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Social Subjecthood? The inclusion of (post)colonial migrants in Dutch, French, and British welfare states, 1945-1970

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4. Post-war welfare states in the Netherlands, France and the United Kingdom

4.1. Introduction

In the post-war period, all industrialised countries increased their public and private social expenditure. However, the magnitude of this increase, as well as various structural features, like the “mix” between public and private provisions, the degree of central government involvement and the organisation of welfare have always differed from country to country.¹ The chapter therefore introduces the welfare state in each country case. Each section starts with brief historical analysis, which is intended neither to comprehensively document the entirety of the historical record, nor to engage functionalist assumptions according to which the history of any given case led inexorably to a given outcome. Recognising that institutions have changed in meaningful ways that affect their character and function, I set out to “trace the erratic and discontinuous process whereby the past became the present.”² Specifically, I focus on the histories of social assistance and social security and their ideological underpinnings.

4.2. The Dutch welfare state: a laggard?

4.2.1. Overview

The Dutch welfare state is complex compared to many other European systems, containing an array of individual regulations: some universal, others with specific target groups.³ Social security (*sociale verzekeringen*) plays a larger role in meeting citizen needs compared to social assistance (*sociale voorzieningen* or *bijstand*). Around 3/5th of expenditure on benefits and social security implementation is financed by premiums or contributions, with employers responsible for the majority of these contributions.⁴ Historically, social partners have played a major role in implementation. Social security is in turn split into national insurance (*volksverzekering*) and employee insurance (*werknemersverzekering*). National insurance schemes are intended for all residents of the Netherlands regardless of their employment status and provide solidaristic benefits that are independent of previous earnings. Employee insurance, meanwhile, is intended for salaried workers only and offers wage-related benefits.

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- 1 Oude Nijhuis, *Labor Divided in the Post-war European Welfare State: The Netherlands and the United Kingdom*.
 - 2 Garland, “What Is a “History of the Present”?: On Foucault’s Genealogies and Their Critical Preconditions,” 372.
 - 3 Marcel Hoogenboom, *Standenstrijd En Zekerheid: Een Geschiedenis van Oude Orde En Sociale Zorg* (Amersfoort: Drukkerij Wilco, 2004), 19.
 - 4 K.P Goudswaard, C.A de Kam, and C.G.M Sterks, *Sociale Zekerheid Op Het Breukvlak van Twee Eeuwen* (Alphen aan de Rijn: Samsom, 2000), 19.

Among other features, this combination of universal *and* earnings-based schemes has earned the Dutch system a classification as a hybrid of social-democratic and conservative regimes.⁵

A second characteristic of the Dutch system is its late emergence. For most of their history the Dutch relied largely on a system of poor relief organised into religious, charitable and municipal initiatives. Central government merely set rules, gathered information about poor relief, monitored local activities and occasionally offered subsidies (via municipalities).⁶ Organised religious interests, unions, employers and a cross-party coalition of conservative aristocrats all viewed state involvement with skepticism. Their resistance softened as industrialisation reached new heights at the end of the nineteenth century, as in other European countries. However, unlike in other European countries, the modern welfare state would need to wait almost another century for its big breakthrough. Employee insurance schemes were introduced in fits and starts. National insurance schemes did not emerge until after the Second World War. By that point, German workers had been covered by compulsory industrial accident and old-age insurance schemes for over half a century.

From its slow start, the Dutch made up for lost time in the 1960s by closing the remaining gaps quickly. Expansion happened during the leadership not of leftwing parties but of confessional-liberal coalitions.⁷ In 1956, among thirteen western European countries, only three devoted less of their GDP to social insurance spending than the Netherlands.⁸ Oude Nijhuis has described the Dutch system as a “vanguard among welfare states” for its accessible, cradle-to-grave system of care for all citizens.⁹

4.2.2. Poor boards and religious influence

During the Dutch Republic (1581-1795), which was a confederacy of seven different provinces, religious poor boards (*kerkelijke armbesturen*) in the Netherlands offered ‘indoor’ and ‘outdoor’ relief.¹⁰ The former refers to almshouses, orphanages, institutions or workhouses. Outdoor relief involves periodical cash transfers to a recipient’s home. In the Netherlands, religious boards were of Calvinist (Reformed Protestant), Lutheran, Catholic or Jewish denomination.¹¹ Private poor boards (*particuliere armbesturen*, also known as *bijzondere armenzorg*) administered by

5 Rik van Berkel and Willibrord de Graaf, “The Liberal Governance of a Non-Liberal Welfare State? The Case of the Netherlands,” in *The Governance of Active Welfare States in Europe*, ed Rik van Berkel, Willibrord de Graaf, and Tomáš Sirovátka, Work and Welfare in Europe (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2011), 132–52, https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230306714_7; Christian Albrekt Larsen, “The Institutional Logic of Welfare Attitudes: How Welfare Regimes Influence Public Support,” *Comparative Political Studies* 41, no 2 (February 2008): 145–68, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414006295234>; Gosta Esping-Andersen, *Social Foundations of Postindustrial Economies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

6 Henk Boels, “Van Statenbond Naar Eenheidsstaat: De Groei van Een Natie (1795-1880),” in *Duizend Jaar Openbaar Bestuur in Nederland*, ed Pieter Wagenaar, Toon Kerkhoff, and Mark Rutgers (Bussum: Uitgeverij Coutinho, 2011), 195.

7 Here, I follow Dennie Oude Nijhuis in using ‘confessional’ to signify that a political party or group is religiously affiliated, regardless of the religion to which it is affiliated.

8 Flora, cited in Oude Nijhuis, *Religion, Class and the Post-war Development of the Dutch Welfare State*, 76.

9 Oude Nijhuis, 19.

10 Marco H.D van Leeuwen, “Armenzorg 1800-1912: Erfenis van de Republiek,” in *Studies over Zekerheidsarrangementen Risico’s, Risicobestrijding En Verzekeringen in Nederland Vanaf de Middeleeuwen.*, ed J van Gerwen and Marco H.D van Leeuwen (Amsterdam: NEHA, 1998), 199.

11 Goudswaard, de Kam, and Sterks, *Sociale Zekerheid Op Het Breukvlak van Twee Eeuwen*, 116.

independent individuals operated alongside these religious boards. Both could eventually ask for subsidies from local (city-level) officials to support their operations.¹² Political affiliation was mostly local and organised into local (urban) communities.¹³

Early attempts at centralising this system coincided with the consolidation of the Dutch nation. In the late eighteenth century, dissidents joined forces with French Napoleonic armies to topple the Republic.¹⁴ During the French occupation that followed, fiscal and bureaucratic reforms expanded the role of the state. In 1795, state citizenship was instituted.¹⁵ After Napoleon's defeat, the brand-new Kingdom of the Netherlands¹⁶ maintained a central role for the state in the domain of poor relief. From 1814, all charities involved in poor relief were required to fill out surveys sent to them by central government.¹⁷ Additionally, each municipality was mandated to establish a *civic* poor board (*burgelijke armbestuur*), appointed by and financially accountable to the municipal council.¹⁸ A long tradition of subsidiarity vis-à-vis religious institutions, however, left its traces: neither benefit levels nor conditions for eligibility were standardised.¹⁹

A window of opportunity for welfare expansion opened and then closed in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1848, growing anxiety about public unrest prompted the redaction of a new Dutch constitution that would take power away from the king. Its author, the liberal²⁰ statesman Thorbecke included a provision according to which poor relief would become an object of state intervention.²¹ However, contemporaries viewed Thorbecke's attempts to transform this provision into legislation as falling "out of thin air."²² His reform stirred considerable opposition from religious authorities, who viewed social assistance as analogous to raising a child and refused to trust a secularising state with this responsibility.²³ Moreover, state-led assistance could financially threaten churches, who relied on donations made by members in search of salvation. Accordingly, an 1854 Poor Law (*Armenwet*) eventually only *enshrined*, rather than diminished (as Thorbecke had originally envisioned), the responsibility

12 Boels, "Van Statenbond Naar Eenheidsstaat: De Groei van Een Natie (1795-1880)," 72.

13 Mart Rutjes, "Useful Citizens Citizenship and Democracy in the Batavian Republic, 1795-1801," in *Useful Citizens Citizenship and Democracy in the Batavian Republic, 1795-1801* (Amsterdam University Press, 2015), 74, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9789048522415-008>.

14 Hoogenboom, *Standenstrijd En Zekerheid: Een Geschiedenis van Oude Orde En Sociale Zorg*, 54.

15 C. Rooijackers and J.F. Vroomans-de Greef, inventory of the archive of *Ministerie van Justitie: Algemene En Juridische Zaken (AJZ) van de Hoofdafdeling Vreemdelingenzaken En Grensbewaking*, 2.09.52, Nationaal Archief, The Hague, 1981, 7.

16 This territory included Belgium until 1830.

17 van Leeuwen, "Armenzorg 1912-1965: Van Centrum Naar Periferie," 545.

18 Annemarie van Geloven, "De Rol van de Burgerlijk Armbesturen in de Plaatselijke Armenzorg" (Brabants Historisch Informatie Centrum, 2017), <https://www.bhic.nl/ontdekken/verhalen/de-rol-van-de-burgerlijk-armbesturen-in-de-plaatselijke-armenzorg>.

19 van Leeuwen, "Armenzorg 1800-1912: Erfenis van de Republiek."

20 In Dutch politics, liberal refers to a loosely organised group of either secular or 'latitudinarian' - i.e with liberal standards of religious belief and conduct - individuals; see Rudy B Andeweg and Galen A Irwin, *Governance and Politics of the Netherlands*, 2nd ed (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 19.

21 Joost J. Dankers, "Thorbecke En de Armenwet van 1854. Armenzorg Tussen Staatsvermogen En Particulier Initiatief," in *Geschiedenis & Cultuur 18 Opstellen Ter Gelegenheid van Het Afscheid van Prof Dr H.W von Der Dunk* ('s Gravenhage: Staatsuitgeverij, 1990), 119.

22 Hoogenboom, *Standenstrijd En Zekerheid: Een Geschiedenis van Oude Orde En Sociale Zorg*, 57.

23 van Leeuwen, "Armenzorg 1800-1912: Erfenis van de Republiek," 279.

of charitable and religious institutions over welfare.²⁴ Benefit levels remained unspecified and, on the whole, inadequate; criteria for receiving benefits (as an individual) or municipal subsidies (as a board) opaque.²⁵ Additionally civic boards saw their room for manoeuvre restricted: they could only offer an absolute minimum level of assistance, and only if the beneficiary in question received no contributions whatsoever from religious (or private) institutions.²⁶

The character of welfare reflected the dominant influence of the church. Social assistance was profoundly entangled with moral doctrine. Some religious boards withheld assistance for prostitution, begging, crime, drunkenness, extramarital affairs, public fights, or failure to attend the service.²⁷ In Rotterdam, a religious board conditioned full assistance on church attendance. Beneficiaries would turn in a card signifying the date of their attendance and a signature. Without the card, a fraction of the benefit was withheld and deposited into a pot for clothing and church books, to be later distributed amongst recipients who *had* attended church.²⁸ Private and civic boards were also concerned with a potential recipient's moral conduct. This only increased with the introduction of the 'Elberfelder system,' a form of welfare originating from the German city of Elberfeld in the late nineteenth century according to which volunteer social workers conducted thorough investigations of the potential beneficiary, their family, their habits and their vices in order to determine eligibility.²⁹ If approved for assistance, visits continued.

4.2.3. Stagnation

Eventually the inability of the prevalent system to meet the demand for social assistance became clear.³⁰ In the 1870s, a fall in grain prices had pushed farmers to the cities in search of work, triggering widespread deprivation.³¹ At the same time, the cleavage between Calvinists and Catholics had narrowed, partly because liberalism had grown in popularity.³² For confessionals, the question was no longer *whether* there would be state involvement in social rights, but how to design it.³³ They largely agreed that the state should sanction initiatives agreed upon at local levels by the social partners.³⁴ When Calvinists and Catholics governed together for the first time, they passed laws forbidding child labour and establishing minimum working condition standards. In 1897, a progressive liberal cabinet carried on its predecessors' efforts

24 van Leeuwen, 283.

25 Oude Nijhuis, *Religion, Class and the Post-war Development of the Dutch Welfare State*.

26 J.F.L. Blankenberg, "De Armenwet 1912," *Onze Eeuw*, 1923, 31.

27 van Leeuwen, "Armenzorg 1800-1912: Erfenis van de Republiek."

