

THE IDENTIFICATION OF 'RADICALS' IN THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT, 1906-1914

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INTRODUCTION

This article aims to identify the existence of a little known group of minority opinion in British society during the Edwardian Age. It is an attempt to define who the British Radicals were in the parliaments during the years immediately preceding the Great War. Though some were particularly interested in the foreign policy matters of the time, it must be borne in mind that most confined their energies to promoting the Liberal campaign for *domestic* welfare issues.⁽¹⁾

Those considered or contemporaneously labelled as 'Radicals' held 'leftwing' views, being politically somewhat just left of centre. They were not revolutionaries or communists. They wanted change through reforms carried out in a democratic manner. Their failure to carry out changes on a significant scale was a major reason for the decline of the Liberals, and the rise and ultimate success of the Labour Party. Indeed, following the First World War, many Radicals defected from the Liberal Party to join Labour.

With regard to historiography, it can be stated that the activities of British Radicals from the turn of the century to the outbreak of the First World War were the subject of interest to the most famous British historian of the second half of the 20th century, A. J. P. Taylor. He wrote of them in his work *The Troublemakers* based on his Ford Lectures of 1956. By the early 1970s A. J. A. Morris had established a reputation in the field with his book *Radicalism Against War, 1906-1914* (1972), and a further publication of which he was editor, *Edwardian Radicalism 1900-1914* (1974). In 1977 his *C. P. Trevelyan 1870-1958. Portrait of a Radical* was published, and of his remaining major writings one could add *The Scaremongers* (1984).

Amongst the numerous works of Stephen E. Koss, those dealing specifically with Radicals and of outstanding importance were *Sir John Brunner : Radical Plutocrat 1842-1919* (1970) ; *Fleet Street Radical*, being a biography of A. G. Gardner of the *Daily News* ; and the *Pro-Boers* both of 1973.

Simultaneously, in Canada, Howard S. Weinroth of McGill University was producing a string of articles. He wrote 'The British Radicals And The Balance Of Power, 1902-1914' ;⁽²⁾ 'Left-Wing Opposition to Naval Armaments in Britain before 1914' ;⁽³⁾ 'British Radicals and the Agadir Crisis' ;⁽⁴⁾ and 'Norman Angell And The Great Illusion: An Episode In Pre-1914 Pacifism' ;⁽⁵⁾

The research methods used in writing this article have been to examine speeches made in

Parliament ; to analyse the private correspondence of the Radicals ; their writings produced in book and pamphlet form ; and their contributions to newspapers and to journals. Quite naturally, some non-Radicals have been studied, so as to help form a contrast, and therefore to help to highlight who the Radicals were.

The definition of a British Radical has never been an easy task. It can be ascertained by the following quotation from a book of the time about a leading Radical, Charles Sydney Buxton :

I remember him saying one day when he was dining with some other friends and myself that he did not know what he was. "One day I am a Socialist, the next I am not. I think I am really a Radical—certainly not a Liberal. " His real sympathies were with the Labour party, but at the same time he welcomed and was in full agreement with nearly all the Liberal measures of the past few years, and at this time [1909] he regarded the Liberal Party as the force in the country most capable of carrying out immediate practical reforms.⁽⁶⁾

WHO WERE THE PARLIAMENTARY RADICALS ?

(1)

People of a radical disposition have existed in British parliamentary history for as long as parliament has existed. The names of Chatham and Lord North, Fox and Pitt, Palmerston and Aberdeen, Gladstone and Disraeli testify to the divisions over foreign policy that their existence caused. Even during the period of the last Liberal Governments of 1905-15 the Radicals were, for the most part, deeply dissatisfied with British foreign policy and the way it was administered. Most Radicals within parliament during that time-span were members of the Liberal Party.

A series of problems besets the individual who attempts to name the Radicals. First, it must be realized that they did not form a distinctive political party, nor did they have a clear-cut leader. It has been suggested that E. D. Morel came closest to filling the latter role after 1911, once he had produced *Morocco in Diplomacy*. As Catherine Ann Cline states :

Morel was at the centre of the Radical assault on Grey's foreign policy which began in October 1911 and continued unabated until April 1912.⁽⁷⁾

However, he was not yet an MP, which points not only to the inability of parliamentary Radicals to find a leader from amongst themselves but also indicates how the Radicals outside parliament were more prominent than those inside.

Within parliament many Liberal Radicals must have realized the dangers of damaging their own career prospects if they spoke out critically of the party in power. A place in the cabinet or of high office would not be theirs if they did not pay lip service to those within whose power

it was to devolve such authority. The 'Relugas Compact' was indicative of the incestuous way that the party chiefs could attempt to arrange appointments. Clearly, it is not easy to quantify the number of Radicals in parliament on the basis of what they said in the House as they could speak on a topic in a critical way of the Government and yet yield to the party whips and vote for the Government at the divisions. With some Radicals the strength of their convictions overcame such qualms and they stood by what they believed in. As Roy Douglas states :

. . . it is not difficult to believe that there were many . . . Liberal M.P.s who felt a greater or lesser measure of unquiet on such matters [as arms expenditure], but either deferred to the judgement of their leaders, or did not care to stand up and be counted.⁽⁸⁾

Another factor in restricting their criticism of the Government was the feeling that if they went too far they might actually discredit the Liberal Party sufficiently to bring down the Government. What could be worse? That would certainly deprive them of the chance of personal advancement. Also they realized that if the Liberal Party could be criticized for excessive expenditure on armaments as a result of the naval arms race with Germany then how much more would the Conservatives be likely to spend on such an issue. The Conservatives were considered the party of rampant imperialism, forever seeking to extend British control over additional subject minorities. Conversely, the Liberal Party stood traditionally for maintaining what already existed of the Empire and preferring self-determination for minorities, such as existed in the Balkan Peninsula. The Conservatives could be expected to spend more than the Liberals on overseas commitments and the spread of British influence. The Radicals were anxious that such monies should be spent instead on their socio-economic reforms.

Another difficulty in identifying those Radicals who were interested in foreign issues was simply the fact that most were far more pre-occupied by domestic political matters. They were eager for the introduction of an old age pension scheme, the introduction of unemployment and invalidity insurance schemes, and in particular, the curbing of the powers of the House of Lords. Many of those measures already existed in some foreign countries, such as in Germany. That desire was in keeping with their traditional beliefs. Consequently many Radical MPs commented on domestic issues but rarely, if ever, on foreign matters. That factor added to the difficulty in identifying those MPs who were specifically Radicals with regard to foreign policy issues. A man could conceivably be a Radical on domestic matters but quite conservative in his thinking on matters of foreign policy. For example he could desire those social reforms mentioned and yet remain in keeping with the Radical traditional belief for a strong navy. Radicals firmly believed in the importance of having a navy sufficient to protect the country, but what they did not relish was an international arms race, that would absorb the funds that could otherwise be used for socio-economic reforms and also endanger international peace.

The decision to speak in the House of Commons on foreign policy matters tended to be the

choice of a minority of Radicals who held a particular interest. For example, the historian G. P. Gooch spoke more often on the Balkans than on India, according to his biographer Frank Eyck.⁽⁹⁾ They did not speak on the same topic repeatedly. They simply grouped and regrouped on issues that personally interested them because they held no coherent party policy. Indeed the lack of a continuing set of firm attitudes towards matters of foreign policy, meant that they changed their minds on such matters with apparent alarming speed. For example on the Liberals entering office in 1905 the Radicals were delighted with the continuation of the entente with France and yet by 1911 following the disclosures of Belgian atrocities in the Congo, and the revelations of secret military talks with France, they wanted to distance themselves from the 'old liberal alliance.' Likewise, in 1908, the Radicals initially welcomed the Young Turk revolution but then became totally disillusioned with it when no reforms were forthcoming in the Ottoman Empire. Also in the same year, the Radicals objected, at first, to the Austro-Hungarian annexation of the nominally Ottoman provinces of Bosnia-Herzegovina. And yet, by the end of the year, they were applauding the Dual Monarchy for its attempts to compensate Turkey for those territorial losses. In 1912 the Radicals were satisfied with the success of the Balkan League in virtually expelling the Turk from Europe in the First Balkan War and yet in the following year condemning those same League members for the atrocities that they were committing amongst themselves during the Second Balkan War. Other examples could be given of how the Radicals subordinated the existence of the idea of any coherent set of policies to their moral standpoints and idealistic frame of mind.

Yet another difficulty in naming individual Radicals was the change in the way parliament performed its task. The era of the party organization with all its inherent pressures had arrived. As A. J. P. Taylor succinctly put it :

The independent member was being squeezed out by the party machine ; and it became increasingly unattractive to "split the party" over foreign affairs as parliament did more and more in domestic legislation. Radical MPs swallowed a distasteful foreign policy for the sake of old age pensions or the taxation of land values.⁽¹⁰⁾

After the 1910 General Elections it was harder for the Radicals to criticize openly as the Liberal Party majority had diminished so much in the House of Commons.⁽¹¹⁾ Also the Government was assailed from all sides on domestic political issues brought about by a major upsurge in industrial unrest, the agitation of the suffragettes, and the apparently inexorable slide of Ireland towards civil war.

