

British Society since 1945 by Arthur Marwick

Chapter 20: The “Enterprise Economy“

Abstract

Marwick’s chapter “The Enterprise Economy“ from his book “British Society since 1945“ deals with several fields of British economy. He introduces economic facts and the development of national industries, and goes on to explain the underlying economic theories. The Enterprise Economy has been one of the most important factors of the development of British civilization. He describes the effects of economic policy (Thatcherism), and shows the degree to which it influences for example sports. Marwick points out several fields like industry, small businesses, sponsorship and disasters which all have been responsible for today’s economic, political and social values of Britain.

Summary

At the beginning of the chapter “Enterprise Economy”, Marwick evaluates a table which shows the indices of production in the period between 1976 and 1986 and briefly points out several developments of significant economy branches, for example: The coal industry, the oil industry and the iron and steel industry. After this introduction of economic facts, he goes on to describe the policies of the Thatcher Government concerning the free market-place and the corresponding criticism. One measure of this policy was to strengthen the small. The importance of IT and its influences on many other branches, such as telecommunication, banking and newspaper, remained, at first, unrecognised, and therefore, relatively low financed by the government. Nevertheless the IT industry developed extremely well and additionally created new job opportunities. Another significant process, which was launched by Thatcher government was the privatisation of nationalised industries (e.g. Jaguar Cars, British Aerospace). Also of importance for British Economy was commercial sponsorship. With an increasing expenditure to 60 Million Pounds, commercial sponsorship contributed to the economic growth rate of 4% in 1987. Marwick explains that while some people spoke of a Thatcherite Revolution there are also negative aspects like too much emphasis on the world of finance and too little on that of productive industry. Another criticism is the maintenance of “arduous work in unpleasant conditions” (270) as a consequence of a policy that rather supports economy than high quality of working conditions. In order to support this thesis he enumerates several accidents and tragedies which can be attributed to that philosophy: Profit is the overriding motive.

Questions

1. What does the 'Keynesianism- doctrine' mean?
2. What are the main economic policies of the Thatcher Governments?
3. What is the philosophy of 'monetarism'?
4. Explain "poll tax".
5. What are the consequences if making profit is regarded as more important than safety?
6. What are the reasons for and the consequences of commercial sponsorship?
7. Which circumstances made the small business grow?
8. In how far was the new style of industrial relations, established by overseas companies, ambivalent for the employees?
9. What was the impact of multi- nationals?
10. What was the main factor that made the percentage of share holders in Britain rise from 7% to 19% in the late 80's?

Outline of the presentation

- I
 - Production statistics, evaluation
 - Main features of the Thatcher Government concerning economy
- II
 - Growth in small business
 - Multi-Nationals
 - IT
 - Privatization
- III
 - Sponsorship
 - main protagonists
 - figures
- IV
 - Economy and safety
 - working conditions
 - tragic disasters