

Assignments

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1. Read the text and the two interview excerpts.
2. Write down Sam Watts's and Tony Benn's hopes for the future.

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1. Explain why the Beveridge report was so popular.
Regard the British population's hopes for the future in your considerations.
2. Point out what Beveridge meant with the phrase "five giants".
3. Discuss why Beveridge regarded it necessary to fight these "five giants".
4. Summarise which duties Beveridge allocated to the state.

4 Describe, contextualise and interpret the illustration.

5

1. Summarise Labour's promises in case of an election victory.
2. Explain which argument would have convinced you to vote for the Labour Party.
Explain your reasons.

6

1. Compare the election results from 1945 with those of the 1930s.
2. Comment on the reasons for the success of the Labour Party in the 1945 elections.

7 Reflect how the following fictional characters would evaluate the government reforms:

- Sarah Miller, a widow with two children of nine and fourteen, whose flat had been destroyed by bombs during the war
- Bill Jones, a worker in a coal-mine, who can no longer work because of silicosis
- Peter Billing, a shipyard-worker from the North of England, who was unemployed through most of the 1930s
- Dr. Robert Temple, a GP, who mainly treats private patients
- Harold Penn, a civil servant, who would like to buy a house for his family and considers a good education for his children as crucial

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Great Britain in 1930s – Secondary Literature –

Extracts from the Beveridge Report, November 1942:

The impact of the Wall Street Crash and the Depression that followed intensified mass unemployment in the United Kingdom, especially in the staple industries like the textile industry, mining and shipbuilding.

As a consequence, unemployment in these industries rose dramatically in the 1930s. In 1932, over 47% of steel workers were unemployed, as well as 60% of insured workers in shipbuilding. Throughout the 1930s, unemployment in these industries remained high. Government attempts to improve the situation of the unemployed were unsuccessful.

In some industrial towns the situation became unbearable and triggered protest. In the small South Tyneside shipbuilding town of Jarrow, for example, 77% of the workforce lost their jobs after the last large shipbuilder closed down. In October 1936 two hundred unemployed men marched

300 miles to London to petition parliament and government to bring work back to their town. When the marchers reached London, they tried to hand their petition to the Prime Minister. Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin, however, refused to meet them. Nevertheless the marchers were able to address a large number of MPs. When the protesters returned, they discovered that their unemployment benefit had been reduced, because they had not been available for work during their march to London. The march, which had been supported by Jarrow's mayor and the town council, by local politicians, churches and trade unions, is known as *The Jarrow Crusade*. It raised awareness of the miserable situation in Jarrow and other struggling towns all over Britain.

Living and working conditions – Source Material –

Sam Watts, a former dockworker, describes the living conditions in a working class area in Liverpool before the Second World War. He gave the interview for Ken Loach's documentary film The spirit of '45 from 2013:

I just thought, what fools everyone are. How we've all been taken in [...]. We're just sucked into a false life of what it's all about. When we were living in the slums
5 off Great Homer Street [in Liverpool], we

were the greatest Empire in the world. We had India, Africa, Canada, Australia. The greatest Empire in the world. But we were living in the worst slums in Europe.

Sam Watts, "We Are the Greatest Empire in the World", interview on: www.thespiritof45.com/interviews-archives/welfare. Transcribed by the Marco Blöcher.

In the same documentary, the former labour politician and minister Tony Benn, remembered a conversation during the war:

My mind goes back to a meeting we had on a troop ship. Then one lad got up. He said, "In the 30s, we had mass unemployment". He said, "We don't have unemployment in
5 wartime." He said, "If you can have full employment killing Germans, why can't

we have full employment building homes, building houses, building schools, recruiting teachers, recruiting nurses, recruiting
10 doctors?" And that argument registered.

Tony Benn, 1950-1960 and 1963-2000 Labour MP and government minister, taken from: "Spirit of '45" by Ken Loach, 2013. Transcribed by Marco Blöcher.

The Beveridge Report – Source Material –

Extracts from the Beveridge Report, November 1942:

THREE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF RECOMMENDATIONS

[...] 7. The first principle is that any proposals for the future, while they should use
5 the full experience gathered in the past, should not be restricted by consideration of sectional interests established in the obtaining of that experience. Now, when the war is abolishing landmarks of every kind,
10 is the opportunity for using experience in a clear field. A revolutionary moment in the world's history is a time for revolutions, not for patching.

