

# **Reconsidering the “Edwardian Radical Right”, 1903-1918**

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## Abbreviations

AWL (Anti-Waste League)

BEU (British Empire Union)

BF (British Fascisti)

BL (British Library)

BLO (Bodleian Library)

BLSUU (British League in Support of Ulster and the Union)

BML (Bimetallic League)

BUF (British Union of Fascists)

BWL (British Worker's League)

CA (Churchill College Archives)

CIGS (Chief of the Imperial General Staff)

CRL (Cadbury Research Library)

EIA (Empire Industries Association)

EMB (Empire Marketing Board)

FTU (Free Trade Union)

HC (House of Commons)

HL (House of Lords)

IML (Imperial Maritime League)

IUA (Imperial Unionist Association)

IWC (Imperial War Conference)

IWM (Imperial War Museum)

LNU (League of Nations Union)

LWC (Liberal War Committee)

NAM (National Army Museum)

NAU (National Agricultural Union)

NCA (National Constitutional Association)

NDP (National Democratic Party)

NFTL (National Fair Trade League)

NL (Navy League)

NMM (National Maritime Museum)

NRS (National Records of Scotland)

NSL (National Service League)

NUCA (National Union of Conservative Associations)

NWAC (National War Aims Committee)

PA (Parliamentary Archives)

PEC (Paris Economic Conference)

PER (Paris Economic Resolutions)

PRONI (Public Records Office of Northern Ireland)

PUE (People's Union for Economy)

RCI (Royal Colonial Institute)

SDF (Social Democratic Federation)

SNDC (Socialist National Defence Committee)

SWC (Supreme War Council)

TC (Tariff Commission)

TNA (The National Archives)

TRL (Tariff Reform League)

UBC (Unionist Business Committee)

UETL (United Empire Trade League)

UPG (Ulster Provisional Government)

USRC (Unionist Social Reform Committee)

UUC (Ulster Unionist Council)

UVF (Ulster Volunteer Force)

UWC (Unionist War Committee)

WSRO (West Sussex Record Office)

WUTRA (Women's Unionist and Tariff Reform Association)

## Introduction

### *The Radical Right in Historiography*

The history of the Edwardian Radical Right is intertwined with that of the wider Conservative and Unionist Party. Most historical studies of the Unionist Party—an alliance between the Conservatives and anti-Irish Home Rule Liberal Unionists until their merger in 1912—mention the Radical Right. This is in part owing to the role played by the Radical Right in the debates over policy (Tariff Reform being the most prominent) but also in those over National Service, defence, social reform, Ireland, and party organisation and presentation.<sup>1</sup> Except for National Service, these debates did not originate in the Edwardian era itself. They were the results of ongoing discussions since the 1880s within the Conservatives, and then the Unionists, over how to confront partisan opponents (the Liberals, Irish Home Rulers, and the emergent Labour movement) and global challenges (emerging military and economic rivals to Britain and fears of imperial ‘disintegration’).<sup>2</sup> Debates on the strength of the Radical Right have usually been used to examine the state of the Unionist Party during the Edwardian era and its ability to respond to these problems. This is in part because the Radical Right emerged as a result of a perceived failure by the Unionist Party to effectively deal with these matters, as manifested especially by the Tariff Reform movement.

In this study, the term ‘Radical Right’ will be used throughout, as it has been in prior studies of the Edwardian Radical Right including those by Phillips, and Geoffrey Searle. The term

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Tariff Reform’ refers to the debate over adopting preferential duties while ‘National Service’ refers to the debate over introducing compulsory military training for males.

<sup>2</sup> E.H.H. Green, *The Crisis of Conservatism: The Politics, Economics, and Ideology of the Conservative Party, 1880-1914*, (London, 1995), 16-7.

'Radical' will reflect Joseph Chamberlain's argument in a speech to the Conservative Party Conference in November 1905 that a radical was "one who, seeing a grievance anywhere, will pluck it up by the roots."<sup>3</sup> Such a description suited the Radical Right, who found numerous grievances and believed its solutions indeed plucked up those problems by the roots.

Radical Right was not a contemporary term. Even if it had been, 'Radical' was often a pejorative term used by Unionists against the Liberals. Even the applicability of the term 'Right' can be questioned, at least relative to critics within the Unionist Party. A number of Radical Right adherents defined themselves as forward-thinking and opposed to a purely anti-Socialist platform. Early in the Tariff Reform debate, Prime Minister Arthur Balfour even described Joseph Chamberlain's faction as the Left of the Unionist Party and his Free Trader enemies as the Right.<sup>4</sup>

A number of contemporary labels were given. For example, Peter Cain's study of arch-imperialists such as Lord Alfred Milner, MPs Leopold Amery and W.A.S. Hewins, and political journalists and authors like J.L. Garvin and Richard Jebb, noted that these men at times described themselves as 'Constructive Imperialists.' These Constructive Imperialists sought to consolidate Britain and the Dominions into a single entity, with Tariff Reform as the first step.<sup>5</sup> Yet, in this thesis, it is better to understand the Radical Right as a part of the Constructive Imperialist history, spanning the years 1903-1918 whereas the Constructive Imperialists spanned the 1880s to the 1930s.

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<sup>3</sup> *The Times*, 22/11/05, 12.

<sup>4</sup> D. Boyce (ed.), *The Crisis of British Unionism: The Domestic Papers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Selborne, 1885-1922*, (London, 1987), 31.

<sup>5</sup> P. Cain, 'The Economic Philosophy of Constructive Imperialism', C. Navari (ed.), *British Politics and the Spirit of the Age: Political Concepts in Action*, (Keele, 1996), 41.

Another contemporary term was the title 'Progressive Unionists', coined by James Harris, 5<sup>th</sup> Earl of Malmesbury, in the introduction to the essays by the hard-line Tariff Reformers known as 'the Confederates' in the book, *The New Order*.<sup>6</sup> The Unionist Peer Richard Verney, 19<sup>th</sup> Baron Willoughby de Broke, identified by Gregory Phillips as the personification of the Radical Right, wrote articles in *The National Review* detailing his idea of 'National Toryism'.<sup>7</sup> The failure to offer a single contemporary title for the movement reflected the Radical Right's failure to organise its own adherents into a formal group.<sup>8</sup>

The Radical Right came under greater study when the Edwardian Conservative Party's previous relative lack of historical attention was redressed in the 1970s and 1980s. The two primary points of debate have been the Radical Right's coherence and its strength within the Unionist Party. Among the first contributors was Gregory Phillips, whose study of the Ditcher<sup>9</sup> peers who voted against the 1911 Parliament Act showed that they were politically active and had a programme beyond negativism.<sup>10</sup> He, however, isolated the Ditchers from the broader Radical Right, arguing that the presence of the Cecils—Unionist Free-Traders—precluded the Ditchers from being a part of the Radical Right's history.<sup>11</sup>

Geoffrey Searle, in contrast, positioned the Radical Right as opponents of the socio-economic status quo in Edwardian Britain on the grounds that the status quo was

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<sup>6</sup> J. Harris, 'Unionist Philosophy', J. Harris, (ed.), *The New Order: Studies in Unionist Policy*, (London, 1908), 6.

<sup>7</sup> G. Phillips, 'Lord Willoughby de Broke and the Politics of Radical Toryism, 1909-1914', *Journal of British Studies*, 20:1, (1980), 205-224.

<sup>8</sup> G. Searle, 'Critics of Edwardian Society: The Case of the Radical Right', A. O'Day (ed.), *The Edwardian Age: Conflict and Stability, 1900-1914*, (London, 1979), 95.

<sup>9</sup> 'Ditchers', who were also known as 'Die-Hards' during the 1910-11 constitutional crisis, were Peers who voted against the Act as opposed to 'Hedgers' who abstained.

<sup>10</sup> G. Phillips, 'The Die-Hards and the Myth of the 'Backwoodsman'', *Journal of British Studies*, 16 (1977), 108.

<sup>11</sup> G. Phillips, *The Die-Hards: Aristocratic Society and Politics in Edwardian England*, (Cambridge Mass 1999), 114.



antithetical to national and imperial unity.<sup>12</sup> Searle did not exclude the Ditchers from the Radical Right, but also argued that a split between technocratic Milnerites and populist Die-Hards<sup>13</sup> existed in the pre-war period.<sup>14</sup> For him, Milnerites and Die-Hards differed on “the desirability...of Coalition [government]...[and] how best to respond to the Irish crisis...” with Milnerites supposedly pro-compromise on a federalist model and Die-Hards opposed.<sup>15</sup> Yet the same distinction was made by Robert Scally when he located the Milnerites as part of a Social Imperialist movement embodied by the wartime Lloyd George Coalition. Scally felt that if there was collaboration between the two (Milnerites and Die-Hards) it only came as “an alternative to...coalition, though a poor one...”<sup>16</sup> He also depicted the Tariff Reform League (TRL) and National Service League (NSL) as being in an ambivalent relationship at best.<sup>17</sup> This thesis, however, will show that this distinction—especially during the Ulster Crisis—has been overstated and that there was much greater overlap between ‘Milnerites’ and Die-Hards in personnel and ideas than has been argued previously.

Alan Sykes, meanwhile, used Phillips’ positioning of de Broke as the embodiment of the Radical Right to question its reformist character. He showed that, for all its rhetoric, de Broke’s approach to social reform was closer to that of Lord Salisbury, son of the former Prime Minister and one of the most small ‘c’ conservative members of the party, than it was to groups like the Unionist Social Reform Committee.<sup>18</sup> He also argued that the Radical

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<sup>12</sup> G. Searle, ‘Revolt from The Right in Edwardian Britain’, P. Kennedy, A. Nicholls (ed.), *Nationalist and Racialist Movements in Britain and Germany Before 1914*, (Oxford, 1981), 21-39.

<sup>13</sup> In this thesis, ‘Die-Hards’ will refer to the term as used by historians for sections of the Conservative Right during the 1900-1930s, but ‘Ditchers’ for the specific 1910-11 crisis over the 1911 Parliament Act.

<sup>14</sup> Searle, ‘Revolt From The Right’, 33. ‘Milnerites’ refers to admirers and allies of Lord Alfred Milner.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 33

<sup>16</sup> R. Scally, *The Origins of the Lloyd-George Coalition: The Politics of Social Imperialism, 1900-1918*, 224.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>18</sup> A. Sykes, ‘The Radical Right and the Crisis of Conservatism before The First World War’, *Historical Journal*, 26:3, (1983), 675-6.

Right—as embodied in the Tariff Reform movement—was a spent and submerged force by 1912-13. It had failed to either pass Tariff Reform or to give the Unionists a ‘positive’ programme to counter the Liberals or Labour.<sup>19</sup> E.H.H. Green, meanwhile, claimed that the Radical Right was a minor part of the Unionist Party and should be regarded separately from ‘Radical Conservatives’ who were more reconciled with the Unionist mainstream. He used Leo Maxse, editor of *The National Review*, and William Bridgeman, a Unionist whip, as respective examples of both.<sup>20</sup>

In recent years, more emphasis has been placed on attempting to find a formal dividing line within the Radical Right, but also on its survival into the war. David Thackeray’s article on the collapse of the TRL showed that it survived its pre-war nadir and had a wartime resurgence, if then to be broken by the split between ‘Gradualist Unionists’ and ‘Imperial Activists.’<sup>21</sup> In a wider study of the Conservative Party he argued that a line of division could be drawn between the moderate TRL, Women’s Unionist and Tariff Reform Association (WUTRA) and British Covenant and the more radical and violent British League to Support Ulster and the Union (BLSUU), British Workers’ League (BWL) and British Empire Union (BEU). Thackeray depicted the former as better able to adapt to the realities and changing nature of British politics while the latter, more bellicose and “radical right” groups, expired into irrelevance.<sup>22</sup>

The most recent work, however, has been Neil Fleming’s study of the Conservative Right. He divides the Radical Right into three sub-vectors: ‘Empire-first Unionists’, the ‘legion of

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<sup>19</sup> A. Sykes, *Tariff Reform in British Politics, 1903-1913*, (London, 1979), 237.

<sup>20</sup> Green, *Crisis of Conservatism*, 239-41.

<sup>21</sup> D. Thackeray, ‘The Crisis of the Tariff Reform League and the Division of ‘Radical Conservatism’, 1903-1922’, *History*, 91:301, (2006), 45-54.

<sup>22</sup> D. Thackeray, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age: Conservative Cultures and the Challenge of Mass Politics in Early Twentieth-Century England*, (Manchester, 2013), 80, 193.

leagues' (the TRL, NSL, NL, IML, etc.), and Ditchers. While he notes there was overlap between the three in personnel and ideas, he also argues there was little to unify them beyond desiring a stronger programme from the Unionist front bench for their individual causes.<sup>23</sup> If there was a Radical Right, it had a moderate size and influence over the Unionist Party and it failed to provide a viable alternative leader or a coherent philosophy as an alternative to the Unionist leadership.<sup>24</sup> If it did succeed in forcing the Unionist Party to reform itself through Balfour's resignation in 1911 and restructuring its organisation, the Radical Right still failed to create an organisation for itself even during the First World War.<sup>25</sup>

This dissertation, however, will argue that the Radical Right, whilst indeed lacking a single leader or a coherent platform, did have an ideology that bound it together. It will use Eric Foner's definition of ideology as less a dogma and more a system of beliefs, values, fears, and reflexes which held to common problems and solutions.<sup>26</sup> Or, as Searle phrased it, the Radical Right, despite at times being divided on how to approach certain crises or events, "owed allegiance to a common set of attitudes and viewed politics in a way which gave them a distinct identity."<sup>27</sup> The thesis will seek to display that there was a strand of the Unionist right wing which possessed a coherent ideological platform, if lacking in cohesive organisation or a definitive 'manifesto' document. Furthermore, this strand's platform was primarily a response to Britain's perceived decline through Tariff Reform (for economic,

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<sup>23</sup> N. Fleming, *Britannia's Zealots, Volume 1: Tradition, Empire, and the Forging of the Conservative Right*, 31-2, 35.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 75, 207.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.

<sup>26</sup> E. Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, and Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War*, (Oxford, 1995), 4-5.

<sup>27</sup> Searle, 'Critics of Edwardian Society', 85.

industrial, and trade decline and a means of integrating the empire) and National Service (for military decline).

### *Measuring Adherence*

This dissertation utilises secondary sources, newspapers, diaries, memoirs, speeches, contemporary publications, and private papers to analyse the Edwardian Radical Right's vision of Britain's problems and how to resolve them. These sources have been re-evaluated to argue that the Edwardian Radical Right represented a coherent ideology within the Conservative Right that sought to respond to both internal and external crises it believed Britain to be undergoing. This ideology was an outgrowth of a defensive imperial-nationalism.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, this dissertation will also highlight the Radical Right's self-admitted failure to properly articulate this ideology and to support it through a formal and cohesive organisation. These sources also help show the Radical Right's lack of recognition of (or refusal to admit to) problems facing its platform other than the failure to provide a single, coherent philosophical position or 'constructive' offer for the Unionist Party to present to the electorate. This, combined with the inability either to directly establish a platform or represent such a platform through an individual leader or cohesive popular group, contributed to the Edwardian Radical Right's ultimate failure. It also masked the extent to which there was an agreed understanding of Britain's problems and the potential solutions.

In prior pages, this dissertation has used 'it' to refer to the Edwardian Radical Right unless directly referencing individuals or groups of individuals within the Radical Right. This is

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<sup>28</sup> 'Imperial-nationalism' refers to the belief that Britain and its Dominions constituted a 'British Nation' and that closer political, economic, and military ties were necessary.

because 'it' is superior to 'them' as a means of expressing the Radical Right's common ideological position but failure to create a cohesive organisation. Ultimately, the Radical Right was an ideology in search of a name and formal body of devotees. This is also why the Edwardian Radical Right's supporters will be referred to as 'adherents' rather than 'members', in contrast with the term 'legion of leagues', which encompassed a number of pressure groups in the Edwardian era and their members. The Radical Right participated in several of these leagues, given that these pressure groups were—outside publications—the Radical Right's primary means of campaigning for its platform. However, only the IML, a right-wing breakaway from the Navy League, could be called an exclusively 'Radical Right pressure group' in that its founders and nearly all its leading members were adherents of the Radical Right. Even then, as detailed in Chapter III, the IML lacked a number of Radical Right adherents who remained committed to the NL and helped reform it. The same was the case for the National Party in 1917, which was the closest to a Radical Right political party, but many remained within the Unionist Party. The Radical Right was not a formal or organised pressure group or party faction, and its role in leagues such as the TRL, NL, and NSL involved co-habitation with more moderate Tariff Reformers, right-wing Liberals, and traditional Conservatives respectively.

