

What is the racial & political situation in Britain following 1975?



In the 1970s, Britain entered a major economic crisis. Unemployment soared, inflation soared. There were strikes in almost all major industries. The government debt grew so much that Britain needed bailing out with international aid. The working week was even reduced to just 3 days to conserve energy supplies caused by the strikes. The height of this crisis became known as the **'Winter of discontent'** in 1978/79.



What do these images represent?



On top of all of this, there was a rising racial tension due to the belief that foreigners were taking all the jobs leaving the British workers jobless. Politicians began suggesting immigration was hurting the economy, not helping it. There were many who still shared the fears of Enoch Powell.

Leicester City Council warned that 'the entire fabric of our city is at risk because they are beginning to outnumber the white population'. The National Front was gaining supporters, in Leicester it gained 18% of the vote in a local election!



What characteristic of the British economy might lead to the rise of extreme political views?

Discrimination was rampant in almost all areas of life. Schools tended to have lower expectations of black and Asian students, so they had lower expectations of themselves, gaining fewer qualifications and therefore fewer life chances. Black and Asian communities faced higher unemployment and struggled to get promoted.

Racial Violence Returns

The latest version of youth gangs – the skinheads – became infamous for ‘paki-bashing’. Girls were kicked on their way to school, stones were thrown at windows, eggs and tomatoes hurled at families who dared to step outside. Following a murder, the leader of the National Front said in public “one down, a million to go”.



There have been many race related riots since the 1970s, highlighting there are still racial tensions in Britain. It should be remembered though that the vast majority of people in Britain are pro multiculturalism and see it as a strength of being British.

As you did for the previous riots we studied, make notes on the following with key facts and detail that you can then use to create a report on racial violence in Britain since 1975...

1977: The Battle of Lewisham



The Battle of Lewisham took place on 13 August 1977, when 500 members of the far-right National Front (NF) attempted to march from across southeast London and various counter-demonstrations by approximately 4,000 people led to violent clashes between the two groups and between the anti-NF demonstrators and police.

5,000 police officers were present and 56 officers were injured, 11 of whom were hospitalised. 214 people were arrested. Later disturbances in Lewisham town centre saw the first use of police riot shields on the UK mainland.

1981: Brixton Riot



The 1981 Brixton riot was a confrontation between the Met Police (London Police) and protesters in Brixton, South London. The riots took place between 10th & 12th April. The main riot taking place on 11th April, dubbed “Bloody Saturday”.

It was thought the root of these riots was the deaths of a number of black youths in a house fire in January that many felt hadn’t been investigated appropriately by the police, raising tensions.

On 10th April, a young boy named Michael Bailey had been stabbed and was running away from some other black youths. He ran into a constable to try to stop the bleed and put Michael in a cab to hospital. A police car then arrived and stopped the cab, taking Michael to the police car, when realising he was injured attempted to take him to the hospital quicker than the cab...

April 1981: Brixton Riot

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YmUNjphPHJ4> Documentary 1hr

A group of about 50 youths began shouting for the release of Michael thinking he had been arrested. “look they’re killing him” shouted one of the youths. The crowd attacked the car and pulled Michael out.

Rumours then spread that a youth had been left to die by the police or they just watched as he was stabbed and did nothing. 200 youths (black and white) turned on the police.

Michael later died and it was believed in the community that it was due to police brutality. The riots started at 5 long into the night with 46 police officers injured, 5 very seriously. There was looting, arson and breaking of windows.



July 1981 – Toxteth Riots (Liverpool)

Similarly to Brixton, there was a tension between the people of the Toxteth community and Merseyside Police. Toxteth is in inner-city Liverpool and is a very poor area with a large black community.

It started by an angry crowd who had watched the police stop and search a young black youth, perceiving him to be too heavy handed, they attacked. 3 police men were injured.

There were further similarities to the community of Brixton, Toxteth also had a massive unemployment rate leading to anger desperation and tensions.



