

History of social policy

[Society](#)



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1. Explain the meaning of the following terms: industrialisation; urbanisation; public health problems and the implications for state provisions. The Industrial Revolution was a period from the 18th to the 19th century where major changes in agriculture, manufacturing, mining, and technology had an extreme effect on the society's economic and cultural conditions. Starting in the United Kingdom, then consequently spreading throughout Europe, North America, and ultimately the world.

The Industrial Revolution marks a major turning point in history. Almost every feature of daily life was influenced in some way. Most particularly, average income and population began to exhibit extraordinary sustained growth. This is known as urbanisation. Urbanisation is the increase in the proportion of people living in towns and cities. Rapid urbanisation took place during this period of industrialisation, many people moved from rural to urban areas to get jobs in the rapidly expanding industries in many large towns and cities.

It is estimated that 1/6 of the British population visited London during the 18th century, and the most adventurous and ambitious stayed. This urbanisation had huge implications and resulted in complex societal changes which had adverse effects on the public health of communities. Diseases like typhoid and cholera were common. An outbreak of cholera in 1848 killed 14,000 in London. This was due to the housing shortages, sanitation problems, low standards of personal hygiene, polluted drinking water, exploitation of workers and widespread poverty.

Great Britain in the nineteenth century was a great bastion of individualism where that unsympathetic principle of the political economists -laissez faire- dominated public opinion, and Parliament. The individualist theory of government holds that the position of state is to protect the liberty of individuals to act as they wish, as long as they do not infringe upon the liberties of others. Although there has been extended debate over whether this “ age of -laissez faire” gave way to an “ age of collectivism,” This is the period regarded as the source for the widespread collectivism that would follow. Collectivism At its root is the belief that a collective is more than just individuals interacting together. It is the belief that the group is an entity itself, more important than the sum of the individuals. Put simply by John F. Kennedy “ Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country. ” And that is exactly what happened, In 1875 state intervention meant that a public health act was passed. This implemented that all new residential construction had to include running water, and an internal drainage system.

Also the act meant that all towns had to have pavements and street lights. Yet there was still alot that needed to be done which meant more state intervention was necessary. The national insurance scheme introduced by the liberal government in 1911, gave most workers health insurance and unemployment benefits for workers in industries with high risks of unemployment. But by the 1920s and 1930s the economicdepressionand widespread unemployment meant that the national insurance scheme was paying out more that it recieved.

Benefits were cut and a means test was imposed. This did not change a thing however, poverty was pervasive and particularly among the families of the unemployed. 2. Assess the relationship between laissez faire and ideas of welfare and poverty in the 19th century. Give examples including reference to the poor laws. The original people that believed in and encouraged laissez-faire were the physiocrats (political economists). The physiocrats were followers of the physiocrat school of economic thought, and were in a way the predecessors of classical economists.

Although some of their more renowned ideas were very backwards, like believing that only land (physical assets) produced revenue, they certainly were the first to come up with the notion of laissez-faire. (or no government interference) In 1563 the poor of Britain were branded for the first time into deserving, and the undeserving. The elderly and the very young, the infirm, and families who irregularly found themselves in financial difficulties due to a change in circumstance were considered deserving of social support.

But people who often turned to crime to make a living such as, highwaymen or pickpockets, migrant workers who roamed the country looking for work, and individuals who begged for a living, were to be treated unsympathetically. The act of 1572 introduced the first necessary poor local poor law tax, an important step acknowledging that alleviating poverty was the responsibility of local communities, in 1576 the concept of the workhouse was born, and in 1597 the post of overseer of the poor was created. The great act of 1601 combined all the previous acts and set the benchmark for the next two hundred years.

The Poor Laws passed during the reign of Queen Elizabeth played an essential role in the country's welfare. They signalled important progression from private charity to welfare state, where the care and supervision of the poor was embodied in law and integral to the management of each town, village and hamlet. In 1843, the newspaper *The Economist* was founded, and became an influential voice for laissez-faire capitalism. In response to the Irish famine of 1846–1849, in which over 1.5 million people died of starvation, they argued that for the government to supply free food for the Irish would violate natural law.

Clarendon, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, wrote, "I don't think there is another legislature in Europe that would disregard such suffering." Laissez-faire policy was never absolute in any nation, and at the end of the 19th century, European countries again took up some economic protectionism and interventionism. France for example, started cancelling its free trade agreements with other European countries in 1890. Germany's protectionism started (again) with a December 1878 letter from Bismarck, resulting in the iron and rye tariff of 1879. 1929 was a crucial year across the globe.

When the United States stock market crashed, ripples were felt across Europe. As hardship and insecurity walked hand-in-hand into the 1930s, they met increasing unemployment and poverty. As president of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt took action by implementing a new economic strategy in the New Deal. This model was the "optimistic activism, experimentation, and interventionist reforms" that the country so desperately needed at the time whilst the USA committed herself to social

justice and firmly held the belief of government responsibility towards its citizens, the USSR praised socialism and developed communism.

The United Kingdom saw the action other global governments were taking, and decided to follow the lead. In 1935 Attlee became the new leader of the Labour Party. At that time the Conservative government feared the spread of communism from the Soviet Union to the rest of Europe. In 1940 Attlee joined the coalition government headed by Winston Churchill. He was virtually deputy Prime Minister although this post did not formally become his until 1942.