Thus, the Radical Right's primary political activities came in two forms. The first was its attempts to coalesce into an organisation and/or adopt a single platform and manifesto. The second was influencing those bodies it participated in (the TRL, NSL, NL, etc., the Unionist Party, and the Lloyd George Coalition). In this it diverged from political trends in Edwardian Britain, not least as regarded the role of women. Individual women can be regarded as adherents of the Radical Right, primarily Violet Cecil (confidant and later wife to Lord Milner in 1921 after her first husband's death) and owner of the *Morning Post* Liliás Frances, known

as Lady Bathurst. During the First World War, women's suffrage activist Christabel Pankhurst would be another. Violet Cecil shared a 'masculine' conception of the British Empire (as defined by historians like Eliza Riedi) and attempted to convince other imperialist groups like the Victoria League to endorse Tariff Reform.<sup>29</sup>

Lady Bathurst used her control of the *Morning Post* to hire editors like H.A. Gwynne and fire his predecessor Fabian Ware, who himself had been given the role in no short measure because of his alignment with her political views.<sup>30</sup> None the less, the Edwardian Radical Right's masculine worldview and its lack of formal organisation ensured that its adherents during this period were primarily male and often exclusionary towards women, particularly in the militarist sphere. Thus, the Radical Right were among those within the NSL who firmly rejected attempts to give women activists more influence, unlike the WUTRA in the Tariff Reform campaign.<sup>31</sup>

The nature of the Radical Right also meant that there was no single position on political debates directly involving women such as the suffrage question. The Radical Right differed little from the general Unionist line and neither those pro nor those anti-women's suffrage felt it worth fighting over. De Broke even apologised to Maxse for the backlash of readers to his article in the *National Review* which supported women's suffrage.<sup>32</sup> In parliamentary votes, there were some who consistently voted for (or at least never against) women's suffrage such as Amery, George Wyndham, Alan Burgoyne, George Touche, John Rolleston, and J.F. Remnant. There were firmer opponents who included Page Croft, Halford

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<sup>29</sup> E. Riedi, 'Imperialist Women and Conservative Activism in Early-Twentieth Century Britain: The Political World of Violet Milner', *Women's History Review*, 22:6, (2013), 930-1, 936.

<sup>30</sup> K. Wilson, *A Study in the History and Politics of the 'Morning Post', 1905-1926*, (Lewiston, 1990), 3-4.

<sup>31</sup> M. Hendley, *Organized Patriotism and the Crucible of War: Popular Imperialism in Britain, 1914-1932*, (Montreal, 2012), 14.

<sup>32</sup> De Broke-L. Maxse, 1 November 1913, WSRO, Maxse 468 443.

Mackinder, Rowland Hunt, J.W. Hills, Rupert Gwynne, Martin Archer-Shee, Evelyn Cecil, Lord Winterton, T.E. Hickman, and George Lloyd. Others like Charles Bathurst, Arthur Steel-Maitland, George Tryon, Charles Hunter, and Ion Hamilton Benn sometimes voted in favour and other times against.<sup>33</sup> This shows that the Radical Right were not much engaged in questions of women's suffrage, focusing more on subjects like Tariff Reform and National Service.

Outside the formal activist sphere, women did enjoy social influence that could lead to political influence, one example being Lady Derby during the Victorian era, the Edwardian era being similar in this regard.<sup>34</sup> Yet this could also work the other way as Violet Cecil, being married into the Cecil family who were often anti-Tariff Reform and anti-National Service, took a lesser role in the TRL and WUTRA for the sake of those ties.<sup>35</sup> The Radical Right's ideology, despite being conceived of as modern by its adherents, was actually behind its own time in its failure to properly utilise women's activism or the feminine sphere as a whole. In part, this was because the nature of the Radical Right structure gave little opportunity for women to insert themselves into that structure, unless there was a defined role such as ownership of a newspaper. By contrast, after 1906, the wider Unionist Party was able to reform its electoral appeal to be less purely male-centred populist in nature.<sup>36</sup>

The Edwardian Radical Right's characteristics resembled those assigned by Michael Freedman's to the New Liberalism. Lacking a sub-culture akin to that of the Fabians, the

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<sup>33</sup> *Hansard*, HC Debate, Parliamentary Franchise (Women) Bill, 12/07/10, Vol. 19 cc327-9. *Hansard*, HC Debate, Parliamentary Franchise (Women) Bill 28/03/12, Vol. 36 cc727-8. *Hansard*, HC Debate, Representation of the People (Women) Bill 06/05/13, Vol. 52 cc2001-5.

<sup>34</sup> J. Davey, *Mary, Countess of Derby, and the Politics of Victorian Britain*, (Oxford, 2019).

<sup>35</sup> Riedi, 'Violet Milner', 938.

<sup>36</sup> J. Lawrence, 'Class and Gender in the Making of Urban Toryism, 1880-1914', *The English Historical Review*, 108:428, (1993), 645.

Radical Right's adherents, like the New Liberalism's, were linked through overlapping social circles, ideas, and means of communication.<sup>37</sup> The Radical Right used newspapers, letters, and publications to communicate common ideas, but rarely used dinner parties to the extent of the New Liberalism, the Monday Night Cabal in 1916 being more an exception than a rule.

Like prior works by Phillips, Searle, and Fleming, this dissertation will not provide a complete, definitive list of who can be considered an adherent of the Radical Right. Instead, as it was distinguished by an ideological common ground linking individuals within and outside Parliament, adherence to the Radical Right will be identified by allegiance to at least three of four distinctive political positions. The first such position is a strong intellectual sympathy for Tariff Reform and Imperial Unity, the foundation of the Radical Right's solution to both foreign and domestic threats, and for National Service and/or conscription; the second a self-perception of being 'sound', 'constructive', 'definite' in opposition to those against its platform; the third an admiration for Joseph Chamberlain, Alfred Milner, and Field Marshal Lord Frederick Roberts; and the fourth a general mood of suspicion towards the Unionist leadership, particularly during the Balfour years. At times, there were exceptions to the fourth condition of the list. For example, Lord Selborne and George Wyndham, as former Cabinet ministers, were supportive of Balfour. Regardless, a common analysis of the ills plaguing Edwardian Britain and common solutions for those troubles were what defined the Edwardian Radical Right.

The individuals most referenced in this dissertation, some referenced before as adherents of the Radical Right, came primarily from political and journalistic backgrounds. This is not to

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<sup>37</sup> M. Freeden, *The New Liberalism: An Ideology of Social Reform*, (Oxford, 1986), 4-6.



call the Radical Right a parliamentary clique or grouping. For one, there was no formal Radical Right organisation within Parliament, and a number of adherents were either outside Parliament, spent minimal time as MPs, or were not elected until after 1910. Of those within Parliament who could be called Radical Right adherents, some were former Cabinet ministers such as William Palmer, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Selborne, and George Wyndham, who became an adherent after the 1906 election. Others were MPs elected after 1900 such as Leopold Amery, Henry Page Croft, Edward Turnour (also known as Lord Winterton), the economist William Hewins, George Tryon, Evelyn Cecil, Martin Archer-Shee, George Sandys, Rowland Hunt, Ronald McNeill, George Touche, Alan Burgoyne, Rupert Gwynne, Ion Hamilton Benn, George Lloyd, George Courthope, J.W. Hills, William Ormsby-Gore, Viscount Duncannon, Viscount Morpeth (later Lord Carlisle), Charles Bathurst (later Lord Bledisloe), and Waldorf Astor. Some MPs elected prior to 1900 who were adherents included Jesse Collings, John Middlemore, Evelyn Cecil, and John Gretton.

Peers affiliated included Willoughby de Broke, Milner, Oliver Russel, 2<sup>nd</sup> Baron Amptill, Earl Malmesbury, Alexander Forbes-Lyvie, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Lyvie, and John Douglas-Scott-Montagu, 2<sup>nd</sup> Baron Montagu of Beaulieu. Adherents who were either active or retired military officials were Lord Frederick Roberts, last Commander-in-Chief when the post was abolished in 1904 and President of the NSL from 1905-1914, Admiral Charles Beresford, Alan Percy, later 19<sup>th</sup> Duke of Northumberland, and Sir Henry Wilson. Journalistic adherents were F.S. Oliver, J.L. Garvin (editor of *The Observer*), Lord and Lady Bathurst (owners of the *Morning Post*), Fabian Ware (editor of the *Morning Post* until 1910 when replaced by another adherent H.A. Gwynne), and Leopold Maxse. Other adherents included Richard Jebb, Christopher Turnor (agricultural reformer), Halford Mackinder (imperialist-geographer), and Patrick Hannon (political organiser and activist).

Others will be cited, and the dissertation makes no claim to provide a complete or definitive list, but these individuals have been identified through correspondence, articles, and parliamentary votes as having been adherents of the Radical Right. Owing to this definition, certain individuals usually associated with the Radical Right such as Hardinge Giffard, 1st Earl Halsbury (whose name was used for the Halsbury Club, a group founded by the Ditchers after the Parliament Act's passage) and Edward Carson, were not adherents of the Radical Right. This dissertation will explain how they were distinct from the movement and, however much admired, did not share the broader ideological common ground that connected the Radical Right.

The Edwardian Radical Right can be understood as a part of the Constructive Imperialist tradition, outlined by Peter Cain's study,<sup>38</sup> as well as a specific movement located in the Edwardian era and First World War Britain. In partisan terms, however, although Richard Jebb protested otherwise,<sup>39</sup> it was firmly located in the Unionist and Conservative political tradition. Even critics within the party such as Hugh Cecil conceded that those like the Radical Right were heirs to an imperialist tradition that had gained strength during Benjamin Disraeli's leadership in the 1870s.<sup>40</sup> As for Radical Right adherents themselves, a prime example of their Unionist nature is how Halford Mackinder—converted on Tariff Reform's necessity for imperial union and National Service for defence—defected from the Liberals in 1903 for the Unionist Party.<sup>41</sup> Liberalism was not reconcilable with the Radical Right whilst the Unionists were. Most adherents identified with core aspects of the Unionist political

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<sup>38</sup> Cain, 'The Economic Philosophy of Constructive Imperialism'.

<sup>39</sup> Green, *Crisis of Conservatism*, 6.

<sup>40</sup> H. Cecil, *Conservatism*, (London, 1912), 36-7, 63.

<sup>41</sup> B. Semmel, 'Sir Halford Mackinder: Theorist of Imperialism', *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, 24:4, (1958), 554, 557. R.J.Q. Adams, 'The National Service League and Mandatory Service in Edwardian Britain', *Armed Forces and Society*, 12:1 (1985), 63.

tradition including imperialism, defence of the monarchy and House of Lords, and opposition to Irish Home Rule. The defence of the established Anglican Church was another strong theme among Conservatives and, while there are few specific references to it from Radical Right adherents (bar Willoughby de Broke's vocal pronouncements in the *National Review*<sup>42</sup>), there is little evidence that the Radical Right were less defensive of the Established Church, or less respectful of Conservative adherence to it, than other Unionists. Fundamentally, the Radical Right emerged in reaction to the political and economic anxieties of the Edwardian era. Aaron Friedberg in his book *The Weary Titan*, which studied Britain's relative decline, argued that Britain faced a trade, financial, naval, and army crisis.<sup>43</sup> As he admitted, however, a platform which sought to reform Free Trade, redress government finance through tax reform or spending cuts, sharply increase naval spending, and expand the army (especially by National Service) all at once was unlikely to find popular or parliamentary support.<sup>44</sup> The Radical Right embraced such a platform, with the exception of direct tax increases (as Tariff Reform was to fill the coffers instead). Even if this platform did indeed lack popular support, it is important to understand how and why it failed, but also to recognise that there was an explicit, and holistic, plan to maintain Britain's world supremacy.

For example, whilst Scally argues that there was mutual ambivalence between the NSL and TRL, advocates of National Service like Milner frequently called Tariff Reform "our other horse"<sup>45</sup>, and Lord Roberts also made implicit gestures of support towards Tariff Reform.

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<sup>42</sup> *National Review*, Volume 58, Issue 334, October 1911, 208-9.

<sup>43</sup> A. Friedberg, *The Weary Titan: Britain and the Experience of Relative Decline, 1895-1905*, (Princeton, 1988), 288-9.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 289.

<sup>45</sup> Milner-'Majorie', 13/03/09, BLO, Milner 35.

Not every member of the NSL was decisively pro-Tariff Reform and an adherent of the Radical Right, but advocates of National Service were more likely than not to also be Tariff Reformers and share an ideological worldview with the Radical Right. Similarly, Richard Jebb was at times semi-detached from the Unionist Party but applauded Milner for promoting imperial unity through Tariff Reform and National Service.<sup>46</sup> This dissertation, moreover, will propose that while de Broke was an adherent of the Radical Right, its archetypes can be found more in the Unionist MPs Henry Page Croft and Leo Amery, both of whom were activists within the TRL and NSL and advocated a strong military and a unified British Empire.<sup>47</sup> Thus Larry Witherell described Page Croft's advocacy of Tariff Reform and National Service as a "double-edged Imperialism."<sup>48</sup>

What made the Radical Right distinct in the years 1903-1918, as opposed to being solely Constructive Imperialists, was that its adherents believed in that double-edged imperialism along with some social reform, as a solution to the ills of Edwardian Britain. There are some writings which outlined this platform. One example would be Lord Milner's frequent push to the Unionists to adopt a programme that tied together, "(a) Tariff Reform. (b) Imperial Unity. (c) Defence. (d) Social Uplifting. (e) A sound Constitution. (f) A real United Kingdom. (a), (b), (c), (d) are all closely interconnected, and are the big Imperial issues and primary issues of principle...".<sup>49</sup> Similarly, the Reveille Movement, a group founded in 1910 by adherents Page Croft and Willoughby de Broke, pushed for a platform that melded the policies of, "Defence.-Maintenance of the supremacy of the Navy and an adequate Army...

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<sup>46</sup> R. Jebb-Arthur Atkinson, 17/01/07, Institute of Commonwealth Studies Library, 1907 January-June, ICS5116/A.

<sup>47</sup> H.P. Croft, *My Life of Strife*, (London, 1948), 40.

<sup>48</sup> L. Witherell, *Rebel on the Right: Henry Page Croft and the Crisis of British Conservatism 1903-1914*, (London, 1997), 16.

<sup>49</sup> A. Chamberlain, *Politics From Inside: An Epistolary Chronicle, 1906-1914*, (London, 1936), 369-70.

(2) Trade Reform...(3) Empire Union.-Imperial Preference...(4) Land Reform.-Small ownership...(5) Poor Law Reform...".<sup>50</sup> Another example of an attempt to publicise the programme was Alan Burgoyne's account of a fictional invasion of Britain where the incursion was fought off and in the post-war Britain,

"The newly organised General Staff developed a type of universal military service to which none could take exception and for the first time in the history of our Army, the land forces of the Empire could boast as efficient an Administration as had governed the Navy for some time past. In other directions, also, great progress was to be noticed; Socialism, reconstituted, sifted and recast, found its level and fell into line with the Party of Imperialism that had finally swamped the base section of Little Englanders under whose governance the nation had suffered so much. Tariff Reform is no longer a dream, had placed us upon a level with competitive nations in trade, and unemployment was daily becoming a thing of the past."<sup>51</sup>

What plagued the Radical Right, however, was that it could neither push forward a cohesive, organised public manifesto, nor could it be called a 'group' in the sense of a formal organisation or solid bloc of individuals. The Radical Right's organisational ties were fragile, but its ideology of defensive imperial-nationalism kept strong until the midst of the First World War, during which the various leagues in which the Radical Right participated collapsed.

The division that Scally, Green, and Thackeray discerned manifested itself more clearly during these wartime years between those who could reconcile themselves and collaborate

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<sup>50</sup> *The Times*, 08/10/10, 10.

<sup>51</sup> A. Burgoyne, *The War Inevitable*, (London, 1908), 310-2.

(if conditionally) with the political mainstream and those incapable of doing so. In this dissertation, this wartime split will be defined as between 'Constructivists' like Amery and 'Dogmatists' like Page Croft. The former were more capable of collaborating with the moderate Unionists and could participate in the front bench and the Lloyd George Coalition, if becoming disillusioned with the latter by the early 1920s. The Dogmatists were less capable of doing so and remained on the political margins.

Although this division has similarities with Thackeray's between the moderate TRL/WUTRA/British Covenant and violent BLSUU/BWL/BEU, the dissertation will argue that Thackeray's division is too neat. Milner, for example, was a leading figure in the British Covenant but also in promoting ties with the BWL. The Constructivists were less moderate and pragmatic intrinsically but more so compared to the Dogmatists. William Bridgeman, Green's example of a 'Radical Conservative', described Amery as being a poor judge of where to stand his ground, even if admiring his stalwart imperialism.<sup>52</sup> Similar language was used by Amery about Leo Maxse when describing their attempt to win Liberal Imperialists over to Tariff Reform.<sup>53</sup> The Dogmatists were thus to Constructivists what Constructivists (at least those who were not fully submerged into the party fold during the post-war years) were to mainstream Conservatives such as William Bridgeman, Neville Chamberlain, and Stanley Baldwin.

Regarding the divide between 'peaceable' and militant groups, this dissertation will also argue that Thackeray overstates the philosophical divide between the British Covenant movement and the BLSUU. Milner and Amery's activism on behalf of the former will be

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<sup>52</sup> P. Williamson (ed.), *The Modernisation of Conservative Politics: The Political Diaries of William Bridgeman, 1904-1930*, (London, 1988), 230.

