

# 1

# United Kingdom?

1900–1914

## What is 'Britain'?

---

Inequality and diversity marked the economic, social and administrative structures of the districts and nations of the country in 1900. This perhaps explains widespread, and continuing, uncertainty even about its name. The official title was United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, since the 1801 Act of Union united the United Kingdom of Great Britain with the Kingdom of Ireland. The kingdoms were increasingly disunited through the nineteenth century, as Irish nationalism challenged British control, especially in the mainly Catholic, mainly poor, rural South, which was also disunited from the mainly Protestant, more urbanized, North. 'Great Britain' included England, Wales and Scotland after the 1707 Act of Union joined the Kingdom of Scotland with that of England and Wales, which had been conjoined since 1542. It was and is generally called 'Britain' in everyday discourse, though the English, with the largest population, home of the Crown and the government, habitually spoke of 'England' and 'Britain' interchangeably, until chastened by assertive Scottish and Welsh nationalisms later in the century.

Nationalisms were alive in the countries of the United Kingdom in 1900, as elsewhere in the world. Most strongly in Ireland, but emerging in Scotland and Wales, which were anxious to defend their cultural distinctiveness against growing Westminster control. Welsh people, long controlled by England, wished to preserve their language and the cultural difference it signified; Scotland maintained separate legal and judicial systems and greater administrative independence. Its local government arrangements,

including for education and Poor Relief, were never assimilated into those of England and Wales, requiring separate legislation; its established church was the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Ireland retained similar control of certain internal affairs, while Wales had few independent powers.

Great Britain and Ireland were the largest 'British Isles', as they were described geographically (though Ireland resisted the label 'British'), which included the much smaller Channel Isles and the Isle of Man, neither integrated into the United Kingdom but constitutionally colonies within the Empire with a high degree of control over domestic affairs. The vast British Empire, consisting of countries on every continent, amassed under varying degrees of British control since the eighteenth century and said to cover one-quarter of the world's surface, gave the United Kingdom exceptional world economic and political power. But this never went unchallenged. There was recurrent resistance, most successfully by the United States which broke away in 1776. The century opened amid the Anglo-Boer War, 1899–1902, in which the mighty British imperial army experienced surprising difficulty in overcoming resistance by farmers of Dutch origin, known as Boers, to Britain's takeover of their territories in southern Africa containing the world's richest goldfields. Britain managed to defeat them and the Boer states of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State were incorporated into the Empire and granted self-government. They joined the Dominion of South Africa when it was inaugurated in 1910.

The Empire was never unquestioned within the United Kingdom and challenges grew following the shock of the weaknesses revealed by the war. Conservatives and Liberals were divided, especially the Liberals, though their leaders, including Asquith, Prime Minister 1908–16, and Edward Grey, Foreign Minister, 1905–15, were more committed Imperialists than many backbenchers. The Labour leader Ramsay MacDonald advocated 'Home Rule all round' and devolution to elected colonial governments. These differences persisted, within the United Kingdom and the Empire, through the first half of the century.

## Who was British?

In law, since at least the seventeenth century, anyone born within the British Empire was a British subject of the Crown (not a 'citizen', a term reserved for republics, such as France), holding British nationality and identical rights to those of UK-born subjects. These included rights to reside and hold property in the United Kingdom, to work and vote (if suitably qualified, which females and men without property were not), to equality before the law, to free movement around the Empire and to equal rights everywhere within it – provided they had evidence of birth, a birth certificate or equivalent, which

many poorer colonial people did not.<sup>1</sup> Wealthy colonials could be sure of equal rights throughout the Empire, poor seamen and others could not.<sup>2</sup>

The leaders of colonies with powerful white elites increasingly questioned this definition of nationality. As civil rights – particularly voting rights – were extended, faster in New Zealand (the first country in the world to enfranchise women in 1893) and Australia than in Britain, some excluded the indigenous people of their own countries and immigrants of different races or colour from other colonies. In response, the British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act 1914, for the first time enshrined in statute that 'a British subject anywhere is a British subject everywhere'<sup>3</sup> but made important concessions to the white-controlled Dominions, the status granted to Australia, Canada and New Zealand in 1907 and South Africa in 1910, conferring considerable devolved power. It allowed each Dominion 'to grant legal nationality in such terms as its legislature thinks fit'.<sup>4</sup> Australia could now exclude anyone not defined as 'white', and restrict the rights of indigenous Aboriginal people. All 'white' Australian adults, including women, had the vote from 1902; Aboriginal Australians not until 1967, when they were also included in the National Census for the first time. The official 'white Australia' immigration policy did not wholly disappear until 1973. Similarly, Canada defined nationality to exclude indigenous peoples, and South Africa excluded Asians and its black majority population. Unusually, in New Zealand the indigenous Maori gained a degree of formal equality in the Treaty of Waitangi, which established British sovereignty in 1840. They achieved parliamentary representation in 1867 and elected four MPs in 1868, better than elsewhere, though Maoris still felt marginalized both culturally and politically.

Even when it was established, British nationality was not always for life, especially for women. From 1870, any British-born woman was deemed on marriage to take the nationality of her husband and, if he was not British, she would lose her British nationality and all rights associated with it. Previously it had been impossible for men or women to renounce British nationality, even if they adopted that of another country. This caused increasing problems in international law for men, women and children in cross-national marriages, as married women gained more rights, unevenly across countries, including rights to own property and to custody of their children. The simplest solution, at a time when the only place in the world where women could vote

<sup>1</sup> Ann Dummett and Andrew Nicol, *Subjects, Citizens, Aliens and Others: Nationality and Immigration Law* (Chicago, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1990).

<sup>2</sup> Pat Thane, 'The British Imperial State and National Identities' in B. Melman (ed.), *Borderlines. Genders and Identities in War and Peace, 1870–1930* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 29–46; Laura Tabili, 'The Construction of Racial Difference in Twentieth Century Britain: the Special Restriction (Coloured Alien Seamen) Order, 1925', *Journal of British Studies* 33(1) (1994): 54–98.

<sup>3</sup> *Hansard*, House of Commons, 1914, vol. LXII, col. 1201.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1199.

and oppose it was the American state of Wyoming (from 1869), was to require married women to take their husband's nationality. They could apply for re-naturalization as British five years after widowhood or divorce. In 1914, following protests, this was modified to apply immediately on widowhood, but not following stigmatized divorce. Once women could vote in many countries, after the First World War, this became an international campaigning issue until, gradually, most countries, including Britain from 1948, let them retain their nationalities on marriage.

## Immigration

---

In 1900, immigrants from outside the Empire, 'aliens' as they were officially called, could buy British nationality for a payment of £3, without other conditions, though this was expensive for poor people. Migration was unrestricted, and passports were not required for crossing borders until the First World War. Previously how many people migrated to Britain, for how long, is uncertain. Around 1900, there were substantial numbers of Italians, Germans and others, mainly from Europe, in London and other cities, and well-established multi-racial communities in ports, including Liverpool, Bristol and Cardiff, where colonial and other seamen settled. Immigrants might be fleeing persecution or seeking work, including poor Italians and wealthy men of many countries attracted to the City of London, the world financial centre. However, the largest immigrant group in Great Britain came from impoverished Ireland.<sup>5</sup>

Despite persistent hostility to the Irish, immigration was not a significant issue until thousands of Jews fled from Russia from the 1880s, mostly escaping vicious pogroms but also severe poverty. Approximately 250,000 had reached Britain by 1914, often impoverished, they settled in particularly large numbers in East London. Like poor immigrants through the century, they were accused of taking jobs and homes from British people, disrupting their communities and culture, and lowering living standards. To avoid accusations that Jews were abusing public welfare services, including the Poor Law, causing intensified antisemitism, the established Jewish community, including wealthy businessmen and financiers, created institutions to support them, including Jewish schools and a Jewish Board of Guardians providing welfare aid. They helped immigrants to establish themselves in employment or small businesses, making a valuable contribution to the economy.

They received little thanks and protests led to Britain's first immigration restrictions in the Aliens Act 1905. Conservative Prime Minister Arthur Balfour told parliament: 'We have the right to keep out everybody who does not add to ... the

<sup>5</sup> David Butler and Gareth Butler, *Twentieth-Century British Political Facts 1900–2000* (London: Macmillan, 2000), p. 351.

industrial, social and intellectual strength of the community'.<sup>6</sup> To remain, immigrants must show that they could support themselves and their dependants 'decently' and could 'speak, read and write English reasonably well'. Criminals, the insane and those thought likely to apply for Poor Relief were excluded. No 'alien' could apply for naturalization before five years' residence. Following parliamentary pressure, the Act granted asylum to refugees who could prove they were escaping 'persecution involving danger of imprisonment or danger to life or limb on account of religious belief'.<sup>7</sup>

The advantages of British nationality grew as Britons gained more rights, including state old age pensions in 1908 and National Insurance in 1911.<sup>8</sup> 'Aliens', including colonials who could not prove their place of birth, and their British-born wives, were excluded from both. Following protests by the Jewish community, in 1911 the British-born widows, but not wives, of aliens could claim the pension, and non-naturalized aliens who had been resident for five years and were in regular work could contribute to National Insurance. Immigration, access to British nationality and associated rights were contentious through the century.

