

Chapter Title: What came between new liberalism and neoliberalism? Rethinking
Keynesianism, the welfare state and social democracy
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Book Title: The Neoliberal Age?
Book Subtitle: Britain since the 1970s
Book Editor(s): Aled Davies, Ben Jackson, Florence Sutcliffe-Braithwaite
Published by: UCL Press. (2021)
Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1smjwgq.9>

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What came between new liberalism and neoliberalism? Rethinking Keynesianism, the welfare state and social democracy

David Edgerton*

The *new neoliberalism* is an ugly neologism, but it captures a crucial problem with the term ‘neoliberalism’ and how it is understood in relation to British history. *Neoliberalism* is supposed, in most of the extensive literature on it, to appear very much later than, and to be different from, both liberalism and the British ‘new liberalism’ of the early twentieth century.¹ Furthermore, neoliberalism is thought to have followed something that succeeded new liberalism. Various terms are used to describe this post-new liberal and pre-neoliberal phase, usually said to date from 1945 to the late 1970s or early 1980s: they are usually Keynesianism, the welfare state and, in recent years, social democracy, often used in combination and defined circularly.² The usages of Keynesianism and welfare state clearly pre-date the advent of the common usage of neoliberalism. However, social democracy as a descriptor of a form of polity-economy-society seems only to have come into significant use among historians with the rising use of the term neoliberalism. Curiously, Keynesianism and the (Beveridgean) welfare state are, in a standard historiographical cliché, identified as direct descendants of new liberalism, while British social democracy is typically characterised as Keynesianism and the welfare state.³ In short, we are in a conceptual mess. In this chapter I hope to bring some clarity to these issues by enquiring into the meaning, scope and logical consistency of the concepts, their relationship with each other, and how well they map onto what we know of the history of the UK since 1945. I want to show that the terms

are not innocent, but that their influence and significance arise from the grip that very particular historiographical traditions have had on our understanding of twentieth-century British history.⁴

I suggest that the concepts Keynesianism, the welfare state and social democracy, along with related ones, are in practice unhelpful analytical terms which should be abandoned as general descriptors (though certainly not as narrower, well-specified technical terms). By implication, neoliberalism, which too often relies on a contrast with them, for this and other reasons, is also best dispensed with. I echo Daniel Wincott's critique of 'epochalism' in thinking about these issues.⁵ I also argue, with Jim Tomlinson, that the claims made for the usual chronologies of the welfare state and Keynesianism are misleading, especially but not only in that neither disappeared when neoliberalism, according to standard accounts of neoliberalism, replaced them: the concept of neoliberalism suspect for this reason alone.⁶ I also suggest that neoliberalism should not be used because, in all its common variants, it misses key elements of radical changes that have been visited on the UK since the 1980s.

These concepts appear to be well grounded and capable of being applied in serious theoretical and analytical work. Yet they have very particular or very general meanings, and changeable ones. Most are not actors' terms, but analysts', and many have shifted from being negative to positive descriptions, from aspirations to descriptions of reality. They are typically poorly defined, and while they refer to mere parts, they are often misleadingly made to stand for the whole. Keynesianism and welfare state, and now social democracy, are closely related to other concepts, which in itself lends them authority. Thus affluence, it is often suggested, was the result of Keynesianism and the welfare state. The post-war consensus and the post-war settlement are in both cases, historians suggest, mainly agreements about Keynesianism and the welfare state.⁷ But these concepts, far from being neutral descriptive and/or analytical terms, are in fact embodiments of very particular and strongly interdependent historiographical and ideological assumptions.

These terms are also thought to be powerful because they are (or in some cases are becoming) terms of art in the historiography of the post-war UK. But their claims to usefulness as general descriptions of economy, society and polity are not as historiographically secure as they seem.⁸ Their usage needs to be understood as the result of the dominance of a particular kind of social democratic historiography of post-war Britain, which tells that history in very particular ways, stressing Keynesianism and the welfare state, and seeing these as the products of what is seen as *the* creative force of the time – social democracy. But British historiography

could have been very different. In a blistering 1993 article, the sociologist W. G. Runciman asked the question: when, in the twentieth century, did the British capitalist mode of production change? He had no truck with terms such as Keynesianism or social democracy and their implied chronologies.⁹ He is clear that there was one huge change with permanent effects, which took place between 1915 and 1922 and involved the creation of the welfare state, a new corporate economy and large trade unions and the establishment of mass suffrage. By contrast, changes in 1945 and 1979 were trivial: he suggests that neither nationalisation nor privatisation made much difference and that the new mode of production established early in the century continued in existence. It is both a very necessary corrective and a reminder of how much of history is driven by arguments about chronology.¹⁰ His argument is not as wrong as it must appear to the student of British history. But in this chapter I also argue for breaks in 1945 and 1979, though not for the reasons most of their advocates suggest, or that Runciman considers.

Social democracy

Social democracy has long been a term of art on the left. As every socialist knows, before 1914 many Marxist parties styled themselves as Social Democratic parties (in Germany, Russia and the UK, for example), and since the First World War social democracy was the term for non-communist socialist parties, the most important of which, in terms of size, was the German Social Democratic Party (the SPD), and, after 1945, the British Labour Party. It was a term commonly used *critically* in reference to such parties by those further to the left, as in David Howell's *British Social Democracy*.¹¹ In the pages of *Marxism Today* in the 1980s the term was still used in this way by, for example, Stuart Hall.¹² If for the left it was a term of critique, it was also used positively by the right of the Labour Party, to distinguish itself from the left (which in response sometimes styled itself democratic socialist). The revisionists of the 1950s used it of themselves, and in 1981 a right-wing splinter group from Labour was called the Social Democratic Party.

While there is obvious authority for, and value in, labelling parties or fractions of parties as social democratic, it is not obvious that they ever created societies which ought to be so labelled. Eric Hobsbawm made, in passing, a crucial point. As he noted, '[t]he Soviet systems are the only ones which actually claimed to have established fully socialist economies and societies. To the best of my knowledge no social-democratic

government or party, however radical or long-lived, has ever made such a claim.¹³ I have no reason to challenge that conclusion. Certainly, it is implausible that the social democrats of Germany or France or Italy would ever make such a claim for their nation, given how rarely and/or how late Social Democrats achieved office compared with Christian Democrats or Gaullists. A Labour Party claim to have created a social democracy, given that Labour was in office for only roughly half the period between 1945 and 1979, would be only a little less unlikely.

