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Future and past anxieties : a look at the origins of the British welfare state through WWII

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Future and Past Anxieties:

A Look at the Origins of the British Welfare State Through WWII.

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Introduction

The 1942 Beveridge Report was a forward-looking document that contained

recommendations for the future of welfare in Britain. It has become central to debates about the

origins of the welfare state and is famous for its recommendations of universal welfare for all

citizens. The report also attempted to redefine how the state interacted with the people, by

looking to establish a basis for a universal welfare initiative that included social insurance, health

service and full employment.[1] The Beveridge Report, in the entirety of its vision, was

revolutionary because it defined true freedom as "freedom *from* want, *from* disease, *from*

ignorance, *from* squalor and *from* idleness."[2] Historians generally agree that this document

played a role in spurring the discussion of a welfare state in Britain among the people and within

Parliament. The Beveridge Report led to Parliamentary debates regarding its contents as well as

the future of the British welfare initiative, and in turn, prompted the government to issue the

subsequent White Papers -- a set of plans for post-war reconstruction regarding welfare. These

White Papers, split into three parts and formally titled "A National Health Service," "Social

Insurance Part I and II," and "Employment Policy," outlined the government's plan concerning

health care, insurance and employment of its citizens. After their victory in the 1945 election,

these White Papers and the Beveridge Report became models for the Labour Government's

welfare state plans and the eventual implementation of their welfare state by 1948. While

recognizing the importance of the Beveridge Report and its emphasis on the future, I argue that

the origins of the welfare state also comes from a combination of two other sources. First, Britain

was driven by the misery of the aftermath of WWI and its history and was induced to promise its

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[1] Keith Laybourn, *The Evolution of British Social Policy and the Welfare State*, (Keele: Keele University Press, 1995), 213.

[2] Derek Fraser, *The evolution of the British welfare state: a history of social policy since the Industrial Revolution*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 237.

citizens that those events would never be repeated, among other things. The government strove

to learn from its past mistakes during the interwar years, in an attempt to create a new, better

world for Britain. In addition, the government drew from the collectivist nature of citizens'

shared experiences and their desire for a welfare state during WWII, as it began propagating a

new welfare state.

Historians have previously understood the origins and creation of the British welfare state

as an initiative that stemmed from the unity and equality among the British people during World

War II. R.M. Titmuss argued that "the war created consensus politics and paved the way for the

universal ideas outlined in the Beveridge Report of 1942 [and] that in this 'people's war' the

nation as a whole united in sacrifice to achieve victory."[3] This social solidarity among the British

made them responsive to the "great increase in egalitarian politics and collectivist state

intervention."[4] Titmuss also argued that bombing and evacuation events led to the exposure of

social problems which had remained hidden from the public and that this generated a

commitment to fix the aforementioned issues.[5] Derek Fraser proposed a similar line of argument.

He believed that the all-out effort of total war created decreased social distinction and increased

unity among the British people. The spirit of the "people's war" invoked hope for a better future

and a demand for peace.[6] Fraser agreed that the policy of evacuation "was a part of the process

by which British society came to know itself, as the unkempt, ill-clothed, undernourished and

often incontinent children of bombed cities acted as messengers carrying evidence of the

deprivation of urban working-class life in rural homes."[7] With the total war effort, Britain needed

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[3] Laybourn. *Evolution British social policy.*, 209.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Derek Fraser. *Evolution British welfare state.,* 228-229.
[7] Ibid., 230.

to keep up its production and in turn its workers needed to be healthy and well-fed -- because of this, Fraser argued that warfare necessitated welfare.[8] The 1940s was a time of universalism, while the 1930s, before the war, was a time of selectivity. Fraser stated that the war inspired the notion of shared sacrifice and established a feeling of comradery among citizens, which ultimately played a role in the establishment of equality and togetherness as a British institution.[9]

Other historians have argued instead that the interwar period and the events before are what led to a shift in understanding of the welfare state. Historians Angus Calder and Henry Pelling both believed that this gradual revolution of ideas surrounding the interwar period emboldened discussion and the subsequent creation of the welfare state -- and that the war simply reinforced ideas that already existed.[10] Paul Addison argued that the war forced the fusion of the Left and Right out of necessity, and gave the Labour Party advantage on the homefront, while Churchill was solely focused on victory over Germany.[11] He also believed that there was an increase in confidence among citizens which allowed the Britons to believe that a welfare state was a possibility, and even a necessary step for the nation. They could do more than just 'meddle through'.[12]

I agree that the Beveridge Report reflected already existent ideologies as well as brought about new ones. This report ignited the debates for post-war reconstruction plans and a demand for the government's involvement. The fusion of the Left and Right paved the way for bipartisan cooperation on post-war reconstruction, especially with regards to welfare initiatives. Although

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[8] Ibid., 232.
[9] Ibid., 227.
[10] Ibid., 210.
[11] Paul Addison, *The road to 1945: British politics and the Second World War*, (London: Jonathan Cap LTD, 1975), 20.
[12] Ibid., 19.

the WWII evacuation policy, which evacuated city children to the safety of the countryside, exposed many to the deplorable living conditions of the working-class, I argue that the British public was already aware of that suffering. It is clear from the debates surrounding the welfare state that most Britons saw the misery of the interwar years, for a majority of the country had experienced some type of suffering, and now demanded the state's help to prevent its repetition. I believe the combination of looking to the past and toward the future shaped how the debate surrounding the welfare state was debated, and in turn influenced its structure. Members of Parliament (MP) used the past for reference to avoid mistakes and achieve successes. I believe the origins and motivation for the welfare state can also be found outside WWII and did not sprout solely from conditions during the conflict. There was a feeling of unity among the British people, and this notion of shared sacrifice aroused hope and ideas of prosperity for the future. However, this was an undercurrent to the endless anxiety the British state felt about the future, and fear that the past might repeat itself.

The debates surrounding the welfare state allowed Britons to express their anxieties and hopes for the future by remembering the past. Specifically, Britons were anxious about repeating the horrors in the aftermath of WWI -- they were afraid of falling backward. They were also concerned about Britain's moral leadership in the future; it had been a major force in the past. The future of Britain as a nation evoked unease in relation to the family institution and the furthering of the British race. The interwar past was something both MPs wanted to build on and simultaneously, something they rejected as totally inadequate. The way they invoked the past was multidimensional -- it was not simple demonization of the past. MPs wanted to retrace old attempts to create a welfare state, and do it right this time around. Through these three case studies, I will show that the bipartisan motivations for the British welfare state were dominated

by endless anxieties for the future of Britain, while hope and national fellowship acted as an undercurrent to the creation of the welfare state.

The scope of this project focuses particularly on how members of Parliament and the media, specifically newspapers, understood the establishment of the welfare state. My use of the term "Britons" reflects political rhetoric used by MPs to illustrate unity within the public sphere and to shape the terms of debate. Their instrumentalist rhetoric was meant to unify the community, stop fascism and honor citizens. It is important to study the political rhetoric because these discussions within Parliament led to social policies and the eventual establishment of a welfare system. How MPs started early debates affected the structure of later debates and the eventual terms of the actual scheme. Within the debates, MPs stuck to a strictly British-focused narrative. There was little mention of enemies like Hitler or Mussolini and their possible relation to the welfare discussion. When discussing the economics of the welfare state there is little mention of ideas of laissez-faire. This is most likely due Britain's movement away from ideas of laissez-faire at the turn of the century and into WWI.

In the aftermath of WWI, the government took a firm stance on the extent of their role in helping unemployed citizens and returning veterans. The government believed that there should be extremely limited intervention in the lives of its people. This is particularly telling in the government's role in assisting veterans, specifically those disabled. The policy was essentially one of inaction. Sir Robert Horne, chancellor of the Exchequer in the Lloyd George's post-WWI Coalition government stated, "It should be observed that so far as the grievance of these men, is that they cannot find employment, their case is not different at the present time from that of an

unprecedented number of other men and women, who do not draw pensions from the State."[13]
Disabled veterans were only entitled to a payment in relation to their injury, and the state did not
have to help reintegrate them back into society. The lack of responsibility felt by the government
is exemplified by its decisions relating to disabled veterans.

There were limited efforts by the state to returning ex-servicemen. In 1920, the Coalition
government introduced the King's Roll scheme, a voluntary service that appealed to the
patriotism of employers to persuade them to hire disabled men.[14] Veterans could be compensated
for injuries sustained during the war, but their return to society was considered a problem outside
the sphere of government intervention. This refusal highlighted the government's limits relating
to intervention in the lives of its citizens. In turn, these veterans relied heavily on the gratitude of
the public and benefited from their philanthropy and volunteerism. In her book, *The War Come
Home: Disabled Veterans in Britain and Germany, 1914-1939,* Deborah Cohen argued that the
public made it their duty to assist in providing the resources, whether that be artificial limbs, job
training, or a place to stay, so that veterans could attempt to integrate back into society. In the
interwar years, the philanthropy of the public undeniably helped some disabled veterans return to
domestic life more than the help of any government.

Over time, however, it became apparent that citizen charity was not going to suffice in
the long run -- the state needed to intervene and public opinion indicated that it was the
government's responsibility to be involved. Philanthropists did not see their work as a long-term
solution for the indifference of the state. These private citizens advocated for a greater role of the

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[13] Deborah Cohen, *The War Come Home: Disabled Veterans in Britain and Germany, 1914-1939*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 17.
[14] Ibid.

government in the affairs of disabled veterans.[15] The public became allies of the disabled ex-servicemen and even newspapers who claimed to speak on the behalf of the nation attacked the state for its "stinginess, its disorganization, [and] moral failings."[16] This idleness of the government would not stand in the post-war reconstruction plan of the 1940s.

The interwar years also saw a shift in interactions among nations. The involvement of most of the western world in the conflict of WWI demonstrated the necessity for a new approach on how nations interacted with one another. There was a call for moral leadership and peaceful relationships within the world. Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, a speech delivered to the U.S. Congress in 1918, outlined Wilson's vision for a stable, long-lasting peace among Europe, the Americas and the rest of the world. This speech called for peace and led to the creation of the international organization, the League of Nations. This organization was created as an international body to maintain harmony in a post-war world. The League of Nations petitioned for communication and cooperation between countries, and wanted to establish international laws for the conduct of governments across the world.[17] This new organization created a level of diplomacy that had never been seen before. The League acted as a vehicle for internationalization; issues that before would have been deemed national or imperial were now thrust into the international realm.[18] For Britain and its citizens, the League of Nations allowed them to take on a moral and paternal role in the world that they felt was needed.

The collective trauma of the great war convinced Britons of the necessity of change in international interactions. This new outlook on international relations led many in Britain to

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[15] Ibid, 37.

[16] Ibid.

[17] League of Nations, *The Covenant of the League of Nations*, (Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1920), i.

[18] Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 4-5.

show interest in its country's interactions with others.[19] It was important for Britain to have the support of its citizens in the creation of international law, because of its major role in the League of Nations. There were attempts to engage the British people with international issues and demonstrations of their role as guardians to the world. This was an effort to boost national morale during a time when Britain was beginning to suffer in the aftermath of the war. The importance of Britain's occupation as a world leader translated into the debates surrounding the welfare initiative. During this period, however, there was anxiety concerning the security of Britain's placement on top. With changing ideas about statehood and independence that came toward the end of the interwar period, Britain's leadership was brought into question. The welfare state offered Britain a way to gain relevance again.