<sup>53</sup> J. Barnes, D. Nicholson (ed.), *The Leo Amery Diaries: 1896-1929*, (London, 1980), 56-7.

viewed as less a rejection of the BLSUU and more a willingness to work with and around those Unionists who had philosophical objections to the BLSUU's overt violence. The Radical Right's internal division was less to do with ideology and more to do with tactics and with willingness to place conditional trust in the Unionist leadership (and Lloyd George during the First World War).

### *Methodology*

This thesis seeks to answer how long the Edwardian Radical Right lasted, what its actual relevance in Edwardian British politics was, and why it failed in its aims. This thesis stays with the general research approach taken by prior scholars in the field such as Gregory Phillips and Geoffrey Searle. These historians on the Radical Right focused their research on a number of archival sources, memoirs and diaries, parliamentary debates, and contemporary publications.<sup>54</sup> This dissertation took similar cues as to which archives and personal publications to consult, those of Leo Amery, Leo Maxse, Alfred Milner, Lord Roberts, Lord Winterton, etc. This was done because this dissertation's description of the Radical Right and its nature broadly lined up with those taken by Phillips and Searle, the latter particularly as will be explained later.

This thesis utilises Searle's working definition (quoted below) of the Edwardian Radical Right as a movement which allowed it to define who were adherents. The adherents' names were identified on the basis of research in secondary sources by authors like Phillips, Searle, and N.C. Fleming, and then other names emerged from the private papers and publications of those individuals. This dissertation then utilises the material from the archives and literature, primary and secondary, to create a definition for the Edwardian Radical Right.

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<sup>54</sup> Philips, *The Die-Hards*. Searle, 'Revolt From The Right', 'Critics of Edwardian Society'.

The primary shift suggested by this thesis, as a result of research, is to draw more connection with the Constructive Imperialists who emerge in works like Peter Cain's studies.<sup>55</sup> Overall, however, as will be referenced later, this dissertation's definition of the Radical Right as a movement expands slightly upon Searle's own summation of the Radical Right. This definition was—whatever the divisions between adherents—having an “allegiance to a common set of attitudes and viewed politics in a way which gave them a distinct identity” and the definition will be shared in this thesis.<sup>56</sup> The expansion is primarily rooted in how the common allegiance in attitude and view of politics also included a common belief in a set of policies which were meant to reverse decline in Edwardian Britain. The separation in 1917-18 came when this was no longer true for a sufficient number of individuals within the Radical Right.

A natural outcome of this decision was to define the Edwardian Radical Right as certain individuals supporting certain overlapping policies. In the case of policies, this primarily took the form of participation in the campaigns for Tariff Reform (and through it, Constructive Imperialism) and National Service, whilst the connected issues of personnel related to frustration with the Unionist Party and its leadership. This working definition of the Radical Right was influenced at first by similar summations by prior historians and then supported by investigation into primary sources which revealed a set of commonly advocated policies and justifications for those policies. Relevant information relating to these were found in accounts including articles in newspapers such as the *National Review* and *Morning Post* along with correspondence and diaries. In selecting which sources to approach and how,

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<sup>55</sup> Cain, 'Economic Philosophy of Constructive Imperialism', 41-65. See also P. Cain, 'Political Economy in Edwardian England: The Tariff Reform Controversy', A. O'Day (ed.), *The Edwardian Age: Conflict and Stability, 1900-1914*, (London, 1979), 34-59.

<sup>56</sup> Searle, 'Critics of Edwardian Society', 85.



given the focus on individual politicians, journalists, and activists, as opposed to grassroots organisations, this thesis can be seen as taking cues from 'High Politics'. Traditionally associated with focusing on prominent political leaders at the expense of all other political factors, David Craig has shown that a 'High Politics' approach more entails a focus on a handful of individuals and how they interacted with other political forces, including doctrines like the Radical Right's, rather than a lack of acknowledgement of the latter, and that a 'High Politics'-based study can go beyond the Westminster frontbench.<sup>57</sup>

In this case, while this thesis discusses the successes and failures of organisations like the TRL, NSL, etc. it does not presume them to be pure 'Radical Right' groups. Instead, these pressure groups advocated policies which the Radical Right endorsed and, in turn, adherents of the Radical Right participated in these pressure groups. In turn, the relationship between these groups and the Radical Right will be a subject of discussion. In summary, this thesis cleaves closer to the 'High Politics' school rather than the 'New Political History', which focuses more on 'low politics' including electoral sociology, grassroots activists of political parties and of groups like trade unions, etc.<sup>58</sup> In regards to 'New Political History', this thesis does not utilise the quantitative element which Allan Bogue argued was one of its elements,<sup>59</sup> and the main element which this thesis utilises would be the focus on pressure groups as an aspect beyond the 'traditional' focus on frontbench politicians.<sup>60</sup> Even so, this thesis will focus more on the Radical Right's participation in pressure groups, rather than claiming that these pressure groups were a part of the Radical Right (bar the IML).

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<sup>57</sup> D. Craig, "High Politics' and the 'New Political History'", *Historical Journal*, 53:2, (2010), 453, 457.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 475.

<sup>59</sup> A. Bogue, 'The New Political History in the 1970s', M. Kammen (ed.), *The Past Before Us: Contemporary Historical Writing in the United States*, (New York, 1980), 233.

<sup>60</sup> A. Bogue, *Clio and the Bitch Goddess: Quantification in American Political History*, (New York, 1983), 69.

In part, this is because the thesis does not define the Edwardian Radical Right as a single organisation with a solid and definitive membership list. A number of individuals counted as adherents to the Radical Right at times had tensions with other individuals and were more conciliatory or aggressive respectively towards the Unionist leadership (Balfour particularly). As Bo Strath noted, political movements “are a mixture of interpretations and programmes, rather than being uniform intellectual orders free from contradiction” and ideologies ought to be contextualised beyond fixed belief systems “with more or less cohesive...groups of adherents.”

The term ‘ideology’ emerges as the best possible to describe the ties connecting the Edwardian Radical Right given the lack of a formal organisation or longstanding set of social arrangements to serve as a substitute for the former. There were not enough formalised ties between adherents to achieve co-operation through sanctions and solidified network ties that, according to Jennifer Larson under ‘network theory’ enable groups to overcome collective action problems.<sup>61</sup> The allegiance to a common set of attitudes and political outlooks, as Searle described, along with a set of policy prescriptions, were what fundamentally defined the Edwardian Radical Right, in the view of this thesis, as a result of the research done. When referring to ‘ideology’, the thesis ultimately takes the definition set out by Searle with the inclusion of an allegiance to a common set of policies, most notably Tariff Reform and National Service. As some historians have admitted, “ideology is the most elusive concept in the whole of social science.”<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> J. Larson, ‘Networks of Conflict and Co-operation’, *Annual Review of Political Science*, 24:89-107, (2021), 98-9, 90.

<sup>62</sup> D. McLellan, *Ideology 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*, (Minnesota, 1995), 1.

For the Edwardian Radical Right, being part of the Unionist Party, there is natural overlap with Conservative ideology, but in this case this thesis will resemble John Ramsden's works in Paul Readman's lament that it will be closer to "traditional high political...not overmuch concerned with the explication of Conservative ideology."<sup>63</sup> The Edwardian Radical Right fitted into none of the four subsets (reactionary, radical, moderate, and New Right) outlined by Noel O'Sullivan as defined by him. The closest comparison would be the radical conservatives barring the "mass direct involvement" aspect given how the Radical Right operated, whatever its ambitions. The closest the Edwardian Radical Right come to O'Sullivan's 'radical conservatives' would be O'Sullivan's example of the latter as Disraeli and Thomas Carlyle in the display of limited support for reforms in the name of preserving order.<sup>64</sup>

Given the term 'group' would imply a clear, definitive membership list for the Radical Right, instead the word 'ideology' is used as a substitute given the lack of suitable alternatives to describe the Radical Right. For example, Michael Freeden's description of ideology as "collectively produced and collectively consumed...that collective nature makes them public property"<sup>65</sup> is problematic for the Edwardian Radical Right given the lack of an actual outlined manifesto or any form of Radical Right meetings even at the social level. Instead, in this thesis, the definition of ideology cleaves broadly along what Raymond Geuss called "the beliefs the members of the groups hold, the concepts they use, the attitudes and psychological dispositions they exhibit...'ideology' in this very broad sense" with some

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<sup>63</sup> P. Readman, 'The State of Twentieth Century British Political History', *Journal of Policy History*, 21:3, (2009), 224.

<sup>64</sup> N. O'Sullivan, 'Conservatism', M. Freeden (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies*, (Oxford, 2013), 297, 300.

<sup>65</sup> M. Freeden, 'Ideology and Political Theory', M. Freeden (ed.), *The Meaning of Ideology: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives*, (London, 2007), 18.

“differences of belief, motivation, preference, attitude, etc.” being a natural aspect of the Radical Right too.<sup>66</sup>

### *Chapter Outlines*

This thesis will take a broadly chronological approach, barring some sub-chapters. Chapter I will establish the background of the Edwardian Radical Right. The arguments against Free Trade, and in favour of Tariff Reform, had an earlier antecedent in the Protectionist defence of the Corn Laws during the 1840s. For the Edwardian Radical Right, however, the background to its emergence lay primarily in the Late Victorian era.<sup>67</sup> The relevant events included the rise of the ‘New Imperialism’, the forging of the Unionist alliance between the Conservatives and anti-Home Rule Liberal Unionists, and internal developments within the Conservatives and then the Unionist alliance. Joseph Chamberlain’s speech on 15<sup>th</sup> May 1903 declaring himself for Tariff Reform will be considered the origin point for the Radical Right, not least as it inspired some of its most active adherents into politics. Already present, however, were the perceived national weaknesses and opportunities identified by the Radical Right as a result of the Second Boer War. The Edwardian Radical Right can thus be identified as a reaction against perceived failures in the Late Victorian era that threatened a terminal decline for Britain. The solution for that decline was a defensive imperial-nationalism best embodied in Tariff Reform/Imperial Preference,<sup>68</sup> a core policy for Constructive Imperialism’s dream of an imperial union between Britain and the Dominions, and National Service together.

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<sup>66</sup>T. Eagleton, ‘Introduction’, R. Guess, ‘Ideology’, T. Eagleton (ed.), *Ideology*, (Oxfordshire, 2013), 2, 261.

<sup>67</sup> Sykes, *The Radical Right in Britain: Social Imperialism to the BNP*, (London, 2005), 3.

<sup>68</sup> Imperial Preference was one of the terms used for Tariff Reform with both being defined as giving the self-governing colonies of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa preference in duties. This was not total Free Trade between the states, but tariff preference.

The second and third chapters, covering the years 1903-1909, concern the platform of the Radical Right and its successes and failures respectively. The second chapter will show that the Radical Right had a common and distinctive ideological position based on reorienting Britain's trade and defence policies towards promoting an imperial-British identity, coupled with social reforms. The third chapter will detail the Radical Right's successes and failures in promoting these causes. Ultimately, the lack of a single national leader after Chamberlain's stroke and the failure to form a 'Radical Right' group or put forward a distinctive public platform would constitute fatal weaknesses. Similarly, the Radical Right lacked appreciation that imperialism and militarism were not causes that it held exclusive ownership of, which especially became fatal to its existence and independence during the war years and their aftermath.

Chapter IV will examine the constitutional crises from 1909 to 1911 concerning the House of Lords, and the Radical Right's role in those crises. These years witnessed the peak of the Radical Right's influence until the January 1910 general election and then its internal unity and disillusionment with the Unionist leadership until Balfour's resignation in November 1911. The Ditcher revolt (which the Radical Right played an important part in) shattered Balfour's authority and legitimacy as leader of the Unionists, and the Radical Right celebrated his departure. These two years, however, also saw policy setbacks, while the 'legion of leagues' were forced to reckon with their reliance on the Unionist Party. The leagues' agendas were often put aside by the partisan calculations of local and national Unionists and the leagues' own loyalties towards the Unionists. Many leading personalities in the NSL were forced to accept their cause's subordination to the battle against the Liberal government's redistributive 'People's Budget', while the TRL were undermined by Balfour's 'Albert Hall' pledge in November 1911.

Chapter V will discuss the Radical Right during the years 1911-1914, primarily considering whether the Radical Right was fully 'subsumed' to the Unionist Party fold (as Sykes argues) or if an independent identity remained. Bonar Law's leadership, and the reforms to party organisation, proved to be more damaging than enabling for the Radical Right, especially in the case of the ideological centrepiece of Tariff Reform. The Tariff Reform cause, however, did survive the disappointment of January 1913 when Bonar Law reneged on his commitment to restoring food duties as Unionist policy, and the NSL did see a growth in membership and the acceptance of the compulsory principle by the Unionist leadership, if only for cadet corps. In terms of its policies, the Radical Right did not die in 1914. The Ulster Crisis, and Law's 'New Style', did broadly reconcile the Radical Right with Law, if only on the promise of toppling the Liberals and preventing the Home Rule Act. For many in the Radical Right, even those open to federalism such as Amery, Ulster Exclusion was only ever a tactic. If not for the First World War's interruption, the Ulster Crisis may have led to a reassertion of the Radical Right's identity through revulsion at any potential compromise on Law's end. The First World War, however, prevented this outcome. Instead, the Radical Right during the war would be split apart and either merged into the Lloyd George Coalition until 1922 or found itself stuck on the political margins. Chapter VI will go into the war years leading up to Lloyd George becoming Prime Minister in December 1916. After a brief surge of relevance and influence during the July 1914 Crisis, the Radical Right was forced to reckon with its parliamentary weakness and its failure to convert the public to its specific form of imperialism and militarism. The Unionist Business Committee (UBC) and Unionist War Committee (UWC) represented opportunities for the Radical Right but also exposed its limitations. The lack of a leader with national standing now became especially apparent. Herbert Asquith's fall from the Premiership in 1916 was more due to Bonar Law than to any

activism by the Radical Right. The pressure that helped convince Law to move against Asquith was a more general backbench movement which had more limited goals than the Radical Right and was distinct from it. Asquith's fall did result in some of the Radical Right entering power, but only through patronage by Lloyd George Coalition frontbenchers like Milner, with only a few individuals benefitting from Milner's support.

As Chapter VII will discuss, the result was that a division soon emerged in the Radical Right that shattered its already fragile bonds. The Constructivists who chose to work within the Lloyd George Coalition included peers and MPs such as Milner, Amery, Arthur Steel-Maitland, J.W. Hills, George Tryon, and Charles Bathurst. Those outside, meanwhile, grew alienated from the coalition and attempted to oppose it. They included Page Croft (who founded the National Party), H.A. Gwynne (editor of the *Morning Post*), Lady Bathurst, and Leo Maxse. Their attempts via the National Party and UWC, however, only exposed both existing and new weaknesses. The National Party floundered from the first day while the UWC remained incapable and unwilling to become a right-wing parliamentary opposition. Attempts to utilise divisions between Lloyd George and the Chief of the Imperial General Staff (Sir William Robertson) and the commander on the Western Front (General Sir Douglas Haig) in order to force the Premier out failed as well. The Dogmatists could not even bring themselves to form an alliance with insurgent right-wing forces such as Noel Pemberton-Billing and Horatio Bottomley, despite the electoral successes of the latter. Policy successes over Tariff Reform, conscription, and anti-Germanism, meanwhile, were all undermined. The TRL saw a wartime revival, but only to split in 1917 and become de facto defunct within a year, the NSL shut down in all but name as well, and the success of the National War Aims Committee (NWAC) would show that liberal internationalism still had influence. By 1918,

despite the landslide victory for the Lloyd George Coalition in the December election, and an independent majority for the Unionists, the Edwardian Radical Right was a defunct force.

### *Summary*

Anne Summers' description of the TRL, NSL, and NL as—despite some achievements worthy of notice—having failed on their own terms<sup>69</sup> can be extended to the Edwardian Radical Right. It failed to find a viable leader after Chamberlain's stroke or organise into a coherent body, let alone overturn Free Trade and the voluntary principle in the military in favour of a rigid imperial-nationalism. The Radical Right had predicted the war with Germany and believed it would legitimise its policies and ideas. In fact, groups like the NL and NSL which were closer to the Radical Right's aggressive militarism collapsed whereas the 'softer' Victoria League endured. Internal divisions, meanwhile, tore apart the otherwise re-ascendant TRL. The fragile ties that held the Edwardian Radical Right together shattered as it was subsumed back into the Unionist fold.

The Unionist Party was able to win an independent majority in 1918, whilst by then the Radical Right had disintegrated. This outcome demonstrated the organisational strength of the Unionist Party (with Daniel Ziblatt crediting its mass hierarchical organisational structure for allowing containment of extremist elements<sup>70</sup>) that prevented a viable Radical Right splinter party and lessened the chances of a viable Radical Right faction. However, the Unionist victory in 1918 also highlighted the Radical Right's underestimation of Unionist appeal on terms outside its own. Whereas the Radical Right felt that the Unionist Party's approach to Tariff Reform and national defence was half-hearted at best, Nigel Keohane

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<sup>69</sup> A. Summers, 'The Character of Edwardian Nationalism: Three Popular Leagues', P. Kennedy, A. Nicholls (ed.), *Nationalist and Racist Movements in Britain and Germany Before 1914*, (Oxford, 1981), 84.