July 1981 – Toxteth Riots (Liverpool)

The Toxteth Riots lasted in total around 9 days with gas grenades, petrol bombs, scaffolding and paving stones being used in the riots. Almost 500 police officers were injured and there were 500 arrests. 70 buildings were damaged so badly they had to be destroyed.

Again, like Brixton, there was severe looting and elderly residents had to be evacuated.



Make a list of common features of all of the riots we've looked at so far...

- Relations with police
- High levels of poverty
- High unemployment
- Low living standards
- Long lasting tensions and discrimination

Think right back to Yr7, what were the causes of:



The peasant's revolt 1381

- Raising the poll tax
- Wages capped and poor living standards
- "Evil" tax collectors
- Fed up of being treated badly due to poverty

Pilgrimage of Grace 1536

- Henry VIII destroying the monasteries
- Long lasting tensions over religious persecutions



What about more recently, what were the causes of:

The Suffragette Movement

- To get women the vote and equality
- To end discrimination against women
- To increase the opportunities for women



People are no different in their values, priorities and needs as well as their limits whether it is 1381 or 2020, do you agree?

So, there are clearly some common causes of unrest throughout history, and some unique causes.

Another area to look at in modern Britain, the miner's strikes of the 1980s...

The Coal Miner's strikes 1983-85
– one of the most brutal and devastating struggles in Britain's history



Margaret Thatcher, the Prime Minister of Britain felt the Coal industry was proving too expensive for the government as they had to keep paying the workers despite the fact coal use was reducing significantly due to new more modern fuels.

The problem was that coal mining had been the key work of hundreds of communities around Britain for many many years. Sons followed their fathers who followed their fathers into the industry, it is all some communities knew. So, to lose the coal mines brought great fear and panic as well as anger at the government's attempts to close the industry down.

NUM – National Union of Mineworkers Vs. NCB – The National Coal Board (Government)



Arthur Scargill



Margaret Thatcher

What is a trade union and what is its main tactic for change?

The strikes were the biggest since 1926 in the General Strike, with nearly 26 million combined work days lost by the miners going on strike. The strikes were designed to bring Britain to its knees due to its reliance on coal to stay fuelled. This would put pressure on the government to back down and stop closing the pits.

Some mines went on strike, especially in the north east and Wales, where as some, in the Midlands kept working which led to one of the most bitter disputes in history with the term 'scab' being thrown at those who broke the strike by 'crossing the picket line' and not supporting their colleagues. The reason this was an issue was because if you were on strike, you didn't get paid and people had to feed their families. It was a terrible dilemma.





What do you know about the Windrush Scandal crisis of 2018?

Windrush Scandal refers to the political decision in 2018 to deport legal British citizens back to their home lands in the Caribbean despite in most cases, them living in Britain for up to 50 years. Many of them were wrongly detained and denied legal rights. 83 people were illegally deported from Britain.

Why Windrush Scandal? (What is the reference to Windrush?)

Relating to the ship 'Empire Windrush' that many of these Caribbean's or their relatives arrived to Britain on in 1948 following the British Nationality Act. Some people who flew to the Caribbean with their British passport were refused entry to come back HOME to Britain!

Slavery to windrush clip 15 mins

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GamxNrkwqMw>

Windrush Scandal in the Media

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q4SIP7EZze4>

Ch4 Why the scandal

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y2q2dQlsyWY>

Parliament

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o8rx2Mbyxhl>

Piers Morgan

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BFoSlrnc-6I>

Newsnight

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=65-PdhliNiE>

Fighting to prove I'm British



The 20th Century, relating to immigration, race relations and politics ended...

Write the synopsis of a book or DVD about immigration, race relations and politics (economy) in Britain in the 20th Century.

It should summarise all of the topics we've learnt about in this immigration unit.

Documentary summarising the Windrush Generation and this topic 1hr

Windrush Doc https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YGTm_Gsvyzw

If you're interested, another documentary https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_rzJTNZSLM