28 van Leeuwen, 312.

29 Hoogenboom, *Standenstrijd En Zekerheid: Een Geschiedenis van Oude Orde En Sociale Zorg*, 99.

30 van der Meer, Raadschelders, and Kerkhoff, "Van Nachtwakersstaat Naar Waarborgstaat: Proliferatie En Vervlechting van Het Nederlandse Openbaar Bestuur in de Lange Twintigste Eeuw (1880-2005)," 267.

31 Hoogenboom, *Standenstrijd En Zekerheid: Een Geschiedenis van Oude Orde En Sociale Zorg*, 75.

32 This was in part due to the electoral weight of the middle class in a context where wealth determined voting rights. For more on this, see confessionals' response to Liberal efforts to secularise the public educational system in the 1870s. This was known as the 'schoolstrijd.' Kees van Kersbergen, "Religion and the Welfare State in the Netherlands," in *Religion, Class Coalitions, and Welfare States*, ed. Kees van Kersbergen and Philip Manow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 121.

33 Hoogenboom, *Standenstrijd En Zekerheid: Een Geschiedenis van Oude Orde En Sociale Zorg*, 23.

34 Coen Helderma, "De Hoge Raad van Arbeid, 1919-1940(-1950)," *Tijdschrift Voor Sociale En Economische Geschiedenis* 1, no 2 (2004): 51.

at social legislation. The most noteworthy act was a 1901 workplace accident insurance scheme (*Ongevallenwet*) in which employees were mandated to take out insurance for workplace accidents.³⁵ It was characterised by ‘dualistic’ implementation: the state, via a new agency called the National Insurance Bank (*Rijksverzekeringsbank*), would receive implementation power, but employers retained important discretion regarding the extent of risk they wanted to bear.³⁶ Hoogenboom considers the law a “prelude to the development of the welfare state” although it did maintain the dependency of employees on their employers.³⁷

Following these innovations, the development of the Dutch welfare state both in the realm of social assistance and social insurance ground to a virtual halt for the next decade.³⁸ Van Leeuwen calls the new 1912 Poor Law a law “standing with its back to the future.”³⁹ The law preserved the subsidiarity principle and explicitly rejected any formal right to relief. The law did introduce the “poor council” (*armenraad*),⁴⁰ a municipal-level institution representing members of different charities and intending to facilitate cooperation. However, participation in the council was mandatory only for civic poor boards, and many religious boards did not participate or even agree to share data.⁴¹ A department for the poor (*Afdeling Armwezen*) at the Ministry of the Interior carried out the functions of central government, which were limited to monitoring and oversight.⁴²

Social insurance fared similarly. In 1913, the progressive Calvinist minister Talma managed to pass legislation establishing insurance for sickness, disability and old-age.⁴³ Following these modest innovations, five Calvinist-led governments of the 1920s and 1930s consistently failed to make progress on the social insurance front.⁴⁴ Van Kersbergen notes that the dominant Calvinist party, the ARP (*Anti-Revolutionaire Partij*), had advocated vehemently for “sovereignty in one’s own circle,” an organisational structure in which responsibility over general social affairs was devolved to lower levels where autonomy ruled.⁴⁵ This philosophy was at odds with state involvement. Instead, the reigning cross-partisan concern of the 1920s and 1930s was *maladjustment* (in Dutch: *onmaatschappelijkheid*).

Despite its imprecise definition, the concept effectively birthed a new type of social work devoted to morally elevating citizens whose way of life was deemed “problematic” through intense supervision and etiquette instruction. These efforts at “social elevation” (*sociale verheffing*)⁴⁶ were consistent with the historical practice of offering ‘indoor’ poor

35 Abram de Swaan, *Zorg En de Staat: Welzijn, Onderwijs En Gezondheidszorg in Europa En de Verenigde Staten in de Nieuwe Tijd* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Bert Bakker, 1989).

36 Goudswaard, de Kam, and Sterks, *Sociale Zekerheid Op Het Breukvlak van Twee Eeuwen*, 116.

37 Hoogenboom, *Standenstrijd En Zekerheid: Een Geschiedenis van Oude Orde En Sociale Zorg*, 132.

38 Hoogenboom, 136.

39 van Leeuwen, “Armenzorg 1912-1965: Van Centrum Naar Periferie,” 521.

40 van Leeuwen, 523.

41 van Leeuwen, 524.

42 “BiZa/Armwezen, 1918-1947.”

43 Hoogenboom, *Standenstrijd En Zekerheid: Een Geschiedenis van Oude Orde En Sociale Zorg*, 160.

44 Oude Nijhuis, *Religion, Class and the Post-war Development of the Dutch Welfare State*, 24.

45 van Kersbergen, “Religion and the Welfare State in the Netherlands,” 125.

46 Jesse Frederik, *Waarom Ik Me Een Sociaaldemocraat Voel, Maar Nooit PvdA Heb Gestemd*, Den Uyl-Lezing, 2017, <https://decorrespondent.nl/7731/lees-en-luister-waarom-ik-me-een-sociaaldemocraat-voel-maar-nooit-pvda-heb-gestemd/465107002569-7a288df1>.

relief. The establishment of “re-education villages,” (*heropvoedingsdorpen*, *woonscholen*, or *gezinsoorden*) were exemplary. These were essentially neighbourhoods that functioned as live-in schools where the conduct of residents was closely supervised.⁴⁷ Some of these operated as extensions of religious schools: the Rudolph Foundation (*Rudolphstichting*), founded in 1927 by deacons of the *Gereformeerde Kerk*,⁴⁸ ran a live-in village for “neglected children” in De Glind, Gelderland.⁴⁹ These were not purely religious initiatives. In Amsterdam, local officials from the social democratic party⁵⁰ designed such neighbourhoods for entire families.⁵¹ At the Zeeburgerdorp in Amsterdam, families had to pay an allowance to live in the neighbourhood, into which entry was strictly controlled. Their belongings were disinfected upon arrival, and supervisors regularly checked if the women kept the house clean.⁵² Congruent with poor relief practices of the past, this assistance was punitive and stigmatising. A psychiatrist who worked at the Zeeburgerdorp classified its residents as “backwards,”⁵³ on account of their “utter lack of interest outside the narrowest circle of interests; in an inability to exercise foresight; in carelessness and lack of responsibility; in self-righteousness, mild stubbornness, and in slavishly following an ingrained routine.”⁵⁴

4.2.4. Van Rhijn and social security

Unlike in Britain or France, the Second World War represented only a modest break in social policy traditions. However, the war did increase policymakers’ ambition and contributed to a general belief in the malleability of social institutions.⁵⁵ After Germany invaded the Netherlands in May 1940, Queen Wilhelmina and the cabinet fled to London, where one year later, a committee under Beveridge’s leadership would begin to plan for collective life after the war. The Dutch cabinet-in-exile, led by the Calvinist Pieter Sjoerd Gerbrandy, engaged with similar questions and convened a committee in 1943 to improve the coherence and

47 This was a tradition that had nineteenth century roots. In 1818, the Society of Benevolence (*Maatschappij der Weldadigheid*) was founded by Johannes an der Bosch. It involved removing poor residents from urban areas and directing them towards designated areas in the Netherlands and Belgium. Residents of ‘colonies’ had to perform laborious agricultural work, and attend church and school in exchange for help becoming an independent farmer. Originally they were voluntary, but they served as a blueprint for punishment colonies to which relocation was mandatory for the delinquent poor. See “Maatschappij van weldadigheid,” Canon van Nederland, accessed March 21, 2023, <https://www.canonvannederland.nl/nl/drenthe/drenthe-vo/maatschappij-van-weldadigheid>.

48 In 1834 and 1880, some orthodox Protestants broke away from the Dutch Reformed Church (*Hervormde Kerk*), the main Protestant domination, and formed several *Gereformeerde* churches. In English, this also translates into ‘Reformed’ - so I follow Andeweg and Irwin, *Governance and Politics of the Netherlands*, 20 and use the Dutch term to avoid confusion.

49 “Rudolphstichting Bereidt Zich Voor Op Zilveren Feest,” *Nieuwe Leidsche Courant*, January 14, 1953, <https://leiden.courant.nu/issue/NLC/1953-01-14/edition/null/page/3>.

50 Social democratic interests were represented by the SDAP (*Sociaal-Democratische Arbeiderspartij*) from 1894 until 1946, at which point it merged with a liberal and a Christian social democratic party to form the PvdA (*Partij van de Arbeid*).

51 “Zeeburgerdorp” (Gemeente Amsterdam Stadsarchief, April 23, 2019), <https://www.amsterdam.nl/stadsarchief/stukken/verdwenen-amsterdam/zeeburgerdorp/>.

52 “Zeeburgerdorp.”

53 This is a translation of a Dutch word, *achterlijk*, which is also an offensive term for a learning disability.

54 Frederik, *Waarom Ik Me Een Sociaaldemocraat Voel, Maar Nooit PvdA Heb Gestemd*.

55 van der Meer, Raadschelders, and Kerkhoff, “Van Nachtwakersstaat Naar Waarborgstaat: Proliferatie En Vervlechting van Het Nederlandse Openbaar Bestuur in de Lange Twintigste Eeuw (1880-2005),” 267.

administration of the social security system system.⁵⁶ Drawing similar conclusions as Beveridge had, the ‘Van Rhijn’ committee would eventually advocate for a solidaristic state-administered social system, in which the entire population would be covered equally but contribution levels would vary according to income.⁵⁷

Van Rhijn’s universalist vision was discarded almost immediately after his commission published its report in 1945.⁵⁸ This was somewhat surprising, since the first elections after the war had ushered in a change of political leadership to a ‘Roman-red’ coalition between Catholics and Labour that should have been more sympathetic to state-led social assistance than its Calvinist predecessors.⁵⁹ This coalition would govern from 1946 to 1958, under the Catholic leadership for two brief years with Louis Beel and Labour leadership with Willem Drees for the remaining ten.⁶⁰ Strange bedfellows at first glance, both Catholic and Labour eyed the working-class vote.⁶¹ Compared to Calvinists, van Kersbergen argues that Catholics could formulate state intervention in a positive sense, as an expression of the state’s duty to assist the needy.⁶²

However, ultimately, conflict over implementation of a new social insurance system prevailed. The contradictory ambitions to both preserve the character of the system as insurance-based and bring vulnerable groups under its wing proved challenging.⁶³ The guided wage policy (*geleide loonpolitiek*), a cornerstone of a post-war package of Keynesian policies, posed an additional obstacle.⁶⁴ Under this policy, trade unions agreed to accept artificially low wages to make Dutch exports more competitive and promote full employment. The policy achieved its aims: the Dutch economy grew around 5 percent per year between 1950 and 1973.⁶⁵ The welfare state, however, had limited room to levy social insurance premiums, which would be taken out of workers’ pockets.

Although no major reforms of the Dutch welfare state took place under the first Roman-red coalitions, a handful of “emergency provisions” repaired a porous social safety net. Acts like these compensated workers for wage moderation and kept spending power high in the context of low wages. The most important stopgap was one of Drees’ most notable legacies: the 1947 Emergency Law on Old-Age Provisions (*Noodwet Ouderdomsvoorziening*).⁶⁶ This

56 Oude Nijhuis, *Religion, Class and the Post-war Development of the Dutch Welfare State*, 71.

57 Susanne Liesbeth Kuipers, “Cast in Concrete? The Institutional Dynamics of Belgian and Dutch Social Policy Reform” (Amsterdam, Leiden University, 2004), 149.

58 Oude Nijhuis, *Religion, Class and the Post-war Development of the Dutch Welfare State*, 71.

59 A month after liberation, Queen Wilhelmina had appointed an emergency cabinet, which took the reins up until elections could be held in May 1946.

60 Although the KVP emerged the winner of the 1948 elections, Beel failed to secure the support necessary to form a majority coalition. Only by offering the premiership to Labour did this become possible. The close friendship between Drees and Beel is one of the reasons cited for the longevity of the Roman-red cooperation. Bert van Nieuwenhuizen, *Willem Drees: Vernieuwer Voor*, in *En Na de Oorlog* (Utrecht: Aspekt B.V Uitgeverij, 2010), 49.

61 van Kersbergen, “Religion and the Welfare State in the Netherlands,” 133.

