

To what extent were women given the vote in 1918 due to the work of the suffragists?

In 1867 the second reform act gave most skilled working class men in town the vote, yet women were denied the vote in national elections and considered as property of their husband or fathers. It is a source of debate why women over 30 were given the vote in 1918 and some argue it was due to the peaceful protest of the suffragists. However it is important to consider other factors including the militant suffragettes, the changing attitudes to women and the influence of womens' war work. This essay intends to argue that.....

The suffragists played a significant impact in helping women to get the vote. The suffragists believed in using peaceful methods to protest for votes for women. They held meetings, would issues leaflets, newspapers and mass demonstrations to promote their cause. For example in 1907 they held a mud march where 3,000 women protested in London. *Although* many argue that the suffragists peaceful protest were important in winning respect by remaining law abiding *further analysis has shown that* by 1903 these peaceful methods were less effective because they were easy to ignore and had lost the attention of the public and press. The suffragists worked with Liberal and then Labour politicians who were in favour of female suffrage and helped with their election campaigns. *Although* the support of the suffragists meant that 50% of MPs in parliament were in favour of female suffrage by 1900 and conciliation bills to give women the vote were introduced annually from 1910, *it must be acknowledged that* none of these bills were ever successfully passed before 1914. To sum up, initially the suffragists may have raised awareness of the cause and despite their efforts with politicians this essay believes that more pressure was needed, and this came in the form of the suffragettes.

The suffragettes were very important in the decision to grant women the vote. The suffragettes used militant tactics such as heckling politicians, chaining themselves to parliament and window smashing. This was important in helping women get the vote because they revitalised the campaign and gained much publicity which the suffragists had lost. From 1912-14 they entered the wild period, when they attacked property such as putting acid on golf courses and setting fire to Leuchars train station.. *While* the suffragettes did indeed gain lots of publicity and female suffrage was discussed daily in parliament during the wild period, something which the suffragists never achieved, *it must be acknowledged that* not all publicity was positive and although discussed daily no bill was every passed to give women the vote during the wild period, in fact the cancellation of the 1912 conciliation bill was blamed on suffragette violence. In addition because they used terrorists tactics it was impossible for the government to grant them the vote or else it would encourage other groups such as Irish nationalists to use violent tactics too. Indicating that the suffragettes may have been more of an obstacle than a help to women getting the vote. Finally although the suffragettes were very important for gaining publicity and although they may have acted as a barrier by using violence, this may have helped in 1917 when they were debating female suffrage as many felt granting the vote would avoid a return to this violence. To sum up, despite their individual flaws, both female suffrage groups managed to promote the case for votes for women, yet they were helped by the wider context of the time which saw improved attitudes to women.

Changing attitudes to women in education and politics were very important. By 1900 all girls had to be education to 12 and many universities such as London were allowing women to graduate. This was important because it removed the argument that women were not clever enough to vote. From 1869 the Municipal Franchise act let women vote on local elections as well as local councils and school boards. Although these changes proved that women were able to handle politics and made it increasingly difficult to deny women the vote in national elections it is important to remember that these changes were very slow, there were only 200 female drs in 1900 and very few women took part on local politics, therefore it is unlikely that without increasing pressure from female suffrages, it would have taken longer for women to get the vote. A final factor which helped with the timing of the vote was womens work in ww1.

War work's importance in the decision to give women the vote has tended to be over exaggerated simply because of the proximity in time between the end of the war and the 1918 representation of the people act. **On the one hand** it did help with the final decision, in 1915 Britain experienced a munitions crisis and women entered the factories to make shells for the war. This was dangerous work where women worked 10-12 hour shifts and suffered or were killed in accidents and explosions. Nearly 1 million women took part and 60% of shell makers were women, for example in Gretna alone, nearly. This helped women get the vote because it removed the argument that women didn't deserve the vote because they hadn't fought in the war. Some also argue that due to the lack of suffragette violence, war work allowed the govt to back down without looking as if they were giving in to terrorists. *While some argue that* the vote was simply a reward for war work, due to billboards at the time saying 'the nation thanks women' *this essay disagrees as* the vote was given to property owners over the age of 30 while those who had worked to support the war in munitions were aged 16-26 and were from poorer working classes, therefore clearly they would not benefit from the vote. In addition, women in France worked during the war but were not granted the vote, yet they did not have a prewar suffrage campaign. This would indicate that the work of the suffragists and suffragettes was very important in raising awareness of the cause and war work acted as a catalyst to speed up a decision which had already been made.