So far reference has been made to 'Radical Liberals' but clearly writers such as Joseph Baylen and Norbert Gossman, as well as A. J. P. Taylor, accept that the term 'Radical' was applicable to a much wider category of MPs. Baylen and Gossman in the introduction to their *Biographical Dictionary of Modern British Radicals*⁽¹²⁾ maintain that there were two groups of Radicals. Firstly there were those who hoped for a fundamental change in the fact that the

country was controlled by the Establishment of the upper class and Church of England. They wanted to reduce the rigidity of the class structure of society. The second group of Radicals were identified with those who sought through state intervention to alter the structure of society thereby producing less inequality of wealth and increased legislation on social welfare. The former, older and more traditional group could be termed 'Cobdenites' and the latter, more recently emerging group as 'Progressives.' The Cobdenites were in favour of the extension of the franchise, for example, whereas the Progressives laid far greater emphasis on the creation of the old age pension and insurance schemes. Baylen and Gossmann refer to the two groups as 'Liberal-Radicals' and 'Socialist-Radicals.' In brief, besides the Liberal Radicals one could identify many Labour and Irish Nationalist MPs as holding Radical convictions as well. Nevertheless, of whatever party or tradition, as far as this article is concerned, as A. J. P. Taylor stated:

. . . the Radicals in parliament carried less weight so far as foreign affairs went. They were admirable, but rather trivial: Sir Wilfred Lawson, . . . Arthur Ponsonby, W. H. Dickinson, all now forgotten. Ramsay MacDonald is the only exception. . .⁽¹³⁾

In trying to quantify the numbers involved H. V. Emy claims:

The overall impression is of an advanced Social Radical section, rarely less than 25 strong in any division, and drawing on a further body of support which in itself (including the Lib-Labs), may well have exceeded 40. Behind this group ranged a somewhat larger number of Radicals who were prepared to lend support, in the manner of traditional Radicalism, to causes of which they approved, and who wished to preserve an air of independence in dealing with what they saw as principles.⁽¹⁴⁾

But then of course it must be borne in mind that his book looks at Liberals only and does not attempt to investigate MPs of other political persuasions. He uses the method of analyzing the division lists to identify Radicals by seeing just how many times Liberals voted against their own party on questions that could be said to be matters of major policy significance for the Government.⁽¹⁵⁾ It is quite a concrete way of identification based on the sound principle that 'actions speak louder than words.' Certainly to vote in such a way tested the strength of an individual's convictions.

Bernstein⁽¹⁶⁾ maintains that a traditional number of Radical Nonconformists existed in the Liberal Party in the 1870s and 1880s as activists because that Party was the only vehicle through which they could achieve their objectives. Additionally, however, a new generation was joining them, who were, for the most part, Nonconformist businessmen and lawyers who had achieved recognition by their own merits. Because they all had the same social or religious grievances they all supported the same causes. Bernstein claims that about a third of the Liberals could thereby be identified as Radicals during 1874-1885 and that the number rocketed

to more than 70% during 1886-1895 in response to Chamberlain's successful ability to organize radicalism.

Another indication of the growth of Radical influence prior to the 1906 Liberal electoral triumph was the increase of their unsuccessful numbers who attempted to get elected to the Executive Committee of the National Liberal Federation (NLF). In 1896 there were just three, but in 1899 ten. In 1900 several Radicals were successfully elected such as C. H. Roberts (landowner); W. R. D. Adkins (lawyer); Hugh Fullerton (retired merchant); G. H. Radford (writer); and W. H. Lever all of whom were to be MPs after 1906. In 1901 the unsuccessful numbers rose to 22 and in 1902 to 25. Of those successful such prominent Radicals as A. Birrell, J. F. L. Brunner, W. H. Dickinson, R. C. Lehmann, Murray Macdonald, D. M. Mason, W. S. Rowntree and J. Stuart were chosen. The Radicals were in the majority on the Executive Committee between 1903-5 despite the numbers seeking election dwindling due to the increased interest in parliament itself.⁽¹⁷⁾

For the period 1907-14, in examining Stenton and Lees's *Who's Who of British Members of Parliament* based on *Dod's Parliamentary Companion*,⁽¹⁸⁾ one can count 16 MPs who were referred to as being 'Radical' and 6 as 'Advanced Radical' but that by no means gives a conclusive number as clearly many Liberals, listed simply as 'Liberal,' had similar outlooks to those listed as 'Radical.' Additionally, the question must be raised: how accurate are such mere labels? Where does one draw the line between one label and another, such as the 3 'Advanced Liberals' and the one 'Opposition Liberal' member? Some were described as 'Liberal-Labour' (1) and 'Liberal and Labour' (2). James Rowlands, MP for the Dartford division of Kent 1906-Jan. 1910 and Dec. 1910 until his death in 1920, actually managed to get himself described as 'Liberal and Radical' in Dod's work.

Undoubtedly the labelling of MPs is extremely difficult for two reasons that add further complications to the identification of Radicals, Firstly, an MP could hold certain beliefs in 1906 but have altered his stance by 1914 simply by the process of the individual's ageing. Remembering that Radicals were highly-principled and somewhat idealistically-minded people, life's experience could bring into question those attitudes especially if they felt that those beliefs were actually a barrier to personal political career progress. Secondly, and somewhat cynically, MPs positions altered to fit in with their career progress. As W. E. Forster said:

Before the Queen made me a Cabinet Minister I was much more of a Radical. After that I did what I could and not what I would.⁽¹⁹⁾

In the Edwardian age that sentiment was still perfectly true. As Peter Rowland wrote

. . . Lloyd George, Churchill and Burns, although only the first of these, and possibly not even he, possessed Radical convictions which were more than superficial.⁽²⁰⁾

Contemporary Radicals were disillusioned by Churchill's apparent opportunism once he

attained the post of First Lord of the Admiralty in 1911 and by his enthusiasm for the task of spending vast sums on the building up of the navy. It seemed that he conveniently forgot his Radical standpoint of earlier years.

A more generous interpretation of those who gained high office in the Government, would be however, that they were expected to follow the policy laid down by the party chiefs in order to uphold the Government's credibility in office and not to speak on an ad hoc basis. Certainly the notion of the cabinet's collective responsibility would fit that criterion. That notion of following the Government line was likewise recognized at the time, as the *Labour Leader* of 17 April 1908 stated :

Office was an effective muzzle, and though Masterman was an "avowed Socialist" (!) he was "not likely to vote against the Government any longer."⁽²¹⁾

The differences between Radicals and Labour Members were not easily drawn. The Conservatives lumped them together as being manifestations of socialism and were very fearful of its growth. After all, the 1906 General Election had seen the Conservatives sustain the greatest electoral defeat in parliamentary history. In that humiliation they saw the Labour vote increase by more than 500%. The Conservative apprehension was very aptly summed up in the famous words of Arthur Balfour :

If I read the signs aright. . . C-B is a mere cork, dancing on a torrent which he cannot control, and what is going on here is the faint echo of the same movement which has produced massacres in St. Petersburg, riots in Vienna, and Socialist processions in Berlin. We always catch Continental diseases, though we usually take them mildly. .

.⁽²²⁾

The rise of an 'extreme Radical' wing was recognized at the time. Indeed, towards the end of 1908 and during 1909 it was the Radical Liberals who were leading the way in parliament rather than Labour as seen in such debates on unemployment and armaments, on land reform and taxation. The Conservatives were incensed in view of the growing inter-party animosity that the ideas of the New Liberalism apparently resided only in parliament amongst the relatively small group of Radicals whose connections with their constituencies seemed weak. The Conservatives' linking of Radicals with Labour as one and the same phenomenon was born out by the fact that in some constituencies Lib-Lab. candidates stood, indicating a working alliance between the two political elements. In fact the Liberal Party was so affected by the Radical influence that the foremost Radical press organ of the period, the *Nation*, was able to wonder whether Asquith would succeed Campbell-Bannerman as Prime Minister as 'only by and with the Left [would] Asquith be able to govern. Five-sixths of the Liberal parliamentary party are Left wing.'⁽²³⁾

H. V. Emy maintains that the Radicals actually fulfilled the requirements of the newly-

politicized lower class electorate before the emergence of the separate Labour Party.⁽²⁴⁾ He believes that the two were so close that they were virtually synonymous. He believes that it could have been Radical pressure that was decisive in forcing the passage of the Labour Bill put forward by Ramsay MacDonald for feeding children in school.⁽²⁵⁾ Emy further maintains that :

. . . Radicalism did prove instrumental in holding Labour at bay. Whereas Labour parliamentary strength had risen to 42 after December 1910, this figure had declined to 37 by mid-1914.⁽²⁶⁾

It must also be remembered that such were the sympathies of the Radicals that 14 actually made the transition and left the Liberal Party to join Labour by 1924. This would indicate a very close association of ideas between the Radicals and Labour during the period in people's minds, thereby adding to the difficulty of specifically identifying an independent Radical position.