However, a number of students of modern capitalism have used the term as a descriptor for a phase of capitalism. In 1981 Andrew Gamble used 'social democracy' to describe a common trend in 'most capitalist states' to have universal suffrage and increased public spending, while clearly remaining essentially capitalist, and consequently having a particular kind of politics.¹⁴ In his pioneering 1988 book on the politics of Thatcherism, Gamble used the term to cover most advanced Western economies, as the political and social superstructure which best accommodated Fordism. It was a richer definition than Keynesianism and welfare, to be sure.¹⁵ Jeffrey Frieden's 2007 history of capitalism sees social democracy as a means of saving capitalism from itself, starting in the 1930s with Scandinavian Social Democratic governments and the US New Deal, calling it a moderate anti-capitalism, which after 1945 was to be found even among European Christian Democrats, who extended the welfare state and intervened in industry.¹⁶ More recently, Branko Milanović has developed a three-period model of capitalism – classical, social democratic and liberal meritocratic – defined in terms of returns to capital and labour.¹⁷ Much less well defined, social democracy appears in work by Tony Judt. His collection of essays *Ill Fares the Land* uses the term repeatedly in the sense of a general Western European practice since 1945.¹⁸ It has to be said that his discussion is shot through with conflicting and changing, vague definitions.¹⁹ By contrast, his earlier *Postwar* uses the term, and sparingly, in the classical sense.²⁰ More recently Thomas Piketty has used the term for the period 1950–80 (its 'golden age'), covering countries ranging from Sweden to the US to Argentina, defining it as a period of low inequality and a large fiscal and social state (which, I note below, is not a workable definition).²¹

Among historians of the UK, the term social democracy was very rarely used to describe the nation as a whole but has been coming into limited use in the last decade. In 1991, Paul Addison wrote in a review in *Twentieth Century British History* that '[t]he rise and fall of Keynesian social democracy is one of the central problems of twentieth century British history'.²² Roger Middleton labelled the last and fourth part of a

1996 book ‘The rise and fall of Keynesian Social Democracy’.²³ But after around 2010 it became a little more common, including in *Twentieth Century British History*. There James Vernon wrote that ‘[t]he social democracy that my parents and I grew up with in Britain – where the state managed a mixed economy and sought to deliver full employment and universal forms of welfare – was shared in various forms across much of the world’.²⁴ In the same journal, others have since ‘complicated the “rise and decline” narrative of social democracy’ or written of the ‘transition from post-war welfarism and social democracy’ or ‘the social democracy of the post-1945 welfare state’.²⁵

Social democracy is defined in this recent literature in varying ways. James Vernon’s definition is intimately connected to the welfare state: the Beveridge report, he writes, ‘became the foundation of a new post-war social democratic settlement’, while recognising that social democracy was ‘compromised’ by anti-democratic tendencies, and differences in gender, class and race.²⁶ Others see it somewhat differently. Aled Davies argues for a post-war ‘social democratic economic policy’ of industrial modernisation, and a ‘social democratic political economy’.²⁷ He takes the Labour Party to have created, from 1945, a ‘social democratic state’ which lasted to the 1970s.²⁸ The aim was to ‘achieve the fundamental goal of a modern industrial economy in which export-led growth could resist national decline by overcoming the endemic deficit in the nation’s balance of payments; as well as providing stable, productive and well-paid employment for all’.²⁹ But here social democratic political economy is defined as the standard historians’ account of post-war economic policy – and nothing in the argument claims it is specifically social democratic. Guy Ortolano contrasts social democracy with market liberalism, as *co-existing tendencies* within the post-war UK, encouraging or opposing the extension of the state, specifically the welfare state, while recognising that there are those who see only a very weak social democracy in the post-war UK.³⁰ More concretely, in the case of housing he identifies social democracy with mixed private and public housing, addressing, therefore, the crucial importance of ownership in social democratic politics and aspirations. He notes and rejects the historiographical focus on the origins of market liberalism and the degeneration of social democracy, supporting the claims of Davies and Edgerton that social democracy (as a party and intellectual programme) remained, or even became, dynamic in the 1970s.³¹

Chronology is part of definition. British social democracy is usually dated from 1945 (or 1940) to 1979. For Andrew Gamble, ‘the war established social democracy in Britain’, specifically in 1940.³² However,

Vernon's textbook gives it a heterodox beginning in 1931 (when it was, oddly, a matter of protection, support for distressed areas, colonial trade and a state-managed economy), though established as common sense from 1945 (with a radically new welfare state, and a new imperialism), and argues it lasted into the 1970s.³³ By contrast, Scott Newton depicts a social democracy (though the definition is not clear) created by the Tories in the early 1960s, and which lasted until the Thatcher years.³⁴

It seems to me that using the term social democracy in this new, broad sense has not in fact generally brought much new to the table of British history (and I will suggest below what else it might bring). It has done little more than re-label the welfare state and Keynesianism, and some other aspects of economic policy, to contrast it with what came before and later. This is nevertheless problematic, for two key reasons.

The first is that it ignores traditions of historiography which would deny, for important reasons, the applicability not only of the term, but of the underlying meanings it now conveys. Some historians have long maintained that precisely because of the centrality of Keynesianism and Beveridgean welfare, the UK was not, and could not be, social democratic. Thus Patrick Joyce, writing recently, referred to the 'myth of social democracy'.³⁵ Historians of the left have, as Joyce does, long insisted on what might be called a new liberal continuity thesis. This argument emphasises the importance of Edwardian new liberal innovations to the post-war welfare state and notes the ways in which Keynesianism restrained modernising state intervention. Both Keynes and Beveridge are characterised as new liberals. The implicit claim, surely correct, is that social democracy must mean something other than Keynesianism and Beveridgean welfare.

The second point is more complex. It is that this usage of 'social democratic' does not recognise that the historiography which labels the post-war UK as Keynesian and a welfare state is a very particular one, dating from the 1960s, and which can itself be called social democratic, in the sense of Labour revisionist. These histories celebrated Keynesianism and the welfare state, linked them and told the story of twentieth-century British history as the triumph of these two elements after 1945. It was a history focused on the civil state which systematically excluded the Cold War, and the warfare state, and indeed the private sector, except under the distorting lens of decline. It sometimes feels as if by definition all change of any value was the work of social democrats or resulted in social democracy.³⁶ This work still defines for many historians what British history is, and the context in which sub-elements should be studied.³⁷ The evaluation may now be generally less positive than in the past, but the

key themes of broad historical understanding are (apart from empire) much the same.

A social democratic governmentality?