In conclusion the suffragists were very important in the decision to get women the vote. Changing attitudes to women in politics and education made it more likely that eventually women would be given the vote and war work was important as a catalyst. However most important was the combined effort of the suffragists and suffragettes because although they had individual flaws, their combined effort raised publicity for the cause, ensured that pro female suffrage MPs were in parliament

How successfully did the Liberal reforms tackle the problems of poverty

The Liberal govt came to power in 1906 when previous governments had followed the policy of laissez-faire which ensured very little government intervention to help the poor and studies found that 1/3rd of people lived in poverty. While in power the liberals introduced welfare reforms which affected many of the causes of poverty which were identified by Rowntree, yet it a source of debate how successful they were. By examining the efforts to tackle poverty due to old age, unemployment and sickness this essay intends to argue that poverty was not very successfully tackled.

In 1908 the Liberals introduced the old age pension to people aged over 70 and it was collected at the post office. *Although* the pension gave 25p a week to individuals meaning 1 million pensioners received extra money and for some removed the fear of the workhouse *realistically* this was not enough to remove poverty in the elderly as Rowntree identified that an individual required 35p a week in order to stay above the poverty line, meaning that those in receipt of pensions would still need an extra source of income from families or charities. In addition the age limit was set too high, at the time manual workers found it hard to work past 55 therefore many faced poverty as they were too old to work but too young to claim a pension. To sum up, the pension may have been a departure from laissez-faire yet in practise provided too little to too many to actually tackle poverty due to old age.

Rowntree found that unemployment was a cause of poverty. In 1909 the Liberals set up Labour exchanges to help people find work. 400 of them existed in Britain by 1910. *Despite* 4000 people finding jobs through labour exchanges every day and therefore having a source of income against poverty, *further analysis indicates* that the exchanges were actually much less successful as it was really only skilled workers who found work through them, as 75% of those who registered never found work through them and no training was given to unskilled workers. They would have been more successful if workers and employers were forced to register. In 1911 National Insurance part 2 was introduced to provide an income to insured workers who found themselves out of work. This helped prevent poverty as a worker could claim 35p a week for 15 weeks which would enable an individual to just stay above the poverty line. Although 7 trades were covered, giving cover to 2 million people in those trades such as docking which had regular spells of unemployment, further analysis reveals that no help was given to those in agriculture which had regular spells of unemployment. Overall only a limited few in towns were given the minimum amount of money to stay out of poverty and only really skilled workers had a better opportunity to find work.

Sickness was a cause of poverty as the worker found themselves without an income and all medical treatment had to be paid for. To tackle this the Liberals introduced National Insurance part 1 in 1911. Worker, employer and state all paid into a fund to provide benefits for a sick worker. As DLG said the worker was getting 9D cover for only 4D. This did go some way to preventing poverty due to sickness as the insured worker would get 50p a week for 13 weeks and then 25 for the second 13 weeks, meaning that with a source of income they would not fall into poverty. A total of 13 million people were covered, the largest group of all under the Liberal welfare reforms. Although workers were allowed free medical treatment from approved GPs this had limited success in removing sickness as a problem because family members were not covered and their care had still to be paid for. Finally, *although* National Insurance part 1 and 2 helped provide financial support for workers who were sick or unemployed, *further analysis* indicates that National Insurance actually put workers into poverty, acting as a pay cut because it was compulsory for the poorest paid workers earning less than £160 per year. Overall, minor progress was made in tackling poverty due to sickness and Britain was far from the NHS.

The largest cause of poverty was low wages as Rowntree found that 52% of poverty was due to low wages yet very little was done by the Liberals to tackle this issue. In 1909 the Trades Board Act was introduced which provided agreed working conditions and wages for people working in sweated industries such as box, chain and lace making. This was important because it meant that people were being helped in the jobs which had the worst conditions and by 1913 370,000 people were being supported. However, closer analysis reveals that this act was clearly limited when facing such a large problem as Rowntree found that 52% of poverty was due to low wages and no national minimum wage was ever established so although agreed wages were set they did not ensure that the worker could escape poverty.

