservative Party Conference hotel	Divorce made easier
1985		Privatisation begins in earnest NUM defeated after year-long strike Unemployment officially reaches 3 million for first time	Widespread street riots in many major towns
1986	USA bombing reprisals against Libya	Large (Labour) Metropolitan Boroughs abolished	

	Primarily international	Primarily political/economic	Primarily social
1987		Conservatives win election with 102-seat majority Stock Exchange crash	
1988		Thatcher launches virulent attack on EEC Act of Parliament further restricting trade unions Education Act controlling teaching	
1989	Final collapse of Soviet communism USSR troops leave Afghanistan	Poll Tax begins in Scotland SDP disintegrates Liberal Democratic Party formed	
1990		Poll Tax begins in rest of Britain Britain joins ERM Ridley attacks EEC Thatcher forced to resign Major becomes PM	Widespread Poll Tax riots

	Primarily international	Primarily political/economic	Primarily social
1991	Political reunification of Germany Gulf War Break up of Yugoslavia in civil war		
1992	Denmark and France almost reject Maastricht Treaty Britain withdraws from ERM	Conservatives win election with 17-seat majority Smith becomes Labour Party leader Sterling devalued	Mass protests against pit closures
1993	Israeli–Palestinian peace agreement ERM collapses	IRA Warrington bombing Pit closures carried out Maastricht Treaty narrowly and acrimoniously accepted Joint London/Dublin Downing Street Declaration for Peace in Northern Ireland	Teachers confront government on education changes
1994		VAT range extended (includes domestic fuel for first time) Ulster violence continues until September ceasefire	