In the aftermath of WWI, Britain saw a departure from traditional notions of the British family from before the war. A political movement, " the endowment for motherhood," called for the state to pay mothers compensation for raising children and doing domestic work. Before WWI and afterward, women -- mothers and housewives -- were considered secondary when thinking about family income. Family allowances were meant to provide a payment for children and wages for mothers, creating a buffer of independence for women and children from the male breadwinner, who was not necessarily always capable of proper care. The call for these allowances attempted to bring women to the forefront of politics.

Women were perceived as mothers and housewives first -- so much so that most of the legislation during the interwar years made them dependents of their husbands, leaving them with little to no benefits. As the war ended in 1918, women were granted the right to vote, thus expanding their ability for political involvement. Various organizations sought to make women

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[19] Helen McCarthy, *The British people and the League of Nations: Democracy, citizenship and internationalism, c. 1918-1945*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2011), 1.

active and responsible citizens. This activism, however, was meant to take place within the home and was meant to make the responsibility of the wellbeing of their children and husbands easier and more efficient.

These changing attitudes of the interwar years were referenced during the welfare debates of the 1940s. Members of Parliament felt that these issues were of the utmost importance when considering a British welfare state for the future. The changing attitudes of the interwar years also represented the state's willingness to look to back on the past, and look forward to the future.

Chapter 1: The Aftermath of WWI

In the debates surrounding the Beveridge Report, MPs were particularly concerned with preventing a return to the misery and despair present in the aftermath of WWI. They argued the state needed to take more responsibility for the condition of its citizens in regards to their health, employment and confidence. The report introduced by William Beveridge in 1942, outlined a comprehensive social policy to attack the so-called "five giants": Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness. This report looked to establish a basis for a universal welfare initiative that included social insurance, health service and full employment.[20]Additionally, it was claimed the state should not make, then break promises like they did after the last war, proposals for a better future needed to be fulfilled. The failures of the past loomed large in discussions in Parliament and in newspapers about the future of welfare initiatives. During the Employment Policy debate in June 1944, Sir G. Schuster, a former barrister and National Liberal member stated, "I should be the last person to argue that we ought to shape our future policy merely with an eye to avoiding the mistakes of the past. But it is of value to look back on the lessons of the past, and it is certainly necessary to test the proposals in the White Paper by asking ourselves, How would they have worked in the conditions that we had to face in the years between the two wars?"[21] Members of Parliament saw the value in looking to the past to create a better future. They did not want the conditions of the interwar period to be repeated.

In the aftermath of WWI, the government has seemingly promised good homes and jobs for returning veterans and their families. [Something on the seeming promise, e.g. "homes for heroes" slogan] The story of veterans and their families is an important one and was brought up

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[20] Laybourn, *The Evolution of British Social Policy*, 213.
[21] "Employment Policy," 21 June 1944. *Parliamentary* Debates, Commons, 5th ser., vol. 401 (1943-1944), cols. 279.

continuously in the debates surrounding the Beveridge Report. If the government could not

provide substantial welfare for this group during the interwar years how were they to provide

welfare for the whole population. Their stories exemplified why the government needed to do

more for post-WWII Britain. The state delegated medical and social support for veterans to

philanthropic organizations. In practice, state policy was to provide support in words only rather

than with financial or structural resources. Disabled veterans were only entitled to a payment in

relation to their injury. However, this payment did not cover all a disabled veteran's expenses,

nor did the state did not have to help them reintegrate back into society.[22] The British

government refused to take full responsibility for disabled veterans. The programs that did exist

for veterans were limited in scope. The newly formed Ministry of Pensions provided allowances

to some veterans and their families, but they attempted to delegate whatever tasks they could to

the voluntary effort as well as restricting the state's responsibility in the employment and

rehabilitation of disabled veterans.[23] Disabled ex-servicemen could be compensated for injuries

sustained during the war, though even the compensation of a quadriplegic was not enough to

cover living expenses. Their return to society was considered a problem outside the sphere of

government intervention. This refusal highlights the government's limits relating to intervention

in the lives of its citizens. In turn, these veterans relied heavily on the gratitude of the public and

benefited from their philanthropy and volunteerism.

One of the reasons the state was reluctant to provide direct support was that everyone was

suffering from the economic downturn that came to Britain after 1921. Sir Robert Horne,

chancellor of the Exchequer in the Lloyd George's post-WWI Coalition government stated, "It

should be observed that so far as the grievance of these men, is that they cannot find

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[22] Cohen, *The War Come Home*, 17.
[23] Ibid., 16.

employment, their case is not different at the present time from that of an unprecedented number

of other men and women, who do not draw pensions from the State."[24] There was a notable

reluctance to provide a targeted welfare program in the interwar years.

The experience of the great war, however, changed public opinion about how the

government should take care of its citizens. The newspaper, *Oxford Times* stated, "The State has

its duties towards disabled soldiers, and should not be allowed to pass them on to volunteers,

however enthusiastic they may be."[25] The government passed on responsibility to voluntary

private institutions because of popular private initiative. These private institutions reflected the

state's unwillingness to provide as well as justified further state neglect.[26] To the public, the

state, "failed to make the most of its opportunities and by hesitation- almost amounting to

refusal- to incur capital expenditure, has endeavored to shirk its responsibilities and to throw

them on to the generosity of charitably-minded individuals."[27] The expected responsibility of the

government was in crisis. The public came to believe the British state was responsible for the

needs of disabled veterans. The government's reluctance to help its citizens during this period

was criticized then and during the welfare debates two decades later. Members of Parliament

during the 1940s felt the state could no longer ignore the needs of Britons. By highlighting the

misery felt in the interwar period, MPs brought the reality of the past to the present; the suffering

could not and should not be repeated.

The belief in the necessity of the government taking more responsibility for disabled

veterans evolved into notions of the state responsibility for all citizens. This ideal found

expression in November 1944 when the *Daily Herald*, then a Labour-leaning newspaper, stated

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[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid, 38.
[27] Ibid, 38-39.

in an article titled "Beveridge's Great Scheme will be Justified", "the responsibility for continuity of benefit and for finding employment was on the Government. We could achieve freedom from want and lay down a new economic foundation only if our human and material resources were used for national and not for private interests."[28] This represented one line of thinking during this period. It was the responsibility of the state to take interest in the welfare of its citizens and provide a decent standard of living. The Government needed to use their resources for national interests, in this case, the wellbeing of its people. The implication was, in the interwar years, the state continually put private interests over public interests. This was no longer acceptable in the eyes of the public and the *Daily Herald*.

The definition of government responsibility changed between the end of WWI and into the midst of WWII. Mr. Tom Brown, a Labour MP from Ince who had both worked as a miner and in the National Union of Mineworkers, outlined the state's expectations of the people and the people's expectations of the government. He argued, "it is the duty of all citizens to do their best for the State. Having said that, I also say that it is the duty of the State to protect those citizens who have done their best for it. Protect them from what? Protect them from poverty, want and unemployment, or, as the Prime Minister said, provide them with food, houses and work."[29] These were tangible things that the government and even the Prime Minister, understood were needed by citizens and should be the responsibility of the state to provide. This was a shift away from the logic of the interwar period. It was no longer acceptable to leave disabled veterans and the rest of society in the hands of the public using private funds. The state needed to use their own resources to provide for the public and not pass the problems of its citizens to others.

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[28] H. R. S. Phillpott, "Beveridge's Great Scheme will be Justified," *Daily Herald* (London, UK), Nov. 4, 1944.

[29] "Employment Policy," cols. 502.

In the welfare debates of the 1940s, members of Parliament looked back to this perception that the state had failed its citizens, especially veterans, in the interwar years. Britons had sacrificed much for the nation, whether fighting in trenches or working tirelessly on the home front to support the war effort. The feelings of the public and members of Parliament about the aftermath of WWI can be summed up in a quote by Mr. Brown, during the debate on the Employment Policy White Paper of 1944. He began by asking "the indulgence of the House to quote what was said in the first year after the last war, in 1919." For him, the history of the interwar years was directly relevant to the present debate about the future of the welfare debate. After WWI, there was a sense of the urgent need for a radical break with the past. "'The old world must end. Millions of gallant young men and women have fought for the new world; hundreds of thousands have died to establish it; if we fail to honour the promise given to them then we dishonour ourselves.'" He then reflected on the disappointing reality of the years that followed:

> What has the new world meant to them? It was a world where, for millions of honest workers, men and women, toil purchased nothing better than squalor, poverty, penury, anxiety and wretchedness. It was a world scarred by shims and disfigured by sweating, where unemployment, through the upheavals in industry, brought despair to multitudes of humble homes; a world where, side by side with want, there was waste of the inexhaustible riches of the world, partly through ignorance, partly owing to lack of forethought and partly arising from deeply entrenched selfishness.[30]

Brown argued this "new world" was filled with misery and poverty, it was filled with the poor fighting to survive and the rich living in luxury. There is a feeling of inequality, a feeling of betrayal that while a majority Britons were suffering a small percentage of the population lived luxuriously, too selfish to care about the less fortunate. Unrelenting unemployment not only caused poverty, but also anxiety and despair among British workers. This experience left a sense

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[30] Ibid.

of frustration and futility and caused a loss of skills and self-respect among Britons, for promises of a new way of life were broken.[31] He believed this is due not only to ignorance of the state but also its selfishness. The state was ill prepared for the aftermath of the war, and unwilling to find the funds to lessen the burden carried by its people. This statement meant to warn against making a similar mistake after the present war. Brown alluded that the government can no longer be selfish or ignorant of what the people desire and need.

During the Beveridge Report debate, Mr. James Griffiths, who would become national insurance minister after the Labour Party's victory in 1945, gave a similar warning to Brown. He claimed, "Our people have memories of what happened at the end of the last war, memories of the period of depression, memories of the unemployment, frustration, poverty and distress into which large masses of our people were thrown."[32] Britons' memories of the interwar years were ever present during WWII and there was a major concern for what the future held when the experience after the last war was filled with poverty and misery. Griffiths continued, "In public, and much more in private, at the fireside, men and women are asking: After this, what? After victory, what? A return to the old days, a return to those years in which never less than 1,000,000, and sometimes 2,000,000, and at one time 3,000,000 of our people, were allowed to rust on the streets, unwanted in this country?"[33] Such questions led the public to fully embrace the Beveridge Report and the notion of expanding governmental responsibility. Griffiths remarked, "There is a deep determination among the mass of the people that we must in the years that are to come build up a Britain in which, if there is want which we can prevent, we shall

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[31] Walter L. Arnstein, *Britain Yesterday and Today: 1830 to the Present*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001), 316.
[32] "Social Insurance and Allied Services," 18 February 1943. *Parliamentary* Debates, Commons, 5th ser., vol. 386 (1942-1943), cols. 1966.
[33] Ibid.

collectively prevent that want and give our people a real opportunity in life."[34] The people felt they had suffered enough. They were ready to work as a collective to prevent want and create a new Britain that gave its people a new prospect at life. The government needed to see that its people were ready to forge into a new world. Griffiths and the nation believed it to be imperative that this time a new world must prevail.