If social democratic historiography has its limitations, could the concept of social democracy help further illuminate British history? I believe so. We can ask, for example, what it would take to show that the UK could usefully be described as social democratic after 1945? We could ask, did it follow a social democratic foreign policy or defence policy? Interestingly, it is highly unlikely anyone has ever made this claim. Restricting the argument to the domestic sphere, we would need to show, I think, that the Labour Party, the Labour movement, developed and implemented a distinctively social democratic (rather than Keynesian or Beveridgean) method of economic and social calculation. Was there a social democratic governmentality?

Such a governmentality, or aspiration to it, is hard to find. One looks in vain (until the 1970s) for an elaborated set of arguments from the left for alternative ways of running the economy, except for making general arguments about planning and putting the interests of the nation first.³⁸ For example, the Labour Party made only minimal proposals for taking private industries into public ownership after the 1945 general election, and did not do so again until the early 1970s. It is interesting too how little attention is given in subsequent accounts to Labour policy for nationalised industries or to the significance for the power of property of the privatisations after 1979.³⁹

That said, there were huge transfers to the public sector in the late 1940s, giving the state enormous leverage in investment, in everything from public housing to electricity generation. Yet there was little discussion of these programmes, excepting perhaps housing, by the Labour Party and the left at least until the 1970s. There were no distinctive Labour criteria for nationalised industries, though they were nationalised on the basis that they should indeed be run on principles recognising their systemic national and perhaps class significance. Post-war governments produced criteria which merely aped the profit criteria for private firms, which often made nationalised industries unprofitable when they did what they were supposed to do – behave differently from a private enterprise.⁴⁰ This is not to say that nationalised industries and other state enterprises did not, in fact, operate to distinctly national and other criteria – they did, most notably in buying British and ignoring the costs of doing so; the point here

is that these crucial issues were not the subject of sustained analysis on the left. To put it another way, the Labour Party generally relied on state experts rather than on its own, including in economics. Indeed, it is crucial to understanding the nature of post-war expertise, including that associated with the public sector, not to assume that it was somehow social democratic in spirit, although it often is.

The exception that proves the rule is the post-Beveridge economics and sociology of the welfare state. There was a left tradition of investigation and policy prescription operating on assumptions about what was best for the nation, and which were aimed at correcting systematic inequalities created by capitalism. For example, in criticising the notion of the National Health Service (NHS) as a cost to the individual through taxation, and private medicine as a saving to the taxpayer, it was argued that both private and public medicine cost the nation money, and the issue was which system was more equitable and more efficient. Thus, the NHS, it was argued, was a cheap as well as equitable way of providing the nation with the health care it might otherwise provide itself by less equitable and more expensive private means. Similarly, a universal national state pension scheme of a generous kind might well be the most efficient from a national point of view. This was, indeed, the argument made by Labour welfare specialists in the late 1950s in arguing for a new National Superannuation scheme, one which rejected the key Beveridgean principle of the fixed contribution and benefit.⁴¹ The policy never came into practice, and it was only in the 1970s, with the State Earnings Related Pension Scheme (SERPS), that a limited version came (temporarily) into play in a world in which the private occupational pension now dominated. This and other measures radically (and, as it turned out, temporarily) increased the generosity of the welfare state in the 1970s.⁴² That transformation of the welfare state is barely known, but it is important to note its significance, and to understand that the reforms of the 1980s were in part restorations of the welfare state of the 1950s and early 1960s.⁴³ This argument is consonant with Richard Vinen's important claim that Thatcherism was in many ways a return to the consensus of the 1950s and 1960s, one broken by the left in the 1970s.⁴⁴ We need to ask, given Avner Offer's definition of social democracy as provision for life-cycle dependency by transfers through progressive taxation (rather than private savings through the market), whether even by this criterion the UK was ever social democratic.⁴⁵

After all, the National Superannuation scheme was decisively rejected by the Conservatives, who favoured the expansion of private pensions which grew dramatically. There was, in any case, always a

non-social democratic economics and sociology of welfare in play, for example doctors and others who continued to oppose the NHS, including health economists, through the 1950s into the 1960s and 1970s.⁴⁶ Furthermore, much of the application of efficiency thinking to the NHS was the sort of work study and operational research already in use in government and industry to reduce costs.⁴⁷

Another way of defining social democracy would be in terms of a systematic recognition of the existence of labour and capital, with mechanisms to ensure that the voices and interests of labour are represented, constraining the power of capital and increasing that of labour. To be sure, there was a good deal of tripartism after 1945, but of a limited kind, which was obviously, as was corporatism more generally, not necessarily social democratic in this sense at all. It was not until the 1970s that Labour intellectuals, trade unions and others proposed new practices, exemplified in plans for 'industrial democracy', the social contract and planning agreements, which might count as such.⁴⁸ In the British case it is rather striking that there was a change in the tone and nature of capital-labour relations, but that this seems mostly due to economic conditions rather than new governing practices. Differentials of income were very substantially reduced from the 1940s into the 1970s, though of course never anything like as much as social democrats wanted.⁴⁹

Another way of approaching the issue would be to look for measures designed to restrict the prerogatives of property. Keynes himself held that his theory had major implications for capital. If the rich were not needed to drive investment, then interest rates could and should be held low, which would lead to the euthanasia of the rentier, the functionless investor.⁵⁰ And indeed, the 1930s, the war and, importantly, the post-war years were periods of low real interest rates, and the distribution of wealth became more equal, until the 1980s. But it is equally notable that wealth taxes (as opposed to taxes on income from wealth) remained minimal, and that the state subsidised private ownership of some capital, notably in housing. The rentier was constrained but was not dead, and the social democratic politics of property were very much more moderate than Keynes' own.

What was Keynesian welfarism?

The British case is often taken as an exemplary one for Keynesianism and welfare and social democracy. But comparative assessment across

Western Europe suggests a variegated picture from which it is very difficult to conclude that the British case is indeed exemplary, or that such forms are in fact truly transnational, except at the most trivial level. Was Keynesianism, whatever it is taken to be, the norm across Western Europe (or 'the Western world') after 1945? Was the UK more, or less, Keynesian than the norm? What did that imply for state intervention? It is very hard to say. For welfare the story is much clearer. Comparatively speaking, within Western Europe, the UK was a low spender on welfare, in the 1950s and later too.⁵¹ Furthermore, most continental welfare states organised welfare on a different model from the UK. With regard to social democracy generally, it is tellingly completely unclear where the UK stands comparatively, though for some aspects, British social democracy is seen as comparatively weak (the institutionalisation of corporatism, the existence of a social democratic 'pillar', the authority of the trade unions), especially in comparison with Scandinavia.