## Emigration

Yet emigrants outnumbered immigrants. Over 1 million people emigrated from the United Kingdom to the United States and the colonies between 1903 and 1909; another 1 million emigrated before 1914, with about 10 per cent from Ireland, mostly poor people seeking better lives and mostly young men.<sup>9</sup> Smaller numbers of prosperous people travelled, not necessarily permanently or always to the formal Empire, seeking fortunes from gold-mining, banking, railway-building or other enterprises, often successfully. Others went as colonial administrators, agricultural advisers, education officers, police, doctors, missionaries and soldiers.<sup>10</sup>

Women made up a higher proportion of Irish than British emigrants, though the growing ambitions of British women for wider opportunities encouraged emigration. Women were a majority of the UK population due to their longer life expectancy and the higher male emigration rate, and some of these 'surplus women', as they were described, were attracted by the surplus of men seeking wives in the

<sup>6</sup> David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews. Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840–1914* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 287.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 290.

<sup>8</sup> See p. 36.

<sup>9</sup> Butler and Butler, *Twentieth-Century British Political Facts*, p. 351.

<sup>10</sup> Bernard Porter, *The Lion's Share. A Short History of British Imperialism, 1850–2004*, 4th edn (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2004), p. 199.

Dominions, while others sought greater equality, independence and work.<sup>11</sup> Many of the first female medical graduates of Glasgow University from the late nineteenth century worked in India, where the prohibition on male doctors treating women in purdah gave them opportunities unimaginable at home. In 1900, 63,909 women emigrated from Great Britain; in 1911, 156,606, mainly working-class women but also teachers, missionaries and aspiring businesswomen emigrated.<sup>12</sup> The most vulnerable émigrés were thousands of children from care homes, such as Barnardo's, who were sent to families and institutions in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa, unknown to their own families and often told that they were orphans when they were not, sometimes with happy outcomes, sometimes sadly not, a practice that continued in Canada until 1939 and in Australia into the 1960s.

## Who Ruled Britain?

Constitutionally, the sovereign ruled the United Kingdom and the Empire: that is, Queen Victoria until her death in January 1901, aged 82; then her son, Edward VII, who died in 1910, when his son, George V, succeeded. The monarchy delegated power to a partially democratic House of Commons of 670 members and a wholly undemocratic House of Lords comprising twenty-six Anglican bishops and 561 hereditary peers,<sup>13</sup> mainly landowners plus growing numbers of businessmen and financiers – '500 men chosen accidentally from among the unemployed', as Liberal David Lloyd George described them – and holding substantial political and legal power. The Lords was the highest Court of Appeal, headed by the Lord Chancellor who presided over the House. For the Commons, 60 per cent of adult men, qualified by property holding, could vote, but no women. Most men without the vote were manual workers, but better-off men were also disfranchised if they were not independent householders paying local taxes (known as rates) but lived in family or other property, as many did before marriage.<sup>14</sup> Apart from the monarchy, all these constitutional inequalities were seriously challenged before 1914.

Politics in 1900 was dominated by the Liberal and Conservative parties. Both had clear social and ideological identities, while also providing space for moderately divergent views, increasingly so as the electorate and society became more diverse. The Conservative Party was identified with landed wealth, the Church of England,

<sup>11</sup> A. James Hammerton, *Emigrant Gentlewomen. Gender Poverty and Female Emigration, 1830–1914* (London: Croom Helm, 1979).

<sup>12</sup> Hammerton, *Emigrant Gentlewomen*, p. 177.

<sup>13</sup> Butler and Butler, *Twentieth-Century British Political Facts*, p. 225.

<sup>14</sup> Duncan Tanner, *Political Change and the Labour Party, 1900–1918* (Cambridge University Press, 1990).

Empire and established institutions. The Liberals were identified with the urban middle classes, progressive landowners, Nonconformists and radical reformers. They were strong in the largely Nonconformist 'Celtic Fringe' of Scotland, Wales and southwest England, and among the skilled workers who gained the vote in 1867 and 1884 and elected Liberal MPs in constituencies they controlled, particularly mining districts – eleven in 1900. These distinctive, working-class, cloth-capped men, visibly different from other MPs, were labelled 'Lib-Labs' by their opponents and they adopted the title with pride.

The Conservatives decisively won the 1900 General Election, and 70-year-old Lord Salisbury, from an old aristocratic family, became the last premier to sit in the House of Lords. He was ailing and in 1902 was replaced by Arthur Balfour, his nephew – hereditary privilege flourished in both Houses. Signs of change included the newly formed Labour Representation Committee (LRC, later the Labour Party), which in its first election gained two seats and 63,304 votes; Irish Nationalists won eighty-two of the 103 seats in Ireland.

The LRC was founded in 1900 by trade unions and socialist societies, including the reforming intellectual Fabian Society, the rhetorically revolutionary Social Democratic Federation (SDF), both founded in 1884; the moderate socialist Independent Labour Party (ILP), founded 1892; and the Co-operative movement. The SDF left when the party committed to reform by parliamentary means rather than by revolutionary class war. The LRC was initiated by the unions following a series of legal decisions eroding their rights, which the leading parties showed no inclination to reverse, particularly following a strike on the Taff Vale railway in South Wales when the courts upheld the employers' claim that the union was liable for their losses from the strike, effectively making strikes impossible. The unions funded the LRC and paid their MPs, who were normally expected to serve unpaid on the, previously correct, assumption that all MPs had other incomes. The first Labour MPs were all working class, mostly former union officials. The LRC's first chair was James Keir Hardie, illegitimate son of a Scottish farm servant, a self-educated miner, founder of the ILP, its first MP, for West Ham 1892–5, then one of the LRC's first MPs, for Merthyr Tydfil from 1900.<sup>15</sup> The first secretary, who did most to develop and promote its ideas, was James Ramsay MacDonald, son of a poor, unmarried Scottish mother, a journalist and an MP from 1906. He presented Labour as the advanced wing of progressive Liberalism, dedicated to achieving 'British Socialism' by parliamentary means rather than the class war advocated by continental socialists, anticipating displacing Liberalism when all working people had the vote.<sup>16</sup>

15 K. O. Morgan, *Keir Hardie. Radical and Socialist* (London: Faber & Faber, [1975] 2011).

16 David Marquand, *Ramsay MacDonald* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1977).

Working-class voters did not always support Labour or the Liberals. Many voted Conservative, especially where nationalist, anti-immigrant sentiment was strong, as in east London against the Jews, in Lancashire against the Irish, though social deference or ideological conviction created working-class Conservatives everywhere. As landed wealth declined, the Conservatives attracted businessmen and financiers from Liberalism. The Liberals won the next election, in 1906, decisively, while the LRC gained thirty seats and adopted the name Labour Party. Liberal and Labour successes owed much to a secret pre-electoral pact not to compete where they would split anti-Conservative votes. The new government speedily paid its dues with the Trade Disputes Act 1906, reversing the Taff Vale judgment and increasing unions' immunity from prosecution. The first ever working-class Cabinet Minister, Lib-Lab John Burns, proud son of a washerwoman, was appointed President of the Local Government Board (LGB) responsible for the Poor Law. The Prime Minister was Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, son of a wholesale draper in Glasgow. In 1908, he resigned due to ill-health and was replaced by Herbert Henry Asquith, son of a Yorkshire wool merchant, a barrister who remained premier until 1916.

## International Relations

Around 1900 Britain appeared isolated in Europe, mainly due to competition over colonization. There were tensions with France in North Africa, with Germany in southern Africa and with Germany and Russia in China. Russia was feared as a threat to its British-controlled southern neighbours, India and Afghanistan. The United States was emerging as an imperial power – much as it shunned the term – acquiring the Philippines, Hawaii, Cuba and other territories in the Pacific and Caribbean in the early 1900s, becoming a rival naval power along with France, Russia and, increasingly, Germany and Japan. Britain tried to maintain good relations with its rivals. It courted the United States and in 1902 signed a five-year treaty with Japan, both pledging not to compete in East Asia. In 1904, came an entente with France, essentially agreeing to share control of North Africa – Britain based in Egypt, France in Morocco. Japan fought and defeated Russia in 1905, the first modern example of an Asian state defeating a European one, challenging racial stereotypes. The weakness of the Russian state was underlined by the revolution of December 1905. Britain took advantage of this to reach an agreement with Russia in 1907, securing Afghanistan within its sphere of influence.

By 1907 Britain no longer seemed isolated and shared its European allies' apprehension about Germany and an anxiety to avoid a major war. They feared Germany's economic strength and evident desire to rival their international political and colonial powers. Demands grew in Britain for increased military and naval spending, despite resistance within both major parties.

## The Economy

In 1900, Britain, the first industrial nation, was the world's leading trading nation and the centre of world finance. The City of London dominated investment in developing economies. City finance benefited from Britain's long-established free trade policy and consumers gained from resulting cheaper imports. But cheap food from Argentina, Australia, Canada and elsewhere disadvantaged home producers and agriculture declined. In the early years of the century manufacturing competition intensified, especially with America and Germany, whose home markets were protected by taxes on imports (known as tariffs). In 1900, Germany produced 13 per cent of world manufacturing and Britain almost 19 per cent; in 1913, this stood at 15 per cent and 14 per cent, respectively, while the United States produced 30 per cent of world output.<sup>17</sup> Hence the demand for protective tariffs – 'tariff reform' – was a major political issue in the 1900s, supported by the Conservatives against the Liberals and Labour who upheld free trade. Tariffs were strongly opposed in the City and by manufacturers still prospering in expanding overseas markets, including in textiles, mining and shipbuilding.

These industries peaked in output and employment in the 1900s, and while demand grew there was little incentive to diversify. At the same time, Germany and the United States developed new, less labour-intensive, industries using electrical power and new technology, producing road vehicles, advanced chemical products, electrical engineering and scientific instruments, which threatened the future of the British economy. Nevertheless, average UK living standards rose, signalled by expanding services, including transport, and growing consumption of such mass-produced goods as soap, chocolate, tobacco, newspapers and other printed publications, pharmaceuticals, ready-made clothing and footwear – signs that the economy could innovate and of an expanding home market.