Brown and Griffiths' description of the aftermath of WWI was not exaggerated. The interwar years saw considerable misery and suffering felt by all levels of British society. Between 1921 and 1938, unemployment averaged 10.6 percent, more than double the average during the five decades preceding the great war.[35] In June 1929, one million Britons were unemployed. By December 1930 two and a half million were out of work and by midsummer of 1932, one in four English family breadwinners were unemployed.[36] Of the 1.7 million wounded soldiers, a majority of them were permanently disabled, making it extremely difficult for them to find employment and integrate back into society. This level of unemployment meant by 1933 about 7 million people in Britain were on the Dole, a meager governmental cash payment meant to provide relief.[37] The value of British exports decreased so work like coal mining and shipbuilding decreases dramatically, causing many to become unemployed.[38] Communities were decimated and industrial workers were kept idle by the lack of government intervention.

This misery was felt more intensely in some parts of Britain over others. During the Beveridge Report debate, Mr. S. O. Davies, a Labour minister and former miner, referenced the

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[34] Ibid.
[35] S. Lael Brainard, "Sectoral Shifts and Unemployment in Interwar Britain" National Bureau of Economic Research, (Cambridge, MA), Jan. 1992.
[36] Arnstein, *Britain Yesterday*, 310.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid., 304.

interwar years to argue in favor of meaningful action on welfare. He argued "Millions of the finest skilled workers were rendered unemployed and reduced to almost abject poverty. Some of the oldest industrial communities in the world were forced to become derelict as in my own constituency. After the last war a highly industrialised community were forced out of their collieries and their iron and steel works…and, while men were kept in enforced idleness, £12,000,000 to £14,000,000 were paid to keep them in their despair and misery."[39] Davies emphasized the failure of the Dole and its cause of keeping individuals unemployed in order to receive help from the government. He continued, "Are we going to repeat that again-the policy that reduced the people of this country to rags and tatters, under which the textile workers of Lancashire were not permitted to produce clothing for the miners of South Wales and we were not permitted to keep fires upon their own miserable hearths?" He argued that Britons were prevented from helping each other, breaking apart society instead of bringing it together in a time of need. Davies warned of unrest if the people did not receive what they believed they deserved. He stated, "I warn the Government that when our people are demobilised from the Forces and from the war industries they will not stand the kind of cruelty that was perpetrated against them after the last war."[40] This speech is critical of not only state inaction but of misguided inaction. The system did not provide enough relief nor did it attempt to create new opportunities where industries were in decline and essentially kept workers idle. Davies employed the idea that this misery was doomed to repeat if the state failed to intervene; he suggested the state is the one thing that can prevent these deplorable conditions from reoccurring.

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[39] "Social Insurance and Allied Services," 17 February 1943. *Parliamentary* Debates, Commons, 5th ser., vol. 386 (1942-1943), cols. 1904.
[40] Ibid.

The public, and even soldiers were experiencing an increase in the standard of living because of the demands of total war. MPs argued this relief from misery would not be taken from the people without a fight. During the Employment Policy debate, Mr. MacLaren, a Labour minister and former engineer, reiterated that the Dole scheme and neglect by the state would no longer be acceptable in the eyes of returning soldiers. He argued, "I am amazed at the way they [soldiers] reacted to a healthy life when I remember how they rotted at our street corners. These men, now revitalised, are not coming back to the life they had before. They are not coming back to unemployment, and, what is more, they are not coming back to be "doled," overlooked and supervised by bureaucrats."[41] MacLaren believed soldiers would not allow the state to toss them to the wayside, only providing scrapes to live on, as they did after the last war. The soldiers now benefiting from a healthier lifestyle, would be unwilling to return to such desolation they experienced in the interwar years.

During the debate outlining the government's Employment Policy, Captain Prescott, a representative for the constituency of Darwen from 1943-1951, gave another example of a small town decimated by the conditions created in the aftermath of WWI. He stated, "I conclude with a slight repetition by saying that in the comparatively small town of Darwen, which has a population of about 30,000, there were 10,000 people unemployed in 1931. Out of 50 mills, over 25 were closed, and the misery, want and poverty which were experienced there were indescribable."[42] This was just another example of how a town dependent on industry suffered during the interwar period. This misery was widespread and felt by a whole community. How the government dealt with the future of trade and industry within the country was important to MPs and the areas they represented because these individuals saw firsthand the damage done by

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[41] "Employment Policy," cols. 520.
[42] "Employment Policy," cols. 254.

government inaction. Prescott concluded, "Whatever our political views may be, I hope that a message will go forth from this House today and in the ensuing days of the Debate on this White Paper, that will make it clear that those conditions will never be allowed to return."[43] Prescott urged members of Parliament to not let political views interfere with doing what was right for the people of Britain and not allowing the misery felt after the great war to be felt again. He argued for MPs to come together, forget the politics, and make a stand against past injustices. Essentially, politics needed to be taken out of the equation. The necessity of a welfare state could not be an agenda of one side; all of Parliament needed to understand the obligation to the people and their wellbeing.

With the debates surrounding the Beveridge Report and subsequent White Papers, there was a call by MPs and the public for the government to produce realistic policies with detailed plans of action, shifting away from the empty rhetoric of the last war. During the final day of the Beveridge Report debate in the House of Commons in February of 1943, Captain George Grey, a Liberal minister and army officer, stated, "We have to make sure that our Forces and people are inspired for that necessary sacrifice and devotion by a realisation that the world after this war is going to be a new one and that it is not merely going to be empty phrases and pious platitudes such as they received after the last war."[44] The government needed a program in place to guarantee that the British people would not be let down by the state a second time. They had an obligation to get it right this time around. Captain Edward Cobb, a National Unionist minister and army officer, continued this notion by stating, "there [are] few people in this country who [have] forgotten the years after the last war, years of disillusionment and dissatisfaction due very largely to the specious promises made by the then Coalition Government…I hope and believe

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[43] Ibid.

[44] "Social Insurance and Allied Services," cols. 1986.

that the present Government are extremely anxious that nothing should be said in the course of the Debate that would mislead the people and lead to that same state of disillusionment and disappointment."[45] Cobb argued that Parliament had to be cautious when discussing the future of the welfare state, for the British people were paying close attention to these debates to determine if their world would look different than it did after the last war.

The people wanted to see concrete ideas about the future and policies for action that broke away from the restrictions during the interwar years. Mr. Graham White argued, "If the House of Commons can succeed in persuading people that we are determined to carry through a policy of expansion and a policy of abundance, as opposed to a policy of scarcity which has existed since the first German war, we shall have removed from their minds the belief… that there was only a certain limited amount of work to be done [after the last war]."[46] Parliament and the state needed to show the people they were determined to create policies quite different from those introduced after the last war. It required them to demonstrate that policies would not be limited, and the government would do everything in its power to get to work for the people. These ideas of expansion and abundance correlated with Keynesian economics; Keynes believed economists could advise the government on how to stabilize the economy. He also argued governments should encourage deficit spending and low-interest rates in times of depression and budget surpluses and high-interest rates in times of inflationary boom.[47] The government needed policies of abundance in order to stimulate the economy and support employment.

Sir Robert Aske, a Liberal minister and barrister, similarly warned against usage of vague statements that could lead to disillusionment when discussing the government's employment

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[45] Ibid.
[46] "Employment Policy," cols. 243.
[47] Arnstein, *Britain Yesterday*, 314.

policy. He stated, "The White Paper says: 'The first line of attack on the problem of unemployment in these unbalanced areas must be to promote the prosperity of the basic industries on which they primarily depend. … It will be an aim of Government policy to help these industries to reach the highest possible pitch of efficiency, and secure over-sea markets.'"[48] This was not a new proposal, but a policy that the government had held for a long time. The government spoke of this goal but gave no concrete details of execution. Aske continued, "A pious resolution, but every Government since the last war has passed the same resolution, to be followed by the most disappointing results to all those interested in these areas. There is no suggestion here as to what are the measures which will be promoted or which will carry out the aim of the Government to help those industries."[49] Aske believed the government should not give elusive promises of what they hoped to achievement after the end of the war. He wanted to see outlines of concrete governmental proposals that diminish the problem of unemployment. This was a demand for a new kind of politics that dove into detailed policy proposals and understood the necessary steps. MPs and their constituents wanted to know exactly what the government was proposing. This represented a shift in the people's engagement with the state and in turn the government's transparency to the public. On March 17, 1944, the day after the first round of the debate encompassing the National Health Service White Paper, the *Daily Mirror*, a mainstream liberal newspaper, wrote, "What really emerge from [the debate] was the failure of the Government scheme- admirable in vague principles- to lay down decisions on vital

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[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.

issues."[50] The state's inability to give concrete proposals detailing their plans for postwar

reconstruction was highlighted by the public.

During discussions surrounding the 1940s White Papers outlining the Coalition

government's plans for post-war reconstruction, members of Parliament were still anxious to

produce a world better than the one shaped after WWI. They believed in giving citizens and

returning servicemen and women the support they needed. In the debate on the Employment

Policy White Paper, Mr. Arthur Jenkins, a Labour minister and former miner, argued "On no

account can we allow such a situation as we had after the last war to recur. I welcome this Paper,

recognising its limitations and believing in public ownership. I want to pursue that object as fast

as it possibly can be pursued. In the meantime, I want definite action taken immediately so as to

make impossible large-scale unemployment such as we had after the last war."[51] Jenkins was not

only speaking to the mass unemployment that occurred after the war but also the failings in

industry and finance due to disorganization and ignorance. In these debates and in newspaper

articles there was a call for the government to step up, claim responsibility, and have the courage

to do what needed to be done to create a welfare system for its citizens. Mr. S. O. Davies

declared:

> I urge the Government to take their courage in their hands at long last, and to make up
> their minds that nothing of what happened after the last war shall recur in this country.
> We have the will, we have the skill, and we have the confidence. I hope the Government,
> at last, will make up their minds to mobilise all that, and to give the people of the country
> what they deserve at the end of this war.[52]

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[50] "Parliament sees "symptoms" as doctors wrangle," *Daily Mirror* (London, UK), Mar. 17, 1944.
[51] "Employment Policy," cols. 435.
[52] "Social Insurance and Allied Services," cols. 1908.

It can be interpreted that the courage the government must take is that of the people; the people were entitled to a welfare state because of their sacrifices during WWI as well as the sacrifices they were currently making. The people believed in the welfare state. They wanted it, and Davies believed they deserved to have it. The state needed to utilize what Britons had to offer to prevent a return to the past. The British people insisted the government legitimize their needs as important issues that were necessary to provide. The *Daily Herald*, in December 1942, wrote "There are two words graven on the hearts of the overwhelming mass of men and women- "Never Again.," the people had made up their minds that they would never submit to the social and economic evils of the past.[53] The government's acceptance of the Beveridge Report and their willingness to provide White Papers outlining plans for the future of welfare in Britain illustrated a shift in their understanding of responsibility toward the British people. The public and MPs were anxious to leave behind the misery of the interwar years and create a new world with a state that claimed accountability for providing its citizens with assistance.