<sup>70</sup> D. Ziblatt, *Conservative Parties and the Birth of Democracy*, (London, 2017), 53.



disagreed with this view. He argued that it was enough to give the Unionists a strong reputation as the party of patriotism, which led to its broad unity during the war and success in the 1918 general election.<sup>71</sup>

Yet this patriotic appeal also included a more 'peaceable' political approach which much of the Radical Right lacked. David Thackeray's stress on the success of the more 'moderate' pressure-groups on the Right in a mass democracy perhaps shows the true difference between the Radical Right and the mainstream Unionists.<sup>72</sup> For all the former believed that coming over to its platform was the only means for the latter to survive in a mass democracy, in fact the opposite was the case. Those who accepted the Lloyd George Coalition such as Amery, George Tryon, and Ormsby-Gore were able to pursue front-bench careers. The Dogmatists like Maxse, Page Croft, and de Broke (who once confessed that he did not even know what he wanted specifically) were less capable of doing so. This is not to say that the 'moderates' were any less contemptuous when the Unionist Party appeared lacking or less ideologically dedicated. The Edwardian Radical Right disagreed about method more than principle. Fleming noted Maxse's attempts to force a more coherent articulation of principle were regarded by sympathetic MPs with caution at best.<sup>73</sup> Similarly, Amery felt relief when Leo Maxse and his sister Violet left a dinner which he attended, as he felt that this enabled more progress in leading imperial-minded Liberals towards the platform that he and Maxse shared.<sup>74</sup> This internal divide led to the Edwardian Radical Right's demise in 1917-18, and victory in the First World War prevented the resurrection of its form of defensive and militaristic imperial-nationalism.

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<sup>71</sup> N. Keohane, *The Party of Patriotism: The Conservative Party and the First World War*, (Farnham, 2010), 60.

<sup>72</sup> Thackeray, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age*, 80.

<sup>73</sup> Fleming, *Britannia's Zealots*, 208.

<sup>74</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (eds.), *Amery Diaries*, 56-7.

Despite the Edwardian Radical Right being a failure on its own terms, there remains value in studying its ideology and history. Fleming highlighted the relative successes of the Unionist party's right wing during the Edwardian and wartime period. These successes included the change in Unionist leadership, organisation, and rhetorical approach and inspired aspects of the inter-war Conservative Right.<sup>75</sup> This dissertation, however, extends this argument by asserting that the Edwardian Radical Right was distinct in the Unionist right-wing and held a coherent ideological position. The Radical Right denied the inevitability of Britain's 'relative decline' on a military, economic, and geopolitical level, and believed that through the empire and compulsory military service Britain's position could not only be salvaged but also strengthened.

The Radical Right's ambitions naturally outpaced its capacities, given that it challenged not only one but two shibboleths of Edwardian Britain. A failure to rally under either a publicised manifesto or an individual leader post-Joseph Chamberlain undermined an already weak position, whilst its successes were reliant on building coalitions within the Unionist Party and beyond. This latter point would be better appreciated by some adherents than others, especially during the wartime years of the Lloyd George Coalition. Ultimately, however, the Edwardian Radical Right found its influence primarily confined to the Unionist Party. Despite this, it is worth studying why the Edwardian Radical Right both failed in its grander objectives and failed to fully comprehend and appreciate its more subtle victories. It was a response from a section of the Conservative Right to what it believed to be a multi-faceted crisis facing Britain that required a holistic solution.

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<sup>75</sup> Fleming, *Britannia's Zealots*, 32.

Furthermore, it can be useful to see how a coherent ideology does not always translate into either a single authoritative document detailing the ideology or the creation of a single organisation to promote the inter-connected aims of the ideology. In particular, the NSL included numerous Unionists such as Lord Derby and John St Loe Strachey, editor of *The Spectator*, who were firm Unionist Free Traders. The Edwardian Radical Right represented an influential and vocal strand of the Conservative Right, but nevertheless did not comprise the whole Conservative Right and would indeed face the limitations of its failure to fully associate the aspects of its ideology such as National Service and Tariff Reform with one another. Even so, through understanding the Edwardian Radical Right, comparisons might be drawn with those more successful traditions that emerged from Unionist political culture during the Edwardian-era. These include the more 'peaceable' strands of the Tariff Reform movement such as the utilisation of the Women's Unionist and Tariff Reform Association and post-war 'Baldwinian' Conservatism.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Thackeray, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age*, 8, 10.

## I. Life Before Joe: The Origins of the Edwardian Radical Right

### **Introduction**

The first chapter focuses on the nineteenth century, prior to the Radical Right's creation, detailing the specific historical context which the Edwardian Radical Right both emerged from and situated itself in. In particular, there was some overlap of ideas and philosophies between the Pro-Corn Law Protectionists of the 1840s and 1850s and the Radical Right, as some adherents noted. Yet the Radical Right was (and primarily understood itself as) more a reaction to political developments during the 1880s and 1890s. One example would be the emergence and failure of the National Fair Trade League in the 1880s. In a similar vein, the Boer War and the military problems it revealed were fundamental in shaping the National Service aspect of the Radical Right platform. It was a platform born of twenty years of political and economic development that culminated in Chamberlain's Birmingham speech endorsing Tariff Reform—representing the Constructive Imperialism that was foundational for the Radical Right ideology.

As for the Radical Right's adherents, a number believed they were the successors to Randolph Churchill's 'Fourth Party' in the 1880s, although the actual overlap was overstated by the likes of Leo Maxse and J.L. Garvin. In actuality, the Radical Right's ideological parents were less Randolph Churchill and Joseph Chamberlain and more the latter with Lord Salisbury. Despite this, the perception that Salisbury had failed was another aspect of how the Radical Right viewed its own history, and it shaped its ideology in reaction to such failure. Although the Radical Right was not solely Chamberlain's work, Chamberlain's speech on 15<sup>th</sup> May 1903 emboldened many younger adherents of the Radical Right to enter politics and provided the foundation of the Radical Right's ideology—Imperial Union—with

its call for Tariff Reform. How the Radical Right perceived the past is vital in understanding how it constructed what it saw as a modernising platform in reaction to what it believed was twenty years of inaction by government and the Unionist leadership in the face of decline. Key was the Boer War and its aftermath which gave the specific shape for the Edwardian Radical Right platform as distinct from the movements of the 1880s and 1890s with Chamberlain's declaration for Tariff Reform in May 1903, along with the developing National Service campaign.

### **The Protectionists**

The Radical Right did have a Tory history, despite accusations by its opponents.<sup>77</sup> Given the adherents' loyalty to Chamberlain, the Radical Right was perceived as a clique of Radical Liberal Unionists who acted like disruptive guests in the Conservative household. The supposed lack of conservatism in the Radical Right's programme and methods were used to justify denying its ties to Conservatism. A few adherents of the movement believed as much; Richard Jebb confessing to Fabian Ware after the latter's sacking from his editorial position at the *Morning Post* that Tariff Reform failed as "we were running a Radical [Liberal] Policy in the name of Conservatism...We did it in good faith, but it was a fraud all the same."<sup>78</sup> Jebb, however, was a minority among the Radical Right in holding this view. Moreover, E.H.H. Green in his study of the Edwardian Unionists pointed out that Jebb was merely trying to explain Ware's sacking by the paper that then hired H.A. Gwynne, whose approach and platform were near-identical to Ware's.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> J. Hutcheson, *Leopold Maxse and the National Review, 1893-1914: Right-Wing Politics and Journalism in the Edwardian Era*, (New York, 1989), 229.

<sup>78</sup> R. Jebb-F. Ware, 30/07/12, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 1912 May-Dec., ISC116/A.

<sup>79</sup> Green, *Crisis of Conservatism*, 9.

As for the Radical Right, most if not all identified with Toryism and its history. Henry Page Croft when announcing the National Party in 1917 traced its antecedents to Benjamin Disraeli's Wycombe speech in 1832.<sup>80</sup> Willoughby de Broke went further back and argued that his policies came "at the fount of Bolingbroke, Pitt, and Beaconsfield."<sup>81</sup> As for more direct historical connections between the Radical Right and the Conservative Party's history, however, the movement's roots lie in the nineteenth century.

The abolition of the Corn Laws by Robert Peel split the Conservative Party in two between the Peelites and the rump Conservative Party, also called the Protectionist Party. The Protectionists failed to defend the Corn Laws and would abandon Protectionism in a few years. The arguments used in defence of the Corn Laws, however, were strongly similar to those used by the Radical Right in favour of Tariff Reform. Anna Gambles has shown that the Protectionists believed that the Corn Laws were essential to a balanced economy and that pro-Corn Law arguments included pro-Imperial rhetoric and an openness to the principle of state intervention.<sup>82</sup> In the 1840s, the connection between Free Trade and a race to the bottom on worker standards and wages was also established by Corn Law advocates.<sup>83</sup>

The Radical Right had to create a more nuanced form of this argument, given the passage of social reforms under Free Trade. Joseph Chamberlain contended that such social reforms were in the long run irreconcilable with free imports.<sup>84</sup> A less direct but softer connection between anti-Free Trade and pro-social reform attitudes in the 1840s was made by Robert Stewart. He showed that pro-Corn Law MPs were more likely to rebel against Peel and

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<sup>80</sup> *National Opinion*, 10/1917-12/1918, CA, CRFT4/1.

<sup>81</sup> *National Review*, Volume 58, Issue 344, 10/11, 208.

<sup>82</sup> A. Gambles, *Protection and Politics: Conservative Economic Discourse 1815-1852*, (Suffolk, 1999), 19-22.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 217.

<sup>84</sup> J. Chamberlain, *Imperial Union and Tariff Reform: Speeches Delivered From May 15 to Nov. 4 1903*, (London, 1903), 53-4.

support Anthony Ashley-Cooper's push to limit women and children to ten-hour workdays. Peel only overturned his defeat in the Commons on this issue through a threat of resignation, just as he did in 1844 when a colonial sugar preference (balanced by increasing duties on foreign sugar) was pushed by Protectionists.<sup>85</sup> The Protectionists offered a defence of the Corn Laws that drew together paternalistic social reforms and imperialism, much as the Radical Right would offer.

However, the connections between the two were not always positive. John Manners, a Cabinet minister under Disraeli, would complain how in Britain the interests of consumers always won out over the interest of producers.<sup>86</sup> This apparent pro-consumer and anti-producer bias would be a source of complaint among the Radical Right, even as the TRL aimed to create consumer-focused arguments for Tariff Reform. Matthew Roberts drew an unfriendly comparison between the Protectionists and Tariff Reformers. He argued that the similarity between the campaign to save the Corn Laws and the TRL undermined the latter's claim to be offering a more modern economic policy than the Free Traders.<sup>87</sup> The spectre of the Corn Laws seemed to hang over Tariff Reform, and with it the Radical Right. This perception led to a complicated attempt to sanitise Tariff Reform from the popular memory of the 1840s.

Joseph Chamberlain himself had trouble deciding where he stood on the question of the Corn Laws. He had been a Free Trader in the past. When he mentioned the Corn Laws' repeal, he argued that Free Trade won as "people were persuaded at that time, and I think

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<sup>85</sup> R. Stewart, *The Politics of Protection: Lord Derby and the Protectionist Party, 1841-1852*, (Cambridge, 1971), 16.

<sup>86</sup> R. Shannon, *The Age of Disraeli, 1868-1881: The Rise of Tory Democracy*, (New York, 1992), 340.

<sup>87</sup> M. Roberts, 'Popular Conservatism in Britain, 1832-1914', *Parliamentary History*, 26:3, (2007), 406-7.

rightly persuaded that at the moment...it was the best economic policy for us to pursue.”<sup>88</sup>

In his speech announcing the Tariff Reform campaign in West Birmingham, Chamberlain even identified himself as a Free Trader and not a Protectionist, albeit one who valued Imperial Preference over cheapness.<sup>89</sup> He would argue in later speeches, however, that the Corn Laws did not reduce food prices but instead ‘cheap food’ came from decisions made in the 1860s. In an attempt to win over trade unions, he also tied Cobden’s idea of Free Trade with the latter’s opposition to trade unions and higher wages.<sup>90</sup>

Chamberlain likely sought to underplay the connection between the Corn Laws and the introduction of food duties that were unpopular, but necessary for his vision of Tariff Reform. In 1905 he complained to Maxse of comparisons between his policy and the Protectionists’ when he claimed to “have repudiated anything in the nature of the old system of Protection.”<sup>91</sup> Thus he was left to try and keep Tariff Reform from being associated with the Corn Laws but also to try to break the public association of Free Trade’s introduction with the end of the ‘Hungry Forties.’ By November 1905, he simply argued that sixty years had passed since the Corn Laws’ abolition and that times had changed.<sup>92</sup> He was not alone in this. William Bridgeman, a pro-Tariff Reform Unionist outside the Radical Right, denounced the Corn Laws as class legislation when standing for Oswestry as a proud Tariff Reformer.<sup>93</sup>

For those younger acolytes such as Page Croft, Leo Amery, and George Tryon, it was easier to attempt to craft an anti-Free Trade historical narrative. They identified Britain’s economic

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<sup>88</sup> Chamberlain, *Imperial Union*, 184.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 171, 130.

<sup>91</sup> J. Chamberlain-L. Maxse, 21/12/05, WSRO, Maxse 453/187.

<sup>92</sup> *The Times*, 22/11/05, 12.

<sup>93</sup> Williamson (ed.), *Bridgeman Diaries*, 17-8.



growth in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries with state intervention via the Navigation Act and the implementation of the Corn Laws that synthesised trade, defence, and foreign policy as interdependent parts of a greater 'National Policy.'<sup>94</sup> If there were drawbacks to the Corn Laws, they could have been solved with a reform of the duties through further enhancing the preferential aspect for the colonies. Instead, Amery considered that Cobden had cast aside,

“...the old historic, statesmanlike policy of England...to revise the tariff in the direction of taking the duties off raw materials, excepting a colonial preference, of lowering the corn duties against the colonies...instead of reforming, they destroyed. ...The whole principle of conscious and constructive statecraft working for the greatness of the nation and the well-being and development of its citizens was abandoned.”<sup>95</sup>

Amery would later go so far as to claim that the Gold Rush in Australia and the US was the true source of the supposed economic prosperity that followed Free Trade's arrival.<sup>96</sup>

Christopher Turnor, an adherent of the Radical Right concerned with agriculture, argued that Britain's pre-existing manufacturing dominance was the cause of the prosperity Cobdenites attributed to Free Trade.<sup>97</sup> On top of undermining imperial trade ties, Free Trade was accused of also sabotaging migration patterns so that the US and not Canada became

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<sup>94</sup> L. Amery, *The Fundamental Fallacies of Free Trade: Four Addresses on the Logical Groundwork of Free Trade Theory*, (London, 1908), 63-4, 127. G. Tryon, *Tariff Reform*, (London, 1909), 13, 30-36, 139.

<sup>95</sup> Amery, *Fundamental Fallacies*, 126-7.

<sup>96</sup> L. Amery, *The Forward View*, (London, 1935), 76, 82.

<sup>97</sup> C. Turnor, *Land Problems and National Welfare*, (London, 1911), 285.

the primary destination of British emigrants:<sup>98</sup> a mistake that Tariff Reformers claimed Imperial Preference would correct.<sup>99</sup>

Despite the attempts to portray the pre-Free Trade economic policy as a holistic programme rooted in defence and development, however, the Radical Right's focus on the 1840s was not on the Protectionists themselves. Cobden was ironically the protagonist of the Radical Right's story, if a flawed one. The continuing historical memory of the 'Hungry Forties' would haunt the Tariff Reform campaign throughout and beyond the Edwardian era even in agricultural districts.<sup>100</sup> The Radical Right's trade policy may have had echoes in that of the Protectionists, but the platform itself did not emerge from the defeat of the 1840s. Amery traced the development of not only the modern Tariff Reform but also the Constructive Imperialist and national defence movements to the 1880s.<sup>101</sup>

### **The Fourth Party**

When the Radical Right grew frustrated with the Unionist leadership—Balfour especially—the memory of the Fourth Party (a quartet of discontented Conservative backbenchers during the 1880s) was used as both a neglected warning from the past and a model to follow. The 1906 landslide defeat especially brought up comparisons with the image struck by Randolph Churchill, the 'leader' of the Fourth Party, as a champion of Tory Democracy, and the apparent impotent lethargy of Balfour that undid the former's work.<sup>102</sup> Leo Maxse, when denouncing Balfour's leadership and those who defended it, lamented "Oh for an hour of Randolph Churchill."<sup>103</sup> The journalist J.L. Garvin went as far as to say that the

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<sup>98</sup> L. Amery, *Union and Strength: A Series of Papers on Imperial Questions*, (London, 1912), 66.