Yet the largest occupation in 1914 was still domestic service, employing 1.7 million people, overwhelmingly female, another sign of profound social inequality. The economy was regionally concentrated, as it had been since industrialization. Mining dominated County Durham, south Wales, Derbyshire and the central and Fife regions of Scotland; textile production was concentrated in Tayside and the Borders, Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire; steel manufacturing, shipbuilding and engineering were prominent in central Scotland and northern England. In these areas, average incomes were lower and premature death and illness higher than in southeast England, where employment was centred on government, finance and services. In 1913, the male death rate was 30 per cent above the national average in South Shields in northeast

<sup>17</sup> Peter Clarke, *Hope and Glory: Britain 1900-2000*, 2nd edn (London: Penguin, 2004), p. 57.

England, while TB rates on Tyneside were 30 per cent above. In pit villages fresh water supplies and adequate drainage were exceptional: ash pits more common than flush toilets.

## Wealth and Poverty

The human outcome of major inequalities of income and wealth as calculated by the radical Liberal economist Sir Leo Chiozza Money is shown in Table 1.1.

The sources of wealth and status were changing. Between 1870 and 1914 the value of shares grew fourfold, but landed wealth declined, with much rural land no longer in cultivation.<sup>18</sup> Many landed estates were sold, but wealthy landholders were not pauperized. Some invested in land abroad, often in the Empire; others profited from owning urban land, notably the dukes of Westminster who inherited what became the most prosperous districts of central London, including Belgravia, and remain one of the wealthiest families in Britain a century later. Or, like Lord Londonderry in north-east England, rich coal deposits under their land yielded fortunes; others transferred their assets into finance and business at home and abroad. Sons of landowners moved into the City and business increasingly intermarried with trade and finance. In 1896, a quarter of the peerage were company directors (up to a half by 1910), many of several companies. But still, in 1914, the greatest wealth was held by landowners, rivalled only by some leading City financiers.<sup>19</sup>

Increasingly, business wealth was concentrated in London rather than the industrial north and the Midlands. With the growth of public companies more people lived

Table 1.1 UK Income and Wealth, c. 1900

Total UK population 1901, 41,438,700

20% of employees earned above the income tax threshold of £150 pa.

0.5% earned above £5,000.

87% of private property was owned by 882,690 persons; 4,400,000 including families.

13% shared among 38,600,000.

17,000 property holders owned approx. two-thirds of private wealth.

90% of the population left no recorded property at death.

SOURCES: Leo Chiozza Money, *Riches and Poverty*, London, 1905, 1912; Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit*, p. 99.

<sup>18</sup> Jose Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit* (Oxford University Press, 1993, repr. London: Penguin, 1994), pp. 97–8.

<sup>19</sup> Harris, *Private Lives*, pp. 100–6.

wholly or partly on investment income. The middle classes continued their nineteenth-century expansion in numbers and diversity, while the gap between middling and great wealth grew. In 1905, 861,150 people in the United Kingdom owned assets worth £500-£50,000. They can be assumed to constitute the middle class.<sup>20</sup> The lower middle class grew as clerical and lower-level managerial work increased with the expansion of central and local government and large business firms. Most of this new 'white-collar' class were upwardly mobile from the skilled working class, to whom they were perceived to be socially superior, signified by greater job security, though not always higher pay, 'respectable' dress (suits and ties for men), living in different neighbourhoods, following different leisure pursuits, though many kept in contact with their working-class families.

## Poverty Surveys

The lower middle class and, to a lesser extent, skilled workers were certainly more secure than the much larger mass of unskilled workers and seriously poor people. Concern about people left behind by growing national prosperity prompted social research. From 1886 to 1902, Charles Booth, a businessman with a social conscience, organized his survey of poverty, first in east London, known to be poverty-stricken, then throughout London. He did not conduct house-to-house surveys, but collected what he called 'a statistical record of *impressions* of degrees of poverty'<sup>21</sup> provided by school board visitors (who chased up truanting children), clergy and others in regular contact with poor people, supplemented by the observations of assistants living temporarily in low-income communities, such as the future Beatrice Webb (then Miss Potter) who reported on the Jewish population of east London. Reliable observation was possible when poverty was starkly visible in stunted growth, under-nourished bodies and rickety legs, clothing and household goods, or lack of them. On this basis Booth estimated that 30 per cent of all Londoners lived 'in poverty or in want', 8.4 per cent of these and 13.3 per cent of those in poverty in east London, were in the worst situation of being 'at all times more or less in want ... ill-nourished and poorly clad'. He set no fixed income measure but defined poverty as 'having no surplus'.<sup>22</sup>

Booth stressed that these conditions were unacceptable in the wealthiest country in the world. It was suspected that they were peculiar to London, which attracted poor migrants seeking work and had a notoriously unstable labour market. In 1899, another philanthropic businessman, B. Seebohm Rowntree, tested this by surveying York, the

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., pp. 106-10.

<sup>21</sup> E. P. Hennock, 'The Measurement of Poverty: From the Metropolis to the Nation, 1880-1920', *Economic History Review* 40(2) (1987): 201-27.

<sup>22</sup> Charles Booth, *Life and Labour of the People of London* 17 vols (London: Macmillan, 1902-3).

medium-sized, fairly representative, provincial town where his family chocolate factory was the largest employer at a time, as he put it, of 'average prosperity'. He sent investigators to every working-class household in York (11,560) to record income and expenditure and observations of living conditions, while gathering impressions from voluntary workers and clergy. Like Booth he did not try to establish an income-based poverty measure because household conditions were too variable, but sought to estimate the minimum income on which a family could survive in a state of 'physical efficiency', providing:

a diet less generous as regards variety than that supplied to able-bodied paupers in work-houses. It further assumes that no clothing is purchased which is not absolutely necessary for health and ... is of the plainest and most economical description ... No expenditure of any kind is allowed beyond that which is absolutely necessary for the maintenance of merely physical efficiency.<sup>23</sup>

He built on the recent discovery that diet crucially affected health and on new techniques for measuring nutritional needs.

Typical were the Smith family, 'whose house is scrupulously clean and tidy. Mr Smith is in regular work and earns 20s a week. He keeps 2s a week for himself and hands over 18s to his wife'. When Mrs Smith was asked how she met 'any extraordinary expenditure, such as new dress or a pair of boots', she replied 'Well, as a rule, we 'ave to get it out of the food money and go short; but I never let Smith suffer - 'e 'as to go to work, and must be kept up, yer know!'<sup>24</sup> Rowntree concluded that 6.8 per cent of the working-class population of York (3.6 per cent of the whole) lived in this miserable condition, which he called 'primary poverty'. He recognized that few spent their incomes with maximum efficiency and many earning above the stringent minimum were 'obviously living in a state of poverty, i.e. obvious want and squalor' for no fault of their own. These - almost 18 per cent of the York population - he defined as living in 'secondary poverty'. Altogether, almost 25 per cent lived 'in poverty', a figure similar to that of London.

Rowntree and Booth concluded that most impoverished people were not idle 'shirkers'. They worked hard when they could, but suffered low pay (the majority), unemployment or underemployment. It was especially hard for large families. Rowntree found that 22 per cent in primary poverty were in families with four or more children, with only 2.3 per cent of primary poverty in York being due to unemployment, though it was a problem elsewhere and at other times. Important but lesser causes were sickness and old age, death of the chief wage-earner, almost always male, and the widow's inability to earn enough to support her children. Rowntree identified a 'cycle of poverty': low-income families were hardest hit when children were young, better-off when children

23 B. Seebohm Rowntree, *Poverty. A Study of Town Life* (London: Nelson, 1902), p. 352.

24 *Ibid.*, pp. 85-6.

were old enough to work and left home, then impoverished again in later life due to ill-health and incapacity for work.

Poverty was not confined to towns, though this received most attention. It had always been endemic but less visible in the countryside, exacerbated by agricultural decline. Rowntree and others explored this also, finding similar conditions to the towns, without the debilitating pollution: low pay, miserable housing, widespread malnutrition causing sickness, especially among women and children, while prices were higher than in towns and there were concentrations of older people and widows as men fled to work in the towns or the colonies.<sup>25</sup> Rowntree did not try to measure rural poverty but described how:

The be all and end all of life is physical efficiency ... It means that a wise mother, when she is tempted to buy her children a penny worth of cheap oranges, will devote the penny to flour instead ... It means that every natural longing for pleasure or variety should be ignored and set aside. It means, in short, a life without colour, space and atmosphere, that stifles and hemms in the labourer's soul, as in too many cases his cottage does his body.<sup>26</sup>

Studies of urban poverty continued. Between 1912 and 1914, A. L. Bowley surveyed representative English towns. Bowley was a mathematician, concerned with precise measurement, who developed influential survey techniques. He rejected qualitative impressions and introduced the sample survey, examining systematically the earnings and outgoings of representative households. He confirmed that low pay, especially combined with large family size, was the main cause of poverty – as it was a century later.<sup>27</sup>

Qualitative surveys continued, including *At the Works. A Study of a Manufacturing Town* by Lady Bell (1907). This study of Middlesborough by the wife of a local iron-master, drew on her experience of living there for over thirty years and working voluntarily, with other women, to improve conditions. It included statistics and details of budgets, but above all evokes Florence Bell's perception of the diverse realities of life at work, at home and at leisure for workers who created Britain's industrial prosperity. She wanted to inform those, like herself, who profited, commenting, 'If we see in a cottage one emaciated little child wasting away because it has not enough to eat, the sight will make more impression on us than many lists of infant mortality'.<sup>28</sup> She also showed that not all working-class households were so desolate 'that the needy and unhappy homes ... [do not] ... preponderate over the happy homes',<sup>29</sup> without downplaying the social deprivation she believed needed urgent remedy.