62 van Kersbergen, 131.

63 Oude Nijhuis, *Religion, Class and the Post-war Development of the Dutch Welfare State*, 76.

64 Andeweg and Irwin, *Governance and Politics of the Netherlands*, 237.

65 Rita Bhageloe-Datadin and Jurriën de Jong, “De Naoorlogse Economische Ontwikkeling van Nederland En Duitsland” (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2010), 221.

66 Hoogenboom, *Standenstrijd En Zekerheid: Een Geschiedenis van Oude Orde En Sociale Zorg*, 273.

was a tax-financed, means-tested programme which offered every Dutch citizen bar married women a benefit if they were age 65 or over and had an income below a certain threshold.⁶⁷ In 1949, an unemployment insurance act (to be implemented by social partners) entered into force (*Werkloosheidswet*). Like Talma's law, this was an employee insurance scheme, intended for salaried workers only, with benefit levels set in accordance with (previous) earnings. In 1952, a law re-organising social insurance administration transferred implementation of employee insurance schemes to works' councils.⁶⁸ Organised by industry, these were private organisations with responsibilities under public law.

The first national insurance scheme was the General Old Age Act (*Algemene Ouderdomswet*, AOW). National insurance schemes were intended for all residents (rather than just salaried workers), implemented by the Social Insurance Bank (*Sociale Verzekeringsbank*, SVB) and governed by the "solidarity principle," meaning equivalent benefit for everyone.⁶⁹ Signed on 31 May 1956 (Stb. 281) and entering into force on 1 January 1957, the AOW enjoyed cross-party support in Parliament.⁷⁰ Under the AOW, all persons above 65, irregardless of "status, income, or wealth" were entitled to an old-age pension.⁷¹ It was redistributive in the sense that it was financed on a pay-as-you-go basis by worker contributions,⁷² which were calculated based on earnings, but offered a flat-rate benefit set at around two times the level of the average manufacturing wage.⁷³ The AOW was complemented by a second national insurance scheme, the General Widows and Orphans Act (*Algemene weduwen- en wezenwet*, AWW), signed on 9 April 1959 (Stb. 139). Under the AWW, most widows and orphans received a benefit upon the death of their insured spouse or parent.

Besides social insurance (both national and employee), private insurance is important in the Dutch post-war context. By the late nineteenth century, trade unions had set up funds (*kassen*), to which union members contributed and from which they could draw funds in the event of unemployment or sickness.⁷⁴ Meanwhile, life-insurance companies, which had historically been small, rural, and behind the times on actuarial technologies (like the use of mortality rates and premiums) began to grow in size and shrink in number.⁷⁵ Unlike social

67 "Sociale Regelingen Door de Jaren Heen," Sociale Verzekeringsbank, accessed March 16, 2023, <https://www.svb.nl/nl/over-de-svb/wie-zijn-we/geschiedenis-sociale-regelingen>.

68 Since 2002, they have been implemented by the Employee Insurance Agency (UWV, Uitvoeringsinstituut Werknemersverzekeringen) Goudswaard, de Kam, and Sterks, *Sociale Zekerheid Op Het Breukvlak van Twee Eeuwen*, 117.

69 Goudswaard, de Kam, and Sterks, 31.

70 van Nieuwenhuizen, *Willem Drees: Vernieuwer Voor, in En Na de Oorlog*, 30.

71 K.P. Comanje et al., *Two Centuries of Solidarity: German, Belgian and Dutch Social Health Insurance, 1770-2008* (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2009).

72 Since 2002, tax revenues have filled in the deficits.

73 In the Netherlands, the AOW constitutes just one of the three pillars which assure retirees of old-age insurance. The others are occupational pensions, which are financed by capital funding, and private insurance that individuals take out on their own accord. Oude Nijhuis, *Religion, Class and the Post-war Development of the Dutch Welfare State*.

74 Leon van Damme, "Werkloosheidsregelingen in Nederland: Een Parlementaire Geschiedenis" (Arnhem, Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, 2021), 12, <https://repository.ubn.ru.nl/bitstream/handle/2066/239433/239433.pdf>.

75 Nationale-Nederlanden, "De Geschiedenis van NN Group," n.d., <https://www.nn.nl/Over-NationaleNederlanden/Wie-zijn-wij/Onze-geschiedenis/Historische-collectie.htm>.

insurance, private insurance is not mandatory, and is usually financed more with the principle of equivalence rather than solidarity, meaning that the relationship between contributions and benefits is usually stricter than with social insurance schemes.⁷⁶

4.2.5. Ongoing municipal involvement and a new Ministry

Throughout the mid-twentieth century, expenditure on social insurance in the Netherlands steadily but surely surpassed expenditure on poor relief.⁷⁷ However, social assistance persisted and changed form. On paper, it remained governed by the subsidiarity principle of the 1854 and 1912 Poor Laws. In practice, however, prior to the Second World War, municipalities had gradually increased their remit vis-à-vis religious poor boards. Many had dissolved their civic poor boards and turned (the oversight of) poor relief into a normal municipal service whose form evolved in sophistication over time.⁷⁸ For example, in 1922, Rotterdam dissolved its poor council (*Armenraad*) and in 1943 renamed it the Municipal Service for Social Affairs (*Gemeentelijke Dienst voor Sociale Zaken*).⁷⁹ This transition was made easier by the fact that the government had placed responsibility for implementation of many of the new social insurance schemes with municipalities, and not with civic poor boards.⁸⁰

That said, religious charities remained important. They had been active throughout German occupation, with the church performing a critical unifying function.⁸¹ Moreover, contemporaries interpreted the lawlessness of the occupation as having corrupted Dutch morals, heightening the perceived relevance of religion.⁸² Concern with family values animated social life: in an early post-war address to the nation, the Queen stressed the importance of preventing divorce in the same breath as keeping the empire intact.⁸³ At issue, however, was the fact that churches lacked sufficient financial resources to meet the needs of a war-torn population.⁸⁴ Therefore, from 1954 onward, the churches would distribute financial assistance and monitor its use, but the municipality would pay for it.⁸⁵ Central government, for its part, offered subsidies to municipalities for this purpose but continued to shy away from responsibility for citizen welfare. One exception was assistance to war victims. In 1945, the Ministry of Interior set up a Central Bureau for the Care of War Victims (*Centraal Bureau Verzorging Oorlogsslachtoffers*, CBVO).⁸⁶ In 1947, this department merged with another to become the department of Social Care (*Maatschappelijke Zorg*). This department remained in

76 Goudswaard, de Kam, and Sterks, *Sociale Zekerheid Op Het Breukvlak van Twee Eeuwen*, 106..

77 Goedhart in van Leeuwen, "Armenzorg 1912-1965: Van Centrum Naar Periferie," 539.

78 van Leeuwen, 527.

79 Stadsarchief Rotterdam, "Archief van de Gemeentelijke Dienst Voor Sociale Zaken, Vanaf 1965 Gemeentelijke Sociale Dienst," October 9, 2021, <https://stadsarchief.rotterdam.nl/zoek-en-ontdek/archieven/zoekresultaat-archieven/?mivast=184&mizig=210&miadt=184&miview=inv2&milang=nl&micode=1402&minr=43315813&miaet=1inv3t1>.

80 van Leeuwen, "Armenzorg 1912-1965: Van Centrum Naar Periferie," 527.

81 van Leeuwen, 535.

82 NL-HaNA-2.21.257-1, van Lier, "Review of the Press," November 1, 1945.

83 NL-HaNA-2.21.257-1, "Review of the Press," July 29, 1946.

84 van Leeuwen, "Armenzorg 1912-1965: Van Centrum Naar Periferie," p.536.

85 van Leeuwen, p.536.

86 Inventory of the archives of *Het Centraal Bureau Verzorging Oorlogsslachtoffers En de Rijksdienst Voor Maatschappelijke Zorg, 1945-1949*, 2.04.48.14, Nationaal Archief, Den Haag. 1986.

tact until the Ministry of Social Work (*Ministerie van Maatschappelijk Werk*) was founded in 1952 - the same year as the implementation of social insurance was re-organised - for political reasons.

Louis Beel, the Catholic statesman in charge of cabinet formation, needed a new ministry to more equally distribute ministerial posts among Catholics. Beel's choice to focus on social work symbolised the commitment of the Catholic Peoples' Party (*Katholieke Volkspartij*, KVP) to taking on a greater role in its direction.⁸⁷ Jones interprets this as an attempt to institutionalise the long-standing "civilising mission" of promoting social improvement.⁸⁸ Beel selected his friend and KVP colleague, Philip Werner, as the highest ranking civil servant (Secretary-General) of the new Ministry.⁸⁹ The ministry fell under Catholic leadership for almost its entire lifespan (1952-1965), first under Frans-Joseph van Thiel (1952-1956) and then Marga Klompé (1956-1963), the first female minister.⁹⁰ The new ministry oversaw assistance schemes that had fallen under the aforementioned department of Social Care, including assistance to war victims. It also assumed responsibility over the implementation and review of the 1912 Poor Law. The poor councils became 'social councils' and fell under its wings.⁹¹ Additionally, from its establishment the Ministry offered subsidies to civic and religious poor boards.⁹² These subsidies helped win the churches' approval for the effective abandonment of the subsidiarity principle exactly a century after it had been enshrined in the first Poor Law. Following the 1954 report from a committee on Poor Law replacement (*Staatscommissie Vervanging Armenwet*), municipalities would take charge of welfare transfers while churches would focus on 'immaterial' activities like social work and nursing homes.⁹³ The legacy of moral elevation that had animated re-education villages was obvious. For example, the elderly were said to find the curfew, set meal times, and need to ask for a permit to leave the premises of nursing homes "intolerable."⁹⁴ Social control was also achieved by continuing the tradition of conditioning benefit access on upholding religious values. Recipients of social care were expected to attend church and to avoid practices deemed immoral (like extramarital affairs or alcoholism) or wasteful (like keeping a pet or, apparently, listening to vinyl records).⁹⁵ In Catholic circles in particular, cleanliness (of home and soul) was considered important.⁹⁶

87 H. Libretto, inventory of the archives of *Ministerie van Maatschappelijk Werk, (1936) 1952-1965 (1970)*, 2.27.02, Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, 2019, 10.

88 Jones, "Tussen Onderdanen, Rijksgenoten En Nederlanders: Nederlandse Politici over Burgers Uit Oost En West En Nederland, 1945-2005," 173.

89 PDC, "Mr Ph.H.M (Philip) Werner," accessed April 3, 2023, https://www.parlement.com/id/vg09llzypqj/ph_h_m_philip_werner.

90 Klompé, an accomplished and highly regarded politician in her own right, had inherited a privileged take on these institutions; her father had been a member of a Roman Catholic poor board Mostert, *Marga Klompé 1912-1986: Een Biografie*, 37.

91 To this end, in Amsterdam, a poor council was established in Amsterdam in 1913 to unite different charitable institutions and improve poor relief. In 1939 the council was connected to 206 institutions. After the Second World War, the name changed to social councils, and its work was terminated in the second half of the 1960s.

92 van Leeuwen, "Armenzorg 1912-1965: Van Centrum Naar Periferie," p.536.

93 van Leeuwen, p.537.

94 van Leeuwen, p.559.

95 van Leeuwen, p.563.