Just as the comparative question had no easy answer, nor has the straightforward definitional question as to whether the post-war UK is usefully described as Keynesian or a welfare state. These seemingly self-explanatory terms, rich with meaning, are in fact very problematic, in terms of what they are understood to mean. It is unclear, once one looks carefully, when Keynesianism and welfarism can be deemed to have started or ended.⁵²

Implicit and explicit definitions of Keynesianism vary. Sometimes a very wide definition is used as a label for all economic policy, including nationalisation and sometimes even the welfare state. It has been suggested that Keynesianism even created the concept of a national economy. At other times Keynesianism is defined narrowly, as demand management, to argue that because policy was Keynesian in this sense it ignored 'the supply side' or did not lead to a 'developmental state'. There are good grounds for defining it narrowly, not least because Keynes, and most Keynesians, wanted macroeconomic intervention to make the liberal market economy work better, not to replace it. They had no brief for nationalisation or radical industrial policy. Even defined narrowly, Keynesianism is used misleadingly to suggest that managing the total level of demand in the economy was the way in which government managed to generate the historically unprecedented rates of economic growth (well over 2% GDP growth per annum on average) with historically low rates of unemployment, even though demand management was used mainly, as in the Second World War, to restrain inflation rather than to promote growth. It was more stop than go. The idea that Keynesians were inflationists, and those opposed to inflation were anti-Keynesian, is false.⁵³

The question of when Keynesianism started is not straightforward. Although many have been tempted by the idea that the British Second World War economy was run on Keynesian lines, that is to misunderstand it. Indeed, it has been plausibly argued that Keynesianism represents a discontinuity with wartime and immediate post-war practice and only becomes significant with the removal of controls from the very late 1940s.⁵⁴ Keynesianism, in this sense, was the policy of 1950s Tories, not 1940s Labour. But as will be noted below, even in the Conservative years, economic policy involved many different elements, many of which had nothing to do with Keynesianism.

The welfare state is similarly defined in varying ways.⁵⁵ In its application is taken to have been, for example, the principal cause for lifting the British people out of poverty, when the most likely cause was higher wages. It is also strongly associated with state spending as a whole, and a new phase in the history of such spending, even though what was most novel in British public spending in the 1940s and 1950s was high levels of warfare spending.

When did the welfare state begin? is a tellingly problematic question. It cannot be in the Second World War itself, since the war was fought with a pre-war welfare system. That system was very elaborate. It was a Beveridgean working-class welfare state created in the 1920s. It cannot thus be said to have started from 1945. What Beveridge did in the Second World War was to plan to extend the system to the whole population. Indeed, it remained based on the regressive national insurance system, a poll tax, and aiming for a subsistence level benefit (though the NHS was not). Social democratic experts on the social services like Richard Titmuss did not see the UK as a welfare state.⁵⁶ It could be argued that a new kind of welfare state was introduced not in the 1940s, but in the 1960s and especially the 1970s with the rejection of the Beveridgean flat-rate principle.

It is even doubtful if, as is often implied, Keynesianism or welfarism were at the centre of post-war politics, even of the Labour Party, or of the consensus. The economy was discussed in terms of exports and imports, and above all the difference between them – the balance of trade and of payments – as well as investment, planning and production, at least as much as in terms of budget deficits or surpluses. Welfare policy was not the main focus of politics or policy, even rhetorically, even for the Labour Party. The first time Labour had used the term ‘welfare state’ in a manifesto was in 1955. But this is what it said:

In order to strengthen our Welfare State still further and at the same time to play our part in assisting the under-developed areas of the

world, our own production must rise every year. Only a government prepared to plan the nation's resources can do this. Labour will ensure that the claims of investment and modernisation come first.⁵⁷

The Conservative manifesto of that year paired the welfare state with military expenditure:

In an armed Welfare State the demands on taxable resources cannot be light. This makes it all the more necessary that government, central and local, should be run economically. There are today over 50,000 fewer civil servants and four fewer Ministries than when we took over. Conservatives will persist in the drive for simpler and less expensive administration.⁵⁸

There were exceptions, notably the 1959 Labour manifesto, the work of the Gaitskellite social democratic revisionists, which was *uniquely* welfarist.

If the beginnings of the Keynesian welfare state are not as clear as the labelling implies, nor are the endings. Macroeconomic control of the economy hardly disappeared after 1979 – the rationale might have changed, but Keynesians are entitled to argue that the economy continued to behave in Keynesian ways. Keynesian policy instruments continued to be used into the 1990s and beyond, as Jim Tomlinson has eloquently argued.⁵⁹ In any case, the fiscal size of the state did not shrink to where it had been in, say, the 1930s. Indeed, it did not even shrink back to 1960s levels for very many years, and then only temporarily. In the case of welfare spending specifically, the picture is more dramatic – the proportion of GDP devoted to welfare increased from the 1970s to today. What did change, in the 1980s, was the generosity of the system to individuals, and radically so, returning the system to the post-war norm. The most obviously social democratic element of welfare, the NHS (state-owned, run by para-state employees [excepting general practitioners], providing universal services, funded by mildly progressive tax) very obviously expanded in the supposedly post-welfarist era, even if key elements would be undermined through trusts, private finance initiatives (PFI) and contracting out.

The point can be illustrated by looking again at Piketty's definitions of social democracy. He defines it as a period of reduced inequality, the golden age being 1950–80, *and* by high taxation and social spending, a large 'fiscal and social state'. For Piketty and for many others it seems obvious that the two definitions coincide chronologically. But as Piketty's

own figures show all too clearly, while inequality started to increase quite radically from around 1980, the fiscal and social state was usually stable in size in relation to GDP, and in many cases growing. In fact, for all his illustrative cases, including the UK, the fiscal state was larger in 2010 than in 1970.⁶⁰ His argument might be better put like this: in the period 1950–80, in many places, inequality fell as the fiscal and social state *expanded* rapidly. However, from 1980 inequality increased, with a stable or growing fiscal and social state. They are not coincident indicators. It is a serious mistake to believe that welfare systems were designed to reduce, or succeeded in reducing, inequality.

Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism is a term which should, I think, not be used. As well as being a catch-all critical term, and not usually an advocate's category, neoliberalism, by focusing attention on limited and often misconstrued aspects of the great transition of the 1980s, misunderstands those changes, and their extent, in important ways. Firstly, neoliberalism is commonly defined as post-Keynesianism and post-welfarism and post-social democracy, without appreciating the multiple weaknesses of such a definition. Secondly, it is also used in a host of other contradictory or at least very different ways. It is often taken to be a set of *ideas* – dating to the 1930s – arguing for relying on market mechanism, which were then applied from the 1980s onwards.⁶¹ Or, it is suggested, that neoliberalism involved the creation of a new, entrepreneurial *homo economicus*. In another version, neoliberalism is associated with the bureaucratism of the New Public Management. It is usually taken to be one thing, overlooking the differences between 'Austrian' thinking, and for example anti-Keynesian neoclassical liberal economics.⁶² This conceptual apparatus hardly does justice to changes which have taken place since the 1980s, globally or in the UK. Notably, these framings do not address the changing relative power of capital, property and labour since the 1970s.⁶³ Modern hypercapitalism (to use Piketty's term) is centrally a matter of rebalancing the world in favour of capital, rather than the product of a new entrepreneurship or the power of markets qua markets.