<sup>99</sup> Chamberlain, *Imperial Union*, 78. H.P. Croft, *The Path of Empire*, (London, 1912), 15.

<sup>100</sup> Summary of Agricultural Labourers in Eyre Division of Suffolk on Food Taxes, 1914, PA, BL/41/M/14.

<sup>101</sup> Amery, *Union and Strength*, 67.

<sup>102</sup> *The Times*, 22/01/06, 10. Viscount Ridley-J. Chamberlain, 22/01/06, CRL, JC21/2/82.

<sup>103</sup> *The Times*, 12/02/06, 10.

Unionists from the 1880s onwards had lost their vitality owing to their middle-class base and having abandoned the Tory Democracy Randolph Churchill championed.<sup>104</sup> The energy of the Fourth Party and the myth of Randolph Churchill served to highlight Balfour's failings in the eyes of the Radical Right.

Admiral Charles Beresford once told Randolph Churchill that the key to his appeal across the Conservative Party was this sense of "determination and decision" which was found lacking in Salisbury and the Conservative leadership.<sup>105</sup> Churchill appeared to be a man who could make the party adapt itself to democracy and be at one with the people, as younger MPs desired.<sup>106</sup> That the Fourth Party emerged in response to a weak leadership in the form of Stafford Northcote did not hurt the Radical Right's case for tying itself to the Fourth Party. Balfour, a member of the Fourth Party (a fact neglected by the group's admirers during the 1900s), derided Northcote as a man who disliked decisive action.<sup>107</sup> Much the same would be alleged about Balfour by his own critics. Another member, John Gorst, mockingly called Northcote 'the Goat' and pushed Churchill to have the Fourth Party force Northcote under their thumb.<sup>108</sup> In the same contemptuous tone, Amery in 1903 scorned Balfour and his Cabinet, saying "when Joe laid down his views...there was much a terrified unloosening of old bladders..." and asked Maxse about organising "a small gang to blackmail and bully [non-Chamberlainite] Unionist members..." and harangue Balfour as the Fourth Party had Gladstone and Northcote.<sup>109</sup> The Fourth Party and Edwardian Radical Right both also exploited the 'Disraeli myth' wherein Benjamin Disraeli was portrayed as a far-seeing 'Tory

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<sup>104</sup> P. Kennedy, *The Rise of Anglo-German Antagonism, 1860-1914*, (London, 1987) 344.

<sup>105</sup> C. Beresford-R. Churchill, 12/03/87, CUL, MS9248/32412.

<sup>106</sup> C. Beresford-R. Churchill, 16/09/90, CUL, MC9248/348.

<sup>107</sup> R.A. Williams (ed.), *Salisbury-Balfour Correspondence: Letters Exchanged Between the 3<sup>rd</sup> Marquess of Salisbury and his Nephew Arthur James Balfour*, (Hertfordshire, 1988), 52.

<sup>108</sup> J. Gorst-R. Churchill, 16/09/80, CUL, MS9248/12.

<sup>109</sup> L. Amery-L. Maxse, 20/09/03, WSRO, Maxse 451/693.

Democrat' whose national appeal for social reform and imperialism ought be followed, even if Disraeli himself failed to live up to this depiction.<sup>110</sup>

Both movements were also in favour of democratising the party organisation, if not solely for reasons of efficiency. Randolph Churchill's base was the National Union of Conservative Associations (NUCA), and he benefited by tying himself to provincial demands for more power within the party.<sup>111</sup> Joseph Chamberlain connected the Tariff Reform push for reforming the Central Office away from the Whips' control to Churchill's crusade for the NUCA.<sup>112</sup> He went one step further and made reference to Churchill's flirtation with the Fair Trade cause during the 1880s. In 1881, Churchill had made a speech in Oldham that appeared to endorse Fair Trade (an anti-Free Trade campaign whose principles would overlap with those of the Tariff Reform campaign) and won acclaim from across the Conservative Party.<sup>113</sup> In view of Churchill's complaint to Salisbury about the party's refusal to promote a positive programme to the voters with legislation, and Salisbury's reply defending that refusal,<sup>114</sup> Churchill did seem to be the prototypical leader that the Radical Right sought. He appeared a Chamberlain before Chamberlain; a theme which Joseph exploited in his speeches, marking Randolph Churchill as a Fair Trader.<sup>115</sup>

In reality, Randolph Churchill was no Chamberlain before Chamberlain, nor was the Fourth Party a prototypical-Radical Right. Balfour when still affiliated with the Fourth Party admitted to Salisbury that it had no organisation, leader, or distinctive principles.<sup>116</sup> Gorst,

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<sup>110</sup> P. Smith, *Disraeli: A Brief Life*, (Cambridge, 1996), 211-4. A. Milner, *The Nation and the Empire: A Collection of Speeches and Addresses*, (London, 1913), 210. *The Times*, 22/11/05, 12. *The Times*, 08/10/10, 10.

<sup>111</sup> Green, *Crisis of Conservatism*, 104.

<sup>112</sup> D. Dutton, *His Majesty's Loyal Opposition: The Unionist Party in Opposition 1905-1915*, (Liverpool, 1992), 127.

<sup>113</sup> Oldham Conservatives-R. Churchill, 30/09/81, CUL, MS9248/51.

<sup>114</sup> Sykes, *Tariff Reform*, 9-10. Salisbury-R. Churchill, 07/11/86, CUL, MS9248/1991.

<sup>115</sup> Chamberlain, *Imperial Union*, 108.

<sup>116</sup> Williams (ed.), *Salisbury-Balfour Correspondence*, 52.

who pushed most for an independent Fourth Party line to bring forth Disraeli's Tory Democracy, was a Free Trader, and Henry Drummond Wolff was content to accept diplomatic posts. Within the Unionist alliance, for all the expectation of a Churchill-Chamberlain bloc, he felt closer to Spencer Cavendish, known as Lord Hartington and notorious as the leader of the Whig faction of the Liberal Unionists who were sceptical about reform, than he did to Chamberlain.<sup>117</sup> Ironically, considering his reputation among the Radical Right, Balfour felt the opposite.

As for Fair Trade, Randolph Churchill quickly returned to Free Trade and stayed committed to it, much to the disappointment of the Fair Traders. Louis John Jennings, a Fair Trader who had been a supporter of Randolph Churchill, had urged Churchill to promote himself as a Fair Trader, grounding his appeal on how "the great industries of the country...are no longer expanding...[and] our present means of raising revenue cannot possibly keep pace with the demands upon us."<sup>118</sup> Similar arguments would be made in favour of Tariff Reform during the Edwardian era. When Churchill instead denounced Fair Trade at Stockton in 1887, Jennings was disillusioned, especially when Churchill refused to budge.<sup>119</sup> Churchill's eventual fall from the government itself was not over a question of Tory Democracy but instead over his insistence on defence cuts. As Balfour gleefully told Salisbury, both long frustrated with Churchill's ambitions, such a stand alienated Churchill's natural support-base.<sup>120</sup>

Beresford in 1890 urged Churchill that "you and I together could push a definite policy of Defence in which both the Services could work together as one whole for the Defence of the

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<sup>117</sup> R.F. Foster, *Lord Randolph Churchill: A Political Life*, (London, 1981), 340.

<sup>118</sup> J.L. Jennings-R. Churchill, 25/05/87, CUL, MS9248/2493.

<sup>119</sup> R. Churchill-J.L. Jennings, 27/11/87, CUL, MS9248/2701

<sup>120</sup> Williams (ed.), *Salisbury-Balfour Correspondence*, 170.

Empire abroad and at home.”<sup>121</sup> Churchill, however, did not do this. Nor did he pay much attention to Howard Vincent’s insistence that the United Empire Trade League (UETL) was not a Protectionist organisation but a group that sought imperial unity and a freer hand in trade.<sup>122</sup>

Not everyone in the Radical Right regarded Churchill as a missed opportunity. When Leo Amery read a biography of the man whom Maxse and de Broke admired, he concluded that “Randolph was an impossible person, and that it was fortunate that he was snuffed out early.”<sup>123</sup> However, as Beresford told Churchill after the latter’s resignation, what was missed about Churchill was a sense of drive and decision in the Cabinet, which now seemed directionless. It was this reputation that led Maxse to raise the spectre of the Fourth Party in the 1900s. The myth of the Fourth Party and Randolph Churchill was ultimately of more importance for the Radical Right than the reality.

### **The Leagues**

There had been recent campaigns on trade and defence prior to the Radical Right that utilised similar arguments to the Edwardian Radical Right. Up to the 1880s, Free Trade had for three decades been unquestioned as Britain’s economic policy. The agricultural sector appeared robust enough even without the protection of the Corn Laws. As de Broke recalled in bitter hindsight, writing his memoirs in 1923 with a sense of failure, the ideal time for an aristocrat like him had been the decades after the 1840s during which the aristocracy and agriculture remained stable.<sup>124</sup> Amery took a more cynical view and argued Free Trade’s

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<sup>121</sup> C. Beresford-R. Churchill, 29/10/90, CUL, MS9248/3649.

<sup>122</sup> Howard Vincent-R. Churchill, 03/03/92, CUL, MS9248/3861.

<sup>123</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 55.

<sup>124</sup> R. Verney, *The Passing Years*, (London, 1924), 11.

success was only in narrow commercial terms until the bubble inevitably burst in the 1870s and 1880s.<sup>125</sup> For agriculture, this came in the form of the Great Depression that emerged from the influx of American wheat into Europe. As agriculture decayed, and other states adopted tariffs, the debate on Free Trade emerged once more.<sup>126</sup> The 1880s and 1890s were key to the background of the Edwardian Radical Right because it was during this period that the economic, imperial, and military context which the Radical Right responded to emerged. It would also see the rise of the core of the Radical Right's platform, Constructive Imperialism.

The industrialisation of Europe and America created manufacturing rivals which further fed Conservative doubts about Free Trade. At the grassroots level, the result was the formation of the National Fair Trade League (NFTL). The group's manifesto, while advocating Free Trade for raw materials, sought permanent moderate food duties (but none on foodstuffs from imperial colonies) and the reciprocal principle for manufacturing duties.<sup>127</sup>

The NFTL represented a more traditional conception of Protectionism. There was little sign of George Tryon's call for Protection based on the British Empire rather than Britain alone.<sup>128</sup> The only imperial aspect was the exemption on duties for colonial foodstuffs, with little else in regard to raw materials or manufactured goods. Even so, the Radical Right tied itself to the 1880s backlash against Free Trade. Joseph Chamberlain in 1903 would argue that "especially in the last twenty years" Britain had been waiting to react against foreign states raising trade barriers while exploiting Britain's own Free Trade.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Amery, *Fundamental Fallacies*, 3.

<sup>126</sup> B. Brown, *The Tariff Reform Movement, 1881-1895*, (New York, 1963), 9-10.

<sup>127</sup> *The Times*, 03/08/81, 12.

<sup>128</sup> Tryon, *Tariff Reform*, 101.

<sup>129</sup> Chamberlain, *Imperial Union*, 115-6.

The question of Free Trade would also break imperialist pressure groups like the Imperial Federation League in two between Free Trade Imperialists and Constructive Imperialists. The 1880s represented the intellectual origin of Constructive Imperialism in the form of John Seeley's 1883 *The Expansion of England* which called for consolidating Britain and the Dominions into a 'Greater Britain.'<sup>130</sup> For those Constructive Imperialists, consolidation of the British Empire required material policies such as preferential duties as opposed to relying on sentimental ties. Imperial Preference was necessary for Imperial Union and so they would align with the United Empire Trade League.<sup>131</sup> A further development was the emergence of the 'historical' school of economists whose number included W.A.S. Hewins, future founder of the Tariff Commission and LSE Director. The historical school's primary critique of the classical school of economics was that it neglected the true organic nature of the state. William Cunningham and Herbert Foxwell were not involved in the TRL, but the school through Hewins would be associated with the Radical Right. For the historical school, the crusade against Free Trade began twenty years before Chamberlain's Birmingham speech, with 1903 being the occasion rather than the cause of its emergence.<sup>132</sup>

The Fair Trade cause caught on quickly within the Conservative Party. Lord Salisbury by 1892 claimed that Britain needed some form of tool to respond to foreign tariffs and that unilateral Free Trade was like claiming pacifism to avoid a fight.<sup>133</sup> Aaron Friedberg in *The Weary Titan* highlighted how the intellectual foundations for the TRL's critique of Free Trade were laid in the 1880s and 1890s.<sup>134</sup> One example was the argument concerning the greater importance of production to an economy, rather than cheapness, and that "the service of

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<sup>130</sup> Cain, 'Economic Philosophy of Constructive Imperialism', 44-5.

<sup>131</sup> Green, *Crisis of Conservatism*, 40.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 162.

<sup>133</sup> Salisbury Speech, 1892, BLO, PUB220/19-20.

<sup>134</sup> Friedberg, *Weary Titan*, 35, 69.



Fair Trade...[would be] to increase the value of both labour and capital in our own country and thus to find employment for our own people.”<sup>135</sup> The NFTL, meanwhile, also adopted a more imperial tone as the 1880s progressed until it endorsed broad Imperial Preference in 1891.<sup>136</sup> The UETL, meanwhile, would root its own appeal that same year by tying Imperial Preference to social reform and curbs on immigration.<sup>137</sup> The Conservative Party might indeed have been converted to a form of Tariff Reform twenty years early.

The Unionist alliance prevented this. The need to keep the Liberal Unionists (those Liberals who opposed William Gladstone’s conversion to Irish Home Rule on side prevented any move towards Protection. More important, however, was the public’s own refusal to abandon Free Trade. Joseph Chamberlain pinned the blame for the Unionist defeat in 1892 squarely on Salisbury’s flirtation with Fair Trade.<sup>138</sup> By the early 1890s, Fair Trade was pushed to the side-lines out of consideration for both the Unionist alliance and its own unpopularity.

The importance of the Fair Trade movement, however, lay less in its chances of success and more in its gradual move from Protection to Imperial Preference. Furthermore, Constructive Imperialism—foundational to the Radical Right ideology—emerged in the 1880s rather than being a creation of Joseph Chamberlain’s in 1903. Chamberlain remained a Free Trader during the 1880s, but in 1887 after serving in fisheries negotiation with the US, he made clear his hope for closer union between Britain and the self-governing colonies. What was more, he hinted that moves to a commercial union based on an offer by the colonies “if they do not involve the sacrifice of any important principle or of any interest vital to our

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<sup>135</sup> W.H. Watson-R. Churchill, 28/03/92, CUL, MS9248/4159.

<sup>136</sup> Brown, *Tariff Reform*, 78.

<sup>137</sup> Green, *Crisis of Conservatism*, 133.

<sup>138</sup> J. Chamberlain-A. Balfour, 19/07/92, BL, MS49773.

population...” ought to be respected and seriously considered.<sup>139</sup> It was a step towards Tariff Reform which would be of monumental importance for Constructive Imperialism, and in the formation of the Radical Right.

Without Chamberlain’s overt conversion, however, much of the 1890s for supporters of Imperial Preference was spent relying on initiatives from self-governing colonies like Canada. The effect of these groups, however, was also to show the rising inclination within the Conservative Party to offer action in response to perceived economic decline and lack of imperial unity. Conservative MP Howard Vincent asked Salisbury not to ignore the demands at the 1894 Newcastle Conference for social and industrial legislation and action to create an Imperial commercial union.<sup>140</sup> Salisbury, aware of the internal and external complications, sought to delay matters by advising Vincent to focus the UETL’s efforts on public opinion. By 1903, however, with Chamberlain leading the Tariff Reformers, Vincent told Salisbury, “now the [imperial preference] question is the great one before the country and on its merits the Election will be fought upon.”<sup>141</sup>

The demand for action was not restricted to economic questions. The Navy League emerged in the 1890s in response to fears that Britain’s naval superiority was threatened, with pressure on the government to boost spending.<sup>142</sup> The NL itself has often been associated by historians with the Radical Right, and although recent studies by Matthew Johnson have disputed the idea of the NL as a Radical Right group its founding reflected a similar trend. That trend was the demand for an active policy to maintain Britain’s place in the world, the NL being for defence policy what the NFTL, UETL, BML, and NAU were for economic and

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<sup>139</sup> C.W. Boyd (ed.), *Mr Chamberlain’s Speeches, Volume 1*, (London, 1914), 323-4.

<sup>140</sup> Howard Vincent-Salisbury 23/11/94, Hatfield House, 3M/E174.

<sup>141</sup> Howard Vincent-Salisbury, 28/06/03, Hatfield House, 3M/E174.

<sup>142</sup> A. Thompson, *Imperial Britain: The Empire in British Politics, 1880-1932*, (Harlow, 2000) 45.

imperial policy. There was a desire across the Conservatives for a constructive programme that melded not only Protection and Imperialism, but also social reform. As Milner once observed, the rise of a Tariff Reform movement (if not the precise shape it took) was inevitable from the 1880s onwards.<sup>143</sup> While Joseph Chamberlain waited until 1902-3 to align himself with Tariff Reform specifically, even in the 1890s he sought to provide the Conservative Party, and the Unionist alliance, with the very programme sought by the grassroots.