8. The second principle is that organisation
15 of social insurance should be treated as

one part only of a comprehensive policy of social progress. Social Insurance fully developed may provide income security; it is an attack upon Want. But Want is one only
20 of five giants on the road of reconstruction and in some ways the easiest to attack. The others are Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness.

9. The third principle is that social security
25 must be achieved by co-operation between the state and the individual. The state should offer security for service and contribution. [...]

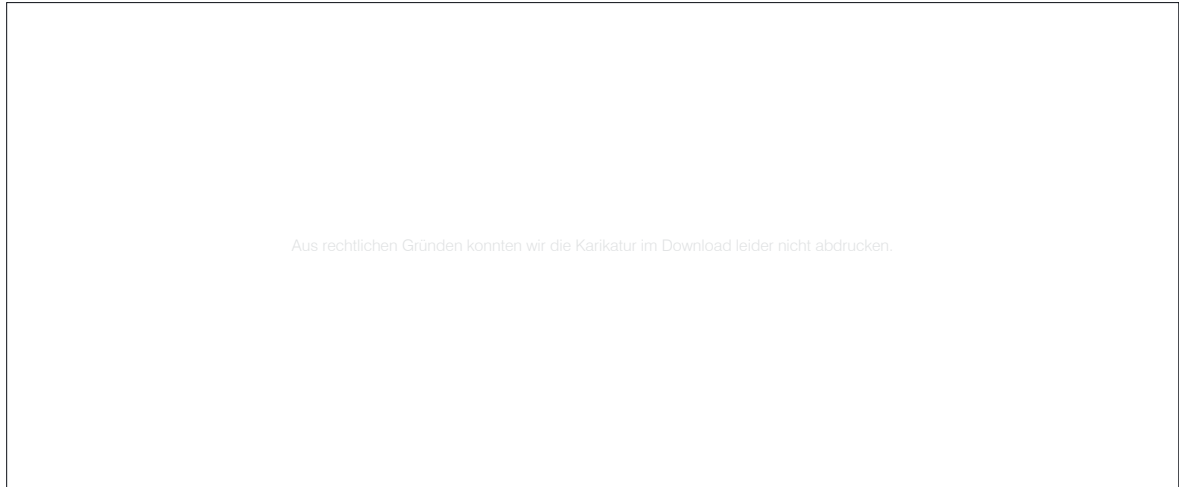
cited from:
www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/citizenship/brave_new_world/docs/freedom_want.htm
The National Archives, Kew, Record Number: PREM 4/89/2, pp. 41-2 (November 1942).

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“Here’s to the Brave New World” – Source Material –

Please look at the illustration by Leslie G. Illingworth in the Daily Mail, 2. December 1942 on: http://www.cartoons.ac.uk/browse/cartoon_item/anytext=Beveridge?page=7 or <http://bit.ly/1xYv14y>

The mug shows the face of William Henry Beveridge.



Let Us Face the Future – Source Material –

The Labour manifesto for the 1945 election, *Let Us Face the Future*, addressed both immediate concerns such as housing and employment, as well as articulating the party’s commitments to social reform, economic planning, and public ownership:

Britain’s coming Election will be the greatest test in our history of the judgment and common sense of our people. The nation wants food, work and homes. It wants more than that—it wants good food in plenty, useful work for all, and comfortable, labour-saving homes that take full advantage of the resources of modern science and productive industry. It wants a high and rising standard of living, security for all against a rainy day, an educational system that will give every boy and girl a chance to develop the best that is in them

[...] The nation need a tremendous overhaul, a great programme of modernisation and re-equipment of its homes, its factories and machinery, its schools, its social services. All parties say so – the Labour Party means it. For the Labour Party is prepared to achieve it by drastic policies of replanning and by keeping a firm constructive hand on our whole productive machinery; the Labour Party will put the community first and the section interests of private business after. [...]

The Labour Party: *Let Us Face the Future*, London, 1945, © Labour Party Archive and Study Centre at the People’s History Museum, Manchester.