But there is a deeper conceptual and periodisation problem. In Michel Foucault's brilliant analysis, neoliberalism was both a post-Nazi phenomenon which arose in nations which had never been liberal, and a US-centred critique of the non-liberal New Deal, post-war welfarism and the Great Society programmes. For him neoliberalism was both German

'ordo-liberalism', which was influential in what was called the 'social market economy' of Germany from the 1950s, and in the US a new economics of work focused on the worker as entrepreneur.⁶⁴ All this in itself throws a huge spanner into the standard argument that the UK and Western Europe/the Western world were social democratic between say 1945 and the 1980s, and neoliberal after that.⁶⁵ There is, however, a another problem which Foucault's argument makes clear. For Foucault, neoliberalism was not centrally post-social democratic but rather post-non-liberal and post-nationalist. Indeed, a vital part of the Hayekian critique of socialism was that it was in fact nationalist. (It is worth noting that *Road to Serfdom* did not recognise any new liberalism – as Keith Tribe notes, Britain had, in Friedrich Hayek's view, been corrupted by German (nationalist) thought, not by anything that came from liberalism.)⁶⁶ A vital part of Austrian neoliberalism, as Quinn Slobodian's recent examination rightly stresses, is its sustained critique of economic nationalism.⁶⁷ Pushing for a cosmopolitan capitalism as opposed to a national (and a potentially democratic) capitalism was a central concern. There is an obvious case to be made that national protection increased in many places in the world after 1945, and that the first great moves to liberalisation (post-war West Germany excepted) came in the formerly very national protectionist (and not obviously social democratic) Southern Cone nations in the early 1970s.

A national economy

We need to ask, recalling Foucault and Slobodian, whether we might also cast post-war British history as a case of nationalism (perhaps with a social democratic twist) replacing liberalism and new liberalism, and this economic nationalism being replaced by a revitalised liberalism. It's a question which most histories of twentieth-century Britain would answer with a bemused, perhaps outraged: NO! For British nationalism, economic or any other kind, barely exists in the history books. But as I have argued elsewhere, we need to take it seriously, especially between 1945 and the 1970s.⁶⁸

I go further than the now-common argument that Keynesianism, and national accounting, constructed the national economy. The national economy was constituted primarily by economic barriers, sustained by nationalist and imperialist ideologies. Unfortunately, in the British case, this process, so familiar around the world, has been nearly invisible to British historians.⁶⁹ This is in part because it was not the result of a

political movement, nor was it associated with an intellectual, as Keynesianism obviously was. But it is also because a central argument of much left social democratic (and here the term is most definitely admissible) and Marxist political economy has been that British capitalism has been unusually liberal and cosmopolitan/imperial and therefore, crucially, not national enough.⁷⁰ The consequence was, in this account, that the British national productive economy was undermined. The state's interventions, it is argued in this view, were limited to macro-economic Keynesianism and welfarism. The problem was, in effect, that there was no real post-new-liberal moment at all.⁷¹ Some influential responses to Thatcherism certainly suggested it was a radical manifestation of a very long-standing aversion to national economic development in favour of cosmopolitan finance.⁷²

Contrary to this thesis, I have argued there was a British national economy with a developmental state. There is a case for seeing it start with the introduction of general tariffs and general imperial preference in 1931/2, but that is, I think, better seen as a shift to an imperial rather than a national economy. It might be thought, from the histories, that the Second World War economy was a national economy, but in many ways the UK became more dependent than ever on overseas supply, not least now from the US.⁷³ The year 1945 saw a real break, I argue, with the end of Lend-Lease and the sudden need for the national economy to export in order to import. Although the years from the 1940s were the peak of imperial trade, the rhetoric was now national, and efforts were made to reduce imperial trade as well. From the 1940s into the late 1960s the proportion of trade to GDP was pushed down, as imports were reduced.⁷⁴ It was also a period, contrary to what is usually implied, of net emigration, not immigration. National policies to promote exports, and restrict imports, had the consequence that the post-war UK was more industrialised than it had ever been in its history, with the highest ever proportions of output and employment accounted for by manufacturing. Conceptually, the economy was highly national in that the balance of payments was seen as a national profit and loss account.⁷⁵ This economic nationalism in the context of imperial preference was not the preferred outcome of either liberals or imperialists. Indeed, as Alan Milward showed, the elite wanted to get away from both imperial and national economics, but only succeeded in doing so in the 1970s.⁷⁶

The national economy also had a developmental state transforming the nationalised infrastructure of the nation. It took until the 1970s for modern trains, mines, electricity generation, post offices and telephone systems to be put in place, nearly all powered by nationally

made equipment. On top of that, a dynamic national private capitalism was created in part by state action – resulting in an economy growing at unprecedented and still unmatched rates. Apart from state provision of infrastructure and energy, and generic support for education, there was direct state investment, investment grants and the use of the tax system to direct economic activity, particularly in favour of manufacturing.

All this highlights that Keynesian new liberalism was hardly the only economic ideology in play after 1945 and makes the point that the technocrats of the post-war UK were not mainly, or even mostly, liberals or social democrats. Many were pursuing a conservative vision of British modernity. One needs to think only of the aeronautical engineers and the aircraft industry to establish the point, though it applies very much more broadly.⁷⁷ For example, what was social democratic about the experts promoting motorways and motorisation?⁷⁸

Thatcher's economy – another view

In this light it is significant and odd that British nationalism barely exists in the lexicon of British politics, except in relation to two important cases, Enoch Powell and Margaret Thatcher. But, as well as being nationalists, they were economic liberals who generally disdained economic nationalism. Powell certainly recognised British economic nationalism and its characteristic forms (for example the obsession with the balance of payments, and declinism). The Thatcher governments dismantled the remaining apparatus of economic nationalism, from the abolition of exchange controls to the promotion of the single market and myriad other initiatives, for example the welcoming of Japanese carmakers into the UK. The balance of payments, which went into historically massive deficits, not least in manufactures, was no longer a cause for concern. It ceased to be contentious to import coal. All this was hardly accidental.

