

Modernity Britain: 1957-1962

David Kynaston

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The late 1950s and early 1960s was a period in its own right-neither the stultifying early to midfifties nor the liberating mid- to late-sixties-and an action-packed, dramatic time in which the contours of modern Britain started to take shape.

These were the "never had it so good" years, in which mass affluence began to change, fundamentally, the tastes and even the character of the working class; when films like Saturday Night and Sunday Morning and TV soaps like *Coronation Street* and *Z Cars* at last brought that class to the center of the national frame; when Britain gave up its empire; when economic decline relative to France and Germany became the staple of political discourse; when "youth" emerged as a fully fledged cultural force; when the Notting Hill riots made race and immigration an inescapable reality; when a new breed of meritocrats came through; and when the Lady Chatterley trial, followed by the Profumo scandal, at last signaled the end of Victorian morality.

David Kynaston argues that a deep and irresistible modernity zeitgeist was at work, in these and many other ways, and he reveals as never before how that spirit of the age unfolded, with consequences that still affect us today.



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