It was afterwards claimed that during the Second World War Attlee worked as a restraining influence on some of Churchill's wilder schemes. The Labour party published the Beveridge Report (1942), the bestselling “report (that) set out social programs to slay the ‘five giants’: Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor, and Idleness”. In 1945 Herbert Morrison (who was defeated by Clement Attlee for the leadership of the Labour Party in 1935) was given responsibility for drafting the Labour Party manifesto that included the blueprints for the nationalization and welfare programmes. The Labour Party was a socialist party and proud of it. As a result, the Labour government “established free medical care under a newly constituted National Health Service, created new systems of pensions, encourage better education and housing, and sought to deliver on the unambiguous commitment to ‘full employment. In 1945, the United Kingdom gave birth to the first modern welfare state. 3. How did the political ideology of the new right wing impact on social policies under Mrs Thatcher? What is a political ideology?

Alcock (2003, p. 194, original emphasis) argues that ideology is ‘ a concept that refers to the systems of beliefs within which all individuals perceive all social phenomena’. He goes on to stating that ‘ in this usage no one system of beliefs is more correct, or more privileged, than any other’. Heywood (2003, p. 12) suggests, an ideology is a more or less coherent set of ideas that provides the basis for organized political action, whether this is intended to preserve, modify or overthrow the existing system of power.

The new right, it is generally accepted that the political ideology of the New Right contains two interrelated but also sometimes contradictory strands of political thought: neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism. The core elements of neo-liberalism are support for individualism, laissez faire and limited government intervention in economy and society. Neo-liberals believe that individuals are rational and therefore the best judges of their own best interests and that they should be allowed the utmost possible individual freedom to determine their own behavior subject only to the restriction that their behavior should not harm others. The core elements of neo-conservatism differ in several respects from those of neo-liberalism. Whereas classic liberals are all in favor of free individualistic decision making, conservatives put forward that this kind of individualism is a recipe for anarchy and that individual freedom, can best be guaranteed via respect for traditional norms, values and institutions.

They declare that traditional institutions and patterns of social behavior which have stood the test of time must have done so because they have been socially beneficial which leads neo-Conservatives to support the maintenance or at most only gradual change in the existing social order

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which implies support for traditional sources of authority, traditional patterns of social and economic inequality, traditional institutions and traditional values.

They are therefore expected to be supporters of strong but limited government, the Monarchy and the Aristocracy, the Church, the traditional family and traditional education. Under the leadership of Mrs Thatcher the conservatives made it their duty to do away with socialism and to reduce the power of the trade unions. Thatcher's government made changes to the N. H. S, by creating the internal market. This was down to the Griffiths reports (1983) which suggested that the N. H. S should be run like a super market. Instead of meeting patients' needs, trusts would be run in competition with one another for patients. Administration costs in the N. H. S in 1979 were around 6%. After the introduction of the internal market these costs had doubled to 12%. This shows that Thatcher had introduced inefficiencies as a result of outsourcing and duplication of work. However, Thatcher's intended privatisation was never carried through completely due to the backlash from the public.

Tebbit once described the N. H. S as the nearest thing in Britain to a "national religion". The conservative government also contributed in making reforms to the state education system. The Conservatives' 1979 Education Act removed the requirements introduced by previous Labor Governments that Local Authorities whose secondary schools were not currently organized on comprehensive lines must prepare plans for the transition to comprehensive education.

Also under the 1979 Act Local Authorities were requested to place greater emphasis on parental choice in the allocation of school places although it has been suggested that in practice this requirement had only limited practical effects. The 1980 Education Act introduced an assisted Places Scheme which subsidized students who passed an entrance examination but whose parents had limited funds to be educated at private schools in the hope that this would enable these more able students to develop their talents more fully than would be possible in the state sector of education.

This policy is a sign of a Conservative belief that state schools were often incapable of developing the talents of the most gifted pupils and in effect provided a state subsidy to the private education sector which the Conservatives wished to support. An important reform was the 1986 Education Act. This abolished corporal punishment in state schools. Other than this the Thatcher lead conservative party made many more changes to the education system Under the terms of the 1988 Education Reform Act, the following education policies were introduced.

A National Curriculum was introduced which was to be followed compulsorily in all mainstream state schools but remained optional for independent schools. The National Curriculum was originally to contain 10 compulsory subjects of which 3 [English, Mathematics and Science] were to be " core" subjects and 7 [History, Geography, Technology, Music, Art, PE and a modern foreign language {at key stages 3 and 4}] were to be foundation subjects. Welsh was to be a Core Subject in Welsh -speaking schools and a foundation subject in Welsh non-Welsh speaking schools.

RE was to be a compulsory "basic" subject in all schools although problems would arise surrounding the precise nature of the RE curriculum which was to be primarily based around Christianity except where the ethnic/religious composition of the school population suggested that this was inappropriate. In conclusion Thatcher's conservative party had an immense impact and made numerous reforms and changes whilst in government. After all she is not called a social policy expert (Clare Beckett: The 20 Prime Ministers of the 20th Century) for nothing.