### **Lord Salisbury and Joseph Chamberlain**

The Radical Right were influenced, both directly and indirectly, by the leading Unionists of the 1880s and 1890s, such as Churchill, Chamberlain, and Salisbury. If Randolph Churchill was admired by most of the Radical Right, then Lord Salisbury was regarded with exasperation at best. Salisbury has often been associated with the 'quietist' tradition of the Conservative Party; cautious in legislation and wary of grand constructive programmes pushed forward by the likes of the Radical Right.<sup>144</sup> Salisbury at times fed this reputation. He confessed to Lord Balcarres that he was troubled by Balfour's willingness to alienate the Whigs with his enthusiasm for social reform programmes.<sup>145</sup> Given that Balfour was seen by his critics as in fact as too reactive and unwilling to embark on constructive policies, it was natural that the Radical Right would associate Salisbury with the decay of Unionism. An editor of the *National Review* in 1910 criticised Salisbury as "the great leader of the

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<sup>143</sup> A. Milner, *Constructive Imperialism*, (London, 1908), 17.

<sup>144</sup> Green, *Crisis of Conservatism*, 315.

<sup>145</sup> C. Vincent (ed.), *The Crawford Papers: The Journals of 27<sup>th</sup> Earl of Crawford and 10<sup>th</sup> Earl of Balcarres 1871-1940: During The Years 1892-1940*, (Manchester, 1984), 43.

Conservatives...was largely responsible for the failure to use for constructive purposes...the large majorities which the country gave him in 1895 and 1900.”<sup>146</sup>

This discontent was worsened by Salisbury’s remoteness and tendency to appoint family and friends to the Cabinet. Dubbed the ‘Hotel Cecil’, the Cabinet appeared to the Radical Right and other critics within the party as a laggard and incapable body with little understanding of the voters.<sup>147</sup> The lack of contact between the front and back benches only deepened this impression, as the Radical Right MP Edward Turnour, commonly known as Lord Winterton, recalled.<sup>148</sup> The result was that Salisbury appeared to be an over-cautious, circumspect politician who was too afraid of risk and reform.

In fact, however, of the Late Victorian Conservative leaders, it could be argued that Salisbury was closer to being the ideological parent of the Radical Right than Randolph Churchill ever was. If Churchill’s presentational skills charmed the Radical Right, Salisbury’s policies helped shape the movement. That he played an important part in the Conservative revival of the 1880s and 90s partially explains this, although by no means was he solely responsible for the Conservative shift from being a party of opposition to becoming the party of government. The role of ‘Villa Toryism’ among the suburbs of the commuter belt and the Conservatives’ own coalition-building also deserve credit. The party was able to present middle-class voters with a platform of self-reliance and respectability, and present a more populist appeal to working-class voters based on ‘Beer and Britannia.’<sup>149</sup> The introduction of the Primrose League also helped to create a social atmosphere which, while not officially affiliated with

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<sup>146</sup> Green, *Crisis of Conservatism*, 155.

<sup>147</sup> J. Ramsden, *An Appetite for Power: A History of the Conservative Party Since 1830*, (London, 1998), 188.

<sup>148</sup> E. Turnour, *Orders of the Day*, (London, 1953), 2.

<sup>149</sup> M. Roberts, ‘Villa Toryism and Popular Conservatism in Leeds, 1885-1902’, *The Historical Journal*, 49:1, (2008), 220.

the Conservatives, still greatly benefitted the party.<sup>150</sup> By 1886, the Conservative victory as part of the Unionist alliance in that year's general election symbolised the success in building the party's organisation and electoral appeal that had eluded Disraeli and Churchill.<sup>151</sup>

Salisbury still played an important role in emboldening the Conservative Party. Ziblatt primarily focuses on the question of party organisation in his study of conservative parties and their reaction to democracy, but credits Salisbury for succeeding where his predecessor and rival failed, despite their better posthumous reputations in this regard.<sup>152</sup> Unlike Northcote, who wished to form a centrist alliance with the Whigs, Salisbury insisted on any alliance with the Whigs being on Tory terms.<sup>153</sup> Much the same approach was taken by members of the Edwardian Radical Right. As for the House of Lords, Salisbury sought to establish the Lords as a near co-equal chamber to the Commons. Disraeli in the aftermath of the electoral defeat in 1880 argued the party had to put its faith in the Lords to fight back against the Liberals.<sup>154</sup> Salisbury followed through on that hope by promoting his Mandate Theory whereby the House of Lords was justified in rejecting legislation from the Commons on the grounds that an electoral mandate was necessary.<sup>155</sup>

It took almost as much effort from Salisbury to push the Conservative Peers into making stands as it did to defeat the Liberals. After an attempted stand on the Irish Arrears Bill saw Salisbury isolated as leader of the Conservatives in the Lords, he threatened to leave politics

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<sup>150</sup> Lawrence, 'Class and Gender in the Making of Urban Toryism', 639-42.

<sup>151</sup> Ziblatt, *Conservative Parties*, 82.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>153</sup> Green, *Ideologies*, 131.

<sup>154</sup> Williams, (ed.), *Salisbury-Balfour Correspondence*, 39.

<sup>155</sup> C.C. Weston, *The House of Lords and Ideological Politics: Lord Salisbury's Referendal Theory and the Conservative Party, 1847-1922*, (Philadelphia, 1995), 48.

if the same happened over the demand to link redistribution of seats with the Third Reform Act.<sup>156</sup> Gladstone's eventual acquiescence vindicated Salisbury's stubborn stance. Salisbury was not quiet on Irish Home Rule either. His rigid resistance to Gladstone's attempts to pass the Home Rule Act in 1886 and 1893 led the Liberal giant to tie Salisbury to 'Tory Democracy' in 1895. By that assertion, Gladstone meant to argue that Salisbury had discarded caution and conservatism in favour of pandering to the radical instincts of his party.<sup>157</sup> On the imperial front, it was Salisbury who would end trade treaties with Belgium and Germany when Canada offered unilateral preference for British imports.<sup>158</sup> It therefore seems that, Salisbury did provide the leadership that the Radical Right desired from Balfour. Far from being the pure embodiment of 'quietism' either, Salisbury was supportive of some social reforms. In 1891 he asserted that the Conservative Party had a worthy mission in using the tools of the state to improve the lives of people.<sup>159</sup> Joseph Chamberlain soon felt that the true reactionary leader in the Unionist alliance was not Salisbury but Hartington. By 1905, he would cite Salisbury in equal reference to Disraeli and Randolph Churchill when arguing that the Unionists had a legacy of 'constructive' social reforms.<sup>160</sup> Whiggism rather than Toryism proved the less constructive ideology. The passage of measures such as free education and small landholding bills even convinced him that Salisbury was a better reformer than Gladstone.<sup>161</sup> By 1892 he told Balfour that he without a doubt preferred working with Salisbury to working with Hartington and, in turn, Balfour felt Chamberlain was far more trustworthy than Hartington.<sup>162</sup> Both men welcomed the thought of closer

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<sup>156</sup> A. Roberts, *Lord Salisbury: Victorian Titan*, (1999), 297-8.

<sup>157</sup> Weston, *Referendal Theory*, 155.

<sup>158</sup> S. Zebel, 'Joseph Chamberlain and the Genesis of Tariff Reform', *Journal of British Studies*, 7:1, (1967), 141.

<sup>159</sup> W.H. Greenleaf, *The British Political Tradition, Volume 2, The Ideological Heritage*, (London, 2003), 228.

<sup>160</sup> *The Times*, 22/11/05, 12.

<sup>161</sup> Williams (ed.), *Salisbury-Balfour Correspondence*, 478.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 136-8.

collaboration between the Conservatives and Radical Liberal Unionists.<sup>163</sup> Salisbury was more cautious than Balfour, but he remained a bolder reformist than the Radical Right gave him credit for.

Chamberlain believed, however, that the Unionists could do more. This was where he and Salisbury parted ways. In 1894, Chamberlain approached Salisbury with a plan. The Unionists would use the House of Lords to propose a new 'Unauthorised Programme' that melded Chamberlain's Radicalism with Toryism. Chamberlain's plan, as he explained to Selborne (still known as William Palmer prior to his father's death) was simple.

"....to spoil the game of the Gladstonians by...dealing with some of the more important social questions by means of Bills. In order to do this effectively the House of Lords must be prepared for something in the nature of the reforms suggested in my speech last night. I believe that in principle Lord Salisbury is not opposed to any of them...the House Purchase Bill, the extension of the Artisans Dwelling Act, the establishment of Courts of Arbitration, Compensation for Injuries and Accidents, and Alien Immigration."<sup>164</sup>

The Radical Right would similarly attempt to use the Lords to push forward radical legislation with Lord Roberts' National Service Bill in 1909.<sup>165</sup> As for Chamberlain's plan, it focused on social reform, but it had deeper implications. Such a tactic from the Unionists would not only have represented a policy programme from opposition but also implicitly granted the House of Lords the right to propose financial legislation. That was how Salisbury interpreted Chamberlain's measures when he rejected the idea, adding that certain

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 428-30.

<sup>164</sup> J. Chamberlain-W. Palmer, 12/10/94, CRL, JC5/74/23.

<sup>165</sup> This will be explored further in Chapter IV.

Conservative supporters would not accept social reform proposals from an Opposition that they might swallow from a government.<sup>166</sup> The hypothetical backers did not include the Conservative rank and file.<sup>167</sup>

For the Radical Right, the 1890s served as a missed opportunity for the Unionists to be the party of social reform. Luke Blaxill and Paul Readman's study of the 1895 election showed that one major reason for the Unionist victory was the promotion of a 'positive Unionism' that offered old-age pensions, improvements to housing, and extension of the Factory Acts.<sup>168</sup> For many in the Radical Right, 1895 stood out as one of the larger missed opportunities for the Unionist Party. Not everyone agreed. De Broke, one of the less constructive members of the Radical Right, recalled Unionist candidates making such promises with a disapproving tone.<sup>169</sup> Leo Amery, by contrast, felt that until the Ulster Crisis, 1895 was the last time that the Unionist Party had put the Liberals on the run.<sup>170</sup>

In summary, Salisbury was important in establishing a political atmosphere in which the Radical Right felt confident in the Unionist Party's capacity for victory. Where he stumbled for its adherents, however, was in his failure to build upon those victories. The failure to use the party's time in Opposition to pro-actively offer a constructive programme would also be one of the Radical Right's biggest frustrations with Balfour. As for Chamberlain, his entry into the Colonial Office after 1895 signalled his further rise towards the status of icon and leader for the Radical Right. Not least was this true for his part in trying to create the building-blocks of Imperial Union in the aftermath of the Second Boer War.

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<sup>166</sup> Boyce (ed.), *Selborne Papers*, 21-2.

<sup>167</sup> P. Readman, 'The 1895 General Election and Political Change in Late-Victorian Britain', *Historical Journal*, 42:2, (1999), 478.

<sup>168</sup> Blaxill, *War of Words*, 134-5. Readman, '1895 General Election', 491.

<sup>169</sup> Verney, *Passing Years*, 178.

<sup>170</sup> 'The Paralysis of Parliament' by Leo Amery, 04/04/13, CA, AMEL1/2/12.



## Birth of the Edwardian Radical Right

### The Boer War: An Imperial Lesson

For many in Britain, but especially the Radical Right, the Second Boer War (also known as the South African War) was a harsh wake-up call. For three years the weight of the entire British Empire had to be called upon against the Boer Republics.<sup>171</sup> Politicians were forced to reckon with a flawed military system but also the consequences of widespread malnutrition and terrible living conditions for much of the population. Numerous volunteers had to be turned away for failing to meet physical standards.<sup>172</sup> Those that did join up “could not shoot, and...knowledge of practical field work was necessarily nil.”<sup>173</sup> What was meant to have been an easy victory instead became a life-or-death struggle during the ‘Black Week’ of military defeats. The sense of humiliation over Britain’s exposed weaknesses was galling for imperialists. Aaron Friedberg argued that one substantial effect of the Boer War was to force the Salisbury Cabinet to realise first that the Boer War would require substantial spending, and also that the British Expeditionary Force as it was, could not be mobilised without endangering home defence. The new financial burden itself exacerbated an ongoing debate about how much revenue the British fiscal system could raise, particularly among the Unionists who distrusted the potential of heightened direct taxes. The Boer War brought existential dread both militarily and financially for Unionists.<sup>174</sup>

If the Radical Right despaired at Britain’s poor condition, it took heart in the public’s spirit.

In the immediate aftermath of the Boer War, however, the Constructive Imperialists were

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<sup>171</sup> Amery, *Union and Strength*, 136.

<sup>172</sup> R.J.Q. Adams, P. Poirier, *The Conscription Controversy in Britain, 1900-1918*, (Basingstoke, 1988), 6.

<sup>173</sup> Croft, *Path of Empire*, 51.

<sup>174</sup> Friedberg, *Weary Titan*, 106, 233, 89-91.

focused beyond the partisan benefits of the war. Rudyard Kipling portrayed defeats such as those during the 'Black Week' as an Imperial lesson that Britain had to take to heart if it wanted to retain an empire. One part of that lesson was that Britain's whole system of defence needed reform. One requirement was to professionalise the British Army. Amery set out on writing his history of the war for *The Times*, a years-long project that sought to highlight the desperate need for reforming the army's culture towards professionalism.<sup>175</sup> It was not only the amateur spirit that men like Amery sought to reform. The National Service League, the first organised pressure group in Britain to advocate compulsory military training, was founded in 1902 in response to the failures of the Boer War.<sup>176</sup> Founding members of the NSL included future Radical Right adherents such as George Sandys, Leo Maxse, and Leo Amery.<sup>177</sup> Lord Roberts, along with others in the Radical Right, directly tied the Boer War and the NSL's creation together by arguing that the lesson of the Boer War had been, "'Arm and prepare...ourselves like men, for the time of your ordeal is at hand'...Such, gentlemen, is the origin...[of] the conviction that in some form of National Service is the only salvation of this nation and this Empire."<sup>178</sup>

One underlying theme of the Radical Right's platform was that the lessons of the Boer War—in imperial and defence policy alike—were forgotten. Roberts decried how "the lessons that the war should have taught us have borne no fruit," and that in twelve years "as regards efficiency and as regards preparedness for war, we are practically where we were in 1900." Milner, meanwhile, warned, "we are bound, sooner or later, to come to

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<sup>175</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 33, 39.

<sup>176</sup> R.T. Stearn, 'The Last Glorious Campaign' Lord Roberts, the National Service League, and Compulsory Military Training, 1902-1914', *The Society for Army Historical Research*, 87:352, (2008), 312-3.

<sup>177</sup> *The Times*, 27/02/02, 7.

<sup>178</sup> F. Roberts, *Lord Roberts' Message to the Nation*, (London, 1912), 10. E. Turnour, *Fifty Tumultuous Years*, (London, 1955), 32-3.

grief. I thought the Boer War had taught us that, but the Boer War is apparently forgotten...in the main we are going on the old lines, as if we had had no warning that we are living on the edge of a precipice."<sup>179</sup> Near-defeat had revealed Britain to be a 'weary titan.'<sup>180</sup> The Radical Right sought to revitalise this titan so that it could stem the tide of imperial retreat and maintain its place in the world. The Boer War might have exposed Britain's weaknesses, but there was cause for spiritual redemption as the public proved, "[t]he national spirit is not dead."<sup>181</sup> The Radical Right believed the mind of public opinion was willing, but the body had to be made able. National Service could handle home defence against invasion and promote public health through universal military training. As for Britain's status in the world, if Britain alone could not handle the load of a world-power, then an Imperial Union might take up such a burden.<sup>182</sup> To accomplish this, however, the Imperial Union would have to be forged. The best way to do so, in Joseph Chamberlain's view, was to forge tighter and more exclusive commercial ties that would evolve into something more.

The cause of National Defence would be one of the two pillars of the Radical Right platform. The other was inspired by another direct response to the Boer War, namely the sight of the self-governing colonies displaying imperial solidarity with Britain.<sup>183</sup> If the war taught an imperial lesson, it also offered an imperial answer. The support given by Canada, Australia,

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<sup>179</sup> *Hansard*, HL Debate, Imperial Defence, 10/07/06, Vol. 160 cc662. *Hansard*, HL Debate, National Service (Training and Home Defence) Bill, 12/07/09, Vol. 2, cc269. Milner, *Nation and Empire*, (London, 1913), 366. Roberts, *Message*, 11-2.

<sup>180</sup> Friedberg, *Weary Titan*, 116.

<sup>181</sup> Milner, *Nation and Empire*, 166.

<sup>182</sup> A. Thompson, *Imperial Britain*, 25.

<sup>183</sup> B. Wise, 'The Problem of Empire', J. Harris (ed.), *The New Order: Studies in Unionist Policy*, (London, 1908), 92. Amery, *Union and Strength*, 68. R. Jebb, *The Britannic Question: A Survey of Alternatives*, (London, 1913), 31. W.A.S. Hewins, *The Apologia of an Imperialist: Forty Years of Empire Policy, Volume 1*, (London, 1929), 50-1.

and New Zealand strengthened the Constructive Imperialists' conception of a British nation beyond the British Isles. That support could be contrasted with the backlash against Britain within Europe, sparking fears of invasion that further fed the National Service cause, and strengthened the Constructive Imperialist determination that these bonds of sentiment be strengthened with action.<sup>184</sup> The attempt to do just that in 1902-03, and the failure of that attempt, would be what sparked the true birth of the Radical Right.