The Beveridge Report of 1942 spurred debate as to what the future held for the British welfare system. Members of Parliament and the public were anxious to distance themselves from the misery of the interwar years, exemplified by the cases of disabled veterans. It was no longer good enough for the government to stand by as its citizens suffered. In the 1940s, the public demanded more state responsibility and, necessarily, intervention. This shift in governmental responsibly was illustrated by the state's willingness to discuss the ideals of the Beveridge Report and issue subsequent White Papers detailing their plans for the future. Much of these proposals contained ideas introduced in 1942. References to the interwar years during the debates of the welfare state led to three main conclusions: the people were entitled to respect,

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[53] H. R. S Phillpott, "Greenwood Tells the Cabinet 'Never Again' on all our hearts," *Daily Herald* (London, UK), Dec. 2, 1942.

understood in a wider consciousness than ever before, government responsibility encompassed much more than it did in the aftermath of WWI with declaring accountability for welfare of its citizens, and the state needed to create detailed policies for the future, avoiding vague statements of the past. This is important in understanding the rhetorical reality of the welfare state and the political will present to push its policies forward in wartime. In the aftermath of WWI, the British people faced misery and hardship. They were committed to 'never again' feel the despair of this period and demanded the government's participation in its prevention.

Chapter 2: Britain, A Moral Leader

While debating the future of welfare in Britain and state policy proposals, MPs saw its creation as a way for the country to become a moral leader to the world and establish itself at the forefront once again. They argued Britain had a moral obligation to its people and the rest of the humanity to create something monumental. The hope was that Britain would become a democratic landmark which other countries would use as a model in crafting their own welfare systems.

Ideas of moral leadership and peaceful relationships with other nations were not new to the MPs or the public when the welfare debates started in 1943. These ideas had been introduced during WWI in Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points and had inspired the creation of an international organization titled the League of Nations in 1920. The League of Nations was created to act as an international body to maintain peace in the postwar world. *The Covenant of the League of Nations*, published in 1920, contained the League's aims. At the beginning of the document, it states that, "In order to promote international co-operation and to achieve international peace and security by the acceptance of obligations not to resort to war, by the prescription of open, just and honorable relations between nations, by the firm establishment of the understandings of international law as the actual law of conduct among Governments, and obligations in the dealings of organized peoples with one another, Agree to this Covenant of the League of Nations."[54] This statement called for communication and cooperation between nations and an establishment of international law to regulate the conduct of governments. Changing ideas in international relations led to new understandings of what it meant to be part of a

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[54] League of Nations, *The Covenant of the League of Nations*, (Boston: World Peace Foundations, 1920), i.

globalized world. In her book titled, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire*, Susan Pedersen discussed the role of this organization in creating a level of international diplomacy and publicity that had not been seen before. The League's oversight could not force nations to change how they governed but it obliged them to say they were attempting to change their ways of governing.[55] It also was a vehicle for internationalization, "the process by which certain political issues and functions are displaced from the national or imperial, and into international, realm."[56] These desires for cooperation and communication among nations was an also an aim for the post-WWII world. Britain, with its model of a welfare state, believed it could be a leader in this development.

With the founding of the League of Nations, the organization saw the growth of a large interest in its endeavors within British society. The creation of the League of Nations inspired the founding of the League of Nations Union (LNU), the League's strongest champion in Britain.[57] Helen McCarthy, in her book *The British People and the League of Nations*, argued that the League "inspired a rich and participatory culture of political protest, popular education and civic ritual which took root in British society between the wars."[58] The collective trauma of WWI convinced the British people of the necessity of reform concerning international relations. The goal of the LNU was to secure the British people's support of the League of Nations as the guardian of international endeavors and to promote an ideology of "pacifism" which regarded international cooperation as the best means of stopping a war, while allowing military involvement to uphold the rule of international law.[59] The LNU desired to persuade the British

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[55] Pedersen, *The Guardians,* 4.
[56] Ibid, 4-5.
[57] McCarthy, *The British people and the League of Nations*, 1.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid., 3.

people to accept their role as guardians of the world and boost national spirit and morale as a

nation. In the 1940s the state also wanted citizens to be aware of their role as global citizens and

as leaders to other nations.

As a major leader in the creation of the League of Nations, it was important for Great

Britain to have the support of its citizens in the development of international law. The LNU

illustrated this vision of "mutually interlocking spheres of influence which left existing

hierarchies between nations and peoples intact and shored up Britain's self-image as a humane

guardian of a liberal empire."[60] This organization allowed for the involvement of its citizens in

the creation of its international developments. In Britain, the League of Nations represented a

break in tradition in foreign policy but not in its identity as a moral leader of the world or its

position within the international community as the first amongst equals.[61] The League may have

changed how the British understood international relations but it did not affect its belief in its

moral leadership or its place among other nations. Notions of Britain's leadership from the

interwar period continued into WWII, finding a hold within the welfare debates.

As Europe rushed toward another major war and Britons suffered from poverty,

unemployment and squalor, belief in the effectiveness of the League Nations decreased as the

public turned to look inward. In the late 1930s, Mass-Observation, a social research organization,

asked Britons to rank foreign affairs and domestic affairs in order of importance and found only

twelve percent believed foreign and domestic affairs to be more important than the latter.[62] There

was a sense of disillusionment in the League of Nations and a desire to fix problems at home

before committing to those aboard. As suffering continued in Britain, the LNU realized it could

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[60] Ibid., 248.
[61] Ibid., 9.
[62] Ibid., 243.

no longer ignore the country's social and economic problems in favor of discussing international relations. In the 1940s debates, there was the belief that if Britain fixed itself domestically it could act as a leader for the rest of the world; a role they failed during the interwar period.

National approaches to welfare were increasingly located within an international context. A newspaper warned its readers in 1943 against "becoming so absorbed with the problem of social security that they risked losing sight of the bigger picture: 'International and not National is the thought which precedes all our considerations of the great and glorious take of Reconstruction which lies ahead'."[63] Maintaining an international outlook was a major part of the discussions of the British welfare initiative. Two years before, in 1941, a focus on a better global future had led to the creation of the Atlantic Charter. In August of that year, American President Franklin D. Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill signed this document, which outlined the war aims of both the U.S. and Britain. A point that many Britons took seriously was the hope of establishing a peace which would allow all nations to dwell safely within their own boundaries and would "afford assurance that all the men in all lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want."[64] This was a promise by both the United States and Britain to create conditions within nations that allowed freedom from want-- a welfare state. The Atlantic Charter led to the Declaration of the United Nations in 1942, a document signed by 26 countries in agreement to unite and defeat the Axis powers at all cost. This declaration would lead to the formation of the international organization of the United Nations and in its conception the dissolution of the League of Nations.

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[63] Ibid., 250.

[64] U. S. Department of State Bulletin, August 16, 1941, p. 125; Joint Declaration by the President of the United States of America and Mr. Winston Churchill representing His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, known as the Atlantic Charter, August 14, 1941. London H.M Stationery Office 1941. [United States No. 3 (1941), Cmd. 6321].

The introduction of the Atlantic Charter produced new ideas about democracy, internationalism and foreign relations across the world. These ideas threatened Britain's self-image as a virtuous imperial power because of the country's dependence on its symbolic and materialistic ties to its dominions and colonial dependencies near and far.[65] There was sharp criticism from both the United States and the colonies themselves. Britain realized in order to maintain an image of a morality it needed to shift how it discussed and interacted with its empire. In *Britain To-Day*, the publication of the British Council, the editor stated, "There has been an acute awakening of the public conscience in Great Britain to the need of harmonizing its Colonial policy with British conceptions of individual rights and democratic government… none but the Imperial Power can take the measures which are necessary to rescue them from barbarism… to protect them from exploitation, to educate them, to enable them to hold their own and win their way to prosperity."[66] This excerpt gave a clear indication of how Britain saw itself in relation to colonial subjects and its perceived job in postwar reconstruction. Britain's understanding of its falling position within the global rank led to a discussion of Britain's moral obligation within the debates surrounding the welfare state. Ideas of moral leadership stemmed from the days of the League of Nations and MPs believed Britain was responsible for leadership within an international context and could not fail in its responsibility like it did with the League of Nations.

When discussing the creation of the welfare state, MPs argued for Britain's moral obligation not only to its citizens but the rest of the world. Mr. Greenwood on the first day of the Beveridge Report debate stated, "early action [in creating a welfare state] would hearten the

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[65] Sonya O. Rose, *Which People's War?: National Identity and Citizenship in Britain 1939-1945*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 239.
[66] Ibid., 243.

people of this country and of other countries and would give Britain the moral leadership in the universal struggle for social security for all people in all lands."[67] By creating an all-encompassing welfare state, the British would become the world leader in the fight against want internationally. Greenwood continued, "I earnestly hope that the Government will grasp this great and glorious opportunity to place themselves in the forefront of a great human movement and so fulfill some of the fundamental aims for which the war is being fought."[68] This could be Britain's opportunity to bring themselves to the forefront and become an example for the rest of the world to follow. By fulfilling this document, Britain would achieve what was not by the League of Nations. The welfare state stood as a helpful tool for creating peace across the world. Dr. Burgin continued this idea of moral leadership by stating "The wealthiest country, the greatest leader of Western thought, surely this country will not lag behind the best international product and example in this matter of social security. Surely, as part of the new world we are creating, we are going to have a system of social security worthy of the name. Surely, we are going to realise that this is a moral question."[69] As a world leader, Dr. Burgin believed Britain had the moral duty to create a system of social security not only for its British citizens but for the citizens of the world. This was reflective of Britain's understanding of itself as a leader within the League of Nations and an example of moral governance. By looking at its role in the past, Britain hoped to contribute more in the future. During the Employment Policy debate, Mr. Hughes stated, "We must pledge ourselves to a common objective, not to give a man work, not to provide him with something to do, but to lift the whole status of our people. Give to the full

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[67] "Social Insurance and Allied Services," cols. 1628.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid., 1694.

extent everything we can produce; if we cannot sell it, give it away."[70] Hughes believed

providing work was not the objective; lifting the status of the British people should be the goal of

the government. He then argued this, in turn, would help the people of the world, he continued,

"That is what is done in wartime, either to ourselves or the other peoples of the earth. This is an

objective-raising our own people, raising the peoples of the earth where we can."[71] Mr. Hughes

considered that the state's responsibility must extend beyond the bounds of its people to

encompass the world. It was important for Britons to see themselves as leaders not only to create

a sense of unity but to build a nation fit for strong leadership in the post-war world. The identity

of a moral leader justified by the League of Nations during the interwar period led Britons to

carry this notion of responsibility in discussing their postwar aims.

There was caution, however, of upholding the promises of the Atlantic Charter for not

only Britons but for individuals across the globe. During the Beveridge Report debate, Mr.

