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THE LIBERALS AS A THIRD PARTY IN BRITISH POLITICS
1926-1931: A STUDY IN POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

James Allen Braden, B. S., M. A.

* * * *

The Ohio State University
1971

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PLEASE NOTE:

Some Pages have indistinct print. Filmed as received.

UNIVERSITY MICROFILMS
Sir, in Cambria are we born,
and gentlemen:

Further to boast were neither true
nor modest,

Unless I add we are honest.

Belarius in *Cymbeline*,

Act V, sc. v.
In 1927 Lloyd George became the recognized leader of the Liberal party with the stated aim of making it over into a viable third party. Time and again he averred that the Liberal mission was to hold the balance—as had Parnell's Irish Nationalists—between the two major parties in Parliament. Thus viewed in these terms the Liberal revival of the late 1920's must be accounted a success for at no time did the Liberals expect to supplant the Labour party as the party of the left.

The subtitle reads: "A Study in Political Communication" because communications theory provided the starting point for this study. But communications theory is not imposed in any arbitrary fashion, for Lloyd George and his followers were obsessed with exploiting modern methods of communications. His experience as Prime Minister during World War I had convinced him that effective propaganda—carried by a party communications network—could revive Liberalism. He devoted special care to the press since he wished to use it as a link between Liberalism and the voters which had formerly been supplied by English Nonconformity. Hence, Lloyd
George's version of Liberalism may be justly called newspaper Liberalism with a vengeance.

Other media besides newspapers, metropolitan and provincial, were used by the Lloyd George Liberals. Books, advertising, mobile campaign vans, propaganda meetings, pamphlets and leaflets are considered in this study; special attention is given to circulation figures and numbers of people in attendance at meetings. On the whole the Liberals were more print-oriented than Labour, for Lloyd George Liberalism could not be reduced to an easily understood formula such as "Socialism in our Time" or "For King and Country."

Liberalism was based in the main on nonassociated interest groups such as the Free Churches, Irish Roman Catholicism, Welsh and Scottish nationalism, and temperance groups. None of these groups acted in more than an intermittent fashion. There was no associational interest group such as the Trade Unions which could communicate to a mass electorate. Had the middle class expanded more rapidly, a base might have been created for a Liberal associational interest group on the lines of the black coated unions of today. Liberals appeared as political pirates--middle class lawyers and professors who were defending no legitimate interest in society. Compared to the Liberals, the trade unions possessed a new legitimacy even after the General Strike. A free-wheeling,
profiteering society with a wide-open communications network was precisely what most Britons did not want. It hardly seems necessary to add that Lloyd George's status as the highest paid journalist in the world did little to enhance his reputation with the voters.

The Liberal message was too much at variance with the media used to succeed in reaching a mass electorate; in other words it could not be translated into mass media terms. Lloyd George Liberalism was print-oriented—designed for the thoughtful middle class reader. The Liberal elite was structurally divorced—by industrialization—from the potential Liberal classes. In the case of the trade unions there was a structural communications link between Labour politicians and their followers which no longer existed in the Liberal party. The Conservative party possessed a communications sub-structure in the Church of England, the system of deferential politics, and businessmen's organizations such as the associated chambers of commerce.

Since this study is built around David Lloyd George's leadership of the Liberal party, private papers of that worthy constitute the principal source. These papers are located in the Beaverbrook Library in London and at the home of the Rt. Hon. Earl of Dwyfor at Brimpton Mill, near Newbury, Berkshire. The Churchill papers were closed to me, but I
used the Baldwin papers (Cambridge University Library) to provide a Conservative view of Liberal revival. Hugh Dalton's Diary (MS. copy in the British Library of Political and Economic Science) provides the best Labour party source currently available. The Samuel papers located in the House of Lords Record Office, London, give an inside view of Liberal reorganization. Lloyd George's enemies in the Liberal party are studied through the medium of the Herbert Gladstone papers (British Museum) and the H. H. Asquith papers (Bodleian Library, Oxford). The Gilbert Murray papers located at the Bodleian also contained the views of the anti-Lloyd George faction. C. P. Scott's journal (British Museum) is indispensable for understanding the key role played by that remarkable journalist. J. L. Hammond's letters to his wife which are preserved at the Bodleian provide a corrective supplement to some of Scott's more extreme statements. R. C. K. Ensor's papers found in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Oxford give some insight into how the Daily Chronicle and Lloyd George (its chief stockholder) worked together.

Since the role of the press is important in Liberal revival the newspapers used have been selected with some care. The London dailies have all been used—especially the Liberal Daily Chronicle and Daily News. For the General Strike period
the Government's British Gazette is essential. More important for this study is the provincial press; the Liberal Yorkshire Observer is the most important provincial organ of the New Liberalism; the Liverpool Post and Mercury gives the "Old" Liberal point of view. The Cardiff Western Mail speaks for Welsh Conservatism, the Glasgow Herald for Scottish Independent opinion, the Weekly Scotsman for Conservative Unionists, and the Belfast Northern Whig is essential for understanding the Liberal role in Ulster. These newspapers give a national spread of opinion which enables us to put the Liberal revival in perspective.

Since this is a study of the media by which the Liberal elite sought to communicate with potentially Liberal electors, no attempt has been made to discuss local party organization. While such a study might add to our knowledge of Liberal revival, it has no direct bearing on the communications link between mass and elite. The decade of the 1920's is the period when British political methods became thoroughly modernized. Lloyd George was mainly responsible for this and the problems raised by the role of the mass media in politics are by no means irrelevant to our concerns today.

This study owes a great debt to The Ohio State University Department of History, which awarded me a grant for a year's research in Britain. Signal kindness was shown me by the Rt. Hon. Earl of Dwyfor, who permitted a stranger to
examine heretofore unused papers belonging to his grand­father, David Lloyd George. Invaluable aid was accorded me by Mr. A. J. P. Taylor, Honorary Director of the Beaverbrook Library, and his assistant, Mr. Iago, in using the Lloyd George and Bonar Law papers. In addition, I should like to thank the staffs of these libraries for their help: the British Museum, the Bodleian Library, the library at Corpus Christi College (Oxford), and the Cambridge University Library. Collections at the Public Records Office, the House of Lords Record Office as well as the Collindale Newspaper Library were essential to completing this study. I am grateful to the librarian and staff at the British Library of Political and Economic Science for their assistance in using the Dalton Diary and the Passfield Papers. Finally, the Library of Congress granted me a carrel and study facilities which aided me in writing up the results of my research.

In preparing the manuscript comments and suggestions provided by my adviser, Professor Philip P. Poirier, proved of great value.

I owe a special debt to my typist, Gerda Hagan, without whose assistance I could not have completed this manuscript.
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INTRODUCTION

I often think... that we can trace almost all the disasters of English history to the influence of Wales. Think of Edward of Carnarvon, the first Prince of Wales, a perverse life... and an unseemly death, then the Tudors and the dissolution of the Church, then Lloyd George, the temperance movement, Nonconformity and lust stalking hand in hand through the country, wasting and ravaging.1

Thus Evelyn Waugh in his 1928 novel Decline and Fall.

Thank God for Mr. Lloyd George! Go on, Mr. Lloyd George, you may have the frowns of the rich, but you will have the blessings of the poor. A thousand may curse you, but you will be blessed by tens of thousands.2

Thus Tom Lovell, an obscure Somersetshire Laborer, at the 1926 Liberal Land Conference.

Truth, even the truth about David Lloyd George, lies somewhere in between these two assessments—among the middle classes to be precise. For Lloyd George was the last radical (although his enemies preferred to call him the lost Liberal) and he sought between 1926 and 1930 to create a new middle class Radicalism out of the wreck of the Liberal party. It is easy to dismiss him as a power-mad politician, and as Welsh,

---


or worse. It is not easy to discover the essence of what the Italians used to call, during the age of Mussolini, Lloyd George-isme. In the chaos resulting from the General Strike the times (but not The Times) seemed to cry out for bold and, above all, virile leadership.

After 1926 British politics suffered from a broken center. The ruling class was certain that the Labour party could be dealt with, but the very existence of Liberalism served to force the two extremes further apart--making open class war a real possibility. Paradoxically enough, the Liberals posed a fundamental threat to the British party system; the existence of three elements in an essentially two-party system was profoundly unsettling to the unmathematical English soul. Liberalism, which once had been native to Britain (at least in Mr. Gladstone's day), seemed now to be disturbingly un-British; if not quite European, then continental, almost French. In any case a system in which three parties competed for votes was definitely foreign, and everyone in London's clubland knew what had happened to France.

Liberalism, in the years between 1926 and 1929, was faced with a basic problem: how to function as a third party within a system designed for only two parties. It is a truism that Britain has possessed--at least since the time of the Normans and the Saxons--a two-party system. Like all truisms this simply is not true; it is sufficient to cite the examples
of the Irish Nationalists, Joseph Chamberlain's Liberal Unionists, and the early Labour party. It would be truer to say (so Liberal theorists claimed) that Britain has possessed, since 1885, a three-party system which occasionally degenerates into a struggle between only two parties.

As the opening date for this study 1926 was chosen because in that year the Liberal party's internal crisis came to a head. Much has been made of quarrels between Asquith and Lloyd George—indeed too much. A more fruitful approach is to treat the party as a unit. All three parties suffered from recurring leadership quarrels in the unstable three-party system. The General Strike both showed up the inadequacy of Asquith's leadership and seemed to offer the Liberals another chance to put their program before the electorate. Both the Conservatives and the Labour party emerged faintly discredited from the Strike; in these circumstances the Liberals hoped to pick up a considerable protest vote against the Government and against socialism.

But in order to seize the opportunity the party's propaganda machinery had to be modernized, for Lloyd George knew very well that the Liberals' propaganda methods were old-fashioned. Of crucial importance was the condition of the Liberal press; newspapers such as the Manchester Guardian and the Westminster Gazette appealed only to a small circle of readers. The editors of these papers made little attempt to
to appeal to the apolitical ordinary reader; they suppressed
news and often wrote, as T. O. Lloyd remarks, "editorials
designed to influence policy which were deliberately made
incomprehensible to anyone who did not know how discussions
were going in the Cabinet." It was plain to Lloyd George
that Liberalism needed support from the mass circulation news­
papers, such as the Daily Mail, if it was to regain votes
lost to the two major parties.

Mass communications were important instruments in
spreading Liberal propaganda and Lloyd George sought alliance
with the press lords of Fleet Street—Beaverbrook and Rother­
mere. He seized upon mass circulation newspapers and loud­
speaker vans as the means of spreading doctrines often objec­
tionable to those in control of the regular party machinery.
By attempting to manipulate public opinion in this way Lloyd
George aroused great hostility; in the eyes of his enemies the
member for Carnarvon Boroughs, prince of demagogues, was far
advanced on the road to becoming the "Northern Mussolini."

3See his Empire to Welfare State: English History

4This phrase was used by Sir Henry Lunn in a letter
to Dr. T. R. Glover, February 9, 1927; see the Gilbert Murray
Papers, Box 7, at the Bodleian Library, Oxford.
CHAPTER I

THE ORIGINS OF THE LIBERAL REVIVAL, 1926-1927

One of the most striking phenomena of the early twentieth century is the decline of the British Liberal party and its displacement, as the party of the Left, by the Labour party. In the years between 1929 and 1929 David Lloyd George made a courageous effort to raise the Liberal party from its sick bed so that he could continue to play a large role upon the political stage. The resulting Liberal Revival transformed the party, which in 1918 seemed shattered forever, into a potent political force. Above all, Lloyd George's efforts contributed to the continued existence of a three-party system which seemed so alien to Britain's traditional two-party politics.

In the years before World War I the Liberal party was one of two major parties in the State. Under the inspired leadership of William Ewart Gladstone, Liberals carried through important reforms, such as the Third Reform Bill of 1884, which gave the vote to some two million agricultural laborers. But after the Grand Old Man announced his conversion to Home Rule for Ireland in 1885 many of his Radical supporters, led by Joseph Chamberlain, left to form a new Liberal Unionist party and subsequently to join
the Conservatives. Gladstone's decision on the Home Rule issue established an alliance between the Irish Nationalist party and the Liberals which endured until 1914. Indeed, Liberal majorities in the House of Commons often came to depend upon the votes of Irish M. P.'s.

Liberalism's Gladstonian synthesis included not only the Irish Home Rulers but also most English trade unionists. Despite the unauthorized Newcastle Programme of 1891, Liberals displayed little zeal in advancing purely working class interests; in particular, young laboring men found difficulty in securing adoption as Liberal candidates for Parliament. To represent trade union interests more effectively a separate Labour party was founded in 1900, and scored a substantial victory at the 1906 general election in collaboration with the Liberals.

During the Liberal government of 1905 to 1915, the Liberal party displayed considerable vigor in pressing the cause of reform. Under the premiership of Balliol-trained H. H. Asquith, Liberals successfully carried through the People's Budget of 1909 as well as the Parliament Act of 1911. The activities of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lloyd George, proved that the party could still stand for Radical reform; the Welsh statesman denounced dukes and landlords with what the governing class considered impeccably bad taste. In 1913 Lloyd George announced the beginning of
a crusade against the evils of landlordism; a Land Inquiry Committee was created to investigate the problems involved although it did not publish a report until 1914. The advent of Lloyd Georgian Radicalism seemed to assure the Liberals of a long future as a major party on the British Left.

World War I disrupted the normal pattern of political life and forced Lloyd George to abandon his incipient Land campaign. Demands for a more vigorous prosecution of the war led Asquith to admit Labour and Conservative leaders to his government in May 1915. Even as head of this First Coalition, Asquith seemed inadequate as a war leader and in December 1916 Lloyd George became Prime Minister with the backing of Conservative party leaders. Angered by what he regarded as Lloyd George's betrayal, Asquith had drifted into Opposition by the war's end. From 1918 to 1923 the Liberal party remained divided into two factions: those who followed Asquith and those who followed Lloyd George.

In addition to the split within the party, the Irish Nationalist and Labour parties broke away from Liberal direction. By the end of the war the old Irish Nationalist party (allied with the Liberals since the 1890's) had disappeared and M. P.'s representing Ireland ceased to sit at Westminster. The Labour party emerged from the "Coupon" election of 1918 as the largest of the Opposition parties; William Adamson, an important leader in the Labour party, declared that to
become H. M's Opposition all the Labourites needed was "two additional clerks, a typist and a messenger."¹

As Prime Minister in a largely Conservative Coalition government, Lloyd George flirted with the idea of a Centre party created by "the fusion of the two parties in the Coalition."² This plan was soon dropped but pacts were worked out between Lloyd George Liberals and Conservatives at the local level. At the 1920 municipal elections in Liverpool, for example, the city's Conservative party chief reported to the leader of the Conservatives: "For the first time, though not in actual alliance with, we worked in harmony with the Liberal party and it was a feature of our campaign that we opposed no Liberal and they opposed no Conservative."³ Such municipal pacts lasted until 1927 when they were broken by the Liberals under Lloyd George's leadership.

Liberal followers of Asquith, in common with the Labour party, opposed Lloyd George's Coalition but found it impossible to cooperate with Labour. Before the 1918 general election, Asquith approached Sidney Webb with an offer of cooperation in the constituencies against their common enemy.


³Ibid., 99/7/1.
"The Squithians were willing to give half & half," wrote Hugh Dalton, "But Labour refused."4 Left without allies and struggling against Lloyd George's immense prestige as the man who had won the war, the Asquith Liberals lost heavily in the general election. Most of their leaders went down to defeat, including Asquith who lost East Fife, a seat which he had held for over thirty years.

With the Labour party officially committed to a policy of socialism after 1918, it became difficult for Liberals to take a distinctive position. It was clear that the Coalition ("the Prime Minister and myself," as Bonar Law put it) was full of "determined opposition to the policy of the Labour Party in favour of the nationalization of land and industries."5 It was less clear how Asquith's position in the struggle between capitalism and socialism differed from that of the Government.

The very existence of the Coalition introduced considerable confusion into party politics, and even threatened the unity of the Conservative party. When Asquith was returned to Parliament at the Paisley by-election of 1920 he spent most of his energy attacking Socialism. Even though he was opposed by a Conservative, Asquith received open support

4Dalton Diary MS., entry for January 2, 1919, op. cit.

5Bonar Law to Sir George Younger, February 18, 1920 in the Bonar Law Papers, 96/3.
from a member of the Unionist Executive Committee. Here was a de facto alliance between the two capitalist parties which left the field of Left politics clear for Labour. Supporters of the Coalition claimed that "Mr. Asquith's return was assured by the support accorded to him by both Unionist and Liberal Coalitionists."

When the Conservatives broke up the Coalition in 1922, both wings of the Liberal party found themselves without allies and without a distinctive program. The Conservative party supported capitalism and the Labour party advocated socialism: in between lay the Liberal party which supported capitalism yet opposed the party of capitalism. In these circumstances most voters found the Liberal party irrelevant; as the Secretary of the Midland Liberal Federation lamented in 1922: "The most dreadful feature of our work during the past four years has been the difficulty of arousing any interest whatsoever."

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6Sir Archibald Salvidge to Bonar Law, February 12, 1920, 96/3 in ibid. complained that "Lord Chaplin, has sent a communication to Mr. Asquith wishing him success at Paisley and mind you, this from a member of the Executive Committee of the Unionist Party."

7Sir Archibald Salvidge, "A Political Future for Coalitions Only," Sunday Chronicle, February 29, 1920; a clipping of this article may be found in the Bonar Law Papers, 98/7/16.

From the low point of 1922, the Liberal party enjoyed some slight revival in the next two years. Stanley Baldwin, who became Prime Minister after Bonar Law's retirement, committed the Conservative party to a policy of Protective tariffs in 1923. As a result Asquith and Lloyd George joined forces in defending the traditional Liberal issue of Free Trade. The general election which followed yielded 158 seats to the Liberals, but left Labour as the largest Opposition party. Relying upon Liberal support, James Ramsay MacDonald formed Britain's first Labour government early in 1924. A lamentable Red Scare in the autumn of 1924 provoked the third general election in as many years; the Liberals were widely blamed for having placed a Socialist government in power. The number of Liberal M. P.'s fell to just 43 and Baldwin, having renounced Protection, returned as head of a Conservative government which held power until 1929. Once again the Liberals were left without an issue which differentiated them from the two other parties.

A system in which three parties competed for votes existed between 1923 and 1929, but most Liberals believed that the electoral system was unfair to the third party. They wished for a measure of electoral reform which would more effectively mirror Liberal voting strength. As the price of his support for the 1924 Labour government, Asquith demanded that Proportional Representation "should be brought
into actual operation in the course of the present year."\(^9\) But most Labour politicians including MacDonald had opposed such a measure ever since 1918 on the grounds that (as Hugh Dalton told his constituents) "it would hinder a return to a clear cut two Party division in the country."\(^10\) The Labour government refused to support electoral reform and the P. R. Bill failed in consequence to pass the House of Commons.

The Conservative party was, like the Labour party, unwilling to carry through any measure which might aid a Liberal revival. When the Liberals won only 43 seats at the 1924 election, Baldwin was jubilant at the prospect of a return to a two-party system. As he remarked to his intimates on the day that he returned to 10, Downing Street: "For some time I felt things were shaping themselves towards the disappearance of the Liberal Party, but I did not think it would come so quickly. The next step must be the elimination of the Communists by Labour. Then we shall have two Parties, the Party of the Right and the Party of the Left."\(^11\)

\(^9\)Asquith to MacDonald, May 1, 1924; this letter is to be found among the Cabinet Papers, CAB 23/48, Cabinet 29 (24) 5 at the Public Records Office, London.


Since the Liberal party was expected to disappear, Conservatives saw no reason why they should concede electoral reform—any more than MacDonald had in 1924. Instead, Central Office organizers attempted to win over individual Liberal voters to support the Conservative party. This policy required the utmost caution on the part of the Government if it were to avoid giving offense to traditionally Liberal groups in the constituencies. When the Baldwin government was considering introducing a Catholic Emancipation Bill, the Conservative agent for Lancashire and Cheshire wrote: "I have been struck since I came to Lancashire at the number of low Churchmen here who are Liberals, and this is just the type of question which might prevent those who are wavering at the present from definitely identifying themselves with our Party."\(^{12}\)

The three-party system did not exclude Liberals from some limited participation in affairs of state. When a major diplomatic crisis threatened in 1924, over the assassination of Sir Lee Stack in Egypt, the Conservative Cabinet voted to show Asquith "the telegrams which had passed, and to keep him fully informed."\(^{13}\) Such courteous treatment may have lulled

\(^{12}\)H. Robert Topping to the Principal Agent of the Conservative Party, January 22, 1926, in the Baldwin Papers, Volume 52, folio 25, in the Cambridge University Library.

\(^{13}\)See the Cabinet Papers, CAB 23/49, Cabinet 63 (24) a., November 24, 1924 at the Land Registry Office, London.
Asquith (now elevated to the House of Lords as the Earl of Oxford and Asquith) into accepting the situation in which the Liberal party found itself. He took comfort in the view that the three-party system had come to stay "at any rate within any distance of time that I can even in imagination measure."14

Asquith's passivity in the face of Liberal decline between 1924 and 1926 contrasted strongly with Lloyd George's views—even though Lord Oxford remained Leader of the party. The Welsh statesman, who held the office of Chairman of the Parliamentary Liberal party, believed that only extraordinary measures could prevent the small number of Liberal M. P.'s from dwindling still further. A great crusade was needed, in Lloyd George's view, to dramatize some issue unique to the Liberal party—an issue which would cut across the line between socialism and anti-socialism.

In these circumstances it was not surprising that the thoughts of many Liberals returned to Gladstone's success in his Midlothian campaign of 1880 when he had denounced the British government's attitude on the Eastern Question. The Gladstonian model seemed to offer the best chance for a Liberal revival in 1926 and had the additional advantage of reuniting the several factions of Liberals. In fact Sir Arthur Crosfield,

14Asquith spoke at Glasgow on March 18, 1926; see the Glasgow Herald press cutting for March 19, 1926 preserved among the Asquith MS., Volume 46, folio 160 at the Bodleian Library.
a Liberal foreign policy expert, wrote to Lloyd George suggesting that he take up the Eastern Question:

... is not justice to a Christian community in the Near East that has suffered terrible wrongs at the hands of the barbarian, as good a cause today as it was when Gladstone led the Heather in Midlothian just fifty years ago? Is not that a battle cry worthy of the Liberal Party and its best traditions, and well calculated to reunite it everywhere?15

Lloyd George had already attempted to repeat the success of Gladstone's revival of Liberalism in the 1880's. What is most remarkable in Lloyd George's conduct is his almost slavish imitation of the Gladstonian technique of organizing a press campaign to whip up Turcophobia in Britain. The Daily Chronicle was controlled by the Welshman and its foreign correspondent, Martin H. Donohoe, met in secret with the Liberal leader in the first week of January 1926. Recalling the success of the Daily News correspondent Macgahan in exposing the "Bulgarian Horrors" for Gladstone in 1876, Lloyd George said:

The conscience of England must be awakened, it is dormant. The traditions of Gladstone must be revived; the story of Turkish atrocities must be made to ring throughout the length and breadth of England until the people rising in their indignation insist on an end being put to the Turk and his bloody rule. I want you to be the Macgahan of this campaign. ...16

15Crosfield to Lloyd George, February 7, 1927 in the Lloyd George Papers at the Beaverbrook Library, G/5/7/33.

16The quoted words of Lloyd George are recorded in a letter sent by Donohoe to E. A. Perris (Editor of the Daily Chronicle) from Naples, January 6, 1925 in the R. C. K. Ensor Papers, Box 1926 in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Oxford.
Donohoe's mission was "to have some atrocity telegrams in print immediately after the reopening of British Parliament in February because they will probably give rise to a debate in the House." Free copies of the Daily Chronicle containing atrocity reports were to be sent to every parsonage and to every Christian organization in the British Isles.\textsuperscript{17}

Kurdish Christians, or "Chaldean Christians" as they were known, had been victims of the Turks since time immemorial. According to Donohoe's researches (which were printed in a series of articles in the Daily Chronicle during February 1926) these Christians were strict followers of John Wesley. A Kurdish Aga or headman testified in an exclusive interview that "we have heard much of Lloyd George who is a friend of the friendless."\textsuperscript{18} The Daily Chronicle helped things along with a leader entitled "The Unspeakable Turk" which essayed to plumb the depths of the Muslim soul.\textsuperscript{19} A campaign of relief was organized for these eastern Christians through the Assyrian and Iraq Christians Relief Committee.\textsuperscript{20}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{17}Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{18}Article by M. H. Donohoe in the Daily Chronicle, February 9, 1926, p. 9.
  \item \textsuperscript{19}Ibid., February 10, 1926, p. 6.
  \item \textsuperscript{20}See the statement by Herbert J. Ward, formerly secretary of the Chaldean Fund and a member of the Assyrian and Iraq Christian Relief Committee in ibid., February 11, 1926, p. 7.
\end{itemize}
campaign of 1876, a pamphlet, containing the whole series of Donohoe's articles, was published by the *Daily Chronicle*.21

Despite these extensive preparations Lloyd George's attempt to whip up Turcophobia aroused little interest among the electorate. The reasons for failure are not far to seek: the only large newspaper to support the campaign was the *Daily Chronicle*, and the Liberal party organization did not take up the issue. In effect, this was a pure case of newspaper Liberalism unsupported by organization. The campaign was a remarkable example of how Lloyd George tried to use the press to advance his personal policy without reference to the Liberal party. But the failure of the campaign marks the Welshman's turn away from pure Gladstonianism toward a more radical course based upon careful organizational preparation.

Lloyd George took up the Land Question at the precise point where he had dropped it in 1914. Many reasons impelled the Welsh statesman in this direction; chief among them was the fact that, as his biographer notes: "Love of country things was one of Lloyd George's most deeply rooted passions."22 In addition he had achieved his greatest triumphs as a politician, at the time of the 1909 "People's Budget" controversy, by attacking landlordism.

21See the advertisement in *ibid.*, p. 9.

Besides his personal predilection for land reform, Lloyd George knew from his own youthful experiences that agricultural laborers were often exploited by their landlords in ruthless fashion. Writing of the pre-war period, Henry Pelling notes that "one cannot but be impressed by the constant and unyielding influence of the large landowners, and the weakness and apathy of the labourers." Relatively unorganized and unattached to any political party, the agricultural laborers of Britain constituted an important source of votes which could aid in reviving the Liberal party.

Lloyd George took up the Land Question in order to give class coherence to the Liberal party; that is, he attempted to incorporate the agricultural laborer into a party organization. The Land and Nation League was founded by Lloyd George in 1925 with himself as president. It is clear that he was following the Labour party model of organization for almost all of the trade unions were affiliated with that party.


Similarly, the Land and Nation League was affiliated with the Liberal party although its membership belonged almost exclusively to one class. In January 1926 Lloyd George moved his political organization from Number 18, Abingdon Street to the offices of the Land and Nation League at 25 Old Queen Street. The move formalized his personal commitment to Land reform, and the Land campaign was pressed with new vigor.

The Land policy provided the answer to urban as well as rural problems; it was, argued E. D. Simon, preliminary to any attempt at new housing, slum clearance, or town planning. As Ramsay Muir put it: "We mean to reconstruct our urban civilisation, to transform the character of our towns, and to make use of the glorious opportunity which is being given to us by modern science and engineering, of substituting a clean and healthy diffused civilisation for the dirty and coagulated civilisation into which the industrial revolution thrust us." Here we have in a nutshell the Liberals' anti-industrial bias; we may call their attitude one of reconstructive Liberalism, because it aimed at correcting the evils of industrialism.

\[25\]Lloyd George moved on January 19 as reported in the Manchester Guardian, January 20, 1926, p. 9.


\[27\]Ibid.
The Land Campaign would also cure the ills of British rural life. Unlike France and other continental countries, Britain had never known land reform on a large scale. Hence little land had got into the hands of the British agricultural worker—a class which might be regarded in consequence as naturally Radical. Lloyd George proposed to rationalize the land system by taking control out of the hands of a few landowners and redistributing their acres to the laboring class. He even went so far as to charge that Britain contained a landless peasantry to the number of 900,000.28

Lloyd George saw the Land campaign as an alternative to the class consciousness of socialism. As he declared on January 30 at the Shrewsbury Music Hall: "I am pressing it as a national need, not as a class attack. (Cheers.) I am attacking no class."29 But even Lloyd George's closest Liberal followers found that difficult to believe. Sir Alfred Mond, a leading industrialist and Liberal M.P. for Carmarthen, declared "the policy of Socialism and land nationalisation—for which Mr. Lloyd George stands" were reasons enough

28See his speech at the Park Hotel in Cardiff on January 23, 1926 in the Manchester Guardian, January 25, 1926, p. 13. Letters to The Times questioning this assertion motivated Lloyd George to defend his statement in a letter to that journal on February 9, 1926, p. 15.

29See the Manchester Guardian, February 1, 1926, p. 3.
for leaving the Liberals. He joined the Conservatives (on January 26, 1926) one week before Parliament met.

The loss of a sitting Liberal's seat was a serious blow to the party—reducing its membership in the House of Commons from 42 to 41. Mond added insult to injury by announcing that he would retain the Carmarthen seat, although sitting as a Conservative, until the next general election. His opposition to the Land proposals was supported by a section of the local Liberal Association.

Leading Liberals were obviously upset over the Mond affair. Oxford's reply to Mond's letter of resignation was unusually tart: "I regret that, before you gave it publicity, you did not allow me the opportunity— as has been my unbroken experience in the case of communications of this kind— of seeing you, and discussing the matter with you." Walter Runciman thought Mond's departure would strengthen the party

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30 Mond's letter to Alderman John Lloyd, Chairman of the Carmarthenshire Liberal Association in ibid., February 3, 1926, p. 5.


32 The Times, July 13, 1926, p. 16. Each polling district in Carmarthenshire was represented in a deputation which called on Mond. The Manchester Guardian, February 4, 1926, p. 11 reported that a resolution made by Mr. John Hind asking for Mond's resignation was carried unanimously by the Executive of the Carmarthenshire Liberal Association.

although he added that he did not agree with the land proposals either.\textsuperscript{34}

Lloyd George compared Mond to Judas: "Like another notorious member of his race he has gone to his own place."\textsuperscript{35} The reference is to the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles wherein is described the choosing of Matthias to take up the discipleship "from which Judas fell, that he might go to his own place." This remark was widely regarded as anti-Semitic and Lloyd George was forced to declare, on January 30, that he personally had the greatest admiration for the Jewish race "and nothing fills me with greater contempt than to see newspapers drenched with anti-Semitism trying to make political capital out of criticism which I passed upon a certain member of that race."\textsuperscript{36}

The Land campaign caused a crisis of conscience in other M. P.'s as well. Captain F. E. Guest, Liberal member for North Bristol, declared that "he must dissociate himself from the land policy of Mr. Lloyd George, because it was Socialistic, unwanted, unnecessary, and disintegrating to the

\textsuperscript{34}Runciman addressing the Eighty Club at the National Liberal Club on January 26 as reported in the \textit{Daily Telegraph}, January 27, 1926, p. 12.

\textsuperscript{35}\textit{Ibid.}, January 27, 1926, p. 11.

\textsuperscript{36}In responding to a vote of thanks proposed by Joseph Sunlight, ex-M. P. for Shrewsbury and a Jew, at a public meeting. \textit{Manchester Guardian}, February 1, 1926, p. 4.
Liberal Party. Yet Guest remained within the party, although he afterwards always voted with the Conservatives. Lieutenant-Commander E. Hilton Young resigned the Liberal Whip in order to act independently. He warned that the Land policy "must result in the Liberal Party becoming the ally of the Socialist Party or its tool." Apparently true Liberalism was to be found among the Tories for Hilton Young joined that party soon after the General Strike.

The real beginning of the Liberal Revival came with the Land Reform Conference held in London at the Kingsway Hall on February 17-19, 1926. Considerable effort was made to involve the Liberal working class in the proceedings; in an interview with the Manchester Guardian, Lloyd George suggested that Liberal newspapers organize a fund to pay the expenses of working class delegates to the conference. He insisted that three-fourths of all Liberal supporters came from the working class, but admitted that, because of the expense of travelling, only five percent of that class

37Guest addressed his constituents on March 6 in this wise; see The Times, March 8, 1926, p. 9.

38See Hilton Young's letter of resignation to Lord Oxford dated February 19 in ibid., February 22, 1926, p. 14. The Daily Telegraph of February 20, 1926, p. 11 reported that Young had been supported at the last general election by the Unionist Association in Norwich; thus this action came as no surprise.

ever appeared at Liberal conferences.  

The National Liberal Federation declared itself "prepared to make a grant towards such expenses, of not exceeding £5, to the funds of any Constituency Association outside London which appoints at least one such delegate" from the working class. A voucher for reduced railway rates of a single fare and one-third was provided to every delegate. In these circumstances a considerable number of manual workers attended the conference and some even spoke. In all the number of delegates was over 1500; 464 constituencies out of a total 510 for England and Wales appointed three delegates each.

Up until 1926 the Land campaign was the personal property of one politician. At the Land Conference it became the policy of the Liberal party: one which would enable the party to break out of the Celtic fringe areas and win votes in southern and urban Britain. For a demographic shift had taken place which was driving people from the fringes to southern England; from the country to the town. C. F. G. Masterman, president of the Conference, advised the delegates

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40Ibid.

41On the £5 grant and the railway voucher see H. F. Oldman's (Secretary of the NLF) letter to the local Liberal associations dated January 15, 1926 in Report of the Liberal Land Conference (London: Liberal Publication Department, 1926), p. 8.

to "remember eight out of every hundred of the citizens of this country live in the towns and it is the need of the towns which is predominant at the present moment."43

Apparently a commuter suburb such as Dorking was the latest version of a Liberal utopia. As Dr. T. J. Macnamara, a follower of Lloyd George, confided to the conference:

Now from the slums of every great city you have to thrust out big broad roads to the outer part of this region where land is cheap, where houses, therefore, can get elbowroom, where the women and children can live in God's good fresh air, and where the increment value which would accrue therefrom, or a fair share of it, will belong to the community and not to the landlord.44

Complaints against the stranglehold of urban landlords were aired before the Conference. One delegate invited the assembly to take the case of London. The ground all round Victoria Station up to Hyde Park corner is the Duke of Westminster's estate—leasehold. . . . If you round Bloomsbury you have the Duke of Bedford's estate. I tell you, ladies and gentlemen, the residential part of London, some of the best streets for shops, are in the hollow of the hands of the ground landlords.45

A new urban Liberalism was proposed by the Land Conference to redress "the suffering inflicted on the population of our towns by the land monopoly." Rating of land

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44For Macnamara's speech see ibid., February 17, p. 35.

45Miss Alison Garland's speech on February 17 in ibid., pp. 37-8.
values, town-planning, a "Leasehold Tribunal" to aid tenants in renegotiating leases, arterial roads to carry urban dwellers to the country were advocated in resolutions passed by the Conference. Regional authorities--composed of groups of Local Authorities--were to be created to carry out these plans.46

The social composition of the Land Conference was largely middle-class and did not represent the agricultural laborer, as C. F. G. Masterman complained.47 Lloyd George cited the collection of £125 at the Conference as proving that only a few laborers attended. Laborers could never have given that much money and he estimated that not more than a dozen were present.48

Attempts to keep the sessions of the conference secret from the newspapers failed. On the second day of the conference a regrettable incident occurred between W. M. H. Pringle, a follower of Asquith, and Major Leslie Hore-Belisha, M. P. and a prominent Lloyd Georgite. Pringle accused

46See the resolutions adopted by the Land conference in the Liberal Magazine (March, 1926), 143-4 and the Daily News, February 20, 1926, p. 7.

47C. F. G. Masterman in Reynolds; February 21, 1926 as quoted in Gleanings, LXIII (April, 1926), 393.

48Lloyd George as reported in the Daily News, February 22, 1926, p. 7. He claimed that some of the best speeches at the conference were made by the agricultural workers.
Hore-Belisha of leaking an account of the conference proceedings to the *Evening Standard*. The latter denied the accusation with vigor and gave pertinence to his argument by slapping Pringle's face.\(^{49}\) Needless to say, the incident was thoroughly reported next day in the press. The General Secretary of the Land and Nation League, in a letter to *The Times*, was at pains to point out that the quarrel was a purely personal matter which had nothing at all to do with the Land policy.\(^{50}\)

On the rural side, the Land conference declared that every farm worker should have a statutory right to half an acre of land. An Agricultural Authority in each county would have the power to take over ill-used land for the benefit of the farm worker.\(^{51}\) The proposals were radical in nature and unacceptable to most landowners, but the "socialist" element was no longer prominent. The Land Conference performed the important function of translating the Lloyd George land policy into a Liberal land policy.

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\(^{49}\) *Daily Mail*, February 20, 1926, p. 9. The *Daily Telegraph* reported that Harcourt Johnstone questioned the desirability of a delegate combining the functions of delegate and journalist (February 20, 1926, p. 11). A detailed account of the "violent scene" can be found in the *Manchester Guardian*, February 20, 1926, p. 11. Hore-Belisha claimed: "I smacked his face as a challenge."

\(^{50}\) See *W. McG.Eagar's* letter of February 27 to *The Times*, March 2, 1926, p. 12.

\(^{51}\) See the summary of the conference in the *Liberal Magazine*, "Notes of the Month" (March, 1926), 131.
The Daily Chronicle, for February 10, reported that a fleet of land campaign motor vans had been organized (by the Land and Nation League) to spread the message throughout the country. Slogans on the vans read "Our Land," "The Land for the People," and more explicitly "Land Reform means Freedom for all who work in Town and Country." One side of the van let down automatically and there appeared, as if by Druidical magic, a speaker's rostrum.52

Newspapers as well as campaign vans were used to create public opinion favorable to the Land campaign. A letter from Albert C. White of the League's Press Department was circulated to various persons asking them to write to the newspapers on land reform as we are anxious to increase public interest in these questions by widespread correspondence in London and Suburban Press. . . . Will you be good enough to write, for circulation to the newspapers, a short letter dealing if possible with one or more concrete cases of injustice within your knowledge? Alternatively, if you cannot find time for this, would you be prepared to sign a letter, drafted in this office and based upon information in our possession, to the same purpose? There is growing evidence in trade journals and elsewhere of a growing feeling on this matter which only needs stimulating in order to create an effective public opinion.53

52 The vans are described in the Daily Chronicle, February 10, 1926, p. 7.

53 With a display of righteous indignation this attempt to manufacture support for Land reform was exposed in The Times, March 1, 1926, p. 14.
In fact a good deal of the debate over the Liberal Land policy proved difficult, because of its highly technical nature, to present to the public in forms easy to understand. At a sitting of the House of Commons on November 30, 1926, Lloyd George argued with Walter Guiness (Minister of Agriculture) "as to the method employed by valuers in calculating the capital value of agricultural land, as, for example, in cases of acquisition of land for the purpose of small holding." Guiness suggested that the President of the Surveyors' Institute be asked to give an impartial opinion, a challenge which Lloyd George accepted. The Daily Chronicle duly reported this event under the somewhat disingenuous title of "The Capital Value of Agricultural Land: The Challenge by Mr. Lloyd George."54

The trouble with the Land campaign lay in the fact that detailed proposals put forth by the Liberals called forth detailed responses from opponents. Much of the propaganda used by the Liberals was refuted by Government experts on essentially minor points. This kind of controversy did not create sensational stories in the mass media of the

54See E. A. Perris, editor of the Daily Chronicle, to Lloyd George, December 6, 1926 which enclosed a press release from P. A. London News Agency; included was a copy of the Daily Chronicle's story on the Guiness-Lloyd George debate from which the above quotations are taken. This document may be found among the Lloyd George Papers held by the R. Hon. Earl of Dwyfor at his home, Brimpton Mill, near Newbury, Berkshire.
press, and Liberal assumptions that the public would be able to follow the debate seemed hopelessly naive. The voting public in Edwardian days may have been interested in detailed political debate, but it was out of place in the bustling post war world.

The Land and Nation League set up a "school" at Oxford in September which trained nearly a hundred staff speakers in how to present the case for Land Reform. Those who lectured at the school included: W. McG. Eagar (Secretary of the Land and Nation League), W. R. Davidge (President of the Town Planning Institute), F. D. Acland, Ramsay Muir, and Ernest Brown. Graduates of the school scattered to the provinces to train local voluntary speakers. In each of the ten Liberal Federations into which Britain was divided, a lecturer visited five days a week. The lectures were open to all Liberal workers and (claimed a party spokesman) "at least one of them will be devoted to the women's point of view and will be given by a woman." In this way the revival of the Liberal local parties began.

The controversy over the Liberal land proposals spurred the other two parties to develop their own policies. The Ministry of Agriculture presented the Government's program

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55See *The Times*, September 7, 1926, p. 9.

56See *ibid.*, for a list of places where lectures were given, November 20, 1926, p. 9.
In a pamphlet entitled *Agricultural Policy*.\(^{57}\) In July, 1926 the Labour party entered the lists somewhat tardily with *A Labour Policy on Agriculture*. Obviously the Liberal land policy was a threat to the Labour party in rural areas. A member of the ILP who was also a prominent farmer, thought that the Liberals might regain lost ground in the West Country since "The Labour Party and the ILP have not yet discovered a good economic policy for these small towns & rural constituencies."\(^{58}\)

In 1927 the Land campaign swung into high gear. Dr. Joseph Hunter, a Dumfries physician, resigned his practice to take up a position as propaganda chief for the Land and Nation League. He emphasized that a new tactic of procuring voluntary speakers would be introduced: "I know of hundreds of men and women who would gladly take a meeting a week to help on the cause of Liberalism, if only they felt sure of their subject." The Land and Nation League, Hunter claimed, was to be made into "a great university" for people who wished to campaign; he called for a volunteer army of 2,000 workers to meet their goal.\(^{59}\)

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\(^{59}\)Quoted in the *Daily Chronicle*, January 5, 1927, p. 4.
The league was extremely active in spreading propaganda. It issued weekly a set of "Speaker's Notes" and the *Land News*, an illustrated monthly, had a circulation of 200,000. From January until August of 1927 over 7,836 land meetings were held; in August nearly 1,500 meetings took place, and in one week in September a record of 294 meetings was achieved. Ten thousand meetings were held per year in 1926 and 1927; and 13 motor vans covered 200,000 miles in 1927. Local land conferences were convened and studies of rural problems, such as housing and marketing of produce, were published. The *Daily Chronicle* described the land campaign as the most systematic propaganda campaign Britain had seen since the days of the Anti-Corn Law League, and boasted that press space devoted to land problems had increased by 40 per cent since 1925.

Labour held its own Land Nationalization Conference, in imitation of the Liberals, in London on February 26, 1927.

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60 For the circulation of the *Land News* see ibid., April 6, 1927, p. 7.

61 For the figures on motor vans and meetings, see the statement of Earl Beauchamp, September 22, in "Political Notes," *The Times*, September 24, 1927, p. 10. The claim of 10,000 meetings per year was made in the *Daily Chronicle*, January 5, 1927, p. 4.


63 April 6, 1927, p. 4.
At the Conference Philip Snowden (Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer) declared that his party planned a special appeal to rural constituencies at the next general election; without rural votes, he said, there could be no Labour majority. When the Government met the challenge by introducing a Landlord and Tenant Bill designed to make life easier for rural tenants, the Daily Chronicle complained of "unabashed borrowing" from the Liberal land proposals. As a West Country farmer wrote: "A lot of farmers are very discontented with the Government. If the Liberals had any unity they might win some seats in the S-W and for practical purposes I think their land policy as good as the Labour one--better if one is out to catch the farmer's vote. I should not wonder if Devonshire went Liberal at the next election."

Behind the scenes Sir Herbert Samuel, a former Cabinet minister who became chief of the Liberal party organization in 1927, sought to modify the Radicalism inherent in the Land campaign. He objected to explicit commitment on the part of candidates to land reform: "The power of the agricultural authority to take over badly cultivated land

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65 April 9, 1927, p. 8.

66 Arthur F. Grenfell to R. C. K. Ensor, October 2, 1927 in the Ensor Papers, Box 1927, Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Grenfell was a member of the I. L. P.
might be mentioned only incidentally, if at all. It is an unimportant matter while it is the one point which allows our opponents to claim that the Liberal policy is one of official control of agriculture. This was an objection which troubled many Liberals who feared bureaucratic interference with agriculture.