With specific regard to matters of foreign policy the close approximation of attitudes between the Radicals and Labour continues to blur the distinctions between them. As A. J. P. Taylor claims, instead of pulling the Radicals towards socialism, dissent over foreign policy actually pulled the Labour Party back towards the Radicals. Interestingly, issues concerning foreign affairs strengthened the Lib-Lab. coalition at a time when domestic social issues endangered it. As with the Radicals, Labour members were far more interested in domestic matters. The Labour Party manifesto for the 1906 General Election contained only half a sentence addressed to foreign affairs 'Wars are fought to make the rich richer;. . .'⁽²⁷⁾ Taylor claims that '. . . there was nothing in their speeches to distinguish them from those of middle-class Radicals.'⁽²⁸⁾ and claims to have discovered only one Marxist speech in parliament, by Baron de Forest which stressed that financial competition was at the root of international disputes.⁽²⁹⁾ He goes on to maintain that the only foreign policy initiative by Labour during the period 1906-14 was in January 1911 when it held a special conference on disarmament at Leicester. Apparently :

Keir Hardie's only contribution was to suggest that "treaties be subject to Parliamentary ratification before being signed"—a routine Radical proposal of the time.⁽³⁰⁾

A. J. A. Morris echoes the same sentiments :

The majority of Labour members 'had no real constructive foreign policy but shared the views which were traditional in Radical circles.'⁽³¹⁾

In the words of Clement Attlee :

In the years before the war there was little to distinguish the foreign policy of the Labour Party from that of the radical wing of the Liberals.⁽³²⁾

As a result of the existence of the Radical element within the Liberal Party the closeness of the two parties was such, that as Taylor maintained :

The Radicals never envisaged the disappearance of the Liberal party - rather the absorption of the Labour party into it.⁽³³⁾

(II)

So what did the Radicals believe in and stand for ? In understanding the Radicals' political position one has to bear in mind the powerful influence of Nonconformity during the late Victorian and the Edwardian periods. Religion was inextricably intertwined with political life, though admittedly a declining factor by 1910. Also many champions of causes pursued by the Radicals were clergymen. Consequently it casts light on the Radical frame of mind to understand the Nonconformists better.

The Nonconformists were stronger in the north and west than the south and east of the country and everywhere tended to fill the areas left vacant by the Anglican Church. Nonconformist attendances were greater than Anglican in 20 out of 29 towns specified as the major manufacturing areas (in the Religious Census of 1851, the only one of its kind ever made).⁽³⁴⁾

Traditionally, clergymen have been considered conservative-minded people who tended to support the Establishment. Certainly that would seem to be the case with the Anglican ministry that relied on the State for its stipends. But Nonconformists were also restrained by considerations of income for they looked to their congregations for their living. The Nonconformist opinion makers consisted of a few lay and ministerial people and not so importantly the general ministry. These leading figures usually occupied livings with congregations having comfortable means in urban areas. Undoubtedly a major reason for why the general ministry did not become more involved in politics was the realization that they relied on the congregations for employment, unlike the Anglican clergy. For example in 1901, as many as 8% of Congregational ministers had no church. Nonconformist clergymen needed to be wary of what they said about political issues. For example at the beginning of the century a London congregation let it be known that 'We share your views, but politics are not what we come to hear from the pulpit. . .'⁽³⁵⁾ Ministers had to be very careful about expounding their views on socialism as they tended to move to the political left, for if the congregations did not like what they heard, they would drift away, thereby reducing the incumbent's income.

Nonconformists found a natural affinity with the Liberal Party for :

. . . the Liberals had inherited the Whig advocacy of the principles of civil and religious liberty. Only from the Liberals could Nonconformists expect redress for their disabilities. Nonconformists of all shades were drawn to Liberalism by their hope that it would abolish their practical grievances.⁽³⁶⁾

During the 1870s' and 1880s' there developed the distinctive characteristics of what was coined in 1890 the 'Nonconformist Conscience.' The main features of it were : firstly, the belief that no sharp boundary could be drawn between politics and religion ; secondly, that politicians were to display impeccable characters ; and thirdly, that the State ought to promote the citizens' moral welfare.

Nonconformists believed in George White's spirit that :

If we make politics a part of our religion, as I claim we should, then in the conduct of our national policy, moral principles must be supreme.⁽³⁷⁾

The Nonconformists who mostly became involved in parliamentary matters were Baptists, Congregationalists, Methodists and Presbyterians.⁽³⁸⁾ Indeed the link between religion and politics was intertwined, for as F. B. Meyer claimed : 'Every great revival of religion has issued in social and political reconstruction.'⁽³⁹⁾ Koss believed that though Nonconformity had always been a considerable force in local politics, the Education Bill of 1902 actually showed it to be 'for the first and last time. . . to achieve a truly national dimension.'⁽⁴⁰⁾ However, its influence was substantial as Koss proceeds to maintain that many contemporaries counted 'Free Church militancy. . . as the single most important weapon in the 1906 Liberal armoury.'⁽⁴¹⁾ Nonconformists wanted not just a Liberal Parliament however, they wanted 'it to be a Parliament that contained a healthy complement of Free Churchmen who conceived of themselves primarily as such.'⁽⁴²⁾ The reliance of the Liberal Party on the Nonconformists in 1906 can be realized from the support that was given to it from such businessmen as Sir J. Brunner, G. Cadbury, W. P. Hartley, W. H. Lever and Albert Spicer. Their value was enhanced when one realized that landed wealth supported the Conservatives, while trade union subscriptions went to the Labour Party.⁽⁴³⁾ The importance of Nonconformist influence can be observed in the Whitby election of June 1905 when Noel Buxton became the first Liberal to sit for that constituency. He had been supported by John Clifford.⁽⁴⁴⁾

Nonconformists were delighted with Campbell-Bannerman's cabinet of December 1905 and also with the Liberal landslide victory of 1906. Of the 19 places in the cabinet, the majority, that is 10 or 11 were Nonconformists (according to whether counted by the *Free Church Year Book* or by the Liberation Society).⁽⁴⁵⁾ For instance, Augustine Birrell, who was the son of a Baptist minister, took the controversial post at the Board of Education. David Lloyd George filled the post at the Board of Trade, and John Burns went to the Local Government Board. In the 1906 General Election, it was estimated that between 180 and 200 Nonconformists were elected. Koss claims that 'Among Labour as well as Liberal M.P.s the Nonconformist ethic predominated. . .'⁽⁴⁶⁾ As Prime Minister Campbell-Bannerman summarized it : 'We have been put into power by the Nonconformists.'⁽⁴⁷⁾

The very size of the Liberal victory in 1906 produced problems for the Liberal Party as much as it showed advantages. There arose the opportunity for conflicting elements to express

themselves, quite apart from an increased animosity on the part of the Conservative dominated Upper House. Those factors handicapped the government, for compromises and concessions were necessary often at the cost of Nonconformist interests. Additionally the Nonconformist members did not sit together as a 'block' or vote in unison in the Commons, unlike the Irish Nationalists or Labour Party members. Also, some Nonconformists were thus in name only, and consequently did little if anything to further the cause. Robertson Nicoll⁽⁴⁸⁾ wrote on 30 May 1907 an article to the effect that only 83 out of about 200 Nonconformist M.P.s 'took seriously their responsibilities as Free Churchmen.'⁽⁴⁹⁾ *The Baptist Times* of 25 February 1910 looking back, maintained that 'The denominational papers bragged of 200, but of these, I am told, not more than seventy or eighty at most could be relied upon.'⁽⁵⁰⁾ Such were felt to be the problems to the government after the General Election of 1906 that :

. . . various attempts were made to neutralise or rechannel the Free Church agitation, which had recently proved a boon to the Liberal Party and now quickly threatened to become an embarrassment.⁽⁵¹⁾

However, Horne's political career could not be said to have been a great success. From the first, some of his friends had doubted whether he could successfully combine a parliamentary career with his pastoral duties. Though the sentiment was expressed by some of his colleagues that 'We need in Parliament a man who shall give expression to Nonconformity on its spiritual side' nevertheless the valid view was expressed by the *Methodist Recorder* when it stated that :

The general question as to whether ministers of the Gospel should sit in Parliament we need not debate. Such cases will probably be very few. . . . A man cannot do everything. . . . We hold that not all ministers, perhaps not many, can enter into public political controversy with advantage. Many are temperamentally unfitted for such a part; . . . Some have no light at all to shed on political matters, and, if they could believe it, would help more by silence than by speech.⁽⁵²⁾

In the spring of 1914 Horne let it be known that he intended to give up his ministry or position as M.P. due to the strain being so great and the benefits being so little. His death on 2 May of the same year settled the issue.

The General Election of January 1910 was a set-back to the Liberal Party. It no longer had the majority that it commanded in 1906, and could only hold office with the co-operation of the Irish Nationalists and the Labour Party. Most of the approximately 200 Nonconformists who stood for election did so as Liberals. Consequently, the losses of the Liberal Party were reflected in the waning fortunes of the Nonconformists. Whereas in 1906 about 180 Nonconformists were elected to parliament among the progressive element, in January 1910 about 125 were returned amongst the combined strength of the 315 Liberal and Labour members.⁽⁵³⁾

The divisions in Nonconformity⁽⁵⁴⁾ continued to dissipate their energies as with the Radicals.