Clement Davies argued, "It started on the high hopes expressed in the Atlantic Charter, the

words of which were coined by the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister, and we have heard,

not only in this House, but throughout the country, expressions of admiration for the sentiments

that were expressed in that Charter. They have been the foundations not merely for propaganda

throughout the world but the foundation of all which we are fighting for and calling upon the

democracies of the world to join in with… This is a great moral principle: it is a great economic

principle. Do not disappoint the people of this country."[72] The people of Britain and the world

were excited and expectant of promises made by the Atlantic Charter. It was in Britain's interest

to keep these promises and not. Davies maintained, "You will one day be meeting the peoples of

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[70] "Employment Policy," cols. 294.
[71] Ibid.
[72] "Social Insurance and Allied Services," cols. 2016.

other countries face to face at the table. You will be asking them to join with you in raising the economic standards of the world. Go into that conference with your own policy at home as a guide to all the other countries."[73] The cooperation of other countries demanded the creation of a welfare incentive that benefited all citizens and in turn would be desired by other nations. This would lead to better relations between nations of the world.

The publication of the Beveridge Report spiked interest not only in Britain but across the world as well. The idea of a full-fledged welfare state was an interest for many and this attention caused various MPs to argue that the welfare state gave hope to those across the world oppressed by dictatorial governments and propaganda. Captain Grey argued, "Why is it that these proposals for social security for the British nation have been of absorbing interest in recent months not only to ourselves, the principals, but the whole of the civilised world? The reason is a simple one, but it is evidently so simple that the Government do not yet fully appreciate it. Surely the reason is that now in the fourth year of the war we are the first member of the United Nations to produce our post-war aims."[74] Britain gave the first sign of hope in creating a new world in postwar Europe. Grey continued, "For three years of war, Europe and the occupied countries have had hammered into them the Nazi new order and the Nazi peace aim, but apart from rather vague outlines such as the Atlantic Charter they have been told nothing concrete at all about the world which we intend to build."[75] The Atlantic Charter gave vague aims of what the United States and Britain hoped for the postwar world, but nothing since had been produced to give concretion to these aims. Grey argued the Beveridge Report was the first attempt to bring the aims of the Atlantic Charter to fruition and give the people of the world, who had been bombarded with Nazi

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[73] Ibid.
[74] "Social Insurance and Allied Services," cols. 1986.
[75] Ibid.

ideals, the hope of a better future. In this case, a future of social security was the responsibility of a nation's governing body.

The Beveridge Report was a type of propaganda that gave hope to people outside of Britain. Mr. Govern, during the Beveridge Report Debate, stated, "It can be both an inspiration to human beings who have been led to believe, by propaganda during the past 3½ years, that they are fighting for something worthwhile, and a pledge that you intend to give them proper honour for the sacrifices they have made and the difficulties-they have endured, and a proper place in a new order that will rule out the crudities that were in operation in this country before the war."[76] The Beveridge Report, and subsequent White Papers acted as validation for Britons fighting in the war. This report justified their sacrifices and displayed the willingness of the government to take on the responsibility of its citizens' wellbeing. Mr. Govern implied that the Beveridge Report could also, "be an inspiration to people in enemy lands. It can disabuse their minds of a great deal of propaganda about the state of the vested interests in this country, by showing that the change that is taking place is not unreal, that it is not a sham such as was seen after the last war when men came back to take their place in the streets as unemployed and to face misery and distress."[77] Like Grey stated above, the idea of an inclusive welfare state could be an inspiration for people in other countries as well as those under the oppression of the enemy. It illustrated, through the British example, that a government could shift its understanding of responsibility and commit to preventing a return to the misery felt during.

Beyond seeing the conception of a welfare state as hope for Britons and the rest of the world, MPs also saw it as an improvement to the ideals of democracy. Mrs. Cazalet Keir argued,

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[76] "Social Insurance and Allied Services," cols. 1848.
[77] Ibid.

"In general, I range myself, as I am sure the vast majority of people in this country do, on the side of this human and vital document, because I believe that these proposals in the main would be the imaginative extension of the principles of democratic government, and judged by their reception abroad, except of course for the twisted, snarling voice of the German radio, it may well prove to be another democratic landmark of the people, by the people, for the people."[78] The initiative for a welfare state could serve as a milestone in the progress of democracy in Britain and the world. Keir believed this movement was a step forward for the people. This achievement of the Beveridge Report also warranted Britain's actions as a paternalistic leader and worked to lessen anxieties related to their rank among nations.

There was anxiety that if Britain did not demonstrate its dominance within the world, it would fall to the wayside. Before the United States entered the war, Britain was well aware of its status as a great power. It also aware of its failing status, and saw the opportunity of uniting with the United States as a way to maintain relevance within the world order.[79] Together the United States and Britain could help create a peaceful world through their aims with the Atlantic Charter. The anxiety of Britain's status was summed up by Lieut.-Colonial Elliot during Employment Policy debate in 1944. He argued, "For we are a small nation, and unless we can make ourselves the head and front of a group of nations great enough to stand beside the other great groups which have come into existence we shall be in the same position as the Continental nations were after the last war."[80] There was anxiety that if Britain did not lift itself up, through welfare policies and the creation of a high standard of society, they would be similar to the continental nations that were politically and emotionally scarred after WWI. Elliot believed

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[78] Ibid., 1795.
[79] M.A. Fitzsimons, *The Foreign Policy of The British Labour Government 1945-1951*, (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1953), 28.
[80] "Employment Policy," cols. 501.

continental Europe was, "endowed with power which they had no strength to exercise. They were given responsibilities which crushed them under their weight. That is the danger, the danger of inadequacy which lies in front of this country, that is the danger which we have to avert, and only in the spirit of good will which has been made manifest in this Debate will this country be able to pull through."[81] Many MPs felt Britain had lost some of its prominence within the world and it was of the utmost importance to bring the nation back on top. Mr. David Eccles argued the welfare state policies, especially those included in the White Paper discussing social insurance were pieces, "of administrative machinery which we can recommend to the rest of the world as a British product."[82] It would be Britain's own knowledge and production that led to prosperity in other countries and this would bring the nation into prominence. Many were also thinking of the future of Britain's reputation with the implementation of a comprehensive welfare state. Dr. Guest stated, "I am confident that, whatever else is put to the credit of this Government in the future, when historians look back they will see, in this period, a great development of the medical and health services of this country putting Great Britain in the forefront of the world in that respect."[83] How future generations of people looked back on Britain occupied the minds of Parliament. They wanted to leave a legacy that redeemed their past failures and was worthy of praise in the future. While debating the National Health Service Policy, Mr. Graham White stated, "We must, in these days, never close our minds to the kind of role we are to play in the world of the future. We know that our population will prevent us ever playing a decisive role as a military power, even if we wished to do it. I yield to nobody in my intense belief in what we can

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[81] Ibid.

[82] "Social Insurance," 2 November 1944. *Parliamentary* Debates, Commons, 5th ser., vol. 404 (1943-1944), cols. 1038.

[83] "National Health Service," 16 March 1944. *Parliamentary* Debates, Commons, 5th ser., vol. 398 (1943-1944), cols. 457.

accomplish in the field of industry, but my belief is that, if we are to be supreme in the postwar world, it must be in political and moral leadership."[84] Britain's small size and population meant that it could not compete militarily against bigger nations. White believed Britain needed to act as a political and moral leader in order to maintain power and appear strong and relevant to other nations. He continued, "It is my profound conviction that we can render no greater service to a shattered, devastated and bleeding Europe than to present to it, as an example, a living and working democracy, to which they can turn for help and for guidance."[85] The British could be a guiding light to a devastated Europe. By crafting an example of a working democracy, these nations could follow in Britain's footsteps. White continued, "Therefore, I am entirely in agreement when it is said that all these things must be grouped together-health, education and housing-into one great scheme. I hope that someone on behalf of the Government will soon put a concrete scheme before the country, and that as a result we shall see the outward and visible sign of the attempt to rebuild Britain not only physically but morally as well."[86] The nation needed to rebuild and rebrand itself, not only for gaining the favor of its people but also the favor of the world's citizens. White closed with, "The solution to inadequacy was a comprehensive welfare state and giving the means to wield power for the nation through the condition of its citizens. The means for the British nation needed to come from a having a healthy and active society."[87] Fixing Britain's reputation meant creating a society that boasted a healthy and striving society. The country's power lied with the people.

There were also notions of continuing the importance of international relations that were present during the interwar years and acted as foundations for the League of Nations. During the

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[84] "National Health Service," cols. 485-486.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid.

Employment Policy Debate, Mr. Bevin claimed the need to work with other nations to stabilize the economy and lower unemployment worldwide. He stated, "in association with other countries, we must try to agree on measures which will prevent the appalling fluctuations in the international price level, which characterised the years between the wars and which, if there is a reasonably stable international price level, make for expansion all over the world and give security and confidence."[88] Civilized nations needed to collaborate to prevent a repetition of the misery and unemployment felt after WWI, and Britain desired to be a leader in these discussions. Most remember the General Strike of 1926. This was an internationally-known event no one wanted to repeat. This strike paralyzed the British economy and involved over three million workers in various industries but with an emphasis on the coal industry.[89] Britons were conscious of the misery felt by coal miners and other with Britain because of a failing economy. The world was aware of the economic misery occurring across nations. The establishment of international cooperation would support Britain's claims of morality and honorability. The notion of an alliance was furthered with Mr. James Griffiths' discussion of lowering competition within markets, he argued "Look at the world to-day. Over there across the Channel Americans and British are fighting together and dying together. Are we going to compete at the end of the war with people who are now Allies in war? Are we sending out a message to the world that although we can collaborate to win a war we cannot collaborate in order to achieve the wellbeing of the people of the world?"[90] The relationships between nations was an important question when looking at the postwar world. How were, in these cases, the Allied powers going to work together to maintain peace and prosperity? Griffiths offered an example from the past in failure

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[88] "Employment Policy," cols. 223.
[89] Martin Pugh, "The General Strike", *History Today* 56 no. 5 (2006), 40.
[90] "Employment Policy," cols. 566.

of cooperation, he stated, "I say that at the end of this war we should end another war, the

competition for the markets of the world, for I know what would happen. We started competing

for the coal markets of the world and we beggared the coal workers of Europe, reduced them to a

level of slavery everywhere. After 15 years we began to think about the possibility of regulating

and organising the export trade by agreement."[91] The coal industry and the miners suffered

because of lack of collaboration and Griffiths believed in order to have efficient industries and a

good quality of life for citizens there needed to be a new level of interactions among nations with

limited competition.

Members of Parliament were also concerned with the development of the Colonial

Empire in the promotion of Britain as a moral leader among nations. Britain was quite aware of

its waning power within its empire stemming from developments within the interwar years. With

the creation of the League of Nations and the importance of international relations, Britain

needed to navigate how its dominions functioned within the empire and the world. Many

dominions like New Zealand, Canada and the Irish Free State gained new streams of

independence from Britain during the interwar period.[92] A first step was the Balfour declaration

which claimed the autonomous communities within the British Empire were equal in status and

not subordinate to one another.[93] Territories like New Zealand and Canada began to see

themselves separate from Britain and able to conduct relations with foreign nations separately

from Britain's policies.[94] The increased stress on separation by dominions meant Britain needed

to reevaluate its relationship with its empire and bring it into the present. At the start of the

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[91] Ibid.

[92] Lorna Lloyd, "Loosening the Apron Strings: The Dominions and Britain in the Interwar Years", *The Round Table* 369 (2003): 282.

[93] Ibid., 281.

[94] Ibid., 283.