On the whole the Liberals were correct in their assessment of the rural situation as Table 1 shows. There was a steady decline in Britain's capacity to grow her own food from the middle of the nineteenth century until 1926. In England and Wales the number of acres under tillage fell from 11,713 in 1866 to 7,999 in 1926. This was a drop of over 30 per cent. Lloyd George based his argument for reversing this trend upon his wartime experience, asserting that "we starved Germany before Germany succeeded in starving us."68

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68See his speech to Carnarvonshire farmers at Pwllheli on April 20 in the Daily Chronicle, April 21, 1927, p. 3.
### TABLE 1
TILLAGE IN GREAT BRITAIN IN THOUSANDS OF ACRES (1866-1936)\(^a\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>England and Wales</th>
<th>Scotland</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>11,713</td>
<td>2,124</td>
<td>13,837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>11,380</td>
<td>2,116</td>
<td>13,495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>10,330</td>
<td>2,037</td>
<td>12,387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>9,283</td>
<td>1,930</td>
<td>11,213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>8,648</td>
<td>1,877</td>
<td>10,526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>8,407</td>
<td>1,823</td>
<td>10,230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>7,999</td>
<td>1,710</td>
<td>9,708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>7,370</td>
<td>1,573</td>
<td>8,942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>6,981</td>
<td>1,546</td>
<td>8,527</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The Land and Nation League offered a meaningful public role to aspiring orators. Ernest Brown, who won the first by-election victory of the Liberal Revival in 1927, was the best speaker produced by the Land campaign. Public debates aroused by the Land proposals seemed to make the Liberal party relevant to the problems of the day— at least in 1926-27. A comparison with Lloyd George's attempt to revive the Eastern Question may make the importance of the Land Campaign clear. In the former campaign he made use of the press to stir up public opinion, but the Nonconformist churches (as used by Gladstone) failed to supply the communications substructure which was wanted. The decline of Nonconformity
as a prop for Liberalism could only be remedied if some other support were found. This was where the Land and Na-
tion League came in: it supplied an organizational struc-
ture which carried propaganda to people who ordinarily might never read a Liberal newspaper. The League's fleet of motor vans were ideally suited to spreading Liberalism throughout the vast spaces of the county constituencies; the vans acted as a communications sub-structure for the Liberal revival. To collapse history into an epigram: Lloyd George exchanged the pulpit for the campaign van as a means of supplementing his newspaper propaganda.

Land reform schemes might divide Liberals from one another, but stricter control of the Drink traffic was an issue upon which all Liberal agreed. Liberals had done much to bring the "Trade" under control before and during the War, but it was felt, according to the Daily Chronicle, that post-war conditions required a restatement of temperance policy. Lloyd George argued for temperance reform, not on moral grounds but on grounds of national efficiency. In a speech at Holyhead (on August 23, 1926) he charged that the country spent £315 millions annually on alcoholic beverages—and

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69 See the Daily Chronicle, January 21, 1926, p. 4.
that the nation's drink bill drained money away from productive purposes.70

America's seeming success at ending the Drink trade by means of Prohibition provided a moral example for the Liberals. The Women's National Liberal Federation passed a resolution arguing that "in view of the present economic condition of this country and recent experience in the United States, it is desirable that the Liberal Party should take into consideration Prohibition as a solution of the Drink Problem."71 Speaking at Bromley on October 31 Sir Donald Maclean, a follower of Asquith, said that the voters read a great deal about the failure of prohibition in America, but he wished "in fairness they could be told how much of the abounding prosperity of that country was due to the restrictions on drink."72

Liberals undertook research into the evils of Drink even though the National Liberal Federation had not yet adopted a resolution favoring temperance reform. In January 1926 the Temperance Committee of the Liberal and Radical

70See the report in ibid., August 24, 1926, p. 4 Lloyd George claimed that the four great issues of the day were World Peace, Drink, Industrial Peace, and Land.

71See the report of the Eighth Annual WNLF Council meeting in London, June 22-3, 1926 in the Liberal Magazine, XXXIV (August, 1926), 467.

72Quoted from the Manchester Guardian, November 1, 1926, p. 13.
Candidates' Association, a body dominated by followers of Asquith, announced that it would conduct a Temperance Inquiry. A reference library was to be collected on the subject and investigators were sent around Britain and to other countries to gather information. This is evidence of the new urgency attached to the Drink Question by the younger generation of Liberals.

The Liberal Summer School movement sent out questionnaires on the Drink Question to 800 Liberal organizations and "many thousands of individual Liberals." The object was to find out the state of opinion within the party. Most Liberals, it turned out, believed that "poverty, crime and disease are related to that of drink" although opinion was divided as to whether drink was a cause or effect. An objection to temperance reform was felt to be that "you cannot make people good by act of Parliament." Social drinking was regarded by most Liberals as harmful, although a minority felt the habit to be beneficial "or it would not be as general as it is among intelligent men and women."

Prohibition was rejected by most Liberals although the principle of local option received majority support.

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73 F. C. Thornborough was chairman of the Temperance Committee; for the material in this paragraph see "Notes of the Month," Liberal Magazine, XXXIV (March, 1926), 137.

74 See The Times, July 13, 1926, p. 11.
On the question of public ownership of the drink trade Liberal opinion divided, but most believed that it should come piece meal. Satisfactory results, declared the majority, "cannot be hoped for while the drink trade remains in private hands." Legislation to eliminate bogus private clubs was favored, although the proposal that all clubs should be open to unrestricted right of entry by the police was considered objectionable. There was a certain contradiction in Liberal thought between individual freedom and collective prohibition. Witness this passage from the Liberal Magazine on the Drink Question:

In the Liberal Party we are all for reasonable liberty in personal habits; but we regard the present consumption of intoxicating drink as a danger to the State; and we are therefore in favour of the continuation of those restrictions that have tended to reduce consumption, and we persist in our long standing advocacy of local option.

Liberal arguments against Drink were weakened by Government statistics as shown in Table 2. Despite an increase in Britain's population the number of public houses per 10,000 persons had declined; in 1895 there were 33.94 pubs per 10,000; in 1926 the figure had fallen to only 20.44 per 10,000. In fact the assault on Drink was a way of attacking the Conservative party, for the brewers were

75Ibid.

76"Notes of the Month," Liberal Magazine (April, 1927), 207.
mainstays of Tory party finance. On any account beer (in the view of most Liberals) was the opiate of the people.

**TABLE 2**

**NUMBER OF ON-LICENSES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>% per 10,000 of population</th>
<th>Decrease during preceding period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>103,341</td>
<td>33.94</td>
<td>1,152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>102,189</td>
<td>31.69</td>
<td>2,711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>99,478</td>
<td>29.27</td>
<td>6,994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>92,484</td>
<td>25.84</td>
<td>5,858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>86,626</td>
<td>23.22</td>
<td>567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>80,420</td>
<td>20.68</td>
<td>560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>79,860</td>
<td>20.44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All these statistics are from "Licensing Statistics, 1926; Statistics as to the Operation and Administration of the Laws relating to the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors in England and Wales for the Year 1926," (London: H. M Stationery Office, 1926), Cmd. 2913, p. iii.*

Asquith's followers were more enthusiastic about pressing for Temperance Reform than those of Lloyd George. The Anti-Drink campaign proposed by the Liberal and Radical Candidates' Association underscored the unwillingness of the Old Liberals to come to grips with postwar issues. Their decision to undertake a Temperance Inquiry as a means of solving the social problem seems more redolent of the age of Charles Darwin than that of Charlie Chaplin.
Perhaps the most important result of the Anti-Drink campaign was the stimulus it gave for conducting the first survey of opinion inside the party ever attempted. Annual party opinion polls became a fixture of the Liberal Revival; they culminated in the National Liberal Survey of 1929 which attempted to locate every Liberal in the British Isles. In their use of the new tool of opinion polls the Liberals were as up to date as could be desired, but it also betrayed their tendency to concentrate upon influencing opinion at the expense of building up party organization.

The search for a reservoir of votes for the Liberal Revival led Lloyd George Radicals almost naturally to attempt to develop a Liberal working class movement. As early as January 7, 1926 Colonel Thomas F. Tweed, chief of Lloyd George's political organization, proposed "the creation of political associations other than Socialist within the unions, promoting candidatures of trade unionists, irrespective of whether they were Liberals, Conservatives, or Socialists." 77 C. F. G. Masterman asserted that most trade union members were not Socialists, but rather wished only for such Liberal items as good wages, security of employment, and equal opportunity. 78

77Tweed spoke on "Liberals and Trade Unionism" at Manchester; see the Manchester Guardian, January 8, 1926, p. 11.

78Masterman in the Sunday Express, January 24 as quoted in Gleanings, LXIII (March, 1926), 289.
On April 6, 1926 the Executive of the NLF adopted a series of recommendations with the objective of organizing Liberal trade unionists. Undoubtedly some working class Liberals existed but it was difficult to determine their numbers or their mood. Nonetheless, the advent of the General Strike in May virtually forced newspapers and politicians to examine more closely the views held by members of the working class. By August Frank H. Abrahams, a trade unionist, could write to The Times suggesting that the Liberal party adopt 50 trade unionist candidates for the next general election.

The National Conference of Liberal Trade Unionists was held on September 18 at Caxton Hall; it was chaired by the President of the NLF, J. A. Spender. An important object of the meeting was to consider a draft constitution for an organization to be called the National League of Liberal Trade Unionists. Some 242 delegates from 67 unions, including several women, attended from all parts of England and Wales. At the morning session the Welsh delegates demanded that the

79 The Times, April 6, 1926, p. 7.
80 Ibid., August 31, 1926, p. 13.
81 Daily News, September 20, 1926, p. 10. Apart from Spender only trade unionists participated in the conference.
82 The Manchester Guardian, September 20, 1926, p. 9. The journal lists the 67 unions that were represented.
political levy be divided among the three parties on the basis of membership in the unions. This demand was rejected by the conference—it being resolved that the League should "merely advise and help members in all matters connected with the political levy." The Conference also resolved that local trade union groups were to be affiliated to the local constituency associations, as this would provide a middle class brake up on working class Radicalism. 83

The officers of the League had all attained the honor of being appointed Justices of the Peace; the chairman was Fred Maddison, who had served as chairman of the Trade Union Congress in 1886. The Honorary Secretary was Arthur Peters, C. B. E., who once upon a time had been chief agent for the Labour party. Maddison belonged to the London Society of Compositors; the vice-chairman, Walter Stonestreet, was a member of the National Union of Operative and Domestic Engineers and General Metal Workers. The Honorary Treasurer was Henry Vivian—an ex-M. P. from the prewar period. 84

The Executive Committee of the National League of Liberal Trade Unionists represented the nine major geographic

83 My source for the previous paragraph is the official statement issued by the National Conference of the Liberal Trade Unionists which appeared in *The Times*, September 20, 1926, p. 11. The resolutions passed by the conference can also be found in the *Daily News*, September 20, 1926, p. 10.

84 The *Liberal Magazine*, XXXIV (October, 1926), 577.
areas of England and included a tenth representative for Wales. Unions represented on the Executive included the Railway Clerks' Association, the Amalgamated Engineering Union, the Lancashire and Cheshire Miners' Federation, the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers, the National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers, the British Iron, Steel, and Kindred Trades Association, and the Railway Workers.\textsuperscript{85}

The \textit{Daily News} stated that more than 100 constituency groups of Liberal trade unionists had been established in England and Wales—and that the next target was Scotland.\textsuperscript{86}

The League's Executive committee met in London on November 6 and issued a "Manifesto to British Trade Unionists" which denounced the connection of the unions with the Labour party. The Manifesto promised to aid trade unionists in securing exemption from the political levy, denounced "the disastrous blunder of the General Strike," and stated that co-partnership was the goal of the League.\textsuperscript{87}

The National League of Liberal Trade Unionists never became very successful. It is important only as an indication of a new Lloyd Georgian commitment to try to win industrial workers over to Liberalism. Liberal propaganda

\textsuperscript{85}The \textit{Manchester Guardian}, September 20, 1926, p. 9.

\textsuperscript{86}November 8, 1926, p. 8.

\textsuperscript{87}See the \textit{Liberal Magazine}, (December, 1926), 719-21.
campaigns on the Eastern Question, the Land Question, and the Temperance Question seemed in 1926 to belong only to the politics of nostalgia. Liberals, and Lloyd George too, had simply revived prewar political issues without bothering to seek new approaches to the greatly different dilemmas of the 1920's. It is no wonder that many people saw the Liberals as old-fashioned. But with the creation of the National League of Liberal Trade Unionists, it was plain that Lloyd George was leaving the Land issue for an attack upon problems raised by urbanized and industrialized Britain.

Although the Liberal programs adumbrated during 1926 seemed old-fashioned compared to those of the two other parties, Lloyd George had succeeded in modernizing his party's approach to propaganda. His attempt at using the Daily Chronicle to whip up feeling against Turkish atrocities proved a dismal failure, but he had learned one valuable lesson: that a newspaper campaign unsupported by a political party could not hope to succeed. In consequence he turned toward a new and distinctively modern means of propaganda which assisted the Liberal party's revival rather than merely his own. These were the campaign vans which, with their loud speakers, carried the message of Land reform into nearly every constituency. For in Lloyd George's view, vigorous propaganda and an attractive program were the keys to Liberal survival (if not Liberal Revival) within the three-party system.
Previous struggles between Asquith and Lloyd George had left the question of party leadership unresolved. Over persuaded by his followers, Asquith hung on to the party leadership even after his defeat at Paisley in 1924—although age had considerably weakened his powers. In 1926 he was 74 years old while Lloyd George was a mere 63. The advent of the General Strike brought the Asquith-Lloyd George question to a head.

Asquith, Simon, and the rest of the Shadow Cabinet sided with the Government. Lloyd George broke with his erstwhile colleagues and took a middle position, condemning the Government for allowing the Strike to happen. He went so far as to write an article, published in the New York American on May 9, 1926, predicting dire results from the strike.\(^1\) In taking this stand he clearly went against the majority of the Liberal leaders; even H. A. L. Fisher, an adherent of Lloyd George made a statement in Parliament that he considered both the General Strike and the Government's announcement that it would not negotiate as mistakes. His statement was quoted in the Westminster Gazette, May 4, 1926, p.3.

\(^{1}\)A clipping of the article is preserved in the Herbert Samuel Papers, A/66, folio 59 in the House of Lords Record Office.
George, believed the Shadow Cabinet's stand to be correct. The Radical Group of Liberals, led by Runciman, issued a manifesto condemning the General Strike "as an offense against the community." These terms are much the same as Asquith's and Simon's denunciation of the strike. Asquith denounced the strike in the House of Lords on May 4 and Simon--speaking as a lawyer--called it an illegal act. Both of these speeches were printed in the British Gazette, but a speech by Lloyd George in Parliament was somehow overlooked.

As all of the London Liberal journals were shut down, Lloyd George attempted to set up his own newspaper in order to counter propaganda emanating from the Government's British Gazette. On May 5, Sir Godfrey Collins, the Chief Whip, had suggested to the Daily News that a newspaper setting forth the Liberal view of the General Strike might be published outside London. Lloyd George took up this idea--after Collins dropped it--and secured the assistance of the Liberal Luton News and Bedfordshire Advertiser. The Luton News proprietors

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3Manchester Guardian, May 12, 1926, p. 3.

4Comments and the text of Simon's speech can be found in the British Gazette, May 10, 1926, p. 4; Asquith's speech in the Lords is reported in ibid., May 8, 1926, p. 1.
refused to accept a statement in a proposed leading article that "The Government had declared war" and the scheme was given up.⁵ An example of the kind of article which was to have appeared is the following piece by Lloyd George:

**OUR POLICY**

**NEGOTIATIONS MUST BE RESUMED**

The object of this paper is two-fold. It is to place before the public, firstly, uncoloured news, and, secondly, a policy which is independent in the sense that it is not dictated by any of the parties in the present struggle, but expresses, as we believe, the real mind of a great and growing body of citizens who have no axe to grind and no desire except to save their country from the appalling dangers which menace it.⁶

Asquith Liberals were mightily shocked when they learned what Lloyd George had tried to do in Luton. W. M. R. Pringle, an ardent follower of Asquith, charged that the Luton newspaper had intended to suppress Asquith's May 4 speech in the House of Lords which condemned the Strike.⁷ Contrary to the received interpretation of these events, it was not Lloyd George's American article or his refusal to attend a Shadow

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⁵See the Manchester Guardian, May 15, 1926, p. 7 and the Daily News, May 18, 1926, p. 9 which contain letters from those concerned in the Luton venture.

⁶The Luton News published this article after the General Strike was over on June 3; it was quoted in The Times, June 4, 1926, p. 16 and the Manchester Guardian, June 4, 1926, p. 9.

⁷See Pringle's speech at Dunstable on May 29 as reported in The Times, May 31, 1926, p. 9.
Cabinet meeting, which determined Asquith to break with him—it was the Luton affair.

Outraged that Lloyd George had revolted against the party again, the supporters of Asquith plotted his downfall. On the afternoon of May 18, a private meeting was held at Asquith's town house in 44, Bedford Square. Among those present were Simon, Runciman, Lord Beauchamp, Buckmaster, Buxton, Maclean, Collins, Vivian Phillipps, Pringle, and Sir Robert Hudson. The meeting agreed unanimously that Asquith should write to Lloyd George in strong terms, although Asquith insisted the letter "must be so framed as to put Lloyd George in the wrong if it had to be published."  

On May 20 Asquith sent his letter to Lloyd George denouncing the latter's articles in the American press and his refusal to attend a meeting of the Shadow Cabinet: "Your refusal to do so I find impossible to reconcile with my conception of political comradeship."  Lloyd George's reply, dated May 24, emphasized his desire for party unity and said that he had throughout the General Strike "given what I considered to be the best advice to my countrymen as one who has

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8 For a description of the meeting see Hudson's letter to Gladstone of May 18, 1926 in the Herbert Gladstone Papers, British Museum Add. MSS. 46475, CXXXVI, 194.

9 See the copy in the Asquith Papers, Volume 35, folios 226-8 in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.
taken part often in the accommodation of industrial disputes in Campbell-Bannerman's Government, yours and my own."\(^{10}\)

Because of late posting Lloyd George's reply failed to reach Oxford in time and Oxford's letter was sent to the press. Lloyd George followed suit.\(^{11}\) The London Liberal Candidates' Association passed a resolution on June 2 deploring both the publication of the Earl of Oxford-Lloyd George correspondence and any attempt to remove Lloyd George from councils of the Liberal party.\(^{12}\) Beatrice Webb noted in her diary that Asquith's intemperate letter has "smashed to smithereens" the Liberal party and might presage Lloyd George's coming over to Labour.\(^{13}\) Asquith regarded Lloyd George's letter of reply

\(^{10}\) Lloyd George's letter is preserved in ibid., Volume 35, folios 230-40.

\(^{11}\) Lloyd George described the circumstances of the late posting in a speech at Llandudno Junction on May 26 as reported in The Times, May 27, 1926, p. 8. The son of C. P. Scott described his father's collusion with Lloyd George upon this occasion: "I was present at the mtg of May 21, 1926, when C. P. blue pencilled L. G. with almost as little regard for his feelings as he would have shown to a leader writer on trial. L. G. would interrupt now and then with explanations about the sharpness of the sting that was being withdrawn. But he submitted with extraordinary good humour." E. T. Scott to J. L. Hammond (the only date on this letter is "1932") in the Hammond Papers, C. 34, item 146 in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

\(^{12}\) Letter signed by Major H. L. Nathan and H. Heathcote Williams on June 3 in the Asquith Papers, Volume 18, folio 115.

as "equivalent to resignation" from the Shadow Cabinet.\textsuperscript{14}

One Liberal put it nicely when she wrote: "and now they are saying 'Poor Lloyd George!' Asquith is hard on him etc."\textsuperscript{15}

Lloyd George was plainly shocked by Asquith's strong line; as he lamented to Lady Beauchamp: "I never thought Oxford capable of this kind of thing."\textsuperscript{16}

The Liberals who followed Asquith were jubilant at the prospect of getting rid of Lloyd George. J. A. Spender, the noted Liberal editor, complained that "a lot of flipperty young people who haven't an idea what he is like" were backing Lloyd George--along with the rather older \textit{Nation} and \textit{Manchester Guardian}.\textsuperscript{17} C. P. Scott, editor of the latter journal, viewed the controversy in this light: "There is no doubt that his [Lloyd George's] position in the party is threatened. Of course journalism is not his job and he ought not to have been tempted to earn money in that way. But aside from that general objection I don't think the American article is open to serious criticism, and his general plea for moderation is

\textsuperscript{14}Asquith to Sir Godfrey Collins, June 1, 1926 in the Asquith Papers, Volume 35, folio 241.

\textsuperscript{15}Charlotte King's letter of June 6, 1926 to Gilbert Murray in the Murray Papers, Bodleian Library, Box 7.

\textsuperscript{16}Lloyd George's letter of June 9, 1926 in the Lloyd George Papers at the Beaverbrook Library, G/3/5/34.

\textsuperscript{17}Spender to Murray in a letter of June 6, 1926 in the Murray Papers, Box 7.
wholly to his credit." A letter to Asquith signed by 12 members of the Liberal Shadow Cabinet was published on June 2 complaining that Lloyd George's "methods have often made us suspect that he has not abandoned the idea of a new Coalition."  

Lloyd George called two meetings of the Liberal parliamentary party for June 3 and June 8 to try to avoid an immediate split. He refused to resign his office as chairman for the session. The situation posed a problem for the former Coalition Liberals who, although elected by Tory votes, had agreed to support Lloyd George in this crisis on personal grounds. The first meeting adjourned on a motion moved by Sir Robert Thomas and seconded by Sir Murdoch Macdonald:

That the Liberal Parliamentary Party in the House of Commons deprecates the publicity given to the differences between the Liberal leaders and expresses the earnest hope that our leaders will use their best endeavours to restore unity in the ranks of the party.

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19 The signatories were Grey, Simon, Runciman, Buxton, Lincolnshire, Buckmaster, Maclean, Cowdray, Phillipps, Geoffrey Howard, W. M. R. Pringle, and Collins; see the Liberal Magazine, XXXIV (July, 1926), 365. The Daily News (December 6, 1926, p. 8) stated that a mysterious financial offer, rumored to be nearly £1,000,000 had been made by Lord Cowdray on the condition that Lloyd George be purged. This was why the attempt was made to drive him out of the party.


At a second meeting the motion passed by 20 votes to 10.\textsuperscript{22}

This amendment meant a victory for Lloyd George within the ranks of the parliamentary party.

The Liberal split had unpleasant repercussions in the Farnham Division where the Secretary reported that:

Lord Oxford's letters have made Liberal work in these difficult divisions almost impossible & we are in danger here of having to curtail our activities very greatly as our chief subscriber is so disgusted that he has announced his determination to retire from active political work. He has always been until the last six months a strong supporter of Lord Oxford.\textsuperscript{23}

Lloyd George's stand on the General Strike gave rise to renewed rumors that he planned to join the Labour party. He found it necessary to write a letter to Sir Robert Hutchison, on June 3, denying these rumors.\textsuperscript{24} Snowden answered for Labour, arguing that if Lloyd George left the Liberals he

\textsuperscript{22}The Manchester Guardian, June 9, 1926, pp. 11-12.

Those voting for the amendment were as follows: Duckworth, Edwards, England, Ernest Evans, Forrest, Guest, Harney, Hore-Belisha, Hutchison, Garro-Jones, Haydn Jones, Kenworthy, Kenyon, M. Macdonald, Owen, Rees, A. Sinclair, R. J. Thomas, C. P. Williams, and Wiggins. Voting Against: Wedgwood Benn, Briant, Crawfurd, Collins, Fenby, Hamilton, Harris, Livingstone, Morris, and Runciman. Cowan, D. Davies, and Simon did not vote. Fenby in support of an earlier amendment made a plea for unity commenting that he had read Lloyd George's material twice very carefully and could find little fault with its substance. Livingstone, secretary of the Radical Group, said that the "Conservatives" of the Parliamentary Liberal Party had outvoted the Liberals and that a crime had been committed against Asquith "the greatest leader of our time."

\textsuperscript{23}Mrs. T. H. Price to Gilbert Murray, June 14, 1926 in the Murray Papers, Box 7.

\textsuperscript{24}Liberal Magazine, XXXIV (June, 1926), 368.
would be playing to the hands of the followers of Asquith. In a speech at the East Castlestreet Welsh Baptist Church in London (where he was a deacon) on June 27, Lloyd George opined that if Christ returned in 1926 that "He, probably for approval of the Archbishop of Canterbury’s appeal for conciliation instead of force, would have been excluded from the Liberal shadow Cabinet." The Times declared that this mixing of religion and politics had shocked Lloyd George's followers among the English, if not the Celtic, Non-Conformists.

As Lloyd George put it, the failure of the General Strike had presented the Liberal party with another chance. New power seemed to surge into the minds and hearts of the middle class which had successfully weathered the Strike. C. F. G. Masterman asserted that the General Strike "was broken by the very class which has been the subject of the contempt of all Socialist writers from Karl Marx to Lenin and Trotsky."

As a result of the General Strike, Lloyd George announced on June 8, that the Liberal party would undertake an

25Snowden's article in Reynolds's Illustrated News, June 6, 1926; quoted in ibid., 369.


27"Political Notes," June 29, 1926, p. 16.


inquiry into industrial problems. W. McG. Eagar, secretary of the Land and Nation League, was to organize the inquiry and the executive committee of the Liberal Summer Schools was to provide the expertise. The terms of reference for the inquiry were:

To consider the economic and social problems of post-war British industry with special references to the possibility and means of changes in the organization of industry which would encourage better use of national resources, increased employment, and closer cooperation between capital and labour; of increasing the productivity of British industry and the earnings of labour; of avoiding industrial stoppages; and of fairer distribution of the proceeds of industry and fuller participation by the workers in its conduct.

The Coal Strike continued after the conclusion of the General Strike with attendant suffering in the mining districts. Baldwin cabled a long message to America on August 4 denying

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30 In a speech at Manchester, Daily News, June 9, 1926, p. 9. In their attempt to revise the general estimate of Stanley Baldwin's career, his most recent biographers have also rewritten the history of the Liberal party. They state that Liberal revival came earlier "starting in 1925 with the Industrial Inquiry, and following with others into agriculture and the use of land." See Keith Middlemas and John Barnes, Baldwin: A Biography (London: Macmillan, 1970), p. 511. This statement reverses the actual order of events and may provide an index to the reliability of their work as a whole.

that any starvation existed. A. J. Cook, leader of the miners, asked Ramsay MacDonald to reply to the Prime Minister's statement and was refused. In desperation Cook turned to Lloyd George—a man he had called in January "a liar and a deceiver." In an article for the American press, Lloyd George alleged that miners were being starved into submission; he called Baldwin's message "the meanest document ever penned by a minister of the British Crown." Churchill denounced this as another of Lloyd George's "unfortunate incursions into the journalistic literature of the United States." Both Churchill and Lloyd George saw themselves cast for the role of the "Man of Destiny" who might emerge from the industrial struggle. Lloyd George was now the champion of the Left, while Churchill was the champion of the Capitalist.

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33This phrase was used by Cook at Bradford on January 3 and reported in The Times, January 4, 1926, p. 9.

34Cook announced his appeal to Lloyd George in a speech at Perth on August 14 as reported in the Daily News, August 16, 1926, p. 7. Lloyd George's article appeared in the Sunday News, August 22, 1926 and was reported in the Liberal Magazine (September, 1926), 510 and the Daily News, August 21, 1926, p. 7.

35Churchill spoke at Squerryes Court, Westerham, the home of Vivian and Lady Sybil Smith on August 21, reported in The Times, August 23, 1926, p. 12.

36The phrase is Beatrice Webb's; see her Diary, op. cit., the entry for June 30, 1926, p. 106.
Asquith was taken ill in June and effectively out of the struggle for control of the Liberal party. Although he believed that "the appearance of the Labour party on the scene has done nothing to invalidate, or to render obsolete, the mission of Liberalism," he resigned as leader in October.37 The loss of Asquith necessarily disoriented many Liberals; Simon commented that "I feel it as a son feels the loss of his father."38 In a letter of October 14, Lord Cowdray suggested that the retiring leader ought to support Lord Grey as his successor.39

For many Liberals the Leftward course of their party during 1926 gave them reason enough to go over to the Conservatives. The following chart tabulates the chronological, sociological, and geographical distribution of the secession of twenty-three prominent Liberals; these Liberals were important enough in their localities to receive notice of their secession in Gleanings or in one of the national newspapers.

37The undated (but probably written in October) memorandum written by Asquith, "Function and Future of the Liberal Party" in the Asquith Papers, Volume 35, folio 263. Also see Asquith's letter to J. A. Spender, President of the NLF in ibid., folios 258-9.

38Simon to Asquith, ibid., October 9, 1926, Volume 35, folio 272.

39Cowdray's letter to Asquith of October 8 in ibid., Volume 35, folio 270.
## TABLE 3

LIBERAL SECESSIONS TO THE CONSERVATIVES IN 1926

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Locality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>ex-M. P.</td>
<td>Hull</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>parliamentary candidate</td>
<td>Derbyshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>parliamentary candidate</td>
<td>Tonbridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>ex-M. P.</td>
<td>North Battersea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>president of local association</td>
<td>Sheffield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>town councillors</td>
<td>Liverpool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>party members</td>
<td>Leeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>ex-vice-president of local association</td>
<td>Huddersfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>party member</td>
<td>Huddersfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Marquis</td>
<td>(of) Northampton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Baron</td>
<td>(of) Bwlch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>ex-M. P.</td>
<td>Carmarthen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Considered chronologically, the above chart shows two periods of secession during the year: (1) in February eleven Liberals, almost half of the total, left the party because of the Land controversy; (2) from July-November twelve seceded because of the General Strike and Lloyd George's sorry role in it. Ten of the core group were town councillors, three were former M. P.'s, and two had stood as parliamentary candidates. Sociologically they fall into two groups: those active on town councils and those who had failed to gain or retain office at the national level. Both groups might have hoped to find more opportunity in the Conservative party—especially with the strong Labour offensive in municipal elections. Twenty-one of the group came from the North where Liberalism's main English strength was concentrated. The Liverpool town council suffered heavily from secessions partly because a local pact between Liberals and Conservatives had been in operation since the days of the Coalition. It is undeniable that such local pacts facilitated Liberal desertions to the Conservative party; this was part of the price which the Liberal party continued to pay for having entered the Coalition.

It cannot be denied that there was considerable pressure upon Liberals to go over to the Conservatives. Earl de la Warr, a prominent Labour peer, declared on January 30, 1926, that "Mr. Winston Churchill and Sir Alfred Mond were two of the great Liberals of their day because they had the courage
to face the present situation and choose between Socialism and Conservatism. "Churchill looked forward to the day when, in the struggle against Socialism, Liberals would "lend the whole of their strength to the Conservative party in finally eradicating such foolish and subversive and reactionary doctrines from the minds of a large section of our fellow countrymen."

It is often forgotten that the liberal party gained recruits from the other two parties. The Reverend B. G. Bourchier underwent a conversion as remarkable as that of St. Paul's on the road to Damascus. For the good Reverend was a vicar in Hampstead when the call came to abandon all, including the Garden Suburb Conservative Association, and follow Lloyd George. Hampstead Garden Suburb brought forth men of iron in those days.

Alderman H. Cropper and Alderman H. Varley (the latter being leader of the Labour party on the Chesterfield Town Council) came over to the Liberals from the Labour party in 1926. The importance of Varley's conversion is not to be

40De la Warr spoke at Ormskirk as reported in the Manchester Guardian, February 1, 1926, p. 2.

41Churchill spoke to the Bolton Conservative Association on January 21; see ibid., January 22, 1926, p. 18.

42Bouchier was vicar of St. Jude's-on-the-Hill and "one of the most popular of clergymen in North London;" he set forth his confession of faith in Liberalism in his Parish Paper. For chapter and verse see the Daily Chronicle, January 20, 1926, p. 7.
underestimated because he was the brother of a Labour M. P. It was hinted, in the pages of the Daily Chronicle, that Cropper had not only become a cropper in Labour eyes, but would also be the Liberal candidate for Chesterfield at the next general election.\(^4\)

Four Liberal M. P.'s seceded from the Party in the chaos of 1926. Mond and Hilton Young went to the Tories over the Land policy; Kenworthy and Wedgwood Benn went to Labour once it was clear that Lloyd George would become the Liberal leader. As early as February 1926, Benn had declared publicly that he would not accept Lloyd George's leadership because that Son of the Leek was dependent upon the votes of Guest and his followers; the Guestians supported Lloyd George as chairman of the Parliamentary Party. Benn insisted what was needed was vigorous leadership in the Commons on Liberal causes, but Lloyd George was unable to supply this because he was a prisoner of the Coalitionists.\(^4\) Although Benn resigned his seat at Leith in February 1927, Ernest Brown managed to hold it for the Liberals by a narrow majority.

Kenworthy left the Liberals in the fall of 1926, but he retained his seat (Central Hull) for the Labour Party at

\(^4\)For a discussion of the Cropper-Varley affair see ibid., February 26, 1926, p. 4.

\(^4\)Liverpool Post and Mercury, February 2, 1926, p. 7. See Benn's statement made at a Liberal Parliamentary party meeting.
When interviewed by the press he maintained that Lloyd George would follow him into the Labour fold:

I am convinced that is the proper course for him and other Liberal leaders . . . . I see no possibility of a strong efficient Opposition capable of forming a stable alternative Government in present circumstances with Liberal and Labour cutting each other's throats as they are now doing . . . . The people are getting poorer and poorer through bad trade and unemployment. Labour is turning more and more to constitutional methods. That is the encouragement that Liberals need for joining Labour.

Although there is no hard data available on Liberal party finance for 1926-1927, certain things may be inferred about the party's financial difficulties from the record of the Liberal pension fund. Set up in 1923, this fund was designed to supply pensions for retired party employees; in 1926-7 securities which made up the fund were sold as part of a general wind-up of Asquith Liberals' financial affairs. Table 4 lists these securities and their market value.

Except in the case of the War Loan, these bonds were given to the Party before World War I; after the war these securities became all but worthless. Thus any surplus that the party might have built up in the years of its prosperity

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45 Catherine Ann Cline gives a summary of Wedgwood Benn's career and that of Kenworthy in Recruits to Labour: The British Labour Party, 1914-1931 (Syracuse University Press, 1963), pp. 152-3 and 163 respectively. She has nothing to say about their careers as Liberals.

46 Cardiff Western Mail, October 26, 1926, p. 9. Kenworthy was interviewed in London on October 25.
was wiped out in the collapse of the European system, and most especially, the collapse of the old regimes in Russia and Hungary.

TABLE 4
LIBERAL PENSION FUND SECURITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Face Value</th>
<th>Security</th>
<th>1926-7 Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£ 900</td>
<td>1908 5% Moscow Bonds</td>
<td>£ 27.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>900</td>
<td>1906 5% Moscow Bonds</td>
<td>31.10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000</td>
<td>1892 4% Hungarian Consolidated State Bonds</td>
<td>227.10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>893.5</td>
<td>1906 5% Russian Loan</td>
<td>69.10.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>900</td>
<td>5% Moscow Loan</td>
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<td>5% War Loan 1929/1947</td>
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<td>£4643.5</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>£666. 8.9</td>
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*For a record of the Liberal pension fund see the letters and bank receipts relating to the Maclean and Hudson account in the Asquith Papers, Box 147, folios 128-30, 144, 146-7, 163-5. These funds were sold off between December 1926 and May 1927. The Russian and Hungarian securities were a gift to the party and were not party investments; on this point see an unsigned letter to Sir Donald Maclean, April 1, 1927 in the Asquith Papers, Box 147, folio 146.

Lloyd George's Fund became an important public issue in 1926 and 1927. Although his critics complained that the fund was under the Welshman's personal control, there were in fact four trustees. These were Lord St. Davids (chairman), Sir William Edge, M. P., Sir Robert Hutchison, M. P., and Sir Charles Barrie; Sir John Davies acted as secretary to the
board of trustees. The Times sneered that "there is considerable doubt as to whether a legal trust has been constituted."48

A more serious question was the origin of the Lloyd George fund. In two letters to The Times Lord Rosebery, a former Liberal Prime Minister, hinted that peerages had been sold to raise the fund; he called for a commission to investigate. "The sight of some 90 peers explaining to a Commission the origins of their nobility would be something worth making a sacrifice for."49 Lloyd George's headquarters declined to be drawn on this issue and declared only that the fund had been raised "in a way which does not differ from that followed by the Conservative Party or by the Liberal Party in the days before the Coalition."50


48"Political Notes," ibid., December 1, 1927, p. 11.

49Rosebery's first letter appeared in ibid., February 16, 1927, p. 15 and his second letter, part of which is quoted in the text, in ibid., February 28, 1927, p. 13. A third letter dated August 13 appeared in the Banker (September, 1927) quoted in ibid., September 8, 1927, p. 9, answering a charge that Rosebery had sold a peerage in 1895 and concluded: "But I never got a shilling for it . . . . I hope Mr. Lloyd George has as simple a tale to tell."

50The statement in answer to Rosebery appeared in The Times, February 17, 1927, p. 14. The question was also discussed in the Daily Herald, February 17, 1927, p. 2 and September 8, 1927, p. 9.
Once it was clear that Asquith, incapacitated by a stroke in June, 1926, could not retain the party leadership, Lloyd George moved to fund the Party. On September 27, Thomas F. Tweed of the Land and Nation League wrote to Vivian Phillipps offering to provide enough funds so that every constituency would have a Liberal candidate for the next general election. A special sub-committee (composed of Sir Charles Hobhouse, Colonel Penry Williams, Ronald Walker, Thomas Waterhouse, and Geoffrey Le M. Mander) was appointed to consider the financial offer. Lloyd George assured the committee that assistance would not be withdrawn after the general election and that "it was intended to provide financially for 500 candidates." The main difficulty appeared to be that Vivian Phillipps, chief of Liberal organization, must go. A special meeting of the full Liberal Administrative Committee was fixed for December 15, 1926 to hear the sub-committee's report. A fully attended meeting voted 19 to 14 to adopt the report of the special sub-committee which recommended the acceptance of the unconditional offer from Lloyd George's "secret" fund.

51 Letters of September 27 and October 7 from Thomas F. Tweed published in the Daily News, November 1, 1926, p. 9.
52 Ibid., November 18, 1926, p. 7.
53 Ibid., December 16, 1926, p. 7.
News of Lloyd George's offer provoked the followers of Asquith into public action. Pringle resigned his position as prospective Liberal candidate for the Luton Division. Lord Grey, at a dinner in honor of Vivian Phillipps on December 13, announced that he had "found it impossible to keep in step with Mr. Lloyd George." Ernest A. Harney, an M. P. and a follower of Lloyd George, wrote "that this coterie having burned their own boats are determined to wreck the party and then start a new one under their own auspices."

A long and public correspondence ensued, from October 1926 until February 1927, between Lloyd George and the party as to what the amount of his contribution was to be and what conditions were attached. Considerable difficulty was experienced in setting the conditions under which Lloyd George would give financial assistance to the party. The Liberal leader was unwilling to give too much—perhaps for fear of destroying the party's moral fiber. Sir Archibald Sinclair wrote to Lloyd George on February 2, 1927 on this topic:

54 The Times, December 10, 1926, p. 11.
56 Harney to Lloyd George, December 14, 1926, in the Lloyd George Papers, G/31/2/12.
57 These letters are given in the Liberal Magazine (January, 1927), 14-33 and in The Times, January 31, 1927, p. 14.
You have expressed your strong dislike of the principle of making grants to constituencies and the whole object of the new Organization Committee, whether they agree with you or not in making a definite rule against such grants, must be—and obviously with your cordial co-operation—to make the constituencies self-supporting and to discover other sources of financial support than your fund which, however large, is not inexhaustible.66

Although most Liberals agreed that the party ought to become self-supporting in the future, they were frightened by Lloyd George's threat to cut off all funds after the next general election. Ronald Walker, wealthy industrialist and a member of the Organization Committee, argued with the member for Carnarvon:

If we spend money at a £40/£50,000 a year rate right up to the election—and then have to stand waiting your nod for continuance one or two things will happen. Either good men will leave the party or they will cease to be good men. I am not asking you to guarantee to continue the high rate of expenditure I name. That is another matter. I want you to say now that you will make some arrangement secure [sic] that in any case a substantial sum will be in the hands of the party after the general election so that they may grade down to whatever income they can raise for themselves if necessary. The possibility of a catastrophic condition (financially) following on the election with yourself in a position of financial dictator is one certain to do our party infinite harm.59

Sir Archibald Sinclair supported the Walker proposal for continued support from the Lloyd George Fund after the general election. Remembering that Cowdray had promised a million pounds to the party if they got rid of Lloyd George, Sinclair commented: "Obviously no guarantee as to the permanence of his subscription has ever been extorted from any subscriber to the Liberal or any other political fund and you may well ask why in this respect you should be put on a different footing from Lord Cowdray or any other generous financial supporter of the Party."62 The reason for this unusual demand was, Sinclair believed, the mere fact that Liberal financial dependence existed "would be a powerful weapon in the hands of our political opponents both Tories and Socialists."

58 Sinclair to Lloyd George, in the Lloyd George Papers, G/18/4/3, p. 3. Keith Middlemas and John Barnes state that in 1927-9 "Lloyd George's funds were sprayed lavishly over the parched deserts of constituency organization." However much one admires the authors' use of simile, they produce no evidence to support their contention that the Lloyd George Fund went to the constituencies. See Baldwin: A Biography, op. cit., p. 466.

59 Walker to Lloyd George, January 30, 1927 in the Lloyd George Papers, G/18/4/3.

60 Ibid.

61 Lloyd George to Walker, February 3, 1927 in ibid., G/18/4/3.

62 Sinclair to Lloyd George, February 2, 1927 in ibid., G/18/4/3.
as well as the Asquith faction. Sinclair suggested that a suitable arrangement "should amount to half of the annual contribution which you have undertaken to make towards the general expenses of the Party"—roughly £20,000.63

The money, which the followers of Asquith saw as "tainted" Coalition gold, was raised when Lloyd George sold his interest in the Daily Chronicle—receiving in cash £1,750,000 and £1,250,000 worth of shares.64 The reported total of £2,900,000 ought to be £2,500,000 according to an entry in Hugh Dalton's Diary:

Laski has been hearing from Vivian Phillipps & other anti L-G Liberals about the L-G fund. Every Liberal candidate is in a hole when asked how much he is getting from the L.G. fund. Either acceptance or self-conscious refusal dams his Party. V P thought the fund amounted to about £2 1/2 million. Most of it is invested in the Daily Chronicle & accumulating at 8% compound interest.

Samuel has only had £300,000 for general election & preparations. Land & Nation League has £200,000. L. G. is still putting candidates of his own into constituencies & financing them from the residue.65

The £300,000 was paid to Sir Herbert Samuel (chief of the Liberal organization) in two installments of £150,000 each to finance the coming General Election.66 Interest from

63Ibid.

64These figures are given by R. Hopkin Morris, an anti-Lloyd George M. P., in a letter to The Times, October 24, 1927, p. 8.

65Dalton Diary, MS., 1927-9, entry for January 30, 1928.

66See Lloyd George to Samuel, an undated letter (but probably written in 1928), in the Lloyd George papers, G/17/9/30.
the investment was £36,000 on a five per cent basis (as claimed by R. Hopkin Morris) which was used to finance the work of the party's headquarters. The interest from the remainder amounted to £109,000; this was employed to finance the Land and Nation League as well as various committees of inquiry which carried out research into social problems. The conditions were that none of Lloyd George's fund be used to finance local Liberal associations and all money was to be cut off after the next general election.67 No money was given to revive the local Liberal associations; and the bulk of Lloyd George's Fund remained under his control and unspent.