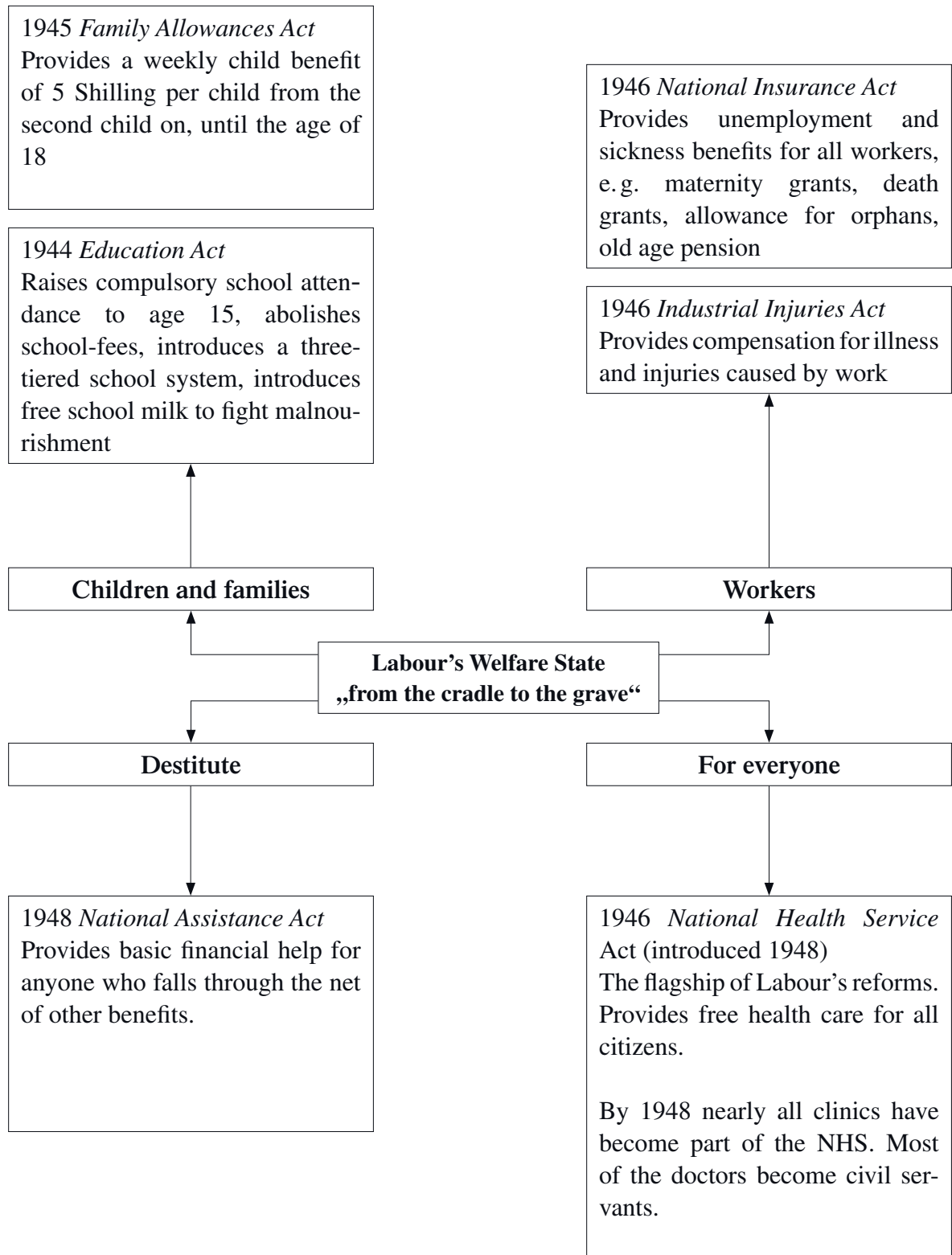
General Election Results in the United Kingdom, 1931 – 1945

Members of Parliament in the House of Commons

	Conservatives	Labour	Liberals	Others	Total
1931	474 (77%)	52 (8%)	36 (6%)	53	615
1935	429 (69%)	154 (25%)	21 (3%)	11	615
1945	210 (32%)	393 (61%)	12 (2%)	25	640

Source: House of Commons Library: Research Paper 08/12 - Election Statistics UK 1918–2007, London, 2008, p. 11.

Social reforms of the Attlee government 1945 to 1951



Housing

1946 *New Towns Act*

Act to speed up the process of building new housing areas, especially in and near cities that were bombed during the Blitz.

1947 *Town and Countryside Act*

Goal: 300 000 houses per year. All in all 1.25 million houses were built between 1945 and 1951. The protection of the environment is part of this programme.