

New Higher
History
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Question
Booklet.
TGS
J Davidson.



Chapter 3 : Why did the Liberal Reforms happen?

Throughout much of the 19th century, public and government attitudes towards the poor in Britain was reflected in Samuel Smiles' book *Self Help*, essentially it was their own fault they were living in poverty. The poor, so many of the rich thought, were uneducated, lazy and drank too much. This attitude would naturally affect the help the poor would get from the government. If members of the government felt the poor were not deserving of

any assistance then the poor would have to fend for themselves in times of unemployment, illness, injury and old age.

This situation continued until the turn of the century when more concern was being shown about the level of poverty the poor were living in and the effect it was having on the future prosperity of Britain.

This chapter will consider the reasons why the Liberal Government of 1906 - 1914 passed so

many reforms to help the old, the young, the sick and the unemployed. Were they passed because of genuine concern for the poor or were the reasons more to do with getting votes or because of concern about the safety and security of the country?

What were nineteenth century attitudes to poverty?

Using the textbook, *Britain&Scotland and Germany*, Chapter 3, answer the following:

- 1) Give some details of mid-nineteenth century attitudes towards poverty from people such as Samuel Smiles and Norman Pearson.
- 2) Why did the poor avoid the workhouse and poor house?.
- 3) Why did many Victorians become involved in philanthropy?
- 4) Sum up the problems and criticisms of these charitable organisations.
- 5) Look at the quote from the Charity Organisation Society and the view of William Glastone, both on p.44. Why do you think people thought like this about the poor? How does it compare with the poor's attitude to the government of today?
- 6) Do you know, or have you got any experience of someone who has fallen on hard times due to unemployment, divorce, or illness? Do you think it was due to 'personal weakness' as Smiles thought?

Changing attitudes to poverty.

- 1) Please read this short section, taking time to understand what the key points are from the three blue sections, i.e. from Macclesfield Relief Association, George Sims and L.R.Phelps. Make a short summary paragraph of this section.

Extension:

- Become familiar with the phrase Laissez-Faire.
- Find out more about the Scottish Poor House and the English Workhouse.

Why did the Liberal Government take action against poverty?

As this section deals with what you will eventually write an essay on, take time over these questions and look further into the factors by using other books and the internet. Try to find out the views of historians to this question.

The Reports of Booth and Rowntree

- 1) Victorians were no longer ignorant of the causes of poverty because of these two highly important reports. What did these investigations prove?
- 2) What were the findings and arguments of Booth's report on London life? He also threw a warning at the government - what was that warning?
- 3) What did people realise from Seebohm Rowntree's investigation on poverty in York?
- 4) Rowntree provided a more detailed description of poverty (you will get a diagram showing his poverty cycle). Define primary and secondary poverty.
- 5) The last sentence about 'wasteful' spending on p.46 is interesting. What's your thoughts on this idea? Have ever seen people on TV who claim to be living in poverty but still seem to have money for a flat screen TV and Sky+ or, perhaps cigarettes/alcohol? Are these basic needs or luxuries? Do you 'need' such stuff to escape the problems of poverty or is the government too generous now? Discuss it with a partner or jot down your thoughts.
- 6) Please copy the paragraph starting 'The reports of..' which appears above Source 3.6 on p.47.

Worries about National Security

- 1) What did the recruitment for the Boer war reveal and what question did this problem raise?

2) What were the recommendations of the 1904 Reports and what conclusion does the textbook come to at the bottom of p.47 (keeping in mind your essay title on this section)? The point that Source 3.7 makes was very influential in the government's change of attitude towards helping the poor.

Concerns over National Efficiency.

- 1) What was hindering Britain's ability to compete against new industrial nations such as Germany?
- 2) Explain why labour exchanges were needed and what function did they have? Have you ever wondered how people found work before Job Centres existed?
- 3) Why did Germany, again, give our government something to think about?

Political advantage and New Liberalism

- 1) Who was now competing against the Liberals for the working class and how might the Liberals keep the working class vote?
- 2) Describe the difference between 'Old Liberal' thinking and 'New Liberal' thinking.
- 3) Why did some Liberals, who were wary of reform, support change?
- 4) Was 'social reform' an important policy vote winner in the 1906 Liberal election? So what did bring in 'a flood of social reforms'?

Extension work:

- Discuss with a partner the idea that the Liberal Government didn't bring in Reforms because of Booth's findings but perhaps because of his warning of a 'revolution'.

Why did the Liberal Government take action against poverty? (contd.)

The Effect of Municipal Socialism

Before you start this section, take a few moments to consider and discuss with a partner, the extent to which our local (municipal) authority intervenes in our lives.

- 1) Make a clear (and in your own words as much as possible) definition of 'Municipal Socialism.
- 2) Why do you think it was that most programmes of social welfare appeared in the growing towns and cities? (Use your common sense here)
- 3) Write a short summary of the work of Liberal Joseph Chamberlain.
- 4) What types of services were improved and set up during this time of 'Municipal Socialism'?
- 5) How much of what the 'Unknown commentator' mentions in the blue box on p.50 still applies today? (Remember municipal just means local, as in local authority)
- 6) Copy the last short paragraph of p.50.

Concluding summing up

Write a paragraph which answers this question:

Why did the Liberal Government of 1906-1914 bring in social reforms?

Make sure you include as many reasons as you can find - not just what appears in this chapter - so have a look at resources in the department.

Extension Work

Have a look at the Activities on p.51.

Essay Practice

Read through the 'Essay Writing' section on pp. 51 - 54, then make a start on this essay. Your teacher will give you some help and it will be discussed in class. This essay should be a maximum of three sides, done in class and should be completed in 40 minutes. You will be given a date to hand it in and it will be marked according to SQA marking criteria.