In conclusion the Liberal reforms failed to tackle the problems of poverty by 1914. On the one hand some pensioners no longer feared the workhouse but too few were covered and those who were did not get enough to stay out of poverty. Skilled workers now found it easier to find work and those workers in industrial trades had an extra level of support during cyclical spells of unemployment. Yet the majority of workers, especially unskilled workers and in rural areas still faced poverty due to unemployment. On the one hand sickness insurance was perhaps the most successful due to the large number of people covered and the access to medical treatment, but it was a far cry from the free NHS of 1948. Finally the biggest cause of poverty, low wages, was barely touched. Therefore, while the causes of poverty may have been affected, and the groundwork laid for future governments to improve, they were definitely not tackled successfully by 1914.

The Liberal welfare reforms 1912-14 were introduced due to genuine concern for the poor - How accurate is this statement

The Liberals came to power in 1906 at a time when previous governments had followed laissez-faire, believing poverty was the fault of the individual. Although the Liberals has focused on free trade in their election campaign, while in power the liberals introduced welfare reforms including national insurance and old age pensions. It is a source of debate why they did this, certainly this was through a genuine concern for the poor. However it is important to consider other influencing factors, such as concern for national security and an attempts to have better soldiers and workers. In addition the importance of New Liberals must be considered. Finally, the argument that the reforms were introduced in order to win political advantage and stay in power. This essay intends to argue that it is..... accurate to argue that they were introduced due to genuine concern.

The studies of Booth and Rowntree in London and York found that 1/3rd of the population were in poverty. This revelation about the extent of poverty caused genuine concern and was important because it put pressure on the government to react by showing that there were equally high poverty levels in the capital as well as a small town. It reinforced the argument that poverty was a national problem which was too large for charities to cope with but needed government intervention. In addition Rowntree identified the real causes of poverty as low wages, old age, sickness and unemployment. This was very important because it revealed that poverty was not the fault of the individual as many had believed, therefore it indicates a level of genuine concern as it made it harder for the liberals to justify continuing their policy of laissez faire. *Although* some feel that the studies of Booth and Rowntree would have put any government at the time under pressure to respond to the results of the *survey further analysis indicates that there was not immediate pressure*. Although the studies were produced in 1901 the 1906 Liberal's election campaign focussed on free trade and did not mention welfare reforms. This suggests that while there may have been an element of genuine concern, other factors were important in influencing the government including a desire to maintain the empire.

One argument is that rather than genuine concern the reforms were introduced due to concern about the effect of a weak and poor population on national security. The Boer War 1899-1902 had produced alarming results, 1/3rd of recruits were rejected and it took 400,000 British soldiers 3 years to defeat 35,000 Africans. This led to concern that unless the health of the workers improved, Britain would have difficulty maintaining her Empire and would be unable to defend herself against a militarily efficient country like Germany. In addition, while Britain had led the industrial revolution, by 1906 Germany and the USA was threatening to catch up with Britain, especially in steel. Combined with the fact that employers such as Cadbury's were complaining that workers were unable to complete a full day's work, the introduction of the reforms can be seen as an attempt to have healthier fitter soldiers and workers. While analysis of the reforms would seem to suggest this, in that free school meals were given to children further analysis suggests that perhaps there was an element of genuine concern, in that £7 million a year was spent on pensions, yet these people could not fight or work for the country. To sum up, while the govt may have recognised that the health of the people needed to be improved, the reforms were not simply to make the country efficient.

The labour party was formed in 1900 and promised welfare reforms to the working classes, although some argue that this put pressure on the liberals to introduce welfare reforms to win their support, this essay intends to argue that the political threat has been overexaggerated. On the one hand the Labour party would appear to be a threat as they increased in popularity from 2 seats in 1900 to 29 seats in 1906, while still small it was the speed of the growth which was said to have put the liberals under pressure to retain the vote of working class men. Infact David Lloyd George himself said that the Liberals would be ousted from power unless they dealt with the problems of the working class. Yet, further analysis reveals that the liberals actually lost working class support due to their reforms, for example workers rejected paying compulsory national insurance contributions - arguing "Taffy is a welshman, taffy is a thief". An alternative view is that the conservatives were the bigger threat, they too were promising welfare reforms and by 1910 the Liberals only had a majority of 1, therefore in any political group were to replace the Liberals it would be the conservatives. Yet the 1910 People's Budget taxed the rich to pay for welfare reforms which reinforces the argument that political survival was not the most important concern as this would have lost support of the wealthy who could vote conservatives.