Employment Policy debate, Mr. Bevin argued for attention to be brought on the empire. He stated, "There is one great field that must call for special attention, and that is the development of the Colonial Empire. It must have a proper place in our expanding overseas trade. It must be systematically organised and have as its objective the raising of the standard of life of the 66,000,000 people in the Colonies. They can gain and we can gain. It is a common effort achieving a common purpose. Success in maintaining a high level of employment at home will in itself assist the export trade." By creating a better quality of life for its colonial subjects, Britain would benefit. This was also reflective of the ideal of Britain's paternalistic role in the world. The British were to be the ones to improve their colonies, not only to bring them forward into a civilized international world but also to benefit from their further development. Captain Cobb reiterated this point by stating, "I should like to see far greater sums provided for in order to raise the standard of life among our Colonial subjects and to increase their purchasing power so that they can become more effective consumers of our manufactured goods. I would put in this caveat, that if we are to spend large sums of our money to develop our Empire our manufacturers should have the first right to the markets which that increased development will provide."[95] Here, Cobb desired to raise the quality of life for British colonial subjects in order to make them better consumers of the Empire's goods. He then argued if money was spent on bettering their lives, then it was expected only British manufacturers would have the right to the colonial markets. By creating better colonial consumers, these individuals could then buy more and in turn, create new markets for manufacturers to pursue. Cobb continued, "I regret that so little room is found for the Empire in this White Paper on the ground that the Government do not appear to realise that unemployment, as every other matter of importance affecting this country, is not a purely

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[95] "Employment Policy," cols. 523.

national question. It must, surely, be an Empire question as well. If you have one unit in the

Empire which is weak, for one reason or another, it is bound to affect the strength of the Empire

as a whole."[96] The current and future strength of the empire concerned Cobb. He believed if one

part of the Empire was weak, the entire Empire suffered.

In an environment set on creating a new world of internationalization, it was important to

MPs that Britain maintained its definition as a world leader by creating consumers out of its

colonial subjects. Mr. Greenwood also believed Britain's colonies played a vital role in the

development of its future. During the Employment Policy debate, he argued, "I do not believe

that this nation alone can solve its own unemployment problem. I do not believe that fiddling

about with preferences and tariffs can go very far, or that that is a way to prosperity which will

yield lasting results. What we have to do if we are to get a proper standard of life for the people

of this and other countries, if we are to maintain a high and stable level of employment, is to

develop the undeveloped resources of the world. There we can do a great deal in the Colonial

Empire."[97] The empire offered new resources to raise the standard of living of both Britons and

colonial subjects; it offered much potential for advancement in the colonies. Greenwood

continued, "There are vast untouched resources which could, if they were developed, yield a new

standard of life to the peoples of the Colonial Empire and help to maintain a higher standard of

life for the people of this country."[98] Britain and its empire would benefit from the development

of these untouched resources, but there were many more that could be developed to benefit the

rest of the world. Greenwood maintained, "But that in itself is not sufficient. All the resources in

the Colonial Empire are only a fraction of the world's resources still untapped, resources which

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[96] Ibid.
[97] "Employment Policy," cols. 363.
[98] Ibid.

we know are there, which have never been measured and have not yet been used. The solution

therefore of this problem of unemployment rests upon the orderly development of the available

resources of the world for the needs of mankind."[99] Looking toward the development of the

resources within their empire meant a push for advancement for all mankind. Britain needed its

colonies resources to raise the standard of living for all its empire. This could lead to the

development of resources in the rest of the world and a lifting of all world citizens.

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[99] Ibid.

Chapter 3: Britain and the Family

Anxiety surrounding women, the family as an institution, and the future of the British "race" were important dimensions of the welfare debates. MPs were concerned with defining the role of women, specifically mothers and housewives, within the welfare state. The decreasing birth rate among the British also caused unease among both the public and the government. They saw these social policies as possible tools and incentives to spur the growth of the country's population. The policies put forth ultimately stuck to a strong patriarchal narrative; the male as the primary breadwinner and women and children were dependents. Although the aftermath of WWI spurred a call to action to give women, specifically mothers, the compensation they deserved, this movement functioned within a male breadwinner model justified by social science. From political activities during the interwar period for the "endowment of motherhood" to talks about family allowances during WWI, the debates surrounding the creation of the welfare state functioned along strict gendered lines and called into question interwar gender ideals.

Although socialists like H. G. Wells and others had supported the "endowment of motherhood" a decade before the WWI, this event significantly uprooted gender role ideals. Susan Pedersen, in her book *Family, Dependence, and the Origins of the Welfare State: Britain and France, 1914-1945*, states it was only after the war which, "had sufficiently unsettled the relationship between men, women, and the state that some British feminists began to campaign for endowment."[100] The "endowment of motherhood" was a political movement for the state to pay mothers compensation for raising children and doing domestic work. New feminists, those for endowment, "hoped to generate state policies to compensate all mothers for their domestic

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[100] Susan Pedersen, *Family, Dependence, and the Origins of the Welfare State: Britain and France, 1914-1945*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 140.

labors within the home, thereby ending the economic dependence of unwaged wives on their husbands."[101] A champion of this movement was Eleanor Rathbone, an Oxford graduate and daughter of a prominent Liverpool family. She formed the Family Endowment Society in 1917 in order to campaign for family allowances (another way of framing the endowment of motherhood).[102] Rathbone believed a disproportionate amount of children suffered from poverty because women's work as wives and mothers was not rewarded.[103] Family allowances were meant to provide an allowance for children and wages for mothers, creating a buffer of independence for women and children from the male breadwinner who may not necessarily be able to properly care for his wife and children. Jane Lewis, in her article titled, "Models of equality of women: the case of state support for children in twentieth-century Britain", argues the claim to family allowances was based on "motherhood and 'difference'", and this argument was, "profoundly radical in terms of its idea that allowances would both value women's unpaid domestic work and promote women's equal pay in the labour market."[104] Before WWI and afterward, women were considered secondary when thinking about family income. This movement for family allowances attempted to bring women compensation for domestic labor to the forefront of politics and make it an issue of importance.

Although this movement pushed for women to get recognition for their roles as mothers and wives, it was still prominently believed the woman was meant to take care of young children. Eleanor Rathbone, the major force behind family allowances, followed this thinking. Lewis argued, "there was no question in her [Rathbone] mind but that the idea that the care of

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[101] Ibid., 139.

[102] Jane Lewis, "Models of equality of women: the case of state support for children in twentieth-century Britain" in *Maternity and Gender Policies: Women and the Rise of the European Welfare States, 1880- 1950s*, ed. Gisela Bock and Pat Thane (London: Routledge, 1994), 73.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid., 74.

young children was properly women's work, and, like nineteenth-century feminists, she continued to believe that woman had to make a choice between marriage, and motherhood, and paid employment."[105] Women were to choose between being wives and mothers or joining the labor market; to work in both the domestic sphere and as a paid employee simply could not be done without some time of failing of the woman or the household. The placement of women firmly within the domestic sphere was the major opinion of most middle-class social investigators and philanthropists. They believed that the fundamentals of the male breadwinner family model were critical to the well-being of society.[106] This model influenced the social policies before the great war.

When the Liberal government of 1906-1914 developed national health and unemployment insurance, women were neglected. The legislation treated women as, "the dependents of men and sought to further their primary role as wives and mothers;" women and children were not included under the national health insurance.[107] During WWI when women took up jobs left open by men leaving for war, they were considered "scroungers and malingerers" because the insurance operated through the labor market. They were perceived as wives and mothers first, workers second; because of this, unemployment insurance procedures were tightened and women were denied benefits when submitting unemployment claims, specifically during the interwar period.[108] The perception of women as secondary when considering family income caused government policies to continue to view them as dependents of their husbands. The only improvement came in 1925 with Neville Chamberlain's Widows', Orphans' and Old Age Pensions Act, but even this could barely be seen as an enhancement. This

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[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid., 76.
[107] Ibid., 77.
[108] Ibid.

conservative measure only benefited the widows of insured men, and the payments were funded through the contribution of those men.[109] Pedersen argues, "By linking pensions to the man's insurance status rather than to the woman's sole responsibility for children, the Conservative bill finalized the divorce between widows' pensions and women's rights."[110] A widow's pension did not transition into rights for women for the key to gaining a pension was the dependence on a man's insurance not a women's duty as a mother.

As World War I was drawing to a close, Prime Minister Lloyd George called for the construction of new homes 'fit for heroes'. It was the duty of the Women's Housing Sub-Committee, created in 1916, to deal with problems for reconstruction and the design of homes that functioned for both women and their husbands. In 1919 the short booklet, *The Working Woman's House*, was published and declared a woman, "wants her house to be fit for a hero to live in, but she also wants to free herself from some of that continuous toil which is the result of the bad housing conditions of the past, and has prevented her from taking her full share of work as a citizen, wife and mother."[111] The creation of the women's committee and their responsibility in the design of new houses suggested an interest in transforming new women voters into active and responsible citizens within their domestic sphere.[112] Krista Cowman argues in her article about female citizenship and the gendered domestic interior that the Sub-Committee's ideas for the transformation of the domestic space attempted to, "change the working-class home from a site of domestic drudgery to one of empowerment where active and respectable female citizens

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[109] Pedersen, *Family, Dependence*, 168.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Krista Cowman, "'From the Housewife's Point of View': Female Citizenship and the Gendered Domestic Interior in Post-First World War Britain, 1918-1928," *The English Historical Review* 130, no. 543 (2015): 352.
[112] Ibid., 353.

could be produced."[113] The role of women in housing design firmly kept them within the

domestic sphere and reinforced the notion of the household as a woman's primary focus and

duty. Though women were becoming more active citizens, it was believed this activism could

take place within the home and attempted to make their responsibility for the wellbeing of their

children and husbands easier and more efficient.

There was an uncomfortable tension during the interwar years in relation to defining the

role of women within British society. This period acted as a time of growing employment

opportunities for women not only in shops, offices and factories but also in the professions like

engineering, veterinary surgery, and law. These opportunities were possible by the passing of the

Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act in 1919.[114] Kate Murphy argues in her article titled, "A

Marriage Bar of Convenience? The BBC and Married Women's Work 1923-39", that despite the

tradition of women leaving work to marry, many during this period wanted to keep their jobs

because of the lure of new consumer goods and the desire for an ideal home. Thus, the benefits

of a double-income were tempting for many female workers, at least until children were born.[115]

For a large number of women, however, the option of continuing work was unavailable due to

marriage bars which compelled them to resign when engaged to be married. The first formal

marriage bar in Britain was introduced by the Post Office in 1876. There was concern that a

woman's employment would compromise her role as a mother. By the outbreak of the great war,

marriage bars were commonplace.[116] Murphy argues the roots of interwar attitudes toward

married women's work lie in the late nineteenth century when middle-class women entered the

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[113] Ibid., 356.
[114] Kate Murphy, "A Marriage Bar of Convenience? The BBC and Married Women's Work 1923-39," *Twentieth Century British History* 25, no. 4 (2014): 534.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Ibid., 538.

workforce. Arguments against these developments cited the superiority of the male breadwinner and the belief that a woman's duty was to care for her husband and children. These arguments were carried into the twentieth century.[117]

The economic climate of the interwar years operated against married women in the workplace. During the depression that affected most of the nation between the wars, anger was directed at married women workers because they were seen to be taking jobs from single women and unemployed men.[118] In 1931, the government passed the Anomalies Act which excluded married women from unemployment benefit unless they could prove the necessity to return to work.[119] It was clear anxiety surrounded the presence of married women in the workforce and many were concerned about its possible impact on motherhood and the domestic sphere.

