BRITAIN TRANSFORMED 1918 - 1997
PLYMSTOCK SCHOOL HISTORY DEPARTMENT

A Short History of England—1945-79—Simon Jenkins—The Welfare State

Clement Attlee

'The new government was infused with a spirit of optimistic euphoria. It was led by Labours coalition leader, Clement Attlee.'

Q. What did Churchill famously say about Attlee?

Q. Who were parts of Attlee's cabinet?

Foreign Office -

Minister of health -

Deputy Prime

Minister **-**

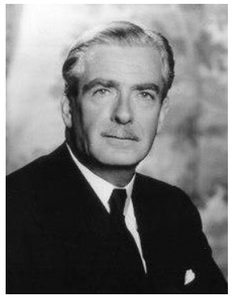
Q. The new welfare state would take responsibility for every citizen from the…

Q. What did the 1944 Butler Education Act introduce?

Q. What did the 1946 National Insurance Act introduce?

In 1948 came Bevan's National Health Service Act, with a free general prac- titioner and hospital for all.

Q. How did Bevan overcome the doctors concerns?



Winston Churchill and Anthony Eden

'At a second election in the Autumn of 1951, the Tories won a majority and Churchill returned to power at the age of 76.'

Q. What was Churchill's governments slogan?

Q. What did the Tories do to the welfare state and nationalisation?

Q. What was the welfare consensus dubbed as?

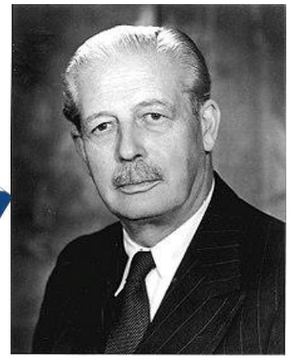
In 1956, Churchill's successor as Prime Minister, Anthony Eden, threw the country back into imperial mode.

Q. How did Eden react to Egypt's nationalisation of the Suez Canal?

Q. Who was the President of Egypt at this time?

Q. Why was Eden forced to withdraw from Egypt?

This was the final signal that Britain's status as a world power was over. Washington now called the shots.



Harold Macmillan

'Eden resigned soon after Suez and was succeeded by Harlod Macmillan, another elderly survivor of the First World War, whose ironic nickname was Supermac.'

Q. In 1957, which treaty did Macmillan's government refuse to sign?

This treaty established a 'common market' of the principal war states of Europe however Macmillan insisted that Britain should keep its implied 'seat at the top of the table.'

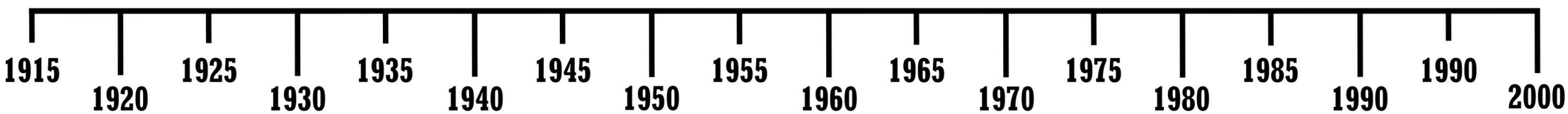
Q. Macmillan retained power at the 1959 election. What phrase did he coin 2 years earlier?

Q. Which immigrant area was racial conflict a major issue in 1958?

Q. Which sex scandal distracted the Macmillan government in 1961?

'The affair was manna to the nation's new satire industry. The often savage television show That Was The Week That Was began in 1962.'

Q. In 1963, Macmillan decided to join the Common Market, but who were they vetoed by?



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Harold Wilson – 1st Term

Labour's new leader, Harold Wilson, scraped to victory at the 1964 election, was quick to capitalise on the mood of the 'swinging sixties.

Q. Wilson invigorated his party to harness the…

Q. What did Wilson's amended Butler Education Act encourage?

This amendment began a major programme of social reform largely championed by liberal home secretary Roy Jenkins.

Q. What other reforms did Jenkins introduce?

Q. In 1967, what did Wilson have to do to protect Britain's balance of payments and what did he say to the public?

Q. What did Tory MP say following the government's decision to admit 50,000 Commonwealth immigrants?

Edward Heath

In 1970 the Tories returned to power under a downbeat former chief whip, Edward Heath. Economic management was now the central theme of British politics, in particular the balance of power between government and organised labour.

Q. How did Heath signal a break with the post-war consensus?

Q. What happened on Bloody Sunday?

A soaring world oil price also stoked inflation and led to running battles with the unions.

Q. Heath had to perform an embarrassing U-turn to rescue which company and type of industries?

Heath was then hit by a miner's strike. The cabinet responded in line with the usual customs of governments throughout the century and opted for more control. However, this led to further unrest, most seriously in energy supply.

Q. What issues arose due to the energy supply issues?

In desperation, the miners were conceded a 35% pay rise, ensuring the demise of half their industry in the next decade.

Q. Heath sought an election on the issue of what?

Wilson's 2nd term and Callaghan

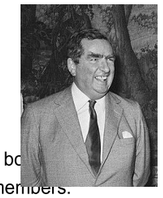
Following Heath's failed election in which the electorate replied, 'Not You,' Wilson returned to 10 Downing Street having secured a narrow majority. However, the economic situation was dire with the government consuming almost half the national product

Q. What was inflation running at?

Q. What did foreign commentators label Britain as?

In 1976, Wilson handed 10 Downing Street to his old colleague James Callaghan, the only man to have held the offices of home secretary, foreign secretary, chancellor and prime minister.

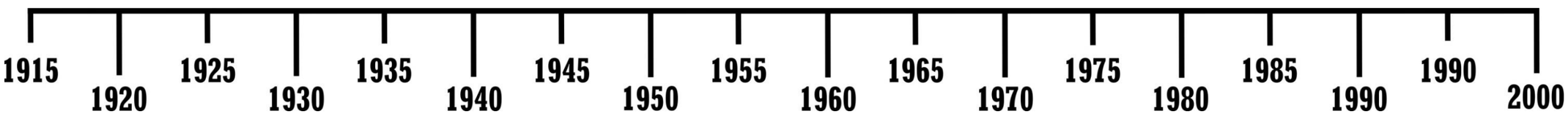
Q. In 1976, what did chancellor Denis Healey have to do to help save the British economy?



Like Heath, Callaghan was beset by a trade unionism bo
public sector growth to an unprecedented 12 million members.

Q. What were the 1978-9 strikes called?

Frozen rubbish piled up in the streets and there were improbable reports of bodies lying unburied.

On the 10th of January 1979, Callaghan arrived back from a summit in Guadeloupe and was famously quoted as saying by the Sun, 'Crisis? What crisis?

In March 1979, Callaghan lost his slender majority on a motion of no confidence.