25 Mark Freeman, *Social Investigation and Rural England, 1870-1914* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000).

26 B. Seabohm Rowntree and May Kendall, *How the Labourer Lives: a Study of the Rural Labour Problem* (London: Nelson, 1913), pp. 312-13.

27 A. L. Bowley and A. R. Burnett-Hurst, *Livelihood and Poverty: a Study in the Economic Conditions of Working-class Households in Northampton, Warrington, Stanley and Reading* (London, 1915); see also p. 108.

28 Lady Florence Bell, *At the Works. A Study of a Manufacturing Town* (London: Arnold 1907, repr. London: Virago, 1985), p. xxxi.

29 *Ibid.*, p. xxxii.

Many women campaigned for social reform. The belief that women would end the inequalities that male politicians had tolerated for too long was one motive for demanding the vote. They included the Fabian Women's Group, formed in 1908 to demand the vote and improved social and working conditions particularly for women. Led by Maud Pember Reeves, wife of the New Zealand High Commissioner, a successful campaigner for the vote in her home country and aware that New Zealand led Britain on social reform, they recorded the budgets and daily lives of families in Lambeth, south London, asking 'How does a working man's wife bring up a family on 20s a week?'<sup>30</sup> The report, *Round about a Pound a Week*, included details of incomes and budgets and described housing, diet, health and family life. It stressed how carefully most poor women managed inadequate, insecure incomes, contrary to the 'improvidence' perceived by critics ignorant of their lives.<sup>31</sup> The Fabians advocated a state-guaranteed national minimum income, sufficient to keep a family, which New Zealand had been the first to introduce in 1894, followed by Australia in 1896.

Most Lambeth wives were not in paid work. They had work enough at home, sometimes supplemented with employment as cleaners or by letting rooms to lodgers. The Fabians also campaigned for and with employed women, especially in the low-paid, largely non-unionized, appropriately labelled, 'sweated' trades, including tailoring, cardboard-box making, lacemaking, chain-making, carried on in small workshops or by female outworkers in their homes. In 1905, they organized a London exhibition displaying women's working conditions. The publicity, with pressure from labour organizations, persuaded the Liberal government to fix (low) minimum wages in these occupations through the Trade Boards Act 1909.

## Leisure

Researchers also explored the brighter side of life. Booth and Rowntree stressed how those with adequate incomes could enjoy themselves and that one of the many deprivations of the very poor was the absence of pleasure. The favourite leisure activity of working-class men remained the pub and alcohol consumption rose in the 1900s. However, the range of leisure activities and their commercialization expanded as real wages rose and organized workers gained shorter working hours and Saturday afternoon off to watch football, while the better-off attended racecourses or watched or played tennis or golf. Improved transport provided day trips to the seaside or the country, or holidays for those who could afford it. The fastest growing towns between the censuses of 1901 and 1911 were seaside resorts. Working people went to Margate in the south or

<sup>30</sup> Maud Pember Reeves, *Round about a Pound a Week* (London: Bell, 1913, repr. London: Virago 1979), pp. 146–58.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146.

Blackpool in the north (nearly 4 million in 1913<sup>32</sup>), the middle classes to Eastbourne or Southport and the rich to the French Riviera. Cycling was another popular way to escape the city, particularly for younger middle-class people. The rich still preferred fox-hunting and the grouse moors. Leisure, like everything else, was class divided. Working people could devote their leisure to self-improvement: the Workers Education Association (WEA) was founded in 1903 to provide evening classes with well-qualified tutors. Local authorities invested in public libraries, museums, galleries and music venues. For relaxation, music halls and, increasingly, cinemas attracted better-off working people. New, lasting, leisure opportunities and patterns were established.

In leisure, as in other ways, prosperous Britain in the 1900s was probably more unequal, socially and economically, than any other European country.<sup>33</sup> Despite some improvement, opportunities deteriorated due to rising prices in 1910–13, causing a wave of strikes among better-paid, unionized, skilled workers. In 1912, 40 million working days were lost in strikes, notably in mining. It was one of many challenges to the Liberal government and some feared revolution. Rather, workers were continuing the demands for better working conditions and greater equality which created the Labour Party.

## Votes for Women

Women's campaigns were another challenge. They grew from the mid-nineteenth century, along with the numbers of educated, independent women demanding better education and employment, equal property, divorce and child custody rights, eliminating domestic violence and much else. Despite some gains, the law still subordinated women, especially married women, to men. By 1906, many women had lost patience and believed that only when they had the national vote could they gain the equalities and social improvements denied them by male politicians. Textile workers from Yorkshire and Lancashire, shop workers and the 30,000 members of the working-class Women's Co-operative Guild campaigned alongside middle- and upper-class women.<sup>34</sup>

Since 1869 the minority of independent female property-holders paying local rates (mainly better-off widows and unmarried women) had been able to vote in local elections. This passed easily through Parliament two years after it rejected John Stuart Mill's bid to extend the national vote to women in 1867. Parliament judged it acceptable for women to elect local authorities which dealt mainly with social conditions, such as public health and Poor Relief, which were believed to suit women's interests and

<sup>32</sup> Geoffrey Seale, *A New England? Peace and War 1886–1918* (Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 554.

<sup>33</sup> Harris, *Private Lives*, p. 100.

<sup>34</sup> Jill Liddington and Jill Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us. The Rise of the Women's Suffrage Movement* (London: Virago, 1978).

capabilities when serious matters of state did not. Some women agreed. Women could be elected to school boards when they were established in 1870 to develop compulsory state education. After a struggle, they gained election to Poor Law Boards of Guardians, then to rural and urban district councils. Election to the more significant county and municipal councils was granted by the Liberals in 1907. In 1900, there were about 1 million female electors and 1,589 elected women; by 1914 this had risen to 2,488.<sup>35</sup>

Women were active in national politics not only on 'women's issues', but in pressure groups of all kinds and were indispensable as canvassers, fundraisers and organizers for the political parties that denied them the vote. The parties established women's branches: the Conservative Primrose League, founded 1884, in 1900 included 64,003 'Dames'; the Women's Liberal Federation, founded 1886, had about 70,000 members in 1910, 115,097 by 1914; the Women's Labour League (WLL) was formed in 1906, supporting the Labour Party, with a cross-class membership of 5,000 in 1914.<sup>36</sup> The more active women were in politics, the more absurd their disfranchisement appeared, especially when they gained the vote in New Zealand and Australia, then in Finland in 1906, even in the Isle of Man from 1881 female property-holders voted for their parliament, the Tynwald. The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) was formed in 1897, led by Millicent Garrett Fawcett, a Liberal, married to a radical Liberal politician. It was committed to peaceable lobbying and composed mainly of Liberal women disappointed by the party's failure to support women's suffrage. Initially, as a tactical first step, it demanded the vote on the same terms as men, which would have limited it, like the local vote, to better-off single and widowed women.

The Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) was founded in 1903 by Emmeline Pankhurst, an ILP stalwart from Manchester, her daughters and friends. It also supported the limited franchise as an initial aim. It was committed to public campaigning, impatient with the NUWSS' quiet, apparently ineffective, lobbying. Horror at the WSPU's unfeminine behaviour drove the *Daily Mail* to endow them with a diminutive intended, with a striking lack of success, to be disparaging: 'suffragettes'.<sup>37</sup> Women's suffrage was not a prominent issue in the 1905 election, but from 1907 the WSPU, frustrated by politicians' lack of response, interrupted ministers' public speeches shouting 'Votes for Women'. By 1909, they felt driven to demonstrations, window-smashing and other actions which did not harm people but provoked arrest, fines and imprisonment. They responded with hunger strikes in prison and resistance to the forced feeding that followed. The behaviour of the women and the police and prison authorities shocked

<sup>35</sup> Patricia Hollis, *Ladies Elect. Women in English Local Government 1865–1914* (Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 486.

<sup>36</sup> Christine Collette, *For Labour and For Women. The Women's Labour League, 1906–18* (Manchester University Press, 1989).

<sup>37</sup> Jad Adams, *Women and the Vote. A World History* (Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 204.

opponents and supporters and some women defected to the NUWSS, but the WSPU placed women's suffrage firmly on the public agenda. Quiet lobbying and noisy demonstrations were both essential to promoting 'the Cause'. In 1911, an unknown number of suffrage campaigners boycotted the National Census, arguing 'If women don't count, neither shall they be counted'. To evade it, groups of women joined all-night hikes or parties, some spent census night roller-skating in a rink in central London. Emily Wilding Davison hid overnight in a broom cupboard in Parliament.<sup>38</sup>

All three British political parties and the Irish Nationalists<sup>39</sup> included suffragists and 'antis', male and female. Most Liberal backbenchers appear to have supported women's suffrage, but did not prioritize it, and the Cabinet was less persuaded, but in 1912 the government was driven to introduce an Electoral Reform Bill proposing adult suffrage for men and women. This caused a hopeful lull in campaigning until the Speaker ruled woman suffrage out of order and militancy revived. Labour was the only party committed to full adult suffrage. From 1912, NUWSS shifted to supporting this option and supporting Labour. WSPU militancy mounted. Letter boxes were set on fire. Emily Wilding Davidson died after throwing herself at the king's horse in the 1913 Derby. Hunger-striking militants were punished with the Prisoners' Temporary Discharge for Ill-health Act, known as the Cat-and-Mouse Act because it discharged from prison women risking death only to recall them when they recovered. In 1914, Asquith at last promised to include women's suffrage in the government's next attempt at electoral reform, without indicating a date. This, and the whole movement, was overtaken by the war.