Of course, the economic opening to the world was not the only aspect of Thatcherism, but it was decisive and sustained. However, Thatcherism also represented a rulers' revolt, a radical strengthening of the power of wealth, and the wealth of the powerful, and a new economic form where, for example, privatised infrastructure was a means of extracting profit on an unprecedented scale. As Brett Christophers shows, a new form of rentier capitalism of huge scope has emerged.⁷⁹ Not for nothing did Denis Healey call Thatcher 'la Pasionaria of privilege'.⁸⁰ Understanding the importance of the opening up to the world, and the new politics of property, helps make clear what Thatcherism was not.

Thatcherism did not transform the rate of growth of the British economy, nor did it unleash a radical new British entrepreneurialism, or indeed consumer sovereignty in a national market.⁸¹

Paradoxically the move to economic internationalism was made possible by previous state investment, by the success of the state, not by its failure. Thatcher inherited, uniquely in modern British history, a nation self-sufficient in food, an exporter of wheat and meat (a point not noted in social democratic or left histories). She also inherited a nation which was about to become, for the first time since 1939, a net exporter of energy. This epochal post-war transformation has barely registered in political discourse or the history books.⁸² The implications were extraordinary: the UK no longer needed to be a net exporter of manufactures. The post-war national reconstruction programme was crucial to Thatcher for a second reason. There was a mass of modern public capital that had not been there in 1950, or 1960, or even 1970. As well as the cases mentioned above, council houses, in their millions, now existed, ready to be sold in unprecedented quantities. Furthermore, the devastations to the productive economy caused by government policy were only sustainable because the government inherited a newly comprehensive and, by historical British standards, generous welfare state created in the 1970s. There was an extensive safety net onto which many millions could and did fall. The official number of unemployed rose to more than three million and stayed at that level for years. The number of people on invalidity and sickness benefit doubled between 1980 and 1993, to two million people.⁸³

Conclusion

That the Second World War or the late 1940s inaugurated Keynesianism and the welfare state and was therefore social democratic, and that this was superseded by a neoliberal era which was non- or even anti-Keynesian and which rolled back the welfare state, is a commonplace in British historiography. It rests on shaky foundations and is the result of, and has resulted in, an underpowered analysis of post-war history. Keynesianism, the welfare state and social democracy did exist, but not in ways or at times which justify any or all of them standing for the whole political-economic-social system. The conventional understanding of neoliberalism as the successor to this badly articulated social democracy is similarly limited and limiting, and the term probably should not be used at all.

Keynesianism, welfare state social democracy and neoliberalism are hardly the only keywords of modern British historiography which should be challenged. ‘New liberalism’, ‘the people’s budget’, ‘the war to end war’, ‘appeasement’, ‘Britain alone’, ‘people’s war’, ‘consensus’, ‘post-war settlement’, ‘affluence’, ‘stop-go’, ‘decline’, ‘Thatcherism’, ‘monetarism’ and, indeed, ‘empire’ are similarly open to challenge. They embody very particular analytical frames, but these are difficult to see because they are seen as British history itself. That is why there is a notable lack of debate between interpretations – where such debates have occurred they have largely been skirmishes over particular cases. One reason is that historiography overemphasises what has been visible in the public sphere and to the centre left.⁸⁴ While there are serious interpretative works on twentieth-century Britain which take distinct views, they are not the subject of extended debate as to their conclusions or their merits and are barely known to curricula.⁸⁵ They deserve to be. For the idea that the post-war UK was Keynesian and a welfare state is very much the product of historians’ imaginations; so too is the notion that it should be described as social democratic, and indeed that it should not.

Notes

- * I would like to record my deep appreciation for Patrick Joyce and Colin Gordon, organisers of the Foucault Life and Politics workshops, for providing the immensely stimulating context without which this paper would not have been written, as well as the organisers of the conference which has led to this book. I am also grateful to Aled Davies, Alex Hutton, Tom Kelsey, Kit Kowol, Gabriel Mesevage, Avner Offer, Richard Vinen and Jon Wilson for their comments and suggestions on drafts.
- 1 Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval, *The New Way of the World: On neoliberal society* (London, Verso, 2013), 46–7, makes the point that new liberalism and the later but overlapping *neoliberalism*, as ideas, were both committed to saving liberalism, but by different means – the first exemplified for them by Keynes, by increasing state intervention, the second by using the state to maximise the operation of markets. But while they insist on the difference between liberalism and neoliberalism, they have no account of what came between them historically – other than odd references to Fordism and welfare states and so on.
 - 2 Sometimes, however, *neoliberal* means simply a wide variety of liberalisms in play from 1945, as in Ben Jackson, ‘Currents of neo-liberalism: British political ideologies and the New Right, c.1955–1979’, *English Historical Review*, 131 (2016), 823–50.
 - 3 For a rich, not only British-focused, argument to this effect, see Ben Jackson, ‘Social democracy’ in Michael Freedon and Marc Stears (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013), 348–63.
 - 4 On which see Emily Robinson, *The Language of Progressive Politics in Modern Britain* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).
 - 5 Daniel Wincott, ‘The (golden) age of the welfare state: Interrogating a conventional wisdom’, *Public Administration*, 91 (2013), 806–22.
 - 6 Jim Tomlinson, *Managing the Economy, Managing the People: Narratives of economic life in Britain from Beveridge to Brexit* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017), 229–30.
 - 7 On affluence, see Stuart Middleton, ‘“Affluence” and the left in Britain, c.1958–1974’, *English Historical Review*, 129 (2014), 107–38; on consensus, see Richard Toye, ‘From “consensus” to

