

Inferior Politics

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Inferior Politics explores how social policy was created in Britain in a period when central government was not active in making it. Parliament proved capable of generating national legislation nonetheless-and provided a forum for debate even when it was impossible to mobilise consensus behind any particular plan. In this setting, there was a lively, and surprisingly inclusive, 'politics' of social policy-making, in which 'inferior' officers of government (what we might call 'local authorities') figured prominently. The book explores institutional structures which shaped these debates and their outcomes, and supplies several case studies of policy-making: one focussing on some of the less well-known activities of William Wilberforce, as he attempted to promote a national 'reformation of manners'; others featuring such apparently marginal figures as imprisoned debtors and a lowly (and bigoted) London constable. A central chapter explores the history of social and economic empirical enquiry from the invention of 'political arithmetic' in the later seventeenth century through to the first census of 1801, detailing similar interaction between government and private enthusiasts. Drawing together three decades of the author's work, including two new essays, Inferior Politics demonstrates how Joanna Innes has significantly revised and extended our understanding of the ways and means of British domestic government, in an era marked by institutional continuity but continuing and vigorously debated social challenges. EAN/ISBN : 9780191571527 Publisher(s): Oxford University Press Format: ePub/PDF Author(s): Innes, Joanna

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