## Marriage

Inequalities in marriage were one cause of women's protest. Not all women married, despite social expectations, mainly because they outnumbered men. In England and Wales there were 15.5 million males to 16.6 million females in 1900, and in 1914 this was 17.8 million males to 19 million females, with similar proportions in Scotland and Ireland.<sup>40</sup> Marriages did not always last, with their greatest destroyer being death. Of marriages in England and Wales in the 1880s, 13 per cent ended by death, most often of the husband, within ten years, with 37 per cent ending this way within twenty-five years.<sup>41</sup> Widowers were more likely than widows to remarry, seeking care

<sup>38</sup> Jill Liddington, *Vanishing for the Vote. Suffrage, Citizenship and the Battle for the Census* (Manchester University Press, 2014).

<sup>39</sup> Myrtle Hill, *Women in Ireland. A Century of Change* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 2003); Louise Ryan and Margaret Ward (eds), *Irish Women and the Vote. Becoming Citizens* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2007).

<sup>40</sup> B. R. Mitchell and P. Deane, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge University Press, 1962), pp. 12–14.

<sup>41</sup> Michael Anderson, 'The Social Implications of Demographic Change' in F. M. L. Thompson (ed.), *The Cambridge Social History of Britain. 1750–1950*, vol. 2 (Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 29–32.

for their children or themselves. Women often preferred the independence of widowhood, even in poverty, including custody of their children, compared with the legally enforced dependence of wifehood, while men could be reluctant to support another man's children. Low pay and limited work opportunities made poverty almost unavoidable for single women without independent wealth. Impoverished single mothers were as numerous in the mid-nineteenth century as in the late twentieth, for different reasons.<sup>42</sup>

Some marriages failed. Divorce was legalized in England and Wales in 1857, having been, since the Reformation, available only to the few who could afford a private Act of Parliament. From 1857, a wife could be divorced for adultery, but to divorce her husband she had to prove adultery plus additional 'aggravation', such as cruelty, desertion or incest. The gender double standard of expected sexual behaviour pervaded the law. Also, divorce was expensive, prohibitively for most people. But one of many differences between Scotland and England and Wales was that, under Scots law since before the Reformation, men and women could divorce on equal terms, for desertion as well as for adultery. It was somewhat cheaper and costs might be met by the Poor Law, though the stigma was considerable, especially for women, and the administrative hurdles daunting. There was no divorce in Ireland, where it was anathema to all the dominant religious groups.

In England and Wales from 1878, wives could claim in magistrates' courts a separation order and maintenance from husbands guilty of violence or desertion. This followed a feminist campaign against 'wife-torture', as they described domestic violence,<sup>43</sup> but extracting payment could be difficult. In 1900, 494 divorces were granted in England and Wales and more than 5,000 separation orders. Legal separation did not permit remarriage. Some believed that the obstacles to divorce encouraged 'illicit unions', with couples cohabiting because they could not divorce and remarry, arousing disapproval in some quarters and demands for divorce reform in others. This was investigated by a Royal Commission on Divorce and Matrimonial Causes, appointed in 1910, which concluded in 1912 that, 'beyond all doubt', divorce was 'beyond the reach of the poor', led to 'irregular and illicit unions', and should become more accessible. It recommended extending and equalizing the grounds for divorce between men and women.<sup>44</sup> Nothing changed due to opposition from those who believed reform would destroy marriage and then the onset of the First World War.

<sup>42</sup> See p. 459.

<sup>43</sup> Frances Power Cobbe, 'Wife-Torture in England', *The Contemporary Review*, XXXII (April-July 1878): 55-87; Lori Williamson, *Power and Protest. Frances Power Cobbe and Victorian Society* (London: Rivers Oram, 2005).

<sup>44</sup> Stephen Cretney, *Family Law in the Twentieth Century. A History* (Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 163-318.

It is impossible to know how many couples lived together unmarried, perhaps parenting children, not necessarily because they did not want to marry but because they could not, often presenting themselves to the world, and being accepted, as married.<sup>45</sup> They were numerous enough to arouse the concern and sympathy of respectable members of the Royal Commission, including the Archbishop of York. In Scotland, the situation was, again, different. Couples could divorce more easily, but many churches would not remarry them and civil marriage did not exist until 1939, as it had in England and Wales since 1836. But 'irregular' stable partnerships could be officially registered as they could not in England and Wales, and they amounted to 12 per cent of all registered partnerships, including marriages, between 1855 and 1939,<sup>46</sup> similar to the figure for the whole of Great Britain in the late 1990s.<sup>47</sup>

## Population Panic

There was greater anxiety about the size and physical fitness of the population. The birth rate began an unprecedented decline in the 1870s, a trend shared with other European countries, continuing to the 1930s. Births fell from 36 per 1,000 population in England and Wales in 1877 to 23.8 in 1914; in Scotland from 35.3 to 26.1; in Ireland from 26.2 to 22.7.<sup>48</sup> It was believed that births fell fastest among the middle classes, careful people who planned their lives, seeking to improve their families' living standards and their children's life chances, while the feckless masses had too many children who were malnourished and feeble, causing national 'physical degeneration' and potential economic and military decline. Similar fears were widespread in Europe.<sup>49</sup> Pessimism was stoked by eugenic theory, created in 1883 by the English mathematician, Francis Galton, who argued that poverty caused debilitating physical and mental conditions which were inherited and could be halted only by preventing reproduction of the 'unfit'. Eugenics gained adherents internationally, though in Britain it was always challenged by the belief that, even if physical weakness associated with poverty was inherited, it could be countered effectively by welfare and environmental reforms.

To discover which families were restricting their births and why, the 1911 Census asked every woman who had been married how many children she had borne and how

<sup>45</sup> Pat Thane and Tanya Evans, *Sinners? Scroungers? Saints? Unmarried Motherhood in Twentieth-Century England* (Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 8–13; Ginger S. Frost, *Living in Sin. Cohabiting as Husband and Wife in Nineteenth-Century England* (Manchester University Press, 2008).

<sup>46</sup> I am grateful to Eleanor Gordon and Anne-Marie Hughes, University of Glasgow, for this information.

<sup>47</sup> Jane Lewis, *The End of Marriage? Individualism and Intimate Relations* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2001), p. 34.

<sup>48</sup> Mitchell and Deane, *Historical Statistics*, pp. 29–31.

<sup>49</sup> Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration. A European Disorder c. 1848–c. 1918* (Cambridge University Press, 1989).

many had died. To assist analysis of the census data, the Registrar-General, the official keeper of information about births, marriages and deaths, in charge of the Census, constructed the first official division of the population into social classes, defining six grades according to the occupation of the head of household (assumed to be male): Professional (class I), Managerial (class II), Skilled non-manual (class III Non-manual), Skilled Manual (III Manual), Semi-skilled (IV), Unskilled (V).<sup>50</sup> The classification did not succeed in explaining why the birth rate was falling, but it survived the century, influencing social research and perceptions of social class and status, though persistently debated and modified, not least to allow women class status independent of men.<sup>51</sup>

The Census was not fully analysed until the 1920s, due to the war. It revealed no clear class differences but significant local inequalities in births affecting all classes, probably related to economic, gender and age structures. Mining communities, with little women's employment, had the highest birth rates, though these also gradually declined, while in textile districts, where married women conventionally worked in factories, they were lower.<sup>52</sup> As more women in all classes sought freedom and equality, the less they tolerated repeated pregnancy, childbirth, miscarriage, child deaths or secret, illegal abortions, all causing long-term damage to their physical and mental health and lowering their children's life chances in large, poor families. But births were hard to control especially for poorer people and knowledge was limited. Condoms, caps and sponges were available, but disapproved of and costly. The commonest methods were the oldest, *coitus interruptus* and abstention from sex.<sup>53</sup>

Fears of degeneration and declining 'national efficiency' were multiplied by Britain's difficulties in the Anglo-Boer War.<sup>54</sup> Leading army men argued that the failure to sweep to quick victory over inexperienced Boer farmers owed more to the poor physical condition of British males than to poor leadership. It was reported that one-third of army volunteers were rejected due to physical inadequacy (too short, too thin or too weak) or poor health, though the evidence was conflicting. The Interdepartmental Committee on Physical Deterioration, appointed to investigate, concluded in 1904 that deterioration in overall physical standards was unproven (medical witnesses, in particular, were sceptical), but working-class health and nutrition were, and long had been, seriously poor. It found little evidence that such conditions were genetic and proposed remedies,

<sup>50</sup> S. R. S. Szreter, 'The Genesis of the Registrar-General's Social Classification of Occupations', *British Journal of Sociology* 35 (1984): 285–317.

<sup>51</sup> Michael Savage, *Social Class in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Penguin, 2015).

<sup>52</sup> Eilidh Garrett, Alice Reid, Kevin Schurer and Simon Szreter, *Changing Family Size in England and Wales. Place, Class and Demography, 1891–1911* (Cambridge University Press, 2001).

<sup>53</sup> S. Szreter and K. Fisher, *Sex Before the Sexual Revolution: Intimate Life in England, 1918–1963* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

<sup>54</sup> See p. 9.

including extending and enforcing controls on overcrowded homes and smoke pollution; improved food and milk distribution; more open spaces; better work conditions and shorter hours to prevent fatigue; medical inspection and state-sponsored meals in schools; instructing mothers about diet and child care and schoolgirls in cookery and nutrition; and encouraging physical exercise, including in schools.