Whatever the Welshman's opponents might say Sir Charles Hobhouse, chairman of the sub-committee which accepted Lloyd George's offer, stated that the terms were "honourable, satisfactory, and substantial."68 Writing to Lloyd George, Hobhouse commented: "I very much regret that in your efforts to secure unity in the Party you have been made the subject of a grossly unfair attack and misrepresentation, but the path of the peacemaker is harder than that of the transgressor!"69

67R. Hopkin Morris to The Times, October 24, 1927, p. 8.
68Hobhouse at Weymouth on January 30, the Daily Chronicle, January 31, 1927, p. 4.
69Sir Charles Hobhouse to Lloyd George, January 27, 1927, Lloyd George Papers, G/10/4/3.
At the beginning of February 1927 the tortuous negotiations over the reorganization of the Liberal party came to an end. The NLF Executive and Arthur Brampton, its chairman, discovered "a general desire" to appoint Sir Herbert Samuel to the chairmanship of the organization committee. Samuel had been absent from England between 1920 and 1926 while serving in the post of High Commissioner to Palestine; as a result he was not committed to either of the two Liberal factions. Brampton called upon Samuel and found that gentleman in a state of what can only be called willing reluctance. As Samuel described the conversation in a letter to Lloyd George:

I said to Brampton, as I had said to a number of others who had approached me on the subject, that I would much rather not undertake that post. It was not really my metier, and it would interfere with other work which I was anxious to do. Brampton pressed the point strongly, and I finally said that if the desire was really a general one, I could not refuse to consider an invitation, though I would greatly prefer that it should not be given.70

In those days much of the expense of fighting a by-election was borne by the candidate and there was very little aid from the central organization. The Liberal Fighting Fund was raised by voluntary contributions and it was intended to supplement the amount contributed by Lloyd George. According to Samuel, the Lloyd George donation was to be used only to

70Samuel to Lloyd George, February 9, 1927 in the Lloyd George Papers, G/17/9/4.
employ additional staff, hire travelling organizers, to form new local associations, distribute literature, and "propa-ganda." 71

In any case the advent of the Lloyd George Fund was not an unmixed blessing, for Lloyd George's enemies often refused to give any more money to the party. A particularly striking case was that of the well-known follower of Asquith, Sir Robert Hudson, who had promised to contribute to the party coffers. Once Lloyd George had begun to finance the party, Hudson stated that "until somebody points that it is my duty to make good my promise, I propose to send no more money to that quarter." 72

Because few people believed in the future of a three-party system, speculation about an amalgamation of the Labour and Liberal parties ran riot in 1926. Rumors of the formation of a Centre Party—which would embrace both Lloyd George and moderate Labour—were heatedly denied by J. H. Thomas, a leading member of the Labour Shadow Cabinet. 73 John Wheatley, a former Labour Cabinet Minister, declared that "the House of Commons


72 See Hudson to R. H. Davies, May 30, 1927 in the Asquith Papers, Box 147, folio 68.

73 See the Manchester Guardian, January 6, 1926, p. 17.
would be a happier place of an evening if Lloyd George and Wedgwood Benn were with us on the front Opposition Bench."74

Lloyd George found himself pursued so ardently that he was moved to declare himself against alliances with other parties until Liberalism had built up a larger representation in Parliament.75 This was a clear statement of the policy he meant to pursue, but Philip Snowden was not easily put off. In a widely reported speech on January 28, 1926 the former Chancellor of the Exchequer stated that a Lab-Lib alliance would be possible if a purge were carried out "of all the reactionary sections of the Liberal Party."76 Sir Donald Maclean, a member of the Asquith faction, observed that "Snowden is undoubtedly making signals to our left & there is a good deal of response."77

On the other hand Conservatives were inclined to regard the Liberal party as a bulwark against Socialism. At the beginning of 1926 Viscount Younger, who had been chief

74See Wheatley's article in Forward, February 20, 1926; quoted in Gleanings, LXIII (April, 1926), 425.

75See his speech at Carnarvon on January 20 as reported in the Daily Chronicle, January 21, 1926, p. 3.

76Snowden spoke at Blackburn as reported in the Manchester Guardian, January 29, 1926, p. 11. It should be noted that the Guardian was in favor of cooperating with Labour although not in the way that Snowden appeared to mean; see the leader entitled "The Future of the Liberal Party," January 4, 1926, p. 6.

77Maclean to Herbert Gladstone, January 31, 1926 in the H. Gladstone Papers, British Museum, Add. MS. 46474, CXXXV, folio 187.
of the Conservative party organization during the Coalition, promised to see that the next Parliament contained at least 100 Liberals.\textsuperscript{78} When Liberals attempted a surprise division with Labour cooperation, on July 23, 1926, one of the Liberal members "accidentally" informed the Government Whip of the plan, and the plot failed.\textsuperscript{79} Such episodes deepened Labour's distrust of Lloyd George and all his works.

In Parliament, as well as outside it, the Liberals suffered from divided leadership; often there was no leadership at all. As one observer described the situation on the floor of the House of Commons: "Several times the question has been put from the chair without the party having arrived at a decision as to how to vote. This has led to hurried last minute consultations."\textsuperscript{80} Such confusion aggravated the difficulties under which a small third party worked, for on most amendments there was only the choice of supporting the Conservatives or supporting the Labour party.

Unfortunately there existed Liberal M. P.'s who would vote against their own party's amendments and persistently

\textsuperscript{78}Sir Robert Hudson to Sir Donald Maclean, January 27, 1926 in the Herbert Gladstone Papers, British Museum, Add. MSS. 46475, CXXXVI, folio 183. See the account of Younger's conversation with Hudson.

\textsuperscript{79}See "Political Notes," The Times, June 24, 1926, p. 12.

\textsuperscript{80}From a document entitled "Work of the Liberal Party in the House"; it is undated but was probably written by Sir Robert Hutchison for the benefit of Lloyd George. See the Lloyd George Papers, G/10/9/17.
refused to enter the Labour lobby when requested by the Liberal Whip. These malefactors always voted with the Conservatives for the very good reason that most of them had been elected to Parliament by Conservative votes. The worst offenders were Captain F. E. Guest, Walter Forrest, Sir Thomas Robinson, and Sir W. Beddoes Rees, all of whom sat for English seats. To these may be added John Hugh Edwards and Colonel Abraham England, although they never voted against a Liberal amendment. In fact all of these M. P.'s were former Coalitionists now officially deserted by Lloyd George. They formed what C. F. G. Masterman called a sub-party within the Liberal party.\(^{81}\) Although other Liberals might quarrel among themselves outside Parliament, it was the former Coalitionists who most often split the party inside the House.\(^{82}\)

A basic cause of the Liberal cross-voting during 1926 was the divided nature of the leadership. The quarrel over the General Strike temporarily destroyed all leadership in the House of Commons, and when the smoke cleared Sir Godfrey Collins, the Chief Whip, was found to have resigned along with Asquith. At a series of meetings in the first week of

\(^{81}\)See Masterman's "The Political Outlook," *Contemporary Review*, CXXIX (February, 1926), 140.

\(^{82}\)The list of members who received Conservative support is taken from the *Liverpool Post and Mercury*, February 2, 1926, p. 7. These former Coalitionists were elected under the label of Constitutionalists in 1924.
November, the parliamentary party elected new whips and discussed the creation of a Parliamentary Executive Committee to replace the Shadow Cabinet. This marked a change because from time immemorial the whips had been appointed by the party leader. Sir Robert Hutchison was elected Chief Liberal Whip by unanimous vote of the parliamentary party. The creation of the Parliamentary Party Executive suggested by Lloyd George was opposed by Runciman, and the meeting voted to postpone this question indefinitely. But as a result of these meetings closer consultation developed between the leader and the members of the parliamentary party.\(^8^3\)

Election of Hutchison as whip brought revolt from independent members of the party; both T. D. Fenby and Guest declared that they would not accept the party whip. The problem was only half solved by Fenby's election to the post of Assistant Whip for the English members. Guest and his eight Coalitionist followers remained outside the whip's control, but the Welsh M. P.'s received their very own whip in the person of Major Goronwy Owen. The party now possessed three whips instead of the two which served during Asquith's tenure.

\(^8^3\)A report of the Liberal Parliamentary party reorganization can be found in the *Daily News*, November 3, 1926, p. 8 and in the same journal on November 9, 1926, p. 7.
as leader—increasing party discipline on the floor of the House.84

With the conclusion of the struggle within the Liberal party, Lloyd George was ready to launch his attempt to revive Liberalism. He had succeeded in conciliating the independent faction within the party, but failed to win over the followers of Asquith or to subject the former Coalitionists to control by the whip. It is obvious that Lloyd George had taken center ground within the Liberal tradition. Left Liberals like Kenworthy and Wedgwood Benn disappeared to Labour; as Table 3 illustrates many Right-thinking Liberals went over to Toryism at the municipal level.85 The loss of these elements made it easier for Lloyd George to centralize the party's organizational structure. Addition of the Lloyd George fund temporarily solved the party's financial difficulties at headquarters while leaving the constituencies to shift for themselves. Indeed, reviving the constituency parties was the main task facing Sir Herbert Samuel in 1927.

84 Hutchison's election as Whip along with Guest's and Fenby's statements were noted in the Manchester Guardian, November 9, 1926, p. 9. For the election of Owen and Fenby see The Times, "Political Notes," November 12, 1926, p. 14 and ibid., November 17, 1926, p. 14.

85 See page 58.
CHAPTER III

THE LIBERAL REVIVAL, 1927

The Liberal party won three by-elections in the spring of 1927. Leith by-election was won on March 24 and North Southwark division returned a Liberal just four days later. On June 1 Sir William Edge won Bosworth, in the heart of England, after a hard-fought campaign which Liberals came to call the Second Battle of Bosworth Field. The majorities were small but, coming after the unbroken string of Liberal defeats in the previous year, it seemed as if Lloyd George had breathed new life into the party. Once more Liberals could believe that deep inside the British soul there lurked a fierce hatred of the poly-syllabic catch-words of socialism. Once more the followers of Lloyd George could argue that the country (and not Wales merely) was naturally Liberal.

Such faith in the future of Liberalism would have seemed misplaced at the beginning of 1927; followers of Asquith were greatly embittered by the party's acceptance of financial assistance from Lloyd George. Some of the despair that old Liberals felt at the triumph of Lloyd George is caught in this letter from Alfred Beesly, a long-time opponent of the Welshman, on January 27: "Is it any good spending time or money on the party any longer! Would it not be better to support such
things as the Free Trade Union, & the Individualist Movement & trust to that yeast leavening the lump eventually.  

The followers of Asquith moved to procure the support of the leaders of Nonconformity. An indictment of Lloyd George was drawn up in a missive entitled "Mr. Lloyd George and Liberalism":

When the catastrophe of the General Strike was approaching, it was well-known in the inner circles of political life that Mr. Lloyd George was prepared to play the role of a Northern Mussolini--the strong man of the moment--if the Government had weakened. When the Government stood firm he encouraged the miners to prolong the dispute, both to their own hurt, and to the permanent injury of the country.

To give form to this feeling the Liberal Council was formally constituted at a large meeting in London on February 11, 1927; Lord Grey, Foreign Secretary from 1906 to 1916, was elected as president. Several vice-presidents were elected including leading Liberals such as Sir Godfrey Collins, Gilbert Murray and J. A. Spender. Runciman accepted the office of chairman and Vivian Phillipps became one of the honorary secretaries. The new organization was dedicated to opposing Lloyd George from within the party.

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1Beesley to Murray in the Gilbert Murray Papers, Box 7 in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

2Sir Henry Lunn to Dr. T. R. Glover, February 9, 1927, in the Gilbert Murray Papers, Box 7.

3See the report in the Daily Chronicle, February 12, 1927, p. 4.

4Cardiff Western Mail, April 22, 1927, p. 8.
The split was mainly on the basis of generations: two generations followed Grey's leadership: the 1906 Generation and the Coalition Generation, i.e. Liberals who entered politics before 1922. Proof of this contention is found in a letter to The Times of January 21 from young Liberals who supported Lord Grey; this was signed by 24 "young" Liberals most of whom had entered politics before the Coalition fell.5 Lloyd George was followed in the main by the 1914 Generation of Liberals like Samuel and by what we may call the 1926 Generation or the post-General Strike generation. The Welsh statesman must be described as sociologically young in order to explain why he attracted a following of young people.

As one journal described the situation: "there are middle-aged and elderly men to-day who have a pre-war experience and a post-war mentality—and these are the natural leaders of the world. . . . It is no wonder that rather weary men with a pre-war mentality chafe against the activities of those more restless personalities who have not forgotten the old ideals, but whose post-war vision is broadened and illumined in the company of youth. It is these last alone who can save Liberalism from decay."6

5The Times, January 21, 1927, p. 10.

6Quoted from a "very respectable journal" in the Liberal Magazine which called the words quoted above "a precious piece of tosh." See "Notes of the Month," XXXIV (January, 1927), 2-3. The Liberal Magazine withheld the name of the journal.
Youth was a new element in Liberal thinking. Arthur Marwick has noted that "however we may define 'youth,' it is clear that as a political and cultural phenomenon it makes its first significant appearance on the British scene in the 1920's." Liberal youth organizations, like the National League of Young Liberals and the Union of University Liberal Societies, were founded in 1920; but these remained essentially debating societies until 1926-1927. A new stage opened in 1927 when the youth organizations were mobilized on a national basis.

In January 1927 the Yorkshire Council of Young Liberals published the first number of a monthly magazine, the Forward View. In a foreword to the issue the editor, Elliott Dodds, wrote that the purpose of the magazine was to pull the youth movement closer together for "a desire has often been voiced for some regular medium through which our Younger Liberal branches might keep in touch with one another, pooling their experience and learning of each other's doings." The new magazine provided a communications link between party headquarters and the local branches.

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The Young Liberals gave more active evidence of renewed vigor by announcing that they would hold meetings in Hyde Park on Sundays during the summer. The other two parties had long carried on this practice in the grassy shrine of British free speech, but complaints that this was breaking Sunday observance were received by the Liberal Central Office; to this the office replied that the League of Young Liberals were an independent organization over which they had no jurisdiction. Often a Liberal M. P. would speak in the park even though heckling from "Reds" was a constant hazard.

The Union of University Liberal Societies entered active political life for the first time on July 4-9 when it carried out a "mass attack" on the Northamptonshire Division. This rather desperate measure had been planned at their January conference at Cambridge and it illustrates how Liberals developed new tactics to meet the needs of the 1920's. Undergraduates from Oxford, Cambridge, Manchester, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Cardiff, Aberystwyth, and Reading took part. The attack was preceded by a two-day "school" opened by Ramsay Muir, the President of the Union, at which the policies to be propagated

9On the Younger Liberals decision to hold meetings in the park see the Daily Chronicle, May 18, 1927, p. 4.

10On the complaints about breaking the Sabbath see The Times, August 4, 1927, p. 12.

11On heckling see the Daily Chronicle, May 23, 1927, p. 4.
were discussed. Meetings were held in the Northampton Liberal Club. The members then went forth to preach the Liberal Gospel in open-air meetings each night. Village meetings were held in the divisions of Wellingborough, Kettering, and Daventry; afternoon meetings were scheduled for women at which the speakers were women undergraduates and meetings were conducted for workmen at lunch-time outside factories in Northampton. Altogether some 93 meetings were held but in some of the villages they aroused very little interest.  

The role of the youth organizations in the Liberal revival has heretofore been overlooked. Samuel announced after the by-election victory at Leith in March that there would be 500 Liberal candidates at the general election. This meant that many more Liberal workers had to be found on short notice and, since the constituency parties were still in decline, unpaid youth canvassers filled the gap. On school holidays the UULS Liberals acted as a flying squad which could be sent out from the center to wherever they were needed.

Unfortunately, the youth organizations could not provide enough campaign workers for a general election. In

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12On the "mass attack" on Northampton see the Liberal Magazine (June, 1927), 378 and ibid, (August, 1927), 513.

13See Samuel's statement in the Daily Chronicle, May 6, 1927, p. 5. In a speech given at the Eighty Club on February 28, 1927, Samuel announced the intention of presenting at the polls "at least 500 Liberal candidates, and probably more;" Daily Chronicle, March 1, 1927, p. 3.
October 1927, Samuel opened a drive to enroll 100,000 voluntary workers at the constituency level. Every person who signed up received a certificate inscribed with the words: "I hereby enroll as one of the Hundred Thousand Liberal Workers pledged to promote the supremacy of Liberal principles in the government of the nation." The certificate was of some value since it was an original design created by a popular artist—Garth Jones. Books of certificates were supplied to all constituency associations, and the original drawing of the certificate (framed with a suitable inscription) was offered as a prize to the local association which enrolled the largest number of workers before December 31, 1927. In this way the revival of the constituency associations began.

Up until the General Strike the Land campaign was the most important reform proposal developed by the Liberals. The effect of the rebellion of the workers can only be called shattering—at least, so far as the Liberal party was concerned. Historically Liberalism both as a party and an ideology had concentrated upon piecemeal reform in order to remedy specific abuses of capitalism. The problems of worker qua worker were evaded by shifting him into another category. Thus in the Land program the worker was transmuted into suburban dweller or made over into a small farmer; the worker presumably escaped

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14 On the material for this paragraph see the Liberal Magazine (November, 1927), p. 649.
the evils of capitalism by moving to the country. And the vaunted urban Liberalism of the Land Conference is better called a suburban Liberalism.

Socialism had long possessed a unified theory for dealing with industrial capitalism; now the Liberals attempted the same kind of unified approach as opposed to the older Liberal method of dealing with each problem as it arose. J. M. Keynes stated, in an address on "Liberalism and Industry," that efficiency as well as justice must be considered in developing a unified approach to industrial problems. Control from the center was, Keynes stated, the way to give justice to the workers and efficiency to the capitalists. On the one hand the government should encourage the development of large combines or trusts; on the other higher wages for workers.  

In the Liberal scheme of things the lion would lie down with the lamb; Imperial Chemical Industries with the meanest coal miner.

Although the Liberal Industrial Inquiry was announced in June 1926, the form it was to take was not settled until the beginning of 1927. The general direction of the inquiry was placed in the hands of an executive committee which was composed of the five chairmen of the "special committees" along with Sir Herbert Samuel, Sir John Simon, H. D. Henderson,

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15See Keynes' address as reported in the Daily Chronicle, January 6, 1927, p. 4.
and E. D. Simon (vice-chairman of the executive). Lloyd George, Ramsay Muir, J. M. Keynes, E. H. Gilpin, E. C. Simon, and W. T. Layton were chairman of special committees. W. McG.Eagar, general secretary of the Land and Nation League, became secretary of the Industrial Inquiry. Hubert Phillips held the post of "economic investigator attached to the staff."16

In common with the Liberal Temperance Inquiry (also begun in 1926), the Industrial Inquiry functioned as a team of experts, divorced from sordid considerations of party gain. Of the 28 participants engaged in the actual committee work only two, Lloyd George and Sinclair, were M. P.'s. The rest were journalists, like Masterman and C. A. McCurdy, or intellectuals who had published important books on their subject. Although Ramsay Muir might be classed as a politician he was a former university professor as well. Only one trade unionist sat on the Trade Unions committee; he was Walter Stone-street, a member of the National Union of Operative and Domestic Engineers and General Metal Workers, and Vice-Chairman of the National League of Liberal Trade Unionists.17

16On the organization and membership of the Liberal Industrial Inquiry see The Times, January 29, 1927, p. 7 and the Daily Chronicle of the same date, p. 4.

17See Chapter I, p. 43.
TABLE 5
MEMBERSHIP OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES ON THE
LIBERAL INDUSTRIAL INQUIRY

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<td>H. D. Henderson</td>
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<td>Situation</td>
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<td>C. A. McCurdy</td>
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<td>Sir Josiah Stamp</td>
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Liberalism had traditionally relied upon working class support in attaining power and Lloyd George believed, as he said at the time of the Land Conference, that most Liberal voters belonged to the working class. His stand on the General Strike reinforced his claim to appear as the champion of the proletariat, and in addition the first Liberal by-election victory since 1925 was won in the industrial constituency of Leith. Lloyd George declared, to an audience of coalminers, that a gain of only 20 Liberal M. P.'s in the next Parliament might make the difference between good terms and bad terms for them as far as wages were concerned. "Why, then," he asked "did the miners brush aside Liberal support, as if it did not matter?"18

Although Lloyd George's new Radicalism aroused little enthusiasm among the downtrodden miners, the mineowners were properly shocked. One of the most reactionary of the latter, Hugh Bell, denounced in a letter to The Times "the folly of such a line of conduct as is pursued in different ways it is true, by Mr. Cook and Mr. Lloyd George."19 Such charges probably did Lloyd George's reputation more good than harm, but many respectable people had been frightened by his attitude

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19The Times, June 1, 1927, p. 17.
during the General Strike. Increasingly, he was seen by these timid folk as undermining the national character.

The most important parliamentary struggle of 1927 was fought over the government's Trade Union Bill. This was an attempt to cut off the political levy and to make "sympathetic strikes" illegal. Lloyd George stated that "From every point of view the Trade Unions Bill is a grave blunder. Trade is improving very gradually, very slowly, and it is only by goodwill and co-operation amongst all classes of the community that this improvement can be accelerated. Why, then, provoke ill-will, anger, and conflict?" 20

All sections of the Liberal party united in condemning the Trade Union Bill—with the significant exception of F. E. Guest and his eight Coalitionist followers. Lord Grey, president of the Liberal Council, wrote a letter to The Times, in which he denounced the Bill in the strongest terms. 21 Runciman stated that he followed Grey on this question and Simon gave another of his famous legal opinions—in which he pronounced

20Lloyd George at Nevin on April 21 as reported in the Daily Chronicle, April 22, 1927, p. 4.

the Bill to be unsatisfactory because it did not treat a lockout by the employers with the same severity as a strike.\textsuperscript{22}

The \textit{Liberal Magazine} opposed the Trade Union Bill on the grounds that it was "not only anti-Trade Union, it is anti-Liberal."\textsuperscript{23} Fred Maddison, Chairman of the National League of Liberal Trade Unionists and a member of the London Society of Compositors, favored Simon's suggestion that an inquiry be made into the industrial situation before any action should be made. The government's Bill, Maddison claimed, could only "strengthen the power of the disruptive forces in the Labour movement."\textsuperscript{24} J. L. Garvin, a Tory journalist often friendly to the Liberals, thought the Bill would cost the Government a hundred seats at the next election; "what is the most remarkable in all these circumstances is that the stars in their courses fight for the revival of Liberalism."\textsuperscript{25}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{22}Runciman's views were printed in "Political Notes," \textit{ibid.}, April 12, 1927, p. 16. Simon's opinion was given in a letter to \textit{The Times}, April 9, 1927, p. 8 and a report in the \textit{Western Mail}, May 6, 1927, p. 9. His views were noted as early as February 15, 1927 in the \textit{Daily Chronicle}, p. 4.
\item \textsuperscript{23}See "Notes of the Month" (May, 1927), p. 267.
\item \textsuperscript{24}Maddison described himself with becoming modesty "as a lifelong trade unionist;" as stated in Chapter I, he had been chairman of the TUC in 1886. See his letter to \textit{The Times}, April 12, 1927, p. 17.
\item \textsuperscript{25}See the \textit{London Observer}, April 10, 1927, p. 16.
\end{itemize}
Although all sections of the party united in condemning the Trade Union Bill, not all sections could agree upon a scheme for opposing it in Parliament. Two meetings of Parliamentary Party were required before a motion for the Second Reading could be agreed upon. The agreed amendment was clearly a compromise:

That this House, while condemning the general strike of 1926 as an abuse of trade unionism, believe that the admitted uncertainties of trade union law should only be considered after they have been elucidated by an impartial inquiry. At a time when increasing efforts are being made to promote the industrial peace which is a vital need of the nation, this House regrets the introduction of a Bill which cannot fail to hamper these efforts and which will divert the time and attention of Parliament from urgent measures of public economy and social reform.

There was some justice in The Times' comment, in a leading article, that the Liberal amendment would postpone legislation on this question until the "Greek Kalends." Runciman helped matters along by disavowing any responsibility for the amendment.

26For the meeting held on April 5 see the Daily Chronicle, April 6, 1927, p. 3 the meeting on April 7 is reported in ibid., April 8, 1927, p. 3.

27See "Political Notes," The Times, April 8, 1927, p. 14. The Liberal Parliamentary Party asked Cyril Asquith, Lord Oxford's son, to write a series of amendments for the Trade Union Bill. The Party decided the general lines and Asquith was to put them in legal form, on this see the Manchester Guardian, May 5, 1927, p. 10.

28See The Times, April 9, 1927, p. 13. Also on delaying tactics see the Western Mail, May 6, 1927, p. 9.

29"Political Notes," The Times, April 12, 1927, p. 16.
During the long debates over the various clauses of the Trade Union Bill, Liberal unity was consistently broken by the nine Coalitionists. On all occasions they supported the Government, while the rest of the party voted with Labour. When the Labour party walked out of the House on May 16, the Liberals voted unanimously to stay. But the Liberals' glorious experiment in lone opposition was cut short when the Labour men returned. The long struggle came to an end with the Third Reading on June 23; seven Liberals voted with the Government and 14 others voted with Labour.

It is important to note that most of the splitting within the Liberal Parliamentary party (on the Trade Union Bill and other issues) can be laid at the door of the former Coalitionist Liberals. The rest of the party might detest


31See "Political Notes," The Times, June 25, 1927, p. 12 or the Liverpool Post and Mercury, June 24, 1927, p. 9 which noted that the Liberals were not surprised but considerably disappointed to find Sir John Simon had voted with the Government—others included in this select group: Forrest, Beddoe-Rees, Duckworth, Macdonald, Robinson, and J. H. Edwards. M. Macdonald generally voted with the government on the Trade Union Bill.

32Nine Coalitionists (some journals call them Constitutionalists) had been elected in 1924 with Conservative support; these dined together once a week at which time they formulated policy for their group. The nine were Guest, Robinson, Beddoe-Rees, England, Williams, Forrest, Duckworth, J. H. Edwards, and Wiggins; see the Yorkshire Observer, February 13, 1926, p. 14. The Glasgow Herald February 4, 1927, p. 11 stated that the nine had recently proclaimed themselves independents. This journal questioned how much longer they would continue their formal association with the Liberal party.
Lloyd George but they would seldom vote with the Conservatives. One result of the Trade Union Bill struggle was a deputation from the West of England which called upon Sir Robert Hutchison (the Chief Whip) and Samuel; they asked that the whip be withdrawn from F. E. Guest and Sir Beddoe Rees—the two worst offenders. Hutchison and Samuel complained that they were powerless so long as the Coalitionists had the support of their local parties; they suggested that the Western Liberal Association ought to take action. The *Liberal Magazine* thundered that the behavior of the former Coalitionists was "inconsistent and irrational," but agreed that only their local associations could eject them.

Baldwin's Trade Union Bill of 1927 established new procedures for collecting the political levy in trade unions—"contracting-in," instead of contracting out. This measure was designed to limit the amount of money which flowed into Labour Party coffers from trade unionists, and it seemed to be aimed at destroying the trade union base for a mass party. But the National League of Liberal Trade Unionists hoped to divert some of the trade unionist money to themselves. A letter from Arthur Peters, Honorary Secretary of that body, alleged that unions were trying to get around the new law.

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34 "Notes of the Month" (August, 1927), pp. 466-7.
He wrote: "We are communicating with the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies in order that he may be fully acquainted with these various appeals to obtain signatures through misleading circulars. . . . and the League will use every legitimate effort, legal if necessary, to see that the law is properly carried out."35

Concern with reviving Liberalism at home did not prevent British Liberals from noting the new energy displayed by Continental Liberals in the 1920's. Early in 1927 the National Liberal Federation accepted an invitation from the Entente Internationale des Partis radicaux et des Partis démocratiques similaires to send a delegate to one of their meetings in Berlin.36 The NLF executive committee selected W. T. Layton, a Liberal economist, to attend the conference (held on May 28, 1927) of what can only be called the Liberal International. Layton returned enthusiastically expressing the view that "it would be a distinct advantage to the Party to

35See The Times, December 1, 1927, p. 17.
36At its congress in Karlsruhe, on January 15-17, 1927 the President of the Entente internationale, Ivar Berendsen of Denmark, announced "que le Secrétaire général doit entrer prochainement en relations avec les partis libéraux anglais et belge, en vue de leur adhésion éventuelle a l' Entente." See Entente internationale des Partis radicaux et des Partis démocratiques similaires, Compte-rendu du Congrès de Karlsruhe, 1927, Fascicule III (Paris, 1927), p. 84.
be in touch with the Radical parties of the continent."\(^{37}\)
The NLF agreed to send delegates to the Paris conference of
the Entente in the fall to discuss "the movement towards
freer trade."\(^{38}\)

On October 31-November 1, 1927 the Paris conference
of the Entente met. The three British delegates were Sir
Robert Hutchison (Chief Whip), Sir Charles Hobhouse (Presi­
dent of the NLF), and Geoffrey Mander (a member of the NLF
Executive). Elected as first vice-president of the Entente,
Hobhouse reported that the Continental delegates "had been
in considerable doubt as to our adhesion, and were all the
more delighted when we gave it." He formally invited the
Entente to convene its 1928 conference in London.\(^{39}\)

Hutchison suggested that the 1928 London conference
devote itself to questions of interest to British Liberals.
These questions were "la question rurale: les rapports entre
patrons et ouvriers, la question des grèves, le principe de
l' arbitrage obligatoire, la question du chômage. Ce sont

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\(^{37}\)This is how the Report of the NLF Executive Com­
mittee recorded Layton's words; see Appendix III of the
"Proceedings of the National Liberal Federation... 1927"
in Pamphlets and Leaflets: 1928 (London: Liberal Publica­
tion Department, 1928), p. 100.

\(^{38}\)Ibid.

\(^{39}\)See Hobhouse's report on the Paris conference to
the NLF Executive on November 17; it was published in the
Liberal Magazine (December, 1927), p. 741. Layton addressed
the delegates on European economic policy for his speech; see
Compte-rendu, op. cit., Fascicule IV: Congrès de Paris 1927
(Paris; 1928), pp. 73-89.
quatre questions qui intéressent au plus haut point l'Angleterre."40 As spokesman for the British delegation at the Entente's banquet, Hutchison recalled the Liberal by-election victories of the spring: "Dans les trois cas nous avions un conservateur et un travailiste contre nous et nous avons gagné; c'est extrêmement encourageant et c'est la marque d'un revirement d'opinion qui est de plus en plus significatif."41

The history of European liberalism has yet to be written and the same is true of the Entente internationale des Partis radicaux. It is apparent that Liberal revival in Great Britain was part of a wider European process stretching from Leith to Ankara (for the Turks were well-represented in the Entente). It is only when the Liberal revival is placed within its European context that it will be completely understood. For the moment it is only necessary to note that the rather narrow outlook of British Liberalism, once bounded on the North by Midlothian and on the West by Carnarvon Boroughs, had widened to include all of Europe. If Labour could draw strength from the Socialist International, then the Liberals could only survive by joining the Liberal International.

In 1918 women over the age of 30 were given the right to vote while men received the franchise at the age of 21.

40Ibid., p. 107.
41Ibid., p. 129.
Baldwin had pledged to give the vote to women at 21 in the 1924 election but had not carried out his promise. Save for a few die-hards like Churchill and Lord Birkenhead, most politicians were in favor of an equal franchise. The Women's National Liberal Federation worked assiduously to win prospective "flapper" voters to Liberalism. On November 10, 1927 a Liberal Women's Club was opened at 113, Cherry Street, Westminster—a few minutes from Victoria Station. Meals at a moderate price and bedrooms were available where members could rest. The annual membership fee was fixed at £10.10 but the first 200 applicants were to be admitted to membership without charge.42

Since there was some danger that younger flappers might vote for Labour candidates, Liberals suggested that the right to vote might be fixed for both sexes at age 25. The Liberal Magazine insisted that the age of voting was immaterial; "the point of principle many times emphasised in resolutions of the Liberal Party, is that women should possess the right to vote on the same terms as men."43 When Lloyd George asked for C. P. Scott's opinion on the matter; the editor of the Manchester Guardian replied: "I see no conclusive objection on the merits to making the qualifying age 25 for all persons


not yet on the Register, but I do see a tremendous weight of prejudice and prescription against it of which account will have to be taken."44

More important to the Liberals than votes for women, was reform of the system of voting so that a third party would have a sporting chance. The Liberal Magazine cautioned that electoral equality between the sexes would mean nothing without a reform of the franchise.45 Two systems of reform were suggested: The Alternative Vote (or A.V.) allowed the voter to mark his order of preference for each of the candidates listed on the ballot; if no candidate received an absolute majority of first preferences, first and second preferences would be added together until one candidate gained a majority. Liberals looked to A.V. to improve their chances, because both Conservative and Labour supporters would select the Liberal candidate for their second preference. Unfortunately, such a measure would be of use to the Liberals only in constituencies where the three parties were roughly equal in size.

Even better than A.V. (from the Liberal point of view) was the system known as Proportional Representation.

44Scott to Lloyd George, April 8, 1927 in papers belonging to the Earl Lloyd George of Dwyfor at his home, Brimpton Mill, Newbury, near Reading, Berkshire.

Advocates of P. R. proposed to set up a Mirror Parliament which would reflect, in proportion, the actual number of Liberal voters in the country as a whole. Since the party led by Lloyd George had polled 17.6 per cent of the votes cast at the 1924 general election, under P. R. the Liberals would be entitled to 84 seats in the House of Commons instead of the 40 they held.

No one was quite sure what effect of P. R. or A. V. would have on the British electoral system. Samuel, who had undoubtedly learned caution as a Jewish governor of Palestine, thought that the general question of electoral reform could be brought forward "without necessarily tying ourselves to the precise form it should take." Lloyd George urged C. P. Scott to commit the Manchester Guardian to Proportional Representation. Scott replied, somewhat testily:

To begin with I can't pledge the paper in advance. We must hold ourselves entirely free to take what line appears reasonable at the time under all the circumstances. . . . P. R. tends of course to equalise the position of parties. . . . but if the Tories are to get their full share of representation in the centres of population & to retain their unqualified dominance in the counties they stand to gain in both & we may be faced with something like a permanent Tory majority.

On the question of the Alternative Vote there was considerable division of opinion among Conservatives. Viscount

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46 Samuel to Philip Kerr, June 25, 1927 in the Lloyd George Papers, G/17/9/11.

47 Scott to Lloyd George, April 8, 1927 in papers belonging to the Earl Lloyd George of Dwyfor.
Younger of Leckie, chief of the Conservative party organization during the Coalition, called for "the French plan of a second ballot" in order to prevent minority, that is, Labour rule. The Conservative Central Office made a study of the effects of A.V.; their findings may be reduced to five propositions: (1) all Conservatives alternative votes would go to the Liberals; (2) all Labour alternative votes would go to the Liberals; (3) 60 per cent of Liberal alternative votes would go to the Conservatives; (4) 40 per cent of the Liberal alternative vote would go to Labour; (5) 20 per cent of those voting would make no second choice. The Central Office concluded somewhat gloomily:

There can be little doubt an understanding will be made by most Liberals and Socialists at the next General Election in order to defeat the Conservatives so far as the second vote is concerned. . . . If the Liberals run, as they can quite easily, 500 Candidates the consequences are obvious.

Liberal by-election successes in 1927 caused some anxiety in Labour ranks. As Hugh Dalton noted in his diary:

"A 'Liberal revival' not quite a fantastic claim. The by-elections had fallen wonderfully well for the Liberals. If

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48Younger spoke at Ayr on November 19 and his speech was reported in the Manchester Guardian, November 21, 1927, p. 3.


50Ibid.
God had asked L G where he would have liked four or five by-
lection s, L G couldn't have chosen better for himself than Leith, N. Southwark, etc.--or worse for us."51 But when the Liberals failed to win any more by-elections during the year, Arthur Henderson commented that "for the first time since the last General Election I feel there is a chance."52

C. P. Scott, editor of the Manchester Guardian, was eager to put together a Lab-Lib pact. Lloyd George told Scott that he favored a policy of not fighting Labour in seats where there was no chance for a Liberal victory. Instead of repeating the experiment of 1924 in which Liberals supported MacDonald's Government without sharing in office, Lloyd George wanted a Lab-Lib Coalition Government. He declared that he had had enough of office and that it was necessary for younger Liberals to gain experience in administration. In Lloyd George's view, the Liberals could not win more than 250 seats at the next general election; for the Left to govern it was necessary that a new Coalition be formed.53


52Quoted by Dalton in ibid.

Acting as emissary from the Liberals, Scott went to lunch with Ramsay MacDonald in order to acquaint him with Lloyd George's views on Lab-Lib cooperation. Ramsay MacDonald evidently was still smarting from the wounds of 1924; he regarded Lloyd George and Churchill as mainly responsible for destroying the first Labour government. In addition, there was anti-Semitism among the Labour rank and file (according to MacDonald) towards Samuel and Lord Reading. MacDonald claimed that there was general rejoicing in the Labour party when Samuel announced 500 candidates were to stand. He welcomed the Liberals into the struggle against Labour in the industrial constituencies; he thought that if Liberals and Labour fought each other it would divide the opponents of progress. When told by Scott that Lloyd George had promised to stand out of the Lab-Lib ministry, MacDonald topped it by explaining that he would stand out too. When pressed by Scott to list the offices that might fall to the Liberals, MacDonald suggested the Scottish Law offices—an insignificant concession and almost insulting. MacDonald said that the Trade Union Bill would cripple Labour finance and prevent Labour from contesting the rural constituencies where Liberalism was still strong.54

54See Scott's record of a luncheon with MacDonald at the Athenaeum on July 23 in Scott's journal, ibid, folios 210-12.
Part of the difficulty in negotiating a Lab-Lib agreement was that Lloyd George was intriguing with Snowden against MacDonald. According to Sir Charles Hobhouse, the idea was that in a Left Coalition party Lloyd George was to take MacDonald's place and Snowden would replace Walter Runciman as his deputy. The state of MacDonald's health seemed to create a real possibility of his retirement before the 1929 general election. Scott gained the impression that MacDonald was on the edge of a nervous breakdown; the latter talked of retiring from leadership of the party because he was "unwell."

In October 1927 Scott made a second attempt to secure Lab-Lib cooperation. Lloyd George told Scott (whom he knew would talk to MacDonald) that in the next parliament the Left parties could count upon a joint majority of 80 to 100 seats. But agreement on policy between the two leaders proved difficult. Lloyd George would agree to only a partial repeal of the Trade Union Bill and MacDonald demanded nationalization of the Coal industry. It was only with the greatest reluctance

55 Hobhouse to Sir Herbert Samuel, October 10, 1927 in the Samuel Papers, A 70, folio 17. See also Margaret Cole (ed.), Beatrice Webb's Diary: Volume II, op. cit. entries for April 5 (p. 137), July 7 (pp. 145-6), and August 22 (p. 151), 1927.

56 Scott showed the notes of his conversation with MacDonald to J. L. Hammond; see Hammond's letter to his wife, Barbara, August 4, 1927 in the Hammond Papers at the Bodleian Library, Volume A 5, items 11-12.
that the Welshman agreed to a Labour plan for a special tax of two shillings in the pound on all unearned incomes over £500 a year.57

A third attempt to build Lab-Lib cooperation was made by Professor Gilbert Murray on behalf of the League of Nations Union. Murray, an old enemy of Lloyd George within the party, was angered by the Welshman's cavalier treatment of the LNU. Murray complained, on August 16, that "LG has sent a message that he would like to speak for the LNU on Disarmament, though when we ask to fix a date we can not get an answer."58 As a consequence Murray was inclined to work out a joint Lab-Lib policy on disarmament. He wrote to Samuel, on September 12, that he and Lord Cecil viewed with alarm the line taken by Liberal newspapers on the Geneva Protocol; he complained that Liberal objections to the protocol had put these newspapers in a reactionary stance. Murray proposed that he, Samuel, Henderson, Cecil, and Grey get together and work out a joint policy.59 On September 17, Grey wrote to

57This paragraph is based upon material in C. P. Scott's diary, entry for October 14, 1927, British Museum Add. MS. 50907, Volume III, folio 219.

58Gilbert Murray to J. L. Hammond, August 16, 1927 in the Murray Papers, C. 30, item 98, Bodleian Library.

59Murray to Samuel, September 12, 1927 in the Samuel Papers, A/70, folio 9 in the House of Lords Record Office.
Samuel that a meeting with Cecil and Murray had been arranged for September 29.  

C. P. Scott approved of the attempt to cooperate with MacDonald on the Geneva Protocol issue; "I think it ought to be possible to secure a joint Lib-Lab policy on this matter." But Lloyd George objected to an agreed Lab-Lib statement on disarmament which had been worked out; Murray warned Samuel that the attitude of the Liberal newspapers would drive the half million League of Nations supporters—most of whom were Liberal—into the Labour party.

All three attempts to work out an understanding between the leaders of the Left parties came to grief for one reason: both MacDonald and Lloyd George believed they could make terms with the Conservatives if the other proved difficult. In his last conversation with Scott, MacDonald stated that "They [Labour] would much rather make terms with the Tories. I remarked that it might be difficult to get much out of them, but he was quite sanguine; there were a number of progressive young Conservatives. . . . He was quite friendly

60Grey to Samuel, September 17, 1927 in ibid.

61Scott to J. L. Hammond, September 13, 1927 in the Hammond Papers, C. 34, item 38, p. 1.

62Murray to Samuel, October 5, 1927 in the Samuel Papers, A/70, folio 12.
to me personally & begged me, on leaving, to come again. But what, on that footing, could I say to him?"63

Scott believed that MacDonald "is afraid to work with us because that wd. destroy the myth that there is nothing to choose between Liberals & Tories whereas by, if possible, forcing us to cooperate with the Tories he cd. maintain it. And perhaps there is a danger there. Ll. G. wd. be treading a familiar path!"64 Lloyd George took the view that "the Labour people must not suppose that they were our only possible allies. There were plenty of progressive young Conservatives & with them also a Coalition might be made."65 On this basis there could be no middle ground between MacDonald and the Liberals.

Things were not helped by the belief in Labour ranks that Lloyd George and Philip Snowden, who lived nearby in Surrey, were plotting the fall of MacDonald. One of the most significant pieces of evidence was the story that Ethel Snowden kept a photograph of the Welshman over her London fireplace. As Hugh Dalton confided to his diary:


64C. P. Scott to J. L. Hammond, November 25, 1927 in the Hammond Papers, C. 34, item 43.

65Account of a conversation with Lloyd George in C. P. Scott's diary, op. cit., entry for October 14, 1927, folio 220.
It is said that, if L. G. holds the balance in the next Parliament, he will support a Lab Govt on condition that J. R. M. is sacked, & replaced by P. S. as P. M. This, I hear through good sources, was his attitude in the summer. . . . The rumor (that L. G. would want him in J. R. M.'s place) was referred to at one of our informal 'at homes' in November. P. S. said nothing!66

Even if we discount the story about the photograph, it is clear that these rumors were believed, and they must have cut MacDonald to the quick.

At any rate there was no love lost between MacDonald and Lloyd George. As the Liberal leader described the situation:

I am not in the least surprised about the change in the Frognal [where J. R. M. owned a house] weatherglass— or weathervane, as you please. I never thought Ramsay would willingly cooperate with the Liberals. He hates them. He is a compound of vanity and vindictiveness. His snobbish instincts incline him to association with the Tories. But I quite agree with you that the mere idea of Tories and Socialists working together in harmony is just a dream of a man who is not recovered from a bad nervous breakdown. . . . It is a sad reflection, but there is no doubt that the future of progressive activities depends largely upon Ramsay's health.67

Mass communications were an important element in the Liberal revival. Asa Briggs has noted that the Liberals developed from "a party of power" during the World War I period into "a party of ideas."68 But ideas were only useful to


67Lloyd George to C. P. Scott, October 19, 1927 in the Scott Papers, op. cit., Volume IX, folios 230-1.

Lloyd George if they could be put before the voters, and the academic-intellectuals who produced many of these ideas were hardly suited to writing for the Popular Press. As Dr. Joseph Hunter (vice-chairman of the Executive Committee of the Land and Nation League) put it: "The Liberal Party had failed because it was too slow in the step. Its professors must throw aside their academic robes and take off their coats to the task."69

Newspapers were the only important mass medium of the day and Lloyd George relied heavily upon the Daily Chronicle for his "mouthpiece"—as one press directory described it.70 But in order to raise money to fund the party, he was forced to sell his shares in that newspaper at the end of 1926. At this juncture the Welshman persuaded his old associate (and newly returned Viceroy of India), the Marquess of Reading, to become Chairman of the Board of United Newspapers. This concern published the Daily Chronicle and Reading was said to have put "a large amount of money" into the paper.71

69 Dr. Hunter spoke at the 1920 Club in London on February 2; see the report in the Daily Chronicle, February 3, 1927, p. 4.


71 George Renwick to R. C. K. Ensor, May 6, 1927 in the Ensor Papers, Box 1927, loc. cit.; both men were on the staff of the Daily Chronicle.
The *Daily Chronicle* remained a Lloyd George newspaper, but the new Chairman of United Newspapers promised "to work steadfastly for genuine unity and goodwill amongst all Liberals, without which Liberalism can never be a powerful and effective force in our generation."\(^2\) Attempts to maintain a neutral stance between supporters and opponents of Lloyd George soon brought Reading into conflict with the Liberal leader. His latest biographer remarks: "Reading never found the meetings of this Board congenial; he had no specialized knowledge of newspaper production, and he was further embarrassed by the connection between the *Daily Chronicle* and Lloyd George's notorious Political Fund, which was the principal shareholder in United Newspapers."\(^3\)

Conflict with Reading deprived Lloyd George of the dictatorial control which he had formerly exercised over the editorial policy of the *Daily Chronicle*. In these circumstances he began to woo the owner of the *Daily Mail*, Viscount Rothermere, whose newspaper possessed the largest circulation of any London daily. Close association between the two men was no new thing, for Rothermere had occupied the post of


Minister for Air (1917-1918) in Lloyd George's Coalition Government. The press lord was a former member of the Liberal party, although by 1927 he and his newspaper described themselves as Independent Unionists. In common with Lloyd George, Rothermere loathed Stanley Baldwin; undoubtedly he hoped to replace Baldwin with Lloyd George in a renewed Coalition after the next general election.