96 Mostert, *Marga Klompé 1912-1986: Een Biografie*, 31.

Major reforms to social assistance would have to wait for Labour to leave government. In 1958 confessionals returned to power under Beel. This Catholic-led coalition oversaw the increase in national insurance benefits and two major legislative acts instilling the involvement of government in social assistance. In 1963, the General Child Benefit Act (*Algemene Kinderbijslagwet*, AKW) entered into force with clear aims of promoting natality as it guaranteed a per-child benefit for every child born after the third. The 1965 General Assistance Act (*Algemene Bijstandswet*, ABW), which has been called the “tailpiece” of the Dutch social system,⁹⁷ offered an income transfer equal to the social minimum for the entire citizenry. In the event of an income drop below the given threshold, all citizens in need would receive financial assistance. Financed by general tax revenue, the new law enshrined a right to social assistance for the first time in Dutch history. Municipal services were responsible for extending the financial assistance to which a claimant had a right via the ABW.⁹⁸

4.3. The French welfare state: work, family, fatherland

4.3.1. Overview

The modern French welfare state has been called an “uneasy compromise between Beveridgean goals and Bismarckian means.”⁹⁹ Since the Second World War, its aim has been to offer a comprehensive, universal regime characterised by administrative cohesion and rationalisation, à la Beveridge. Indeed, like their Dutch counterparts, the main civil servants responsible for envisioning a reformed French welfare state were London-based when they made their recommendations. However, the self-employed as well as well-paid salaried employees known as *cadres* were reluctant to give up autonomous insurance schemes that had developed in prior decades. The result, as codified in two ordinances of 1945, was an ambitious but highly fragmented, multi-tiered system of occupation-specific insurance schemes. Financed by wage-deducted contributions and offering wage-related benefits, the system is usually classified as a conservative regime type, with all the caveats that apply (see 3.2.2).¹⁰⁰

The legal cornerstone of the system is a “general social security regime” which directs a single contribution from each registered worker into funds administered by labour representatives. The funds are grouped into three different administrative levels, each corresponding to different type of benefit. Additionally, like the Dutch, the French privilege social security over social assistance as a means of meeting citizen needs.¹⁰¹ However, the French welfare state is more unified than its Dutch equivalent, possibly due to a long French tradition

97 Goudswaard, de Kam, and Sterks, *Sociale Zekerheid Op Het Breukvlak van Twee Eeuwen*, 35.

98 Stadsarchief Rotterdam, “Archief van de Gemeentelijke Dienst Voor Sociale Zaken, Vanaf 1965 Gemeentelijke Sociale Dienst.”

99 Bruno Palier, “The Dualizations of the French Welfare System,” in *A Long Goodbye to Bismarck? The Politics of Welfare Reform in Continental Europe* (Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 73–100, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt46n02d.7>.

100 Manow and Palier, “A Conservative Welfare State Regime without Christian Democracy?,” 146.

101 Bruno Palier, “Les Transformations Du Modèle Social Français Hérité de l’après-Guerre,” *Modern & Contemporary France* 16, no 4 (2008): 438.

of statism (étatisme). Nonetheless, the general social security regime sits alongside a number of complementary, pre-existing schemes.

A unique role is reserved for family and childcare policy. Indeed, for one observer, “the French welfare state is as much if not more about family than about social security.”¹⁰² A system of family allowances developed organically out of voluntary employer initiatives in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹⁰³ In 1945, after several partially successful attempts at state regulation of the funds that had emerged, reformers moved to integrate this system within the general social security regime. The newly named family allowance funds (*Caisses d’Allocations Familiales*) co-existed alongside other primary (local-level) funds of the social security system, but changed slightly in character. The Minister of Labour and Social Security gained an oversight function (albeit indirect).¹⁰⁴ Employers lost their influence over allowances as the administration of the funds was transferred to labour representatives.¹⁰⁵ From 1967, the principal institution in charge of implementation was the National Family Allowance Fund (*Caisse Nationale d’Allocations Familiales*, CNAF). State involvement in family life speaks to its broader concern with moral conduct and social order.

4.3.2. Providence, mutualism and sanitation

According to Pierre Laroque, who would later be considered its founding father, the French welfare state owes its origins to the tradition of *prévoyance libre*.¹⁰⁶ This refers to the voluntary adoption of protective insurance measures against the consequences of unforeseeable events, driven ostensibly by the virtues of providence, prudence and farsightedness. This term found its expression in 1750s France in spontaneous, local-level savings initiatives or mutual aid/relief societies launched by peasants, artisans, and merchants.¹⁰⁷ In 1818, Paris-based bankers founded the first *Caisse d’épargne*, a more institutionalised savings association that took the form of a public limited company authorized by King Louis XVIII. The fund redistributed voluntary grants from founders and directors alongside contributions by depositors, on the occurrence of specific events, like unemployment or sickness.¹⁰⁸

Local funds (*caisses*) then proliferated, modeled vaguely after the *Caisse d’Epargne*, but relatively diverse in institutional form. The redistributive capacity of the funds was initially

102 Philip Nord, “The Welfare State in France, 1870-1914,” *French Historical Studies* 18, no 3 (Spring 1994): 829.

103 Cicely Watson, “Population Policy in France: Family Allowances and Other Benefits I,” *Population Studies* 7, no 3 (March 1954): 265.

104 Cicely Watson, “Population Policy in France: Family Allowances and Other Benefits II,” *Population Studies* 8, no 1 (July 1954): 50.

105 Dutton, *Origins of the French Welfare State: The Struggle for Social Reform in France, 1914-1947*, 213.

106 Pierre Laroque, *La Sécurité Sociale de Pierre Laroque: Sélection d’articles, Conférences et Écrits (1932-1996) de Pierre Laroque* (Paris: Comité d’histoire de la sécurité sociale, 2020), 63.

107 Carole Christen-Lécuyer, “Histoire Des Caisses d’épargne En France 1818-1881 Une Étude Sociale: Thèse de Doctorat En Histoire Sous La Direction d’André Gueslin, Université Paris 7-Denis Diderot, 1040 F°., Soutenue Le 6 Novembre 2003 Devant Un Jury Composé de Jean-Pierre Chaline (Président), Francis Démier, André Gueslin, Yannick Marec, Bernard Vogler.” *Revue d’histoire Du XIXe Siècle*, no 28 (June 1, 2004), <https://doi.org/10.4000/rh19.681>; Laroque, *La Sécurité Sociale de Pierre Laroque: Sélection d’articles, Conférences et Écrits (1932-1996) de Pierre Laroque*, 63.

108 Christen-Lécuyer, “Histoire Des Caisses d’épargne En France 1818-1881 Une Étude Sociale”; Laroque, *La Sécurité Sociale de Pierre Laroque: Sélection d’articles, Conférences et Écrits (1932-1996) de Pierre Laroque*, 63.

limited partly because they lacked the trust of their depositors.¹⁰⁹ The state mitigated against mistrust by guaranteeing and administering the deposited funds, first via the treasury and then the *Caisse des dépôts* - the national development bank.¹¹⁰ With this backing, the volume of deposits grew rapidly, from 100 million fr in 1837 to 300 million fr by 1843.¹¹¹ In 1881, the first national savings bank was founded, retaining a private-public format.

Family allowances simultaneously took off in the private sector. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, employers in various sectors, including municipally owned public utilities, railways, civil service and textile firms, introduced children's allowances.¹¹² Although payments were meagre, employers were keen to "promote the reproduction of their labour force" whilst simultaneously keeping wages low to avoid inflationary pressure.¹¹³

State involvement in social assistance remained modest, although a series of laws were passed to govern, or oversee the governance of, pressing social issues. 1838 and 1851 legislation for the mentally and physically ill, respectively, spearheaded these efforts.¹¹⁴ An 1893 law offered free healthcare to the needy although the care was still provided by private physicians whom the state would reimburse.¹¹⁵ Nord locates part of the cause for this particular law in a general obsession of the republican movement in the 1860s with "hygiene."¹¹⁶ This in turn is partly explained by the fact that the Chamber of Deputies¹¹⁷ was stocked with "physician-legislators."¹¹⁸ In addition, the law obliged every commune to have an office for public assistance.¹¹⁹ However, in the early 1900s, a typical private charity in a city outspent municipal bodies charged with public assistance by the order of ten to fifteen.¹²⁰ Philanthropic efforts remained centre-stage. Republicans had long considered voluntary, bottom-up initiatives by unions, mutual societies or charities as a silver bullet for various social issues.¹²¹ These liberal and individual ideologies "limited what French political instincts expected of the state."¹²²

109 Christen-Lécuyer, 4; Laroque, 63.

110 Christen-Lécuyer, 5; Laroque, 63.

111 Michel Margairaz, "Les crises de l'épargne en France dans la seconde moitié du XIXe siècle La construction de la politique de prudence de la Caisse des dépôts et consignations," in *Crises financières, crises politiques en Europe dans le second XIXe siècle*, Publications d'histoire économique et sociale internationale (Genève: Librairie Droz, 2011), 3, <https://doi.org/10.3917/droz.aglan.2011.01.0121>.

112 Watson, "Population Policy in France: Family Allowances and Other Benefits I," 264.

113 Laura Levine Frader, *Breadwinners and Citizens: Gender in the Making of the French Social Model* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008), 4.

114 Laroque, *La Sécurité Sociale de Pierre Laroque: Sélection d'articles, Conférences et Écrits (1932-1996) de Pierre Laroque*, 64.

115 Nord, "The Welfare State in France, 1870-1914," 834.

116 Note that from the infamous French Revolution in 1798 until the late nineteenth century, French political taste was mostly divided between republicans on the left and monarchists on the right Nord, 829.

117 This was the lower house in the Third Republic (1875-1940). Note that after the French Revolution and the abolition of the monarchy, the classification of political systems has been organised into Republics. A change of Republic usually happens due to a change of the constitution.

118 Nord, "The Welfare State in France, 1870-1914," 833.

119 Nord, 822.

120 Smith, *The Two World Wars and Social Policy in France*, 1:128.

121 Nord, "The Welfare State in France, 1870-1914," 837.

122 Baldwin, *The Politics of Social Solidarity: Class Bases of the European Welfare State 1875-1975*, 102.

4.3.3. Moving toward social insurance

Legislation of the nineteenth century laid the floorboards for the modern French welfare state: based on occupational insurance schemes but profoundly concerned with moral conduct. After France lost to a newly unified Germany in 1871, it embarked on a social trajectory modelled after the German example though at a slower pace. Bismarckian Germany was a pioneer of *Sozialpolitik*, with national schemes of compulsory health, accident and old-age insurance dating back to the 1880s.¹²³ French legislators eventually followed suit, approving funding for veteran pensions, and free, universal primary education.¹²⁴ The latter was accomplished via the 1881-1882 “Ferry laws” (*lois Ferry*). Named after their chief advocate (Jules Ferry), these laws removed the influence of the Catholic Church from public school provision and cleared the way for the state to become involved in “moral education,” which was defined as “rooting in the souls of students ... those essential notions of human morality ... necessary to all civilised men.”¹²⁵

Other legislation focused on improving working conditions. An 1874 child labour law raised the minimum working age to twelve years and created a state inspectorate located at the newly established labour department (*Direction du travail*) of the Ministry of Commerce.¹²⁶ In 1898, a law of work accidents was passed, marking the first national insurance scheme.¹²⁷ In 1910, after a decade of discussions, the parliament adopted a law on workers’ and peasant pensions. However, the scheme was voluntary; workers could choose not to participate, and the benefits were of limited generosity compared to the Lloyd George plan in England of roughly the same time period (1908).¹²⁸ There was also at least one noteworthy development in the realm of private and voluntary social assistance: in 1890, a central office was created to mediate between charities and the state (*Office central des oeuvres de bienfaisance*), which had the net effect of promoting coordination among charitable organisations.¹²⁹

During the interwar period, state intervention increased. The French had suffered heavily during the First World War, with over a million soldiers killed, leaving hundreds of thousands of needy dependents.¹³⁰ Inflation was rampant, partly because France had borrowed heavily to finance the war without an accompanying increase in productive capacity. Given their sacrifice, French leaders rewarded the public with social benefits.¹³¹ Much expenditure took place at the local level, with departmental expenses increasing by 720 per cent between 1920 and 1940.¹³² Examples of spending items for state and voluntary associations included family allowances, subsidised public housing for large families, and subsidies designed for the postnatal care and

123 Nord, “The Welfare State in France, 1870-1914,” 821.

124 Smith, *The Two World Wars and Social Policy in France*, 127.

125 Lucien Jaume, “La laïcité selon Jules Ferry,” *Commentaire* Numéro155, no 3 (2016): 8, <https://doi.org/10.3917/comm.155.0591>.

126 Nord, “The Welfare State in France, 1870-1914,” 823.

127 Michel Laroque, “Préface,” in *La Sécurité Sociale de Pierre Laroque: Sélection d’articles, Conférences et Écrits (1932-1996) de Pierre Laroque*, by Pierre Laroque (Paris: Comité d’histoire de la sécurité sociale, 2020), 61–68.

128 Nord, “The Welfare State in France, 1870-1914,” 821.

129 Viguier, “Chapitre 2 L’assistance sociale délégitimée par la Sécurité sociale mais toujours indispensable,” 3.

130 Thomas R Christofferson and Michael S Christofferson, “France during World War II: From Defeat to Liberation,” in *France during World War II* (Fordham University Press, 2022), 2, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780823291595>.

