

**UNIVERSITÉ DE TOULON ET DU VAR
FACULTÉ DES LETTRES ET SCIENCES HUMAINES**

SESSION / SEMESTRE	: session 1, semestre 5
DÉPARTEMENT	: Langues Etrangères Appliquées
CODE U.E. / ANNÉE	: 51c / 2009-2010
MATIÈRE	: civilisation britannique
DURÉE de l'ÉPREUVE	: 3 heures
DATE ET HEURE	: 13 janvier 2010, 8h30 – 11h30
SALLE	: amphi W 300
ENSEIGNANT	: P.-F. Peirano
DOCUMENTS AUTORISÉS:	néant

I. Answer **two** of the following four questions (8 pts).

- To what extent is it possible to say that Great Britain is characterised by a "lack of social mobility"?
- What are the main differences between the various British regions?
- Are the British media an accurate¹ reflection of British society?
- In which ways have the public services been recently reformed in Great Britain?

II. Text and questions (12 pts).

By the end of the 1990s, British socialism – in any meaningful sense – appeared to have withered away². Instead, a Labour government (at least at first) proclaimed its attachment to a 'third way' of new-style, pluralist social democracy which avoided or tried to reconcile traditional statism³ and the unregulated free market.

Another serious feature of post-war Britain was the prevalence of persistent social inequality. Britain was and remained a notably unequal country in terms of income, capital, and social opportunity throughout this period. This applied to the field of economy and Britain was divided (approximately) between a prosperous high-tech 'south' and an ageing industrial 'north', between

¹ accurate (here): *fidèle*.

² to wither away: *s'évanouir, disparaître*.

³ statism: a kind of governance in which a prominent role is given to the State.

employed and unemployed, waged and salaried employees, average earners⁴ and low-paid – in a rigid, pre-determined pattern without parallel in the industrial world.

On these rooted distinctions of wealth and social class (masked by the apparent growing classlessness⁵ of dress and speech⁶, especially among the young) were superimposed other, more specific inequalities. The limited opportunities in terms of employment, housing, or social mobility for Britain's lower-class people were unresolved problems of the period.

These various divisions actually came from a deeply rooted⁷ inequality between different groups and occupations which modified other apparent signs of social progress. Thus, the great advance in literacy over the period and the expansion of the young population receiving secondary education was checked by the presence of a divisive system of private education. Indeed, the proportion of children attending 'public' (i.e.⁸ private) schools rose throughout the 1980s.

In almost fifty years, the British have been slow to recover from wartime victory. In the internal movements of modernisation and a more positive approach to an expanding Europe, in the value systems of more emancipated and better-educated younger generations, there were processes of change which nevertheless left Britain as a polity⁹ in being.

Kenneth O. Morgan, *Britain since 1945: the People's Peace*, 1999.

1. According to the author, what has remained the essential characteristic of British society since 1945?
2. Reflect on the following passage: "*Thus, the great advance in literacy over the period and the expansion of the young population receiving secondary education was checked by the presence of a divisive system of private education. Indeed, the proportion of children attending 'public' (i.e. private) schools rose throughout the 1980s*" (ll. 21-24). What measures led to the expanding of private education?
3. How does the author consider the various transformations that have taken place in British society?

⁴ an earner: someone who earns a living.

⁵ classlessness: the fact of not belonging to any social class.

⁶ speech (here): *la manière de s'exprimer*.

⁷ rooted: *enraciné*.

⁸ i.e. (Latin, *id est*): *c'est-à-dire*.

⁹ a polity: *un régime (politique)*.