Another similarity was the lack of leadership.⁽⁵⁵⁾ And as with the Radicals, the outbreak of war in 1914 showed a sharp distinction between :

. . . 'hard' and 'soft' components: between a majority who sanctioned and a small minority who utterly opposed the war effort. . . those who clung to their faith withdrew from active politics, while those who remained active no longer chose to emphasise their faith. Within the pro-war majority, there was a subtle—but portentous—divergence between the super-militants like Dr. Shakespeare, who led his congregation in prayer for Germany's destruction, and moderates like Dr. Horton, who clung to the remnants of an abused liberalism. For the first time, these various distinctions openly owed less to denominational than to political allegiances.⁽⁵⁶⁾

By 1916 it was evident that disagreements ran right across denominational divisions. For example, the 50 or so Liberal and Labour M.P.s', who voted with John Simon against the Military Service Bill which was aimed at the introduction of conscription, were from many religious groups.

'Clifford and J. Campbell-Morgan joined with various journalists and intellectuals—including G.D.H. Cole, Bertrand Russell, F.W. Hirst, J.A. Hobson, and H.W. Massingham. . .'⁽⁵⁷⁾

to send a letter of support to John Simon in his decision to resign as Home Secretary over the matter. The links between Nonconformists and Radicals still existed, even though both groups had suffered severely with the decline in the fortunes of the Liberal Party.⁽⁵⁸⁾

Therefore politics for Nonconformists and Radicals consisted basically of making moral decisions. So apart from supporting politicians of a high moral calibre, Nonconformists were impatient that when a political wrong was observed that it ought to be rectified immediately. Likewise compromise with a wrong stance was inconceivable as it would be considered to be an agreement with evil. Persistent wrongdoing would incur spiritual retribution, so political decisions took on an awesome significance. For example, in 1897, a United Methodist Free Churches pastoral letter emphasized the fight against alcohol, for 'Unless we do, we may yet perish in the doom that will one day overtake the unreformed British Empire.'⁽⁵⁹⁾

In practice, their attitudes resulted in two manifestations. One, was that Nonconformists responded in an ad hoc way to the latest wrong to be perceived, and following a somewhat intense period of campaigning, left it, to concentrate on a newer evil. Consequently, campaigns of short duration predominated in substitution for any long-term policy.

The second manifestation of the Nonconformists approach, was that as the emphasis was on correcting wrongs, the image portrayed was a negative one. It seemed merely as if Nonconformists were complaining about policies rather than offering something of a constructive nature. As the Primitive Methodist, Arthur Guttery, maintained :

It was not his business, he said, to propose schemes of redress or to suggest legislative measures. That was the duty of Statesmen and of Cabinets. It was his business to . . . denounce abuses and wrongs and shams and inequalities. . .⁽⁶⁰⁾

(III)

With regard to ideas, one could say that most Radicals held for most of the time, most, if not all, of the following beliefs. In domestic affairs they advocated land reform; votes for women; advocating secularism; continued opposition to the privileges and unique treatment of the State Church to the point of wanting disestablishment; self-government for Ireland and India; colonial reform; the social legislation surrounding the old age pension and the unemployment and invalidity insurance schemes; graduated income tax; salaries for MPs; and the curbing of the powers of the House of Lords.

In foreign affairs, Radicals usually condemned imperialism; were opposed to autocratic governments; believed in self-determination, particularly championing the cause of ethnic groups in Persia and the Balkans; believed in international arbitration; held that international peace could be best achieved through the democratic control of foreign policy, implying the employing of open rather than secret diplomacy; ardently campaigned for the limitation of armaments; the ending of arms races; and the introduction of methods for the humanizing of war.

A Radical was a dissenter — that is, someone holding attitudes other than those held by the government and Establishment. His was a 'state of mind which reflected a sense of moral outrage against privilege, waste, and abuse of power.'⁽⁶¹⁾

A fundamental obstacle in the progress of the Radicals was, for those who were of a Liberal allegiance, deciding to stay within the Liberal Party. So long as they remained within that Party they were forever mindful of their obligations to it, which ultimately strangled their free expression. Additionally, they relied on funding from that Party rather than finding sources of their own; and they also failed to establish an independent local, constituency political network of organization. Consequently, they ended up, in the long-term, in terms of votes, being supported by no particular section of society.

Conversely, the Labour Party gained strength by its very independence of action. In 1906, Ramsay MacDonald actually welcomed the landslide and total victory of the Liberals over all other parties combined, as freeing the Labour Party from having the compulsion to be part of any parliamentary coalitions. They were not tempted to compromise their values for political expediency.⁽⁶²⁾ Labour had to find its own source of funding, namely coming from the Trades Unions; it had to establish its own constituency level organization, its own political programme, and its own distinctive set of policies. It was identified from the start with the lower classes of society and clearly claimed to represent them in attempting to improve the lot of the downtrodden.

Radical Liberals wanted a comprehensive set of domestic social reforms within a society in which a mixed economy might operate and the government would only intervene as a final resort. Labour, however, perceived a programme of extensive nationalization in which the State regulated the economy and played the leading role in society.

Because the Radicals held a state of mind rather than a set of policies, one can agree with Emy that 'Each Radical had both his own priorities and his own scheme of values, and was unwilling to compromise either.'⁽⁶³⁾ They were consequently often in opposition to one another, as well as to the party to which they adhered.⁽⁶⁴⁾ John Morley wrote of the situation in 1906 that :

They are of all sorts of political temperament, and as Dilke, who is one of them, assures me, they don't agree about anything, and have no leading mind among them.⁽⁶⁵⁾

Consequently, their chances of significantly influencing a determined minister like Sir Edward Grey was virtually non-existent. (Morley also naturally counted himself to be in that category.)

The dictionary definition of a Radical as 'one who holds the most advanced views of political reform on democratic lines'⁽⁶⁶⁾ fits aptly, for the Radicals were not revolutionaries or anarchists. They wished for fundamental changes in British politics starting with the root of British institutions, namely parliament itself. They did not envisage a total overthrow of the system, but an evolution to a more democratically accountable way of responding to the interests of the people. The Radicals were not rebels, because that would have been a 'refusing of obedience of allegiance . . . to the rightful or actual ruler or ruling power of the country.'⁽⁶⁷⁾ Neither were they revolutionaries, as that would have required :

. . . a complete overthrow of the established government in any country or state by those who were previously subject to it ; a forcible substitution of a new ruler or form of government.⁽⁶⁸⁾

They certainly were not anarchists, for such a person is defined as 'One who admits of no ruling power,' anarchy being the total 'absence of government ; a state of lawlessness due to the absence or inefficiency of the supreme power ; political disorder.'⁽⁶⁹⁾ They wished to work within the existing system, to alter it fundamentally, by a process of democratic evolution.

Most of the Radicals were members of the Liberal Party, but some existed in the Labour and Irish Nationalist groupings. A tentative suggestion of numbers is not easy, but during the 1906-1914 period, in parliament, there were 29 Radical Liberals having attained high office or senior positions of governmental responsibility. Furthermore, among the backbenchers were 86 Radical Liberals, 14 Radical Labour members and 38 of other political labels, bringing the rank-and-file of that frame of mind to a total of around 140.

CONCLUSION

This article set out to establish who the British Radicals were during the period 1906-1914. In so doing, it found that the Radicals gave a series of ad hoc responses to events rather than follow a particular policy. Those responses rested on emotions often generated by humanitarian feelings. Consequently, the Radicals were no match for the Liberal Party hierarchy.

The Radicals had no leader. They spoke and wrote as individuals. Therefore they were unable to bring weight to bear in Parliament. The causes for which they gave responses were often minority interests, so it was extremely difficult to arouse widespread public concern. They were chiefly pre-occupied with domestic matters such as the welfare programme put forward by the Liberal Governments of 1905-1915.

Not all Radicals were the same in the strength of their convictions. The majority were not prepared to risk their careers by upsetting their seniors and the Establishment. Some went on to have their work recognized by receiving official honours. For them, the outbreak of hostilities in August 1914 left them helping the British Government to the best of their abilities. What had decided the issue had been Germany's invasion of Belgium, that was, the image of a large State or Empire oppressing a small country or nationality. Their consciences were apparently cleared by such an act of aggression.

For others, that was a minority of Radicals, convictions were held to be sacrosanct. Consequently they failed to achieve the heights of success in their careers even if they were successful in their causes. Such were the cases, for example, of E. D. Morel and C. P. Trevelyan. One reason was that they were highly individualistic people. They lacked unity and the cohesion of a policy. They argued amongst themselves. Some chose the independence and solitude of travelling to remote places. That helps to explain why Noel Buxton found such a fascination in Macedonia, Lynch in Armenia and Persia, and Morel in the Congo.