- “common ground”: The rhetoric of the postwar settlement and its collapse’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 48 (2013), 3–23.
- 8 For the neglect of the important British warfare state after 1945 in the literature, and how it was possible for historiography and the social sciences to so systematically neglect such a crucial and obviously significant part of the state, see David Edgerton, *Warfare State: Britain, 1920–1970* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005), especially chapter 7.
 - 9 Walter G. Runciman, ‘Has British capitalism changed since the First World War?’, *British Journal of Sociology*, 44 (1993), 53–67.
 - 10 Thanks to Daniel Wincott.
 - 11 David Howell, *British Social Democracy: A study in development and decay* (London, Croom Helm, 1976).
 - 12 Stuart Hall, ‘The great moving right show’, *Marxism Today* (January 1979), 14–20.
 - 13 Eric Hobsbawm, ‘Out of the ashes’, *Marxism Today* (April 1991), 19.
 - 14 Andrew Gamble, *Britain in Decline: Economic policy, political strategy and the British state* (London, Macmillan, 1981), 186–7. See p. 185 for its party political senses.
 - 15 Andrew Gamble, *The Free Economy and the Strong State: The politics of Thatcherism* (London, Macmillan, 1988). Thanks to Jon Wilson.
 - 16 Jeffrey A. Frieden, *Global Capitalism: Its rise and fall in the twentieth century* (New York, Norton, 2007), 229–50, 297–300. It is particularly interesting in noting that small countries, very exposed to world trade, could be among the most social democratic – he has in mind the Nordics.
 - 17 Branko Milanović, *Capitalism Alone* (Cambridge, MA, Belknap Press, 2019).
 - 18 Tony Judt, *Ill Fares the Land* (London, Penguin, 2010). An expansion of a lecture: Tony Judt, ‘What is living and what is dead in social democracy?’, *New York Review of Books* (17 December 2009).
 - 19 Dylan Riley, ‘Tony Judt: A cooler look’, *New Left Review* (September–October 2011).
 - 20 Tony Judt, *Postwar* (London, Penguin, 2005).
 - 21 Thomas Piketty, *Capital and Ideology* (Cambridge, MA, Belknap Press, 2020), 487–91. In the following pages Piketty does discuss in effect many other rich dimensions of social democracy but they are not included in the definition.
 - 22 Paul Addison, ‘The intellectual origins of the Keynesian revolution’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 2 (1991), 89–94.
 - 23 Roger Middleton, *Government versus the Market: The growth of the public sector, economic management and British economic performance c.1890–1979* (Cheltenham, Edward Elgar, 1996).
 - 24 For example James Vernon, ‘The local, the imperial and the global: Repositioning twentieth-century Britain and the brief life of its social democracy’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 21 (2010), 375–418, at 418: ‘I have suggested that the central historical problem in twentieth-century Britain was not the strange death of liberal England but the brief life of social democracy.’
 - 25 Gillian Murray, ‘Community business in Scotland: An alternative vision of “enterprise culture”, 1979–97’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 30 (2019), 585–606, at 586; Alistair Kefford, ‘Housing the citizen-consumer in post-war Britain: The Parker Morris Report, affluence and the even briefer life of social democracy’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 29 (2018), 225–58, at 226; and Tom Hulme, ‘Putting the city back into citizenship: Civics education and local government in Britain, 1918–45’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 26 (2015), 26–51 at 26.
 - 26 James Vernon, *Modern Britain: 1750 to the present* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2017), 372, 378–9.
 - 27 Aled Davies, *The City of London and Social Democracy: The political economy of finance in Britain 1959–1979* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017), 1.
 - 28 Davies, *The City of London*, 5.
 - 29 Davies, *The City of London*, 18.
 - 30 Guy Ortolano, *Thatcher’s Progress: From social democracy to market liberalism through an English New Town* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019), 17–19. He identifies a ‘broadly social democratic political culture’ (28); he refers to a deep ‘social democratic project’ identified with the welfare state (29). See also 33–4 where social democracy contains within it both consumerism and individualism.
 - 31 Ortolano, *Thatcher’s Progress*, 21, citing Davies, *City of London* and David Edgerton, *The Rise and Fall of the British Nation: A twentieth-century history* (London, Allen Lane, 2018).

- 32 Gamble, *Britain in Decline*, 103.
- 33 Vernon, *Modern Britain*, chapters 10 and 11.
- 34 Scott Newton, *The Reinvention of Britain 1960–2016: A political and economic history* (London, Routledge, 2017).
- 35 Patrick Joyce, *The State of Freedom: A social history of the British state since 1800* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013), 322 ff, *passim*.
- 36 For a critique of the surprisingly common assumption that most change in twentieth-century Britain came from progressive liberals or social democrats, see Edgerton, *Rise and Fall of the British Nation*.
- 37 See, for example, Peter Clarke, *Hope and Glory: Britain 1900–2000* (London, Penguin, 1996, 2004); Vernon, *Modern Britain*; and Pat Thane, *Divided Kingdom: A history of Britain, 1900 to the present* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2018).
- 38 See Edgerton, *Rise and Fall of the British Nation*.
- 39 Ortolano, *Thatcher's Progress*, is an exception as noted above.
- 40 Alec Nove, *Efficiency Criteria for Nationalised Industries* (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1973).
- 41 See, for example, Sally Sheard, *The Passionate Economist: How Brian Abel-Smith shaped global health and social welfare* (Bristol, Policy Press, 2013).
- 42 Daniel Wincott, 'Images of welfare in law and society: The British welfare state in comparative perspective', *Journal of Law and Society*, 38 (2011), 343–75; and Wincott, '(Golden) age of the welfare state', 806–22.
- 43 For an attempt to sketch out these arguments, see Edgerton, *Rise and Fall of the British Nation*, 302–6, 460–2.
- 44 Richard Vinen, *Thatcher's Britain: The politics and social upheaval of the Thatcher era* (London, Simon & Schuster, 2013).
- 45 Avner Offer, 'The market turn: From social democracy to market liberalism', *Economic History Review*, 70 (2017), 1051–71.
- 46 Andrew Seaton, 'Against the "sacred cow": NHS opposition and the fellowship for freedom in medicine, 1948–72', *Twentieth Century British History*, 26 (2015), 424–49.
- 47 Stephen M. Davies, 'Promoting productivity in the National Health Service, 1950 to 1966', *Contemporary British History*, 31 (2017), 47–68.
- 48 Tomlinson, *Managing the Economy*, 69, also makes the point that the 1970s were the high point of social democracy. See also Edgerton, *Rise and Fall of the British Nation*, chapter 16.
- 49 But only if a qualifier to a term descriptive of the system – as in Milanović's 'social-democratic capitalism'.
- 50 See John Maynard Keynes, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (London, Macmillan, 1936), chapter 24, 'Concluding notes'. Thanks to Tom Kelsey. Ironically, through nationalisation Labour created purer rentiers than the old owners of nationalised industries. They exchanged shares for more secure government bonds.
- 51 José Harris, 'Enterprise and welfare states: A comparative perspective', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 40 (1990), 180
- 52 Wincott, '(Golden) age of the welfare state', 806–22.
- 53 E. H. H. Green, 'The Treasury resignations of 1958: A reconsideration', *Twentieth Century British History*, 11 (2000), 409–30.
- 54 Neil Rollings, "'The Reichstag method of governing'? The Attlee governments and permanent economic controls', in Helen Mercer and Neil Rollings (eds), *Labour Governments and Private Industry* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1992).
- 55 On the term 'welfare state', see Edgerton, *Warfare State*, 59–60; Klaus Jörn Petersen and Henrik Petersen, 'Confusion and divergence: Origins and meanings of the term "welfare state" in Germany and Britain, 1840–1940', *Journal of European Social Policy*, 23 (2013), 37–51; and Daniel Wincott, 'Original and imitated or elusive and limited? Towards a genealogy of the welfare state idea in Britain', in Daniel Béland and Klaus Petersen (eds), *Analysing Social Policy Concepts and Language: Comparative and transnational perspectives* (Bristol, Policy Press, 2014), 127–42.
- 56 See Richard Titmuss, *Essays on the 'Welfare State'* (London, Allen & Unwin, 1958).
- 57 Labour Party, *Forward with Labour: Labour's policy for the consideration of the nation* (1955).
- 58 Conservative Party, *United for Peace and Progress: The Conservative and Unionist Party's policy: A personal statement by the Prime Minister* (1955).
- 59 Jim Tomlinson, 'Tale of a death exaggerated: How Keynesian policies survived the 1970s', *Contemporary British History*, 21 (2007), 429–48.