The presence of New Liberals in the government was very important in the decision to introduce welfare reforms. New Liberals such as David Lloyd George and Churchill believed that it was the duty of the govt to help the poor and therefore indicates an element of genuine concern. They were important to the introduction of the welfare reforms as their appointment in 1908 marked the beginning of a spate of reforms including old age pensions and national insurance. In particular DLG was very important because he visited Germany and saw how this country had become military and economically strong despite the introduction of welfare reforms such as pensions. However it must be acknowledged that the studies of Booth and Rowntree were important because they provided a blue print for which areas need to be tackled.

In conclusion it is very accurate to argue that the liberal reforms were introduced due to genuine concern. On the one hand the threat of political survival has been overexaggerated as the liberals were willing to lose support from both rich and poor voters. A desire to help improve the efficiency and security of the nation was more important as the govt were made aware of the potential consequences of a weak and debilitated population yet analysis of the reforms makes it clear that this was not the most overriding concern. It is accurate to argue that genuine concern was the most important reason for the introduction of the reforms as the presence of new liberals who wanted to help the poor ensured that reforms were passed and the studies of booth and rowntree provided the ammunition which they needed by revealing the extent of poverty in Britain.

To what extent did the Labour welfare reforms establish a welfare state in Britain

In 1942 Sir William Beveridge produced his report which identified the 5 giants facing Britain, these included Squalor, Want, Disease, Idleness and Ignorance. During WW2 the government took an increased role in ensuring equality in Britain by organising evacuation and rationing. At the end of the war the people voted overwhelmingly for Labour as they believed they were the party who would best implement the Beveridge report. It is a source of debate whether their reforms were able to establish a welfare state, a state which ensures that every citizen has a basic standard of living. By examining Labour's reforms to tackle want, squalor, disease and idleness this essay intends to argue that considering the post war economic circumstances, Labour set up a welfare state to a very large extent.

The people needed housing to ensure a minimum standard of living, yet despite their effort Labour were unable to effectively ensure that this was achieved. On the one hand they did make an improvement, firstly they continued to build pre-fab houses, this contributed to tackling squalor as 157,000 were built by 1948 providing good quality homes for people. To tackle the long term housing shortage the 1946 new towns act was introduced which tackled the problem of squalor by producing 14 new towns by 1951 which provided good quality homes in model communities. Finally to improve the housing crisis, labour increased the size of council houses from 800 to 1000sq feet. Although Labour were able to create 1 million homes by 1951 they were unable to effectively ensure that this element of a welfare state was completely fulfilled as 750,000 households were still needed shown in the 1951 census. Yet when judging Labour, it is important to consider the wider context of the time. Due to the end of the war there was a massive increase in marriages, divorces and children, meaning that this all put extra pressure on Labour. To sum up, although Labour were unable to ensure all citizens had a house as required in a welfare state, considering the post war difficulties they deserve praise for the improvements they made. They were much more successful in tackling the issue of health.

Prior to labour many people simply couldn't afford to pay to see a dr or for the medicine and operations they required. Labour were extremely successful in ensuring that all citizens had access to health care as in 1948 they introduced the National health Service which provided free appointments for drs, dentists and opticians as well as all medical treatment and prescriptions to be free at point of contact. This was very important in ensuring that people had a minimum standard of living because it removed the cost barrier. There is clear evidence that the NHS provided essential healthcare which was required. In the first year 187 million prescriptions were issued, with 5 million of these alone being for glasses. Clear evidence that the NHS met the needs of the people was that only 7 million prescriptions were issued the year before the NHS while 13.5 million were issued the month after, this indicates that people were able to get the health care they required but previously could not afford. Although some historians criticise labour for introducing prescription charges in 1951, 5p for some dentists and glasses thereby making it no longer free at point of contact, further analysis reveals that this did not affect its ability to ensure all citizens had access to health care, as those relying on benefits and on low incomes did not have to pay it. Overall in terms of health labour were extremely successful in ensuring all citizens had access to healthcare, they were equally as successful tackling the problem of lack of income.