These Radicals, of such strong conviction, were very anti-militaristic and opposed to war, not just because of the suffering that those facets entailed, but also because they represented subordination of the individual to the State, which was an encroachment on people's freedom. Hence one always comes back in this analysis to the extreme individualism of those Radicals. For example, they believed that in order to reduce the State's power to manipulate the individual in matters of foreign policy, secret diplomacy should become open. It was not just a case of becoming more democratic but of increasing the individual's say in national affairs.

These thorough Radicals were very sensitive people indeed. Their humanitarian feelings extended to vegetarianism and their liking for animals. G. G. Greenwood was an example. Their objection to killing was linked to their anti-militaristic and anti-war stance. Consequently they were against the build-up of armaments; they had links with the Quakers; they had strong pacifistic tendencies; some were conscientious objectors. Their emphasis dwelled clearly on the notion of negotiation first, and failing that, to keep on trying. For them 4 August

1914 was truly a tragedy. They had insufficient time to organize protest against the conflict. Eventually many joined Labour because of disillusionment with the Liberal Party.

One has to bear in mind always that there was considerable overlap between the two types of Radicals described above. Some Radicals could be more 'thorough' on some occasions than on others and vice versa. Different issues would inspire them to varying degrees of ardour.

So if one takes those attitudes into consideration and attempts to come to a conclusion as to who the British Radicals were, then a 'frame of mind' can be discerned. They were people who were very interested in the past, thus accounting for the large number of historians, archaeologists and classicists amongst them. They felt a strong attraction to cultural matters. A strong imagination existed as, for example, shown in the large and varied literary output. A Romantic streak linked the interest with the past to their strong imagination, which in turn associated itself with strong feelings.

As well as the strong emotions they possessed an attachment to sentimentality. An element of adventure accompanied those feelings. As idealists they wanted the moral high ground in which they wanted to be right and to be seen to be right. Obsessional tendencies could be observed in their determination to pursue their causes to ultimate ends even if that took many, many years to accomplish. Thorough Radicals exhibited distinctively neurotic tendencies.

In analyzing problems they chose to revel in the most complex issues as if fascinated by the very details themselves. It was as if they relished the opportunity 'of playing chess' for the intricacies of the game itself. It leaves the reader of their exploits wondering whether they were choosing to exercise their strong imagination, or simply as idealists, deciding to escape from reality. Either way the British Radicals present to posterity 'a sharpened conscience.'

APPENDIX 1

RADICALS
INSIDE PARLIAMENT

1906-1914

This list has been compiled from *Who's Who of British Members of Parliament*, volumes II and III, edited by Michael Stenton and Stephen Lees. The names of these Radicals have been checked in many other sources in order to verify the decision to include them. *Hansard* is an example, as well as numerous secondary works, such as *Liberals, Radicals and Social Politics 1892-1914* by H. V. Emy.

Abraham,	Rt. Hon. William ('Mabon')
Addison,	Rt. Hon. Christopher
Adkins,	Sir William Ryland Dent
Alden,	Percy
Arnold,	Sydney
Atherley-Jones,	Llewellyn Archer
Baker,	Joseph Allen
Barnard,	Edmund Broughton
Barnes,	Rt. Hon. George Nicoll
Beaumont,	Hon. Hubert George
Belloc,	Joseph Hilaire Peter Rene
Benn,	Sir John Williams
Bennett,	Sir Ernest Nathaniel
Bentham,	George Jackson
Billson,	Alfred
Brunner,	Rt. Hon. Sir John Tomlinson, Bart.
Burt,	Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton,	Charles Roden
Buxton,	Rt. Hon. Noel Edward
Byles,	Sir William Pollard
Chancellor,	Henry George
Cobbold,	Felix Thornley
Collins,	Rt. Hon. Sir Godfrey Pattison
Cooper,	George J.
Cotton,	Sir Henry John Stedman

Cremer,	Sir William Randal
Curran,	Peter Francis
Dalziel,	Rt. Hon. Sir James Henry, Bart.
Davies,	David (Baron 1932)
Davies,	Ellis William
Davies,	Timothy
Dawes,	James Arthur
De Forest,	Baron Maurice Arnold
Denman,	Hon. Richard Douglas
Dickinson,	Rt. Hon. Sir Willoughby Hyett
Dilke,	Rt. Hon. Sir Charles Wentworth, Bart.
Dillon,	John
Dunn,	Albert Edward
Edwards,	John Hugh
Esslemont,	George Birnie
Fenwick,	Rt. Hon. Charles
Foster,	Rt. Hon. Sir Balthazar Walter (Baron Ilkeston 1910)
Fullerton,	Hugh
Glanville,	Harold James
Gooch,	George Peabody
Grant,	J. Corrie
Greenwood,	Sir Granville George
Greenwood,	Rt. Hon. Sir Hamar, Bart.
Hall,	Frederick
Harcourt,	Robert Venables Vernon
Hardie,	James Keir
Hart-Davies,	Thomas
Harvey,	Alexander Gordon Cummins
Harvey,	Thomas Edmund
Hazel,	Alfred Ernest William
Helme,	Sir Norval Watson
Hemmerde,	Edward George
Henderson,	Rt. Hon. Arthur
Higham,	John Sharp
Hogge,	James Myles
Holt,	Richard Durning
Hope,	John Deans
Horne,	Rev. Charles Silvester

John,	Edward Thomas
Johnson,	William
Jones,	Sir Edgar Rees
Jones,	Rt. Hon. Leifchild Stratten (Baron Rhayader 1932)
Jowett,	Rt. Hon. Frederick William
Kellaway,	Rt. Hon. Frederick George
King,	Joseph
Lamb,	Edmund George
Lamb,	Sir Ernest Henry
Lambert,	Richard Cornthwaite
Langley,	J. Batty
Lansbury,	Rt. Hon. George
Law,	Hugh Alexander
Lawson,	Sir Wilfred, Bart. (II)
Lea,	Hugh Cecil
Leese,	Sir Joseph Francis, Bart.
Lees-Smith,	Rt. Hon. Hastings Bertrand
Lehmann,	Rudolf Chambers
Luttrell,	Hugh Courtenay Fownes
Lynch,	Henry Finnis Blosse
Macdonald,	Rt. Hon. James Ramsay
Macdonald,	Rt. Hon. John Archibald Murray
Mackarness,	Frederick Michael Coleridge
MacNeill,	John Gordon Swift
Maddison,	Fred
Markham,	Sir Arthur Basil, Bart.
Martin,	Joseph
Mason,	David Marshall
McArthur,	William Alexander
McLaren,	Rt. Hon. Sir Charles Benjamin Bright, Bart.
Millar,	Sir James Duncan
Molteno,	Percy Alport
Money,	Sir Leo George Chiozza
Morrell,	Philip Edward
Nicholson,	Sir Charles Norris, Bart.
Nuttall,	Harry
Outhwaite,	Robert Leonard
Pearson,	Sir Weetman Dickinson, Bart.

Pickersgill,	Edward Hare
Pirie,	Duncan Vernon
Ponsonby,	Arthur Augustus William Harry
Raffan,	Peter Wilson
Rendall,	Athelstan
Richards,	Rt. Hon. Thomas
Richardson,	Arthur
Roberts,	Sir John Herbert, Bart.
Rowlands,	James
Rowtree,	Arnold Stephenson
Rutherford,	Vickerman Henzell
Samuel,	Sir Stuart Montagu, Bart.
Scott,	Alexander MacCallum
Scott,	Alfred Henry
Sherwell,	Arthur James
Shipman,	John Greenwood
Silcock,	Thomas Ball
Spicer,	Rt. Hon. Sir Albert, Bart.
Stewart,	Halley
Stuart,	James
Swann,	Rt. Hon. Sir Charles Ernest, Bart.
Thomas,	David Alfred
Thorne,	Rt. Hon. William James
Toulmin,	Sir George
Vivian,	Henry Harvey
Wadsworth,	John
Warner,	Sir Thomas Courtenay Theydon, Bart.
Watt,	Henry Anderson
Wedgwood,	Col. Rt. Hon. Josiah Clement
White,	James Dundas
Whitehouse,	John Howard
Williams,	John
Wilson,	Henry Joseph
Wilson,	John (III)
Wilson,	Philip Whitwell
Wing,	Thomas Edward
Yoxall,	Sir James Henry

APPENDIX 2

RADICALS

WHO GAINED SENIOR POSITIONS IN GOVERNMENT

These names have been compiled in the same way as Appendix 1. This list has been formed by an examination of the work *British Political Facts 1900-1985* by David & Gareth Butler, Macmillan, London, 1986, pp. 4-7. Below are those Radicals who were members of the Liberal Governments 1905-15. They were 'Ministers in Cabinet,' 'Ministers Not in Cabinet,' and 'Junior Ministers Attached.'

Acland,	Rt. Hon. Sir Francis Dyke, Bart.
Birrell,	Rt. Hon. Augustine
Bryce,	Rt. Hon. James (1st. Viscount 1914)
Burns,	Rt. Hon. John
Buxton,	Rt. Hon. Sydney Charles (1st. Earl 1920)
Campbell-Bannerman,	Rt. Hon. Sir Henry
Churchill,	Rt. Hon. Sir Winston Leonard Spencer
Ellis,	Rt. Hon. John Edward
Gladstone,	Rt. Hon. Herbert John
Haldane,	Rt. Hon. Richard Burdon (1st. Viscount 1911)
Harcourt,	Rt. Hon. Lewis Venables Vernon (1st. Viscount 1917)
Lloyd George,	Rt. Hon. David
Lough,	Rt. Hon. Thomas
Macnamara,	Rt. Hon. Thomas James
Mallet,	Charles Edward
Masterman,	Rt. Hon. Charles Frederick Gurney
McKenna,	Rt. Hon. Reginald
Morley,	Rt. Hon. John
Norton,	Capt. Cecil William
Roberts,	Charles Henry
Robertson,	Rt. Hon. John MacKinnon
Runciman,	Rt. Hon. Walter (Baron 1937)
Samuel,	Rt. Hon. Sir Herbert Louis (Viscount 1937)
Simon,	Rt. Hon. Sir John Allsebrook
Sinclair,	Rt. Hon. John (1st. Baron Pentland 1909)
Tennant,	Rt. Hon. Harold John
Trevelyan,	Rt. Hon. Sir Charles Philips, Bart.

Whitley,
Wood,

Rt. Hon. John Henry
Rt. Hon. Thomas McKinnon

APPENDIX 3

RADICAL MPs : SOME STATISTICS

PERSONAL BACKGROUND

If one looks at the personal background of the Radicals with a view to identifying common characteristics amongst them then interesting conclusions can be reached.⁽⁷⁰⁾

For the purposes of commenting on any regional variations it seems appropriate to divide the British Isles into nine regions. They are Scotland ; Wales ; Ireland ; the north of England, being those counties between the Scottish border and the Mersey-Humber line ; the Midlands ; East Anglia ; south-eastern England including London ; southern England, being Hampshire with the Isle of Wight and including Berkshire and Oxfordshire ; and finally the south-west including Wiltshire and Gloucestershire.

PLACE OF BIRTH

Half the Radical MPs were born in Scotland, Wales and the north of England in the respective percentages of 15, 8, and 27 of the total number of Radicals. The remaining half of the Radicals were born 12% in the Midlands, 5% East Anglia, 14% south-east, 3% south, 6.5% south-west, 3.5% in Ireland and 6% abroad. Of the 8 born abroad 3 came from Canada, 2 from Australia and 1 from south India, the remainder from outside the Empire. Apart from the somewhat obvious observation that the Irish Nationalists were born in Ireland it can be seen that of the 13 Labour and Independent Labour members all but 4 of them were born in the north and west of mainland Britain. Those remaining 4 consisted of 3 from the Midlands and 1 from East Anglia so that no Labour member was born anywhere in the truly southern part of England.

EDUCATION

It is not easy to locate the primary schooling of most Radicals and indeed 12 are described as having been educated privately. The task of identifying the Radicals education becomes somewhat easier when later and higher education are looked out. Half of them went to a Public school and 55% to university. This very high percentage indicates not only that the Radicals were very well-educated people but also came from wealthy surroundings. Having said that though it must be noted that no Labour members went to either Public schools or universities.

Of those who went to Public schools two-fifths went to 'The Seven'⁽⁷¹⁾ while the remainder were scattered over about three dozen other schools. Half of those who went to 'The Seven' went to Eton, ten. Interestingly, at the back of T. W. Bamford's book *Rise of the Public Schools* are various appendices, the eighth of which includes lists of people who have been to Public school and subsequently achieved considerable public success in various walks of life such as

in political, ecclesiastical and military occupations. Bamford concludes by summarizing the lists according to the number of most men going to the various Public schools.⁽⁷²⁾ Eton heads the list and is succeeded by Winchester, Dartmouth, Harrow, Rugby and Marlborough in that order and followed by 18 other schools. If one takes those top named ones and compares them to the findings with regard to the Radicals there are just two variations. One is that my list ordering would be that Winchester would come after Rugby in the following order: Eton, Harrow, Rugby, Winchester and Marlborough. However the biggest difference is the omission of Dartmouth. This indicates evidence of a distinctly non-military interest. That would be in keeping with the Radicals anti-imperialist, anti-jingo tendencies, their abhorrence of war, and their possession of strong pacifistic tendencies.⁽⁷³⁾

Of those Radicals who went on to university education 27 attended Oxford and 22 went to Cambridge which added to the 27 who went to other universities amounted to 55% of the total number of Radicals. At Oxford, Balliol College led with 7 past students, followed by Christ Church, Trinity and University Colleges each with 3 past students, and the remaining number spread over 9 other colleges. It is interesting to note Balliol's attraction, for though not Radicals, it can be seen that Sir Edward Grey was a past student (1880-84) and others in the Foreign Office such as Cecil Spring-Rice (1878-80); Harold Nicolson (1904-7) the diplomat and novelist who was the son of Arthur Nicolson; and also Eric Crowe (1922-5) only son of Sir Eyre A. Crowe Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

At Cambridge as many as 14 of the 22 Radicals attended Trinity while the rest went to 6 other colleges. The three Radical Buxtons, Noel, Charles and Sydney all went to Trinity, thereby indicating that for some families it was a tradition to attend a particular Oxbridge college.

Of those Radicals who went to universities other than Oxford or Cambridge a third studied in England, all in the capital; a third in Scotland, all at Glasgow and Edinburgh with the exception of one at St. Andrews;⁽⁷⁴⁾ and the remaining third in Wales, Ireland and abroad combined.

Quite apart from those who studied in university there were others who followed some tertiary course such as Sir James Henry Yoxall who studied at the Westminster Training College for Teachers (1876-78) where he was examined by Matthew Arnold, following which he taught in Sheffield, eventually becoming headmaster in 1887 of the Sharrow Lane board school.⁽⁷⁵⁾

MARRIAGE

Pre-occupation with education undoubtedly accounted for the fact that of the 138 Radicals being surveyed only one, namely William Abraham 'Mabon,' married before the age of twenty-one.⁽⁷⁶⁾ If one counts more than 5 Radicals marrying in any one year of age then most married at 22, 25-27, 29-30, 32-33 and 36. The optimum age was 27 when 10 married, though ages 22,

25 and 26 were not far behind with 8 each year. Only 17 or 12% did not marry at all a factor far made up for by the observation that 12 married twice and 1 even 4 times.⁽⁷⁷⁾ Athelstan Rendall who had first married at 26 did not consider himself too old to marry for the second time in 1946 at the age of 75. All those Labour MPs who married did so by 25, indicating an earlier age of marriage than most Radicals who were Liberals.

CONSTITUENCIES

If one discounts the Irish Nationalist MPs then interestingly enough the number of Radicals sitting for parliamentary seats in highland Britain was the same as in lowland Britain. That is, Scotland with 12% ; Wales 8.5% ; and the north of England 29.5% had the same number of Radical MPs as elsewhere combined in mainland Britain, Midlands 19%, East Anglia 3.5%, south-east including London 17.5%, south-west 8% and south of England 2%. However all the Labour Party MPs sat for seats in highland Britain during 1906-14 with the exception of 4, namely James Ramsay MacDonald who sat for Leicester 1906-18, William Johnson who sat for Nuneaton in Warwickshire 1906-18,⁽⁷⁸⁾ George Lansbury of Tower Hamlets Dec. 1910-Nov. 1912 and William Thorne who held West Ham S. Jan. 1906-Dec. 1918.

AGE AT FIRST CONTEST

If one studies the Radicals biographies to see at what age they first attempted to enter parliament it can be noted that Joseph Leese was the youngest at 23 years old when he unsuccessfully tried for Preston in 1868. It took him 24 more years to get elected for the Accrington division of Lancashire. Then he held it for the period until Jan. 1910 when he retired, with the only break being 1893-95 when he was Recorder of Manchester. He died just seven days before the war began between Britain and Germany in 1914.

The optimum age for trying was however 35 followed by 36 when 13 and 12 MPs respectively made their first bid. If one takes those ages at which 7 or more MPs first tried then 29, 32, 37, 38 and 43 were noted. A total of 51 (37%) had sat in parliament on an occasion before the great landslide election of 1906 while 39 (28%) actually made that General Election their first bid for power.

POLITICAL CLUBS

Political clubs were obviously considered to be very important for social contact between people of similar minds or for the possibilities of enhancing one's political career prospects for 101 (73%) of the Radicals belonged to a club. Indeed 61 (44%) belonged to more than one club. Baron Maurice De Forest belonged to as many as 4 as did David Mason, William McArthur, Percy Molteno and Sir Albert Spicer but Thomas Hart-Davies had the most with 5. Membership was spread over a total of about 38 clubs. 66 Radicals belonged to the 'National Liberal' and 50 to the 'Reform' while 17 were members of the 'Eighty club,' 5 of 'Bath' and 4 of the

‘Athenaeum.’ Interestingly, only Hubert Beaumont was a member of ‘Brooks’s’ whereas 10 of those 29 Radicals who had achieved senior positions in the government were members—obviously an exclusive clientele. The Athenaeum was not far behind for whereas only 4 (2.9%) of the 138 belonged to it, as many as 6 (21%) of their senior Radical colleagues were members. Additionally, by way of comparison, of the 3 clubs that Sir Edward Grey belonged to, two of them, were the Athenaeum and Brooks’s. Of those in the Labour Party only Ramsay MacDonald was to belong to any club, that is, the Athenaeum.