131 Smith, *The Two World Wars and Social Policy in France*, 135.

132 Smith, 139.

education of young children.¹³³ These policies maintained an overall emphasis on natalism and reversing demographic decline. Indeed by 1920 the idea of children's allowances had "firmly taken root" in French society.¹³⁴ At the national level, important legislation passed in this time period. The first Family Allowance Bill of 1931 was passed unanimously, setting minimum standards but otherwise making very few changes to the voluntary system already in existence.¹³⁵ In general, this natalist emphasis constrained women's opportunities in the labour market, reinforcing their role as family carers instead. The Ministry of Labour updated its workplace accident laws and monitored the transition to an 8-hour day.¹³⁶ A 1928 social insurance bill established sickness, retirement and disability insurance, with supplemental benefits for maternity and death.¹³⁷ This would soon come in handy: although the Great Depression began in earnest at a later date in France than elsewhere (1931 compared to 1929), it lasted longer.¹³⁸ The government avoided devaluing its currency, harming the competitiveness of French exports. The ensuing pain suffered by the agricultural sector translated into a decline of the peasantry, a social change that sparked anxieties about departure from French tradition and even spiritual decay which would later serve as ammunition for the promises of renewal made by Vichy France.¹³⁹

4.3.4. Increasing expenditure in a divided nation

The Second World War engineered considerable rupture in French political life. Not only was France occupied, but it was divided into two zones. Moreover, up to three leaders laid claim to the legitimacy and authority of the French state at once. The chaos of this period had profound consequences for the social reform agenda of the post-war period.

France surrendered to Nazi forces in June 1940, when General Philippe Pétain, who had been promoted to the highest ranks of the French military after the First World War, opted to negotiate an armistice with Nazi Germany rather than continue fighting. The terms of peace including splitting metropolitan France in two parts, with two-thirds of the territory (including Paris and the entire Atlantic coast) handed over to the Germans and the southern part of the country becoming a client state under full French sovereignty.¹⁴⁰ Vichy, a "sleepy spa town" located in this southern part, eventually became the seat of Pétain's new government which replaced the Third Republic.¹⁴¹ Pétain promised and promoted national renewal under the mantra "Work, Family, Fatherland," replacing the revolutionary slogan of "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity."¹⁴² Although Pétain criticised the social legislation of the 1930s as decadent and ineffective, spending on highly pronatalist family and health policy actually increased

133 Smith, 137.

134 Watson, "Population Policy in France: Family Allowances and Other Benefits I," 265.

135 Watson, 267.

136 Smith, *The Two World Wars and Social Policy in France*, 129.

137 Smith, 138.

138 Christofferson and Christofferson, "France during World War II," 4.

139 Christofferson and Christofferson, 8.

140 Christofferson and Christofferson, 35.

141 Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years, 1940-1944* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 142.

142 Christofferson and Christofferson, "France during World War II," 38.

in Vichy France,¹⁴³ with the family considered the “essential cell” of the social order.¹⁴⁴ The number of families receiving benefits increased and state subsidies made bigger contributions to family allowance funds than they had previously.¹⁴⁵ Hand-in-hand with this emphasis on the family was a highly racialised conception of the French nation. The Vichy government passed a series of exclusionary and anti-Semitic laws, stripping 15,000 naturalised citizens (of which 6,000 Jews) of their French nationality, excluding them from the workforce and legalising the internment of Jewish people in foreign camps.¹⁴⁶

Meanwhile, General Charles de Gaulle led a minority of French into exile in London to continue the war from overseas.¹⁴⁷ De Gaulle had been one of the most adamant opponents of a Franco-German armistice.¹⁴⁸ In London, the British - sometimes somewhat begrudgingly - recognised him as “leader of the Free French,” offering financial and (some) material support in exchange for help fighting German forces.¹⁴⁹ De Gaulle’s ideological or political leanings were obscure, and he recruited followers from across the political spectrum.¹⁵⁰ Another set of French troops also fought on the side of the Allies - those under the leadership of Henri Giraud, an Algiers-based general. By the end of 1943, the two generals merged their efforts into a committee led by De Gaulle called the French Committee of National Liberation (*Comité Français de la Libération Nationale*, CFLN). Some half a million troops had now been recruited, more than half from the colonies. Ultimately, this was the most powerful and unified movement against Nazi occupation of any occupied power.¹⁵¹

One year later, the CFLN was replaced by the Provisional Government of the French Republic (*Gouvernement Provisoire de la République Française*, GPRF). The GPRF, which was led by De Gaulle for most of its lifespan, enjoyed exceptional legislative and executive powers. Its mandate was considerable: to govern liberated French territories, continue the war against the Axis powers and reconstruct transport, production and distribution infrastructure destroyed under German occupation.¹⁵² By the end of 1944, Pétain had fled to Germany, the Vichy regime had ended, and the US recognised the GPRF, with considerable military and economic resources at its behest, as the legitimate government of France.¹⁵³

The resumption of political life required institutional upgrading.. While the Vichy regime had been discredited, the Third Republic was accused of having permitted French defeat in

143 Smith, *The Two World Wars and Social Policy in France*, 1:139.

144 Jackson, *France: The Dark Years, 1940-1944*, 149.

145 Watson, “Population Policy in France: Family Allowances and Other Benefits I,” 283.

146 Christofferson and Christofferson, “France during World War II,” 104.

147 Christofferson and Christofferson, 34.

148 Jackson, *France: The Dark Years, 1940-1944*, 389.

149 Jackson, 390.

150 Jackson, 397.

151 Christofferson and Christofferson, “France during World War II,” 166.

152 Eric Jabbari, “The Genesis of the Laroque Plan (1944–1945),” in *Pierre Laroque and the Welfare State in Post-War France*, ed Eric Jabbari (Oxford University Press, 2012), 108, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199289639.003.0006>.

153 C M C., “The French Committee of National Liberation,” *Bulletin of International News* 21, no 12 (1944): 471.

1940.¹⁵⁴ Therefore, an (elected) Constituent Assembly was to establish new institutions.¹⁵⁵ The Constituent Assembly was elected on 21 October 1945. Its first constitutional draft, however, was rejected in a May 1946 referendum. Upon its rejection, the responsible assembly resigned.¹⁵⁶ A new Constituent Assembly was elected on 2 June 1945. The second constitutional draft was accepted on October 13, 1946, at which point the GPRF was dissolved and replaced by the first government of the Fourth Republic.

4.3.5. The Laroque Plan

Ambition for universal, Beveridgean social security among leaders of the French resistance ran high. With the political right in ill repute after Pétain, the path was cleared for a planned economy.¹⁵⁷ However, initially, the GPRF had no equivalent plan despite an abundance of reformist ambition and rhetoric among members of the Resistance.¹⁵⁸ This is surprising, as ostensibly “the chief concern of those seeking to re-establish French democracy was how to remould social relations in the direction of fairness and equality.”¹⁵⁹ Some argue that more pressing matters, like waging war itself, took precedence.¹⁶⁰ Additionally, information about the financial stability of the existing insurance system was scarce since the Vichy regime had not made it available.¹⁶¹ Either way, the difficulties facing the existing system of social insurance became quickly clear to the Ministry of Labour of the GPRF.

De Gaulle had chosen Alexandre Parodi as Minister of Labour. Parodi had served in the Ministry of Labour prior to the war until he was dismissed by the Vichy government in 1940. Member of the Council of State since 1930,¹⁶² Parodi was also a leading member of the Resistance, having co-founded a committee devoted to preparing the legislative agenda and judicial reforms for after the war.¹⁶³ He had a close personal relationship with De Gaulle.¹⁶⁴ Parodi appointed Laroque director of social insurance. Laroque’s principal interest was in replacing existing social legislation with a system of universal coverage.¹⁶⁵ He saw this as part of a broader policy package devoted to full employment and the promotion of public health.¹⁶⁶ Consistent with the idealism and drive of the French Resistance, it also served pragmatic ends, since, as Palmer points out, the French Communist Party was mobilising around 25 per cent of the popular vote in general elections.¹⁶⁷

154 Joachim E Goma-Thethet, “Les Élections à l’Assemblée Nationale Constituante de 1945 Dans La Circonscription Du Gabon-Moyen-Congo,” *Outre-Mers* tome 95, no 358–359 (2008): 230.

155 Goma-Thethet, 229.

156 Betts, *France and Decolonisation, 1900-1960*, 70.

157 Rosanvallon, cited in Smith, *The Two World Wars and Social Policy in France*, 1:139.

158 Jabbari, “The Genesis of the Laroque Plan (1944–1945),” 110.

159 Smith, *The Two World Wars and Social Policy in France*, 1:142.

160 Jabbari, “The Genesis of the Laroque Plan (1944–1945),” 110.

161 Jabbari, 110.

162 Jabbari, 111.

163 Diane de Bellescize, “Le Comité Général D’études De La Résistance,” *Revue d’histoire de La Deuxième Guerre Mondiale* 25, no 99 (1975): 1–24.

164 Jabbari, “The Genesis of the Laroque Plan (1944–1945),” 111.

165 Jabbari, 114.

166 Jabbari, 117.

167 Palier, “The Dualizations of the French Welfare System,” 74.

In 1944 mutual aid societies responsible for various *caisses* sent Parodi a note outlining the financial difficulties they faced.¹⁶⁸ A report from the Ministry of Labour echoed their concerns, pointing out that the link between contributions and benefits had been severed: for example, old age allowance and insurance benefits came from the same financial pot.¹⁶⁹ The report incentivised short-term measures designed to plug the gap in the system.¹⁷⁰ Convinced that more drastic reform was needed, the Ministry of Labour quickly got to work designing a plan for revamping the entire system. The lynchpin of the Laroque plan, as it would come to be known, was the *caisse unique*, which would collect all contributions and administer all benefits in a given geographic locality.¹⁷¹ Key also was the incorporation of other benefit schemes into a broad, umbrella regime, including family benefits and workplace accidents which were hitherto governed by distinct legislation.¹⁷² State sponsorship was minimal. In fact, the intention was to keep the system as “independent as possible.”¹⁷³ In truth the French state lacked sufficient resources to play any more central a role.¹⁷⁴

In the summer of 1945, the Ministry of Labour presented a modified version of the Laroque plan to the consultative assembly of the GPRF, which lacked formal legislative powers. On 11 July 1945, Alexandre Parodi went before the labour commission of the same body to present its rationale.¹⁷⁵ Support for the plan was highly divided, even among labour: the largest trade union confederation, the General Confederation of Labour (*Confédération générale du travail*, CGT), supported the government, while the French Confederation of Christian Workers (*Confédération française des travailleurs chrétiens*, CFTC) opposed it, likely in no small part because Catholic organisations already had established their own network of funds.¹⁷⁶ Existing mutual aid societies were similarly critical of administrative rationalisation. They had been providing contributory workers’ insurance to the industrial class for some time, and were not interested in seeing their power diminish.¹⁷⁷

Furthermore, Laroque was banking on the solidaristic sentiment of the middle class, which proved lacking. Their support was crucial as their premiums would no longer go merely toward those of their own standing who had fallen on hard times but to the “needy and indigent.”¹⁷⁸ However, executives and managers known as *cadres* according to a standard class designation (including senior managers, commercial executives, administrators)¹⁷⁹ - hesitated to relinquish

168 Jabbari, “The Genesis of the Laroque Plan (1944–1945),” 113.

169 Jabbari, 115.

170 Jabbari, 116.

171 Jabbari, 120.

172 Jabbari, 120.

173 Palier, “The Dualizations of the French Welfare System,” 75.

174 Baldwin, *The Politics of Social Solidarity: Class Bases of the European Welfare State 1875-1975*, 159.

175 Jabbari, “The Genesis of the Laroque Plan (1944–1945),” 124.

176 Jabbari, 126.

177 Baldwin, *The Politics of Social Solidarity: Class Bases of the European Welfare State 1875-1975*, 161.

178 Baldwin, 159.

179 This designation includes senior managers, commercial executives and administrators Olivier Godechot, Mirna Safi, and Matthew Soener, “The Intersection of Organizational Inequalities: How Gender, Migrant Status, and Class Inequality Relate to Each Other in French Workplaces,” May 1, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4740556>.

their autonomous insurance schemes built up in prior decades.¹⁸⁰ By the same token, the self-employed viewed contributing to such a system as an unnecessary fiscal burden.¹⁸¹ In addition, they would lose the right to affiliate with the fund of their choosing.¹⁸² Despite these concerns, the assembly voted their approval for their plan, paving the way for a new generation of social security legislation.

4.3.6. La Sécurité sociale

The legal foundations of the new regime were ultimately enshrined in two ordinances of October 4 and October 19, 1945. The ordinance of October 4 centralised the administration of benefit distribution. From then on, unified worker contributions would be directed into funds¹⁸³ at the local, regional and national level.¹⁸⁴ Funds at the local and regional level were self-administered, meaning run by councils composed mostly of representatives of organised labour. At the local level, primary funds (*caisses primaires*) handled health-related benefits and family allowance funds (*caisses d'allocations familiales*) were responsible for family allowances. Up one level, regional funds (*caisses régionales*) distributed benefits under all remaining programmes, including old-age insurance.¹⁸⁵ This insurance guaranteed registered workers a pension set at around 40 per cent of their average salary (reevaluated for inflation-related increases) over the last 10 years and payable at age 65. Finally, the National Fund for Social Security (*la Caisse nationale de sécurité sociale*, CNSS), the only public fund, exercised coordination, compensation and oversight functions. The ordinance of October 19 set the level of benefits and the scope of coverage. Combined, the system offered old-age, sickness, and workplace accident insurance.

There was some resistance to integrating family allowance funds into the general social security regime. For Parodi, they had become too chaotic. He found differences in benefit levels offered by different employers within the same sector too extreme and lamented that various funds had overlapping jurisdictions.¹⁸⁶ On the other hand, opponents of integration argued that family needs required special attention from family associations rather than councils made of labour representatives.¹⁸⁷ In the end, the law of October 4 represented a compromise: family allowance funds were distinct and retained their autonomy, compared to the primary funds at the same level. However, the Minister of Labour and Social Security, aided by the General Directorate of Social Security (*Direction Générale de la Sécurité Sociale*) at his Ministry, had the final say over the fate of social security and family allowance funds.

Although the ordinances ultimately enshrined Laroque's ideas, the resistance of previously insured workers left its mark. Not all workers fell under the general regime. Laroque would later lament that, if implemented half a century earlier, the system would have united all

180 Baldwin, *The Politics of Social Solidarity: Class Bases of the European Welfare State 1875-1975*, 158–59.

181 Baldwin, 158–59.

182 Jabbari, "The Genesis of the Laroque Plan (1944–1945)," 121.

183 Manow and Palier, "A Conservative Welfare State Regime without Christian Democracy?," 146.

184 Palier, *Gouverner La Sécurité Sociale*, 82.

185 Palier, 90.

186 Watson, "Population Policy in France: Family Allowances and Other Benefits II," 48.

187 Watson, 48.

workers without exception.¹⁸⁸ Instead, alongside the general regime was a special regime uniting existing public schemes for specific categories of workers like civil servants, railway workers and miners.¹⁸⁹ Many of these schemes already contained retirement provisions. In the domain of old-age insurance, *cadres* created a complementary regime in 1947, managed by the General Association of Retirement Schemes for Cadres (*Association générale des institutions de retraites des cadres*, AGIRC). Meanwhile, a 1948 law called for a system of separate pension systems for non-salaried/self-employed workers of artisanal, merchant, and liberal professions.¹⁹⁰ Smith argues that “the result was a welfare state that gave state sanction to existing social divisions.”¹⁹¹ One of the only exceptions to this fragmented picture was the National Solidarity Fund. Established in 1956, the National Solidarity Fund provided a supplementary, tax-funded minimum allowance for elderly French citizens without resources.¹⁹²

Social assistance did not disappear in this context, although it received much less attention both by scholars and by contemporaries, who observed that it was barely discussed except at local levels of government.¹⁹³ Viguier contends that social security had defeated it ideologically and financially.¹⁹⁴ Organisations who had been providing social assistance did not accept what they perceived as its *nationalisation*, language which landed with particular salience due to the nationalisation of different companies after Liberation.¹⁹⁵ In 1947, several charities, including *Le Secours Catholique* and the French Red Cross banded together in *l’Uniopss* (the National Interfederal Union of Private Sanitary and Social Organizations) to protest the incursion of the state into their terrain. *l’Uniopss* was relatively successful at returning at least some attention to social assistance. By the early 1950s, it was clear that social security had not covered a sufficient proportion of the population, as those dependent on public or private assistance had increased during the post-war period.¹⁹⁶ It cost some municipalities about half of their budget.¹⁹⁷

Accordingly, new legislation established a regulatory regime for social assistance, from then on to be called “social aid” in French (*l’aide sociale*).¹⁹⁸ In 1953, the law of November 29 was passed, and its provisions incorporated almost without modification into the 1958 Family and Social Assistance Code (*Le Code de la famille et de l’aide sociale*) following a decree of 1961.¹⁹⁹ The new laws upgraded the system of public assistance and created new institutions for handling claims. The main institution was the office for social assistance (*Le Bureau*

188 Laroque, *La Sécurité Sociale de Pierre Laroque: Sélection d’articles, Conférences et Écrits (1932-1996) de Pierre Laroque*, 74.

189 Laroque, 73.

190 Liberal professions usually referred to the self-employed working in intellectual domains, but including lawyers, doctors, architects Éric Jabbari, *Pierre Laroque and the Welfare State in Post-war France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

191 Smith, *The Two World Wars and Social Policy in France*, 1:144.

192 Albert Gazier, “Circulaire ministérielle du N° 85-SS” (July 27, 1956).

193 Maurice Thire, “L’aide sociale et le décret du 29 novembre 1953,” *La Revue Administrative* 7, no 41 (1954): 506–12.

194 Viguier, “Chapitre 2 L’assistance sociale délégitimée par la Sécurité sociale mais toujours indispensable.”

195 Viguier, 3.

196 Viguier, 6.

197 Viguier, 6.

198 Viguier, “Chapitre 2 L’assistance sociale délégitimée par la Sécurité sociale mais toujours indispensable.”

199 Pascal Berthet, “La Récupération Des Prestations d’aide Sociale,” *Journal Du Droit Des Jeunes* 2, no 212 (2002):

3.

d'aide sociale), which would conduct means-testing in a given commune in liaison with public and private organisations.²⁰⁰ It would then transmit claims to local admissions committees consisting mostly of civil servants appointed by the prefect. The state could command this kind of authority over private providers of social assistance because it was their main creditor. Charities' reliance on state finances had only increased over time: donations, their former lifeblood, had dried up as the bourgeoisie found themselves less well-off than they had been before the war.²⁰¹ In addition, medical innovations had increased the cost of medical care.

4.4. The British welfare state: from poor law to Beveridge

4.4.1. Overview

The British welfare state is given as one of the quintessential examples of a liberal regime, and often the only European²⁰² state included in this cluster.²⁰³ This classification is consistent with the substantial role the British system awards to means-tested, tax-financed social assistance, even if this was not the intention of its leading architect, the British India-born liberal economist William Beveridge. The history of social assistance in the UK is characterised by a long tradition of poor relief which was inextricable from local religious life. Existing scholarship has emphasised the punitive character of this poor relief, which is said to have instilled discipline in the working class. However, whereas the Netherlands did not overhaul its poor laws until 1965, British legislators had replaced poor law institutions by 1948. In addition, benefits under the act were more modest than Beveridge, an advocate of national minimum standards, had intended.

At the same time, the British regime represents the most unified and universal system of all three country cases here. The National Assistance Act and its precursor, the National Insurance Act of 1946, broke decisively with a fragmented system that had for centuries relied on poor relief as administered by parishes and, later, on friendly societies as managed by their members. The 1942 Beveridge Report, which represented the culmination of wartime efforts to imagine a new future for British welfare, and which was to serve as the blueprint for legislation passed under a Labour government in subsequent years, explicitly called for centralising and streamlining the various pre-existing services. Neither the National Insurance Act nor the National Assistance Act were targeted to a clientele of low-income state dependents, as would be expected from a liberal regime.²⁰⁴ Instead, both are resolutely universal, revealing at least one important similarity with social-democratic regimes.

200 Décret n°53-1186 du 29 novembre 1953, décret n°54-611 du 11 Juin 1954, 1016 § (1954), 4.

201 Viguier, "Chapitre 2 L'assistance sociale délégitimée par la Sécurité sociale mais toujours indispensable."

202 The question of whether Britain is European is a complex one Timothy Garton Ash, "Is Britain European?," *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 77, no 1 (2001): 1–13.

203 Pierson, *The New Politics of the Welfare State*.

204 Esping-Andersen, "The Three Political Economies of the Welfare State," 111.

4.4.2. Medieval history

Resting on a 400-year-old common law, the welfare system of England and Wales is the oldest continuous surviving legal system of its kind in Europe.²⁰⁵ In its various iterations, ‘poor law’ - a collection of different legislative acts dating back principally to the Elizabethan Poor Relief Act of 1601²⁰⁶ - reigned in England and Wales²⁰⁷ from the early seventeenth century until 1948. Poor law obliged parishes to collect local taxes called rates²⁰⁸ to support the poor. How this ‘poor rate’ would be used was the prerogative of volunteer overseers, who redistributed it among those could not work as an early form of relief.²⁰⁹ Although these overseers enjoyed discretion,²¹⁰ they were accountable to local officials known as ‘Justices of the Peace’²¹¹ who could overrule the overseers’ decisions.²¹² Thus, poor law was a national system supported by compulsory taxation at the local level.²¹³

Parochial responsibilities for poor relief reflected the broader architecture of governance at the time. Parishes and local governments held so much sway relative to central government that “the only agent of the central state whom the provincial citizen could regularly expect to encounter was the benign post office clerk.”²¹⁴ Belief systems around the potential moral harm of state interference helped shape the relative size of central government. Just like in the Dutch Republic, any interference of central government in personal welfare was thought to undermine the “independence, self-reliance and initiative” of the individual.²¹⁵

Historians have drawn attention to early expressions of what would later come to be known as welfare chauvinism in the British system. By the eighteenth and nineteenth century, the movement of a worker in England from one parochial jurisdiction to another was a frequent occurrence.²¹⁶ The question of which jurisdiction was responsible for which poor worker took centre-stage.²¹⁷ Ultimately, the Poor Relief Act of 1662 enshrined the responsibility of a parish over all the needy who had lived there for 40 days. In practice, parishes took this as permission to actively remove those inter-parish migrants who had not yet reached the 40-day threshold

205 Lorie Charlesworth, “Welfare’s Forgotten Past: A Socio-Legal History of the Poor Law,” *Amicus Curiae*, no 81 (Spring 2010): 16.

206 UK-LoNA-CO 859/124/2-National Insurance Bill-June 1944 “Memo C.M No 5: “Social Security in the Colonial Territories.”

207 From 1536 to 1707, the Kingdom of England included Wales. From the 1707 Act of Union onwards, this kingdom united with the Kingdom of Scotland to form the Kingdom of Great Britain. Scotland and Ireland have distinct welfare histories. Here we focus on the welfare history of England and Wales, since these were the precursor to welfare legislation of Great Britain.

208 Rates were local taxes, payable by all who owned or rented property.

209 Ray Cocks, “The Poor Law,” in *The Oxford History of the Laws of England*, vol XIII (Oxford University Press, 2010), 473, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199239757.001.0001>.

210 Feldman, “Migrants, Immigrants and Welfare from the Old Poor Law to the Welfare State,” 89.

211 These were Elizabethan England’s answer to the challenge of ensuring rule of law at local levels. Today this function is fulfilled by magistrates. Then, as now, it was a voluntary function. Unlike today, however, Justices of the Peace played a critical role in the administration of local government.

212 Cocks, “The Poor Law,” 474.

213 Feldman, “Migrants, Immigrants and Welfare from the Old Poor Law to the Welfare State,” 80.

214 Thane, cited in Julia Moses, *The First Modern Risk: Workplace Accidents and the Origins of European Social States*, 1st ed (Cambridge University Press, 2018), 22, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108657853>.

215 A.D.K Owen, “From Poor Law to Beveridge Report,” *Foreign Affairs* 21, no 4 (July 1943): 746.

216 Feldman, “Migrants, Immigrants and Welfare from the Old Poor Law to the Welfare State,” 80.

217 Feldman, 83.

back to their ‘parish of settlement.’²¹⁸ Up until 1795, it was also possible to remove someone preventatively, that is, on the “suspicion that at some time in the future they would apply for poor relief.”²¹⁹

With time, the impression grew that, despite an array of legislation, the poor were not adequately cared for. In 1795, the Speenhamland law was proposed, stipulating that parishes top up the wages of the poor with an allowance, the level of which would be set in accordance with the price of bread or other basic necessities.²²⁰ It amounted, in essence, to a minimum income for the poor regardless of their earnings.²²¹ Although never formally adopted, the Speenhamland law did become informal practice in several counties in the British countryside. Austro-Hungarian political economist Karl Polanyi argues that Speenhamland provided workers an informal “right to live,” buffering them from the violent throes of a competitive labour market.²²² Nonetheless, the system came under fire from its critics for distorting market prices and work incentives, as well as resulting in excessive costs for the middle and upper classes.

In the mid-nineteenth century, British welfare underwent dramatic reform, taking on a more punitive character that would leave a lasting imprint on subsequent attitudes to welfare. In 1834, a Poor Law amendment removed the buffer that Polanyi had mentioned. Widely regarded as a “calamity for the labouring poor,”²²³ the amendment required that the able-bodied poor commodify their skills by doing menial jobs, like picking oakum²²⁴ or breaking stones, in exchange for a right to be housed, clothed and fed in indoor relief houses or workhouses. Parishes could even send paupers to the colonies, although relatively few seem to have taken this step.²²⁵ Only the poor classified as ‘non able-bodied,’ which included the sick, the aged, children, and the mentally ill, could receive ‘outdoor relief,’ that is, financial assistance delivered to their homes.²²⁶ The amendment also created a central bureaucracy known as the Poor Law Board, with the task of monitoring local practice and promoting uniformity.²²⁷ These closely resemble the poor councils created by Dutch lawmakers some eighty years later.

Several scandals erupted after the harsh, prison-like conditions of workhouses emerged.²²⁸ For Charlesworth, the 1834 reform marks a critical juncture in the “pathologizing” of poverty and the trend of viewing the poor as a “problem to be contained, controlled and stigmatised”

218 Widows and deserted wives would find themselves removed to the parish of their husband’s birth; see Pat Thane, “Women and the Poor Law in Victorian and Edwardian England,” *History Workshop*, no 6 (Autumn 1978): 32 for more.

219 Feldman, “Migrants, Immigrants and Welfare from the Old Poor Law to the Welfare State,” 85.

220 Cocks, “The Poor Law,” 475.

221 Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*, 82.

222 Polanyi, 86.

223 Feldman, “Migrants, Immigrants and Welfare from the Old Poor Law to the Welfare State,” 91.

224 This was a common task given to prisoners sentenced to hard labour and involved twisting, rolling and pulling out the individual fibres of unmaking old rope so it could be reused in the shipping industry.

225 Zolberg in Freddy Foks, “Emigration State: Race, Citizenship and Settler Imperialism in Modern British History, c 1850–1972,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 35, no 2 (June 2022): 176, <https://doi.org/10.1111/johs.12366>.

226 Thane, “Women and the Poor Law in Victorian and Edwardian England.”

227 Feldman, “Migrants, Immigrants and Welfare from the Old Poor Law to the Welfare State.”

228 The National Archives, “1834 Poor Law,” 2014, <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/1834-poor-law/>.

rather than focusing on the rights of individuals to assistance.²²⁹ Indeed, the voluntary imprisonment associated with poor relief gave the ‘pauper’ a social status on par with that of a criminal.²³⁰ Charlesworth argues that this norm continues to influence the principles and practices of modern welfare provision.²³¹ Similarly, for Shilliam, although the poor law was presented as an instrument of “Christian benefaction,” it actually came to serve as a “legal device to discipline the working poor,” instilling industriousness, prudence and patriarchal values.²³² Of note, nonetheless, is the relatively inclusive character of welfare following the 1834 reform. One aim of the reformers had been to facilitate rural-urban migration and restore the free movement of labour, which they felt had been discouraged by settlement and removal laws; therefore, from 1834 on, urban authorities were forced to take responsibility for the welfare of their (inter-parish) migrant poor.²³³

4.4.3. Moving toward social insurance

By the end of the nineteenth century, the importance of poor law in the provision of welfare started to decline. Ever-expanding industrialisation destabilised the public’s confidence in the ability of local efforts to manage its associated social ills.²³⁴ Observations from the likes of Friedrich Engels, Thomas Carlyle and Charles Dickinson had brought extensive deprivation to the attention of the general public.²³⁵ Moreover, the evidence submitted to royal commissions had suggested that the poor were not nearly as “idle,” “improvident,” drunk and irresponsible as the disciplinary character of the 1834 poor law reform had suggested.²³⁶ This undermined its appeal.

Finally, the same period saw the proliferation of friendly societies, which closely resemble the French mutual aid organisations of the mid-eighteenth century. Running on insurance principles, friendly societies collected regular payments from their members who could receive a lump sum payment in the event of a specific occurrence, like illness or old age. Friendly societies may have taken off due to higher wages associated with new types of work, or due to a need for insurance and community in the context of rapid urbanisation.²³⁷ Either way, they were viewed as promoting desirable qualities in British workers by allowing them to be not just passive recipients of poor relief, but active agents of their own fate.²³⁸ Friendly societies laid the foundations for the development of social insurance.

Enjoying a comfortable majority in the House of Commons, Liberal governments at the end of the nineteenth century began to pass national legislation affecting the welfare of workers

229 Charlesworth, “Welfare’s Forgotten Past: A Socio-Legal History of the Poor Law,” 17.

230 Noel Whiteside, “The Beveridge Report and Its Implementation: a Revolutionary Project?,” *Histoire@Politique* 24, no 3 (2014): 2, <https://doi.org/10.3917/hp.024.0024>.

231 Charlesworth, “Welfare’s Forgotten Past: A Socio-Legal History of the Poor Law,” 20.

232 Shilliam, *Race and the Undeserving Poor: From Abolition to Brexit*, 13–19.

233 Feldman, “Migrants, Immigrants and Welfare from the Old Poor Law to the Welfare State,” 92–93.

234 Owen, “From Poor Law to Beveridge Report,” 747.

235 Moses, *The First Modern Risk*, 29.

236 Doreen Collins, “The Introduction of Old Age Pensions in Great Britain,” *The Historical Journal* 8, no 2 (1965): 249.

237 Martin Gorsky, “The Growth and Distribution of English Friendly Societies in the Early Nineteenth Century,” *The Economic History Review* 51, no 3 (August 1998): 499.

238 Shilliam, *Race and the Undeserving Poor: From Abolition to Brexit*, 61.

and citizens. The new legislation did not conform to one specific logic. In 1897, a workmen's compensation law was introduced, which allowed, although did not require, employers to insure themselves against claims for compensation by workers who had been the victims of accidents "suffered in the course of their employment."²³⁹ Reforms extended coverage of the workmen's compensation act to new sectors. 'Employment exchanges' – or government offices established to help match employers and jobseekers – were set up.²⁴⁰ The civil servant in the Board of Trade responsible for overseeing employment exchanges was William Beveridge, a Liberal²⁴¹ and British India-born economist who promoted employment exchanges as a means of disciplining the work-shy and whose contribution to British welfare will be covered in the next section.²⁴²

Several nation-wide schemes launched under the leadership of Chancellor David Lloyd George became particularly prominent features of the social landscape.²⁴³ George was purportedly motivated by a desire to "match the industrial vitality and stability" of Germany.²⁴⁴ The schemes varied significantly in nature. In 1908, a non-contributory national old age pension was inaugurated, providing between 1 and 5 shillings per week to people over 7 years of age, following similar moves by New Zealand and Denmark.²⁴⁵ It offered particularly generous benefits,²⁴⁶ albeit only for British subjects. However, the "blotter had scarcely come down on the royal signature in 1908... before reformers took off in the opposite direction" – away from tax-financed means-tested schemes.²⁴⁷ Their first stop on the way to contributory insurance schemes, however, included poor relief-style domestic labour colonies. In 1909 George legislated to reclaim rural land to create labour colonies for the urban poor, which charities then set up.²⁴⁸ This initiative bears resemblance to the *heropvoedingsdorpen* in the Netherlands.

One of Lloyd George's most central contributions to British welfare, however, were the contributory insurance schemes against unemployment and sickness launched under the National Insurance Act. The 1911 National Insurance Act insured four fifths of the working population of the United Kingdom against sickness and debilitation.²⁴⁹ Workers earning no more than £160 a year were obliged to insure themselves against illness by paying a contribution that would be topped up by their employers and the state. Meanwhile, workers in specific sectors - notably sectors considered in need of high-skilled labour - were insured against unemployment. Shilliam interprets these two distinct features of the Act as reflective of a broader pronatalist and even eugenicist agenda. By improving the general social hygiene

239 Moses, *The First Modern Risk*, 61.

240 Owen, "From Poor Law to Beveridge Report," 748.

241 At least, initially; he later toyed with the idea of running for office as Liberal, Labour, Independent or as a candidate for one of the university seats according to Jose Harris (1997, 445).

242 Shilliam, *Race and the Undeserving Poor: From Abolition to Brexit*, 51.

243 The Chancellor of the Exchequer is the British equivalent of a finance minister.

244 Shilliam, *Race and the Undeserving Poor: From Abolition to Brexit*, 53.

245 Baldwin, *The Politics of Social Solidarity: Class Bases of the European Welfare State 1875-1975*, 99.

246 Nord, "The Welfare State in France, 1870-1914," 821.

247 Baldwin, *The Politics of Social Solidarity: Class Bases of the European Welfare State 1875-1975*, 99.

248 Shilliam, *Race and the Undeserving Poor: From Abolition to Brexit*, 63.

249 Michael Heller, "The National Insurance Acts 1911-1947, the Approved Societies and the Prudential Assurance Company," *Twentieth Century British History* 19, no 1 (2008): 1-28.

of the less skilled worker and preventing the more skilled worker from the “degeneration” that (especially urban) unemployment was seen to risk, the Act promoted the vitality of the English working population, and in Shilliam’s view, the “reproduction of deserving stock.”²⁵⁰ Originally, the 1911 National Insurance Act was only payable following a nationality and residence test. However, eventually a cross-party coalition of parliamentarians forced Lloyd George’s hand and by 1918, access to all provisions were extended to non-subjects, if only because it was costly to administer the exclusion of foreigners.²⁵¹

During the First World War, existing social services for mothers, children, and the elderly were extended, and workers who were not covered by national insurance schemes could voluntarily sign up.²⁵² Although the poor laws remained in place, the Unemployment Act of 1934 moved to assume some of its clientele. An Unemployment Assistance Board was established, which was intended to assist the unemployed but able-bodied people who had may have previously been reliant on outdoor poor relief by public assistance authorities.²⁵³ Unemployment assistance did remain quite selective.²⁵⁴ However, the Board’s mandate only expanded with time. In 1940, it received the responsibility of administering supplementary old-age pensions, and in 1943 it took over from the Board of Customs and Excise the administration of the non-contributory old-age pensions established in 1908.²⁵⁵

By the outbreak of the Second World War, a plethora of different government departments were responsible for welfare. The Ministry of Pensions and the Ministry of Labour had been established in 1916. The Ministry of Labour handled employment exchanges, the Home Office supervised workmen’s compensation, and the Unemployment Assistance Board dealt with the long-term unemployed.²⁵⁶ Moreover, benefit levels differed widely. Workmen’s compensation offered a pay-out proportionate to previous earnings, while the benefit under the contributory old-age pensions scheme was related to perceived subsistence needs.²⁵⁷ This was the context in which reformers in the Second World War, most notably William Beveridge, reimagined a new future for the post-war British welfare state.

4.4.4. The Beveridge Report

Just like the Dutch and the French, several British civil servants spent the Second World War cultivating a vision for radical reform of the existing welfare system. Orthodox historiography holds that the Second World War catalysed this reformism. Richard Titmuss, in his 1950

250 Shilliam, *Race and the Undeserving Poor: From Abolition to Brexit*, 54.

251 Feldman, “Migrants, Immigrants and Welfare from the Old Poor Law to the Welfare State,” 96.

252 Owen, “From Poor Law to Beveridge Report,” 749.

253 The National Archives, “Records of the Unemployment Assistance Boards, the Supplementary Benefits Commission, and of Related Bodies” (Catalogue description), accessed August 2, 2022, <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C17>.

254 UK-LoNA-LCO 2/3775-Beveridge, “Social Insurance and Allied Services,” November 1942.

255 The National Archives, “Records of the Unemployment Assistance Boards, the Supplementary Benefits Commission, and of Related Bodies.”

256 Jose Harris, *William Beveridge: A Biography* (Oxford University Press, 1997), 365, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198206859.001.0001>.

257 Harris, 366.

Problems of Social Policy, argued that the 1940 blitz²⁵⁸ mounted pressure for a “higher standard of welfare” by revealing the inadequacies of existing health and welfare services.²⁵⁹ Indeed, the relentless bombing campaign prompted the central government to intervene on behalf of the vulnerable: a large-scale evacuation of women and children into the countryside was organised and school meals and milk were provided. On the other hand, Harris argues that the desire for post-war social change was not uniform.²⁶⁰ For example, the left had long favoured universal benefits while conservatives preferred targeted schemes.²⁶¹ By Harris’ account, social reformers during and after the Second World War were merely acting on a momentum that had been building for decades.²⁶²

Either way, in June 1941, several years before the war’s end, Minister without Portfolio Arthur Greenwood, then in charge of post-war reconstruction, commissioned an inquiry into welfare reform. Greenwood called for an interdepartmental ‘Social Insurance’ committee to “undertake, with special reference to the inter-relation of the schemes, a survey of the existing national schemes of social insurance and allied services, including workmen’s compensation and to make recommendations.”²⁶³ Eventually, Beveridge was appointed Chairman, flanked by representatives from government agencies as diverse as the Home Office, Ministry of Labour and National Service, Ministry of Pensions, and Registry of Friendly Societies.²⁶⁴

Whether he rode a crest of pre-existing demand for social reform or generated it himself, Beveridge managed to overcome cleavages that reformers of the nineteenth century had not. Right from the start, Beveridge was interested in grand questions. He asked himself how one might “plan social insurance now if one had a clear field, that is to say if one could plan an ideal scheme, using all the experience gathered in the past, but without being hampered by regard for vested interests of any kind?”²⁶⁵ Beveridge saw the reforms as a means of boosting morale by offering the Allies the opportunity to “plan for a better peace even while waging war.”²⁶⁶ To this end, a cheap version was published for “compulsory discussion” among the armed services.²⁶⁷ Beveridge’s idealism put other committee members – all of whom were civil servants – in a complicated position, as each was reluctant to signal a readiness for sweeping post-war change on behalf of the department they represented. Hence, the final report was signed by Beveridge alone.²⁶⁸

His final report, which was published in 1942, recommended a new welfare system based on several principles, some of which appear conflicting at first. First, the scheme was to be

258 This was a bombing campaign by Nazi Germany on British urban areas, with particular focus on London It started in September 1940 and lasted for nine months

259 John Welshman, “Evacuation, Hygiene, and Social Policy: The Our Towns Report of 1943,” *The Historical Journal* 42, no 3 (September 1999): 782, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3020921>.

260 Welshman, 783.

261 Baldwin, *The Politics of Social Solidarity: Class Bases of the European Welfare State 1875-1975*, 118.

262 see also Owen, “From Poor Law to Beveridge Report.”

263 UK-LoNA-LCO 2/3775-“Social Insurance and Allied Services,” November 1942.

264 UK-LoNA-CAB/66/31/27- War Cabinet: Social Insurances and Allied Services, Summary of Report by Sir William Beveridge, 25 November 1942.

265 Harris, *William Beveridge: A Biography*, 376.

266 Harris, 414.

267 Harris, 427.

268 Harris, 414.

mostly contributory. Beveridge wanted to preserve the cooperative spirit of the community and the prudence of the family.²⁶⁹ Additionally, Beveridge felt that social insurance, rather than “free allowances from the State” was “what the people of Britain desire[d].”²⁷⁰ The task of offering tax-financed, means-tested social assistance would be transferred from local authorities to the exchequer, but would also be reserved “for the limited number of cases of need not covered by social insurance.”²⁷¹ Second, all citizens would be included, including the self-employed, those “not gainfully employed,” and employees whose wages had been too low to qualify them under previous arrangements.²⁷² Third, benefits and contributions would be uniform (flat rate). According to Baldwin, this move gave the proposals of Beveridge, especially when compared to those of Laroque, a “redistributionally rather bland effect,” since both high and low earners would contribute the same amount.²⁷³ However, it also had the effect of making the proposed reform more palatable to the middle classes than Laroque’s proposal had been.²⁷⁴ Fourthly, benefit levels would be linked to subsistence needs, except long-term work accident benefits which would be based on previous earnings, and old-age pensions, which would build up to subsistence levels over twenty years.²⁷⁵ Finally, administrative responsibility would be unified and centralised. The insured would owe a single weekly contribution whose amount would vary in accordance with the ‘class’ of contributors to which they were assigned. This, in turn, depended on their potential reasons for financial insecurity (employees, traders, pensioners, etc.)

The Conservative wartime cabinet convened a committee of officials under Sir Thomas Phillips to examine the report. The committee’s enthusiasm was tepid.²⁷⁶ In contrast, the Labour Party received the report more fervently, which may have helped secure their overwhelming victory in 1945 elections.²⁷⁷ Once in power, Labour under Clement Attlee passed successive acts to give life to the Beveridge report.

4.4.5. National Insurance, National Assistance

The 1942 Beveridge Report served as the blueprint for a complete overhaul of existing social provisions, directly influencing key legislation from 1946 to 1951. A series of statutes falling under the header of the (new) National Insurance Act – the Ministry of National Insurance Act (1945), the Disabled Persons Act (1945), the Family Allowances Act (1945), the National Health Service Act (1946), and the National Insurance (Industrial Injuries) Act (1946) –

269 Shilliam, *Race and the Undeserving Poor: From Abolition to Brexit*, 73.

270 This popular will may well have been affected by the stigma associated with poor relief since the 1834 reform, a stigma which reached new heights as families were subjected to intrusive means tests during the Great Depression (Whiteside 2014).

271 The exchequer would also be responsible for covering family allowances, the NHS, and policies for full employment (Harris 1997: 413).

272 Baldwin, *The Politics of Social Solidarity: Class Bases of the European Welfare State 1875-1975*, 118.

273 Baldwin, 118.

274 Baldwin, 119.

275 Harris, *William Beveridge: A Biography*, 414.

276 Harris, 419.

277 Whiteside, “The Beveridge Report and Its Implementation,” 7. This is complicated, however, because Beveridge himself was defeated by a Conservative candidate in Berwick Harris, *William Beveridge: A Biography*, 448.

together with the Children Act (1946) and the National Assistance Act (1948) formed the cornerstones of the post-war welfare state.²⁷⁸

Beveridge had recommended that a new ministry administer the reforms he was proposing. To this end, a Ministry of National Insurance was established in 1944, with the mandate of recording the contributions and benefits of the insured, supplying information to local National Insurance offices, and paying out long-term benefits under the scheme.²⁷⁹ Its headquarters were located in Newcastle as part of a policy to decentralise government departments and to take advantage of readily available labour in that part of the country.²⁸⁰

The Family Allowances Act of 1945 provided an allowance of 5 shillings weekly at the birth of the second and subsequent children of a family.²⁸¹

The National Insurance (Industrial Injuries) Act of 1946 introduced the new National Insurance scheme, which made weekly contributions obligatory for “all persons in Great Britain who [we]re over school leaving age.”²⁸² It eliminated all prior restrictions on the basis of income, type of work or age. As Beveridge had suggested, the contributions of insured persons would be divided into three classes: Class 1 for employed persons, Class 2 for self-employed persons, and Class 3 for non-employed persons.²⁸³ Contributions were tripartite, made by employee, employer, and state, with the state’s contribution representing around one-fifth of the total up until 1961.²⁸⁴ All workers would in turn receive flat-rate benefits on the event of an “interruption of earnings.” They could receive injury benefits for a period of no more than six months following an accident or illness that took place on the job. Disability benefits could be paid thereafter, calculated as a function of the *degree of incapacity* a person experienced in general. Widows could receive benefits on the death of an insured person. Finally, upon reaching age 65 or 60, men and women respectively could claim a Basic State Pension (BSP). The BSP was a pay-as-you-go, contributory system that departed from the non-contributory state pensions of Lloyd George in that retirees were only eligible for the full BSP in retirement if they had an appropriate contributory record through paying National Insurance (NI) contributions out of their payroll.²⁸⁵ An appropriate contributory record was defined as 156 contributions in total, and a yearly average of 50 contributions paid.²⁸⁶ Again as recommended by Beveridge, coverage for all of these risks would be ensured by a “single contribution,” with each insured person carrying “one card to which the stamp of the appropriate value covering

278 Rosalind Chambers, “The National Assistance Act, 1948,” *The Modern Law Review* 12, no 1 (January 1949): 69.

279 R Mendelsohn, “Ministry of National Insurance: Central Offices, Newcastle-upon-Tyne,” *Social Service Review* 25, no 2 (June 1951): 210–16.

280 Mendelsohn, 210.

281 “The British Family Allowances Act, 1945,” *International Labour Review* 52 (1945): 548.

282 UK-LoNA-CO 859/124/2: Leaflet N.I.38 October 1948 Persons Entering or Leaving Great Britain Ministry of National Insurance.

283 UK-LoNA-CAOG 15/168-Leaflet N.I 38, “Persons entering or leaving Great Britain,” October 1948: 3.

284 A.F Young, *Industrial Injuries Insurance: An Examination of British Policy*, vol 3 (1964; repr., London: Routledge, 2002), 98.

285 Daniel Béland and Alex Waddan, “Policy Change in Flat Pensions: Comparing Canada and the UK,” *Canadian Public Administration* 57, no 3 (2014): 387.

286 UK-LoNA-PIN 57/10-Report from Commonwealth Conference on National Insurance, May 1947.

the combined weekly contribution is to be fixed.”²⁸⁷ Contrary to Beveridge’s wishes, however, insurance benefits would be paid out by the post rather than by friendly society visitors who were intended to grant “more humanity” to the receipt of benefits.²⁸⁸

Next, the National Assistance Act entered into force in 1948. The Act was to be administered by the National Assistance Board (hereafter ‘the Board’), founded that same year. Assuming responsibility over the extension of cash assistance until 1966, its emergence marked the dissolution of both the poor law and the Unemployment Assistance Board founded in 1934. National Assistance was designed to alleviate absolute poverty but to retain an incentive to work.²⁸⁹ Although Beveridge had proposed – to great popular reception – the abolition of means testing, the Board determined basic eligibility for assistance by a form of means testing that involved interviews after an individual had made an application. Implementation was devolved to local levels, where “home visits” by Board officers formed the principal link between individuals and the Board.²⁹⁰ Additionally, the Board had substantial discretion over the dispersal and amount of benefits.²⁹¹ This was in direct contrast to National Insurance benefits, which were uniform and paid by post. That said, regulations under the Act offered guidelines and minimum standards. On top of regular allowances, officers were meant to add a rent allowance, which was supposed to cover net rent in full provided it was reasonable for the general level of rent in the district.²⁹² Any applicant or beneficiary “aggrieved” by the Board’s decisions could turn to the Appeal Tribunal.²⁹³

The ultimate result contained some important deviations from Beveridge’s vision. For example, Beveridge had envisioned a transitional period during which the benefit levels of old-age pensions would be built up towards subsistence levels, but this commitment was not realised.²⁹⁴ In addition, the benefit was not based on a minimum standard of living, and married or divorced women, women looking after parents, and housewives were excluded in many ways.

287 UK-LoNA-CAOG 15/168-Leaflet N.I 20, “Employer’s guide to National Insurance,” April 1948.

288 Harris, *William Beveridge: A Biography*, 453.

289 Gareth Millward, *Sick Note: A History of the British Welfare State*, 1st ed (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022).

290 UK-LoNA-PIN 95/16-“XIII: Visiting,” 3 June 1965.

291 “National Assistance Act 1948,” Pub L No c 29 (1948), <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo6/11-12/29/enacted>.

292 Chambers, “The National Assistance Act, 1948,” 70.

293 National Assistance Act 1948.

294 Harris, *William Beveridge: A Biography*, 451.