In a welfare state the government ensures that all citizens have adequate income. In 1945 Labour introduced family allowance, this helped provide financial support for families with children as it provided 25p weekly for every child after the first. *Although many believe that family allowance helped families with the extra cost of children because it gave them additional income and helped over 3 million families, this essay believes that it had the potential to be more successful because Beveridge had recommended 40p and for every child and one historian argued that the 25p was too little as it was only enough to purchase a mars bar, a tube of toothpaste and a 1lb of tea.* To ensure that people had income from the cradle to the grave labour expanded national insurance making it compulsory and comprehensive, this was very important in ensuring all people had a minimum standard of living because people could claim benefit at times of poverty such as old age, sickness and unemployment. In addition National Assistance was introduced in 1948 which acted as a final safety net against poverty because it provided a lump sum or weekly sums for those people who were not covered by National Insurance. It is clear that this element of a welfare state was successfully met because Rowntree found in 1951 that poverty had dropped from 36% in 1931 to only 2% in 1951. Yet despite this success, further analysis reveals that poverty still remained an issue for those people who relied on benefit. Firstly benefit was only 19% of an average worker's wage and given that levels were fixed for 5 years and didn't rise with the cost of living, it made it very difficult for people relying on benefit to maintain a basic standard of living. In addition national assistance was meant to be a rarely used defence against poverty, but 2 million people, mainly pensioners were claiming it in 1949 which indicates that National insurance was not adequate to prevent poverty. Despite these flaws, considering poverty dropped so low this essay believes that this element of a welfare state was met extremely well.

In a welfare state the government help people to find work. Labour was extremely successful in tackling the problem of unemployment. The nationalised industries to secure jobs such as coal, electricity and the bank of england. They also increased the export trade by 70% which again helped to secure jobs. This clearly provided work for people because unemployment dropped to 2.5%. While some believe that this was due to the efforts of labour, for example by providing training for returning soldiers, further analysis reveals that Labour do not deserve all the credit for creating low unemployment. Many argue that any govt would have had low unemployment simply because of the need to repair and rebuild the country after WW2 created many jobs. To sum up, although labour may not have been entirely responsible, the fact is that unemployment was very low and so this element of a welfare state was successfully achieved. Labour had less success with solving the problem of ignorance.

Labour introduced the 1944 butler education act which made secondary education free and compusorly till 15. This created a welfare state because it removed the cost barrier to education which had seen working class children leave school at 14 and enter low paid jobs. Children sat an exam at 11 which decided which school they would go to based on their academic ability.

Despite removing the cost barrier to education from working class children and in theory giving equality in education based on ability rather than background *in practise* a social divide remained in education as majority of children going to grammar schools were middle class, the junior secondary schools were filled with working class children who saw no real improvement in their educational chances since they still left school with no qualifications and remained trapped in the cycle of poor education and low paid jobs. Considering the equality in health, Labour's record on education is rather weak.

In conclusion Labour was very effective in establishing a welfare state. The most successful reforms were clearly their record for tackling poverty, unemployment and health. By 1951 people's lives had improved so that they no longer had to worry about becoming ill and they knew that the govt would provide help finding work or if they faced poverty the government would provide a range of benefits to help them. They were less successful tackling education, although on the one hand all children now had compulsory secondary education, labour missed their chance to introduce comprehensive education and reduce the class divide. Although they were unable to ensure everybody had the housing they required, this unlike education, was due to factors outwith their control. Despite the individual flaws of each of the areas, labour established the principle of a welfare state which is that the state provides and considering the wider post war economic circumstances, the overall impact was to dramatically improve the quality of life of people therefore labour do indeed deserve credit for successfully tackling a welfare state.

Democracy

Although the 1872 secret ballot act improved democracy because voting was done in secret so people were discouraged from bribing somebody to vote a certain way or intimidating people to vote since it was impossible to know who you voted for, *further analysis revealed* that this act encouraged even more bribery since a voter could now collect bribes from several sides before voting.

Ability to vote

In 1867 the second reform act was passed meaning that most skilled working class men in towns had the vote as long as they rented a property valued at £10 or over and some tenants with small amounts of land were enfranchised. (KU) Despite this act progressing democracy because the electorate expanded massively from 1.3 million to 2.45 million, giving 1 in 3 adult males the vote and working class men had the vote for the first time which paved the way for future reforms *in practise Britain was still far from democratic as* women still did not have the vote and there were different voting rights depending on whether you lived in the town or country. (analysis +)