Perhaps because he over-valued the aid that the Daily Mail could give, Lloyd George was willing to tolerate some of Rothermere's more reactionary ideas. The press lord cautioned Lloyd George against moving too far to the Left because he believed that the Liberals could only come to power with the aid of Conservative votes. He complained of Lloyd George's more radical utterances:

I want to help you, but statements such as these put me in a peculiar difficulty. If they were continued they might compel me to criticise your public speeches which hitherto I have refrained from doing. . . . You can win the next election but only by enunciating a very moderate policy. Don't allow any hot-heads—among whom it looks as if Marquis Reading must be numbered, to mislead you with regard to English public opinion.74

Rothermere predicted that at the beginning of 1928 it would be possible for the Daily Mail to start a Lloyd George boom over the press lord's own signature. Lloyd George was told that he could secure "not less than 250 seats in the

74 Rothermere to Lloyd George, June 1, 1927 in the Lloyd George Papers, G/17/1/12.
next Parliament." Rothermere advised Lloyd George to refrain from writing articles for the foreign press—a view shared by C. P. Scott—because it might offend English opinion. Once again he hinted that fighting on the Left was not really Lloyd George's métier: "May I suggest that in your public utterances you should make a move from your present standpoint and travel the road invariably pursued by all great democrats—towards a very modified political Dictatorship."  

Lloyd George told Rothermere that he had read his letters "with intense interest and [had] given them considerable thought." On a more practical level he pointed out that the Liberal candidate in the Brixton by-election (polling day was June 27) was campaigning on the issue of Retrenchment and he asked for the Daily Mail's support. Retrenchment was one of Rothermere's pets. Lloyd George fell in with the spirit of the thing by telling the press lord that "Winston [Churchill, Chancellor of the Exchequer] is constitutionally incapable of economy. He has no comprehension of it." So far as the Brixton by-election was concerned,  

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75 Rothermere to Lloyd George, June 10, 1927 in ibid., G/17/1/17.  
76 Lloyd George to Rothermere, June 15, 1927 in ibid., G/17/1/8.  
77 Ibid. See F. J. Laverack's speech at Brixton on June 16 in the Daily Chronicle, June 17, 1927, p. 4.  
78 See Rothermere to Lloyd George, June 1, 1927, op. cit. where he requests Lloyd George to support Retrenchment.  
79 Lloyd George to Rothermere, June 15, 1927, op. cit.
Rothermere wrote to the Liberal candidate "that if he made a definite public declaration expressing entire approval of the expulsion of the Soviet Embassy... and foreign Communists I would support him." Despite Rothermere's rather weighty intervention the Liberal candidate lost.

As an example of how close cooperation could be in the Lloyd George-Rothermere entente it is sufficient to examine the following letter from G. Ward Price (the editor of the Daily Mail):

Dear Mr. Lloyd George,

At Lord Rothermere's request I am posting to you to-night the proof of a leader which we shall publish in to-morrow's Daily Mail.

The leader, entitled "Un-English," defended the Welshman's political fund on the ground that "it is discreditable and unworthy of British party controversy that a deliberate attempt should be made to blacken the reputation of an ex-Prime Minister by denouncing him for following a procedure for which his predecessors and adversaries alike have furnished him with precedents."
On October 8, 1927 the *Daily Mail* published an attack upon Baldwin in a ferocious leader. By this time many politicians had begun to realize that a Lloyd George-Rothermere entente had been created. Sir Eric Geddes, Minister of Transport in 1919-1921, wrote to Lloyd George: "I wonder whether you are Rothermere's 'white hope' at the next Election." It may be argued that Rothermere over-rated the extent of the Liberal revival and the Lloyd George overrated the influence of the *Daily Mail*. Even so, with most of the London press hostile, it was important to have Rothermere on the...

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83 See the *Daily Mail*, October 8, 1927, p. 11. This was Rothermere's reply to Baldwin's challenge at Cardiff on October 6 in which the P. M. posed three questions: (1) Is Lord Rothermere a supporter of the Unionist Party with me as leader? (2) Is Lord Rothermere a supporter of the Unionist Party with someone else as leader? (3) Is Lord Rothermere a supporter of Lloyd George? Rothermere stated that he supported no party and that the *Daily Mail* was independent of parties: "After years of experience I am convinced that the less politicians see of newspaper people and the less newspaper people see of politicians the better." See also the *Cardiff Western Mail*, October 7, 1927, p. 9. The 1927 National Conservative Conference was held at Cardiff, October 6-7.

84 Lloyd George to Rothermere, October 10, 1927 in the Lloyd George Papers, G/17/1/22.

85 Geddes to Lloyd George, October 10, 1927 in *ibid.*, G/8/7/10.
side of the Liberals. Lloyd George was under no illusions as to the actual strength of Liberalism in the country and probably felt that he could not afford to alienate any press lords. On the whole Rothermere's support probably helped rather than hurt the Liberals.

The first stage of Liberal revival—with Lloyd George as leader—proved to be successful. Winning three by-elections in the spring of 1927 gave the Liberals good reason to hope for more spectacular victories in the next year. As the struggle over the Trade Union Bill demonstrated, the Party still lacked a firm industrial policy. But the year was mainly devoted to reorganizing the party machine and Lloyd George had given up hope of getting franchise reform out of a Conservative Government. Consequently, his strategy was now to build up as large a following in Parliament as possible (which accounts for his reluctance to part with the ex-Coalitionists). Although MacDonald was a stumbling block, it was reasonable to hope that the Labour leader's health might remove him from the scene. Finally, Rothermere had been won over to tentative support for the Liberal revival. All in all hope was not an unreasonable state of mind for Liberals as 1927 came to an end.
CHAPTER IV

THE IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE, 1928

On February 3, 1928 the Report of the Liberal Industrial Inquiry was published under the title of Britain's Industrial Future.\(^1\) The Yellow Book, so called from the color of its cover, was Lloyd George's bid to win support from industrialists and industrial workers. It was the climax of the New Liberalism of the 1920's; from the 1926 Land Conference until 1928 the Liberals had been engaged in bringing their ideology into accord with postwar conditions. The result of this process, the New Liberalism, caused a stir even outside Wales for, as Doctor Johannes Gerhardt at the University of Munich noted: "Der heutige Liberalismus is kein Manchesterturn, er hat das Prinzip des Laissez-faire modifiziert. . . Ein typisches Beispiel dieser Wandlung ist z. B. der Bericht der englischen liberalen Partei."\(^2\)

The New Liberalism is best characterized as an Anglo-Welsh version of Fordism. It is difficult nowadays to recall

\(^1\)Britain's Industrial Future: Being the Report of the Liberal Industrial Inquiry (London: Ernest Benn, 1928).

\(^2\)See Gerhardt's Liberalismus und Wirtschaftsdemokratie (Berlin: Junker and Dünnaupt Verlag, 1930), p. 44.
the praise, amounting almost to worship, which was accorded to the founder of Fordism—Henry I. The Mussolini of Highland Park, as Ford was styled, was revered as the founder of mass production ever since he had introduced the moving assembly line in 1914 while at the same time managing to pay his workers high wages. Seebohm Rowntree, who helped to write the Yellow Book, grew almost lyrical in his praise of high wages: "That is the great thing America has done... she has given her workers purchasing power. That has kept her mills busy, and there is virtually no serious unemployment in America to-day." On a visit to London in April, the Sage of Dearborn showed himself to be very nearly the ideal Radical; Ford, as the Liberal Magazine noted, "expressed himself strongly in favor of Free Trade, the payment of high wages, and Prohibition."

In the Yellow Book the transatlantic example loomed large. The index to that volume contains 20 references to the United States as compared with 16 for Germany, eight for Belgium, five for Denmark, and two for Britain. But if America was Fordist, it was also Hooverist; the Industrial Inquiry praised the "American Ministry of Commerce" under Herbert

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4 Henry Ford at an interview on April 10, 1928; quoted in the Liberal Magazine (May 1928), 299.
Hoover: "By common consent Mr. Hoover has made contributions of extraordinary value to the development of industrial efficiency in the United States." The model of American development proved exceedingly attractive to Liberals as the 1920's waned; in this period, as Henry Pelling notes, supporters of capitalism in Europe "pointed triumphantly to American prosperity as the justification of their faith." In their eyes the United States was American the Golden.

For Lloyd George Liberals America's prosperity suggested a desirable goal, even if they rejected the methods by which Henry Ford had attained that goal. "Detroitism," Ramsay Muir concluded, could not work outside Detroit; nonetheless the reform of capitalism was necessary to save it:

American business, has however vaguely, grasped this truth, and is settling itself to bring about a wider distribution of ownership. The methods adopted may not be the best, or the only, methods. But at least the end is realised, and is being systematically pursued, which is not yet the case in England. America has set before herself the aim of banishing from her society the 'propertyless proletariat', and creating a society whose members shall all be owners and workers at once. In this respect, and in the others which I have named, we ought not be ashamed to imitate her.

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5Britain's Industrial Future, op. cit., pp. 221-2.
7This was the title of a book by Ramsay Muir, America The Golden: An Englishman's Notes and Comparisons (London: Williams and Norgate, 1927) published under the auspices of the Liberal Industrial Inquiry.
8Ibid., p. 140.
But when it came to specific recommendations, the Liberal Industrial Inquiry fell back upon the peculiar obsessions of Lloyd Georgian Liberalism: freedom of communications, an improved flow of information to the public, in a word, publicity. For the outstanding characteristic of the Liberal revival was it dependence upon the press and new methods of spreading propaganda, such as the campaign vans used by the Land and Nation League. Lloyd George was fascinated by the power of such press lords as Rothermere; if skillful use of publicity could revive the Liberal party, then such a method could also revive the national economy.

Publicity, claimed the writers of the Yellow Book, would cure all the evils associated with capitalism: "For there is very little to be said in favour of the instinctive secrecy of the British business man. The standard of publicity which prevails (in some quarters, but not in all) in the United States has shown how unnecessary it is." Publicity would eliminate the need for excessive government interference in economic affairs: "For the control, therefore, of large-scale concerns, other than transport and public utilities, it is on Publicity that we propose mainly to rely."^9

Large combines might be a threat to economic democracy, according to the Yellow Book, but publicity formed "the

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9 Britain's Industrial Future, op. cit., p. 86.
10 Ibid., pp. 94-5.
necessary condition for the right use by the consumer of his ultimate weapon against this type of combine, namely, his power in the last resort to carry his custom elsewhere."
But the business man would benefit also because publicity would "protect the combine from unfair criticism on the part of the public and from blackmail by other powerful interests (by the Press, for example)."

Britain's Industrial Future proposed that the State must take a hand in facilitating the flow of information; indeed the Liberals called for what amounted to a communications revolution:

The nationalising of knowledge is the one case for nationalisation which is overwhelmingly right. It goes to the root of the chief political and social evils of the day. It is the lack of it which lies behind much class suspicion, breeding industrial strife and malicious idleness. It is the lack of it which makes possible the acquisition of those great fortunes which are due, not to any real contribution to the common pot, but to the private possession and cunning withholding of particular facts which ought to be within the knowledge of all concerned. It is the lack of it which breeds the risk, uncertainty, and precariousness of business, from which spring...unemployment, bankruptcies, and waste. ...

Employers and workers alike would benefit from improved information—according to the Yellow Book: "Both sides need, and neither has access to, a trustworthy body of statistical knowledge; and this must somehow be provided before the results

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11Ibid., p. 94.
12Ibid., p. 122.
of collective bargaining can be made satisfactory."\textsuperscript{13} Industrial unrest was traced directly to worker's lack of information: "Knowledge of the financial results of industry, and of the division of its proceeds, is denied to the worker, and of this he is becoming increasingly resentful. He has little means of judging to what extent he is in fact participating in the fruits of his own labours, or whether or not he is getting a 'square deal'; and his dissatisfaction with the existing order is proportionately intensified."\textsuperscript{14}

An improved flow of information would bring a revolution in the world of finance as well. The Yellow Book restated the old Liberal cry for Retrenchment in novel form: "We believe that the recent inability of the House of Commons to control expenditure and to ensure economy in the right places is largely due to the unintelligibility of the National Accounts, through which no one but a Treasury expert can find his way securely."\textsuperscript{15} More publicity would be of benefit to the Old Lady of Threadneedle Street as well: "The Bank of England might well follow the path blazed by the Federal Reserve Board and give general indications of its monetary

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., p. 218.
\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., pp. 148-9.
\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., p. 421.
and credit policy from time to time, of the objectives it is pursuing, and of the means by which it hopes to attain its ends.\textsuperscript{16}

In his study of \textit{The Downfall of the Liberal Party}, Trevor Wilson passes over the role of the Industrial Conference without so much as a footnote. He asserts that Lloyd George "and some of the other authors set about deriving" a party program from the Yellow Book.\textsuperscript{17} In fact the process of translating \textit{Britain's Industrial Future} into a party program was more complicated than Wilson suggests. A special Industrial Conference of the NLF, meeting at the Kingsway Hall in London, discussed and amended many of the Yellow Book proposals. The conference met on March 27, 28, and 29, 1928 with a total of 3,449 delegates in attendance. Most of the delegates were appointed (as in the case of the 1926 Land Conference) by local constituency associations; 413 constituencies out of a total 513 for England and Wales appointed delegates. The rest included M. P.'s, intellectuals, and a grand total of 233 peers of the realm. There were also 499 women delegates and 250 manual workers somewhere in the dark recesses of Kingsway Hall.\textsuperscript{18} This was the most democratic of

\textsuperscript{16}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 417.

\textsuperscript{17}\textit{See Wilson, op. cit.}, p. 371.

\textsuperscript{18}On the number of delegates see the \textit{Liberal Magazine} (July, 1928), 414.
the postwar Liberal conferences. Party unity was displayed as Runciman and Lloyd George joined together in hymns of praise to the Yellow Book.

The "Kingsway Hall Resolutions," as they were known, translated the work of Lloyd George's experts into party policy. Some Liberals felt that rule by the experts was undemocratic but Philip Guedalla, a distinguished historian, defended the role of experts in the governmental process: "I do not consider that my fundamental belief in democracy is in any way in danger because on economic topics I rather prefer to have the advice of economists, any more than I consider that my Liberalism is in danger when in moments of medical doubt I prefer the advice of a doctor."19

Prominent Liberals from both wings of the party proposed resolutions at the Industrial Conference. B. Seebohm Rowntree, who had helped prepare the Yellow Book, proposed a resolution on "the distribution of the proceeds of industry."20 A confessed opponent of Lloyd George, Ronald Walker, proposed

19 See Hubert Phillips, Handbook on Liberal Industrial Policy (London: Liberal Publication Department, 1928), pp. 87-8 in Selection of Pamphlets and Leaflets, 1928 (London: Liberal Publication Department, 1928) for the text of the Resolutions and Guedalla's comments; no date is given for the latter.

20 For Rowntree's speech see ibid., p. 137. There is no discussion of Rowntree's work on the Liberal Industrial Inquiry (he was on the Executive Committee) or his role in the Industrial Conference in Asa Briggs' study of Rowntree's Social Thought and Social Action, op. cit.
a resolution on "Economy and Budget Reform"; this was seconded by Walter Runciman.\textsuperscript{21} The \textit{Liberal Magazine}, not always friendly to Lloyd George, praised the conference at which "all classes of Liberals were represented—the heads of great businesses, trade unionists, economists, housewives, political organisers, and many others."\textsuperscript{22}

The Liberal Industrial Conference produced resolutions which set out party policy on the Yellow Book proposals. In a Concluding Summary Resolution the conference expressed thanks to the Industrial Inquiry Committee, accepted "substantially" its conclusions, and urged "that the Party should embark upon a vigorous campaign in support of that policy."\textsuperscript{23}

Major H. L. Nathan proposed, in addition to the Kingsway Hall resolutions, the "Outlines of an Industrial Reform Bill" based on the Yellow Book.\textsuperscript{24} On April 13-14, a special meeting of the Scottish Liberal Federation at Glasgow carried "with hardly a dissentient voice" a series of resolutions similar to those carried at Kingsway Hall.\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{22}"Notes of the Month," \textit{Liberal Magazine} (April, 1928), 193.
\textsuperscript{23}Quoted in the \textit{Liberal Magazine}, ibid., p. 208.
\textsuperscript{24}See \textit{Handbook on Liberal Industrial Policy}, op. cit., pp. 149-57.
\textsuperscript{25}Ibid., p. 9.
It is difficult to measure the precise impact of the Yellow Book upon the public. Tom Jones noted that the authors of the Yellow Peril (his coinage) "seemed rather flat at the reception of the book. It had clashed with the funeral of Lord Haig." A. J. Cook, who can hardly be classified as "the public," welcomed the Industrial Report: "I am glad that one party in the State, at any rate, understands and realises the position. Moreover, I don't care from what quarter a real solution comes, if it is the right solution." Liberal newspapers unanimously welcomed the publication of the Liberal Industrial Report. Typical of the London Liberal press was the Daily News' comment that the Yellow Book incorporated "the vision of a better and happier country--fitter for free men to live in, and live lives which will be worth living." From the provinces the Liberal Yorkshire Observer declared that the Yellow Book had been prepared only "after a prolonged period of investigation by experts and reflection by those of theoretical and practical experience."


28 Ibid., February 3, 1928, p. 8.

The entire Liberal press united in praise of Britain's Industrial Future; all were conscious that the real debate would come at the Industrial Conference in March.

Press opinion of the Yellow Book divided along party lines with the Labour and Conservative press united in disapproval. The Weekly Scotsman called the Liberal proposals "milk and water Socialism." The Glasgow Herald thought Britain's Industrial Future "an admirable document" but one "scarcely likely to be an electoral asset of the first importance. Constructive proposals, it is true, are not lacking but they are for the most part neither novel nor distinctive." The Liverpool Post and Mercury lamented that the "Report makes no allusion to the improvement, notoriously urgent, of the great instrument of legislation, Parliament itself." Rothermere's Daily Mail headlined a story on the Yellow Book as a "Startling Plan" and added that "to many one of the principal objections to the scheme outlined will be the enormous increase in officials which the [sic] entail." The Daily Herald called the Liberal Industrial Report "Lloyd George's Latest" and pronounced it to be a "a formidable indictment of Liberalism. . . . the Liberals are not only in the wilderness

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31 Glasgow Herald, February 3, 1928, p. 10.
32 Liverpool Post and Mercury, February 3, 1928, p. 6.
33 Daily Mail, February 3, 1928, p. 2.
electorally, but intellectually. . . . their professions do not square with their practice."34

The sessions of the Liberal Industrial Conference were closed to the press. It is apparent that Lloyd George did not wish to expose himself to misquotation in view of Rothermere's warning: "It is of paramount importance that no utterance of yours at the coming conference should interfere with the effective work I propose to do."35 The critics of Lloyd George within the party were thus afforded an excellent opening; J. B. Hobman complained: "As a mere journalist I was excluded from the Conference held in London this week to consider the Liberal Industrial Report, one of the chief items of which is 'publicity of accounts.' But not accounts of Liberal Conferences on matters of high policy."36

In April 1928 the second of the Liberal reports was published. This was the Tartan Book (so called because of its tartan cover) produced by the Scottish Liberal Land Inquiry Committee and entitled The Scottish Countryside.37

34Daily Herald, February 3, 1928, p. 4.
35Rothermere to Lloyd George, March 16, 1928 in the Lloyd George Papers, G/17/1/27.
37The Scottish Countryside (London: Liberal Publication Department, 1928).
The occasion was marred by a split on policy over land tenure which developed between the chairman, Sir Archibald Sinclair, and a member of the Land Committee, James Scott. The latter penned a "Note" and Sinclair a "Reply" which were printed with the first copies of the Land Committee's report. But a compromise was worked out and, as the Secretary of the Land Committee put it: "The Scottish Land Inquiry Committee is now unanimous." Scott's "Note" metamorphosed into "A Note of Emphasis" which appeared as an appendix to later editions of The Scottish Countryside.

The Scottish Land Campaign began with a Land Conference held in Edinburgh on April 13-14, 1928; after the customary debate over matters moral and physical the Conference approved the Tartan Book proposals. A leaflet distributed by the Scottish Liberal Federation claimed that since 1908 nearly 36,000 male agricultural workers had left the land.

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38 The office of the Scottish Liberal Land Inquiry Committee was in 95, Princes Street, Edinburgh. In addition to the chairman, George G. Mercer, J. P. was vice-chairman and J. Henderson Stewart, M. A., B. Com. was the secretary.


40 See the Liberal Magazine (May, 1928), 271 for the resolutions which were carried at the Edinburgh conference.

41 See "A Real Future for the Scottish Countryside" leaflet, p. 2 in Selection of Pamphlets and Leaflets, 1928, op. cit.
The elector was urged to "come to the first Liberal meeting in your district and hear more about this great gospel of hope for the Scottish Countryside." The Highlands were given special attention, for the Liberals promised to treat that area as "an undeveloped colony." A Highland Development Commission was proposed to encourage utilization of natural resources in the area.

The Union of University Liberal Societies, under the presidency of Ramsay Muir, provided most of the workers for the opening of the Scottish Land Campaign. From April 16 to April 21 the UULS carried out a speaking campaign in the Dumfrieshire and Galloway areas of Southwest Scotland. The area covered was eighty square miles in size; 45 meetings were held and over 2,000 Liberal publications were distributed. From seven local bases in the area, groups of undergraduates went out to speak at markets, lunch-hour meetings outside factories, and evening meetings in the villages. This was the first attempt by the Liberals to mobilize Scottish opinion since Gladstone's Midlothian campaigns.

42 Ibid., p. 3.
44 Ibid.
45 For a description of this campaign see the Liberal Magazine (May, 1928), 306.
Since the Liberals relied upon the Yellow Book and its companion reports as their main political weapon, the attitude of the press was important to them. But the attitude of Lord Rothermere was not entirely reassuring. Of the Yellow Book he complained that "it seems to me to be a report of business by twelve men, not one of whom has a business." He told Lloyd George that "the sooner the Liberal Industrial Report is buried, in fact, the better." As the press lord put it in his blunt fashion: "I could not allow the Daily Mail to be linked with such dangerous theories." 46

Neither was Rothermere sympathetic to the Liberal Land policy: "So strong is the public resentment of bureaucracy that I intend during the present year to start a 'Hands off Farming' movement, demanding the complete withdrawal of the present officious regulations and inspectors." As the press lord explained to Lloyd George "I am anxious that the campaign I propose to conduct in the Daily Mail for an efficient Government in this country shall not be stultified by any misplaced zeal on the part of your supporters." He sought to redirect Lloyd George's formidable energies, advising him

46On March 16, 1928 Rothermere sent a "Confidential" Memorandum to Lloyd George on the important political questions of the day; the above quotation is taken from the copy in the Lloyd George Papers in the Beaverbrook Library, G/17/1/27.
that there was "much high explosive political ammunition to be found in the rubber question. Please read the Daily Mail thereon and use it." 47

Although Rothermere was unhappy about the Yellow Book, he remained a supporter of Lloyd George. As the editor of the Daily Mail, G. Ward Price, put it (in a letter to Lloyd George) Rothermere "has come to the definite and emphatic conclusion that your restoration to power at the next Election can be achieved." 48 Rothermere believed in the ability of the press (and specifically the Daily Mail) to achieve the revival of Liberalism; he wrote to Lloyd George:

The outlook to-day is most favourable for your cause. What still remains indispensable is the powerful backing which I alone can give you. Without that, victory is impossible. With it, victory is assured. Just as my support through the Daily Mail kept Bonar Law at his especial request in office in 1923 when otherwise he would have fallen in a fortnight, so the same support can ensure beyond all doubt your own return to power at the next General Election. 49

The Daily Mail (with a circulation of 1,851,841 in October 1928) was a valuable ally for Lloyd George at a time when the London Liberal press was in difficulties. 50 For

47 Rothermere to Lloyd George, March 16, 1928 in the Lloyd George Papers, G/17/1/27. This letter accompanied the memorandum referred to in note 46.

48 Ward Price to Lloyd George, March 17, 1928 in the Lloyd George Papers, G/17/1/23.

49 The Rothermere Memorandum, March 16, 1928, supra., G/17/1/27, p. 4.

50 See the Daily Mail, November 25, 1927, p. 11. The Daily Mail claimed that it had the largest circulation in the world.
some time the Liberal Westminster Gazette had suffered from declining circulation, and on February 1, 1928 it merged with the Daily News.\(^{51}\) The net daily sale of the combined newspapers reached 901,619 by June 1928, but this was small compensation for losing a London newspaper with a General Election in the offing.\(^{52}\)

Nor was all well at the Daily Chronicle— that last bastion of Lloyd-Georgisme. Lord Reading decided to sell out in July 1928, and Lloyd George proposed to Rothermere that he (Rothermere) enter the bidding.\(^{53}\) If the deal had gone through, Rothermere would have secured control, not only of the Daily Chronicle, but also its subsidiaries; these included the London Sunday News, the Edinburgh Evening News, the Doncaster Gazette, and the Yorkshire Evening News.\(^{54}\) These were all Liberal newspapers, but Rothermere discovered at the last minute that he already held shares in the Yorkshire Conservative Newspaper Company, Ltd. Since the latter published a newspaper which competed with the Yorkshire Evening News, Rothermere wrote Lloyd George that he was debarred from

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\(^{51}\) On the merger see The Times advertisement, March 9, 1928, p. 10.

\(^{52}\) On the net daily sale see the advertisement in ibid., July 27, 1928, p. 8.

\(^{53}\) Evidence for this is to be found in Rothermere to Lloyd George, July 9, 1928 in the Lloyd George Papers, G/17/1/30.

\(^{54}\) For a list of newspapers owned by the Daily Chronicle see The Times, July 17, 1928, p. 16.
entering the bidding. On July 17 it was announced that Inveresk, Ltd. had purchased the Daily Chronicle; a condition of sale was that those newspapers continue to support the Liberal party.

The Liberals also experienced difficulties in working with the B. B. C. On April 19, 1928 Sir John Reith, Director-General of the British Broadcasting Corporation, wrote to the leaders of the three parties about political broadcasts during the next general election. At a three-party conference which was called to discuss Reith's letter, the Liberals discovered that the Government would have the right to deliver one speech for each speech given by the Opposition. The Liberals took the line that each of the three parties ought to broadcast in turn and withdrew from the conference without further ado. J. C. C. Davidson, chief of the Conservative party organization, condemned "the obstinate refusal of the Liberal Party to accept the original proposals which the

55 Rothermere to Lloyd George, July 9, 1928, op. cit.
56 The Times, July 17, 1928, p. 16.
58 On the Liberal position see The Times, May 23, 1928, p. 18.
B. B. C. had put forward on their own initiative." The whole question was postponed until the beginning of 1929.

Correctly perceiving that there were too few Liberal voters to return the party to power, Samuel placed his hopes upon the shoulders of youth. When a great Liberal Youth campaign was launched in March 1928, the chief of Liberal organization, declared in a somewhat flowery message:

Liberalism, which stands for the effort to make the Britain of to-morrow better than the Britain of to-day, should appeal to youth, to whom the to-morrow will belong. The intensive campaign which is being conducted throughout Great Britain to bring our vast electorate to the support of Liberal policies is nowhere more necessary than among the young. They will soon share fully in the rights of citizenship, and therefore in its duties. Chief among those duties is the promotion of sane progressive politics. Let the rallying cry be—Liberalism for youth and youth for Liberalism.

The National League of Young Liberals was the youth arm of Liberalism. By 1928 there were 500 branches of the NLYL with a total dues-paying membership of 25,000; other members "too poor to pay any subscription" could not be counted. The Youth Campaign sought to bring more members

59Davidson's statement is quoted in "Political Notes," ibid., May 24, 1928, p. 16.

60Asa Briggs in The History of Broadcasting, op. cit., does not discuss this incident in any way what so ever.

61Quoted in the Liberal Magazine (April, 1928), 227-8.

62See the letter from Betty L. Arne, secretary of the NLYL, in The Times, March 26, 1928, p. 12.
into the NLYL by distributing leaflets which asserted that "Liberalism is the creed of YOUTH." 63 Another leaflet pointed out elements in the party's program which might appeal to youth:

The Liberal Party has definitely pledged itself to continuous progress in Education and Temperance. Unless the children and young people have access to full knowledge, and unless there is temperance and sobriety in their homes, there is no hope for the country. These two beliefs are at the rock-bottom of Liberalism.64

Liberal revival was evident from the by-election results in the spring of 1928, for on February 9 R. P. Tomlinson won Lancaster and on March 6 Mrs. Runciman conquered St. Ives. Kingsley Griffith triumphed at West Middlesbrough the next day and W. N. Jones won Carmarthen, Sir Alfred Mond's old seat, on June 28. In addition the Liberals only narrowly escaped winning Ilford (polling day was February 22) from the Conservatives. Four victories, and one near-miss, gave color to the view that "the Liberal spirit is an endemic English right and itself a vivid part of our great unwritten constitution. It sprang from England. It belongs to England, and England is not historically herself without it."65

63 From "Youth Calling" in Selection of Pamphlets and Leaflets, 1928, op. cit.
64 From "Liberalism's Call to Youth" in ibid.
65 Austin Harrison in the Sunday Pictorial, January 29, 1928, p. 9.
Lord Rothermere's Daily Mail ran a leading article on March 9 in which it was asserted that "by-elections of the past few weeks have now definitely established the fact that there is a Liberal revival, and that it is making real progress." The men around Lloyd George were less optimistic in private; H. A. L. Fisher wrote to Sir John Simon: "I doubt whether the Government is losing much ground in the country. Our party is undoubtedly doing better, and we are encouraged by the results at Lancaster, St. Ives, and Ilford, for although we did not win Ilford, the Liberal poll was largely increased."

The role of Lloyd George provided material for comment from members of the other two parties. All agreed that Lloyd George was responsible for the Liberal revival. Sidney Webb spoke almost admiringly to Beatrice of "Lloyd George's superb energy" after the Lancaster victory. Ormsby-Gore, a prominent Conservative backbencher who was bitterly opposed to Lloyd George, could see "no hope at all for the Liberal Party

66 Daily Mail, p. 10.

67 Fisher to Simon (who was absent in India serving as chairman of the Simon Commission), March 26, 1928 in the Fisher Papers, op. cit., Box 4.

as long as Ll. G. is there." Lloyd George was both a constructive and destructive force—as the Liberals found to their cost.

An illustration of the destructive side of Lloyd George's association with Liberalism is to be found in his use of the Fund. In 1927 he had promised to give £300,000 to the party—to be paid in two installments of £150,000 each. In 1928 he proposed to deduct £60,000 from the second installment in order to set it aside for the Scottish Land Campaign. Sir Herbert Samuel objected to this procedure because it might "cause some embarrassment" to him with the Campaign Committee; instead he promised to send his personal check for £60,000 to the Lloyd George trustees. The full installment of £150,000 was then paid into Samuel's account.

At this point Samuel refused to pay back the £60,000 as he had promised, and Lloyd George was furious at losing his money. The thrifty Welshman complained:

As I was anxious to help you in every way, [sic] I urged St. Davids [Chairman of the Fund Trustees] to take your word for it. You have now apparently gone back on your engagement. When you say that you will

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70 This paragraph is based upon page 1 of an undated letter of Lloyd George's to Samuel in the Lloyd George Papers, G/17/9/30. In the letter Lloyd George recapitulates Samuel's arguments; there is no reference to this in the Samuel Papers. A reference to the St. Ives by-election (polling day was March 7) earlier in the letter dates it around March-April, 1928. The Scottish Land campaign opened in April 1928.
pay as the occasion arises—that was not your promise—may I remind you that the need for the £300,000 only arises at the general election; but you insisted upon the whole grant being paid into your account even before you received any liability, and it was paid as soon as I received it.  

Lloyd George complained that Samuel's version of ca'canny might involve the Lloyd George Fund Trustees "in heavier liabilities than they are ready to incur." This was a not very disingenuous threat to cut off any further money. He proposed to bring the matter before the Liberal Campaign Committee "so that they may cut their coat according to the measure of cloth at their disposal." As a solution to problems of this kind, Lloyd George suggested that his campaign on the Land be separated from the campaigns directed by Samuel: "We can then resume our activities on the land... and you can organise your own campaign on other issues. That will prevent future misunderstandings."  

It would be wrong to place too sinister an interpretation upon this incident, but it does explain why relations between Samuel and Lloyd George were often cool. But Lloyd George was entirely correct in using his Fund to stimulate party discipline. For if he had given over control of his Fund to men like Samuel, he might soon have been

71 Ibid., pp. 2-3.

forced to withdraw from the Liberal party altogether. The party lacked a central direction and when Lloyd George lost the leadership, in 1931, it quickly split into fragments. Only the Lloyd George Fund held the Liberal party together in the 1920's.

Maintaining discipline in the Parliamentary Liberal party was a task in which the Lloyd George Fund gave little help. Liberal M. P.'s who had survived the deluge of 1924 sat—almost by definition—for safe seats; they needed little help from party headquarters in retaining their seats. Lloyd George did not spend much time in controlling the Liberal M. P.'s; he stated that there was little reason for Liberals to vote in the House of Commons, when no Liberal lobby existed. For this reason, it must be assumed, he seldom voted on even the most important bills. Absenteeism was a problem and it was agreed by M. P.'s that the Chief Whip should be informed if a member could not attend a sitting of the House. Heavy demands for speakers at by-elections caused much of the absenteeism among the small Parliamentary Liberal Party.

F. E. Guest's conduct in the House of Commons was singled out for special comment by the Western Liberal

73See Lloyd George's statement at Middlesbrough on March 5; Daily Chronicle, March 6, 1928, p. 3.

74See "Political Notes," The Times, April 20, 1928, p. 17.

75Ibid.
Federation. Meeting at Bristol on July 27, that body debated whether or not to eject Guest from the hall. Sir Charles Hobhouse, President of the National Liberal Federation, moved that Guest and his entourage be excluded and the motion was carried by a vote of nearly four to one. Complaining of a lack of hospitality shown to him in his hometown, Guest withdrew—although not before threatening to appeal to Lloyd George.76 But he remained a member of the Liberal party throughout 1928.

The former Coalitionists were the most persistent transgressors against party unity. John Duckworth, F. E. Guest, Sir W. Beddoe Rees, Abraham England, John Hugh Edwards, Walter Forrest, and Sir Thomas Robinson nearly always split in support of the Government amendments. Other Liberals such as Sir Godfrey Collins, Sir Murdoch Macdonald, Alexander M. Livingstone, Ernest A. Harney, Sir William Edge, and Sir Robert Hutchison occasionally violated party unity to vote with Baldwin. Even more infrequently some M. P.'s would split in favor of the Labour party while the whip supported the Government; these Left-leaning members included Thomas Davis Fenby (the Assistant Whip for the English members), George M. Garro-Jones, Dougal M. Cowan, Horace E. Crawfurd, and Rhys Hopkin Morris. Some M. P.'s managed to split (on widely-separated occasions) to both Labour and Conservative lobbies;

76On l' affaire Guest see The Times, July 28, 1928, p. 7.
these nimble (not to say Lloyd George-like) members included Ernest Evans, Edward A. Strauss, Sir Robert Hamilton, and Ernest Brown.

Although some splitting by backbenchers occurred, the Liberal leaders no longer voted against the party line. Lloyd George, Simon, and the Runcimans (Walter and Hilda) behaved in exemplary fashion so far as voting was concerned. The improvement in party discipline over previous years was remarkable; leading opponents of Lloyd George like Runciman were willing to forego the pleasure of a public quarrel with the Chairman of the Parliamentary Party. As Liberal revival seemed to become a reality in 1928, the prestige of Lloyd George rose within the party. Only convinced adherents of Asquith such as Sir Godfrey Collins and David Davies refused the Welshman's embrace, and they at least were seldom in Parliament.

The spring of 1928 found the Labour party in a depressed state; in February Sidney Webb reported "the Parliamentary Labour Party is discouraged--they are not making headway in the country--Trade Unionists are it is said, voting Tory."77 After a debate, initiated by Ramsay MacDonald, over the 1924 Zinoviev Letter, H. A. L. Fisher commented: "The

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Labour party did so badly over the recent Zinoviev debate and have in general shown such a lack of critical power that I cannot think that they are gaining ground. 78

Circumstances seemed to favor the Liberals at the expense of the Labour party. When the Government introduced a measure to revise the English Book of Common Prayer in what was thought to be a Romish direction, the Nonconformists were aroused. As Hugh Dalton confided to his diary: "I see a vision of religion coming back into British politics & distracting attention from all that matters &, perhaps, incidentally reviving the Liberals." 79 MacDonald's poor health was also a liability; on this theme H. A. L. Fisher wrote: "L-G is as young and resilient as ever. Ramsay appears to me to be broken in health and I cannot believe he will form and conduct an administration." 80

Not surprisingly, speculation about an amalgamation of the two Left parties revived even though Ramsay MacDonald set his face against any such arrangement: "The party knows its mind and has mapped out its way. It will not shift its ground to meet either Liberal revivals or Communist and Left


Wing attacks. The Labour policy is not a bargaining compromise. "81 Lord Rothermere was also opposed to a Liberal-Labour agreement. It was with horror (or what passes for horror in Fleet Street) that he learned "the long-haired Keynes" advocated an alliance with the "Socialists." In letter to Lloyd George, the press lord burst out: "Some people never learn. The day a pact or understanding is reached between the Liberal party and the Socialist party, that day will seal the doom of the Liberal party."82

As a climax to the Liberal revival in the spring of 1928 came the London conference of the Entente internationale des Partis radicaux et des Partis democratiques similaires. Held at the National Liberal Club on July 6-7, the conference symbolized the renewed strength of European Liberalism. Sir Charles Hobhouse, who presided, characterized England as the "spiritual home" for all Liberals; he advanced the novel thesis that "Europe is plainly divided into two political camps, it halts between two sets of opinion, Reactionary and Communistic on one side, and Liberal and Radical on the other." He urged that Liberalism could flourish only if it took advantage "of physical advance of motion; the gradual abolition of space

81MacDonald in Forward, March 24, 1928; quoted in the Liberal Magazine (April, 1928), 230.

82Rothermere to Lloyd George, April 10, 1928 in the Lloyd George Papers, G/17/1/29.
and of distance; the increasing means and speed of communication."\(^{83}\)

One hundred and twenty delegates from twelve countries attended the conference in London. The British delegation was the largest; it comprised 40 members including M. P.'s, representative of the National Liberal Federation, Women's National Liberal Federation, National League of Young Liberals, the Liberal and Radical Candidates' Association, the Eighty Club, and the press in the person of C. P. Scott.\(^{84}\) Other

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\(^{83}\) Hobhouse's opening speech to the delegates on July 6; see Entente internationale des Partis radicaux et des Partis democratieux similaires, Comptes-rendu du Congres de Londres 1928, Fascicule V (Paris, 1929), 14.

\(^{84}\) The following were members of the British delegation: Mrs. Corbett Ashley (President of the WNLF), Hon. Lady Barlow (Vice-President of the WNLF), Earl Beauchamp (Leader of the Liberal party in the House of Lords), John W. Benson (secretary of the Eighty Club), Miss Barbara Bliss (WNLF Executive), Charles Bevan (NLF Executive), Arthur Brampton (Chairman of the NLF), Hamilton Brown (Member of the Eighty Club), Guy H. Dixon (National League of Young Liberals Executive), Mrs. Collett (Vice-President of the WNLF), Major H. E. Crawfurd (M. P.), J. Victor Evans (Member of the Eighty Club), Mrs. W. E. Dowson (NLF Executive), Mrs. Neville Dixey (Hon. Secretary of the WNLF), Mrs. H. A. Fisher (NLF Executive), Lieut.-Commander R. H. Fletcher (former M. P.), Leonard B. Franklin (Hon. Treasurer of the Liberal and Radical Candidates' Association), Sir Robert Hamilton (M. P.), P. A. Harris (M. P.), Miss M. Harvey (Secretary of the WNLF). Mrs. Basil Herbert (WNLF Executive), Sir Charles Hobhouse (First Vice-President of the Entente), A. L. Hobhouse (Hon. Treasurer of the NLYL), G. G. Honeyman (Hon. Assistant Secretary of Liberal and Radical Candidates' Association), John H. Humphreys (Secretary of Proportional Representation Society), Sir Robert Hutchison (Chief Whip), Miss F. L. Josephy (NLYL Executive), Walter T. Layton (Editor of The Economist), Mrs. W. T. Layton (Vice-President of WNLF), Geoffrey Le M. Mander (NLF Executive), Mrs. Masterman (Vice-President of WNLF), Professor Gilbert Murray (Chairman of League of Nations Union), J. Edward Myers (NLF Executive), C. P. Scott (Editor of the Manchester Guardian), Sir Archibald
countries represented included France, Germany, Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, Greece, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, Finland, and Bulgaria. Although he was not a delegate, Lloyd George dominated the London conference in two speeches which were widely reported. In addition he requested that Daladier (of France) and Dr. Koch-Weser (of Germany) submit their speeches to the newspapers for "it would be a great misfortune if those two speeches could not appear in the English Press." In this way he used the Entente Conference to capture space in the newspapers during the summer doldrums.

The success of the Entente Internationale London congress in July capped a half year of intense activity by the British Liberal Party. The Yellow Book was published at the beginning of February, the Industrial Conference met in March, the Youth Campaign began at the same time, in April the Scottish Land Campaign began, and four by-elections were also won. Critics of Lloyd George might have reservations about his moral character, but they were now (in 1928) forced to recognize his ability. As Jan Smuts, South Africa's most famous

Sinclair (M.P.), Sir Charles Starmer (NLF Executive), T. Fisher Unwin (Treasurer of the Cobden Club), Mrs. Wintringham (former President of WNLF). See ibid., pp. 7-9.

85 See the Liberal Magazine (August, 1928), 489-90.

86 Lloyd George's speeches were reported in The Times, July 9, 1928, p. 9 and ibid., July 9, 1928, p. 16.

87 Comptes-rendu du Congrès de Londres 1928, op. cit., p. 44.
statesman, put it, the Welshman "may be keener on office than on Liberalism, but I am sure he is very keen and very able. And a real forward move is necessary. It is not pleasant to think of the world as divided between Conservatism & Socialism." 88

88 Smuts to Lord Herbert Gladstone, August 9, 1928 in the Herbert Gladstone Papers, British Museum Add. MS. 46008, Volume 132, folio 1.
CHAPTER V

THE PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN

1928

With the publication of the Yellow Book—embodying a statement of the most-up-to-date Liberal principles—the ideological struggle came to an end. Equally important in Lloyd George's eyes was the modernization of the Liberal party's propaganda machinery. As we have seen, the Land and Nation League published its own literature such as the Land News while the Liberal Publication Department (publishers of the Liberal Magazine) remained largely under the control of Lloyd George's opponents within the party. Before a general election campaign could begin, this situation had to be remedied; otherwise the party would continue to speak with at least two voices.

At a meeting of the Liberal party's Administrative Committee on December 14, 1927 it was resolved that "there should be established a Liberal Campaign Department" and that the control of the new department should rest with "a special
ad hoc Committee" to be called the Campaign Committee.¹ These resolutions concealed a struggle between Lloyd George and the Old Liberals for control of the party's propaganda machinery; the principal issue was whether or not the Land and Nation League should join in official party activities. As the Manchester Guardian put it: "The League maintains a large and effective machinery of speakers, vans, and publication" which heretofore had operated separately from the Liberal Publication Department.²

On January 11, 1928 the newly-appointed Campaign Committee met for the first time. The chairman, Earl Beauchamp, was also president of the Land and Nation League. A majority of the members were supporters of Lloyd George; they were Sir Francis Acland, Mrs. Corbett Ashby, Captain R. T. Evans, Colonel Charles Kerr, Miss Enid Lapthorne, Dr. T. J. Macnamara, Ramsay Muir, Sir Archibald Sinclair, Colonel Penry Williams, Dr. Joseph Hunter (executive director), Colonel T. F. Tweed, Harold Storey (director of the Liberal Publication Department), L. J. Humphreys (director of

¹These resolutions were approved by the Administrative Committee and are quoted in "Notes of the Month," Liberal Magazine, XXXVI (January, 1928), 1. The Administrative Committee was composed of the Executive Committee of the National Liberal Federation along with eight others representing the Liberal Parliamentary Party, the Scottish Liberal Federation, and the Women's National Liberal Federation.

publicity), and Miss Sydney Brown (secretary of the Committee). Absent members included Sir Herbert Samuel, Ernest Brown, M. P., Dr. Leslie Burgin, and the lone opponent of Lloyd George, J. A. Spender, who was on an extended trip to the United States.

The stated aims of the Liberal Campaign Committee were economy, prevention of duplication of services, and improvement of propaganda dissemination. At the January 11 meeting four sub-committees dealing with special subjects were set up. Ernest Brown, the victor in the Leith by-election and a prominent speaker for the Land and Nation League, chaired a sub-committee on propaganda meetings. A second sub-committee on party journals was chaired by Dr. T. J. Macnamara—an expert on Liberal land policy and a long-time associate of

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3The Committee is listed in the Westminster Gazette, December 15, 1927, p. 3.


5Glasgow Herald, January 12, 1928, p. 9.