In the debates concerning the creation of the British welfare state, MPs were specifically eager to revive the movement of the interwar years to give wives and mothers compensation for their domestic work. When discussing the Beveridge Report, Mr. Murray fought for the plight of the widowed mother. He argued, "I think, personally, the duty of a widowed mother to an only son or daughter, as the case may be, lies in looking after the home and caring for the boy or girl who is her only hope."[120] Murray strictly believed the duty of a widowed mother was to her children and the maintenance of the household; an ideal maintained from the interwar period. He continued, "Who is the greatest sufferer in a home such as I have described? Who makes the greatest sacrifices; who has all the worry; who goes without, if anybody must? Everybody knows

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[117] Ibid.
[118] Ibid., 540.
[119] Ibid., 546.
[120] "Social Insurance and Allied Services," cols. 1896.

that it is the mother. It is very true that "the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world."[121] It was

the mother that made the greatest of sacrifices. Murray related mothers to rulers of the world. He

believed because of their role in raising the next generation, mothers should be compensated by

the government, "I would say, treat the mothers of England as you treat the rulers of the world.

We treat our rulers very differently from the way we treat our mothers. I believe in practical

politics. If we want to do anything for the mothers of England, let us give them the flowers now,

while they are alive and can appreciate them, not after they are dead. I am not concerned about

what people do with me when I pass on: I am not anxious for a lot of flowers at my graveside; I

wish to be treated decently while I am here. I ask the same thing for the mothers of England."[122]

By compensating and appreciating the mothers of England, the government would be giving

them what they rightly deserve. Murray claimed it the duty of the state to take care of the

mothers for they have made the greatest of sacrifices. Mrs. Cazalet Keir furthered the discussion

of giving new economic status to the housewife.

Mrs. Cazalet Keir praised the Beveridge Report for finally giving the housewife the

economic status she deserved. She began, "Everybody, I think, welcomes in the Beveridge

Report the new economic status which has been given to the housewife. At last it is recognised

as equal to that of any other profession. As Sir William Beveridge points out, six out of every

seven married women are housewives. This means that they make marriage their sole

occupation."[123] With a large majority of married women being housewives, it was important to

both Beveridge and Keir that their labor was acknowledged. This idea, however, followed the

paradigm present during the interwar years; marriage as a sole occupation of women was

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[121] Ibid.

[122] Ibid.

[123] Ibid., 1793-1794.

expected and desired by British society. Cowman acknowledged this thinking, she argued women's involvement in housing design drew a direct connection between the domestic sphere and a woman's new identity as a voter and a citizen. Recognizing women within the domestic sphere was just another way of solidifying their place within it. Keir continued by quoting the Beveridge Report," 'In any measure of social policy in which regard is had to facts, the great majority of married women must be regarded as occupying on work which is vital though unpaid, without which their husbands could not do their paid work and without which the nation could not continue.' I think that is about the best thing that has ever been written on that subject."[124] Beveridge called the work of the housewife vital, allowing their husbands to do what they need to make money. He also stated without the housewife, the nation could not continue. This spoke of the importance of the housewife in British society as well as the new identity and economic status this occupation now carried. Keir continued, "The marriage grant is a very welcome and wise innovation, and I hope the Government will unbracket it in the Report… Of course, Sir William points out that the nature of the benefit required depends upon the social and economic implication of marriage and he treats men and women as a team. A partnership and a team-those words, I believe, are the right and the proper way of expressing equality between the sexes."[125] Marriage was the game changer. For women to gain this new economic status they needed to get married and become housewives. To be housewives, they had to give up any other paid occupation; the domestic sphere would not allow outside distractions. Beveridge labeled marriage, a team. The label "team" kept strict gender boundaries between a husband and wife.

While debating the White Paper outlining the government's plan for social insurance, Mrs. Adamson stated, "All of us are interested in family life and are pleased that the Government

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[124] Ibid.

[125] Ibid.

have, at long last, recognised the necessity of putting forward the proposal for family

allowances." [126] Like Mrs. Adamson, many MPs were pleased to see the government take an

interest in the condition of mothers across Britain. Through this proposal, the state deemed the

condition of British children and mothers part of their responsibility as a governing body.

Pederson reiterated this notion in her book. She argued individuals felt the state's relationship to

women's sphere of domestic service and reproduction should be as rewarding as to the men's

sphere of work and war.[127] Though many were excited about family allowances, there was a call

to give the payment to the mother. Adamson continued, "A great many of the women's

organisations in this country feel, however, that the family allowance should be paid in respect of

the eldest child also, and we are all quite unanimous that family allowances ought to be paid

direct to the mother. We think it would be a small recognition of the importance of the work of

the mother."[128] There was a push to further enhance the importance of mothers in the eyes of the

state. By paying directly to the mother there was an expectation of responsibility and morality.

Receiving the money directly, women could use it for what they deemed most important for

themselves and their children. Adamson argued, "Some of us are anxious to give a new status to

the housewife and the mother and, while it is true that the average husband will ensure that his

wife receives the money, we still feel that the Government ought definitely, in view of what

happens in other nations where family allowances are in operation, to see to it that the payment is

made direct to the mother."[129] The desire for family allowances came from mothers not receiving

the compensation they desire, but also from the possibility of the husband not providing, or

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[126] "Social Insurance," cols. 1025.
[127] Pedersen, *Family Dependence*, 146.
[128] "Social Insurance," cols. 1025.
[129] Pedersen, *Family Dependence*, 146.

giving, enough for women to take care of their children. By paying directly to the mother, the government would bypass the possible complication of the husband.

There were arguments against the notion of giving the allowance to the mother. Mr. Butler made the argument for fathers being in control of the family allowances. He argued, "There is a legitimate technical point here. I have gone into it in great detail with those who understand it. The way it starts is that the father makes an application for an order book, and, once it is granted, it is made out so that the allowances can be paid to either the father or the mother. Therefore it is started by the father. I would like the House to realise the difficulty of leaving out the father altogether."[130] Butler believed because the process of applying for family allowances started with the father, it would be incorrect to leave them out of the decision of who receives the payment. He continued, "It would be wrong to leave out the father because, after all, he is the first breadwinner of the house and the man upon whom the children ultimately depend for a large proportion of their maintenance."[131] Butler's justification for keeping the father in the loop was his role as the first breadwinner of the family and the children's dependence on his income. A father's primary role in the maintenance of his family through paid work made him, in the eyes of many MPs, the executor of important economic decisions concerning the family. This mentality followed the prominent idea of the father as the main provider and the mother a secondary dependent, a notion of the late nineteenth century. It was later decided that family allowances would be payable to either the mother or father. Many saw family allowances as a way to reward large families and encourage young people to get married and start families.

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[130] "Social Insurance," cols. 1114.
[131] Ibid.

Sir William Beveridge introduced the idea of family allowances within the welfare state with his report on social insurance. During the debate surrounding the Beveridge Report, Major Furness argued, "It is a terrible thing that in so many walks of life a man has to be 30 or more before he is earning enough to bring up a family comfortably."[132] There was anxiety that men were unable to start families because they did not have financially stable jobs that afforded taking care of a family. He continued, "Large families have saved the country in this war. I feel ashamed when women come to see me and say they have seven or eight sons all serving in the Forces, and I look into their case and find how little we have done to help those people who have done so much to help us."[133] Furness believed family allowances could be a way to show appreciation for large families who sacrificed so much for the war. He also thought there needed to be an incentive to push for the creation of larger families in Britain. Sir Austin Hudson reiterated the anxiety for men by stating, "You will never get the best out of men or women if they have this feeling of anxiety for themselves, their wives and their families."[134] Men and women were not going to start families if they were anxious about their ability to provide. Hudson argued the nation would not get the best out of their citizens if they felt anxiety toward marriage and families. The *Daily Mirror* in 1944 highlighted the plight of young men in relation to getting married and starting a family, "Many of them have to borrow money leaving a debt round their necks for years. It keeps them from getting married and there is nothing more shameful than a young man deeply in love being deterred from getting married."[135] Debts prevented men from getting married and starting families till later. This ultimately affected

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[132] "Social Insurance and Allied Services," cols. 1799.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid., 1780.
[135] "Parliament sees "symptoms" as doctors wrangle," *Daily Mirror* (London, UK), Mar. 17, 1944.

Britain's birth rate. The public and Parliament felt there needed to be incentives for both men and women to start families sooner and be comfortable doing so. The anxiety men and women felted cause MPs to worry about the future of Britain.

Some members of Parliament thought the introduction of family allowances could act as incentives for getting couples to start families. There was anxiety about the decreasing birth rate and a call to address this issue. During the debate on the Social Insurance White Paper, Sir William Beveridge argued, "There were not enough children altogether to keep the British race going. I do not know whether family allowances will increase the birth-rate, but, at least, we ought to do nothing to risk the loss of any child or risk the insufficient growth of any child we have."[136] Beveridge and others were concerned with the future of the British "race". They felt there needed to be an incentive to increase Britain's birth rate, a turn from ideas of quality over quantity present during the interwar years. Miss Eleanor Rathbone stated, "We are concerned to-day, not with the past, but with the future, and it is entirely to the future that I want to address my remarks. I am going to confess that the argument, on which I want to lay most stress-and it is one which had little part in those early days. We were then concerned with the fear that family allowances might produce too many children. Now the fear is entirely the opposite. The point to which I want to draw attention is the bearing of this scheme on the population. The White Paper makes hardly any reference to that. It is a scheme for insurance against want, not against race suicide, but the danger that is menacing us to-day is nothing less than race suicide. The very figures in the White Paper illustrate that."[137] Rathbone worried about "race suicide", similarly related to Beveridge's worries about the future of the British "race". This was a concern for the future of Britain as a nation. MPs felt its very essence was in jeopardy; without new generations,

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[136] "Social Insurance," cols. 1126.
[137] "Social Insurance," cols. 1168.

how would the ideals and leadership of Britain continue. The present generation needed to construct a world where the British "race" could flourish. That meant having the government provide assistance to the people. Spurring the birth rate was not the only issue that worried MPs about the future of Britain. Concern for Britain's current children plagued many.

"The National Health Service" White Paper debate produced concern for the health of Britain's children. Sir Arnold Gridley explained how the evacuation of children during war revealed their true circumstances. He stated, "The evacuation of our children to the country revealed that many of them had been quite improperly fed in the past and found it most difficult to accustom themselves to the right type of food which they are now getting in the country."[138] The evacuation exposed the crisis many British children experienced during the war and before in the interwar period. Gridley continued, "What chance have children born and brought up in such circumstances and in unhealthy housing conditions have of coming into this world as A.1 grade or of achieving an A.1 status as time goes on? Sound health depends upon the children having a really good start in life, and this means, first, that the breadwinner, that is the father and husband, must be reasonably secure of employment at good wages, so that he can feed and house his family properly- when we have provided the so urgently-needed housing."[139] Sir Gridley reinforced the primary responsibility of the wellbeing of children on that of the father. He argued in order for children to have a good start in life, their parents, specifically the father needed to be gainfully employed and able to provide. The health of the children also depended on the health of the parents. Gridley continued later, "It is uneconomic to have workmen who are constantly absent from work owing to ill health, and the sickly wife and mother in the home is uneconomic.