- 60 Piketty, *Capital and Ideology*, 457.
- 61 One might add that many accounts of neoliberalism are inversions of the very limited and intellectualised stories the neoliberals told of themselves. Amy C. Offner, *Sorting Out the Mixed Economy: The rise and fall of welfare and developmental states in the Americas* (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2019), 283–5, 289.
- 62 David Edgerton and Kirsty Hughes, ‘The poverty of science: A critical analysis of scientific and industrial policy under Mrs Thatcher’, *Public Administration*, 67 (1989), 419–33.
- 63 Though some, such as David Harvey, define neoliberalism as a renewal of the power of capital, a global phenomenon emerging out of the crisis of capitalist accumulation of the 1970s, rather than merely the result of a change in ideas. David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005). See also Milanović, *Capitalism Alone*.
- 64 Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979*, trans. Graham Burchell (London, Routledge, 2008).
- 65 Of course, in reality, many, including Foucault, understood the distinctiveness of West Germany’s ‘social market economy’ and its ordo-liberalism, and indeed did not subscribe to this model at all.
- 66 See Keith Tribe, ‘Liberalism and neoliberalism in Britain, 1930–1980’, in Philip Mirowski and Dieter Plehwe (eds), *The Road from Mont Pèlerin: The making of the neoliberal thought collective* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2009). More generally Tribe notes that the British neoliberals of the 1940s and 1950s and subsequently had no grasp of economic realities.
- 67 Quinn Slobodian, *Globalists: The end of empire and the birth of neoliberalism* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2018).
- 68 Edgerton, *Rise and Fall of the British Nation*.
- 69 This is an argument made in Edgerton, *Rise and Fall of the British Nation*. The broader context of the spread of import substitution industrialisation (ISI) and the shrinkage of trade in post-colonial and Latin American states after 1945 is well described in Frieden, *Global Capitalism*, chapter 13.
- 70 Tom Nairn, ‘The left against Europe?’, *New Left Review* (September 1972); and Bob Rowthorn, ‘Imperialism in the seventies: Unity or rivalry?’, *New Left Review* (September 1971). For the general argument for the centrality of the nationalist critique to the left, see Edgerton, *Rise and Fall of the British Nation*, 385–94.
- 71 John Eatwell, *Whatever Happened to Britain? The economics of decline* (London, Duckworth, 1982), especially chapter 4 on the ‘Keynesian ideology’.
- 72 Eatwell, *Whatever Happened*, 142 and passim, is a good example of this argument. See also Perry Anderson, ‘The figures of descent’, *New Left Review* (January–February 1987), 20–77.
- 73 For the standard national view, see Angus Calder, *The People’s War: Britain 1939–1945* (London, Deutsch, 1969). For a critique, and the alternative non-national view, registering the internationalist and imperialist aspects, see David Edgerton, *Britain’s War Machine: Weapons, resources and experts in the Second World War* (London, Allen Lane, 2011).
- 74 The key work is George Brennan and Alan Milward, *Britain’s Place in the World: Import controls 1945–60* (London, Routledge, 2003).
- 75 On this, see Tomlinson, *Managing the Economy*, chapter 9.
- 76 Alan S. Milward, *The Rise and Fall of a National Strategy 1945–1963: The UK and the European Community, Volume 1* (London, Routledge, 2002).
- 77 See David Edgerton, *England and the Aeroplane: Militarism, modernity and machines* (London, Penguin, 1991, 2013); Edgerton, *Warfare State*; and Waqar S. H. Zaidi, ‘The Janus-face of techno-nationalism: Barnes Wallis and the “strength of England”’, *Technology and Culture*, 49 (2008), 62–88.
- 78 On which point see Otto Saumarez Smith, *Boom Cities: Architect-planners and the politics of radical urban renewal in 1960s Britain* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2019). Ortolano, *Thatcher’s Progress*, notes that while there is much to be said for the social democratic origins of Milton Keynes – not least the social democratic politics of the chair of the New Town, and its architect – the model was, as he shows, something like Los Angeles, accommodating and using the motor car, which suggests another set of ideologies, since the US and the motor car are not usually thought of as social democratic.
- 79 Brett Christophers, *Rentier Capitalism: Who owns the economy, and who pays for it?* (London, Verso, 2020).
- 80 House of Commons Debates, *Hansard* (22 January 1975), vol. 884, col. 1553. La Pasionaria was the nickname given to Dolores Ibárruri, a famous Spanish communist politician.

- 81 See Edgerton, *Rise and Fall of the British Nation*, for this perspective, and also more recent work focusing on wealth, rather than markets, notably Grace Blakeley, *Stolen: How to save the world from financialisation* (London, Repeater, 2019). See also the vital work on the 'foundational economy' and what has happened to it: Foundational Economy Collective, *Foundational Economy: The infrastructure of everyday life* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2018).
- 82 Bob Rowthorn and John Wells, *De-Industrialisation and Foreign Trade* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987), 100–1.
- 83 See, for example, Institute for Fiscal Studies, online resources at https://www.ifs.org.uk/tools_and_resources/fiscal_facts (accessed 21 June 2021), specifically Employment and Support Allowance, Incapacity Benefit, Invalidity Benefit and Sickness Benefit at https://www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/publications/ff/ib_2020.xlsx (accessed 24 January 2021).
- 84 On the question of what is visible and what is not, see Edgerton, *Rise and Fall of the British Nation*, xxxvi–xxxvii.
- 85 For a discussion of a number of such works, see Edgerton, *Rise and Fall of the British Nation*, 592–600. See also Robinson, *Language of Progressive Politics* and David Edgerton, 'The nationalisation of British history: Historians, nationalism and the myths of 1940', *English Historical Review*, 136 (2021), n.p.