6Members were Miss Arne, Sir F. Layland Barrett, E. C. Fordham, A. Glassey, Miss Harvey, Walter Isaac, Cemlyn Jones, J. Atholl Robertson, William Sessions, Tom Scott, and one member nominated by the Scottish Liberal Federation; see ibid.
Lloyd George. Sir Charles Starmer, managing director of the *Yorkshire Observer*, chaired a third sub-committee on Press Publicity. Ramsay Muir, author of several books on Liberal policy, chaired a sub-committee on campaign literature. These sub-committees were filled with those Liberals favorable to Lloyd George; the only exception was J. A. Spender.

Each of the four sub-committees were directed to prepare a detailed plan of campaign for the future. Ramsay Muir moved that a sub-committee should be appointed to investigate "special methods of propaganda" in the constituencies. Another sub-committee—composed of Muir, Colonel Charles Kerr, Walter Isaac, and Dr. Leslie Burgin—was appointed to coordinate propaganda with the London Liberal Federation for the London County Council elections of October 1928. All of this illustrates Liberal determination

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7 Members appointed were R. Bernays, Miss Cody (editor of the *Liberal Women's News*), Captain R. T. Evans, Stuart Hodgson, Walter Isaac, Mrs. Lucy Masterman, and J. Stern; see ibid.

8 Members included Dr. Leslie Burgin, J. Clark, Neville Dixey, Major Gwilym Lloyd George, W. W. H. Hadley, J. M. Hogge, G. M. Garro-Jones, M. P., and Sydney Walton; see list in ibid.

9 Members were: Sir Francis Acland, L. Hore-Belisha, M. P., Major H. E. Crawfurd, M. P., Elliott Dodds, Captain R. T. Evans, Mrs. H. A. L. Fisher, Commander Fletcher, Miss Harvey, and J. A. Spender; see ibid.

10 At the January 11 meeting as noted in ibid.
to improve party propaganda methods before the General Election campaign began.

Lloyd George's conquest of the Liberal propaganda facilities resulted in resignations from the previously ensconced Old Liberals. J. A. Spender, Walter Rea, and Vivian Phillips of the Publication Department announced their inability to continue on January 11. Vivian Phillipps, long an opponent of the Welshman, gave reasons for his resignation in a letter to the Manchester Guardian; he pointed out that six of the twelve members of the Campaign Committee would be "nominated by the Land and Nation League, while the chairman of the Land and Nation League is to be the chairman of the Committee. This gives the Land and Nation League a controlling voice in this department which is to be responsible for the whole of our Liberal party propaganda."  

Anticipating Phillipps' charge, the Liberal Magazine proved to its entire satisfaction that Harold Storey and the Liberal Publication Department would be independent of control by the Land and Nation League: "To put it quite plainly--since the point is being canvassed--the Liberal Campaign Department has no degree of control over the Liberal

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11 See the Yorkshire Observer, January 12, 1928, p. 5.

12 Vivian Phillipps' letter was published in the Manchester Guardian, January 17, 1928, p. 5.
Publication Department, which still works as it has done for forty years, under the joint control of the National Liberal Federation and the Chief Liberal Whip. Under the arrangement now being made, the Liberal Publication Department will co-operate with the Campaign Department for campaigning purposes until the end of the general election, when the whole matter will without prejudice come up again for review.\textsuperscript{13}

The debate over who was to control the party's propaganda machine was of considerable importance because, as the political correspondent of the \textit{Manchester Guardian} noted, the Liberal Publication Department "was the one official link remaining between the two schools of the Liberal party."\textsuperscript{14} Lloyd George's victory over the Old Liberals in this case meant final victory in his struggle to control the party. It was a necessary victory if he was to succeed in modernizing Liberal propaganda techniques; so long as Lloyd George could not control the propaganda machine he did not (in a very real sense) control the Liberal party. But he hadn't much time to reform the machinery; the general election was only a year and a half away.

Lloyd George's capture of the party's propaganda machinery allowed him to achieve the aims of the Land and

\textsuperscript{13}"Notes of the Month," \textit{op. cit.} (January, 1928), 3.

\textsuperscript{14}See the \textit{Manchester Guardian}, January 12, 1928, p. 19.
Nation League within the official structure. The 21 vans used by the League, he claimed, "had been one of the most efficient and effective agents in bringing back to Liberalism the rural electorate." But he noted that Liberal Council candidates in some constituencies had not presented the party's policy fully before the electors. The Liberal Campaign Department was necessary to close the gap between the Liberal central office and the voters.

In order to get around the reluctance of parliamentary candidates to discuss the Liberal program, direct communication with the electorate was attempted by the Liberal Campaign Department. In place of Land and Nation League vans, new Liberal party vans appeared in the by-election campaigns. By using loudspeakers attached to the vans: "The speaker's voice is not strained, and while Liberal truths are booming in Tory strongholds, the heckler is quite ineffectual, for he is annihilated by this production of modern science." The

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15 Lloyd George at the first meeting of the Liberal Campaign Department in London on December 19, 1927 as quoted in the Westminster Gazette, December 20, 1927, p. 1.

16 Lloyd George at the Manchester Reform Club on February 11; quoted in the Daily Chronicle, February 13, 1928, p. 3.

17 This is a description of two Liberal vans at work in the Faversham by-election as reported in the Westminster Gazette, January 13, 1928, p. 5.
Liberal vans were manned by speakers sent out from headquarters—thus by-passing the bias of the local Liberal parties in regard to the Lloyd George program.

Another method adopted by the Liberal Campaign Department to by-pass the local Liberal parties was the printing of three new journals which were to explain the party's national policy to the electorate. The Land News and Mining News began publication on March 1, 1928.\(^{18}\) By October the circulation of all three had reached half a million—according to Liberal headquarters.\(^{19}\) A women's page was added to the Land News in the October issue which explained how Government "safeguarding" taxes raised the price of 17 commodities used by women.\(^{20}\) Each of the three journals consisting of eight pages, which during 1928-1929, attempted to translate aspects of the Liberal policy into popular terms.

Reorganization of Liberal propaganda machinery was the signal for more vigorous electioneering than ever before.

\(^{18}\) See Earl Beauchamp's statement at a meeting of the Liberal Campaign Department on February 8; see the Daily Chronicle, February 9, 1928, p. 4.

\(^{19}\) Manchester Guardian, October 2, 1928, p. 10.

\(^{20}\) For a description of the woman's page see ibid.
In January 1928, 1,414 Liberal propaganda meetings were held—twice the number held in January 1927. From January to August of 1928 a total of 40,000 Liberal meetings were held in nearly 500 constituencies. Four hundred election agents were at work in the constituencies by October; according to the Manchester Guardian this was "a larger number of full-time officials than the party enjoyed even in its palmiest days." Particular success was reported by travelling organizers sent out from headquarters to revive derelict local parties; Liberals claimed that nearly 160 new local associations had been either created or revived. Twelve million booklets, leaflets, and pamphlets were distributed between January and July 1928.

Newspapers remained the most important medium for Liberal party propaganda during the middle years of the Liberal revival. Journals which supported Lloyd George, such as the Daily Chronicle and the Manchester Guardian, were in a fairly healthy state, but the "independent" Liberal press had emerged from World War I much weakened. The chief reason for this lay in the fact that it was a

21Earl Beauchamp’s statement at a meeting of the Liberal Campaign Department on February 8, Daily Chronicle, February 9, 1928, p. 4.

22Manchester Guardian, October 2, 1928, p. 10.

subsidized press which existed only to promote party policies. For example, the Westminster Gazette before 1914 lost between £10,000 and £14,000 yearly; these losses were made good by donations from rich men such as Lord Cowdray.\textsuperscript{24}

After World War I inflation forced the costs of newspaper production to rise while, at the same time, rich men were leaving the party. The old party newspapers were threatened with extinction unless they could be reorganized on a sound commercial basis. In consequence the character of the independent Liberal press changed between 1926 and 1928: journals of opinion possessing high quality and relatively few readers gave way to mass circulation newspapers capable of influencing the emotions of thousands of people.

A newly commercialized independent Liberal press contributed a great deal to the revival of the Liberal party. In Yorkshire, for example, the local Liberal revival was based upon the Bradford \textit{Yorkshire Observer}. Although a descendant of a free trade journal founded in 1832, the \textit{Yorkshire Observer} underwent a radical transformation in November 1926 when it was purchased by the Starmer Group. This was a consortium headed by the millionaire Viscount Cowdray; other prominent Liberals of the

purchasing group included Lord Dalmeny, J. B. Morrell, Arnold S. Rowntree, and Sir Charles W. Starmer. These men established an almost monopolistic control of the press in Bradford; they gained control of the *Bradford Daily News*, the *Bradford Telegraph*, and *The Textile Argus*. It was the proud boast of the Starmer Group that they had "become the only complete producers in the city of morning, evening, or weekly papers, except for the small propaganda sheet turned out weekly in the interests of the Socialist-Labour Party."^25

The Starmer Group reduced the price of the *Yorkshire Observer* to one penny (starting with the January 3, 1927 issue) and began "to modernize it in all its features--a process involving very heavy expenditure." A free insurance scheme, similar to that offered by London newspapers like the *Daily Mail*, was offered to stimulate subscriptions. New presses were installed and more correspondents added to aid the *Yorkshire Observer* in its function as "the especial chronicler of the wool industries." Rather vaingloriously the *Yorkshire Observer's* Diamond Jubilee issue claimed that "in the last 21 months its highest previous circulation has been multiplied by four."^26

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^26 Ibid. Circulation figures at this period were not available to the public unless the newspaper concerned chose to reveal them; for this reason the circulation of the *Yorkshire Observer* cannot be given.
The Yorkshire Observer may be described as "Fenbyist" in its general approach to politics, after T. D. Fenby, the Liberal M. P. for East Bradford. Fenbyism was one of those local variants of Liberalism which made the species so difficult to describe and often to defend. The Fenbyist-Starmer Group in Bradford had little need for Lloyd George's Fund and regarded themselves as spokesmen for the true Liberalism. They cooperated with Lloyd George in a joint effort at Liberal revival but were still willing to criticize their ally.

It was the special mission of the Yorkshire Observer to provide an alternative voice to the London Liberal press which (in Fenby's words) "tends rather toward the direction of stunts than solid political principles." Fenby lamented that a certain section of the Liberal press relied too much upon advertisements—"upon which, perhaps it is dependent for its circulation more than its principles." But like the Lloyd Georgians, Fenby believed that "the Liberal Press plays a great part in the formation of public opinion."27

The Yorkshire Observer is an excellent example of "newspaper Liberalism" as it functioned in Bradford. To a large degree the Yorkshire Observer was a force independent of the Liberal party headquarters. It is not too much to

27Fenby in ibid., October 6, 1928, p. 5.
claim that the newspaper was more important than the Manchester Guardian in aiding Liberal revival. As Sir John Simon put it, the Yorkshire Observer was "Liberal, all Liberal, and nothing but Liberal." The success of the Yorkshire Observer encouraged the son of Cowdray (who succeeded to the title upon his father's death in 1927) to carry out a similar experiment on the London Liberal press. The Daily News and Westminster Gazette were merged on February 1, 1928 to create a new paper known as the Daily News and Westminster Gazette. This was to be a more popular paper than either of its ancestors; it aimed at a daily sale of one million copies—although this figure was never attained. Presumably to offset the influence of the Manchester Guardian, the owners promised to produce an edition in the North. Designed for popular taste and with a national circulation, the Daily News and Westminster Gazette illustrates the downward shift in quality that the Liberal press experienced as it tried to compete with Beaverbrook and Rothermere.

What was described as "a friendly arrangement between Lord Cowdray and his friends" on one side and the Daily News trustees (the Cadbury family) on the other, resulted in

28Simon in ibid., October 5, 1928, p. 9.

creation of a small private company to take over the copyrights of both newspapers. From the prairies of America came a cable from J. A. Spender (former editor of the Westminster Gazette) which stated: "I heartily approve all efforts to consolidate and develop the independent Liberal Press. Nothing is more needed in these times. . . ."31 Certainly the injection of the Cowdray fortune into the Daily News was of some benefit to the Liberal party, but it meant that his money would not be contributed directly to its political fund.

Although mass circulation newspapers shifted some of the expense of the Liberal propaganda to the shoulders of the public, it was still necessary for the party to publish large numbers of pamphlets and leaflets. Such a campaign involved a good deal of expenditure. For this reason the Liberals sought to have the legal maximum of election expenditure reduced. The Equal Franchise Act of 1928 added five million new women voters to the electorate which increased the cost of fighting a general election at a time

30Glasgow Herald, February 1, 1928, p. 11. Members of the board of directors were: Henry Cadbury (Chairman), Viscount Cowdray (Vice-chairman), L. J. Cadbury, B. H. Crawfurd, Lord Dalmeny, W. T. Layton, J. B. Morrell, E. Parke, and H. Simones.

when the Liberals were pressed for money. In 1918 the law had fixed legal election expenses in borough seats at five pence and in county seats at seven pence because of the greater distance involved. The Liberal Magazine argued that the limits of election expenses ought to be reduced because they had been placed at an abnormally high level, "and the cost of printing is lower than it was when the last scale of expenses was fixed." This last consideration was important for a party which relied to an almost excessive degree upon the print medium (the Conservatives and Labour were more likely to rely upon their respective communication sub-structures for contact with the voters).

Liberal objections to the high cost of electioneering were brushed aside by the Government and the old rate of expenditure of five pence an elector was retained for the borough seats. Sir John Simon noted, in a letter, to the press, that the average authorized expenditure was thereby raised from £750 to £937.10 shillings per seat. As the Principal Agent of the Conservative party put it: "Probably our strongest objection to a reduction is that it would be entirely in favour of the Socialist Party, as our election

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33 Liberal Magazine (May, 1928), 269-70.

34 See Simon's letter in ibid., p. 270
campaign costs are much more than theirs." So far as the county divisions were concerned the rate of expense was reduced from seven pence to six pence an elector. The Conservatives accepted the reduction because "a larger scale would be just as useful to the Liberal Candidate as it would be to the Conservative." It was in the county divisions—mainly although not entirely agricultural—that the Liberals could be expected to concentrate their efforts.

Aware (as who was not) that the electoral system was against them, the Liberal leaders hoped a great propaganda campaign would offset this disadvantage. There was considerable controversy within the party as to the best method of launching the campaign. The original plan was for the Liberal leaders and the NLF executive committee to draw up a set of draft resolutions defining the party program; these would then be submitted for approval to the party conference in October. Ramsay Muir and Harold Storey drew up a set of suggested resolutions in June 1928—only to have their work rejected by Lloyd George.

Most emphatically, Lloyd George wished to issue a Manifesto setting out party policy. Muir, acting as

35Memorandum from Leigh Maclachan (Principal Agent) to the Deputy Chairman of the Conservative Party, April 19, 1928 in the Baldwin Papers, Volume 52, folio 207.

36For an account of the writing and rejection of the draft resolutions see Ramsay Muir to Lloyd George, July 26, 1928 in the Lloyd George Papers, G/15/6/9.
spokesman for the NLF executive committee, pointed out the difficulties:

I personally think that a manifesto in October would be excellent—a sort of trumpet-call, very different from the resolutions. But the majority of the N. L. F. [executive] quite definitely hold that it is not their job to issue such a document, and that it will be a bad precedent; also they don’t like the idea of submitting a manifesto to the process of amendment, upon which the delegates insist. You can accept amendments to a series of resolutions without much harm, and by so doing give the impression of general consultation. But amendments to a manifesto, which must be a single coherent document, are a different matter.37

As the NLF representative in the matter of the Manifesto, Muir was critical of the way in which events were moving.38 Lloyd George asked Philip Kerr, a gifted journalist, to write the Manifesto even though Muir complained that Kerr "performs better on the flute than on the trumpet." To make matters worse Lord Beauchamp had promised the NLF that the Manifesto would be ready by August 1, but Kerr announced he would be unable to finish it before the middle of August. By the rules of the NLF the Manifesto would have to be in the hands of every local Liberal association by August 30. Muir pointed out that "if nothing is ready for them on Aug. 15th there will be a good deal of anger, in view of the eight weeks delay."39

37Ibid.

38For Muir's appointment by the NLF as its representative see Sir Herbert Samuel to Ramsay Muir, July, 1928 in the Lloyd George Papers, G/17/9/9.

39Muir to Lloyd George, July 26, 1928, op. cit., G/15/6/9.
Working with desperate haste Kerr sent his draft to Lloyd George on August 2. Dispensing with false modesty, the weary journalist declared that it was "at least as good as the Labour manifesto." Lloyd George's view was rather different. As he wrote to Kerr:

You will forgive me for saying that this effort is by no means your best. You can do much better than this. I have no doubt you feel you had no time to soak in it before you started writing, and that made a real difference. But so much depends on the Manifesto not merely for the Liberal Party, but I am convinced also that the future of this country depends largely upon your appeal going home to the people before the next General Election. A Tory or a Socialist success would pretty well do for Britain. I do not believe we could stand five years of either in our present delicate state of health as a country. I therefore attach very great importance to this Manifesto. It must somehow or other create the impression that Liberalism alone has got the message that will lead the land out of its present difficulties.

In Lloyd George's view (as he wrote to Kerr) "Peace" was the most important issue at the moment, and ought to come first in the Manifesto in order to catch the eye of the elector. "But from that I would proceed to the conditions which are creating the greatest concern in the minds of the people at the present moment—bad trade; unemployment; housing conditions; heavy expenditure—and not only show that Liberalism

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40Kerr to Lloyd George, August 2, 1928 in the Lloyd George Papers, G/12/5/13. The Labour manifesto entitled Labour and the Nation was published in July 1928.

41Lloyd George to Philip Kerr, August 11, 1928 in ibid., G/12/5/14.
has a way out, but that it has discovered a means of utilizing our difficulties to raise the nation to a higher level than it has attained before."42

Kerr submitted a second draft to Lloyd George written in a more popular style than the first. As Kerr put it in a covering letter dated August 28: "The manifesto, of course, is a drafted not as a scientific document but for its impact on a genuine [sic] reader. There is some repetition but that is because as Joe Chamberlain used to say 'Repetition is the soul of electioneering!'"43 Lloyd George wished to keep the whole episode as secret as possible. A. J. Sylvester, his secretary, recorded his chief's order that the drafts were not to be shown to anyone--"not even Sir Herbert Samuel."44

Unable to get the Manifesto finished in time, Lloyd George accepted the alternative course of announcing the party's policy in a major speech at Great Yarmouth. Aware that such a speech would be widely read for an indication of Liberal intentions during the election, Samuel told Lloyd George:

42Ibid. Kerr's first draft of the Manifesto runs to 38 typewritten pages of rather windy rhetoric; see the copy in the Lloyd George Papers, G/12/5/13.

43Philip Kerr to Lloyd George, August 28, 1928 in ibid., G/12/5/18.

44A.J. Sylvester to Frances Stevenson, October 8, 1928 in ibid., G/12/5/16.
The statement will obviously need the most careful wording if it is not to alienate one class or another of our possible supporters. Those that I am most anxious about are the thoughtful, progressive-minded people who want to get things done; who don't mind very much who is to do them; who will vote Liberal or Labour with almost equal readiness; but who will be repelled if the idea gets abroad that the policy of industrial and social reform is being imperilled by minor divisions among politicians who have essentially the same purposes in view. You will agree, I am sure, that the dominant note in the statement should be positive and not negative—how the country is to get done what it wants done, and only incidentally how the divergence between Liberalism and Labour prevents the anti-Conservative majority in the country from coalescing. Since they cannot coalesce, for various reasons, the way to get things done is, first, for the rank and file of progressives to vote Liberal, and second, for the system of election to be reformed.45

Lloyd George's speech at Great Yarmouth followed the main recommendations of Samuel. But the Liberal leader added a touch of fire when he accused the Conservative and Labour parties of working together against Liberalism:

I can see them conspiring and intriguing, separately and together, to destroy Liberalism in Parliament and out of Parliament. I have seen it in the House of Commons these last four years. We have a small party. We are only entitled to very limited opportunities for raising discussions. I have seen the Tory Party and the Socialist Party meeting behind the Speaker's chair to deprive our little party of the limited opportunities they have for discussion. And the meaner of the two is the Socialist.46

45Samuel to Lloyd George, October 6, 1928, Lloyd George Papers, G/17/9/12.

46Lloyd George's speech on October 12 is quoted in the Liberal Magazine (November, 1928), p. 665.
This was hardly the sort of conciliatory line urged by Samuel, but the sensational charge gained public attention. The Chief Labour Whip demanded proof of Lloyd George's allegation. Aside from stirring up the passions of Labour supporters the Great Yarmouth speech was negative in tone; articulation of Liberal policy was embalmed in the various resolutions approved by the conference; these included cures for unemployment, disarmament, electoral reform, and a general condemnation of the Government's sins of commission and omission.

Propaganda for the coming general election was an important concern at the Great Yarmouth Conference. An exhibition of "modern electioneering devices" was placed on display by the Liberal Campaign Department; the exhibits comprised "amplifying and other wireless apparatus, posters, duplicating machines, etc., etc." On October 10 a private conference of Liberal agents and prospective election agents was held, with Samuel in the chair, to discuss "Modern Electioneering Methods." Most Liberals of the Lloyd George


49 See "Proceedings in Connection with the 45th Annual Meeting over the Council held at Great Yarmouth," Selection of Pamphlets and Leaflets, 1928, op. cit., pp. 4-5.
persuasion at least were aware that their party's approach to the electorate must be modernized.

In the evening all the delegates attended a second conference, also closed to the press, on "Methods of Propaganda" both before and during the general election—much to the disgust of The Times. Among the topics discussed were "The Woman Voter," "The Young Voter," "Door to Door Visitation," and "Indirect Canvassing." Of particular interest was the subject of "The Press" which was introduced by J. B. Hobman—former editor of the Westminster Gazette and prospective candidate for North Bradford. The director of the Liberal Publicity Department, L. J. Humphrey, explained the mysteries of "The Organisation of Publicity."^50

Possessing an unpleasantly transatlantic look was the campaign of local meetings which, to supplement the effect of the Great Yarmouth conference, opened on October 8. Fifty-one "propaganda meetings" were held in the constituencies of Great Yarmouth, East Norfolk, South-West Norfolk, Norwich, Lowestoft, Eye, Ipswich, and Horncastle. Loud speaker vans were employed to provide rostrums for a relay of speakers such as Earl Beauchamp and Ramsay Muir, as well as prospective

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^50The report in The Times, October 11, 1928, p. 13 charged that the NLF was putting propaganda before principles—a statement which was true in a temporal sense. The propaganda discussions were held on the first day of the Great Yarmouth meeting. "Proceedings. . . at Great Yarmouth," p. 5 in Selection of Pamphlets and Leaflets, 1928, op. cit.
candidates for the constituencies concerned.\textsuperscript{51} This latest Liberal propaganda campaign effectively blanketed the districts around Great Yarmouth for the duration of the convention.

In electioneering the example of American electioneering was a potent influence. Lloyd George's private secretary, A. J. Sylvester, announced that he would visit the United States to study methods of propaganda in the coming presidential campaign.\textsuperscript{52} The \textit{Manchester Guardian} assured its readers that the Liberal party would not adopt what were considered the cruder American techniques; "nonetheless," the journal concluded, "Mr. Joseph Chamberlain introduced our present system of party organization, for good or evil, from the United States via Birmingham."\textsuperscript{53}

In the fall of 1928 a new Liberal propaganda campaign was opened in Northern Ireland; even Gladstone failed to think of this way of winning votes. A Northern Ireland Liberal Association was formed and plans for running candidates at the general election were announced. Samuel visited Belfast on October 31 and spoke to "a great demonstration in Ulster Hall." Special trains brought Liberals from neighboring constituencies

\textsuperscript{51}On the local meetings see "Proceedings . . . at Great Yarmouth, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{52}\textit{Manchester Guardian}, October 4, 1928, p. 10.

\textsuperscript{53}Ibid.
to hear Samuel's speech. All this activity flew in the face of the Unionist prime minister's warning that Ulster lived "on too narrow a margin" to permit Liberal intervention in the politics of the Province.

Liberals believed that they could win several seats in Ulster because—as the president of the Northern Ireland Liberal Association, R. N. Boyd, put it, "the majority of their population in the Six Counties lived on the land, and to a population of that kind Socialism would have no appeal. On the other side they had the Conservatives, who were historically and actually a landlord party." Samuel reminded his auditors in Belfast that the Liberal party had created the Land Act of 1881 which had freed "Irish Land from the strangles of Irish landlordism;" he promised that Liberalism would continue to work for the benefit of the Irish agriculturalist.

Although it might appear foolhardy for the Liberals to hope to win votes in a predominantly Unionist Ulster, this move was a logical extension of the Gladstonian tradition. Just as the Grand Old Man had been successful in winning Irish votes by championing Home Rule, so Samuel expected to win over Protestant agricultural (but no less Irish) voters with the

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55 Lord Craigavon spoke at Dromore, County Down on July 12; see The Times, July 13, 1928, p. 9.

56 See the speeches of R. N. Boyd and Samuel at Belfast on October 31 as reported in The Weekly Northern Whig and Belfast Post, November 10, 1928, p. 9.
Liberal land policy. Lloyd George had based his 1926 campaign against Turkish "atrocities" in Mesopotamia on similar grounds: namely that what worked for Gladstone would work for the Liberal party of the 1920's. Such blind neo-Gladstonianism did much to damage the claims, made by Liberal politicians, that Liberalism could be used to solve specifically postwar problems.

These feverish Liberal preparations for the general election brought in their train a great deal of speculation as to the result. Ramsay Muir was an enthusiast who believed that if the Liberals got a majority "or even if without a clear majority, we are the largest party, we are prepared to form a government and submit our policy to Parliament. In the latter case we have a better chance of doing good work than either of the other parties, because the other two can't honestly combine against us on any material point. If we should find ourselves in that position, we should accept the judgment of the H. of C. [commons] on all matters not of initial importance. We should also ask the H. of C. to pass a resolution advising the Crown that a dissolution ought not to be granted until every means of carrying on Parliament without a dissolution has been tried."57

57Muir to Lloyd George, August 13, 1928 in the Lloyd George Papers, G/15/6/11.
Leading politicians in the other two parties were by no means as optimistic about Liberal chances as Muir. Churchill was confident that the Conservatives would retain their majority come what may, even a June election. As the Chancellor of the Exchequer wrote to Baldwin on September 2: "I cannot feel that there is decisive drift against us. But Labour will have a heavy class vote; & the Liberals will queer the pitch—(What else can they do?)"58 Sidney Webb told Hugh Dalton that Labour could expect "a net gain of 80 [seats] bringing us up to about 230, with 65 Liberals and a Tory majority of about 25 over all. In practice a little more because some Liberals will always vote with them. He doesn't see the Liberals winning anything much, except in the West Country & the agricultural East."59

Lord Rothermere wrote to Lloyd George that, in view of the poor prospects for Liberal revival, "at no time would it be possible for the Daily Mail to make an open declaration of support. This would alienate a great number of readers and would embarrass the paper in competition with other papers. . . . I can see ways of helping without showing my hand too clearly."60 A private survey made at the request of Rothermere

58 Churchill to Baldwin in the Baldwin Papers, Volume 36, folio 76 in the Cambridge University Library.


60 Rothermere to Lloyd George, October 18, 1928 in the Lloyd George Papers, G/17/1/32.
indicated 25 of the 36 Welsh constituencies and all of Scotland would be lost to Labour at the general election of 1929. "I hope you will maintain and extend any liaisons you may have with the Labour chiefs", he wrote Lloyd George, "because the Labour party, if not winning outright, is going to have very nearly a majority in the next House of Commons."\textsuperscript{61}

Lloyd George wrote privately to Snowden on October 3 that he was confirmed in "the impression which I communicated to you the last time I saw you that anything in the nature of a Liberal-Labour combination in the coming Parliament is impracticable. Neither of the two Parties is ripe for it."\textsuperscript{62}

Meanwhile he was writing to C. P. Scott that some coalition was inevitable: "In the end Labour w[ould] have to come to terms, because for the next 20 years or more, so long as the Liberals maintained their separate organization, they w[ould] have no chance of a clear majority over the other two parties."\textsuperscript{63}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{61}Rothermere to Lloyd George, September 14, 1928 in \textit{ibid.}, G/17/1/31.
\item \textsuperscript{62}Lloyd George to Philip Snowden, October 3, 1928 in the Lloyd George Papers, G/18/7/6.
\item \textsuperscript{63}This is the gist of what Lloyd George said as Scott recorded his conversation in his journal for December 8, 1928; see the C. P. Scott Papers, British Museum MS. 50907, Volume VII, folio 226.
\end{itemize}
Lloyd George told Scott that able young Liberals must not feel that they had no chance at office or they would join the Labour party. He foresaw that a coalition ministry was essential to give places for such younger men as Kingsley Griffith, G. Garro-Jones, Sir Archibald Sinclair, W. A. Jowitt, and Norman Birkett. He promised that he himself would not take office; then went on to declare that if Labour refused the Liberal embrace, terms would have to be made with the Conservatives.64

Labour's Front Bench was—except for Snowden—opposed to a coalition of the Left. Ramsay MacDonald took the position that "a small Tory majority would be better for us than to have the Tories just in a minority, with the Liberals holding the balance. It wouldn't pay us, in short, to put 20 Liberals in by not running candidates, when we could have kept 20 Tories in by running ourselves."65 J. H. Thomas, Colonial Secretary in MacDonald's 1924 government, believed that Labour would get a clear majority at the general election without any assistance from the Liberals; 1929 would be "1906

64Ibid.

65This is a paraphrase of MacDonald's words as recorded by Hugh Dalton in his diary. MacDonald spoke at a meeting of the Labour National Executive at 10:30 A. M. on November 5, 1928. See the entry for that date in the 1927-1929 Volume of the MS. in the British Library of Political and Economic Science.
over again" so far as the swing of the pendulum from Conservatives to Labour was concerned.66

From the foregoing it is evident that the Liberals attached very great importance to the propaganda function; the Lloyd Georgians plainly regarded improved propaganda techniques as the key to Liberal revival. Their obsession was natural in view of the Gladstonian example; the Midlothian campaign in 1876 was notable for its skillful use of propaganda (especially the Bulgarian Horrors pamphlet) against the Terrible Turk. The Home Rule campaigns of 1886-91 were based on the plea of justice for the mistreated Irish. Campbell-Bannerman's great victory of 1906 made use of moralistic arguments against a Conservative government which permitted oppression of Chinese coolies in South Africa and attacks on Nonconformist education at home. What was common to both the Gladstonian campaign and the 1906 victory was their moralizing rhetoric against oppression in faraway places. Arguments against the Terrible Turk were easily translatable into popular slogans.

The problem facing Liberals in 1928 was how to convert the rather abstract theorems of the Yellow Book into popular language. This they attempted to do through widespread propaganda even though it was difficult to convert the language

66Ward Price communicated Thomas' view in a letter to Frances Stevenson (one of Lloyd George's secretaries), December 19, 1928 in the Lloyd George Papers, G/31/3/29.
of Gladstonian or Old Liberal moralism into propaganda for a rational economic program. That is to say that the Liberal grammar of rhetoric was ill-adapted to defending proposals for an almost American prosperity. The Old Liberalism emphasized sacrifice, hard work, and all the bourgeois virtues; Lloyd Georgian radicalism called for a consumer society. Little wonder that the older Liberal was shocked and outraged by Lloyd George's promises. In his heart of hearts he preferred adversity to prosperity.

At the core of Liberal difficulties lay a defective theory of communications which attributed more power to the press than that medium actually possessed. Both the followers of Lloyd George as well as the Old Liberals believed if enough newspapers were on their side, victory was assured. All Liberals were obsessed with the press because it had long been considered the main communications link between leaders and followers—especially in the kind of campaign conducted by Gladstone in 1876 on the question of Turkish atrocities.

The long shadow of Gladstone encouraged Liberals to copy his method of electioneering instead of seeking new ways of reaching the electorate. They believed that newspaper rhetoric won many of their by-elections during 1927-1929 instead of attributing these wins to more basic causes. R. P. Tomlinson, a young Liberal who won a by-election at Lancaster in 1928, praised the Yorkshire Observer in these terms: "The
paper has played, without any doubt, a substantial part toward ensuring my success." 67 So long as liberals thought in this fashion, they would continue to pour money into a newspaper war with the two other parties. They spent their resources on building up newspaper circulation which might have been better used in rebuilding Liberal constituency organizations.

The Liberal leaders relied upon newspapers to link them to followers in the country. But the Daventry affair illustrates that the communication was all in one direction. Lloyd George's lust for victory led him into conflicts with his own party. Daventry was the seat occupied by Captain Edward Fitzroy when elected by Conservatives as Speaker of the House of Commons in June 1928; the outgoing Speaker was the Liberal J. H. Whitley who had held that post since 1918. The London correspondent for the Manchester Guardian reported that "the Liberal Parliamentary party quite agree, including the Leader and the Whips" on the selection of Fitzroy as Speaker.68

The actual view of the Liberal leadership was at variance with the impression conveyed by the Manchester Guardian. Daventry was considered a sure Liberal win at the next


68 See the Manchester Guardian, June 13, 1928, p. 10.
election because in 1924 the Liberal candidate had come within 200 votes of defeating Fitzroy—and this in the year of the Great Red Scare. Since it was normal practice to allow the Speaker an unopposed return, Daventry Liberals would be "virtually disfranchised" according to a Manchester Guardian leader.69

Although Sir Herbert Samuel was in favor of allowing Fitzroy to stand unopposed at the 1929 General Election, Lloyd George was not. He sent a fiery letter to the chief of the Liberal party organization:

I am very surprised to hear from Colonel Kerr that you quite approve of the withdrawal of his candidature from Daventry on the ground that it would be invidious for him to contest his seat against the speaker of the House of Commons.

I entirely disagree with this view. Fitzroy is by no means the best man the Tories could have chosen... It is purely a manoeuvre to secure a seat—which they had already written off as a loss to the Liberals. We are not in a position to chuck seats away in this lordly fashion.70

In accordance with Lloyd George's view, Sir Robert Hutchison (the Chief Whip) told The Times that Liberals reserved the right to run a candidate at Daventry in the next General Election.71 Hutchison's announcement brought a storm of protest from the local Liberals. The chairman of the

70Lloyd George to Samuel, June 19, 1928, in the Lloyd George Papers, G/17/9/8.
71See The Times, June 20, 1928, p. 17.
Daventry Liberals declared: "Headquarters issued their statement about reserving the right to fight the seat without having taken Colonel Kerr or the division into consultation. Liberals in the division knew nothing of the statement until they read it in the press."\textsuperscript{72} Kerr stated his view was "that it would be a mistake for the Liberals of Daventry, or Liberals of any other division to oppose the Speaker."\textsuperscript{73}

One must beware of interpreting every little incident as contributing to Liberal failure to revive, but the Daventry affair illustrates some important points about how the Liberal party worked. If a political party is designed to facilitate communication between leaders and followers, than the Daventry affair is a measure of Liberal failure. The views of the local Liberals were ignored by Lloyd George and Hutchison. In the Liberal party communication went only one way: from leader to followers and never from followers to the leader. As in the case of the land policy, and the industrial policy, decisions taken by the leader proved almost impossible to implement at the local level. The leadership was to an extraordinary degree out of touch with the local Liberal parties.

The definition of a political party must be that it forms a two-way communications structure linking followers to leaders. In the case of the Liberal party there was only

\textsuperscript{72}Manchester Guardian, June 22, 1928, p. 16.

\textsuperscript{73}Ibid.
one way communication—from elite to mass. The reason for this state of affairs is that the decline of Nonconformity had robbed the party of its essential communications sub-structure. So long as a communications sub-structure is present leaders and followers can meet face-to-face. The leader can learn the attitudes of his constituents at first hand—during Sunday School as it were. Communication goes both ways in such an informal situation; in formal communication structure such as a newspaper on the other hand the complaints of the inarticulate (and the majority of the constituents are inarticulate) will not be heard.

The Liberal party in the 1920's belonged to the phylum of invertebrate organisms. That is, it lacked a spine which could serve as a communications sub-structure. Liberalism differed from the other two parties which possessed communications sub-structures such as trade unions and the associated chambers of commerce. There was nothing to link local Liberal parties together except propaganda in the newspapers and other party publications. Not surprisingly the party tended to split into fragments.

Liberal leaders found it difficult to divine the attitudes of their followers and the party suffered because it lacked day-to-day contact with the electorate. Opinion polls conducted by the Liberal Summer School in 1926 attempted to assess the state of party opinion on particular questions,
but this was only a stop-gap measure. Even the Land and Nation League could not provide the same day-to-day contact between opinion leader and opinion follower which English Nonconformity had provided before the war.

The heart of the Liberal drama is to be found in the party's attempt to mold public opinion. Lloyd George attempted to use the press and other propaganda machinery to replace—or at least circumvent—the decline of Nonconformity. By means of the print medium he sought to link mass to elite. But since the bulk of the electors belonged to the working class, this method of propaganda was doomed to fail. For the true working class did not read Liberal newspapers or indeed any newspapers. Their information was derived from opinion leaders who were hostile to Liberalism.74 As Almond and Powell remind us, "interpretation of information through the mass media will probably be carried out by opinion leaders. The opinion leaders will themselves be highly influenced by other face-to-face contacts, which research has consistently shown to be a more powerful means of persuasion than mass media."75

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What is remarkable about the Liberal revival is the belief that propaganda alone offered the key to electoral survival. Hence the party devoted much attention to placing its newspapers on a sound financial footing. In addition, the Liberals spent a great deal of money on printing pamphlets with which to convert the electorate. But both newspapers and party propaganda machinery cost a good deal; in consequence the local constituency organizations were starved for funds. A fundamental weakness of the Liberal revival lay in the fact that local organization was neglected in favor of propaganda, while journalism became a surrogate for politics.
CHAPTER VI

THE COMMUNICATIONS OFFENSIVE, 1929

As the Liberal party prepared for the coming General Election it was plain that an extraordinary effort would be required of the party's communications apparatus. The basic problem was how to link the Liberal elite to the voters in the absence of a communications sub-structure. A solution was found in the National Liberal Survey—first announced in September 1928. This was an attempt "to compile a record of Liberal sympathisers in every constituency."\(^1\) Every constituency was to be divided into districts which were further sub-divided among campaign workers.\(^2\) Based upon the annual register of electors which was to appear in October 1928, the survey itself covered the months of November–December 1928 and January 1929.\(^3\)

Raymond Jones, prospective candidate for Surrey, was appointed secretary of the National Liberal Survey. An

\(^1\)Daily Chronicle, September 18, 1928, p. 3. The Daily Telegraph, September 18, 1928, p. 12 claimed that the purpose of the Survey was to obtain the name and address of "every Liberal in every constituency."

\(^2\)Yorkshire Observer, September 18, 1928, p. 6.

\(^3\)Daily Telegraph, September 18, 1928, p. 12.
eight-page folder explaining the workings of this novel scheme was supplied to every canvasser; in addition leaflets explaining qualifications for registration as an elector and a small leaflet explaining Liberal policy were to be issued. The survey seems to have been a success for by January it had been taken up by 398 of the 509 constituencies in England and Wales. All of the canvassers were unpaid volunteers and the announced goal was to reach every one of the 8,199,391 houses recorded in the 1921 census.

The very success of the National Liberal Survey increased its cost—for it was financed entirely out of the Lloyd George Fund. On October 9, 1928 an estimate that the survey would cost £10,000 was laid before Lord St. Davids, chairman of the Fund trustees, and subsequently approved. As Malcolm Thompson, acting secretary of the Liberal Campaign Department, put it: "This estimate was based on a total circulation of 5,000,000 booklets. The success of the scheme, however, so far exceeded expectations that in all 7,000,000 booklets were called for, and this involved a further expenditure amounting to £2,500."
Colonel Thomas F. Tweed, one of Lloyd George’s secretaries, authorized a further scheme arising out of the Survey, which entailed sending letters from Liberal candidates to all new voters on the electoral Register. This cost an additional £2,500 and brought a protest from the Campaign Committee because Tweed had not gone through proper channels:

"This procedure is very embarrassing to Dr. Hunter [head of the Campaign Department] and his Committee, as neither he nor the Chairman of the [Campaign] Committee had any knowledge of it. Do try and avoid these unnecessary complications if you can, and so spare a lot of ill-feeling in the office."  

The National Liberal Survey was a success but a rather expensive one. It cost £15,000 of the Lloyd George Fund and caused considerable friction among members of the Liberal Campaign Department. Thus a large sum of money was

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8This quotation is taken from an unsigned letter, probably written by Malcolm Thomson to Colonel Tweed, January 9, 1929 in the possession of the Earl of Dwyfor. The quoted sections were ordered deleted by Dr. Hunter from the copy sent to Tweed. The copy I have seen possesses the inscription "Seen and approved (with omissions as marked) by K. Hunter."

9On the actual expenditure for the National Liberal Survey see Receipt No. 76 dated January 21, 1929 "Received from Sir John Davies the sum of Seven Thousand five hundred pounds for balance of grant of £10,000 for Survey." See also Receipt No. 80 of the Liberal Campaign Department, February 19, 1929: "Received from Sir John Davies the sum of Five Thousand pounds for supplementary grant over and above the original estimate of £10,000 for the work of the Liberal National Survey." Both of these receipts are in the possession of the Earl of Dwyfor.
spent—not on the constituencies—but in a way which was designed to procure new members for the local Liberal parties. The National Liberal Survey was a unique effort never before attempted in Britain; it represents the first application of opinion survey techniques to national politics. The survey was another attempt by Liberals to escape from the dilemma posed by their lack of a communications sub-structure by creating face-to-face communication between the canvasser and the voter. One weakness of such an approach was that prolonged contact still depended upon the print medium (in the form of leaflets distributed) unless the electors could be seduced into joining the local Liberal party.

The National Liberal Survey fulfills perfectly the requirements for what Leonard Doob has called a "sub-propaganda campaign"—that is, a campaign which gains the attention of the audience. 10 A sub-propaganda campaign prepares the ground, so to speak, for the message which the propagandist wishes to disseminate. A series of Liberal campaigns began even before the Survey was completed. The first of these was a Peace Campaign which Lloyd George opened with a speech at Manchester on December 8, 1928: "The Hallelujah

Chorus must be put off. The wine of Locarno is already sour and there is a bad leak in the Kellogg Pact, and neither of them is being served at Tory banquets just now."11 On the same day Samuel spoke on the need for "Peace and Free Trade" at Leeds.12

On the whole the great Liberal Peace Campaign aroused little enthusiasm among the voters and it quietly came to an end in January 1929. A foreign policy issue was seldom capable of arousing mass enthusiasm, although it must be conceded that Gladstone had achieved great success with his anti-Turkish campaign in Midlothian in 1876. Nevertheless a domestic issue such as unemployment had a better chance of winning mass support.

On March 1, 1929 Lloyd George announced his famous pledge to conquer unemployment one year after taking office with a Liberal government. A number of Liberal politicians assembled for luncheon at Connaught Rooms (including Sir Herbert Samuel and Walter Runciman) under the presidency of Sir Robert Hutchison to hear the Welshman speak. Representative Liberal candidates from England, Scotland, and Wales also spoke: Ramsay Muir for Rochdale, McKenzie Wood for Banffshire, and Geoffrey Crawshay for Pontypool. Last and

11Quoted in the Manchester Guardian, December 10, 1928, p. 11.

12The Observer, December 9, 1928, p. 21.
least, Mrs. Wintringham, President of the Women's National Liberal Federation, spoke on behalf of the women candidates. Before 400 prospective Liberal candidates, Liberal party leaders, and representatives of the press, Lloyd George sounded the Liberal battle cry:

If the nation entrusts the Liberal Party at the next General Election with the responsibilities of Government, we are ready with schemes of work which we can put immediately into operation, work of a kind which is not merely useful in itself, but essential to the well-being of the nation.

The work put in hand will reduce the terrible figures of the workless in the course of a single year to normal proportions; and will, when completed, enrich the nation and equip it for successfully competing with all its rivals in the business of the world.

These plans will not add one penny to the national or local taxation.

The Liberal leader sketched the outlines of the employment scheme and gave the particulars of the finance. Lloyd George stated that there were four great tasks that the Liberal party would undertake—arresting the decay of the countryside,

13For the Connaught Rooms meeting see accounts in the Daily Chronicle, March 1, 1929, p. 4 and March 2, 1929, p. 3. The Yorkshire Observer's London correspondent (February 28, 1929, p. 6) commented: "The luncheon idea and the big campaign of hundreds of meetings throughout the country which is to follow it are beginning to capture the imagination of the people. I wonder if it is another phase of the Americanisation of our elections."

14Quoted in the Yorkshire Observer, March 2, 1929, p. 4.
abolishing the slums, reducing unemployment, and decreasing the amount of money which the nation spent on drink.15

The pledge was followed by a pamphlet entitled We Can Conquer Unemployment which was published on March 13; this little book presented a detailed statement of Liberal policy for the immediate solution of the unemployment problem.16 The Daily Chronicle styled it a "New Yellow Book."17 Full page advertisements for We Can Conquer Unemployment appeared in the press proclaiming "Every elector should obtain a copy of this book"—the price being only six pence.18 The pamphlet outlined a five year program for national development, but most attention was concentrated on the first two years. With precise figures it outlined the numbers to be employed by the government on public works:

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<th>First Year</th>
<th>Second Year</th>
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<td>Roads and Bridges</td>
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<td>Land Drainage</td>
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<td>London Passenger Transport</td>
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15Morning Post, March 2, 1929, p. 11.
16We Can Conquer Unemployment, Mr. Lloyd George's Pledge (London: Cassell and Company, Ltd., 1929).
18Yorkshire Observer, March 14, 1929, p. 7 and The Times, March 14, 1929, p. 10.
Other Liberal schemes for employment included in the New Yellow Book were work on arterial drainage, reconditioning of houses, improvement of canals, afforestation, reclamation, land settlement, and reopening trade relations with Russia. Indirect effects of the plan would add to the national purchasing power "represented by the wages of those workers directly employed....As a result, a stimulus will be given to the whole of the industry and commerce of the country, reflected, in turn, in increased employment." The greater part of the cost of the scheme would be met out of the central funds, but the necessary capital would be raised by a "Road Loan secured upon the increasing income of the Road Fund." The Times' political correspondent pointed out that a new formulation of the Liberals' economic policy was necessary because "somewhat regretfully they have come to the conclusion that the multi-coloured books which they have issued in recent years are above the heads of the ordinary elector." Undoubtedly this charge was true.

Lloyd George's startling pledge to conquer unemployment within one year commanded the support of most Liberals—despite its novelty and his reputation for inconsistence.

19 We Can Conquer Unemployment, op. cit., p. 52.
20 Ibid., p. 23.
Loyal supporters of Lloyd George were enthusiastic; as C. P. Scott put it: "The new policy on unemploynt [sic] is, I fancy going to do the Liberals a lot of good. I was talking to [Henry] Clay [a well-known economist] about it the other day and he told me he thought it was perfectly sound in principle. He is now applying himself to working it out in detail." For convinced Lloyd Georgians the knowledge that the experts were on the side of Liberalism was comforting indeed. In Samuel's view "The road proposals, which occupy the largest place in the Liberal plan, are based upon advice which has been obtained from the best experts available in the country. There is no wizardry about it."23

Lloyd George's rivals among the Liberal leaders pronounced in favor of the pledge. Walter Runciman plainly stated his position: "The essence of the Liberal policy with regard to the unemployed is that while we shall be saving them from poverty and starvation, we shall at the same time give them an opportunity of returning work for the pay which they receive. . . . The Liberal intention is to use the labour which is now running to waste for great projects


23Sir Herbert Samuel spoke from a farm wagon, surrounded by a cheering crowd of Cornish Liberals, at Land's End on April 8, 1929; see the Daily Chronicle, April 9, 1929, p. 4.
which, in this way, will add to the national wealth."  

More cautiously, Sir John Simon averred: "I have had my disputes with Mr. Lloyd George. . . and we have said some pretty hard things about one another; but what I know is that he has succeeded, where many others might have failed, in concentrating public attention upon certain proposals in a way which makes everybody who wishes to see Liberalism return to its rightful place in the nation truly obliged to him."  

Most former supporters of Asquith within the party supported Lloyd George's unemployment pledge--albeit with some qualifications. Cyril Asquith, son of the dead leader, pointed out (in a letter to The Times) that "there are two schools within the Liberal Party quoad the unemployment scheme consisting respectively of (1) unqualified adherents and (2) qualified adherents, who support the policy minus rigid time limits and minus complete abstention from taxation."  

The President of the Liberal Council, Lord Grey, clearly belonged to the latter school when he declared that "if times were normal and trade depressions were of the kind

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24 Runciman was interviewed at St. Ives on March 9; see the Morning Post, March 11, 1929, p. 15.

25 Simon spoke at Spen Valley on May 1; see the report in the Daily Chronicle, May 2, 1929, p. 7.

26 Asquith's letter appeared in The Times, May 10, 1929, p. 12; in two earlier letters he had attempted to defend the Liberal unemployment policy from Baldwin's charge that it would create inflation. See ibid., April 30, 1929, p. 12 and ibid., May 4, 1929, p. 8.
we used to have before the war the dole would be sufficient . . . . We had to look at the problem rather differently from the way we looked at it in old times. We had to consider that the State might have to face the problem of how to relieve a good many thousands of men for some years to come."27 Despite the fact that he rejected the one-year limit for ending unemployment, Lloyd George characterized Grey's speech as proving "that Liberals go forward as a united party."28

Lloyd George's promise to end unemployment within one year posed a serious challenge to the two major parties. Typical of the attitude of the younger Labour politicians is this description of a meeting of the Labour Election Manifesto Committee written by Hugh Dalton:

[R. H.] Tawney, [a leading Labour intellectual] pressed J. R. M. about figures for increased unemployment benefit, larger pensions at an earlier age, etc. J. R. M. very sticky. Doesn't want to be 'flashy' & 'attractive'. . . . We are letting L. G. & . . . the rest simply march past us. We are led by timid nerveless old men.29

27Grey spoke at the annual meeting of the Liberal Council at Hotel Metropole on April 10; see the Manchester Guardian, April 11, 1929, p. 5.

28See Lloyd George's comment in the Daily Chronicle, April 11, 1929, p. 3.

Although unwilling to propose a specific policy for he "was not interested in startling programmes," MacDonald conceded that "the first point in the Labour programme was unemployment" in a major speech at the Albert Hall. The orthodox Labour position was that the Liberals had stolen a purely socialist program from the Labour party. Lloyd George's one friend on the Front Bench of the Labour party, Philip Snowden, put the matter neatly: "I am sometimes asked why I do not criticise Mr. Lloyd George's unemployment programme. But why should I criticise it? Because if I were to criticise the items I should be criticising a part of our own programme."  

On the Conservative side almost equal hostility met the Liberal proposals to end unemployment. The Times thundered that We Can Conquer Unemployment "is only a much-needed translation of 'Labour and the Nation'. . . the Conservative Party would have betrayed the interests which they exist to defend, if they were to form an alliance whose excuse would be the prevention of Socialism, but whose result would be its adoption." Winston Churchill, who as Chancellor of the

30 He spoke on April 27 as reported in the Daily Mail, April 29, 1929, p. 14. See also Labour's Reply to Lloyd George: How to Conquer Unemployment with a preface by Ramsay MacDonald (London: The Labour Party, 1929).

31 Snowden spoke at Denby Dale on May 18 as reported in The Observer, May 19, 1929, p. 14.

32 See the leader in The Times, April 5, 1929, p. 15.
Exchequer held primary responsibility for refuting claims of the Liberal experts, declared: "If the Socialist Party advance under the banner of plunder. . . . I am indeed sorry to see the party led by Mr. Lloyd George with a policy of squander. Plunder and squander—those are the watch-words of our opponents."33

Churchill's Budget speech of April 15 was almost entirely devoted to deriding the Lloyd George proposals.34 The Yorkshire Observer reported that "Labour Members were frankly annoyed that the Chancellor should have spent so much of his time making fun of Mr. Lloyd George, but the Liberal leader appeared to enjoy the attention greatly. He and his colleagues know that the additional sop to agriculture had been given in the hope of stemming the tide of Liberal progress in the rural areas. The extra grant for road making, after the Chancellor derided the Liberal scheme, was yet another advertisement of the Liberal revival."35 In short the Government promised to spend so much money on public works in hopes of meeting the Liberal challenge that, according to the Liberal Magazine, "the Budget disappointed all

33Churchill spoke at Sevenoaks on April 27 as reported in the Manchester Guardian, April 29, 1929, p. 14.

34For a report of the Budget speech see the Manchester Guardian, April 16, 1929, p. 11.

35Yorkshire Observer, April 16, 1929, p. 6.
Conservative expectations that it would prove of great electioneering value."36

In order to answer Churchill's charges J. M. Keynes and H. D. Henderson published a sixpenny pamphlet entitled Can Lloyd George Do It? The Pledge Examined on May 9. Keynes and his collaborator pointed out: "We believe that the cumulative effect of renewed prosperity will surpass expectations."37 In a discussion of Tory investment policies they maintained: "A country is enriched not by the mere negative act of an individual not spending all his income on current consumption. It is enriched by the positive act of using these savings to augment the capital equipment of the country."38 The Manchester Guardian praised Keynes' and Henderson's pamphlet for its "great lucidity, liveliness, and simplicity of expression."39 Over 50,000 copies were sold within two days of publication.40

36 "Notes of the Month," (May, 1929), 269.


38 Ibid., p. 41.


40 Advertisement for Can Lloyd George Do It? in The Times, May 21, 1929, p. 20.
The Government retaliated with a White Paper which purported to expose Liberal economic fallacies in the following areas: roads and bridges were discussed by the Minister of Transport; housing by the Minister of Health; telephone development by the Postmaster General; and electrical development by the Minister of Transport. The White Paper attempted to prove both the impossibility and the undesirability of applying the Liberal proposals, Lloyd George noted: "We have gained such strength that the Government have taken a quite unprecedented, unwarranted step in issuing a document with the Seal of the Crown as a political pamphlet."42

The Liberals had chosen to fight the election on a single issue; as Lloyd George wrote to the Scottish League of Young Liberals: "unemployment is the only subject that matters in domestic politics at the present time."43 This


42Lloyd George spoke at the National Liberal Club; see the Daily Chronicle, May 14, 1929, p. 4. The Manchester Guardian's London correspondent (May 13, 1929, p. 10) stated: "I cannot remember a precedent, or anything like a precedent, for publishing at the national expense an elaborate answer by retiring Ministers to the publication of an Opposition party."

43Lloyd George wrote to the SLYL at their annual conference as quoted in The Times, April 27, 1929, p. 14.
state of affairs suited the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Winston Churchill, very well as he pointed out in a letter to Sir Philip Cunliffe Lister, President of the Board of Trade:

I hear a rumour that the Worsted Committee may report in about a week in favour of a small duty. This would in my opinion have the worst possible effects. . . . A tax on worsted will come into the political forefront of the Election, and the Liberals will make the greatest possible play with it all over the country, asserting that an immense number of manufactured articles are to be newly taxed and will become dearer, and we shall all be occupied in trying to catch up the gross exaggerations. The last thing in the world we want to do is to disturb the comfortable position into which the fiscal controversy has now got. 44

So far as other issues were concerned, these remained in the background although Lloyd George noted that "in view of the movement of opinion in Scotland, and the attitude of our candidates there, there should be a brief reference to Scottish Home Rule" in the Liberal manifesto. 45 In fact Samuel had come out in support of Home Rule for Scotland as early as January 17, 1929 in a speech at Dalkeith. 46 The traditional Liberal concern with limiting

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44This letter is dated April 25, 1929, Volume 36, Item 142 in the Baldwin Papers, Cambridge University Library.

45Lloyd George to Philip Kerr, March 2, 1929 in the Lloyd George Papers, Beaverbrook Library, G/12/5/21.

46See the account in the Daily Chronicle, January 18, 1929, p. 4. Samuel was speaking in support of the candidate in the North Midlothian by-election.
the powers of the House of Lords was dropped from the mani-
manifesto for, in Lloyd George's view: "It is not really an
issue at this Election, and the Pamphlet should be limited
to the points that are now before the public."47

There was one issue, besides that of unemployment,
which all Liberals agreed was of the utmost importance. This
was the temperance issue which had been revived in October
1928 with the publication of the Liberal Temperance Policy.48
This document had been compiled by the Temperance Committee
of the Liberal and Radical Candidates' Association. Harcourt
Johnstone, a long time opponent of Lloyd George, funded the
research which had begun in 1926.49 The report discussed
the working of local Option in Scotland, the "Physiology of
Alcohol," and the Asquith Bill of 1908 which would have pro-
vided for stricter control of licensing but never secured
passage of Parliament. The authors of Liberal Temperance
Policy recommended "following the proposals of Mr. Asquith's
Bill of 1908, that fourteen years' notice should be given

47Lloyd George to Philip Kerr, March 2, 1929, G/12/
5/21, op. cit.


49See Chapter I for a discussion of the Liberal Tem-
perance Inquiry in 1926. For Harcourt Johnstone's role see
the statement by Isaac Foot at the Great Yarmouth Conference
in "Proceedings...," p. 61, Selection of Pamphlets and
Leaflets, 1928, op. cit.
of a complete recovery by the Justices of freedom of action in dealing with licensed houses."50

A "companion" report on The Temperance Question: Its Relation to Women's Problems of To-day was published at the same time by the Women's National Liberal Federation.51 A committee chaired by Mrs. Runciman worked in cooperation with the Enquiry Committee of the Liberal and Radical Candidates' Association to produce a report on the sociological effects of the drink habit—especially upon the women and children of drunkards. The two reports on the Temperance question illustrate the way Lloyd George's opponents within the party attempted to compete with him by adopting his methods.

At the Great Yarmouth conference debate raged over the kind of temperance proposal the party should adopt. Isaac Foot, spokesman for West Country Nonconformity, pointed out that on industry and land "most valuable reports had been published and recommendations made, but the Liberal Party would have gone into the next campaign at a real disadvantage if Temperance Reform had not been tackled."52 He asserted

50From the summary of the Temperance Report in "Notes of the Month," Liberal Magazine (November, 1928), 651.

51(London: Liberal Publication Department, 1928).

52See Foot's speech on October 12 in "Proceedings . . . at Great Yarmouth," p. 61, Selections of Pamphlets and Leaflets, 1928, op. cit.
that temperance reform policy would make a special appeal to the women electors "especially those who would now be coming on the register for the first time."53 A delegate from North Hereford objected that for the Liberal party to take an extreme temperance position would weaken Liberalism's appeal to the young men. But most Liberals held that a strong stand on temperance would win the women's vote.54

All Liberals agreed that some temperance reform was desirable (and there was the powerful transatlantic example of Prohibition); the debate was merely over what form it was to take. At Great Yarmouth Isaac Foot's draft resolution was approved by the delegates.55 Thus the Liberal party was committed to a policy which stated: "The present national drink bill represents an unproductive and wasteful expenditure by the community, which is indefensible in the existing economic situation, and inimical to the health and efficiency of many of the consumers."56 To aid in securing national efficiency, the avowed aim of the New Liberalism, a central licensing

53Ibid., p. 62.

54See the remarks of G. Edinger (North Salford) and E. L. Granville (parliamentary candidate for Eye Division) in ibid., p. 64.

55See ibid., p. 61.

56The resolution is printed in full in the Liberal Magazine (November, 1928), op. cit., 696.
commission was proposed to "coordinate and stimulate" the work of reducing the number of licenses in England.\textsuperscript{57}

For a party which was attempting to appeal to the English working class, the temperance policy was certainly hazardous. Lloyd George's election manifesto, finally published on May 25, listed "temperance reform" as one of the chief aims of Liberalism.\textsuperscript{58} In their temperance policy, as in their unemployment policy, the Liberals were unique and to the confirmed user of alcohol the Liberal program must have appeared a greater threat to pleasure than those of the other two parties.

In order to draw attention to their unemployment and temperance policies, the Liberals launched a vast campaign in April--a month before the election campaign officially began. On April 8 Sir Herbert Samuel left Land's End on a speaking tour which was planned to take him north to John O'Groats. At the same time Lord Beauchamp, president of the Land and Nation League, left Cowes for Southampton on the first leg of a speaking tour which would take him eventually to Pembroke through the Southern and Eastern counties.\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{57}Ibid., p. 697.

\textsuperscript{58}Quoted in The Times, May 25, 1929, p. 12.

\textsuperscript{59}See the account in the Daily Chronicle, April 3, 1929, p. 4 and the Manchester Guardian, April 3, 1929, p. 4. The Yorkshire Observer, April 8, 1929, p. 6 reported that the approximate number of meetings during April to be addressed by Lloyd George, Sir Herbert Samuel, and Lord Beauchamp would be 250.
Lloyd George's daughters, Megan and Lady Carey-Evans, were among the 1,000 speakers scheduled to take part in the campaign. The number of meetings scheduled in three weeks campaign numbered 10,000. Twelve million leaflets were earmarked for distribution along the way.60

Use of motor cars in the April campaign provided yet another advertisement for the Liberal pledge to cure unemployment by putting men to work on building roads. Samuel's planned tour covered 3,000 miles; a "fleet" of 200 cars decorated with blue flags, the color of Cornish Liberalism, brought nearly 2,000 people to Land's End to see Samuel off.61

The chief of the Liberal organization declared that it was "the greatest campaign ever undertaken in this country by any political party in anticipation of a General Election."62

In fact Samuel only got as far as Dundee before ending his

60 Figures from The Times, April 9, 1929, p. 18. (Samuel gave the figures in a speech at Land's End on April 8, 1929). The Manchester Guardian, April 8, 1929, p. 14 stated that 2,750,000 handbills and 80,000 posters would be distributed during the month of April.

61 See the account in the Daily Chronicle, April 9, 1929, p. 3. The Manchester Guardian, April 8, 1929, p. 14 reported that Samuel would tour through sixty-eight constituencies and would address about 100 meetings.

62 Quoted in the Manchester Guardian, April 9, 1929, p. 5.
tour on May 1; he had covered about 2,000 miles and made 90 speeches. 63

Much more important than Samuel's campaign was Lord Beauchamp's march across Britain—although his effort has received little attention from historians. Lloyd George lent all his support to Beauchamp's campaign—including a lengthy telegram:

The Liberal message is one for the men whose spirits are being crushed under the burden of enforced idleness, for the women whose privations have added to the sufferings of the men, for the youth that sees before it only a vista of idle years. It is a message, too, for those who dwell in the darkness of our slums and for those who, loving the land, are compelled to desert it for the crowded cities. Your journey is more than a tour. It is a pilgrimage of hope. 64

This was the authentic voice of Liberalism so often accompanied by the strains of "Land of Hope and Glory."

Beauchamp set off from the Isle of Wight where he was given a great send-off by "fifteen hundred Liberals, and the fleet of cars that left Southampton was cheered as it passed into the country." 65 The Chairman of the Liberal Campaign Department reported: "We are making wonderful

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63Newspaper clippings describing Samuel's tour may be found among the Samuel Papers, A/72, folio 49 in the House of Lords Record Office.

64Quoted in the Daily News and Westminster Gazette, April 9, 1929, p. 7.

65For a description of Beauchamp's send-off see the Manchester Guardian, April 9, 1929, p. 5.
progress. I have been asked to visit many other places not scheduled in the tour, and have managed to make calls at two of them in route. Everywhere they are acclaiming the unemployment policy."\(^66\) The candidate for the Winchester Division, Mrs. F. L. Josephy, believed that it was "fitting that this new conquest of Britain should start where the old conquest of Britain began."\(^67\)

Samuel's tour failed to reach its goal at John O'Groats only partly because Sir Herbert was, as Trevor Wilson alleges, a poor speaker.\(^68\) In fact he performed quite wittily upon the platform as his epitaph for the Baldwin government makes clear:

Here lies the Conservative Government. Born on Red Letter Day, 1924, died 1929. In a time of great needs it was a Government of small men and petty expedients; although taxation was heavy, trade depressed, unemployment widespread, armaments undiminished, the nation will ever remember with gratitude that under its auspices Cornish broccoli began to enter Continental markets.\(^69\)

\(^66\)Quoted in ibid. 
\(^67\)The Winchester Division (Hampshire) candidate is quoted in the Daily News and Westminster Gazette, April 9, 1929, p. 8. 
\(^68\)The Downfall of the Liberal Party, op. cit., pp. 370-73. 
\(^69\)Samuel at Crewe on April 23 as reported in the Manchester Guardian, April 24, 1929, p. 6. K. Middlemas and J. Barnes, Baldwin, A Biography, op. cit., p. 520 refer to the Conservative Cornish broccoli claim as "one of the bad jokes of the election." On April 18 in London the Prime Minister said: "Things are all right, things are getting better. I have heard that a farmer in Cornwall is actually exporting broccoli;" see the Daily Mail, April 20, 1929, p. 14.
More to the point is Wilson's assertion that Samuel cut short his speaking tour "because of the needs of his own constituency" at Darwen. The whole concept of a motorized national campaign was based upon the American example, which did not apply to Britain, where Liberals fought two elections under a form of electoral dualism. The American president appeals to a national constituency but British politicians must fight both an election in their respective constituencies as well as a national election. For the Liberals to win a majority, they had to win about 250 constituency elections which drained their resources. Thus the Liberal leaders could not devote sufficient attention to the national campaign; the result was that the Liberals were perpetually short of the manpower necessary to operate the Liberal machine at the national level. In this respect the American example misled the Liberals and misdirected their efforts.

The Liberals made extensive use of the media in their efforts to reach the national electorate including the press, posters, advertising leaflets, radio, and telephone transmission of speeches. In the case of posters, a contest with prizes amounting to £250 was announced by the Liberal

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70Wilson, The Downfall of the Liberal Party, op. cit., p. 373. Also see the Manchester Guardian, May 2, 1929, p. 10—Samuel did not go to John O'Groats because it would have meant an additional three days journey. The chief of the Liberal organization returned to London on May 3, 1929.
The deadline for submission was February 22, 1929 and the resultant posters were used mostly for "pictorial effect"; one which sold the most copies read: "Baldwin expects to lose eighty seats: This is one." Widespread use of the pictorial poster was relatively new to Liberal electioneering. The *Daily Chronicle* argued that in view of the enormously expanded electorate "the appeal from the platform will have to be supplemented, as never before, by the printing press and pictures."

The February contest also called for entries of slogans and advertising layouts. The *Yorkshire Observer* noted: "One often hears complaints from young Liberals that the methods of bringing home the facts of Liberalism are not as up-to-date as they might be. Such critics are to have the opportunity of bringing their own bright ideas to the notice of headquarters. . . ." Use of advanced advertising techniques

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71See the announcement in the Liberal Magazine (February, 1929), 96-7. The contest included £250 for poster designs; £250 for pictorial posters; £250 for draft advertisements; £250 for slogans—a total in prizes amounting to £1,000.

72*Daily Chronicle*, May 24, 1929, p. 4.

73Ibid., February 6, 1929, p. 4.

74*Yorkshire Observer*, February 2, 1929, p. 6. The Daily News and Westminster Gazette, April 8, 1929, p. 10 listed the winning slogans: "Liberalism pays all ways," "Of two evils choose neither—Vote Liberal," "In five years' time you'll still be glad you voted Liberal," "Five years' rust must be dispersed by five years' trust—Vote Liberal," "Liberalism is good for the majority," "Liberalism, the National Lifebuoy."
was not unprecedented, for as the Manchester Guardian explained: "Business, especially in America, has made a special art of the slogan." The organizers of the contest took pains to point out that "entries will not be judged by politicians but by advertising experts."76

Full page advertisements on behalf of Liberalism appeared in the daily press on May 13. Photographs of Lloyd George, Samuel, Simon, Grey, Reading, Beauchamp, and Runciman appeared under the caption: "A United Liberal Party Again at the Country's Call--This Time to Conquer Unemployment." The text of the ad proclaimed:

A world wide trade slump followed the War. America in 1921 was on the verge of panic. Our own unemployment figures touched two millions, but Mr. Lloyd George introduced measures which forced them down again to 1,300,000.

The Conservative and Labour Governments which followed made no fighting effort to reduce the figure. They dilly-dallied, with the result that their were again 1,458,000 out of work this February!77

A three-column advertisement appeared on May 21 one week before the poll. The text read: "Can Lloyd George Do It? Economists say 'Yes!' More than a million out of work! The Conservative Party wrings its hands. The Labour Party shakes its fist. Lloyd George on the other hand has a plan."78

76Yorkshire Observer, February 2, 1929, p. 6.
77The Times, May 13, 1929, p. 23.
78Ibid., May 21, 1929, p. 20.
The Liberal newspapers advertising offensive was not emulated by the two major parties; the Labour party because it had little money, the Conservatives because they argued that such a practice was illegal. According to the Conservative legal advisors Section 34 of the Representation of the People Act (1918) required "the written consent of the election agent in all the constituencies in which the newspapers circulated, and that the total cost would have to be apportioned amongst those constituencies and included by the respective election agents in their return of election expenses." 

However this may be the legality of the Liberal methods was never tested in court and one must assume that the Liberal party's legal advisors had approved the practice.

The distribution of pamphlets and leaflets was an important part of the Liberals electioneering armory. It is important to note that most of these were sold to the local election committees. This policy was adopted on the principle of making each constituency self-supporting and "of making people realize that Liberalism is worth paying for." In all

79From a statement by Conservative party headquarters as quoted in The Times, May 14, 1929, p. 16.

80According to the Daily Chronicle, May 24, 1929, p. 4.

81Ibid., May 13, 1929, p. 6.
about sixty Liberal leaflets were placed in circulation. Of the ten most widely circulated, the most popular was entitled "Work, Not Doles" which stated the unemployment policy in tabloid form; four others of these ten also set forth the unemployment policy. The four remaining most popular leaflets were addressed to the women voters--one headed "Mightier Than the Sword" pictured a woman marking a ballot.\textsuperscript{82}

Daily newspaper remained an important part of the Liberal communications effort; newspapers such as the \textit{Yorkshire Observer}, \textit{Liverpool Post and Mercury}, the \textit{Daily News} and \textit{Westminster Gazette}, and the \textit{Daily Chronicle} indefatigably praised the Liberal revival. The threatening behavior of the Liberal press was acknowledged by Ramsay MacDonald who commented: "A Liberal newspaper is fearfully and wonderfully made. It always reads like a religious tract which has been sub-edited by Satan. If there is anything that ought never to believe it is the newspapers which tell you of the great progress that Liberalism is making."\textsuperscript{83}

A not entirely unforeseen feature of the general election campaign was the defection of Conservative newspapers to the Liberal side. Lord Rothermere's \textit{Daily Mail} advocated Conservative cooperation with Liberals in order to keep the

\textsuperscript{82}Manchester Guardian, May 24, 1929, p. 10.

\textsuperscript{83}MacDonald spoke at Bristol on May 23 as reported in \textit{The Times}, May 24, 1929, p. 8.
Socialists out of office: "In these conditions are Conservatives and Liberals to waste energy in fighting one another, or are they to combine for the defeat of Socialism? Over a large part of Great Britain it must be admitted at this moment that Liberal candidates have a better chance of success against the Socialist adversary than Conservatives."\(^8^4\) In the same vein the *Daily Mail* attacked Baldwin's conduct of the 1929 campaign: "The prevailing indifference for the Conservative cause is due to the lack of any inspiring appeal. What can be done for a party by vigorous and stimulating leadership is shown by the remarkable revival of Liberalism under the vitalising influence of Mr. Lloyd George."\(^8^5\) Rothermere made a last plea for cooperation of the "anti-Socialist" parties in an eve-of-poll article:

> I am an anti-Socialist. I am not a Liberal. I am not a Conservative. . . . To cling to the partisan labels of 'Liberal' and 'Conservative' is absurd and futile when the country is confronted by a powerful new party whose deliberate policy is to change the fundamental economic structure of the nation . . . . The great personal influence of the Liberal leader would have been of especial value in an anti-Socialist coalition. I have unstinted admiration for his vitality, virility, and courage in crisis. Of all our public men, it is he (to use a colloquial expression) whom one would choose "to go tiger-hunting with."\(^8^6\)

\(^8^4\) *Daily Mail*, April 8, 1929, p. 12.


\(^8^6\) See Rothermere's article in *Ibid.*, May 29, 1929, p. 10. For other *Daily Mail* leaders expressing the same view see April 9, 1929, p. 12; April 10, 1929, p. 10; April 11, 1929, p. 10; and April 17, 1929, p. 12.
The Conservative Morning Post, which continued to support the Government, noted: "Whatever Mr. Baldwin may do, it is plain that he has lost Lord Rothermere, who is now seen to be out-and-out for Mr. Lloyd George, notwithstanding that the Liberals were the keenest supporters of votes for women." (Rothermere had been a die-hard opponent of the 1928 "Flapper Franchise.")

Lord Beaverbrook, who controlled the Daily Express, the Sunday Press, and the Evening Standard, also gave support to the Liberals. A leader in the Daily Express declared:

There are those who talk of the Liberal plan to put 500 candidates in the field as though it were an act of treason to the Commonwealth, a conspiracy for handing Great Britain over to the Socialists. This is nonsense. Fifteen years ago Liberalism was the governing power in the country. It has a past, a record, a body of traditions exceeded by no party in the State . . . . They (the Liberals) are a guarantee, at this moment the best guarantee in sight, that the government of this country is not going to jump from one undesirable extreme to the other.

J. L. Garvin's Observer, a Sunday newspaper funded by Viscount Astor, praised the Liberal party: "It is a powerful minority. In various ways it is valuable beyond its numbers. It ought to have over a hundred members in the House of Commons. This would make for the good of the nation, and above all, for the intellectual vitality of Parliament. But under a dishonest

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87 Morning Post leader, March 25, 1929, p. 10.

88 Daily Express, March 2, 1929; see the Liberal Magazine (March, 1929), 167.
and foolish electoral system, most Liberals now are, and at the next dissolution still will be, in effect, disfranchised. The Conservatives maintain this system upon no consideration of principle. They maintain it in a spirit of unscrupulous and complacent opportunism because they suppose it gives them the luck of the gamble. They may be deceived. 

Radio broadcasting played an important role in the 1929 election as Asa Briggs' *History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom* makes clear. A considerable controversy developed as to the precise amount of time to be allowed the Government and to the two Opposition parties; the Government insisted that they should have two chances to one and be allowed to answer separately the speeches of the Liberal and Labour Opposition. The *Yorkshire Observer* explained "in order that the experiment should not be vetoed, the Opposition parties have given way on this point, and agreed to let the Government get what advantage they can out of this unfair proposal." A communique issued by the Liberal Campaign Department stated the Liberal party accepted the proposals

89The Observer, February 24, 1929, p. 16.


"only under protest" against "the partial action of the Government in the matter." 92

The order of the broadcasting finally agreed upon ran as follows: April 8, Government; April 11, Opposition (Labour); April 16, Government; April 19, Opposition (Liberals); April 22, Government; April 25, Opposition (Labour); April 30, Government; May 3, Opposition (Liberals). 93 During the final days before the election—the week of May 27—there were three more broadcasts in which Sir John Simon, Ramsay MacDonald, and Baldwin spoke in turn. 94 The difficulty over arranging this schedule illustrates perfectly the difficulty of creating a third party in a bipolar system. In the middle of May the women representatives of the three parties each received a chance to broadcast; Megan Lloyd George and Mrs. Margaret Wintringham spoke for the Liberals. 95

Unable to make full use of sound radio because of the Government's attitude, Lloyd George created—somewhat in the manner of Jehovah creating the earth—a counter broadcasting network for the use of the Liberals. Thus the Marconiphone Company transmitted a speech made by Lloyd George at the Royal

92Quoted in "Political Notes," in The Times, April 8, 1929, p. 12.

93As printed in the Liverpool Post and Mercury, April 8, 1929, p. 10.

94Daily Chronicle, May 9, 1929, p. 4.

95Manchester Guardian, May 9, 1929, p. 10.
Albert Hall over standard Post Office trunk lines to mass meetings in 13 towns. Special precautions were taken to avoid interference by disconnecting all Liberal exchanges from the local switchboard en route. In the halls at the receiving end were loud speakers which relayed what was said to the crowd. The combined length of the circuits was over 2,000 miles in what the Yorkshire Observer called "a considerable technical triumph in the field of speech amplification." It is difficult to estimate the impact of this form of communication upon the electorate. Lloyd George's Albert Hall speech, on March 26, was arranged by the Daily News and Westminster Gazette—another example of the key role played by the press in the Liberal revival. The Liberal leader spoke to 10,000 inside the hall itself and his words were relayed to 40,000 auditors at meetings throughout the country.

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98 As reported in the Daily News and Westminster Gazette, March 25, 1929, p. 9; the journal claimed that "the whole country is awaiting the ex-Premier's speech . . . and the 'Daily News' has made arrangements for the speech to be heard by the largest possible audience. By arrangement with the 'Daily News,' Mr. Lloyd George will speak at the following demonstrations: Albert Hall, Tomorrow. Free Trade Hall, Manchester, April 12. At Edinburgh early in May."
99 Ibid., March 27, 1929, p. 9. The journal reported that at the conclusion of the "Kingsway Hall meeting Mr. Lloyd George expressed his thanks to the 'Daily News' for 'the enterprise that first of all prompted them to organise these meetings and for the energetic way in which they have organised them."
On the occasion of the last of the relayed speeches from Cardiff and Swansea on May 17, the Daily News asserted that the demonstrations were "a feat of organisation unparalleled in the history of newspapers."  

The weakness of the land wire-cum-Marconiphone approach to political communication lay in the fact that it placed a heavy burden upon the local Liberal organization for securing audiences. That is to say that the people who listened to Lloyd George were likely to be convinced Liberals who needed little further encouragement to vote Liberal; land wires were an extension of the use of loud-speakers in politics and had the additional disadvantage, according to the Daily Chronicle, of being "too expensive for use in the constituencies" where the real reservoir of votes lay. Only radio could reach the mass of non-Liberals who might never attend a Liberal demonstration and this last medium was dominated by Government speakers.

On the whole the Liberals had good reason to be proud of their communications effort in the spring of 1929. Lloyd George's pledge to end unemployment—announced on March 1—captured the initiative from the other two parties, which had not yet begun their respective election campaigns. The great April campaigns of Beauchamp and Samuel allowed the Liberals

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100 Ibid., May 18, 1929, p. 7.

to hold almost 20,000 meetings in a single month.\textsuperscript{102} On the other hand they suffered from an important weakness: the Conservatives—with much greater financial resources—could always buy more and better gadgets for propaganda. For instance the Conservative Central Office employed a dozen cinema vans equipped to show "talking films" while the Liberals had to be content with mere loud speakers.\textsuperscript{103} But in fact, as the \textit{Daily Chronicle} admitted, "the loud speaker has not caught on so much as was expected"; the journal stated "candidates find that nothing is so effective as face-to-face talk with the electors."\textsuperscript{104}

\textsuperscript{102}Ibid., May 23, 1929, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{103}The number of Conservative cinema vans is given in "Political Notes," \textit{The Times}, April 12, 1929, p. 14. \textit{The Observer}, January 20, 1929, p. 11 reported that the Conservatives had carried mechanization to a higher pitch than the Liberals. Ten Conservative vans were carrying a repertory of films: "These vans are able to give displays either by daylight or at night, in the open-air or indoors, and they can exhibit both silent and talking films. They generate their own electricity and are altogether self-sufficing units." These Conservative vans attracted large audiences who came to see cartoons which provided political lessons by the methods "which have been made famous by Felix the Cat."

\textsuperscript{104}Daily \textit{Chronicle}, May 23, 1929, p. 4. On the same date the Manchester Guardian's London correspondent (p. 10) stated: "A curious thing about this general election is that, although it was expected to be quite different from all its predecessors in the vast use of mechanical devices and in the reduction of the human element, it looks as though it would be very much the same as the others. Most of the mechanical aids that were to prove so effective in electioneering have been judged a comparative failure." The Yorkshire Observer's London correspondent (January 18, 1929, p. 6) quoted a Liberal election agent as saying that the Liberal loud-speaker vans and other party "stunts" were "not always welcomed by local organisers."
Lloyd George's communications offensive of 1929 was the climax to a development which had begun in 1926 with his Turkish atrocity campaign in the pages of the Daily Chronicle. What we can only call the Gladstonian theory of communications relied upon newspapers to facilitate the flow of information to a limited electorate. With a mass electorate the press was an unsuitable medium because relatively few of the electors (and even fewer opinion leaders) read Liberal newspapers. Modern advertising methods offered the only alternative to what we have called "newspaper Liberalism."

In adopting new methods of persuasion, Liberals operated on the assumption that the newly-enfranchised voters constituted a vast body of persons with no party affiliations. That is, their communications model was based upon the advertiser's premise that the consumer is an isolated being, suffering from anomie, who possesses no opinion about the product he is asked to buy. However well this premise has served Unilever, it did not transfer to British politics, where the majority of people possessed strong notions about the Liberal party in general and Lloyd George's ancestry in particular. Most of the voters belonged to groups (trade unions for example) which were profoundly hostile to Liberalism.

One must not underestimate the novelty of Liberal methods—particularly of their mechanized campaigns such as Beauchamp's and Samuel's tour of the constituencies in 1929. Confirmed Fordists as they were the Liberals naturally turned
to the Ford car in their attempt to spread the gospel of the Land and Nation League. They were the first party to employ loud-speaker vans (in 1926), and by 1929 thirty vans were on the road; each van carried a set of speeches in "cold storage." At the Lancaster by-election of 1928 the Liberals were the first to employ land wires to relay speeches to simultaneous meetings. The only trouble was that the Conservatives, with their huge financial resources, also adopted these methods for the 1929 election; in the battle between electoral funds the Liberals would always lose to the Conservatives.

The Labour party spurned the new campaign methods of Lloyd George. A Labour headquarters official explained: "It is of no use trying to treat an election here as though it were an American Presidential Election." The Labour party relied upon face-to-face communication in order to direct the flow of information from elite to mass: "We differ from the other parties in that our local work is more continuous; we are constantly holding meetings in the ordinary course. The machinery is all ready for the speeding-up which will take place as the General Election gets nearer." This technique was possible because the trade union movement provided a communications sub-structure for Labour propaganda.

105See The Observer, January 20, 1929, p. 11.
106Ibid.
So far as the use of posters is concerned the Liberals had outrun the frontiers of theory; the Liberal communications offensive took place without accurate theoretical guidance. Poster analytical literature which would "guide the artist in producing posters that will persuade, move to action and be predictable in their effect" did not yet exist. The first important theoretical formulation of this subject grew out of the Nazi experience in Germany; in 1938 Ervin Schockel, a Hitlerite propagandist, published Das Politische Plakat. In other words the Liberals were working in the dark so far as the effect of their campaign was concerned—all they knew was that if it worked for Hoover, it must work for Lloyd George too.

Lack of hard data on audience reaction limited the effectiveness of the Liberal loud speaker vans. Volume control on the early models did not exist and the speakers were designed to be heard within the radius of one square mile. Like radio broadcasting, the loud speaker was designed both to eliminate hecklers and to reach an extra-Liberal audience. Unfortunately those persons whose repose was disturbed by a Liberal van were unlikely to be grateful to Lloyd George.

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As a correspondent for the Yorkshire Observer stated: "I must confess that I have never been friendly toward the loud-speaker vans with amplifiers capable of disturbing the peace for a square mile or more."\(^\text{109}\)

All Liberals were accustomed to regard the press as the most important sphere for political action. That is to say that Liberals used the press the way Labourites used trade union organization or Conservatives used clubland: to debate intra-party issues. Inevitably the Liberals print-oriented approach to communication resulted in wide-spread publicity for intra-party quarrels. The nature of the medium meant that the party found it difficult to control the press, for any wealthy man who opposed the Liberal leadership could purchase a newspaper to propagate his views. As early as 1916, Trevor Wilson has noted, both Lloyd Georgians and followers of Asquith possessed their own (still Liberal) newspapers.\(^\text{110}\) The Liberal Central Office could not exercise control over independently financed newspapers; hence the well-known tendency of Liberals to split their party on many key issues.

Lloyd George realized the disadvantages inherent to the press medium: A Liberal newspaper could not reach the huge extra-Liberal mass of an expanded electorate. He turned

\(^{109}\)See the Yorkshire Observer, April 30, 1929, p. 6.

to mechanized warfare conducted by loud speaker vans because these could be controlled by the Liberal Central Office in a way the Liberal press could not. The vans created a unified communications structure while their recorded messages could be controlled from the center. It is obvious that the Lloyd Georgians were attempting to create a system modeled on a radio broadcasting network. If they could have won access to the B. B. C., if they could have employed paid radio advertisements on the American model, the story of the Liberal revival might have ended differently.
CHAPTER VII

THE ELECTORAL OFFENSIVE, 1926-1929

Having described the Liberal communications structure, it is now necessary to examine the impact of that structure upon the voters. The by-elections between 1926 and 1929 provided the best testing ground for Lloyd George's new methods of mechanized electioneering. Before the Welshman became leader, the party's performance in these contests was dismal in the extreme. In 1926 the Liberals, for example, failed to win even one of the thirteen seats which they contested; in most cases their candidate lost his deposit as well.

As soon as Lloyd George became leader the Liberals almost miraculously began to win by-elections and by 1929 they had won a total of nine contests. Such successes were convincing evidence that the Liberal revival was genuine, and that many heretofore "hidden Liberals" were in the process of being converted to the party led by Lloyd George.¹ These by-election victories allowed many Liberals, who ought to have known better, to indulge in fantasies about forming a Liberal government after the next general election.

¹This phrase was used by Basil Murray, son of Professor Gilbert Murray, when he stood as a Liberal candidate at a by-election in Marylebone in 1928; see the Manchester Guardian, April 18, 1928, p. 10.
Liberal efforts to win as many by-elections as possible were hampered by the continued resistance offered by the Liberal Council to Lloyd George's leadership. Both factions within the party attempted to control the selection of parliamentary candidates. In fact the Liberal Council contested some by-elections without accepting any aid from the Lloyd George Fund. In effect they refused to use mechanical electioneering devices supplied by headquarters and, as a result, usually failed to win the seat.

The Westbury by-election (polling day was June 15, 1927) provided an excellent illustration of the continued division within Liberal ranks. The Liberal candidate in the three-cornered fight, Harcourt Johnstone, was put up by the Liberal Council. He was a former M. P. with considerable political experience, and his chances of winning the seat seemed to be good. Coming immediately after three by-election wins in 1927, Westbury offered the chance for the fourth in a row. Nonetheless, at least one member of the Liberal Council took a characteristically pessimistic position: "I rather have it in my bones that we shall get near but not quite near enough to win. Perhaps I feel it would be too good to be true."²

²Sir Donald Maclean to R. H. Davies, June 10, 1927 in the Asquith Papers, Volume 147, folio 159 at the Bodleian Library, Oxford.
lose this by-election rather than contribute another victory to the Liberal Revival.

Friction between Lloyd George and the Liberal Council was gleefully exploited by the local Conservatives at Westbury. They published a letter written by Johnstone (in 1926) in which he explained: "No party can maintain its identity or its usefulness when it is directed or inspired by a man devoid of political honesty. To me Mr. Lloyd George seems to have but few of the virtues with which he is popularly credited and all the vices which his political record only too amply displays."³

Undoubtedly Johnstone's views had changed little in one year, for he displayed great reluctance to cooperate with Liberal headquarters. Lloyd George complained that the Liberal Council had "ignored Samuel" by appointing their own organizer at Westbury. Johnstone refused to invite the Liberal leader to participate in the campaign, although he made feeble efforts to procure a visit to Westbury from Mrs. Lloyd George and her daughter Megan. Realizing that the Liberal candidate was in danger of losing the by-election, the local Liberal newspaper printed a plea asking Lloyd George himself to visit the

³This letter, which had been written to the Wiltshire Times on June 3, 1926, reappeared in a Conservative pamphlet at Westbury. It was quoted in the Glasgow Herald, June 15, 1927, p. 11.
constituency. The former prime minister declined to go until officially asked, with the result that he never went.  

The Liberals lost Westbury by a narrow margin as the final count showed: Eric Long (Conservative), 10,623; Harcourt Johnstone, 10,474; G. Ward (Labour), 5,396. The Manchester Guardian maintained that the Liberal Council was to blame for the loss. If they had made use of Lloyd George's magnetic platform manner, Johnstone could easily have gained the few more votes needed to win. As it was, bickering between the two factions had, in a phrase often used by Liberals in the 1920's, "let the Tory in."

Lloyd George had good reason to be furious at losing the Westbury contest, for it weakened his claim to be the leader of a revived Liberal party. He told C. P. Scott that the press lords, Beaverbrook and Rothermere, would have publicly declared themselves as Liberal supporters if only the by-election could have been won. Aware of the somewhat reactionary attitudes of the two newspaper owners, J. L. Hammond

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4This paragraph is based upon C. P. Scott's conservation with Lloyd George as set forth in the former's journal; see the Scott MS. in the British Museum, Volume VII, folio 200, entry for July 21-3, 1927.

5Figures from the Liberal Magazine (July, 1927), 462.

6June 18, 1927, p. 13. This view was shared by the Liverpool Post and Mercury which was a Liberal newspaper usually hostile to Lloyd George; see the June 17, 1927 edition, p. 8.
(a noted Liberal journalist and historian) uttered the only possible riposte: "Heaven help the Liberals."^7

The Westbury affair proved that old quarrels could still weaken the Liberal party's by-election offensive. It also underlined the weakness of the Liberal Council which apparently could not hope to win without assistance from Lloyd George. Finally, the Welshman's obsession with winning over the Daily Mail and the Daily Express perpetuated those doubts about his political honesty which had originally led to formation of the Liberal Council.

Attempts by members of the Liberal Council to build a political base in constituencies which were independent of Liberal headquarters did not end with the Westbury by-election. In 1928 the enemies of Lloyd George opened their Western Front in the St. Ives division; this was a rambling Cornish constituency far down in the Nonconformist West. Hilda Runciman, the wife of Walter Runciman (who was a fierce opponent of the Welshman), stood in the Liberal interest. The plan was that Mrs. Runciman would win St. Ives and keep it warm, as it were, until her husband could resign his seat.

^Hammond saw the notes of Scott's interview with Lloyd George and wrote about them to his wife Barbara; see the letter (dated August 6, 1927) in the Hammond Papers at the Bodleian Library, A. 5, Item 18.
at Swansea to fight the Cornish division at the 1929 general election. 8

Both Runcimans were known opponents of Lloyd George and could expect little hope from party headquarters. The Manchester Guardian complained: "If the main stream of Liberalism to-day is represented by the fruitful research work of Liberal commissions of inquiry and the Liberal Summer School then the Liberal candidate, admirable as she is in so many ways, is hardly in it." 9 The Liberal Magazine, still under the control of admirers of Asquith, denounced the "almost incredibly stupid stream of criticism by one Liberal newspaper" directed at Mrs. Runciman's candidature. 10

Unwilling to risk a repetition of the Westbury fiasco, Sir Herbert Samuel committed Liberal headquarters' resources to the St. Ives contest without consulting the leader of the party. With this aid Mrs. Runciman managed to win the seat handily. 11 On the other hand Lloyd George was furious at Samuel's intervention. Writing with a pen dipped in vitriol, he told the party chairman:

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8 For a discussion of Mrs. Runciman's intentions see the Daily Chronicle, March 3, 1928, p. 4.

9 February 20, 1928, p. 9.

10 "Notes of the Month," (April, 1928), 195.

11 Polling day was March 6, 1928 and the candidates polled as follows: Mrs. Runciman, 10,241; Sir Andrew Caird (Conservative), 9,478; F. Hopkins (Labour), 4,343. See ibid., p. 260.
The precedent you have set means that if a Liberal candidate avows openly that he
(1) Will not accept the official programme of the Party;
(2) Will not bow to the decision of the Parliamentary Party in its choice of officers, and that if he is not satisfied with the choice he will be justified in repudiating their authority; nevertheless can claim the support and influence of the official organization in his candidature. If that applied to Runciman we must all be equally entitled to the same privileges.12

It is hard not to sympathize with Lloyd George's predicament in the case of the St. Ives by-election. He wished to unite the party under his leadership, but found to his dismay that he could not even control the selection of parliamentary candidates. Furthermore even his nominal subordinates such as Samuel refused to obey him. It is no wonder that he was often reduced to expressing impotent rage at the turn of events. Perhaps the Welshman began to wonder if the Liberal party was a good investment for his vaunted Fund after all.

Despite Westbury and St. Ives, the Liberal party was in much better shape by 1929 than it had been three years earlier. Party newspapers no longer published articles critical of Lloyd George; such conflicts as remained between the two factions of Liberals were fought out at the constituency level. The Liberal party had, at least

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12Lloyd George to Samuel in an undated letter which was probably written in March 1928; see the Lloyd George Papers at the Beaverbrook Library, G/17/9/30.
temporarily, ceased to flaunt its quarrels in the London press. Intra-party struggles now proceeded at the local level (as in the case of the two major parties) instead of at the national level.

With its organization completely modernized by Sir Herbert Samuel, the Liberal party displayed the kind of confidence in the future which had been lacking in the days of Asquith's leadership. Committed to running 500 candidates (there were 615 seats in the House of Commons), most Liberals believed that Lloyd George's leadership had secured a permanent place for them in the three-party system. With pardonable pride the Welshman wrote in April 1929 that Baldwin and MacDonald had abandoned their efforts "to persuade the electorate that no place can again be found for Liberalism on the Procrustean bed of a two-party system."  

As the 1929 general election approached Lloyd George began searching for a role which the Liberals, as a small third party, might play in the new Parliament. He was especially eager to avoid the fate which had overtaken his party after the general election of 1923--that of cooperating with a Labour government without sharing power. In a conversation with Samuel on February 2 the Liberal leader explained that to cooperate with a party committed to socialism.

would result in another Liberal split. Since he held this view it is not surprising that Lloyd George attempted to seek an accommodation with the Conservatives.

On February 18 Lloyd George held a secret meeting with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Winston Churchill, to discuss the possibility of cooperating with Baldwin. As the Liberal leader recalled their conversation:

I told him that according to these reports, it was quite on the cards that the Conservative Party might be the second party in the State instead of being the first. I then urged him to persuade the Prime Minister in a case of that kind not to resign in a hurry before giving an opportunity for consultation with the Liberal Leaders; that we were just as anti-socialist as they were and had no anxiety as [sic] to see a socialist government in control of the affairs of this country.

Lloyd George then listed the conditions under which Liberals would agree to support a Baldwin government after the general election: First, there must be electoral reform; "here, Mr. Churchill admitted quite fully that we had a grievance and that in common justice it ought to be set right." Second Lloyd George declared that he "could support no Ministry which would not tackle the problems of Unemployment--more or less on the lines of our programme--Agriculture,

14See the memorandum by Sir Herbert Samuel, dated February 12, 1929 in the Samuel Papers, House of Lords Record Office, Volume A/72, folio 1.

15See the memorandum by Lloyd George headed: "Very Secret: Note of Interview with Mr. Winston Churchill at his Room in the House of Commons on the 18th of February 1929," in the Lloyd George Papers at the Beaverbrook Library, G/4/4/23.
Roads, etc." He noted that if the Labour party received a large number of seats at the election, MacDonald would be required (by constitutional precedent) to move a vote of no confidence in the Government. In the Liberal leader's opinion "all the members of our Party would be anxious to vote for such a resolution." The solution to this unhappy dilemma was as follows:

an addendum might also be moved humbly to present to the King that the House of Commons had no confidence in an administration drawn from a party which was committed to the nationalisation of all the means of production, distribution and exchange. In that case, if the first motion were carried and the second, Baldwin would be absolved from an obligation to advise the King to send for Ramsay MacDonald, as that would be in direct defiance of the vote of the Commons. The leaders of the three parties might then be sent for by the King; Baldwin might undertake to form a new Ministry. . . .16

That Lloyd George was intriguing with the Conservatives was fairly well known among most members of the political class. Beatrice Webb noted in her diary: "P. S. [Philip Snowden, Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Labour Cabinet] said that Lloyd George who has been broken up in health was making up his mind to support Baldwin's Government rather than put Labour into office. Which bears out what E. D. Simon reported the other day that Ll. G. was

16 Ibid.
hardening against advanced programmes from the Liberals.\textsuperscript{17} This sort of talk did Lloyd George's reputation—or what remained of it—no good at all.

The newspapers took up the same theme when Arthur A. Baumann, a former Conservative M. P., wrote to \textit{The Times} suggesting a Liberal-Conservative pact in the constituencies.\textsuperscript{18} The \textit{Yorkshire Observer} pointed out that all the Liberal leaders were against any pact, and exclaimed: "It is just a coalition and another coupon election that is asked for."\textsuperscript{19} Ramsay Muir, a leading Liberal theorist, wrote that "the Liberal Party would commit suicide if it contemplated any such arrangement, as certainly as if it were to make a similar arrangement with the Labour Party."\textsuperscript{20} And it must be remembered that Lloyd George, in his conversation with Churchill, specifically rejected a pact which would prevent three-cornered fights in the constituencies; "it would be quite impossible to enter into any arrangement at this time."\textsuperscript{21} A more serious obstacle to Liberal-Conservative cooperation

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\textsuperscript{17}Entry for January 12, 1929 in Margaret Cole (ed.), \textit{Beatrice Webb's Diary, 1924-1930}, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 188.
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\textsuperscript{18}\textit{The Times}, April 3, 1929, p. 13.
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\textsuperscript{19}\textit{The Yorkshire Observer}, April 6, 1929, p. 6.
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\textsuperscript{20}\textit{The Times}, April 6, 1929, p. 11.
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\textsuperscript{21}"Notes of an Interview...on 18th February 1929," p. 5, Lloyd George Papers, G/4/4/23.
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was Baldwin's attitude. As his most recent biographers point out, the Prime Minister believed that anyone who relied upon the promises of Lloyd George was a "fool."  

Many Conservatives shared Baldwin's view; H. A. Gwynne, editor of the Morning Post, wrote to the Prime Minister:

> Given another five years of office I believe you will succeed in making honest men of politicians. L. G. has debauched politics, you are making them clean again. I know that if you were as other men you could easily outbid Ramsay and L. G. and ride back into power on the back of a great majority. . . .

Given this attitude no cooperation between the Centre and the Right was possible.

While Lloyd George sought an alliance with the Conservatives, the Manchester Guardian proposed the opposite course:

> If the Liberal and Labour parties are to be jointly responsible for carrying on the government of the country it must be on terms. Probably, to make it effective and durable, it might be necessary to form a coalition Government, but such a Government would have an agreed policy and a definite programme. There is amply sufficient ground common to the two parties to make such an agreement perfectly practicable and entirely honourable. . . .

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22 Middlemas and Barnes, Baldwin: A Biography, op. cit., p. 518.
23 Gwynne to Baldwin, April 5, 1929 in the Baldwin Papers, Volume 36, Item 112 in the Cambridge University Library.
In a letter to C. P. Scott, Lloyd George explained his reasons for refusing to cooperate with MacDonald. He pointed out that if a Labour government failed "the consequence would be that the discredit would fall more hardly on the Liberals than on the Socialists."25 Precisely this state of affairs occurred in 1924 when the Liberal party was all but destroyed at the general election held in the aftermath of the Zinoviev letter.

In Lloyd George's view the Labour party was insulated against the consequences of a Labour government's policy failures, for "they would always have a solid trade union vote to fall back upon." On the other hand, he told Scott, no such block of votes underlay Liberalism: "In the old days we could always depend upon the Free Churches, they are now divided."26 This last was true enough for Baldwin only recently had been invited to speak before the Baptist Union; with mild excitement The Times noted: "It is perhaps rather a novelty that a Conservative Prime Minister should be

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25Lloyd George to Scott, April 30, 1929 in the Lloyd George Papers at the Beaverbrook Library, G/17/11/34.

26Ibid.; this is not to say that the Nonconformist vote was ignored by the Liberals; during the general election campaign Lloyd George held at least one important conference with "leaders of Nonconformity" (on the subject of Catholic schools) before issuing a statement on the subject. The conference was held on May 10; see the statement by A. J. Sylvester to Sir Herbert Samuel, May 10, 1929 in the Samuel Papers, Volume A/72, folio 10 in the House of Lords Record Office.
invited to address a Nonconformist body... however, the sharpness of the old divisions has greatly died down in recent years. 27 It was a considered part of Baldwin's policy to win over the Nonconformists—thus he contributed an article to Christian World on "Why Free Churchmen Should Vote Conservative." 28 The result of these efforts was, as Lloyd George realized, to weaken a communications sub-structure upon which the Liberal party depended.

Lack of a firm bloc of potentially Liberal votes was one argument—in Lloyd George's eyes—for refusing to cooperate with a Labour government. A second argument advanced by the Liberal leader was that if a MacDonald government were successful, then "the young men of our Party would leave us and join the Party which was carrying through a Liberal programme successfully." The only solution to the dilemma, wrote Lloyd George, would be "if it were a whole hearted federation of the progressive interests" which "would end in evolving a united progressive party." Failing this he declared himself "out and out opposed to any idea of Liberal members in the next Parliament putting a purely Socialist Government in power—on any terms." 29

27 See the leader: "Mr. Baldwin and the Baptists," February 1, 1929, p. 13.

28 Parts of Baldwin's article are quoted in ibid., May 9, 1929, p. 11.

29 Lloyd George to C. P. Scott, April 30, 1929 in the Lloyd George Papers, G/17/11/34.
A good deal has been written about Lloyd George's supposed lack of principles and he is usually described as the Prince of Trimmers—if not as a sub-editor for Satan. In fact Lloyd George's opposition to socialism was a consistent strain in his career. One reason for Liberal decline is the fact that the rank and file Liberals twice placed Labour governments in power which they then could not control. Lloyd George never wanted to cooperate with MacDonald and consistently argued against such a policy—for he recognized that "it would simply mean the reduction of the Liberal party to a negligible factor in the State." He was above consistent in his attempt to discover a Liberal alternative and—unlike some of his more principled critics—remained in the Liberal party until death them did part.

So far as the general election was concerned, the advantage of choosing when to fight was held by the Conservative Government. A new register of electors, which included recently enfranchised women voters between the ages of 21 and 30, went into effect on May 1, 1929; polling day came just thirty days later on May 30. An early election was consistent with the advice given by the Principal Agent of the Conservative party who argued: "There is every indication that our Central Office and constituency organization will

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30Ibid.
be further advanced than that of the Liberals or the Socialists." He noted that Conservative organizers had "already got into touch with large numbers of women who will be enfranchised by the new Act, and hope still to be well in advance of our opponents in this respect when the new register comes into force." The 1929 election was to be the first test of J. C. C. Davidson's new Tory Central Office machine.

The 1929 Liberal campaign was expensive because the Liberals fought on two fronts; the other parties on only one. The Liberals fought both of the other parties' philosophies and this required a greater number of pamphlets, as well as longer ones, in order to meet objections from both Tories and Socialists. The other two parties did not have to fight each other; instead they concentrated their fire upon the Liberals. The Liberal communicational network was structurally unsuited to operating in a three-party system while the networks belonging to the other parties continued to operate as if a two-party system existed.

It was exceedingly difficult for the Liberal Campaign Department to define the kind of audience at which to aim

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31 Memorandum from the Principal Agent to J. C. C. Davidson, Chairman of the Conservative and Unionist Central Office, undated but obviously written before May 1, 1929 in the Baldwin Papers, Volume 36, item 79 at the Cambridge University Library.

their propaganda. The audience target for Liberal advertising, for example, would be composed of Conservatives and Labourites in equal numbers; to frame a message which would convince both groups while avoiding giving offense to Liberals was an almost impossible task. The two major parties were only required to secure enough Liberal votes to win and thus could aim their propaganda at a well-defined (and limited) audience. Liberal propaganda, on the other hand, aimed at a heterogeneous audience which was almost as large as Great Britain herself.

To be fair to Lloyd George it must be noted that the Liberal campaign cost more because the Liberals lacked a communications sub-structure. That is to say that the Liberals tried to create such a structure, composed of loud-speaker vans and modern advertising methods, ex nihilio and at the party's expense. On the other hand, Labour organizers made use of already existing trade union organizations and personnel to facilitate the flow of information and propaganda. The Liberal revival came to depend upon large amounts of money; but once that money was withdrawn the revival would be ended. Lloyd Georgian methods were more expensive than Gladstonian ones simply because—in the days of a limited electorate and newspapers which were independent of advertising revenue—the press could link the party led by the Grand Old Man to a limited electorate very cheaply.
By running 500 candidates the Liberals caused a re­
crudescence of old hopes and fears. The Financial Times
claimed Stock Exchange experts predicted that the Conserva­
tives would win 308-12 seats, Labour 228-32, and Liberals
68 to 73; this was an over-estimate since in the event the
Liberals won only 59. Nonetheless the two major parties
were furious at Liberal intervention; The Times thundered
that "the anti-Socialist vote is to be split in every con­
stituency where a Liberal candidate can be procured."
The Labour party took the line that Liberal revival could only
weaken the progressive forces; the Labour Manifesto declared:

At this General Election the voters have to choose
not only the representatives of constituencies, but
a Government. A Labour Government is the only alter­
native to the Present Tory Government.

The results of the by-elections which have taken
place this year clearly support that statement. There
is no possibility of the Liberal Party being more than
a small minority in the new Parliament. . . . The
electors who desire to save the country from the dis­
aster of continued Tory rule can only make their
wishes effective by voting for the Labour Party.

The Liberal party fought such criticism with all the
vigor at its command. The Executive of the National Liberal

33As quoted in the Manchester Guardian, January 8,
1929, p. 10.

34See the leader, "Mr. Lloyd George's Challenge,"
April 30, 1929, p. 17.

35Labour Manifesto, issued May 1, 1929 in the George
Lansbury Papers, Volume 19, Section III, C. 5 in the British
Federation adopted a resolution warning the electorate against "the self-interested efforts of the Conservative and Socialist Parties in disparaging Liberal prospects."36 The Daily Chronicle denounced the Labour party's readiness to stab Liberalism in the back: "Resembling the Tories in this, they spend most of their time in criticising the Liberal unemployment policy and replying to Mr. Lloyd George."37 Continued existence of a third party upset the comfortable expectations of the other two parties, and both came to regard the resurrection of Lloyd George as an illegitimate event.

Although the Liberals ran 512 candidates in the 1929 election, they were easily outclassed in numbers by the two major parties. It is evident (as shown in Table 6) that Liberals never contested the entire number of seats in a given area--except in the Welsh boroughs. In the other borough seats, the Liberals did not attempt to challenge the dominance of Labour and Conservatism.

Further evidence that the Yellow Book program proved of small assistance to Liberal revival is given in Table 7. All of the Liberal seats captured by Labour were in industrial areas; it is clear that Lloyd George's pledge to conquer

36Resolution adopted at a meeting of the NLF executive committee in London on February 20 as printed in the Liberal Magazine (March, 1929), 131-2.

37May 3, 1929, p. 4.
unemployment did not aid the party in these fights. Liberal campaign techniques were unsuited to urban areas and their industrial policy was, in any case, too abstruse to be communicated via loud-speaker vans.

TABLE 6

THE NUMBER OF CANDIDATES RUN IN 1929 GENERAL ELECTION COMPARED WITH THE NUMBER OF SEATS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Con.</th>
<th>Lab.</th>
<th>Lib.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Boroughs</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welsh Boroughs</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Boroughs</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland Boroughs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Counties</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welsh Counties</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Counties</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland Counties</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universities</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>615</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>570</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Based upon figures given in the Daily News and Westminster Gazette, May 21, 1929, pp. 10-11.

The chance for a true Liberal revival lay in the county constituencies which, being largely rural, might be expected to welcome Lloyd George's Land program. The mechanized electioneering tactics of the Liberals were suited to campaigning in rural areas where great distances separated one town from the next. Liberal candidates in rural constituencies numbered 274 while only 238 stood in the urban seats. From this standpoint it appears that the main plank in the
Liberal platform and the chief issue in the election proved irrelevant to the electoral needs of a majority of Liberal candidates.

TABLE 7

A LIST OF LIBERAL SEATS LOST TO THE TWO MAJOR PARTIES IN THE 1929 GENERAL ELECTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Labour Gains from Liberals</th>
<th>Conservative Gains from Liberals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accrington</td>
<td>Lancaster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batley and Morley</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackburn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradford, East</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bristol, South</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carmarthen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denbigh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derbyshire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chesterfield</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hackney, South</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lambeth, North</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwark</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Shields</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoke-on-Trent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swansea, West</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walthamstow, West</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

bDaily News and Westminster Gazette, June 1, 1929, p. 6.

Liberals often blamed three-cornered contests for their failure to perform up to expectation in 1929. The following list shows that the Liberals received as large a proportion of straight fights as the two older parties. Therefore it must be concluded that the three-party system did not hamper Liberal revival in 1929 even though Liberals themselves believed the contrary. One reason for the Liberal
### TABLE 8

LIST OF TRIANGULAR AND STRAIGHT FIGHTS IN 1929 GENERAL ELECTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Triangular Fights</th>
<th>Straight Fights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Liberals</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Counties</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland Counties</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welsh Counties</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Counties</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland Boroughs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Boroughs</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welsh Boroughs</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Boroughs</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universities</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Triangular Fights</th>
<th>Straight Fights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Labour</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Counties</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland Counties</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welsh Counties</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Counties</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland Boroughs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Boroughs</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welsh Boroughs</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Boroughs</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universities</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Triangular Fights</th>
<th>Straight Fights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conservatives</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Counties</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland Counties</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welsh Counties</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Counties</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland Boroughs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Boroughs</td>
<td>33</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>Welsh Boroughs</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Boroughs</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universities</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Based upon figures given in the Daily News and Westminster Gazette listing of candidates nominated, May 21, 1929, pp. 10-11. The above table includes only those contests in which Liberal-Conservative-Labour candidates formed a triangle.*
failure in 1929 must be sought in the disjunction between their program and the needs of the agricultural constituencies where the potentially-Liberal class resided.

**TABLE 9**

**VOTES CAST IN BOROUGH AND COUNTY CONSTITUENCIES IN THE 1929 GENERAL ELECTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Liberal</th>
<th>Conservative</th>
<th>Labour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>London Bor.</td>
<td>353,737</td>
<td>754,242</td>
<td>784,646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Bor.</td>
<td>1,642,811</td>
<td>2,968,513</td>
<td>3,401,861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Co.</td>
<td>2,344,914</td>
<td>3,462,242</td>
<td>2,651,991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welsh Bor.</td>
<td>117,311</td>
<td>84,044</td>
<td>188,589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welsh Co.</td>
<td>319,590</td>
<td>205,011</td>
<td>384,965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Bor.</td>
<td>167,551</td>
<td>388,060</td>
<td>519,431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Co.</td>
<td>233,810</td>
<td>381,390</td>
<td>401,432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. Ireland</td>
<td>100,103</td>
<td>354,679</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universities</td>
<td>22,412</td>
<td>41,838</td>
<td>5,018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5,302,239</td>
<td>8,640,019</td>
<td>9,337,933</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*For election results see the Daily Chronicle, June 1, 1929, pp. 3-7, 11, 14; ibid., June 3, 1929, p. 4; ibid., June 4, 1929, p. 4; ibid., June 5, 1929, p. 4; and ibid., June 11, 1929, p. 4. The numbers in the parentheses are the seats won by the respective parties.

Table 9 makes clear that the Liberals achieved their greatest success in appealing to the English rural areas; 2,344,914 votes were garnered in the counties. This remarkable gain over the 1924 election results was negated only because the Liberals lost 17 of their industrial seats to the Labour party. It was clear that Lloyd George's obsession with land reform had borne rare and refreshing electoral fruit.
Disappointed by their failure to win more than 59 seats, Liberals blamed the existing electoral system. Lloyd George complained: "We have once more been tripped up by the triangle. The Conservatives and Labour parties have each secured one member for 33,000 votes. We, on the other hand, have obtained one member for every 100,000 cast for the Liberal party." Ramsay Muir renewed his pleas for the Alternative Vote: "If we had the A. V. we should have been in a very different position: we should have had a heavier initial poll, & the transfers of votes would have raised us to at least 150, possibly more. If we don't get it, we are done."39

The result of Liberal demands for electoral reform was to make them dependent upon whichever major party was willing to promise it. Lloyd George supported the second Labour government (1929-1931) only because MacDonald promised to call what became the Ullswater Committee to discuss implementing Proportional Representation and the Alternative Vote. Liberal-Labour cooperation was founded upon no agreed program, and it is not surprising that Lloyd George often threatened to turn the Socialists out. The Liberal leader

38 Lloyd George at Euston Station, on May 31, 1929, as quoted in the Daily Chronicle, June 1, 1929, p. 3.

held his hand only because he hoped to get a measure of elec-
toral reform through Parliament, but the marriage of conven-
ience between Liberalism and Socialism ended by exasperating
both parties. By 1931 most Liberal M. P.'s were willing to
accept a Conservative alliance in order to escape the whips
and scorns of Labour.

Lloyd George's massive intervention in the general
election of 1929 enabled both the major parties to blame the
Liberals for their failures. In Norwich, where the Liberals
had broken a long-standing anti-Socialist pact with the Con-
servatives, the Conservative candidate excused his defeat
with the remark: "We were let down by Liberal treachery."40
Ramsay MacDonald took the same line—declaring: "Had there
been no Liberal candidates in the field the majority of
Liberal votes would have been cast in favour of confidence
in a Labour Government as against a Tory Government."41

Conservative candidates were particularly incensed
at Liberal intervention in the constituencies. The defeated
Conservative for West Willesden lamented: "The Liberal inter-
vention. . . pulled votes solely from the Conservatives."42

40J. Griffyth Fairfax to Stanley Baldwin, June 3,
1929 in the Baldwin Papers, Volume 37, folio 83 in the Cam-
bridge University Library.

41See the interview in the Daily Herald, June 3,
1929, p. 7.

42Malcolm McCorquadale to Stanley Baldwin, June 2,
1929 in the Baldwin Papers, Volume 37, folio 133.
In West Renfrewshire another Baldwin supporter explained:
"I am conscious of having received considerable support from Liberals in the County, which made it all the more unfortunate that an extreme section should have intervened at this time. . . as there is no possibility of holding the seat for the Constitutional [i.e. anti-socialist] side unless it is a straight fight."43 In Birmingham a defeated Tory noted: "I felt confident that had there been a straight fight without the addition of a Liberal in the field, we should have just managed to have won."44 In some cases, as in the London constituency of North Southwark, fear of Socialism caused Conservative voters to vote for the Liberal candidate; the defeated Tory wailed: "I fought hard & was left to my fate by half the Conservatives of North Southwark who were so afraid of labor [sic] that they forgot their principles."45

In a few constituencies the Nonconformist chapels provided a communications sub-structure for Liberal candidates. Standing in the Eye Division of Suffolk, an agricultural constituency, the Liberal candidate secured a majority of 1,064 votes despite the fact that the local Liberal party

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43 A. Taylor to Stanley Baldwin, June 3, 1929 in ibid., folio 198.
44 E. W. Salt to Stanley Baldwin, June 3, 1929, in ibid., folio 179.
45 Marcus Samuel to Stanley Baldwin, May 31, 1929 in ibid., folio 180.
was nonexistent. The defeated Conservative moaned: "When we imagined that our opponents had little organisation, if any, in the villages, we forgot that they have in fact an extremely active organisation in each village which meets weekly, to wit, the chapels. These my opponent, himself a professed member of the Church of England, attended regularly at the rate of 3 and 4 every Sunday under the chaperonage of the Minister." At Durham the defeated Unionist complained: "The Liberals put me out. The Chapel people in the dales, whose support was so necessary to me, voted Liberal."

Where regional character reinforced Liberalism—as in Wales and the North of England—the press provided an effective link between party and people. In the Darwen division of Yorkshire, which Sir Herbert Samuel won, the Tory candidate noted, with no little envy, that the local press was on the side of the Liberals. In Walter Runciman's old constituency of Swansea West the defeated Conservative wrote to Baldwin: "The Rothermere Press has purchased our two local evening papers—the 'South Wales Post' and the 'Cambria Daily Leader,' and the latter, in particular, was shouting

46 Arthur Soames to Stanley Baldwin, June 4, 1929 in ibid., folio 191.
47 Cuthbert Headlam to Stanley Baldwin in ibid., folio 108.
48 Frank Sanderson to Stanley Baldwin, June 5, 1929, in ibid., folio 182.
'Vote for the Liberal to keep the Socialist out,' and the result was that the Socialists got in."49

The press also played an important role in returning so-called "hidden Liberals" to their former allegiance; as the defeated Conservative for St. Austell noted, Conservative propaganda fell on deaf ears because:

there is a big and solid lump of Liberals who never come to meetings and won't listen to argument. Many of these had either abstained from voting or voted for us in previous elections owing to their fear of Socialism. Now these people have for months been assured by the newspapers that there was a great Liberal swing in progress which was to resuscitate a middle party. They of course thought to themselves 'This is splendid. We must be in on this.' Without saying a word, though and without showing any enthusiasm they went to the polls in thousands with the result we have seen all over the country.50

Many Old Liberals interpreted the Liberal harvest of only 59 seats as a failure for Lloyd George. In fact many of this class had refused to aid in the 1929 campaign; George Boyle, for example, declaimed: "Yes, I am still a Liberal, though the passage of time makes me rather old fashioned. L-G seems to me a mere vote catcher, whereas I still like to think of Liberalism as a creed based on a distinctive philosophy as I learnt it from John Morley & our friend Frances

49 A. W. E. Wynne to Stanley Baldwin, June 4, 1929 in ibid., Volume 36, folio 244.

50 Maurice Pethenick to Stanley Baldwin, June 2, 1929 in ibid., Volume 37, folio 162.
Undoubtedly the abstention of Liberals who disliked the Welshman hurt the party's electoral offensive in 1929. After the general election Sir Donald Maclean, an Asquith supporter back in Parliament for the first time since 1922, wrote privately that "our right wing was not in action."\textsuperscript{52}

The Old Liberals were jubilant at the result of the general election—so great was their hatred of Lloyd George. Margot Asquith, widow of the former Liberal leader, wrote to Baldwin:

There is one good thing that has come out of it—the British public were not taken in by Ll. G. & his silly promises, & pledges. . . . I was only right in saying we Liberals wd. not win 20 [new] seats. The boasting in the Press of Ll. G. shows how very little power it has.\textsuperscript{53}

Vivian Phillipps was equally happy over Liberal failure at the election; he blamed the leader of the party: "Ll. G. was a mill-stone round our necks. His Coalition record was the perpetual trump card of the Labour heckler—and the moderate Tory—not too pleased with Baldwin—would not touch

\textsuperscript{51}Boyle to R. C. K. Enson, April 23, 1929 in the Enson Papers, Box 1929, at Corpus Christi College, Oxford.

\textsuperscript{52}See Maclean to Lord Herbert Gladstone, June 5, 1929, in the Herbert Gladstone Papers, British Museum Additional MS. 46474, Volume CXXXV, folio 211.

\textsuperscript{53}Margot Asquith to "Dearest Prime Minister," June 2, 1929 in the Baldwin Papers, Volume 36, folio 221 at the Cambridge University Library.
us so long as Ll. G. was our nominal leader. I wonder what some of our rank and file are thinking now that it is all over! With all the money and the boasting and bragging twelve Liberals have been brought back to the new House!"  

What the rank and file Liberals thought about the conduct of the 1929 campaign emerged during a survey of party opinion made just after the election. Many parliamentary candidates responded to a letter sent out by headquarters asking for their views on the use of election posters, press advertising, and leaflets. Fifteen candidates thought it was a mistake to stress Lloyd George in propaganda because this gave opponents a chance to attack his record; fourteen believed that the unemployment pledge had been overemphasized. So far as manpower was concerned 39 criticized the shortage or absence of speakers of national repute while 24 complained about the poor quality of the speakers provided by headquarters.

In regard to the media used to carry propaganda 47 candidates complained that a national poster campaign was

54Phillipps to Lord Herbert Gladstone, June 5, 1929 in the Herbert Gladstone Papers, British Museum MS. 46475, Volume CXXXVI, folio 312.


ineffective, that the posters themselves were too wordy, and the photographs attached to the posters unsuitable. Forty-four claimed that the Liberal Campaign Department posters came in too many varieties and were too expensive for local associations to buy. Seventy-four candidates denounced press advertising as a waste of money; others observed that the advertisements had been placed in the wrong newspapers. Liberal leaflets were found to be ineffective because they contained too many irrelevant details and too little anti-Labour propaganda.57

Some candidates lamented that the needs of the local Liberal organizations had been all but ignored in the 1929 election. Twenty-four argued that headquarters should have spent less on national publicity and more on providing a competent agent for each constituency. A number of others argued for greater financial help to constituencies between elections.58 It is clear that Liberal efforts during the 1929 campaign were directed mainly toward disseminating propaganda at the national level while organizational problems facing the local Liberal parties were not touched.

An additional weakness of the Liberal campaign lay in the fact that the total British system was in 1929 still fairly stable. For the Liberal electoral offensive to produce

57Ibid.
58Ibid.
results which conformed to communicational theory: "at least some parts of the receiving system must be in highly unstable equilibrium, so that the very small amount of energy carrying the signal will be sufficient to start off a much larger process of change." Since the receiving system had not yet reached the position of crisis that it attained after 1929, Lloyd George's pledge to conquer unemployment did not meet the felt needs of the voters. As J. L. Garvin, editor of the Observer, wrote to him: "I was not wholly with you in your method. Thereas [sic] not much 'unemployment' generally in the south where your chances lay. There nine-tenths of the people are employed."

Extraordinary rigidity in electoral tactics also hampered the Liberals in 1929. Once their leader had selected unemployment as the key issue he refused to devote more than cursory attention to any other question; as a result the Liberals appeared irrelevant to those sections of the electorate who cared for other issues. Belying his reputation for political agility, Lloyd George refused to withdraw some of his candidates in favor of Conservatives on the ground


60 Garvin to Lloyd George, June 3, 1929 in the Lloyd George Papers at the Beaverbrook Library, G/8/5/18.
that the Liberals "were pledged to our 500 candidates and must run them." The 1929 Lloyd George appeared greatly changed from the nimble politician of Coalition days.

An additional difficulty which faced the Liberals was that many of their candidates were drawn from the rarefied atmosphere of the universities. These found it difficult to communicate effectively with the electorate in their respective constituencies. A former university professor, Ramsay Muir, made a valiant stand in the Lancashire division of Rochdale but sometimes overdid the intellectual side in his electioneering oratory. The editor of the Liberal Rochdale Observer recalled that Muir's "rich intellectual diet was sometimes too much for strong normal Northern digestions." As the candidate himself insisted (after losing the division): "I have known for more than a year that I should not win Rochdale. If I could have been released and taken the Combined Universities (my natural seat) I should have been in all right, but they wouldn't let me."

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61 See the "Very Secret" Memorandum, written by Lloyd George, describing his conversation with Churchill on February 18, 1929 in the Lloyd George Papers, op. cit., G/4/4/23.


63 Muir to R. C. K. Ensor, June 3, 1929 in Box 1929 of the Ensor Papers at Corpus Christi College, Oxford.
It would be a mistake to call the result of the 1929 general election a triumph for Liberalism. Nonetheless Liberals could be well pleased with the achievements of Lloyd George's leadership, for he had insured their party's survival for another five years. Indeed, it is not too much to say that winning 59 seats preserved the very existence of a three-party system in British politics down to 1945. Considering the parlous state of the party in 1926, Lloyd George worked a miracle in winning any new Liberal seats at all. It was now up to a new group of Liberal M. P.'s to prove that a small Centre party could yet make a significant contribution to the task of governing Britain.
Despite the failure of the Liberals to win more than 59 seats, they had succeeded in reaching a position of holding the balance of power between Labour and Conservatives. The Daily Chronicle exulted: "The balancing position, in which the Liberals are now placed, is one which for years their party has been expecting to hold. It is difficult, but it offers opportunities as well as risks."¹ One of the risks was that the Liberals might act in such a way as to appear to defy the expressed will of a majority of the voters. As R. A. Scott James, leader writer on the Daily Chronicle, put it: "If the Liberals appeared to attempt to dictate now, it would kill them; but of course much can be done without the air of dictation."² Another risk was the unpredictable temper of the Welsh Wizard—as Lloyd George's enemies called him. Even the editor of the Manchester Guardian, C. P. Scott, asked anxiously:

¹See the leader of June 1, 1929, p. 8.

"Can't you imagine Ll. G. balancing? He will need some looking after."³

In these circumstances some people quite naturally came upon the idea of an agreement between the two major parties which would exclude the Liberals. Margot Asquith, writing with characteristic fervor, was the first to suggest (in a letter to Baldwin) the possibility of a pact with MacDonald: "He will do no harm, and you and he, in the name of the King—who should not be worried just now—can come to an honorable and quite frank understanding without alluding to Ll. G. and Co."⁴ E. Rosslyn Mitchell, Labour M. P. for Asquith's old seat of Paisley, told the Glasgow Daily Record and Mail of the advantages inherent in "an understanding of honor" between the two major parties which would allow MacDonald to form a government:

From the Labour Party's point of view, such an understanding would be preferable to an agreement with the Liberals, for the reason that if the Conservatives agree to the [Labour legislative] proposals, the House of Lords will pass them. The Liberals' support in the Commons would leave the Lords antagonistic with consequent congestion of business. . . .⁵

³Scott to Barbara Hammond, May 23, 1929 in the Hammond Papers, C. 34, item 74 in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

⁴Margot Asquith to Baldwin, June 2, 1929, Volume 36, folio 221 of the Baldwin Papers in the Cambridge University Library.

⁵Quoted from the Daily Record and Mail, June 3, 1929 clipping which Rosslyn Mitchell sent to Baldwin, see his letter to the Conservative leader of June 3, 1929 and the clipping in ibid., folios 229-31.
On the other hand Lloyd George was prepared to cooperate with the Conservatives if they gave him electoral reform. E. T. Scott, the son of C. P. Scott who succeeded his father as editor of the Manchester Guardian, was said to be "quite ready to support cooperation with the Tories." From the other side of the fence Liberal Unionists—who had followed Joseph Chamberlain out of the Liberal fold in 1886—urged Baldwin to embrace the Liberal party without Lloyd George; Sir Frederick Fremantle, one of this vanishing species, wrote to the Conservative leader:

If Lord Grey of Fallodon were to lead the Liberals, surely the great majority of Liberals would follow him & most of us would follow you in coming to terms with him on the grounds of the prime need of saving our country from Socialism. The alliance would be inaugurated, on the analogy of 1887, solely on the basis of the single issue. Good management would probably lead to a quickening of fusion, if it should prove workable.7

Since the Liberals would not get rid of Lloyd George, most true blue Conservatives agreed that the best policy was to have nothing to do with him. William G. A. Ormsby-Gore, M. P. for Stafford, told Baldwin: "I cannot be bound by any bargains or arrangements come to with Lloyd George. In the unlikely event of the Liberals deciding to keep the


7Fremantle to Baldwin, June 2, 1929, Volume 37, folio 91 of the Baldwin Papers; Freemantle, described himself and his friends as having been "Liberal Unionists from our school-days," sat as Unionist M. P. for Hertford, St. Albans.
Conservatives in power for a bit, I don't see how I can go on a day in the Government. ... Keep straight on. If you do, Rothermere, Lloyd George, Beaverbrook & Co. will be beaten yet."\(^8\) Baldwin's opinion of Lloyd George is illustrated by the following letter to him from F. N. Blundell, Conservative M. P. for Ormskirk, who lost his seat in the 1929 election:

"I am greatly reassured, in the present position, by the remembrance of a conversation in the Smoking Room, in which you said that you considered L. G. 'the evil thing.' So I know that you won't have anything to do with him."\(^9\)

A delicate question for Baldwin was the timing of his resignation. Neville Chamberlain, his Minister of Health, wrote to the Prime Minister: "I think you would put yourself in the wrong if you resigned without meeting the House. I should therefore ride for a fall. This I imagine you might well get over safeguarding. L. G. would find it difficult to support a proposal to amend the procedure as he intended and he would probably advise his party to abstain. In that case we shall be defeated and the Socialists would come in."\(^10\)

Sir Philip Sassoon, M. P. for Hythe, expressed similar

\(^8\) Ormsby-Gore to Baldwin, June 1, 1929 in \textit{ibid.}, Volume 37, folio 29.

\(^9\) Blundell to Baldwin, June 1, 1929, in \textit{ibid.}, Volume 37, folio 29.

\(^10\) Chamberlain to Baldwin, June 2, 1929 in \textit{ibid.}, Volume 36, folio 211.
sentiments and added: "I hope we shall meet Parliament so as to put on the Liberal shoulders the onus of putting the Socialists in."\textsuperscript{11} This was the real intent of the wily Chamberlain's proposal: to saddle the Liberals with the blame, as in 1924, for putting a Labour government in power.

In fact Baldwin resigned as the King's First Minister without meeting Parliament. As Beatrice Webb noted "this step gives the 'go by' to Ll. George and the Liberal party; it deprives them of their casting vote--or of any bargaining power."\textsuperscript{12} As a result MacDonald formed his second Labour government on June 5, 1929 with Liberal support. Since the Labour party was some twenty seats short of an absolute majority, its tenure of office depended solely upon the good will of Lloyd George.

MacDonald's position as Prime Minister was far from enviable, and he was not without opposition from his own Left Wing. As a secret report to the Labour party's executive noted: "It has been suggested in certain quarters that the King's Speech [setting forth the government's policy aims] might propose extreme Socialist proposals--knowing that these would not be accepted--and on the rejection of the King's

\textsuperscript{11}\textsuperscript{11}\textsuperscript{11}Sassoon to Baldwin, June 2, 1929 in \textit{ibid.}, folio 205.

\textsuperscript{12}\textsuperscript{12}\textsuperscript{12}Margaret Cole (ed.), \textit{Beatrice Webb's Diary, 1924-1930}, op. cit., p. 262.
Speech, the Party should appeal to the Country on the programme."¹³ Advocates of such an approach had little patience with MacDonald's pandering to Liberal prejudices as the price of power.

By attempting to govern with Liberal support MacDonald found himself forced to take cognizance of his allies' wishes. In particular, the Liberals insisted that the Labour government take vigorous steps to combat the rise in unemployment on the lines of Lloyd George's election pledge. They were not insensible that their promises to the unemployed men ("this army of the damned," as one Liberal put it) placed them under a certain obligation to see that the government took action.¹⁴ Upon the success or failure of the Labour government's handling of the problem might depend the very existence of the Liberal party.

Labour ministers experienced grave anxiety as they attempted to draft a statement on unemployment for the King's

¹³"Report of the Sub-Committee on the First Session's Administrative and Legislative Programme" marked "Very Confidential to the Executive"; this is undated but was probably written in the spring of 1929. See the Passfield Papers, Section IV, item 21 in the British Library of Political and Economic Science, London.

¹⁴The phrase quoted above was coined by E. H. Gilpin, a member of the Executive Committee of the Liberal Industrial Inquiry, in his essay on "The Liberal Industrial Policy" in H. L. Nathan and H. Heathcote Williams (eds.), Liberalism and Some Problems of To-day (London: Victor Gollancz, 1929), p. 371.
Speech opening Parliament. Thomas Jones, Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet, recalled the scene in Number 10, Downing Street: "Then we reached Unemployment. Snowden [Chancellor of the Exchequer] was very caustic. 'I can see Ll. G. getting up and tearing all this to bits.' These Ministers, like their predecessors, are apparently haunted by the spectre of Ll. G., never absent from the Cabinet Room." Nonetheless, the King's Speech on July 2 seemed to promise much in the way of social reform: "It will be the foremost endeavour of My Ministers to deal effectively with the continuing evil of unemployment."16

With the Labour government publicly committed to finding a cure for unemployment Liberals could in good conscience support it. J. H. Thomas, a convivial trade unionist, was designated Lord Privy Seal with special responsibility for dealing with the problem. Throughout 1929 and the spring of 1930 Liberals waited for results: perhaps they hoped that Sir Oswald Mosley (the young Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster who was known to be in favor of drastic measures) might spur his colleagues into action.

While Thomas' efforts at finding a cure for unemployment proved ineffective the numbers of the workless continued


to rise. Even members of the Labour party became exasperated at the lack of results; Philip Noel-Baker, a Labour back-bencher, wrote privately: "I am rather in a state of mind about the Government. On Unemployment they are absolutely hopeless. . . ." That Mosley shared this view was proved, on May 20, 1930, when he resigned from the Cabinet over the unemployment issue. Criticized on all sides, Thomas resigned as Lord Privy Seal two weeks later, and moved to the more congenial atmosphere of the Dominions Office. The government's first attempt to deal with the unemployment problem had ended in near-total failure.

At this point the Prime Minister took over personal responsibility for unemployment, and even suggested that all three political parties cooperate in finding a solution. Baldwin refused to be drawn into cooperating with a Labour government, but Lloyd George accepted the invitation with alacrity. Indeed at that moment of crisis, it seemed only the Liberals possessed an answer to the problem. For, as H. A. L. Fisher wrote: "The city of London has never been more depressed, and in the north trade is worse than ever. We expect to have two million unemployed in the autumn, and it is

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17To Lord Robert Cecil on February 27, 1930; see the Cecil of Chelwood Papers, British Museum MS. 51107, folio 80.
quite clear that the Government has not the least idea what to do."18

Although the Liberals now expected to lay their detailed plans before the government, progress was excruciatingly slow. By August 1930 Lloyd George was lamenting that he had received "no information at all as to what are the Government's ideas for dealing with the present emergency."19 MacDonald retorted that "there had been a certain amount of leakage in the Liberal press," and reminded the Liberal leader of "how difficult it made any attempt at cordial cooperation."20 The Welshman noted in turn how "it appeared almost incredible to us that the Government was quite unable to inform us, even approximately, as to the number of men now employed on national development schemes."21

By October it was clear that little would be accomplished even though Lloyd George had submitted to the government a 180-page "Memorandum on the Liberal Proposals on Unemployment and Agriculture." Unfortunately this document

18Fisher to Sir George Schuster on June 19, 1930; see the H. A. L. Fisher Papers, Box 4, in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

19Lloyd George to MacDonald, August 22, 1930 in the Lloyd George Papers, G/13/2/6.

20This is MacDonald's description of a letter which he sent to Lloyd George; see minutes of a Cabinet meeting held on September 25, 1930, CAB 23/90 B.

21"Memorandum on the Liberal Proposals on Unemployment and Agriculture," in the Lloyd George Papers, G/13/3/1.
contained an introduction which proved offensive to MacDonald, for it blamed on Labour the delays which had occurred. Lloyd George apologized to the Prime Minister by suggesting that "these remarks were not made in a spirit of complaint but as an explanation for apparent delay." In his turn MacDonald complained that the Liberal memorandum had been too long in reaching him.22

Exasperated almost beyond words Lloyd George published the substance of the Liberal memorandum as the "Orange Book" in late October.23 Appeal to the public through the printing press was a typical Lloyd George tactic, used when all else had failed. As the Liberal leader told the Prime Minister:

I feel that the publication of our proposals. . . will clarify the situation in Parliament and the country, and need place no obstacle in the way of co-operation for carrying into effect a progressive emergency programme. In order to make this clear, I am proposing to omit the introduction which dealt with delays in the negotiations, because it might give rise to unnecessary party controversy, if published.24

In fact Lloyd George's unfortunate propensity for using the press in rallying public opinion, reinforced MacDonald's suspicions of the Welshman. The Prime Minister proved

22This paragraph is based upon a letter from Lloyd George to MacDonald, October 23, 1920 in ibid., G/13/2/10.


24See the postscript in Lloyd George to MacDonald, October 23, 1930 in the Lloyd George Papers, G/13/2/10.
reluctant to cooperate with the Liberals because he feared that his erstwhile allies might betray him, and publish what they had learned from secret consultations with the government. Here was a clear case where Lloyd George's obsession with the press played him false—placing a stumbling block in the way of his most cherished program. Publication of the Orange Book virtually ensured that the Labour government would not adopt his program, for this would place them in the position of seeming to be dictated to by the Liberal party.

Lloyd George continued to emphasize the desirable features of his plans for curing unemployment until the government fell in 1931. During the debate on the Address (November 4, 1930) he noted that his program resembled those put forward by President Herbert Hoover, the German Chancellor, and even Mussolini.25 But all of this oratory could not improve his reputation for untrustworthiness in the eyes of the Labour party; a great opportunity had been lost because of petty quarrels between a Scotsman and a Welshman. To be fair to Lloyd George, it must be added that MacDonald had no intention of ever adopting the Liberal plan. As Robert Skidelsky has noted: "In the last analysis, though, had the Government

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25 Lloyd George's notes for this speech may be found among the Samuel Papers in the House of Lords Record Office, A/74, folio 9.
really wished to carry out a bold unemployment policy it would have turned to the Liberals despite Lloyd George."

For the Liberals failure to pass their industrial policy into law meant the end of the Liberal revival in a doctrinal sense. From the publication of the Yellow Book in 1928 until the Orange Book of 1930 the party's claim to be up to date in its approach to postwar problems had rested almost solely upon its industrial policy. If a Labour government could not adopt that policy, it seemed highly unlikely that any Conservative-dominated government would. And if this was the case, what point was there in drawing up startling schemes to present to the electorate?

By winning 59 seats at the general election, the Liberals had reaffirmed their intention of remaining an effective third party. In fact the party's prospects seemed exceedingly rosy; Sir Donald Maclean, M. P. for North Cornwall, wrote: "There is enough material there to form an effective Opposition not far short of the Irish Party--I will not say in its best days, but, certainly well up to the normal effectiveness of that famous fighting body." The main concern of all Liberals was party unity; Beatrice Webb noted that "Ll. G.  


27 Maclean to Lord Herbert Gladstone on July 30, 1929; see the Herbert Gladstone Papers, British Museum MS. 46474, Volume CXXXV, folio 218.
implores the Liberal M. P.'s to all vote in the same lobby, on every occasion—what wrecked the party in the constituencies was the way in which they had scattered their votes in the last Parliament."

Unity was Lloyd George's chief aim at the beginning of the parliamentary session in June. Maclean, an opponent of Lloyd George, noted that the Welshman appeared to be in a very accommodating mood. Nonetheless there were persistent rumors of a split; Hugh Dalton, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, was told (by a Liberal M. P.) "that a bunch of 20 Liberals will back us regardless of Ll. G." One Liberal predicted: "As we get nearer the Election, unless our position in the country and in the organisations very greatly improves, I can already name nearly ten of our most effective men who will go Labour—partly from a desire to retain their seats and partly from a belief that a real contribution to progress is no longer to be looked for from us."

On the whole the Liberal parliamentary party displayed praiseworthy unity until December 1929 when the Labour

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29 Maclean to Lord Gladstone, June 14, 1929, Herbert Gladstone Papers, CXXXV, folio 213.


31 Maclean to Lord Gladstone, July 30, 1929, Herbert Gladstone Papers, CXXV, folio 222.
government introduced a bill to reorganize the coal mining industry. Part of the difficulty lay in the government's haste to get the bill through; their slogan seemed to be not merely "Socialism in our time" but "Socialism before Xmas."\(^{32}\)

Liberals felt that the bill did not go far enough and made difficulties; Arthur Henderson, the Foreign Secretary, asked: "Do they think there is a chance to defeat the Govt?"\(^{33}\) Certainly Lloyd George was not unaware of this possibility.

Part of the trouble lay in the fact that the Coal Bill did not conform to plans set out in Britain's Industrial Future. In particular Lloyd George demanded complete amalgamation of the pits in the interests of greater efficiency; this the government refused to grant. Seething with rage, he wrote to Churchill that the Labour ministry "mean to get out of their difficulties with the aid of the coal owners by putting up the price in the home market in order to subsidise our export trade. That is the worst and most disastrous form of subsidy, and would harm our industry, but it would enable them to satisfy the coal owners whose profits will thus be greater."\(^{34}\)


\(^{33}\)Henderson is quoted in Hugh Dalton's Diary MS. copy, Volume 1929-1931, entry for December 5, 1929.

\(^{34}\)October 16, 1929 in the Lloyd George Papers, G/4/4/24.
A compromise was arranged with great difficulty whereby Lloyd George would voice Liberal objections early in the debate in the House of Commons; then he would be followed by a government spokesman intimating acceptance of the Liberal proposals. Unfortunately, Lloyd George's speech on the floor of the House proved so offensive to Labour sensibilities that MacDonald refused to allow the agreed reply to be given. The Prime Minister apparently agreed with Maclean's observation that "a lively scorpion had been tendered by Lloyd George in place of the olive branch."35

The effect of Lloyd George's speech was to swing the bulk of the Liberal party to the Right. In the division, 44 of his followers voted with the Conservatives against the government; MacDonald's ministry was saved only because six followers of Asquith abstained and two other Liberal M. P.'s supported the government. Hugh Dalton, noting that the Welshman had been closeted with Winston Churchill and Sir Austen Chamberlain only a few hours before, observed: "They are still dreaming of another Coalition."36

The possibility of joining with the Conservatives in order to destroy the government over the Coal Bill was never

35This paragraph is based upon Maclean to Gladstone, December 22, 1929 in the Herbert Gladstone Papers, op. cit., folios 231-2.

36Hugh Dalton's Diary op. cit., entry for December 19, 1929.
far from Lloyd George's mind. As he wrote to Winston Churchill some weeks before: "There is a great deal of matter for serious reflection and frank discussion between those who do not believe in Trade Union Government of this country... There ought to be, at any rate, a common policy with regard to the mines." In any case, Lab-Lib cooperation had suffered serious damage; Sir Donald Maclean groaned: "Up to the introduction of the Coal Mines Bill the relations between the Liberals and Labour were increasingly friendly, and the Whips worked together in considerable amity. There is great doubt whether these relationships will be re-established, and the consequences in the House and the Country may be serious."

Just as serious was the damage done to Liberal unity. The Liberal party possessed no machinery for disciplining Geoffrey le M. Mander and Sir William Edge, the two M. P.'s who had voted with the government over the Coal Bill. Earl Beauchamp, Liberal leader in the House of Lords, asked Lloyd George what the Midland Liberal Federation could do to control the two M. P.'s: "I need not remind you that at the last election the division amongst ourselves was the most damaging thing against us, and here it is again. They are both of them, members of the Federation and Mander indeed was

37On October 16, 1929; marked "Confidential" this letter may be found among the Lloyd George Papers, G/4/4/24.

38Maclean to Gladstone, December 22, 1929 in the Herbert Gladstone Papers, folio 229.
chairman until he was elected to Parliament."³⁹ Lloyd George could suggest nothing stronger than a statement from Beauchamp urging unity "especially as you are likely to get a good response from the audience."⁴⁰

The Coal Mines episode underlined a key weakness of the Liberal party: that it relied almost entirely upon opinion in the district federations to enforce parliamentary party discipline. Throughout the period of the Liberal revival, Lloyd George displayed himself as the complete propagandist; he was more concerned with procuring "a good response" from a particular audience than in developing organizational procedures which would make for a unified party. As party leader his inventiveness was almost entirely confined to rhetorical expostulation; seldom, if ever, was he able to go beyond words to deeds.

The issues involved in the Coal Bill controversy were inextricably bound up with the Liberal revival, especially since Lloyd George and Sir Herbert Samuel felt themselves committed to solving the problems of the ailing coal industry once and for all. They knew that tension in the coal mines had caused the General Strike in 1926 and might well cripple British industry again. For this reason they were unwilling

³⁹Beauchamp to Lloyd George, December 26, 1929 in the Lloyd George Papers, G/3/5/24.

to compromise on an issue which they deemed so important to the New Liberalism. To have approved the half-measures of the Labour government's Bill would have made a mockery out of everything to which the Lloyd George Liberals were committed; that is, radical reform of the British industrial system.

On the other hand M. P.'s such as Mander were more concerned with keeping a Labour government in power; they (and the Labour government) interpreted Lloyd George's action as a swing to the Right. Such men had little time for Lloyd George's unexpected ideological rigidity on industrial questions. Beyond dispute the Welshman's motives were complex in his opposition to the Coal Bill, but it is undoubtedly true that he felt the MacDonald government was not proposing the kind of reform needed. The Liberal leader could, after the experience of 1924, hardly be blamed for wishing to dissociate his party from a proposal which raised the price of coal without reducing the inefficiency of that industry's organization. Even a member of the government, Hugh Dalton, complained: "The Bill... is the result of a deal with the Coal owners, & they hate compulsory amalgamation. But it will pay us better to do the right thing in combination with the Liberals, than the wrong thing in combination with the owners."41

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Whatever its effect upon the parliamentary party, it was clear that Lloyd George's line was popular with the rank and file. As Ramsay Muir wrote to the Liberal leader: "Everywhere, I find warm appreciation of the attitude the Parliamentary Party had taken in resisting the Coal Bill, and a great feeling of relief that the Party had, at whatever risk, shown its complete independence by voting definitely against the Government, thus creating a situation quite different from that which so gravely hurt us in 1924." The chairman of the Bewdley Liberal Association added that no opportunity should be missed of emphasizing the party's independence, for the "limitations of a Parliamentary Group System will only slowly be appreciated by the mass of Electors." ⁴²

A parliamentary group system in which government was based upon a tacit coalition of political parties was not new, but it had a lethal effect upon Liberal unity. Even the Liberal leader in the Lords, Earl Beauchamp, found his task difficult; he lamented that "when we do send out a whip, a number--usually away--come down & vote against us!" ⁴³ In the House of Commons, followers of Asquith often refused to cooperate at all; Sir Godfrey Collins, Chief Whip until 1926,

⁴²Muir to Lloyd George, February 18, 1930; in a postscript Muir included the letter from the Bewdley chairman. See the Lloyd George Papers, G/15/6/22.

abstained from attending at least one party meeting on the ground that he was "uneasy about supporting the unemployment insurance bill."\(^\text{44}\)

For the Chief Whip, Sir Robert Hutchison, continued cross-voting by his colleagues proved almost too much to bear. He complained "that Liberal members of Parliament are not a Party, they do not intend to act as a team, they will not recognise decisions taken by a majority of our members, they are undemocratic and in consequence, as a political force in this House we are of small account."\(^\text{45}\) In his memoirs Sir Herbert Samuel, who in 1929 attained the exalted position of Deputy Leader, revealed that presiding over meetings of the parliamentary party "was sometimes a heart-breaking experience. Not seldom, when the course to be taken in the House on some pending question was decided after full discussion, it would be found nevertheless that one section of the party voted in the 'Aye' lobby, another in the 'No' lobby, and a third abstained."\(^\text{46}\)

Ever after the split over the Coal Bill, Hutchison had planned to resign as Chief Whip; in February 1930 he wrote

\(^{44}\text{Collins to Sir Robert Hutchison, November 2, 1929, ibid., G/5/1/17.}\)

\(^{45}\text{Hutchison to Lloyd George, February 28, 1930, ibid., G/10/9/8.}\)

to the leader of the party: "I beg you to relieve me from an intolerable and unreal position as soon as other arrange­ments can be made." Persuaded to stay on to the end of the session, Hutchison refused to be nominated again; he summed up his position in a letter to Lloyd George: "In my view the government has failed miserably to tackle the unemployment problem, it has behaved badly towards the party and . . . the Prime Minister has attacked you personally in public, therefore I do think the Party should actively oppose the Labour Party in the House & Country." 

Sir William Edge, the other Liberal M. P. who had voted for the Coal Bill, resigned as Assistant Whip in March 1930, and in November Hutchison followed suit. Both men had been close associates as well as personal friends of Lloyd George since Coalition days; their disappearance from the Whips' Office marked the end of the Welshman's control over the parliamentary party's machinery. He had nominated Hutchison as Chief Whip in November 1926 at the very beginning of the Liberal revival; when Sir Robert resigned his post (to be replaced by Sir Archibald Sinclair) it was a sign that a new phase had opened in the history of the Liberal parliamen­tary party.

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47 Hutchison to Lloyd George, February 28, 1930, in the Lloyd George Papers, G/10/9/8.

48 October 24, 1930, ibid., G/10/9/7.
Uncertain discipline on the floor of the House of Commons placed peculiar difficulties in the way of the Liberal party's continued cooperation with MacDonald's government. Labour ministers complained of "the difficulty in obtaining from the Liberal Leaders a timely expression of their attitude towards Bills to be introduced by the Government." Even worse, after Lloyd George and Samuel had taken a position on a bill, their action might be nullified by a revolt of their own backbenchers. For example the President of the Board of Trade (William Graham) told the Cabinet: "He had been approached by some Leaders of the Liberal Party, who had informed him that, to their surprise, a certain number of that Party were opposed to the non-renewal of the Dyestuffs (Import Regulation) Act, 1920."

With the parliamentary party's organization dissolving into chaos, whatever unity which had characterized the period of the Liberal revival came to an end. Their own disunity made the Liberals into unreliable allies for either the Conservative Opposition or the Labour government; by 1930 it was clear to most observers that few Liberals would obey Lloyd George on any issue. After one particularly bad party meeting his daughter Megan, M. P. for Anglesey, burst out: "They were

49See the Cabinet minutes for the meeting of November 17, 1930, CAB 23/65, 68(30)5, p. 325.

50At a Cabinet meeting on December 3, 1930 in ibid., 71(30)2, p. 386.
all perfectly horrid to Dadda. They said they wouldn't turn the Govt out. And Dadda was frightfully upset about it."51 That these scenes often occurred was well-known in government circles; there was no little justice in Lord Robert Cecil's comment: "From here it looks as if Ll. G. and the Liberal Party had finally committed suicide."52

Plagued by disunity the Liberals also faced financial problems for, once the 1929 general election was over the Liberal party's subsidy from Lloyd George's political fund came to an end. Lord Reading and Sir Herbert Samuel immediately began negotiations with the Welshman for renewed financial support even though they "did not think there was any pressing need of Ll. G.'s fund."53 Ramsay Muir, who has succeeded Samuel as chief of the party's organization, told the latter that £200,000 was required in order to prepare 350 candidates for the next general election.54 When Lloyd George

51 Quoted by Hugh Dalton in his Diary, MS. Volume 1929-1931, entry for March 24, 1930.

52 Lord Robert Cecil to Philip Noel Baker, marked "Confidential," March 3, 1930; see the Cecil of Chelwood Papers, op. cit., British Museum Additional MS. 51107, folio 82. Cecil had held the post of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in 1925-1927.

53 So they told Lord Grey; for an account of this conversation see Grey to H. Gladstone, August 3, 1929 in the latter's papers at the British Museum, Additional MS. 45992, Volume VII, folio 159.

proved unwilling to subscribe this sum Charles Kerr, a member of the committee negotiating with the leader of the party, pleaded for an interim grant of only £8,500. He argued that this would be enough to keep the party's headquarters functioning for another six months until a new agreement could be reached.55

Lloyd George was unwilling to give more money until the party's two separate head offices were united. For the National Liberal Federation possessed its own office in Abingdon Street while the Welshman maintained a separate headquarters at 29, Old Queen Street. He argued that it was "unbusinesslike for the staff to be in one place, & the head of it in another." This Ramsay Muir was unwilling to admit; he told Lloyd George:

... the question is, in our view, psychological, & very important. Abingdon Street is regarded as the headquarters of the party, Old Queen St. as your personal headquarters, staffed by people who are appointed & dismissed by you. To leave Abingdon St. at this moment, after Samuel has occupied it for the last 2 1/2 years, would be to give a handle to the enemy.56

While the negotiations between Lloyd George and the party were going on, the Liberal Council resumed its criticisms of the Leader. As early as July 27, 1929 Lord Grey had


56Lloyd George's views as well as those of Muir appear in Muir to Lloyd George, December 1, 1929 in ibid., G/15/6/16.
warned Reading and Samuel that a new intra-party struggle was in the offing: "I told them that in my opinion, if the headquarters continued to live on doles from Ll. G., the Liberal Council would in the autumn give a statement re-affirming the reasons for its existence and restating its objection to financial dependence on Ll. G."  

Another member of the Liberal Council, Sir Charles Mallet, made good Grey's threat by publishing an entire book on Lloyd George and his Fund. Suffering from a surfeit of righteous indignation, Mallet exclaimed: "It is said that Mr. Lloyd George is now strongly of opinion that the results have not justified the outlay to which he has been put. More loot and where is it to come from--more bargaining, more surrender of friends may be needed. Faust, we must remember, had to face his day of reckoning. Dare we hope that Sir Charles Hobhouse, or even Sir Herbert Samuel, will escape?"  

The press, that weapon most feared by Lloyd George, was thrown into the fray upon the side of the Liberal Council. Vivian Phillipps' supporters were permitted to denounce the Liberal leader in the august pages of The Times, employing

57Grey to Gladstone, August 3, 1929, in the H. Gladstone Papers, British Museum, Additional MS. 45992, VIII, folio 159.

58In Mr. Lloyd George: A Study (London: Ernest Benn, 1930), p. 290.
the most unmeasured terms. Protests against the newspaper's policy from the Lloyd George camp were ineffective; the editor claimed: "That The Times is not alone, in regarding a 'personal fund' as detrimental to the interests of the Party is shown by the attitude of such men as Lord Grey to whose views every Liberal would accord respect." Lloyd George's supporters, such as Richard Morris (a prominent Anglesey businessman), took the view that the Liberal Council represented only a "residue of a stale personal feud which the party as a whole has finished with." Despite Morris' protests, which were couched in rather unfortunate syntax, the press campaign against Lloyd George's Fund continued unabated into the spring of 1930. As Morris put it: "My opinion is that The Times is using Vivian Philips [sic] in the interest of the Tory party."62

Despite continued appeals Lloyd George cut off all money to the Liberal party after the middle of 1930. By the


60 J. Webb (secretary to Geoffrey Dawson, editor of The Times) to Richard Morris, January 22, 1930, marked "Private"; it may be found among the Lloyd George Papers belonging to the Rt. Hon. Earl of Dwyfor.

61 Morris to J. Webb, January 24, 1930 in the Dwyfor Papers.

62 Morris to Sir John Davies (Secretary of the Lloyd George Fund trustees), January 24, 1930; see the Lloyd George Papers in possession of the Rt. Hon. Earl of Dwyfor.
time that the 1931 general election arrived the party was reduced to penury; Ramsay Muir's letters to Lloyd George became ever more piteous: "I implore you to release as much of your fund as is possible." With the party split into supporters of the new National Government and opponents of it, Muir could only bemoan the loss of the Fund as a unifying force: "We are in a dreadful mess, and we shall have to rebuild from the foundations when the storm is over." Instead of aiding the party in fighting the 1931 election, Lloyd George remarked rather coldly that the road to hell was paved with good intentions; "let us hope that the road out is similarly macadamised."

To the question of Lloyd George's motives in refusing to fund the party of which he was leader, several answers are possible. One of these is that he recognized by mid-1930 the impossibility of rebuilding a strong Liberal party. Equally important was his distrust of Muir, for the latter often appeared more loyal to Liberalism than to Lloyd George. Perhaps the most important reason was that the fund was almost exhausted; over a million pounds of it had been lost when the Inveresk Paper Company (which owned the Daily Chronicle)

63 October 8, 1931 in ibid.

64 Muir to Lloyd George, October 10, 1931 in the Lloyd George Papers belonging to the Rt. Hon. Earl of Dwyfor.

65 Lloyd George to Muir, November 12, 1931 in the Lloyd George Papers belonging to the Rt. Hon. Earl of Dwyfor.
encountered financial difficulties. On this view Lloyd George was unwilling to risk what little remained of his Fund on a party which refused to accept his suggestions as Leader.

Despite progressive disintegration of the party, Liberals continued to support MacDonald's government because of their promise (in the King's Speech) to bring in a measure of electoral reform. Ever since 1924 the Liberals had argued that the existing system treated them unfairly, and that the law ought to be brought into line with the realities of a three-party system. To examine the possibility of electoral reform, the Labour ministry invited all three parties to send representatives to a conference presided over by Lord Ullswater, a former Conservative Speaker of the House. The terms of reference were broad; Ullswater insisted upon a general survey of elections since 1885 before specific proposals could be made.

Both the Labour and Conservative parties had little to gain from changing existing arrangements, but for the Liberals the Ullswater conference was a matter of life and


67 On July 2, 1929; see Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons) 5th ser., Vol. 229 (June 25-July 12, 1929), 49.

68 See his letter to Samuel, December 7, 1929 in the Samuel Papers, A/73, folio 8.
death. Accordingly, the two major parties moved slowly in making arrangements for the conference; they were less zealous in seeking reform than in maintaining friendly relations with Lloyd George. As Hugh Dalton wrote: "We shall hold the Liberals for a long winter, I hope, on the string of electoral reform enquiry!" On the Conservative side Sir Samuel Hoare, Baldwin's delegate to the conference, was no less intent upon wooing Liberal support: "What we should do is to avoid unnecessary friction with the Liberals and by this means to keep command over the House of Commons. This policy appears to me to make the enquiry into electoral reform the strategic point in the politics of the next six months."

Each party submitted a list of subjects to be discussed at the Ullswater Conference. The Labour party displayed considerable interest in limiting the use of modern means of communications which had played so large a part in the Liberal revival. In particular MacDonald's delegates wished to limit "wholesale posting of Party bills," the employment of fleets of motor cars, and the "practice of relaying speeches from a centre." In their turn the Conservatives proposed a stricter limitation of election expenditures

69Dalton Diary MS., Volume 1927-1929, entry for August 3-5, 1929.

70Hoare to Baldwin, July 12, 1929 in the Baldwin Papers, Volume XXXVI, folio 260.
which would have inhibited Lloyd George's use of his fund. The Liberals could hardly be expected to accept the Labour and Conservative demands; they were more interested in discussing Proportional Representation and the Alternative Vote in order to discover the "best means of securing that the composition of the House of Commons shall properly reflect the views expressed by the electorate." 71

The Ullswater Conference sat from December 1929 until July 1930, and both the Labour and Conservative parties raised as many objections as possible to all Liberal proposals for reform. As the conference dragged on the Conservatives became ever more intent upon wrecking it. Fortunately for them, Sir Samuel Hoare told Baldwin, "as the summer holidays approached, Ullswater obviously tired of the strain and eventually himself took the responsibility of breaking up the Conference." For the Conservative party under Baldwin's leadership simply had no interest in seeing any proposals adopted which might tend to revive Lloyd George's party. With considerable satisfaction Hoare observed that if the Labour government "seriously introduced an Electoral Reform Bill, the failure of the Conference should make it much

71See "List of Subjects for Discussion by Electoral Reform Conference," in the Prime Minister's Papers at the Public Record Office, Premier 1/81.
easier for the House of Lords to reject or to delay partisan proposals."72

Ending the Ullswater Conference very nearly spelled the end of Liberal support for the Labour ministry; by the fall of 1930 Lloyd George insisted that a Lab-Lib bill for electoral reform be introduced as a frankly partisan measure without prior Conservative approval. In September MacDonald told his Cabinet (after a secret conversation with Lloyd George and Samuel): "If the Government could not agree on some reform based on proportional representation or the alternative vote, the Liberal leaders did not see how they could continue support."73 Under pressure of this sort MacDonald agreed to submit a bill to the House in January 1931 which allowed the use of the Alternative Vote in parliamentary elections. Regrettably (for the Liberals) the Bill had failed to gain the approval of the House of Lords when the Labour government fell in August.

Without an electoral reform bill the three-party system was obviously doomed, and Lloyd George knew it. The Liberal revival of 1927-29 had illuminated the difficulties involved in trying to win seats in Parliament under the old

72 Hoare to Baldwin, undated but probably written in July 1930, in the Baldwin Papers, Volume 52, folio 272.

73 See "Secret: Note of a Discussion at the Cabinet Meeting held on September 25, 1930" in the Cabinet Papers, CAB 23/90 B.
system and, if electoral reform could not be obtained, Lloyd George saw no reason to continue to fund the Liberal party. It is likely that he would have offered some funds to the party if Proportional Representation could have been secured in 1929-1931, but the bizarre events which culminated in the 1931 financial crisis upset his calculations. In any case the Welshman was unwilling to support the Liberals without electoral reform; consequently the delaying tactics used by Baldwin and MacDonald at the Ullswater Conference were fatal to continued Liberal revival.

To add to Lloyd George's discomfiture his allies in the newspaper world (who had contributed much to the cause of Liberal revival) were now falling away. In July 1929 the aging C. P. Scott had retired as editor of the Manchester Guardian in favor of his son, E. T. "Ted" Scott. Whatever the new editor might be, he was not an enthusiastic supporter of Lloyd George. The Welshman could no longer take for granted that newspaper's approval of his policies. Well might the Daily Chronicle aver that C. P. Scott's resignation "is an important political as well as journalistic event." 74

Even more debilitating to the strength of Lloyd George's camp was the desertion of Max Aitken (Lord Beaverbrook) and Lord Rothermere. In the fall of 1929 Beaverbrook

74July 2, 1929, p. 4.
launched his "Empire Free Trade Crusade" through the pages of the *Daily Express*; joined by Rothermere's *Daily Mail* the new political movement ran its own candidates against official Conservative candidates at by-elections. The object of the crusaders was to persuade the electorate that a tariff wall ought to be built around the Empire in order to keep out foreign products. It quickly became evident Beaverbrook had added an entirely new dimension to politics; Harold Nicolson, whose diary marks him as the Creevey of the 1930's, observed: "It is quite clear that this Empire free trade is going to split the Conservative and possibly the Liberal Parties." 75

With reckless enthusiasm the Empire Free Traders even proposed placing a tariff upon food imports from outside the British Empire. Of "Max" Lloyd George remarked: "I am not sure what his object is, whether it is personal ambition or personal revenge. I sometimes think that he means to step into Joe Chamberlain's shoes as the great Empire binder. His food taxes, if adopted by the Conservative Party will entail certain defeat in the towns...." 76 In any case the Empire Free Trade Crusade represented an open attack upon Baldwin's leadership of the Conservative party, but it had the


76Lloyd George to Churchill, October 6, 1929, in the Lloyd George Papers, G/4/4/24.
unfortunate side effect of diverting the big London dailies' support from the Liberal party. Both press lords now challenged Baldwin directly instead of through the medium of Lloyd George and the Liberal revival.

The coup de grace was administered when the Daily Chronicle collapsed as a result of near-bankruptcy. Serving as Lloyd George's mouthpiece, the newspaper had played a major role in publicizing the Liberal revival. Unfortunately, the Inveresk Paper Company, Ltd., which owned the Daily Chronicle, suffered a serious blow in the economic blizzard following the 1929 Wall Street stock market crash. As Inveresk's chairman reported: "The change for the worse in general financial conditions which took place in the latter half of the year 1929" was responsible for his company's desperate state. By the beginning of 1930 the pressing financial problems of Inveresk forced the sale of many of its properties including the Daily Chronicle.77

Working with considerable haste interested Liberals managed (at the last moment) to merge the Daily Chronicle with the Daily News on June 2, 1930.78 But the News-Chronicle

77See the statements by B. H. Binder, chairman of Inveresk, to his shareholders in the Financial Times, February 24, 1930, p. 9.

(mainly financed by the Cadbury family and the Cowdray millions) had no place for faithful servants of Lloyd George such as R. C. K. Ensor, a gifted leader-writer. For Lloyd George's followers "the Chronicle catastrophe" could only be characterized as "so immense a calamity." Companies holding stock in the Daily Chronicle, such as United Newspapers, Ltd. and the Daily Chronicle Investment Corporation, subsequently ceased to pay dividends to their unhappy shareholders.

By the fall of 1930 Lloyd George's position of power in the London press had been irretrievably destroyed. C. P. Scott was gone, Beaverbrook and Rothermere were otherwise engaged (in creating a political party which competed with the Liberals for the floating voters), and the Daily Chronicle had met its fate. To be sure, the News-Chronicle remained a Liberal organ, but its editorial policy was infected by the anti-Lloyd George view of the Daily News staff. All that was required to compete the ruin was for the Manchester Guardian to take an anti-Lloyd George line, as it did during the 1931 financial crisis, and for E. T. Scott to exit humming the

79 On the pathetic case of Ensor see E. T. Scott to J. L. Hammond, April 16, 1930 in the Hammond Papers, C. 34, item 87.


81 See the financial section of The Times, June 28, 1930, p. 18.
tune to "Lloyd George Knew My Father." Loss of newspaper support was an important factor in bringing the Liberal revival to an end. As Lloyd George must have known so well: the pen is mightier than the sword and those who live by the pen may risk dying by the same means.

Erosion of their press support was a serious matter for Lloyd George and his followers. At the crucial Bromley by-election (polling day fell on September 2, 1930), the Liberal candidate was opposed by an Empire Free Trader as well as by Conservative and Labour candidates. Lloyd George believed Bromley to be a hotbed of Empire Free Trade supporters and remarked that "the Rothermere-Beaverbrook press will probably enter into every Conservative household in the division."82 The effect of this kind of newspaper campaign was to drain off many floating votes from the Liberal poll; in particular Conservatives who might have voted Liberal at the behest of Rothermere during the Liberal revival now drifted away. In these circumstances the Liberal candidate gained only 11,176 votes as compared with the nearly 18,000 he had won at the 1929 Bromley by-election.83 Loss of these

82Lloyd George to Dr. K. M. Hunter (a Liberal M. P. and head of the Land and Nation League propaganda), August 9, 1930, in the Lloyd George Papers, G/32/1/27.

83In the by-election the poll for all the candidates was: Conservative, 12,782; Liberal, 11,176; V. C. Redwood (Empire Free Trade), 9,483; Labour, 5,942; see the Liberal Magazine, XXXVIII (October, 1930), 491.
floating votes accords with more recent analyses of the role of the press in politics for, as Dan Nimmo notes, "the principal proposition that emerges from studies of the campaign effects of newspaper readership is that newspapers influence (through stories, advertising, and editorials) the marginally interested voter."84

The years between 1929 and 1931 demonstrated in conclusive fashion that there was no place in British politics for the Liberal party. With the complex of forces which had produced the Liberal revival withering away, Lloyd George himself began to lose interest in the party. Instead, he hearkened to the somewhat fevered words of the Tory editor, J. L. Garvin: "Never never never can you remain content to be the Opposition oracle of a declining minority."85 Attempting to become an independent force in politics he wooed MacDonald with cozy dinners for two in the House of Lords during 1931, perhaps hoping to put together a Lloyd George-Labour coalition.86 The ubiquitous Hugh Dalton observed: "L. G. simply wants a Coalition--with anyone who will join


85Garvin to Lloyd George, March 5, 1930, in the Lloyd George Papers, G/8/5/23.

86See MacDonald to Lloyd George, January 28, 1931, accepting the latter's invitation to a secret meeting in the Lords among papers held by the Rt. Hon. Earl of Dwyfor at his home, Brimpton Mill.
up with him. An old man in a hurry with the dusk falling.\textsuperscript{87}
For by this time the Liberal revival had begun to appear as
insubstantial as the evening fog which, drifting in from the
Thames, so often (and so transiently) obscures the stolid
battlements of Westminster.

\textsuperscript{87}Dalton Diary MS., Volume 1929-1931, entry for July
15, 1930.
CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

Looking backward, it is clear that the Liberal attempt to compete with two mass parties was foredoomed to failure. Therefore the only task the historian can perform is to show (1) why the Liberals thought they had a chance to win in 1929 and (2) why the Liberals failed to prolong the revival of their party until the 1931 general election. It may be taken as axiomatic that Lloyd George believed he could revive the Liberal party if he were given half a chance. His first hesitating attempts to imitate Gladstone's use of the press to arouse Turcophobia failed, but from first to last the Welshman believed that the press held the key to the hearts of his countrymen—and those of the English too. If he rejected slavish imitation of the Gladstonian model after 1926 it was only because he needed a party organization behind him such as Gladstone had possessed.

Between 1918 and 1930 the press as well as the three-party system went through a period of readjustment. Essentially, the press aspired to become an independent power in the state; it attempted to become in fact, as well as in name, the Fourth Estate. Liberals under Lloyd George's leadership were the party most prone to cooperation with the press partly because the Welshman had found newspapers useful allies.
during earlier political battles. More important the War effort had given a great deal of prominence to the effects of propaganda; the defeated Germans had already admitted that British propaganda had been superior to their own. In these circumstances many Liberals (not all of them followers of Lloyd George) came to believe that propaganda could win political battles as well as military engagements.

Although the press lords, Beaverbrook and Rothermere, were nominally Conservative in orientation, they found to their dismay that the Tory party was not willing to admit their pretensions to independent power. Since the Labour party shared this disdain for journalism and also possessed little enthusiasm for *nouveaux riches*, the press barons gravitated almost insensibly towards the one man, David Lloyd George, who both needed their aid and welcomed them. As A. J. P. Taylor points out in his emphatic fashion: "No public man has made more use of the Press." ¹ Kenneth O. Morgan adds that from the beginning of his career "the press played a major role in Lloyd George's strategy." ²

A new kind of newspaper appeared in the postwar era: one which was dependent upon advertising for its revenue.


The older type of journal, subsidized by millionaire Liberals and appealing to a limited readership, disappeared after 1930. The consequence was that Conservative businessmen advertised in Conservative newspapers while Liberal newspapers—lacking adequate revenue—began to die. The Manchester Guardian was saved from the wreck only because C. P. Scott placed its assets in a trust fund where they were immune from the lures of advertising men. No Liberal mass paper appeared until 1930 when the News-Chronicle was created. On this view the decline of Liberal newspapers was not a cause of Liberal failure to revive; rather, the Liberal press had become irrelevant as a link between the party elite and a new mass electorate.

Lloyd George was predisposed to accept the theory that the press exercised considerable power over the opinions of the electors. Indeed many of the Liberal chieftains of the period were closely associated with journalism and exercised their remaining political power through the press. C. P. Scott edited the Manchester Guardian, Sir Charles Starmer owned the Yorkshire Observer, and Lord Cowdray financed the combined Daily News and Westminster Gazette. The point is that all factions of Liberals were closely associated with journalism and, as their political influence shrunk, the Liberal press became ever more receptive to theories which suggested that newspapers could sway the voters.

Lloyd George was not naive enough to imagine that newspapers alone, even the Daily Mail, could convert the
country. He also used techniques of advertising developed by the business world which, it turned out, were not suited to merchandising the New Liberalism. That is why the Liberals fell victims to a faulty theory of communications resulting in a fatal disjunction between the medium and the message. Economic theories advanced in the Yellow Book were ideally suited to the print medium, but were unsuited to new communications techniques needed to reach a large electorate. It is not impossible that the Liberals would have enjoyed greater success in 1929 if they had, like the National Socialists in Germany, designed their ideology to fit mass circulation newspapers and the medium of radio. If the Liberal revival had come five years later, that party would have been able to draw upon more refined communications theories as well.

Extensive Liberal use of mass-produced posters illustrates another of the limitations of an excessively print-oriented approach. It was easy to picture on a poster the Conservative slogan "For King and Country" which called up the mental image of an Indian Army colonel (complete with "haw-haw" Army accent) standing off hordes of Socialist sub-humans who were probably wogs as well. Likewise, it was quite easy to print upon a poster or in the mind the slogan of "Socialism in our time." It was not so easy to put Liberalism on a poster (in accordance with what is known as "poster theory") because there was no readily accepted symbol or slogan for Liberalism; in view of the Liberals' heavy dependence
upon posters this was fatal. Labourism and Conservatism may be termed pictographic ideologies; that is they lent themselves easily to visual representation. On the other hand Liberalism remained verbographic and imprisoned in words; the Yellow Book remained a closed book to the majority of voters who had neither time to read nor money to buy expensive publications. Thus despite the fleet of loud-speaker vans, the Liberal revival remained print-oriented. As Trevor Wilson points out, during the 1929 campaign "the Liberals put forward an unprecedented number— for the post-war period— of posters, handbills, pamphlets."³

Mechanized campaigning techniques used by the Liberals suffered from a lack of theoretical refinement. At the beginning of the Liberal revival no one realized (apparently) that loud-speaker vans carrying the Liberal message might irritate the audiences they were designed to persuade. In addition, they proved unsuited to campaigning in urban industrial constituencies where the audience stood close to the speaker. Loud-speaker vans were intended to compensate for the shortage of Liberal workers, but by the end of the 1929 campaign, it was discovered (too late) that the vans were no asset. Lloyd George conceived of loud-speaker vans as a replacement for the local Non-conformist ministers who had been effective propagandists for Liberalism in Gladstone's day.

³The Downfall of the Liberal Party, op. cit., p. 373.
Employing a fleet of loud-speaker vans enabled the Welshman to reconstruct his party's communications sub-structure which had been weakened the the decline in influence of English Non-conformity. In effect, each loud speaker acted as a mobile pulpit within a chapel endowed by Lloyd George.

The Liberal revival consisted of the application of new techniques of communication to a party organization which had changed little since the time of Gladstone. Newspaper Liberalism, as it may be styled, was supplemented by mechanized electioneering which never succeeded in reaching a majority of the uncommitted voters. Had Lloyd George been able to purchase substantial amounts of sound broadcasting time the result of the 1929 campaign might have been different. But there was no national communications network, such as existed in the United States, which the Lloyd George Fund could buy; and the Liberal loud-speaker vans were not a successful substitute for radio advertisement.

In any case, by 1929 the two major parties had adopted some of the Liberals' mechanized tactics; the initial advantage possessed by the Liberals was lost. Undoubtedly, mechanized electioneering enabled the Liberals to win some by-elections in 1927-1929, but these tactics were quickly adopted by the other two parties. In addition, the Liberal electioneering machine was equipped for fighting only one by-election at a time; it was not suited to fighting 512 simultaneous by-elections. In general nineteenth century Liberals were more
skilled in the use of the print medium and print technology than their opponents; this was so only because the Liberal party included a greater number of avant garde journalists than the Conservative party. By the 1920's the age of mass journalism had arrived—dominated by Conservative press lords who were quick to see the advantage of new technology. By introducing mechanical devices into electioneering, Lloyd George was attempting to restore his party's technological lead; he forgot that by the 1920's the two major parties were just as modern minded (if not more so) than the Liberals.

In addition, it is important to note that the Liberal communications sub-structure was not as class-tight as that of the Labour party. The Free Churches and the Roman Catholic Church may be described as non-associated interest groups—that is, groups which had little economic coherence. On the other hand, the trade unions were associational interest groups based upon individuals possessing economic interests in common; the unions were knit together by a strong class bond in which face-to-face communication was more effective than in the non-associated interest groups.

By the 1920's the only issue which bound the Free Churches to the Liberal party was that of temperance reform. For this reason the Liberals made great play with it and developed it into a uniquely Liberal issue. Unfortunately, temperance proposals tended to alienate the urban working class which Lloyd George hoped to win over to Liberalism with
his pledge to conquer unemployment. The English worker, as it turned out, valued his beer more than promises of economic prosperity in a cold-water country.

An important result of Lloyd George's obsession with propaganda was that very little of his famous Fund ever reached the local Liberal parties. The national Liberal party was thus cut off from the grass roots and possessed no means of face-to-face communication with the voters. In a very real sense the Liberal party organization may be described as an invertebrate organism. As A. J. P. Taylor says of the 1920's: "Liberal organization in the constituencies languished between general elections and could rarely spring back into effective life. Liberalism became a national cause, increasingly cut off from its local roots."4

Another disability which afflicted Liberalism was the very foreignness of its conception. We have noted that the enthusiasm of the Liberals for temperance reform was fired by the American example of Prohibition. More importantly the example of Fordism provided a model for the ideology of the Yellow Book; Lloyd George wished to increase British efficiency on the American model, but the different natures of the two societies doomed this attempt. The American paradigm applied to the prosperous, relatively classless society

of Prohibition United States; by contrast Britain was a class-ridden society afflicted by high unemployment.

Times of economic depression provided a hostile environment for Liberalism. It was only in times of declining unemployment that the Liberals did well; Liberalism all over Europe revived in the relative prosperity of 1927-1929, but lapsed into its former state of lethargy once the economic blizzard of 1929 had struck. Had economic conditions been better at the time of the 1929 general election, the Liberals might have gained more seats. As it was, economic conditions were worsening on May 30 and this indisputably hampered Liberal revival.

The Liberal party of the 1920's gave undue prominence to "experts," such as J. M. Keynes and H. D. Henderson, who were sociologically divorced from the potential Liberal class. Lloyd George's New Liberalism, as set forth in the Yellow Book, was too far divorced from everyday language to be easily understood by the voters. Even the Liberal leaders did not always understand how the schemes set forth actually worked. The expert class captured Liberalism, with Lloyd George's blessing, but in so doing drew that ideology further away from the understanding of the potential Liberal class. The rise of the Expert may be said to have contributed to the failure of the Liberal revival.

In terms of Lloyd George's hopes for his party, the experience of 1929-1931 proved tragic. Cooperation with a
Labour government did not allow the Liberals enough freedom to effectively use their formidable capacities for propaganda. MacDonald's suspicion of his allies was increased when Lloyd George leaked inside information to the Liberal press; here was a case where Newspaper Liberalism handicapped the party's political effectiveness. It illustrated the difficulty of using the press to achieve political objectives while the party organization played only a secondary role. In the view of most politicians, then and now, leaking information to the press was not really playing the game; the press had no business in usurping Parliament's function of criticizing the government's actions.

Destruction of the Liberal revival came about mainly because Lloyd George lost interest in leading it. Failure to convince Ramsay MacDonald of the merits of his plan to conquer unemployment was part of the reason for this; there was also the indiscipline displayed by the parliamentary party. More important was the desertion of the party (although not Lloyd George) by the Daily Mail and the Daily Express. To a man who believed in the importance of newspaper support this must have seemed a heavy blow. Finally the world depression wiped out most of his Fund along with his cherished Daily Chronicle.

Lloyd George's most persistent delusion was derived from the Gladstonian experience. It was that the print media could serve as a link between the Liberal party and the voter.
This was true in the high noon of Victoria's reign only because English Non-conformity supplied a communications sub-structure which made the system work. Lloyd George was guilty of his usual extremism in supposing that propagandists could do their work in reconstructing the Gladstonian synthesis without an adequate communications sub-structure. Far from being old-fashioned in this respect, he erred in accepting the promises of modern technology too readily. He believed that the loud-speaker van and the marconiphone could take the place of grass roots organization. Even the most ardent technocrat today would find his attitude somewhat naive.

The Welshman's next biggest error lay in attempting to follow the Gladstonian model in using the power of the press even though that model had been designed for very different circumstances. In obedience to the ghost of Gladstone, Lloyd George made alliance with the press barons Rothermere and Beaverbrook. The alliance demeaned Lloyd George's claim to be the last Radical; and it made him seem insincere in making promises to reform the British industrial system. In deference to the press lords, the New Liberalism became a tool in Conservative party internal politics.

Although Lloyd George was successful in creating a new concept of Liberalism, he was unable to link it to any very numerous social class. Lloyd George's Liberalism was Gladstonian to the extent that it remained dependent upon
the media and Christian church organization. In one sense the weight of Gladstone's example may be said to have made a lasting Liberal revival impossible by blinding the Liberals to possibilities inherent in class-based forms of political organization. Always the Liberals looked backwards in the belief that if it worked for the Grand Old Man it ought to work for Lloyd George. This last may serve as a suitable epitaph upon the grave of the Liberal revival.
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