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# TWENTIETH-CENTURY BRITAIN

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## 二十世纪英国： 帝国与遗产

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Kenneth O. Morgan 著 宋云峰 译



通识教育  
双语文库

A VERY SHORT  
INTRODUCTION

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外语教学与研究出版社  
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北京 BEIJING

京权图字：01-2006-6826

Twentieth-Century Britain was originally published in English in 2000.

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## 图书在版编目(CIP)数据

二十世纪英国：帝国与遗产：英汉对照 / (英) 摩根 (Morgan, K. O.) 著；宋云峰译. —北京：外语教学与研究出版社，2013. 1

(通识教育双语文库)

书名原文：Twentieth-century Britain

ISBN 978-7-5600-8552-4

I. ①二… II. ①摩… ②宋… III. ①英语—汉语—对照读物 ②英国—现代史—20世纪 IV. ①H319.4:K

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2013) 第 026184 号



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出版人：蔡剑峰

项目负责：姚虹 周渝毅

责任编辑：文雪琴

封面设计：覃一彪

版式设计：吕茜

出版发行：外语教学与研究出版社

社址：北京市西三环北路19号(100089)

网址：<http://www.fltrp.com>

印刷：紫恒印装有限公司

开本：650×980 1/16

印张：810

版次：2013年4月第1版 2013年4月第1次印刷

书号：ISBN 978-7-5600-8552-4

定价：1980.00元

\* \* \*

购书咨询：(010)88819929 电子邮箱：[club@fltrp.com](mailto:club@fltrp.com)

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物料号：185520001

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# 译者序

对于想了解现代和当代英国历史的读者来说，《20 世纪英国：帝国与遗产》是一本言简意赅、提纲挈领的好书。作者将全书按年代顺序分为七章，每一章不仅对该历史阶段的政治、经济和社会中的重大事件娓娓道来，还涵盖了文化发展和艺术进步等方面的丰富内容。另外各章中插入的历史图片有助于读者对各个时代的社会变迁有更为直观感性的认识，而附录的历史大事记和历任首相列表凸现了 20 世纪英国所经历的主要事件以及政治上的演变。这样的体例形式可使读者便捷地了解 20 世纪英国社会变化的方方面面。

20 世纪可以说是世界历史上最重要的世纪。无论在国际政治经济体系方面还是在教育科技文化方面，世界都经历了翻天覆地的变化，例如社会主义在俄国与中国的建立、两次世界大战、美国霸权的崛起等。而其中最大的变化之一就是英国的衰落。这一衰落过程见证了欧洲列强殖民体系的瓦解与新的世界秩序的建立。英国在这个世纪中不断调整自己的心态与政策以适应内部和外部世界的变化，仍然维持了其世界大国的地位（经济总量居世界第五位，仅次于美、日、德、中；与美、俄、中、法并列联合国安理会五大常任理事国）。20 世纪的英国历史为我们提供了适应世界变化、调整心态与对策的丰富经验和珍贵教训。

第一次世界大战（1914—1918）给英国带来了深刻的影响。作为战胜国之一，英国攫取了更多的领土，成为世界历史上最庞大的帝国——在英王乔治五世统治下的1922年，大英帝国的领土面积达到了创纪录的3,660万平方公里，约占世界陆地面积的四分之一；由于战时需求，女性大量进入就业领域，从而在1918年争得了投票权；产业工人工会的影响力与日俱增，从而使工党在战后成为取代自由党的第二大党。

第二次世界大战（1939—1945）对英国的影响更为广泛。在外部，迫于美国的压力和殖民地民族独立运动的高涨等因素，英国在战后不得不允许其大部分殖民地独立。在内部，战时的动员和对主要工业部门的集中管理给英国在战后实行混合经济并建立福利国家创造了条件。工党在战后大选中获胜，随即在经济、教育、医疗和社会保障方面实施了系列改革，使英国成为较为平等的社会。与改革所获得的社会广泛支持相对照的是30年代的经济萧条与贫富分化给大多数人带来的灾难。此后虽然保守党与工党轮流执政，但从40年代到70年代，英国的混合经济体制与福利制度基本未变，被称为两党之间的“政治共识”。

二战后对英国来说最大也是最痛苦的冲击就是面对、接受和适应其国际地位逐渐衰落的事实。其中最突出的例子是1956年10月的苏伊士运河危机。该事件意味着英国在世界列强中巨无霸地位的终结。虽然不得不面对从世界大国到区域大国的衰落，但帝国情节与怀旧心理一直不时影响着英国政治家的外交政策。这体现在80年代与阿根廷在马尔维纳斯群岛（英国称为福克兰群岛）的主权争夺战上；也体现在90年代追随美国的海湾战争与2003年支持美国的伊拉克战争上。

尽管如此，英国还是意识到作为欧洲国家，其切身利益仍然主要在于欧洲，所以逐渐调整了国策。几经努力和挫折，英国终于在1973年加入了欧洲经济共同体（后来的欧盟），并试

图在其中发挥积极主动的作用。

70年代以来英国国内发生的最大变化是保守党在撒切尔首相领导下对积重难返、不断衰落的英国经济进行以私有化为主要对策的改革。改革使90年代以后的英国在效率上赶上了其他欧洲列强，但也付出了高失业率及制造业衰落的代价。另外一个变化是布莱尔领导的新工党摒弃了党章中社会主义公有制的条款，并在上台后基本接受了保守党的既定国策，试图在公平与效率之间找到平衡，走出“第三条道路”。

