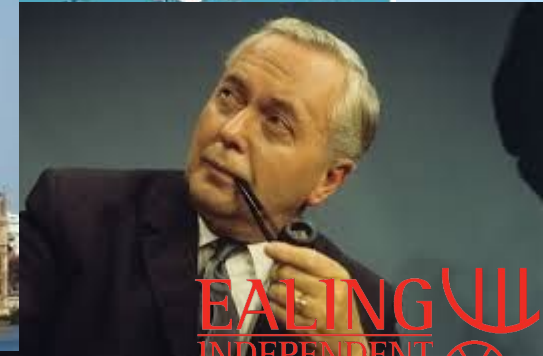




The Making of Modern Britain 1951-2007



The Labour Government 1945-1951



Why did Labour win in 1945?

- * Conservative Party did not understand the needs of ordinary people.
- * Churchill was unable to persuade people that he could be relied upon as a domestic politician.
- * People still remembered that the Conservatives were unable to manage the economy in the 1930s.
- * Conservatives' failed appeasement of Hitler.
- * The Labour party were seen as being better at post-war social and economic reconstruction.
- * The leading figures of the Labour Party had a lot of experience from the war.
- * British electoral system was in Labour's favour.
- * Voters overlooked Labour's own failings.

Social Security measures

- * National Insurance Act - everyone had to give a certain amount of money to cover unemployment, sickness, maternity expenses, retirement and widowhood.
- * Industrial Injury Act - Provided cover for work place accidents.
- * Free medical treatment - National Health Service (NHS)
- * Education Act
- * Family Allowance Act - 25p for every child given to the mother.

Problems with the NHS

- * Many of the jobs created were managerial and administrative positions.
- * The dandruff syndrome - free medical care meant that more people were wasting time and resources on trivial complaints.

Nationalisation Programme

- * Was the common ownership by the means of production, distribution and exchange - basically government control.
- * Government began to take control over fuel and power industries, iron and steel and transport systems such as railways.
- * The government did this because they believed it would bring safety, productivity and efficiency to the nation.

Keynesianism

- * Was the belief that economic depression can be avoided if certain steps were done.
- * John Keynes who first thought of it - he believed that it was the fall in demand of manufactured products that caused industrial economies to fall into recession, therefore the demands need to be kept high.
- * To do this, the theory requires the government to be willing to run deficit budgets, even if that means borrowing money.

Disagreements over Foreign Policy

- * Some party members believed that Britain should follow the Soviet Union, Attlee disagreed.
- * Left wing Labour members were very socialist, so alliances with USA would reduce the chance of Britain becoming independent in international affairs.
- * However, right wing Labour members argued that the Soviets were dangerous and through the US, Britain can be sustained financially.

The Legacy of the Attlee government in 1951...

- *Welfare policies from the Beveridge Report.
- *Keynesianism and economic policies.
- *Education based on equal opportunities.
- *Foreign policies.
- *Imperial policies and granting independence.
- *"Greatest social revolution."