### **Chamberlain's Call to Arms**

Joseph Chamberlain did not invent the Radical Right, but he did inspire it into the shape and focus it took. Chamberlain publicly defined himself as a Free Trader throughout the 1880s and early 1890s, but he was also a stout imperialist. As opposed to Free Trade Imperialists, and much like the Constructive Imperialists, he also believed that sentiment was not enough for Imperial Union; there had to be material arrangements in trade.<sup>185</sup> He had already endorsed the principle of closer economic ties within the Empire and indicated that he was open to any offer from the Dominions. He had even gone so far as to propose an imperial Zollverein, a customs union akin to that between the German states prior to the unification wars, but he dropped the scheme owing to domestic and colonial opposition.<sup>186</sup> By 1898, however, Canada appeared to be taking the first step in establishing closer economic ties, making such an offer by granting Britain a one-third preference on its duties.<sup>187</sup> All Britain had to do in turn was revoke its trade treaty with Germany, which Salisbury did.

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<sup>184</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 205. Croft, *Path of Empire*, 7.

<sup>185</sup> Boyd (ed.), *Chamberlain's Speeches Vol. 1*, 322.

<sup>186</sup> Cain, 'Political Economy', 40.

<sup>187</sup> Tryon, *Tariff Reform*, 104.

Peter Marsh and Richard Shannon have argued that Chamberlain first moved away from Free Trade in endorsing such reciprocal arrangements.<sup>188</sup> Aaron Friedberg, on the other hand, has claimed that Chamberlain's doubts about Free Trade dated as far back as the early 1880s.<sup>189</sup> Regardless, the 1890s saw Chamberlain make his first active steps towards Tariff Reform. The Dominions, however, were not without agency in the eyes of Constructive Imperialists like Chamberlain and his followers. Tariff Reformers would tie the Canadian preference in 1898 to the 1897 Diamond Jubilee, Colonial Conferences from 1887 onward, and other imperial events building up to the 1902 Imperial Conference.<sup>190</sup> One key event in this timeline was the Boer War itself, as the need to fund the military operations caused an important break with the Free Trade tradition.

In 1902, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Michael Hicks-Beach, introduced a duty on corn. Despite Hicks-Beach defending the duty on Free Trade grounds, the *National Review* celebrated the duty as, "welcome to those who have emancipated themselves from the Manchester fetish as a finger-post pointing towards an Imperial Zollverein."<sup>191</sup> How long the corn duties were meant to last, and whether they represented a transition to an empire-focused fiscal policy, was questionable. Hicks-Beach desired the duty to be permanent but was opposed to Imperial Preference.<sup>192</sup>

Another dimension to the debate that concerned the Radical Right was the question of defence spending itself. Where Hicks-Beach, closer to the Treasury model of retrenchment and low taxes, felt defence spending had to be cut, Chamberlain believed a national

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<sup>188</sup> P. Marsh, *Joseph Chamberlain: Entrepreneur in Politics*, (New Haven Conn., 1994), 422. R. Shannon, *The Age of Salisbury, 1881-1902, Unionism and Empire*, (London, 1996), 471.

<sup>189</sup> Friedberg, *Weary Titan*, 45-8.

<sup>190</sup> Amery, *Union and Strength*, 67. Tryon, *Tariff Reform*, 103-5.

<sup>191</sup> *National Review*, Volume 39, Issue 231, 05/02, 364.

<sup>192</sup> Marsh, *Entrepreneur in Politics*, 526.

campaign would win the public over to accepting the fiscal burden of national defence.<sup>193</sup>

When Salisbury finally stood down as Prime Minister, however, Hicks-Beach joined him in exiting the front bench, out of exhaustion from trying to keep the nation's finances afloat.

The question of how to fund ever-rising demands on social and military spending hung over many Unionists' minds during the Tariff Reform debate. Before then, what mattered was that Balfour succeeded his uncle as Prime Minister and Joseph Chamberlain remained at the Colonial Office. Chamberlain did not see himself as a mere Cabinet minister, however, but instead as something akin to an equal partner to Balfour.<sup>194</sup>

One reason Chamberlain desired to remain in the Colonial Office rather than take the Treasury was the chance to negotiate at the 1902 Imperial Conference. There, Canadian Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier was willing to grant preference to Britain for manufacturing goods if Britain gave Canada preference on corn. As Tariff Reformers would argue, Laurier did not make this offer alone, as Australia, New Zealand, and the Cape Colony hinted that they too would follow up on it.<sup>195</sup> It was the exact situation that Chamberlain had envisaged in 1887, and he quickly secured the Cabinet's endorsement. Chamberlain and new Chancellor Charles Ritchie, however, disagreed on what constituted an unacceptable break with principle. With the threat of resignation, Ritchie forced the Cabinet to make a U-turn on preference and the corn duty was discarded.

Leo Amery made a rare criticism of his political idol over Chamberlain's refusal to make Balfour decide between him and Ritchie. Amery in his autobiography depicted this

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<sup>193</sup> Friedberg, *Weary Titan*, 111, 113.

<sup>194</sup> Marsh, *Entrepreneur in Politics*, 530.

<sup>195</sup> Jebb, *Britannic Question*, 224-5.

hypothetical ultimatum, which he assumed Chamberlain would have won and thus become Chancellor, as a saving grace for the Unionist government.

“His [Chamberlain’s] Budget, confined to the preferential remission of the corn duty, represented as he alone could do it, would then have rallied the whole Unionist Party, except the merest handful of dissentients, in the House of Commons, and have given it new life in the country, Followed in 1904 by a second Budget, including a further instalment of preferences with a reduction of existing indirect duties and his own favourite project of old age pensions, it might have resuscitated a moribund Unionism as Lloyd George resuscitated a moribund Liberalism in 1909.”<sup>196</sup>

Amery’s contention receives limited endorsement from Conservative Principal Agent Richard Midleton’s report in 1902. Midleton did not claim that a preferential duty would revitalise the party’s electoral support but did suggest that the public backlash against permanent corn duties would be heavily reduced if they were an explicit precursor to Imperial Preference.<sup>197</sup> If not as ambitious as Amery’s prediction, this did imply that corn duties might have been less controversial if maintained rather than scrapped then re-introduced. Robert Blake in his history of the Conservative Party expressed shock that the party he associated with sensible pragmatism would sink into a civil war over what seemed to be the unpopular policy of Tariff Reform. Even so, he agreed with Amery’s judgement on Chamberlain’s mistake.<sup>198</sup> Whether Amery’s scenario was even remotely possible, the fact

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<sup>196</sup> Amery, *My Political Life, Volume I, England Before The Storm, 1896-1914*, (London, 1953), 233-4.

<sup>197</sup> Jack Sandars-A. Balfour, 04/09/02, BL, MS49761.

<sup>198</sup> R. Blake, *The Conservative Party From Peel to Major*, (London, 1997), 183-4, 178.

remained that allowing the corn duty to be scrapped meant that the advantage of inertia favoured Free Trade.<sup>199</sup>

The bitter feelings were not helped when Ritchie's speech in the Commons explicitly defined his Budget and himself as devoutly Free Trade.<sup>200</sup> Chamberlain was quick to retaliate. On 15<sup>th</sup> May 1903, Chamberlain's speech in West Birmingham would signal his formal break with Free Trade and adoption of Tariff Reform and heralded the birth of the Radical Right. Chamberlain's speech carried three overarching themes; the need for Imperial Union, the necessity of Tariff Reform to accomplish that union, and that time was running out for Britain to bring its empire together.<sup>201</sup> The decision was between union and disintegration. For many of the Radical Right's adherents, Chamberlain's speech did not just make him their leader, but also shaped their lives. After hearing of Chamberlain's speech, Leo Maxe rushed to Amery and told him that they finally had a worthy cause that would shatter "the temple of Mandarinism."<sup>202</sup> The old settled wisdoms that the Radical Right associated with stagnation seemed to be challenged at last. Tryon identified Tariff Reform as a chance for Britain to "resume control of our own destinies."<sup>203</sup> The younger adherents of the Radical Right owed their entry into politics to Chamberlain's activism. George Lloyd told Austen Chamberlain that if not for one of Joseph's speeches in 1903, he would have never entered politics.<sup>204</sup> The same was the case for Henry Page Croft, who credited his entire career and its dedication to Imperialism and National Defence, to Chamberlain.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> J. Barnes, J. Ramsden, *The Age of Balfour and Baldwin, 1902-1940*, (London, 1978), 9.

<sup>200</sup> *Hansard*, HC Debate, Repeal of Corn Duty, 23/04/03, Vol 121 cc256-7.

<sup>201</sup> Chamberlain, *Imperial Union*, 7-8.

<sup>202</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 47.

<sup>203</sup> Tryon, *Tariff Reform*, 101.

<sup>204</sup> G. Lloyd-A. Chamberlain, 16/09/18, CRL, AC18/1/13.

<sup>205</sup> Croft, *Strife*, xii.



Milner was right to say that Tariff Reform was not the work of one man, and that the cause existed before Chamberlain's conversion.<sup>206</sup> What Chamberlain did was provide the means for Tariff Reform to become a mass campaign that offered a national platform with a popular leader. Chamberlain may have re-opened the fiscal debate rather than begin it, but the act of re-opening itself had significance. For some Tariff Reformers, Chamberlain's speeches served to articulate and visualise the vague ideas and sentiments that had hung at the back of their minds.<sup>207</sup> This was something the Radical Right failed to do for itself, and its adherents knew that Chamberlain's ability to do so marked him out as irreplaceable. Hewins lamented that Chamberlain's stroke had removed the one man,

“[Who] was on a far higher plane than his critics and made an immense appeal both to me and to thousands of others in the personal sense....If he had continued as the active leader, the first necessary steps in carrying out the new Imperial policy would no doubt have been taken years before they were actually taken.”<sup>208</sup>

The ideas that animated the Radical Right had developed prior to Chamberlain's Tariff Reform crusade. What Chamberlain did was provide a rallying point to inspire the Radical Right into action and provide a popular platform for the centrepiece of its platform—Tariff Reform—through the TRL. This is not to say that Joseph Chamberlain and the Radical Right were synonymous. Chamberlain was not involved in the National Service campaign, for which Roberts filled the role of inspiring leader. Roberts was arguably more vital for the NSL's survival and success than Chamberlain was for the TRL's.<sup>209</sup> Chamberlain's role, however, was that he inspired the Radical Right into action and influenced the shape and

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<sup>206</sup> Milner, *Constructive Imperialism*, 16.

<sup>207</sup> Parker Smith-J. Chamberlain, 29/10/03, CRL, JC18/18/101.

<sup>208</sup> Hewins, *Apologia Volume 1*, 7-8.

<sup>209</sup> Hendley, *Crucible*, 12.

emphasis of its platform. Roberts would arrive to lead the NSL only in 1905, and for reasons detailed in Chapter III could not fill Chamberlain's place for the Radical Right.

### **Conclusion**

The importance of looking beyond Joseph Chamberlain specifically for the origins of the Radical Right lies in being able to understand how the Radical Right itself perceived its own history. The Radical Right primarily located itself as a response to the crises it believed began in the 1880s, such as relative economic, military, and trade decline, and the perceived failures to properly respond to those issues. Concerns over Britain's military state existed prior to the sharp shock of the Boer War, whilst complaints over a 'slow' and 'reactive' Unionist leadership pre-dated Balfour's ascension along with the search for a more dynamic leader. This more energetic and programmatic leader, however, did not emerge during the 1880s, despite the mythic status surrounding Randolph Churchill. By 1903, however, the perceived failures of the 1880s and 1890s, embodied by the Boer War and Britain's apparent inability to respond with military and economic reform, led to the Radical Right's emergence. Its solution was Constructive Imperialism (embodied by Tariff Reform) in combination with National Service.

While some Radical Right adherents were involved in the NSL's founding in 1902, it was only in 1903—with Chamberlain's call for Tariff Reform—that many entered politics over the first step for the Constructive Imperialist vision of the British Empire's future. Participation in the NSL truly took off in 1905 in part due to Lord Roberts becoming President and the ties

adherents had to either him or to Lord Alfred Milner.<sup>210</sup> Thus, 1903 can be judged as the year the Edwardian Radical Right truly began.

When the main themes of Constructive Imperialism were merged with National Defence and National Service, the Radical Right's ideology emerges. That ideology was one geared to respond to the question of 'the weary titan.' Chamberlain saw the solution to Britain's apparent imperial overstretch in having the self-governing colonies share the burden through Imperial Union. Where the Radical Right would depart from Chamberlain was in the inclusion of National Service, as adherents believed that Britain's military needed as much reforming as did its fiscal policies. If the Boer War created a sentiment for reform, Chamberlain's Birmingham speech refined this sentiment for many in the Radical Right and fostered a sense of identity that sustained the movement. Its identity was rooted in various themes: frustration with a distant and incapable Unionist leadership embodied in Arthur Balfour, the sense of a great imperial opportunity and fear of its fading away, and fear of military invasion and/or disaster. The Edwardian Radical Right was primarily the result of an age of insecurity. Despite the optimism its adherents infused into their rhetoric and proposals, its platform was one of a defensive, reactive, and militaristic imperial-nationalism.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Adams, 'The National Service League', 60, 63.

<sup>211</sup> R. Williams, *Defending the Empire: The Conservative Party and British Defence Policy 1899-1915*, (New Haven, 1991), 4.

## II. The Constructive Platform

### **Introduction**

This chapter aims to show the policies embedded within the Edwardian Radical Right. The individual adherents (who acted primarily as individuals participating in pressure groups) believed that Britain faced a multi-faceted decline that threatened its stability unless certain policies were implemented. Furthermore, its platform would enable a national and imperial rejuvenation on a political, economic, and social level creating internal and external peace, security, and restoration of the British Empire's prior hegemonic position. The foundational policy for this revival was Tariff Reform—which would be the first step to imperial unity between Britain and the Dominions as per the Constructive Imperialist tradition.

In addition to this, the Edwardian Radical Right supported National Service to reform Britain's military defences. National Service was intended to aid the building of Britain's home defence and bring about social improvement. It was furthermore meant to allow for training and expansion of Britain's land forces, securing the home front. Germany's navy could thus be countered without a withdrawal of Britain's naval squadrons outside the North Sea.

At its core the Edwardian Radical Right's platform was fundamentally rooted in Constructive Imperialism, which both pre-dated and would survive beyond the Radical Right. Tariff Reform was to be an imperial panacea for Britain's economic, trade, industrial, and social ills. Social reform was supported as a means of social solidarity and improving material health, as also emphasised in arguments for Tariff Reform and National Service alike. However, both policies were planned to strengthen nation and empire with some sacrifice entailed.

## Meeting of Minds

One issue with studying the Radical Right is that it is difficult to create a perfect list of adherents. The Radical Right was not a parliamentary group. Some adherents such as Thomas Comyn-Platt never succeeded in entering Parliament, or remained within journalism like Ware, Gwynne, and Maxse. Those who did enter Parliament mostly did so in the 1910 general elections or in by-elections between then and 1914. As for extra-parliamentary groups, there was no unified Radical Right group either. The pressure groups usually associated with the Radical Right are the Navy League (NL), Tariff Reform League (TRL), National Service League (NSL), and Imperial Maritime League (IML), and of those, the NL's status as an exclusively Unionist, let alone Radical Right, group has been challenged by Matthew Johnson.<sup>212</sup> The NSL, moreover, was shared with more traditional Conservatives otherwise sceptical of 'constructive' programmes such as Lords Curzon and Derby. The closest entities to a 'Radical Right' group would be the IML and the 1917 National Party, neither of which included enough adherents to qualify. However, these pressure groups still remained the key means (next to individual publications and/or speeches) by which Radical Right adherents sought to promote the aspects of their platform, given the lack of parliamentary organisation or grouping.

Fleming's division of the Unionist Right during the Edwardian era into three 'sub-vectors': Empire-first Unionists, the legion of leagues, and Ditchers is a helpful guide to understanding its divisions. As he also notes, there was an overlap of personnel and ideas between each group, particularly the first two 'sub-vectors'. Where this dissertation differs

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<sup>212</sup> M. Johnson, 'The Liberal Party and the Navy League Before The Great War', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22:2, (2011), 137-163.

is that it argues that the overlap in policies and personnel between those groups did constitute an 'Edwardian Radical Right' worth discussing as opposed to his 'sub-vectors' depiction.

If seen as a loose network of individuals tied together by a common ideology within Unionism, the Radical Right can be identified as a specific response to the perceived looming spectres of the Edwardian era. It sought to counter these spectres—class division, economic decline, and imperial retreat and disintegration—with a multi-layered and inter-connected programme of imperial unity, militarism, and 'constructive' social reform policies to combat strife at home and danger abroad. Willoughby de Broke, Leo Amery, and Henry Page Croft outlined the above agenda in personal correspondence and publicised material.