PARTY ALLEGIANCE

A quite striking feature of the fortunes of the Radicals was the number who chose to leave the Liberal Party in the period 1916–1934, 19 by 1925. An additional 3 other Liberals also found an alternative allegiance, though none with the Conservative Party. Meanwhile only William Johnson who joined the Liberals from Labour in April 1914 moved in the opposite direction. Of the 29 senior posted Radicals only Sir Charles Trevelyan moved politically to the Left and joined the Labour Party by 1922 and his loss was matched by the Rightward move back to the Conservative Party of Winston Churchill in 1924. All this seems to indicate that while those who had attained high office and success in their political careers were content with their lot, many Liberal backbenchers were so disgruntled that they chose to forsake their Party and try their political luck in the new and upcoming Party of the lower classes, the Labour Party. It bears out the idea that most Radicals had a distinctively Left-wing frame of mind.

INVOLVEMENT IN LOCAL AND SHIRE GOVERNMENT

Of the 138 Radicals 53 (38%) were active in local and shire government as JPs, while only 5 of their senior colleagues were so. Meanwhile 9 became Dept-Lieut. and only 1 a Lord Lieutenant of a county. Those Radicals who had entered high office produced 3 and 2 holders of those offices respectively. These figures would indicate that the highly placed Radicals were prone to take the top shire jobs but not prepared to accept lower positions of importance just as those Radicals outside the top group tended to fill the middle ranks of shire society but be unable to attain the higher reaches. It would seem to be a case of success breeding success! This distinction is further supported by the observation that 51 Radicals filled other posts of lesser, more local importance such as being on town councils or on the board of guardians while only 4 senior Radicals did likewise. Clearly those Radicals who achieved positions of high office either did not have the time or simply were not interested in truly local government.

MILITARY INVOLVEMENT

As if to bear out the earlier stated contention that Radicals disliked warlike tendencies it was noted in looking at their biographies that a mere 12 (8.7%) were connected with military activities or personages while of those who had achieved higher status only 3 (10%) fell into

that category.

BUSINESS INVOLVEMENT

The distinction of hierarchical status carried over into those who had business involvements, the figures being 43 (31%) 'ordinary' Radicals to just 2 'senior' Radicals. The latter were Thomas Lough a wholesale tea merchant and John Whitley who was a cotton spinner.

LAW

The legal profession attracted slightly fewer Radicals (24%). It is interesting to see how the traditionally imagined association of the law with the Establishment is borne out yet again, for no Labour member belonged to it and yet as many as 7 (24%) of the 29 highly positioned Radicals had a link. The most popular membership of Inns of law were Inner Temple (11) and Middle Temple (6) which accounted between them for half of the total.

JOURNALISTIC ACTIVITY

Involved in journalistic activity were 24 Radical MPs. Amongst others, they consisted of the proprietors of the *Bradford Observer* (Sir William Byles) ; *Reynolds News* (Sir James Dalziel) ; and of the *Athenaeum* and *Notes and Queries* (Sir Charles Dilke). Additionally they provided the editorship of the *Arbitrator* (Sir William Cremer) ; *The Miner and Labour Leader* (James Hardie) ; the *Daily Herald* (George Lansbury) and the *Daily News* (Rudolf Lehmann). The last-named personality was also on the staff of *Punch*. Also the philanthropic Quaker Arnold Rowntree was Director of the Westminster Press and Associated Papers.

TRADE UNION ACTIVITY

Of the 138 only 17 were active in trade union affairs. Somewhat predictably, all but 3 of the Labour members had a history of such activity and equally unsurprisingly only 2 of the Radicals who had gained positions of governmental responsibility had any such connexions. The two exceptions were John Burns and Thomas Macnamara.

TITLES AND HONOURS

18 (13%) Radicals were created Bart., 13 (9%) became Barons and only Christopher Addison (1945), Hamar Greenwood (1937), David A. Thomas (1918) and Weetman Pearson (1916) received a Viscounty. None was awarded an Earldom. Only Christopher Addison became a KG while the historian George P. Gooch was the sole recipient of the Order of Merit. 17 were Knighted, including Alfred Billson who died in July 1907 before there was the time to gazette it. 6 received KC and another 6 held honorary degrees from various universities. Interestingly, it was the Labour member Ramsay MacDonald who held most honorary degrees, 5, being LL. D. from Edinburgh, Glasgow, Wales, McGill and Toronto Universities. About 16%

of other Radicals held almost two dozen other awards during their lifetimes such as CBE, GCVO, KBE and KCSI. It is particularly interesting, in view of the strong Radical desire for settling international disputes by arbitration and their abhorrence of war that two of them were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. William Cremer (Lib. and Lab.) was a recipient in only the 3rd year of its creation, in 1903, and donated his £8,000 prize money to the International Arbitration League, while Arthur Henderson (Labour) was to receive it in 1934. In total, 58 (42%) of the Radicals were honoured and titled or were elected to some learned body such as the Royal Geographical Society during their lifetime while the corresponding figure for those Radicals who attained high office in the Liberal Governments 1906-14 was about 20 (69%).

PRIVY COUNSELLORS

Only 32 (23%) of the Radicals were made Privy Counsellors (PC) while all but 3 of their senior colleagues were granted that privilege of the sovereign. The 3 exceptions were Charles E. Mallet, Charles H. Roberts and Captain Cecil Norton. This percentage discrepancy could indicate that for those who achieved high governmental positions there was entry to a very select 'club' namely recognition that they had become part of the Establishment.

AUTHORS

39 (28%) of the 138 Radicals could be labelled as authors. Some of the works were in a light vein such as the comedies *An Angel Unawares* and *A Question of Age* by Robert Harcourt, the plays of Edward Hemmerde and the novels of James Yoxall such as *The Courtier Stoops* (1911). But for the most part most of the works were of a much weightier tome.

Some of the writings related to the professional pre-occupations of individual Radicals. For example Rudolf C. Lehmann who worked on the staff of *Punch* during 1890-1919 produced *Mr. Punch's Prize Novels* in 1893.⁽⁷⁹⁾ Likewise Balthazar Foster who had extensive medical training wrote works on medical matters. G. P. Gooch was a renowned historian. The Congregational minister the Rev. Charles Horne wrote such works as *The Story of the London Missionary Society*, *History of the Free Churches* and a *Life of David Livingstone*.

Other works related to countries in which the author had lived or was living. Henry Cotton, for example, who had been born in Kumbakonam, South India in 1845 and had worked for the Indian Civil Service during 1867-1902 and who reached a career climax as Chief Commissioner of Assam⁽⁸⁰⁾ wrote extensively about India. 'Nearer to home', Edward John and John Edwards both wrote several works about Wales. The latter produced a *Short History of the Welsh People* and also *From Village Green to Downing Street* (1908) being a life of Lloyd George.

Some literary topics were purely of an idiosyncratic nature or used a personal skill such as translation of works from a foreign language. For example Granville Greenwood wrote several works on Shakespeare and James White on nautical subjects, while Thomas Hart-Davies made translations of *Catullus* and Gogol's *Revizor*. Clearly Hilaire Belloc stands on his own merits

as one of the greatest British literary figures of the first half of the 20th century.

As domestic political issues were of far greater importance to the majority of Radicals than foreign policy matters it was not surprising to see a preponderance of topics relating to the former rather than the latter. Socio-economic issues such as the causes of unemployment with its resulting effects,⁽⁸¹⁾ housing;⁽⁸²⁾ industry;⁽⁸³⁾ the land question,⁽⁸⁴⁾ legal matters relating to magistrates, and divorce reform;⁽⁸⁵⁾ temperance issues;⁽⁸⁶⁾ arguments for and against women's suffrage;⁽⁸⁷⁾ educational debate;⁽⁸⁸⁾ and the Irish problem⁽⁸⁹⁾ formed the basic diet.

Very little was written by comparison on foreign affairs and usually of an indirect nature relating to general international issues rather than to specific countries. International law was the focus of Atherley-Jones's attention, while L. G. C. Money wrote on money matters such as his *British Trade and the Zollverein Issue* (1902). H. F. B. Lynch was an example of a Radical MP writing on a foreign region for he wrote about Persia in various articles in the proceedings of learned societies such as the 'Central Asian Society' and the 'Persia Society.' He also wrote *Armenia: Travels and Studies* in two volumes in 1901.⁽⁹⁰⁾

Such a wide literary output by the Radicals strengthens the argument made earlier with regard to their educational background that most of them were well-educated individuals. They would have had no difficulty in articulating their views inside or outside parliament. Therefore the question raised is why the Radicals appear to have been so ineffective in influencing the government of the day? The answer is that they acted as individuals in responding to matters of policy, often in opposition to one another through failing to act in a unified manner. Their literary diversity reflected their political approach. Faced with the clear-cut, single-mindedness of some senior Liberal politicians, such as Sir Edward Grey, their approach seemed ad hoc and weak. For those people of such independent thinking, to have united into a single movement, would indeed have been a considerable achievement probably requiring nothing short of the demise of the Liberal Party itself. That, even they would not countenance.

Notes

- (1) It should be stated at the outset, that the author of this article has a particular interest in analysing who the Radicals were from the point of view of studying their attitudes to foreign policy issues, especially with regard to European affairs.
- (2) *The Historical Journal*, Vol. XIII, No. 4, (1970), pp. 653-682.
- (3) *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 6, No. 4, 1971, pp. 93-120.
- (4) *European Studies Review*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1973, pp. 39-61.
- (5) *The Historical Journal*, Vol. XVII, No. 3, 1974, pp. 551-574.
- (6) H. Sanderson Furniss, *Charles Sydney Buxton: A Memoir* (1914), p. 103.
- (7) Catherine Ann Cline, 'E. D. Morel: from the Congo to the Rhine' in: A. J. A. Morris (ed.), *Edwardian Radicalism 1900-1914* (1974), p. 240.
- (8) Roy Douglas, *The History of the Liberal Party 1895-1970* (1971), p. 92.

- (9) Frank Eyck, *G. P. Gooch : A Study In History And Politics* (1982), p. 146.
- (10) A. J. P. Taylor, *The Trouble Makers* (1969), p. 87.
- (11) A. J. A. Morris (ed.), *Edwardian Radicalism 1900-1914* (1974), p. 9.
- (12) Joseph O. Baylen and Norbert J. Gossman (eds.), *Biographical Dictionary of Modern British Radicals. Volume 3 : 1870-1914.* (1988), p. 3.
- (13) A. J. P. Taylor, *The Trouble Makers* (1969), p. 87.
- (14) H. V. Emy, *Liberals, Radicals and Social Politics 1892-1914* (1973), p. 187.
- (15) *ibid*, pp. 185-6 and 279.
- (16) George L. Bernstein, *Liberalism And Liberal Politics In Edwardian England* (1986), p. 9.
- (17) H. V. Emy, *Liberals, Radicals and Social Politics 1892-1914* (1973), pp. 77-78.
- (18) Michael Stenton and Stephen Lees (eds.), *Who's Who of British Members of Parliament. Volume II. 1886-1918* (1978), and *Volume III. 1919-1945* (1979).

N. B Henceforth all the figures in this article, unless specifically stated to be otherwise, will be based on compilations from the above works by Stenton and Lees. The figures, unless stated otherwise, will refer to APPENDIX 1 of 138 'Radicals Inside Parliament 1906-14.' APPENDIX 2 consists of 'those Radicals who attained senior governmental positions of responsibility' or similar wording. APPENDIX 3 gives personal statistics derived from the same source.

- (19) A. J. A. Morris (ed.), *Edwardian Radicalism 1900-1914* (1974), p. 7.
- (20) Peter Rowland, *The Last Liberal Governments : The Promised Land 1905-1910.* (1968), p. 39.
- (21) That part in quotation marks ; quoted in A. J. A. Morris (ed.), *Edwardian Radicalism 1900-1914* (1974), p. 8.
- (22) Blanche E. C. Dugdale, *Arthur James Balfour* (1936), Vol. 1, pp. 438-39.
Written in reply to a letter received from Lady Salisbury 17 January 1906.
- (23) 11 April 1908.
- (24) H. V. Emy, *Liberals, Radicals and Social Politics 1892-1914* (1973), p. 285.
- (25) *ibid*, p. 149.
- (26) *ibid*, p. 287.
- (27) A. J. P. Taylor, *The Trouble Makers* (1969), p. 95.
- (28) *ibid*, p. 96.
- (29) *Hansard* House of Commons. Parliamentary Debates.
5th series. vol. xxxii. col. 2585-91.
- (30) A. J. P. Taylor, *The Trouble Makers* (1969), p. 96.
- (31) A. J. A. Morris, *Radicalism Against War, 1906-1914* (1972), p. 28.
Words in quotation marks from Clement Attlee.
- (32) C. R. Attlee, *The Labour Party In Perspective* (1937), p. 200.
- (33) A. J. P. Taylor, *The Trouble Makers* (1969), p. 95.
- (34) D. W. Bebbington, *The Nonconformist Conscience* (1982), p. 2.
- (35) *ibid*, p. 7.
- (36) *ibid*, pp. 8-9.
- (37) *ibid*, p. 1.

Originally : George White to the Baptist Union Assembly, April 1903, quoted in 'The Nonconformist conscience in its relation to our national life,' *Baptist Hand Book* (1904), p. 113.

- (38) Stephen Koss, *Nonconformity in Modern British Politics* (1975), p. 12.

(39) *ibid*, p. 45.

Originally: 'Presidential address, 9th annual meeting of the National Council 1904; quoted in W. T. Stead, *The Revival of 1905* London (1905), p. 12.

(40) Stephen Koss, *Nonconformity in Modern British Politics* (1975), p. 46.

(41) *ibid*, p. 55.

(42) *ibid*, p. 58.

(43) *ibid*, p. 58.

(44) *ibid*, p. 63.

(45) *ibid*, p. 69.

Liberation Society=7 Methodists, 2 Baptists and 2 Society of Friends. Minutes of the executive committee for 18 December 1905. Liberation Society Records A/LIB/9.

(46) Stephen Koss, *Nonconformity in Modern British Politics* (1975), p. 75.

(47) *Times*, 18 June 1931.

(48) Editor of the *British Weekly* 1886-1923.

(49) Stephen Koss, *Nonconformity in Modern British Politics* (1975), p. 88.

(50) *ibid*, p. 78.

(51) *ibid*, p. 78.

(52) *ibid*, p. 107.

Originally: *Methodist Recorder*, 20 January 1910.

(53) Stephen Koss, *Nonconformity in Modern British Politics* (1975), p. 110.

(54) *ibid*, p. 121.

(55) *ibid*, p. 124.

(56) *ibid*, pp. 129-130.

(57) *ibid*, p. 133.

(58) See *ibid*, pp. 134 and 144.

(59) Charles Booth, *Life and Labour of the People in London: Third Series: Religious Influences* London (1972), vol. 7, p. 218, quoted in D. W. Bebbington, *The Nonconformist Conscience* (1982), p. 16.

(60) J. G. Bowran, *The Life of Arthur Guttery, D. D.* London (n.d.), p. 63, quoted in D. W. Bebbington, *The Nonconformist Conscience* (1982), p. 16.

(61) Joseph O. Baylen and Norbert J. Gossman (eds.) *Biographical Dictionary of Modern British Radicals. Volume 3: 1870-1914* (1988), p. 2.

(62) A. J. A. Morris, *Radicalism Against War, 1906-14* (1972), p. 27.

(63) H. V. Emy, *Liberals, Radicals and Social Politics 1892-1914* (1973), p. 290.

(64) A. J. A. Morris, (ed.) *Edwardian Radicalism 1900-1914* (1974), pp. 8-9.

(65) Viscount Morley, *Recollections* (1917), Vol. 2, p. 175. 23rd June 1906.

(66) *Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol. 13, p. 93.

(67) *ibid*, Vol. 13, p. 299.

(68) *ibid*, Vol. 13, p. 841.

(69) *ibid*, Vol. 1, p. 438.

(70) This analysis is based on the 138 Radicals listed at APPENDIX 1 who were MPs during the period 1906-1914. However, the 29 Radicals who gained senior positions in government, named in APPENDIX 2, will also be commented on for purposes of comparison.

- (71) 'The Seven': Eton, Rugby, Harrow, Winchester, Westminster, Charterhouse, Shrewsbury.
T. W. Bamford, *Rise of the Public Schools* (1967), 'Author's Notes' at front of book and p. 331.
- (72) *ibid*, p. 249.
- (73) Most First Sea Lords have attended Dartmouth, Sir J. Jellicoe and Earl Mountbatten to name just two.
- (74) James Stuart.
- (75) *Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. 1922-30, p. 931.
- (76) Remembering that 21 was then regarded as the age of reaching adulthood.
- (77) William James Thorne, CBE, 1857-1946.
- (78) Became a Liberal in April 1914.
- (79) *Who Was Who*, Vol. 1929-1940, p. 798.
- (80) Joseph O. Baylen and Norbert J. Gossman (ed.), *Biographical Dictionary of Modern British Radicals. Volume 3 : 1870-1914* (1988), p. 215.
- (81) e. g. Percy Alden and George Barnes.
- (82) e. g. Percy Alden.
- (83) e. g. Charles McLaren.
- (84) e. g. Peter Raffan and James White.
- (85) e. g. Athelston Rendall.
- (86) e. g. Arthur Sherwell.
- (87) e. g. Alexander Scott - against women's suffrage.
- (88) e. g. James Scott and John Whitehouse.
- (89) e. g. John MacNeill.
- (90) *The British Library General Catalogue of Printed Books to 1975* (BLC), (1980), Vol. 203, p. 368.

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