总的来看，面对纷繁的内部和外部变化，英国在20世纪的应变与调整是较为成功的。肯尼思·O. 摩根的这本小书原为英国畅销图书《牛津英国史》的一部分，其篇幅虽然不大，但却是最为全面且权威的介绍20世纪英国史的简短导论。这本书论述精辟，语言生动，不失为英国史爱好者和英语学习者的必读佳作。



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# Chapter 1

## The First World War

At the Lord Mayor of London's annual banquet at the Mansion House on 17 July 1914, the chancellor of the Exchequer, David Lloyd George, issued stern warnings about the ominous condition of British society. At home, the 'triple alliance' of miners, railwaymen, and transport workers was threatening a mass united strike to back up the railwaymen's claim for union recognition and a 48-hour week. Alongside this prospect of nationwide industrial paralysis, there was across the Irish Sea a state of near civil war in Ireland, with 200,000 or more under arms in Protestant Ulster and the Catholic south, and the likelihood of the age-long saga of Irish nationalism being brought to a grim and bloody resolution. Abroad, there were nationalist troubles in India and in Egypt. Nearer home in south-east Europe, the ethnic nationalities of the Balkans were in renewed turmoil following the assassination of the Austrian archduke, Franz Ferdinand, at Sarajevo in Bosnia on 28 June.

On the eve of world war, therefore, Britain seemed to present a classic picture of a civilized liberal democracy on the verge of dissolution, racked by tensions and strains with which its sanctions and institutions were unable to cope. And yet, as so often in the past, once the supreme crisis of war erupted, these elements of conflict subsided with remarkable speed. An underlying mood of united purpose gripped the nation. The first few weeks of hostilities, after Britain declared war on 4 August, were, inevitably, a time of some panic. Only dramatic

measures by the Treasury and the Bank of England preserved the national currency and credit. Manufacturing and commerce tried desperately to adjust to the challenges of war against the background of an ethic that proclaimed that it was 'business as usual'. The early experiences of actual fighting were almost disastrous as the British Expeditionary Force, cobbled together in much haste and dispatched to Flanders and France, met with a severe reverse at Ypres, and had to retreat from Mons, in disarray and suffering heavy losses. Reduced to only three corps in strength, its fighting force was gravely diminished almost from the start. Only a stern resistance by the French forces on the river Marne prevented a rapid German advance on Paris and an early victory for Germany and its Austrian allies.

After the initial disasters, however, the nation and its leaders settled down for a long war. Vital domestic issues such as Irish home rule were suspended for the duration of hostilities. The political parties declared an indefinite truce. The industrial disturbances of the summer of 1914 petered out, with the TUC outdoing the employers in voicing the conventional patriotism of the time. A curious kind of calm descended, founded on a broad – though very far from universal – consensus about the justice of the war. The one element required to make it acceptable to a liberal society was some kind of broad, humane justification to explain what the war was really about. This was provided by Lloyd George, once a bitter opponent of the Boer War in South Africa in 1899, and for many years the most outspokenly left-wing member of Asquith's Liberal government. Lloyd George remained suspiciously silent during the early weeks. But in an eloquent address to a massed audience of his Welsh fellow-countrymen at the Queen's Hall, London, on 19 September 1914, he committed himself without reserve to a fight to the finish. He occupied, or claimed to occupy, the highest moral ground. It was, he declared, a war on behalf of liberal principles, a crusade on behalf of the 'little five-foot-five nations', like Belgium, flagrantly invaded by the Germans, or Serbia and Montenegro, now threatened by Austria-Hungary. It was not surprising that a claim that



the war was a holy cause, backed up not only by the leaders of all the Christian Churches but by all the Liberal pantheon of heroes from Charles James Fox to Gladstone, met with instant response, not least in the smaller nations of Scotland and Wales within Britain itself.

## Pro-War Consensus

This broad consensus about the rightness of the war was not fundamentally eroded over the next four terrible years. Of course, it went through many changes, especially after the unpopular decision to impose conscription for the armed services was instituted in May 1916. Eventually, by 1917, sheer war-weariness was taking its toll, quite apart from other factors such as the growing militancy from organized labour and the Messianic appeal of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia. Of course, too, this consensus was sustained by subtle or crude manipulation of the news services, censorship of the press, and government-sponsored legends of atrocities allegedly committed by 'the Huns'. There was much persecution of radical or anti-war critics. In spite of government pressures, bodies such as the Christian pacifist 'No-Conscription Fellowship' and the Union of Democratic Control (which sought a negotiated peace) were by 1917 making some impact on public opinion. Lord Lansdowne's appeal for peace (29 November 1917) caused a great stir. Nevertheless, the available evidence for the war years suggests that the broad mass of the population retained its faith that the war was just and necessary, and that it must be fought until the total surrender of the German enemy, whatever the cost. Recruitment to the armed services from volunteers was heavy and enthusiastic: indeed voluntary recruitment proved more successful in swelling the ranks of the army in France in 1914-16 than was the compulsory method of conscription thereafter. The long years of military and naval conflict that dragged on from the initial stalemate on the western front in the autumn of 1914, until the final Allied breakthrough in August-September 1918 were accepted with resignation and a kind of grim endurance.