"We want a National Policy: and a National Party! ... we want to form a definite plan for consolidating the Empire, and upholding National thought and Patriotism here at home to sustain the Empire. We want...The consolidation of Empire; and the definite organisation of powers. ...A strong Naval policy of superiority...and above all a military policy of at least 250,000 Expeditionary Force, based on Universal Service..."

"What the country wants...is a big ideal clearly held up before them, and Imperial Unity is the only big ideal of our age. We can fill it in with every detail, above all the detail of a prosperous and harmonious people living in a true social order, but the framework of the big ideal must be there all the time to hold it all together."

“The first three subjects [Imperial Unity in regards to defence, trade, and policy consultation] are largely interdependent, and each must be dealt with exhaustively...”<sup>213</sup>

This shows the inter-connected nature of the Radical Right platform, if perhaps its limited success in publicising the platform in the form of a manifesto. The closest thing to an authoritative manifesto played on similar themes too. Published in the *Morning Post* in 1908, in the context of victories of candidates who embraced the ‘Whole Hog’ conception of Tariff Reform—endorsing food duties—in by-elections, it was felt that the time had come to expound a broader reform scheme. The article was written by the editor Fabian Ware in consultation with other adherents of the Radical Right—Milner, Amery, and J.W. Hills—and outlined the broad strokes of the Radical Right ideology,

“The basis of all Unionist policy is union. All national questions, whether domestic or Imperial, should be treated in relation to this fundamental principle, implying union of classes within the State, national union of Great Britain and Ireland, Imperial union of self-governing nations and dependencies under the Crown. Of the questions now before the country Tariff Reform necessarily comes first. As the only means of protecting employment, of increasing production, and of equitably providing additional revenue for national defence and social reform, it is essential to the union of classes...as the only means of meeting the proposals unanimously put forward by the self-governing Dominions for promoting closer Imperial relations it is essential to the union of the Empire. ...The Navy must at all hazards be maintained at such a

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<sup>213</sup> De Broke-H.P. Croft, ??/??/12, CA, CRFT1/20. L. Amery-Bonar Law, 22/05/12, PA, BL/26/3/35. Croft, *Path of Empire*, 12. Amery, *Union and Strength*, v.

strength as would enable it to cope with any other two Navies combined. As regards military defence there is a steadily growing body of public opinion favourable to the idea of a citizen Army based on universal service as the only certain means of creating an adequate reservoir from which to replenish by voluntary enlistment the Regular Army in time of war, and at the same time by always maintaining in this country a force adequate to prevent the risk of invasion, of liberating the Navy for its proper strategic task. National Service would, moreover, have a salutary influence in strengthening by its discipline the social and economic qualities of the national character.”<sup>214</sup>

Tariff Reform as the first and foundational step towards the Constructive Imperialist vision was fundamental to the Radical Right vision for Britain, yet in the context of the Edwardian era, efforts on national defence were necessary too. This was because Britain’s decline not only threatened its internal or imperial fabric, but also represented a direct military threat. Germany filled the role of the great foreign danger to Britain’s economic security and national security.<sup>215</sup>

In his study of the Radical Right, Phillips arguably made a mistake in making Willoughby de Broke its archetype.<sup>216</sup> De Broke’s articles on ‘The Tory Tradition’ and ‘National Toryism’ serve to illuminate aspects of the Radical Right’s ideology, and he played an important role in the 1909-14 constitutional crises as one of the leading Ditchers. However, he was a relatively late entry into the Edwardian political controversies by his own admission and was among the more traditionalist-Tory wing of the Radical Right. Alan Sykes, citing Phillips, used

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<sup>214</sup> *Morning Post*, 12/10/08, 7.

<sup>215</sup> A.J.A. Morris, *The Scaremongers: The Advocacy of War and Rearmament, 1896-1914*, (London, 1984), 46. Cain, ‘Political Economy’, 51.

<sup>216</sup> Phillips, ‘Radical Toryism’, 205-224.



de Broke to support Searle and Scally in splitting the Radical Right between technocratic and anti-partisan Milnerites and demagogic Die-Hards like de Broke and Maxse.<sup>217</sup> This is despite Milner telling Violet Cecil, Maxse's sister and later Milner's wife, in April 1903 that he considered himself, Maxse, and Amery among the few who viewed Britain's problems in a coherent and inter-related manner.<sup>218</sup>

The differences between Milnerites and those who historians have termed 'Die-Hards' in the pre-war period are easy to overstate. There were Milnerites who decried 'Mandarins' and Die-Hards who sought expert-led policymaking. If there was such a divide in the Radical Right, it emerged more in the First World War with Milner and Amery representing one side and Page Croft and Maxse the other.

All four were dedicated to the causes of Imperial Union, National Defence, and a 'constructive' platform: all four were frustrated with the Unionist leadership's delay in advocating each of those causes. Where they differed was in how they approached coalition-building. In a conversation with Maxse, Austen Chamberlain claimed the division between him and Maxse was between "the man who is working for an idea pure and simple and the man who, sharing the idea, cares more for immediate realisation of whatever is presently practicable than for symmetrical perfection or logical consistency."<sup>219</sup> Milner and Amery were closer to the latter position. They did aspire to achieve the ideal and at times scorned the concessions made over that cause, but they were ultimately better able to work with the Unionist leadership and climb the party ranks.

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<sup>217</sup> Sykes, 'Radical Right and the Crisis of Conservatism', 662.

<sup>218</sup> Hutcheson, *Maxse and the National Review*, 145.

<sup>219</sup> Chamberlain, *Politics From Inside*, (London, 1936), 82.

This dissertation will term them ‘Constructivists.’ As for the likes of Page Croft, Maxse, Gwynne, and Lords Ampthill and de Broke, they were ‘Dogmatists.’ They were less able to enter the inner councils of the party and remained side-lined for their refusal to compromise. As between Fleming’s three sub-vectors, there was an overlap in policies and perspectives. In contrast David Thackeray makes a convincing case that the British League for the Support of Ulster and the Union (BLSUU) was a precursor to the violent politics of the British Workers League (BWL) and British Empire Union (BEU).<sup>220</sup> His division of the wartime TRL between Gradualist Unionists and Imperialist Activists and his argument that similar distinctions needed to be investigated across the Radical Right/Radical Conservative spectrum<sup>221</sup> inspired this dissertation’s approach. What he overplays, however, is the difference between the ideas and philosophy behind the BLSUU and those of the British Covenant.<sup>222</sup> The difference between the two exemplified how the Constructivist and Dogmatist divide was less rooted in philosophy and more in method. The same split, and the results of either approach, could also be seen in the IML’s departure from the NL as will be discussed in Chapter III. It would only be the First World War, however, that would see these two diverge and the Radical Right break apart. For much of the 1900s, the differences between Constructivists and Dogmatists were minute at best.

The Radical Right lacked a formal document that set out its precise beliefs and policies. From the various relevant publications, however, common themes emerge. They include Tariff Reform as the means for Imperial Union, industrial recovery, peace, and prosperity, National Service coupled with the maintenance of the 2:1 keel standard for the Royal Navy,

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<sup>220</sup> Thackeray, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age*, 80.

<sup>221</sup> Thackeray, ‘Crisis of the Tariff Reform League’, 53, 60.

<sup>222</sup> Thackeray, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age*, 75-6.

the need for social reform, and anti-Germanism. The lack of a single text definitively setting out this programme was a weakness acknowledged by the Radical Right itself. Attempts were made to alleviate it in 1908 with Lord Malmesbury editing *The New Order* and the *Morning Post* publishing a potential 'Unauthorised Programme.'<sup>223</sup> Neither initiative, however, succeeded in being more than flashes in the pan. This failure to establish the foundation for a unified group meant the Radical Right had to rely on the various disparate groups fighting for the individual aspects of an inter-dependent platform.

Chamberlain's stroke, moreover, removed the most effective leader of the Radical Right, despite his own policy plans being less ambitious than those of his followers. Milner briefly emerged as a possible successor with a series of speeches that established much the same principles as those that the Radical Right championed, but he was a poor democrat and eager to sink out of the limelight. For all of Roberts's apparent sympathy for the Tariff Reform cause,<sup>224</sup> he too could not fill the void left by Chamberlain nor did he ever plan to.

Without a leader, group cohesion, or a manifesto, the Radical Right's only option was to work within the Unionist Party machine. While the Radical Right could pressure the machine on Tariff Reform, it was broadly reliant on the Unionist Party to decide for itself to support the policy. In the cases of navalism and national defence, this reliance on the Unionists could be embarrassingly obvious. Tariff Reform saw far greater success as, by 1908, the TRL succeeded in securing the 'Whole Hog' as the first constructive policy of the party through a combination of conversion and coercion alike. The limitations of this approach would be exposed during the 1909-11 constitutional crises, however.

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<sup>223</sup> J. Harris. 'Unionist Philosophy', J. Harris, (ed.), *The New Order*, (London, 1908). *Morning Post*, 12/10/08, 7.

<sup>224</sup> Roberts, *Message*, 42-4. Roberts-Richard Benyon Croft, CA, CRFT1/17.

The Radical Right's effectiveness as an independent force can be questioned. As Peter Cain highlighted, for all its presentation as a confident, modernist, constructive force, the worldview of Tariff Reform's loudest proponents was defensive and pessimistic.<sup>225</sup> While Balfour was criticised as being a leader who could not speak to the mass democracy, it appeared that the Radical Right hardly did a better job itself.<sup>226</sup> Many in the Radical Right resented the fact that that Tariff Reform debates seemed reduced to discussion of food prices, rather than discussing a grand imperial ideal worthy of sacrifice.<sup>227</sup> The TRL and Women's Unionist and Tariff Reform Association's (WUTRA) campaigns on such consumer politics, however, were important in rallying support. Attempts to win over working-class voters were a top concern for the Radical Right. These attempts still failed miserably.<sup>228</sup>

As for internal activism, women activists were aggressively marginalised in the NSL and NL despite clear evidence that WUTRA was a momentous benefit to the Tariff Reform cause. Making this mistake more apparent was the overlap between some of WUTRA's leading activists such as Mary Maxse and Violet Cecil and sympathy for the National Service cause.<sup>229</sup> The more militarist leagues' failure to reform and properly utilise the participation of women activists was especially backward thinking when compared to the Primrose League (PL). The PL itself was accused of failing to maximise the potential of women participants—both activists and non-activists, yet still managed to find roles for women which the NSL failed to do.<sup>230</sup> The Radical Right's support for maintaining these sharp

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<sup>225</sup> Cain, 'Constructive Imperialism', 58, 60.

<sup>226</sup> Thompson, *Imperial Britain*, 53.

<sup>227</sup> Milner, *Constructive Imperialism*, 61. Chamberlain, *Imperial Union*, 35.

<sup>228</sup> Thackeray, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age*, 80.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, 47. Riedi, 'Violet Milner', 938-9.

<sup>230</sup> Thackeray, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age*, 19-22, 40, 6.

gender divisions in the organisational hierarchy contradicted the self-belief among adherents of being forward-thinking and modernist in their ideology.

The Radical Right's successes between 1903 and 1909 were forcing out the Unionist Free Traders, seeing Tariff Reform adopted, and pressuring moderates in both the TRL and NL into a more aggressive strategy. Given the Radical Right's limitations, this was a respectable record. Yet its adherents had greater ambitions. Many were driven by Chamberlain's declaration that "[t]he days are for great empires and not for little states," and that Britain had a choice between being one of the two.<sup>231</sup> The Radical Right ultimately failed to offer a champion for its programme or to even put forward the programme as a distinctive document. The result was that the Radical Right remained tethered to the Unionist machine. As de Broke reluctantly conceded "nothing in this country has a real chance until it is adopted by one of the Party machines."<sup>232</sup>

The risk, however, lay in that it did not control this machine and so was reliant on factors outside its control for success. Even Tariff Reform's advance would be blunted by forces very similar to those who pushed it alongside the Radical Right. As Peter Marsh said of Joseph Chamberlain's imperial plans, the greater the Radical Right's ambitions, the less success it had.<sup>233</sup> Despite this, it is important to recognise that a platform did exist and influenced the Radical Right's decisions and campaigns throughout the 1900s, not least because the Radical Right's ultimate aim was to restore the 'Weary Titan' to both its past military and economic glory.

### **The Nation At Arms and At Sea**

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<sup>231</sup> *The Times*, 17/05/02, 12.

<sup>232</sup> *National Review*, Volume 59, Issue 351, 05/12, 414.

<sup>233</sup> Marsh, *Entrepreneur in Politics*, 441.

The Radical Right had a platform beyond Tariff Reform, even though Tariff Reform was still of vital importance to adherents. The TRL was the largest pressure group the Radical Right operated within, and Constructive Imperialism, which the TRL represented, was central to the Radical Right's ideology. Tariff Reform itself was a big question. Austen Chamberlain and Bonar Law were able to use that very fact to avoid pleas for them to endorse National Service.<sup>234</sup> Even so, it is important to understand that the Radical Right was a reaction to apparent military weakness and imperial retreat as much as it was an anti-Free Trade movement. A true imperialist in the Radical Right's eyes was one who supported National Service.<sup>235</sup> When it came to the armed forces, the Radical Right took an interdependent view on both the army and the navy. In the case of the army, the Radical Right were strong activists within the NSL, with Amery, Milner, Malmesbury, Page Croft, Winterton, and others being members.<sup>236</sup>

The NSL, despite being founded in 1902, only acquired some momentum when Lord Roberts joined and became its President in 1905.<sup>237</sup> Under Roberts, the NSL emphasised its scheme as not conscription but instead a system of universal military training for home defence. As Roberts put it to Maxse, "I [Roberts] cannot believe that the British public will soon consent to universal service for war out of the country. What we can and I hope will get, is universal training on Home Defence..." out of which a larger, better trained reserve would be

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<sup>234</sup> Bonar Law-F. Ware, 08/09/08, PA, BL/18/8/10. A. Chamberlain-L. Maxse, 05/02/08, WSRO, Maxse 458/649-50.

<sup>235</sup> Amery, *Union and Strength*, 185.

<sup>236</sup> Harris, 'Philosophy', 13. Croft, *Strife*, 82. E. Turnour, *Pre-War*, (London, 1932), 138. Amery, *Political Life Vol. I*, 213.

<sup>237</sup> Amery, *Political Life Vol. I*, 214. Adams, Poirier, *Conscription Controversy*, 12. Hendley, *Crucible*, 7.

available for overseas conflict.<sup>238</sup> This emphasis also worked better with one of the primary arguments behind National Service; the threat of an invasion.

Roberts resigned from the Committee of Imperial Defence (CID) as he felt that Balfour did not appreciate the risks of a 'Bolt From the Blue' style of surprise invasion.<sup>239</sup> Instead, Balfour seemed too wedded to the 'Blue Water' school, which believed that the Royal Navy alone would be sufficient to prevent any invasion. For the NSL, this was a complacent mindset that exposed Britain to the financial and mortal dangers of a shock-invasion. The looming spectre of Germany haunted the minds of Roberts and the NSL, who warned of Germany developing the means to deploy a rapid invasion-force at a time of its choosing.<sup>240</sup> Britain seemed to be a nation unaware of the cliff-edge it faced.

The NSL described their campaign as trying to 'wake up' the public to the need for universal training.<sup>241</sup> The core of National Service's military necessity was this fear of a sudden invasion that would devastate Britain. Supporters of the NSL argued that whatever the cost of a scheme of National Service, which they always claimed to be cheaper than their opponents' estimates, it was far below that of fighting off an invasion.<sup>242</sup>

The benefits of National Service were to be twofold; the army would have proper numbers and the male population would receive the benefits of training.<sup>243</sup> In the years prior to World War One, it was easier to present war as something other than an evil. Preparing for

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<sup>238</sup> Roberts-L. Maxse, 05/09/09, WSRO, Maxse 460/392.

<sup>239</sup> Adams, Poirier, *Conscription Controversy*, 14.

<sup>240</sup> *Hansard*, HL Debate, National Defence, 23/11/08, Vol. 196 cc1690. M. Johnson, *Militarism and the British Left, 1902-1914*, (Basingstoke, 2013), 101.

<sup>241</sup> Roberts, *Message*, vii-viii. NSL Meeting Report, 07/07/10, NMM, WHI/145.

<sup>242</sup> Milner, *Constructive Imperialism*, 78. Milner, *Nation and Empire*, 165. *Hansard*, HL Debate, National Service (Training and Home Defence) Bill, 12/07/09, Vol. 2 cc325. *National Review*, Volume 59, Issue 351, 05/12, 326.

<sup>243</sup> *Hansard*, HL Debate, National Service (Training and Home Defence) Bill, 12/07/09, Vol. 2 cc265-6. Amery, *Union and Strength*, 83.

war could be depicted as akin to “the cash reserve of some great bank, which, though stored away in its vaults, and produced only in emergencies, is yet in daily employment through the medium of its note circulation.”<sup>244</sup> