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| Name | Year | What did it do? |
| Act of Union | 1800 | In 1798 there was a revolt against British rule in Ireland. After it had been put down the British government decided to bring Ireland under closer control. **The act of Union, In 1800 abolished the Irish parliament in Dublin, from now on 100 Irish MPs had to travel to London to sit in parliament.** The loss of their own parliament angered many Irish, what made it worse was that Catholics that formed the majority of Ireland's population, were not allowed to become MPs but they could still vote. |
| Corn Laws | 1815 - June 1846 | **Tariffs, or import duties on foreign wheat. Importing wheat was banned until British wheat reached 80 shillings (4 pounds) a quarter (about 13kg).** Once the Napoleonic Wars had ended in 1815, Landowners, who dominated parliament, demanded a ban on imports of foreign wheat. They said that Britain needed to be self-sufficient in case of another war and because the population was rising so quickly. They Knew that hunger and famine had been one of the major causes of the French revolution and were determined to avoid such a revolution in Britain. They also wanted to protect their own income from their lands. Critics saw it as class legislation passed by landowning parliament for selfish reasons. **In 1828 the Corn Laws were modified to include a sliding scale.** |
| suspension of the Habeas Corpus | 1817 | **The law that anyone arrested had to be charged with an offence and brought before a court. After the Latin for 'you have the body'** |
| The Six Acts | 1819 | These acts were dubbed the 'Gagging Acts'. They: **1. banned military-style drilling and training. 2. Gave magistrates increased powers to search for arms. 3. Banned public meetings of over 50 people unless they had magistrates permission. 4. Speeded up trials. 5. Imposed further restrictions on the press. 6. Increased the tax, or stamp duty on newspapers so as to make radical writings, like those of Cobbett, too expensive for poorer people.** |
| Reciprocity of Goods Act | 1823 | **This act allowed the British government to make agreements with other countries whereby Britain would get rid of such restrictions on trade with a particular country if the other country agreed to do the same.** This would help reduce the cost of imports, such as raw materials. This was particularly important for the textile industry. |
| Reform of the Penal Code | 1826 | The Penal Code in England was made up of hundreds of different laws which stated what sentences should be administered for which offences. Some of these laws were very old, many of them were overlapping or even contradictory. **The system was very inefficient and some offences were completely inappropriate. Peel set out to simplify the law, he reduced what had been hundreds of different laws to just 8. He introduced transportation to Australia.** |
| The Gaols Act | 1823 | Local prisons were often filthy and inhumane. Gaolers were often unpaid and therefore likely to try and extort money from the inmates. **The Gaols Act obliged each county and large town to maintain a prison, paid for by local taxes and controlled by the magistrates. It also established a standard system of discipline and inspection and stated that gaolers should be paid and inmates provided basic education.** |
| Repeal of the Combinations Act | 1824 | In 1799 and 1800, at the height of the war with France, the government had banned trade unions, or combinations of working men. 20 years later, **a campaign was launched by radical MP Francis Place to repeal the Combination law and thus make it legal to form trade unions. Although the government did not actively support the campaign for repeal, they did not oppose it either. By the mid-1820's, Britain was more prosperous and peaceful so there was less fear of trade unions. In 1824 the Combinations Acts were repealed.** |
| Repeal of the Test and corporations Acts | 1828 | After the civil war, the government had been keen to make the Church of England strong and dominant, a necessary support for the monarchy. The C of E was the official state church, with the king at its head. **The Test and Corporations Acts, passed in 1661 and 1673, imposed a test for those holding public office: you had to be an Anglican, since then these laws had often been ignored, especially for nonconformists. In 1828, the Whigs introduced an act to parliament to repeal these laws, the tory government did not oppose it and the repeal was passed. This now made it far more difficult to justify the exclusion of Catholics from their civil rights.** |
| Act of Union | 1800 | In 1798 there was a revolt against British rule in Ireland. After it had been put down, the British government decided to bring Ireland under closer control. **The Act of Union abolished the Irish parliament in Dublin. From now onwards the 100 Irish MPs had to travel to England to sit in the parliament in London.** The loss of the Irish Parliament angered many Irish, What made it worse was that **Catholics who formed the majority of the Irish population, were still not allowed to become MPs. They could vote but still not sit in parliament.** |
| Catholic Emancipation | April 1829 | The act was passed in April 1829, a total of 173 Tory MPs voted against it, these **Ultra Tories believed that catholic emancipation was an assault on the British constitution, a threat to national stability and a betrayal of Tory principles. The act allowed Roman Catholics the right to become MPs or to hold public office.** |
| The First Reform Bill | March - April 1831 | The bill shocked parliament at its extent. **The bill: 1. Deprived 60 boroughs with populations under 2000 of both of their MPs. 2. Deprived 47 boroughs of between 2000 and 4000 people of one of their MPs. 3. Awarded seats in parliament to 11 large towns which were to gain 2 MPs each. 4. Awarded seats in parliament to 21 towns to gain 1 MP each. 5. Established a uniform voting qualification in the boroughs: all those who owned or rented a house worth 10pounds a year in rent. 6. Confirmed the existing voting qualification in the counties to be ownership of property worth 40 shillings a year. 7. Awarded some counties, such as Yorkshire, more seats. The bill was defeated on the second reading in the commons in April.** |
| The Second reform Bill | June - October 1831 | The Whigs introduced a second reform bill, it was slightly more moderate than the first: the main change was that the Whigs agreed to a Tory amendment that extended the vote in the counties to tenants who rented land worth £50 a year not just to those owning property worth 2 pounds a year. **The house of commons passed the bill in September but the House of Lords rejected the bill in October.** |
| The Third Reform Bill | December 1831 - June 1832 | **The Whigs introduced a third reform bill and it passed the commons with a 2:1 majority. In April 1832 Earl Grey introduced the bill in the house of lords. On the 15th of April the Lords passed the new bill but it still had to be examined by the house of Lords' committee. On 7th May the committee rejected the bill the Whig government resigned. By 14th May the Duke of Wellington was unable to form a new government and so the Whigs returned. The king's secretary then persuaded the house of Lords to pass the bill, so many lords abstained from voting and the bill passed in early June 1832.** |
| The Old Poor Law | Elizabethan times - 1834 | The Poor Law made the 15,000 parishes responsible for the care of the poor. **This was provided in poor relief. This was support provided for the poor whether inside a workhouse ('inside relief) or outside in the form of money, food or clothing. (Outside relief). Poor relief was paid for by the propertied classes through local taxes, called the poor rates, and was administered by parish overseers. Those who depended on poor relief were known as paupers.** In some parishes those claiming poor relief were obliged to enter the workhouse, however, in most, outdoor relief was more common. |
| The Poor Law Amendment Act | 1834 | The Poor Law commission set up in 1832, with Edwin Chadwick as its head, made the following recommendations: **1. The '*workhouse test'* - all 'outdoor relief to be abolished and poor relief to be available only in the workhouses. 2. *' Less eligibility'* - conditions in the workhouse to be 'less eligible' (less pleasant) than those of the poorest paid worker outside; this would deter all but the most needy. 3. *'Centralisation'* - the administration of poor relief to be the same everywhere or else paupers would simply go were more lenient; this could be achieved only through a centralised system.** |
| factory act | 1833 | The act was based on the findings of the royal commission which based its research on efficiency rather than humanitarianism. **The terms of the act were:** **1. No kids under the age of 9 yrs old are to be employed. 2. Kids aged 9 - 12 are to work a maximum of 12hrs a day and no more than 48hrs a week. 3. People aged 13 - 18 can work a maximum of 12hrs a day and no more than 68hrs a day. 4. Kids aged 9 - 11 must receive 2hrs of schooling a day. The terms of this act only applied to textile factories or mills.** |
| Mines act | 1842 | People working on the royal commission were shocked to find women stripped to the waist cutting coal alongside men. They considered this to be a dangerous sexual temptation. The laws of 1842 and 1844 which protected women at work were as much about defining 'acceptable' moral standards as they were about improving working conditions. Evangelical Christians said factory reform was moral reform, the factories and mines were seen as breeding grounds of immorality. **The terms of this were: women, girls and boys under 10yrs old do not work underground in the coal mines. Pauper apprentices over 10yrs old could continue to work in the mines. The terms of this act only applied to textile factories or mills.** |
| Factory act | 1844 | The laws of 1842 and 1844 which protected women at work were as much about defining 'acceptable' moral standards as they were about improving working conditions. Evangelical Christians said factory reform was moral reform, the factories and mines were seen as breeding grounds of immorality. **The terms of this act were: 1. women restricted to 12hrs a day. 2. Kids under 13yrs old were limited to 6hrs a day and schooling was increased to 3hrs a day. 3. Dangerous machinery was to be fenced off. The terms of this act only applied to textile factories or mills.** |
| 10 Hours act | 1847 | **Women and young people were limited to 10 hrs a day. The terms of this act only applied to textile factories or mills.** |
| The public Health Act | 1848 | **The Main points of the Act were: 1. it established a general board of health, with three members, one of whom was Chadwick. 2. The Board had the power to establish local boards of health if there was a petition from at least 10% of the local ratepayers or the annual death rate exceeded the high figure of 23 per 1000 of the population. 3. The local boards were given wide powers to deal with sewerage, drainage, water supply, road building and the sanitation of new houses.** |
| The Municipal Corporations Act | 1835 | **The act extended the vote for local town councils to all ratepayers. This effectively excluded the working classes from participating in local government because to be a ratepayer you had to own property and very few of the working classes did so. The new town councils began to establish modern police forces that many of the working classes saw as threatening.** |
| Lowering of Stamp Duty | 1836 | Since the Six acts of 1819, newspapers had to pay a government stamp duty, this was an attempt to deprive the radical press of its working class readers. However not all newspapers paid the duty and many published in secret locations to avoid being caught. This was known as the 'war of the unstamped press'. **Henry Hetherington who owned *The Poor Man's Guardian* sold the newspaper for 1p and was imprisoned twice. In London alone between 1831 and 1836, 740 sellers of unstamped newspaper sellers were put on trial. Eventually the Whig government gave in and in 1836 lowered the tax to a point where newspapers could be sold at 1.5p** |
| Income Tax | 1842 | In Peel's budget speech in 1842, peel painted a picture of a national emergency and then called for **the re-introduction of income tax. Previously it had only been raised in war time. Peel convinced most of the commons that now was the time for such a bold move. The tax would only be paid by those earning more than £150 a year, so that most of the working classes would be exempt. He argued that the poor already had to pay tax on their sugar, tea, soap, candles and many other articles of consumption. This tax would raise enough to clear the government’s debt, it would also enable Peel to reduce tariffs.** |
| Repeal of the Corn law | June 1846 | The conservative party came to power in 1841 with pledges to protect two great principles: defence of the church of England and of the landed interest. Now Peel was overturning the latter. By December 1845 Peel had won over most of his cabinet, but two members remained opposed to repeal. **Peel knew the Whigs were all in favour of ending the Corn Laws so he resigned, expecting the Whigs to form a government and carry through the repeal. This would avoid a split in the Tory party. However, Lord Russell was unable to form a government and Peel returned to power, now determined to push ahead. Protectionist Tories led by Benjamin Disraeli, attacked Peel in debates knowing there was considerable support in the countryside behind them. They knew repeal could not be stopped, but they set out to destroy Peel. The bill was finally passed in June 1846.** |