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[138] "National Health Service," cols. 559.
[139] Ibid.

To have puny and ailing children likely to grow up into weak parents, producing weakly

offspring, is not in the national interest. There must, therefore, be general agreement that it is our

duty to provide the best possible National Health Service which it is within the capacity of all to

pay for."[140] Sick children equated ailing adults in the future, producing weak offspring. To

Gridley, this weakness would hurt the nation. If the state did not take initiative to improve the

quality of life of British children by providing help to their parents, it was predicted these

children would grow into weak adults. Thus, affecting the future of the British "race". The

British population was doomed to become weak and obsolete if policies were not passed. Ideas

about the British "race" had roots from the late nineteenth century. This period was filled with

literature focused on ideas of race and eugenics. Existing civilizational perspectives of the late

19th century supported a hierarchical distribution of the world's peoples and gave a superior

position to England, leading to the justification for a more active role in imperial endeavors.[141]

Due to its imperial empire, Britain resisted theories of national differentiation and continued to

see itself as the leading power of the human race.[142] Thus, they focused on maintaining a strong

British "race" during the interwar years and this led into the discussion of the welfare state

during the 1940s.

When debating the welfare state and its proposed policies most MPs focused on

improving the lives of mothers and women within the domestic sphere. The emphasis on women

as mothers and housewives enforced their placement firmly in the household and any outside of

this paradigm were excluded from welfare benefits. In the Beveridge Report debate, Mr. Leach

brought the circumstances of spinsters to the attention of Parliament. He called into question the

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[140] Ibid.

[141] Peter Mandler, *The English National Character: The History of an Idea from Edmund Burke to Tony Blair*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 72.

[142] Ibid., 86.

status of unmarried women in the Beveridge Report. He stated, "No reference was made in either of those speeches to the new position created by the Beveridge scheme in regard to unmarried women. There is on the Order Paper, as most hon. Members will probably have seen, a Motion in the names of several hon. Members, including myself, asking Parliament to recognise the claims to an adequate pension of unmarried women at 55 years of age…I have read the Report with pretty considerable care, and I do not find the word "spinster" mentioned in it from beginning to end."[143] Leach brought attention to the lack of recognition given to spinsters within the Report. He continued, "That in itself is strange enough, but a study of its provisions leads inevitably to the conclusion that, if the Beveridge Report is adopted in its present form unaltered, the spinsters lose their case, so the spinsters' inaction must now be changed to action."[144] The current Report with no alterations would lead to no benefits provided in favor of unmarried women. Leach argued for their circumstances to be carefully considered by Parliament as those of married women had been. He continued, "Under the Report maximum benefits accrue to the married householder. We do not criticise that approach to the problem at all, but it is permissible to contrast the man-and-wife benefits with the case of the spinster… The Beveridge plan, it is freely admitted, places a premium on marriage. Sir William himself tells us on page 52 that that is the case."[145] Leach claimed the Beveridge Report privileged marriage and in turn ignored spinsters. He believed this disadvantaged an already struggling group of women, "What is not so clearly seen is that it places a handicap on the spinster… The unmarried woman approaching her fifties faces new physical difficulties. Nature is always more cruel to the woman than to the man and imposes upon her new hardships. She has bouts of illness, her energy is flagging and her

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[143] "Social Insurance and Allied Services," cols. 1860-62.
[144] Ibid.
[145] Ibid.

hold in the industrial market becomes decidedly more precarious. Should she lose her job by reason of these troubles or faltering faculties, she will find the industrial dice heavily loaded against her in occupations such as typing, secretarial work, waiting, shop assistants' work, hotel bars and domestic service."[146] Old, unmarried women struggled to maintain employment to support themselves; they did not match up to young single women entering the workforce. Leached concluded, "The young woman applicant always has a very fatal advantage of preference… We must face the fact that the war will increase the number of spinsters, and by creating fatherless children it will add to the responsibilities of maiden aunts and other relatives called upon to make sacrifices."[147] The war would force responsibility onto maiden women whose nieces and nephews were now growing up in one parent homes. If spinsters were thrown to the wayside repercussions would extend beyond themselves and affect all of society.

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[146] Ibid.
[147] Ibid.

Conclusion

On May 8, 1945, the surrender of Nazi Germany signaled the end of World War II in

Europe. Two months later in July 1945, the Labour Party, under Clement Atlee, came to power

in Britain. This came as a shock to the Conservative Party, which believed that Churchill's role

in the defeat of Hitler and the Nazi regime would ensure a party victory in the election. As soon

as the Labour Party was in office, it immediately began the process of creating the welfare state.

Two different reforms had already been established by the time the Labour Government came to

power. The first was the Butler Act of 1944, which allowed for the free secondary education of

all students. The second was the Family Allowance Act of 1945, which was derived from the

widely-debated White Paper on Social Insurance. This act allowed the payment of a five-shilling

allowance per week for every child, other than the oldest, who received full-time schooling until

the age of sixteen.[148] In 1946, the National Insurance Act was established. This law covered the

entire population above school age and provided comprehensive benefits.[149] The final welfare

initiative to be enacted during the Labour Government's control was the National Health Service

Act, which was introduced in 1946, but was not verified by Parliament until 1948. This act

established a comprehensive health service titled the National Health Service (NHS), which is

still in existence today. The legislation sought to improve the physical and mental health of the

people of England and Wales, and make the services free of charge.[150] While in power, the

Labour Government also went through the process of nationalization. The first measure it took in

1946 was the transfer from private to public ownership of the Bank of England. This was

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[148] Rupert Cross, "The Family Allowances Act, 1945", *The Modern Law Review* 9 no. 3 (1946): 284.

[149] W. A. Robson, "The National Insurance Act, 1946", *The Modern Law Review* 10 no. 2 (1947): 171.

[150] *National health service act, 1946. 9 & 10 Geo. 6., Ch. 81.* 1946.

accomplished with little controversy and only a nominal display of opposition from the Conservative Party.[151] The nationalization of basic industries soon followed, the first being the coal industry. Parliament passed the Coal Mines Nationalization Act in 1946 and it was enacted at the beginning of the year in 1947.[152] Bills for nationalizing civil aviation, and cable and wireless were introduced in 1945, and both were passed and enacted by 1947.[153] In 1946, the Transport Bill was introduced to Parliament. This bill was meant to nationalize the railways, canals, and most of the road transport -- it passed and was enacted in 1948.[154] The final modification to the Labour's nationalization was the Gas Bill, which also passed in 1948.[155] The Labour Government focused on consolidating basic industries under governmental control and furthering ideas of centrality from the war. The social policies enacted toward the end of WWII, and the leadership of the Labour Government came about because of discussions that took place during the war.

The debates surrounding the creation of the welfare state consistently invoked the past to look toward the future. New welfare policies were made and enacted because Members of Parliament and the state looked back on the misery in the aftermath of WWI and stated, "never again." It became clear to Britain that the burden of the government needed to change in order to prevent this type of suffering from reoccurring. The public and MPs demanded their government take interest in the development and well-being of its citizens. It was no longer acceptable for the state to turn a blind eye and let volunteers take care of its citizens. There was a call for the government to be transparent and open with the public -- the broken promises from the interwar

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[151] Henry Pelling, *The Labour Governments, 1945-51*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), 78.
[152] Ibid., 80.
[153] Ibid., 81.
[154] Ibid.
[155] Ibid., 86.

years would not be allowed to repeat. MPs demanded the state create concrete proposals for the welfare state, rather than providing vague statements of hope to its citizens. Citizens believed they deserved better, because of sacrifices made not only during WWII but also during WWI. For many, there was no reward during the interwar period.

Moreover, the welfare state played a role new ideas about international relations and anxiety about Britain's rank within the world order. These concerns led to discussions about its role as a moral leader in the post-war world. MPs believed Britain had an obligation to maintain moral and fair leadership in the world. They also believed that this role could improve Britain's reputation among other nations, as well as increase its relevance. The welfare state offered Britain a way to act as a moral leader, and provide guidance for a model citizen welfare system. MPs felt that the British welfare state could set an example of government responsibility. This welfare initiative would not only display to the world Britain's moral and paternal leadership, but would also show its superiority and innovation above other nations of the world.

Discussions surrounding the welfare state also further legitimized the traditional family institution. MPs of Parliament felt it was important to recognize Britain's mother and provide them with proper status. By giving mothers and housewives a new status within the welfare state they would be compensated for the work they do within the domestic sphere. The notion of family allowances would allow mothers to adequately provide for their children and husbands. Britain's mothers held the important role of raising Britain's future generations so it was of the utmost importance that they were well-prepared to accomplish this task. There was anxiety that young men and women were not given the help early to start families and this, in turn, affected Britain's birth rate. MPs believed something must be done to help young couples with starting

families and family allowances could be one of these incentives. By providing help financially

couples may be persuaded to start families thus spurring the birthrate.

Looking back toward the creation of the British welfare state is important for today in the

year of 2018. In the United Kingdom, Britain is struggling to maintain its welfare state. They

saw improvement in many of the areas the welfare state sought to improve. The sustained post-

WWII period of economic growth and near full employment "saw falling poverty, slum

clearance, the founding of a free health service and education system alongside rising real

incomes and falling inequality- which, in turn, led to higher tax revenues and helped the UK pay

off its war debts."[156] But since the late 1970s, the United Kingdom has struggled to maintain the

trajectory of the past. Since the economic crisis of 2008, there have been constant continuous

cuts to the British welfare system. Huge programs like the National Health Service, Old age

pensions and council housing have been hit hard by these cuts. Today, the good work done by

the welfare state is in grave danger of being completely undone. The five giants that Sir William

Beveridge sought to fight with the creation of a welfare state are making a comeback into British

society. In the summer of 2017, Unicef reported that nearly one in five UK children lack

sufficient and nutritious food.[157] The ban on councils building houses have contributed to the

shortage of homes and one-third of private rental homes fail to meet the national Decent Homes

Standard.[158] The life expectancy between individuals living in poor areas vs rich areas in the UK

has sharply dispersed.[159] The funding for the system has collapsed and much have the programs

have as well. There is a push to bring the system back up to standard but there has also been

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[156] Stephen Armstrong, "Want, disease, ignorance, squalor and idleness: are Beveridge's five evils back?" *The Guardian* (London: UK), Oct. 10, 2017.
[157] Ibid.
[158] Ibid.
[159] Ibid.

huge opposition to it. The welfare state is really in a moment of crisis it has not seen since the days of Margaret Thatcher. It is interesting to consider why the welfare state was created in the first place and how these reasons can be understood today. It is clear in the 1940s that anxiety for the future dominated the welfare state discussion. Today, however, anxieties of a different kind occupy the minds of Britain and it is unclear what the future holds for the British welfare state.

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