Women took advantage of these fears to demand action against another severe problem, the high infant death rate, arguing that an obvious way to compensate for falling births was to prevent infant deaths and help the babies grow up fit and healthy. Infant mortality was high in all classes but highest among the poorest. On average in England and Wales 154 infants of every 1,000 born died in their first year in 1898-1902; in Scotland it was 128; and in Ireland it was 108.<sup>55</sup> In the poverty-stricken textile town of Batley, Yorkshire, almost one in six infants died. Women, including in the largest working-class women's organization, the Women's Co-operative Guild (WCG), argued for many of the same reforms as the Interdepartmental Committee: free medical attention and free, pure, milk for babies and their mothers; instruction and support for working-class mothers in feeding and nurturing their babies and themselves, ideally provided in local welfare centres.<sup>56</sup> Women's groups, including the WCG and the WLL, raised voluntary funds to establish such centres and a few local authorities followed their example.<sup>57</sup> The infant death rate fell, but remained high: in England and Wales it stood at 105 deaths per 1,000 in 1914; in Scotland at 111; and in Ireland at 87. It is unclear why improvement was greater in England, Wales and Ireland than in Scotland.

## Conservative Social Reform

Existing institutions could not resolve the social inequalities revealed by surveys and campaigners. Public assistance was available only through the Poor Law, which refused support outside intentionally grim workhouses to anyone judged capable of work and gave minimal help to others, generally observing its basic legal obligation to prevent death from destitution. Growing recognition of the realities of involuntary unemployment,<sup>58</sup> poverty due to low pay and the near impossibility for many working people to save against sickness, unemployment and old age caused mounting criticism of the system and demands for change. Those who could, saved through the Post Office Savings Bank, or trade unions or non-profit friendly societies, run by and for working people

55 Mitchell and Deane, *Historical Statistics*, p. 37.

56 M. Llewellyn Smith (ed.), *Letters from Working Women*, Collected by the Women's Co-operative Guild (London: Bell, 1915, repr. London: Virago, 1978).

57 D. Dwork, *War is Good for Babies and Other Young Children. A History of the Infant and Child Welfare Movement in England, 1898-1918* (London: Routledge, 1987).

58 Jose Harris, *Unemployment and Politics 1880-1914* (Oxford University Press, 1977).

and providing sickness, old age and sometimes unemployment benefits in return for regular contributions. But these were accessible only to the regularly and better paid and few families could afford to cover wives and children as well as male wage earners. Friendly societies had about 5 million members in England and Wales in 1911, almost half of all working men and few women.<sup>59</sup>

Charity helped. It had a long history in Britain and grew through the nineteenth century. Married middle-class women were effectively barred from the labour market and charity gave them useful, fulfilling employment outside the home, which often convinced them that only the state had the resources to solve major social problems.<sup>60</sup> As pressure for state action grew, the Conservatives responded with the Midwifery Act 1902, which required midwives to be trained and registered in an effort to reduce infant and maternal deaths from inexpert handling of childbirth, which was believed to be all too common especially in poorer districts. It was good in principle, but reduced the supply of midwives and increased their cost, further burdening poor families, though untrained women continued to practice in their communities.

Also in 1902, Balfour introduced an Education Act to expand and improve state secondary education in England and Wales (with separate legislation for the different Scottish system) to improve the skills of the future workforce and enhance competitiveness. Secondary schools were funded to provide free places for able children from poor families and secondary school attendance grew – doubling in Wales between 1901 and 1911<sup>61</sup> – but many families could not afford to keep their children out of employment past the minimum leaving age of 13. Schools signified and reinforced social inequalities. About 10 per cent of children attended private schools, day or boarding, with small classes and superior facilities.

The 1902 Act also abolished separately elected school boards in England and Wales, transferring responsibility for education to county and municipal councils and improving coordination between local public health and education authorities. Many areas now appointed school medical officers to identify and treat ill-health among schoolchildren whose families could not afford medical care.<sup>62</sup> In 1905, the government permitted Poor Law guardians to provide free school meals for 'necessitous' schoolchildren, on the school's recommendation, but many parents rejected the stigmatizing association with the Poor Law. Over 300 charities provided free meals unevenly across the country.

<sup>59</sup> Paul Johnson, *Saving and Spending. The Working Class Economy in Britain, 1870–1939* (Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 49–54.

<sup>60</sup> F. Pruchaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-century England* (Oxford University Press, 1980).

<sup>61</sup> George Smith, 'Schools', in A. H. Halsey and J. Webb (eds), *Twentieth-century British Social Trends* (London: Macmillan, 2000), p. 183.

<sup>62</sup> H. Harris, *The Health of the Schoolchild. A History of the School Medical Service in England and Wales* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1995), pp. 40–1.

Unemployment peaked in the winter of 1902–3. Unemployed workers demonstrated, demanding help other than the hated Poor Relief. At the worst times, the Lord Mayor of London opened funds for the 'relief of distress', but philanthropy could never cope with the need. Demonstrations grew so insistent that the Unemployed Workmen Act 1905 allowed local authorities to register unemployed people and provide paid work, mainly infrastructural such as road building, financed by a combination of local rates and voluntary funds, but it was difficult anywhere to provide enough work to meet the need. On 6 November 1905, 3,000 unemployed women marched silently to Westminster. Balfour urged more voluntary donations. Support for Labour and reforming Liberals grew.

In August 1905, Balfour announced a Royal Commission to investigate the 'Poor Laws and Relief of Distress'. Its members represented the range of viewpoints on the 'social question', including Charles Booth; Fabian Beatrice Webb; George Lansbury, Labour politician and activist on the Poplar Board of Guardians, east London; Octavia Hill, housing reformer; and representatives of the firmly moralistic supporters of self-help, the Charity Organization Society (COS). A trade unionist was added belatedly following protest. It reported in 1909.

## Liberal Social Welfare

Demands for social reform contributed to the Liberal and Labour election successes in 1906 and substantial numbers of backbenchers entered Parliament committed to reform. Whether, or to what extent, the state should take on such welfare responsibilities and whether state action risked undermining personal responsibility had long been debated; the debate continued through the century, more prominent at some times than others. At this time, more people were persuaded that starkly visible social deprivation was generally not the fault of the individuals, as the Poor Law had always assumed, and only the state had the resources and the authority to help. More traditional Liberals were unconvinced and most Liberal leaders remained non-committal during the election, giving more prominence to free trade, yet, soon after, the Workman's Compensation Act 1897 was extended, making employers liable for accidents at work and obliging them to compensate employees. Other reforms followed.

## Children and Young People

Also in 1906, a Labour backbencher introduced a Bill allowing (but not obliging) local authorities in England and Wales to provide free meals for needy schoolchildren, funded by charities when possible or from the rates. The Poor Law was not involved. This was the first publicly financed service, other than schooling, for deprived people, free of charge and punitive disabilities. It helped starving children, challenging those

who believed the state was undermining parental responsibility by recognizing that, generally, parents were not culpable for child poverty and that many on low incomes needed help caring for their children. By 1911/12, 131 of the 322 education authorities in England and Wales provided free meals – ninety-five were funded by local rates, the rest by charity. About 100,000 children were fed in London, and 258,000 elsewhere in England and Wales. It was hard for councils in poor districts with limited incomes to meet all the need, and from 1914 the scheme became compulsory, subsidized by the Exchequer, feeding during school holidays was authorized and eligibility was determined by school medical officers who assessed need based on health rather than parental income. Further legislation in 1907 required local authorities to 'provide for the medical inspection of schoolchildren' in state elementary schools to maintain their 'health and physical condition'. This also was financed initially from the pressurized local rates, then by the Treasury from 1912, which also funded optical, dental and other treatment previously inaccessible to poorer children. The measures improved children's health and their capacity to learn.

The Probation Act 1907 established the modern probation service, a first resort for minor offenders, including children and young people, designed to prevent further offending with help and advice. The state took more responsibility for children in the Children Act 1908, which established separate juvenile courts, reformatories for under 16s for whom probation was thought to be inappropriate or had failed, and remand homes to keep them out of adult prisons, providing support and training. The Prevention of Crime Act 1908 established Borstals for training young offenders in work skills, while the Poor Prisoners' Defence Act provided legal aid for poor people indicted for criminal offences.

Under the Children Act, local authorities took responsibility for child victims of cruelty and abuse, a problem exposed by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) from the 1880s.<sup>63</sup> It worked to help children but, aware of its limitations, campaigned for state action, then cooperated in administering the law. The Act introduced penalties for child abuse and neglect and all children were removed from Poor Law to local authority care, where possible 'boarded-out' (fostered) or placed in charitable institutions, in both cases supervised by female local officials. From 1913, children aged 3–16 could not remain in workhouses for more than six weeks.

## Reforming Taxes

The Liberals moved cautiously on social reform, though faster than their predecessors. This was partly due to the difficulty in getting reform past the Conservative-dominated Lords, who rejected or amended many proposals. Another obstacle was

<sup>63</sup> George Behmer, *Child Abuse and Moral Reform in England, 1870–1908* (Stanford University Press, 1982).

insufficient revenue to meet the growing demands on the state, including for defence. The first Liberal reforms cost the Exchequer little, devolving most of the costs to local authorities or charities. A major obstacle to increasing revenue was the government's commitment to free trade. Its refusal to raise revenue from tariffs on imports or taxes on consumption left only the unpopular option of raising direct taxes. Asquith, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, believed that increasing the flat rate income tax of 1s in the £ on incomes of £150 and above would harm those on lower taxable incomes. The alternative was an innovative graduated income tax, making higher earners pay more, which existed nowhere in Europe. It was supported by Labour and Liberal reformers. A Select Committee on Income Tax supported it in 1906, persuading a reluctant Treasury. Asquith proceeded cautiously, aware of opposition from traditional Liberals and in the Lords. In 1907, he took a first step by the least painful means of reducing the tax to 9d on earned income up to £2,000 pa. The revenue was compensated by raising inheritance tax on estates worth over £150,000.<sup>64</sup> When Asquith succeeded Campbell-Bannerman as Prime Minister in 1908, David Lloyd George became Chancellor and planned to go further. Meanwhile, he proceeded with another Asquith initiative: old age pensions.

## Pensions

Campaigners demanded state pensions from the 1870s. The aged poor were widely seen as a major deserving group who experienced severe poverty when they could no longer support themselves after years of hard work and low pay. In 1901, people over 65 made up 5 per cent of the UK population. The only public support was minimal, stigmatizing Poor Relief, which many shunned, even at the cost of misery and starvation. Evidence of their plight accumulated from a series of official investigations and Charles Booth's first major poverty survey, *The Aged Poor in England and Wales* (1894), which led him to become a leading pension campaigner. Opponents invoked the accustomed rhetoric that families should take responsibility not the state. But Booth's work and Poor Law experience showed that many older people had no close relatives because they had never married or their children had died, also that families of very poor older people were often poor themselves, giving what help they could, often in the form of meals, housework and care in sickness, but it was limited. When Thomas Pitkin, a 64-year-old part-time rural labourer, was asked by the Royal Commission on the Aged Poor in 1894 whether his eleven children helped him, he replied 'No. I have had to help them when I can. They have got large families most of

<sup>64</sup> Martin Daunton, *Trusting Leviathan. The Politics of Taxation in Britain, 1799–1914* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 330–74.

them ... The daughter that I have lives about the length of this room, perhaps, from me and she looks after my house'.<sup>65</sup>

When Bismarck introduced the world's first state pensions in Germany in 1889, he stimulated and divided British campaigners. German pensions were funded through a pioneering national insurance scheme, requiring workers and employers to contribute, subsidized by the state. This restricted the pensions to better-paid, mainly skilled, mainly male, workers who could afford weekly contributions. This suited Bismarck's aims to stimulate economic growth through increasing the security of key workers and to undermine support for socialism by demonstrating the benevolence of the liberal state. Some British campaigners advocated insurance pensions, but the driving force behind the pension campaign was concern about poverty in old age, which most afflicted the low paid and irregularly employed who could not afford contributions, particularly women who were the majority of older people. Booth, with strong support from the Labour movement, advocated non-contributory, tax-funded pensions as introduced in Denmark, Australia and New Zealand in the 1890s. Asquith decided this was the most effective solution and prepared legislation before becoming premier.

Lloyd George introduced the Old Age Pensions Bill in June 1908. It was constrained by the revenue problem and the Treasury's reluctance to spend, then amended in Parliament. It was strongly opposed in the Lords, but they did not yet risk taking the unprecedented step of rejecting a Treasury measure. The outcome was a minimal, stringently means-tested, maximum weekly pension of 5s (25p) per week, 7s 6d (75p) for married couples (average full-time earnings for a male manual worker were 27s (£1.35)), paid at age 70, at the Treasury's insistence, to save money, though it was widely accepted that few poorer people could support themselves past 60 or 65. Claimants had to prove they had not been imprisoned for crime or convicted of drunkenness in the previous ten years and were not guilty of 'habitual failure to work according to his ability, opportunity or need for his own maintenance or that of his legal relatives'. Also excluded were 'aliens' and their wives.<sup>66</sup> The qualifications were scarcely less stringent than for Poor Relief, though the pension was not administered by the Poor Law and escaped its stigma. Lloyd George admitted the pension was too small to live on, but argued that it would encourage and supplement saving and family support. It was the first tax-funded cash payment to the poor outside the Poor Law and 490,000 people qualified for the first pensions on 1 January 1909, two-thirds of them female, who appeared delighted, praising 'that Lord George'.<sup>67</sup> Pension claims were assessed by local volunteer committees, state supervised, and paid through the Post Office. Like

<sup>65</sup> Pat Thane, *Old Age in English Society. Past Experiences, Present Issues* (Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 186–92.

<sup>66</sup> See p. 12.

<sup>67</sup> Thane, *Old Age in English Society*, pp. 216–35.

other Liberal reforms, administration was collaborative between statutory and voluntary bodies. This usefully cut costs, but was also a matter of principle for Liberals who believed in encouraging voluntary action and cooperation between charity and state welfare.

## Poor Law Reform

Pensions, like the Children Act, reduced the number of paupers, although for aged people needing institutional care the workhouse remained the only public provision. The number of paupers in England and Wales fell from 916,377 in 1910 to 748,019 in 1914, from 2.6 per cent to 2 per cent of the population.<sup>68</sup> In February 1909, the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws reported. Its work was protracted by differences between the majority of commissioners and a radical minority (including Webb and Lansbury) who issued separate reports. Both were critical of the failure to prevent or ameliorate severe poverty and recommended abolishing the Poor Law, replacing it with specialized services for specific needs, including allowances enabling mothers of young children to stay home to rear healthy children, non-punitive cash support for the involuntarily unemployed and help to find work, along with rigorous investigation of individual circumstances to identify 'shirkers' who should receive compulsory work training. Both also proposed raising the school leaving age to 15; the minority added part-time education to age 18. The main differences were majority support for national insurance for sick or unemployed workers; the minority preferred non-contributory benefits providing 'a national minimum of civilized life' for low earners unable to afford contributions. Also the majority proposed the substantial involvement of charities in providing new services, cooperating with the state; the minority supported cooperation, but believed that, for efficiency, national uniformity and accountability, policy should be directed by the state. Reform was strongly opposed by the LGB, and the Poor Law survived fundamentally unchanged, for the present. Demands for change did not go away.

## Housing and Town Planning

The Liberals also tackled the major problem of urban overcrowding. The Housing and Town Planning Act 1909 encouraged local authorities to condemn unfit dwellings and plan further development at low density, with gardens and open spaces, influenced by the pioneering planners Ebenezer Howard and Patrick Geddes. They inspired the building of Letchworth from 1903, the first 'Garden City', providing homes and work away from London, but only for those who could afford the rents, as the poorest could

<sup>68</sup> M. E. Rose, *The Relief of Poverty, 1834-1914* (London: Macmillan, 1982), p. 58.

not. Owner-occupation was rare at this time except among the wealthiest. The garden city concept influenced the building of London County Council's (LCC) (and Britain's) first council housing estates from the turn of the century, and private ventures, including Hampstead Garden Suburb, started 1905, designed for workers by its philanthropic initiator, Henrietta Barnett, though rents and travel proved too costly. More successfully, Port Sunlight on Merseyside (opened in 1890) and Bournville in Birmingham (with 300 houses by 1900) were built for workers by Lever Brothers and Cadbury's, respectively. The 1909 Act was not mandatory and was mainly effective after the war.<sup>69</sup>

### The 'People's Budget'

Lloyd George's first Budget, in April 1909, the 'People's Budget' he called it, progressed towards a graduated income tax. Earned incomes up to £2,000 pa continued to be taxed at 9d in the £, from £2,000–£3,000 at 1s, then at 1s 2d. Above £5,000 a super-tax of 6d in the £ was charged on all income above £3,000. Death duties rose on estates worth over £5,000 and a new tax took 20 per cent of the profit from land sales. Taxpayers earning up to £500 pa received an innovative £10 tax allowance for each child under 16, perhaps to encourage the 'respectable middle' to have more children. A £200,000 development fund was introduced to create rural employment through measures including afforestation and developing smallholdings.<sup>70</sup>

The land tax incensed the Lords even more than higher income taxes. They took the unprecedented step of rejecting the Budget by 375 votes to 75. The government held firm, made it an issue of public confidence in their policies and called an election in January 1910. They lost seats (from 400 to 275) and their overall majority, but the Conservatives won only 273. Labour rose to forty seats and, along with the Irish Nationalists, helped the Liberals hold on. Peers expressed their determination 'to die in the last ditch' to preserve their privileges. At Asquith's request, the new king, George V – Edward VII died in the midst of the crisis in May 1910 – agreed to appoint enough new peers to outvote the Tories if the Liberals won another election and the Lords remained intransigent. An election in December brought similar results. The Liberals carried on, still supported by Labour (forty-two seats) and Irish Nationalists (eighty-four). Labour's reward included the introduction of salaries for MPs of £400 pa.

The Parliament Act, 1911, limited the Lords' powers. To avoid a flood of Liberal peers, the Lords passed it by 131 votes to 114, with many abstentions. It established that finance Bills required approval by the Commons alone, allowed the Commons to overrule the Lords on any government measure after a maximum delay of two years,

<sup>69</sup> William Ashworth, *The Genesis of Modern British Town Planning* (London: Routledge, 1954, repr. 1968).

<sup>70</sup> Daunton, *Taming Leviathan*, pp. 361–5.

and reduced the maximum period between elections from seven years to five. The powers of the Lords were significantly curbed and they were forced to pass the Budget. By 1914, direct taxes contributed 52 per cent of government revenue compared with 40 per cent in the 1890s.<sup>71</sup>

Balfour resigned in 1911 after losing three elections and failing to stop the Parliament Act. He was replaced by Andrew Bonar Law, a Glasgow businessman, born in Canada, son of a Presbyterian minister whose family had migrated from Ulster, a determined opponent of free trade and Irish independence.

## National Insurance

Lloyd George returned his attention to social reform. After Parliament agreed the Pensions Act, he visited Germany to investigate national health insurance. He was frustrated by the limitations imposed on pensions and believed that national insurance would more successfully fund further innovations. In addition to sickness insurance, he proposed widows', orphans' and disability pensions to assist some of the poorest families, but the Treasury judged these to require higher contributions than many workers could afford and he was forced to drop them. National Health Insurance (NHI) passed calmly through Parliament in 1911, granting insured workers sickness benefits for twenty-six weeks (10s per week for men, 7s 6d for women – unequal compensation for unequal lost pay) and free access to a GP. They and their dependents received free hospital treatment only for the highly infectious scourge of TB. As in Germany, national insurance mainly covered regularly employed working men, leaving most working-class women and poorer, irregularly employed men without free healthcare except the inadequate services of the Poor Law. Severely disabled people received a long-term pension of 5s per week; the wives of insured men received Maternity Benefit of 30s (£1.50) to provide care in childbirth, not, as initially planned, paid to the man, following a campaign by the WCG who feared it would go to the pub not the wife. Contributions from workers aged 16–65 were 4d per week for men, 3d for women; employers paid 3d and the state paid a little under 2d per week per worker, 'nine pence for four pence', as Lloyd George put it. Contributions were collected and benefits paid and administered by organizations experienced in such work, mainly friendly societies and trade unions, defined as 'approved societies', supervised by a central National Insurance Commission. This further example of cooperation between the state and voluntary agencies soothed the latter's fears of state competition, while the state avoided a costly new bureaucracy.

The same structure was adopted for Part II of the National Insurance Act, the world's first experiment with unemployment insurance. In 1908, Winston Churchill, a Liberal

<sup>71</sup> Daunton, *Trusting Leviathan*, p. 35.

at this time, became President of the Board of Trade, the department responsible for work conditions, amid high unemployment. He recruited William Beveridge, then working among the poor of east London at Toynbee Hall settlement house while completing an influential study of unemployment.<sup>72</sup> On Beveridge's recommendation, labour exchanges, nationwide offices providing information and advice on available work, were introduced in 1909. In the same year came the first attempt to control low pay. Following the campaign by Fabian women,<sup>73</sup> trade boards were established in four non-unionized trades covering 200,000 female workers, on which employer and worker representatives negotiated pay, but they were under-resourced and poorly regulated and female pay remained low.

Meanwhile, Beveridge, with civil servants, devised unemployment insurance. Insurance could not solve the greatest labour market problem: workers in irregular and low-paid jobs who could not afford sufficient contributions to cover their high risk of unemployment. The scheme covered 3 million workers in just three, exclusively male, trades, shipbuilding, engineering, building and construction, which normally experienced fluctuations but not high unemployment. Workers and employers contributed 2½d per week, providing 7s per week for fifteen weeks after the first week of involuntary unemployment, administered and paid by labour exchanges, where registration was compulsory to assist the search for work. Claimants were expected to seek work, but could refuse work in conditions inferior to the norm in their regular occupation. It passed easily through Parliament as Part II of the National Insurance Act, and by July 1914 covered 2.3 million workers, costing the state about £1 million. It did not solve the major problems of unemployment but it was an important start. Also in 1908, militant miners were granted an 8-hour day and in 1911, after a long campaign by female trade unionists, a Shops Act established half-day closing each week, reducing shop workers' very long hours.

The Liberals significantly expanded the social responsibilities of the state, unintentionally sowing the seeds of a 'welfare state' which grew through future decades, though profound inequalities persisted.

## Irish and Colonial Nationalism

The government faced increasingly urgent Irish demands for independence. When the Liberals returned to power in 1905, nationalists hoped they would revive Gladstone's offer of 'Home Rule'. But this had split Liberals in the 1880s and party leaders hoped to avoid it. Campbell-Bannerman sought compromise, while support for radical nationalist Sinn Féin ('Ourselves Alone') and outright independence grew in the south of

<sup>72</sup> William Beveridge, *Unemployment: A Problem of Industry* (London: Longmans, 1909); Jose Harris, *William Beveridge: A Biography*, 2nd edn (Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 138–97.

<sup>73</sup> See p. 21.

Ireland, along with demands for continued union with Great Britain concentrated in the Protestant northeast. The Nationalists gained from Liberal dependence on their votes from 1910, leading to a Home Rule Bill in 1912, giving an Irish parliament significant domestic authority while Westminster controlled defence and taxation. With a leader of Ulster Protestant descent in Bonar Law, Conservative opposition was stronger than ever. The Ulster Unionist opposition mobilized, with substantial Conservative support. In September 1912, half a million Protestants signed the Ulster Covenant, declaring resistance to Home Rule, drawn up by Belfast lawyer, Edward Carson. The paramilitary Ulster Volunteers were established and by 1913 numbered 100,000. The Nationalists also mobilized and both imported weapons. Ireland seemed close to civil war when world war intervened. The Bill was delayed by the Unionist Lords for the two years allowed by the Parliament Act and became law in 1914, after the outbreak of war, when it was decreed that it would be implemented when peace returned.

Irish Nationalism inspired independence movements in the Empire. They were stirring in the most prized colony, India – though the Liberals kept Indian nationalism at bay by admitting some Indians to influential positions<sup>74</sup> – and in Egypt – not formally a colony but under firm British control. There were riots in British Guiana, rebellion in northwest Nigeria in 1906 and recurrent resistance in Kenya, all forcefully resisted,<sup>75</sup> though the Liberals always sought ways to accommodate colonial aspirations. Like Irish nationalism and the many other challenges to the status quo before 1914, these were put on hold through the war, then revived more vigorously.

## Conclusion

The first years of the twentieth century placed firmly in public discourse a series of issues which resonated through the century. These included the extent and causes of poverty and the relative responsibilities of the state, the individual and voluntary action for alleviating it; the Liberals so increased the state's role that they were later hailed as founding what became a 'welfare state', unintentionally, and future developments were by no means certain by 1914. There were tensions around immigration, foreshadowing worse in the future, leading to the first of many state controls. A vigorous women's movement challenging gender inequality had achieved little by 1914, but did not go away. Nor did an increasingly organized, more successful, labour movement fighting inequalities of income, wealth and opportunities. There were visible threats to Britain's international political and economic power, including to its imperial authority, about to become intense with the onset of a war of unprecedented horror.

<sup>74</sup> Porter, *Lion's Share*, pp. 218–19.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 199.

## Further Reading for Specific Chapters

### 1 United Kingdom? 1900–1914

An excellent overview combining social, economic and political history, including discussion of wealth and income distribution: Jose Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit. Britain 1870–1914* (London: Penguin, repr. 1994). Also Geoffrey Searle, *A New England? Peace and War, 1886–1918*, *The New Oxford History of England* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

On nationality and the rights of immigrants, Anne Dummett and Andrew Nicol, *Subjects, Citizens, Aliens and Others: Nationality and Immigration Law* (Chicago, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1990).

Perceptive studies of immigrants and their reception in United Kingdom: David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840–1914* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994); Laura Tabili, *Global Migrants, Local Culture. Natives and Newcomers in Provincial England, 1841–1939* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

On key figures in the early Labour Party: David Marquand, *Ramsay MacDonald* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1977); Kenneth O. Morgan, *Keir Hardie: Radical and Socialist* (London: Faber & Faber, [1975] 2011).

Ian Gazeley, *Poverty in Britain, 1900–1965* (London: Palgrave, Macmillan, 2003), provides a clear survey of poverty studies and their findings relevant to several chapters.

On social policies in the emerging welfare state: Pat Thane, *Foundations of the Welfare State*, 2nd edn (London: Longmans, 1996); Pat Thane, *Old Age in English History. Past Experiences, Present Issues* (Oxford University Press, 2000); Jose Harris, *Unemployment and Politics, 1886–1914* (Oxford University Press, 1977); Jose Harris, *William Beveridge. A Biography*, 2nd edn (Oxford University Press, 1997); Deborah Dwork, *War is Good for Babies and Other Young Children. A History of the Infant and Child Welfare Movement in England, 1898–1918* (London: Routledge, 1987). On the Poor Law: M. E. Rose, *The Relief of Poverty, 1834–1914* (London: Macmillan, 1982); M. A. Crowther, *The Workhouse System 1834–1929* (London: Batsford, 1981).

On taxation: Martin Daunton, *Trusting Leviathan. The Politics of Taxation in Britain, 1799–1914* (Cambridge University Press, 2001).

Among the best studies of the women's movement are: Jill Liddington and Jill Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us. The Rise of the Women's Suffrage Movement* (London: Virago, 1978), especially on the roles of northern working-class women; Sandra Stanley Holton, *Feminism and Democracy. Women's Suffrage and Reform Politics in Britain, 1900–1918* (Cambridge University Press, 1986) on the NUWSS; June Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst a Biography* (London: Routledge, 2002) on the WSPU; June Purvis and Sandra Stanley Holton (eds), *Votes for Women* (London: Routledge, 2000).

### 2 First World War

On international politics leading up and during the war, see Reynolds, *Britannia Overruled*, above.

On national politics, Searle, *A New England?* above. John Turner (ed.), *Britain and the First World War* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988; rev. edn London: Routledge, 2016), is a comprehensive collection of specialist essays.

# Divided Kingdom A History of Britain, 1900 to the Present

Pat Thane  
*University of London*



CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

# CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom  
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA  
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia  
314-321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi - 110025, India  
79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of  
education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781107040915](http://www.cambridge.org/9781107040915)

DOI: 10.1017/9781139644310

© Pat Thane 2018

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception  
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,  
no reproduction of any part may take place without the written  
permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2018

Printed and bound in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, Elcograf S.p.A.

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-107-04091-5 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-107-61250-1 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of  
URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication  
and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain,  
accurate or appropriate.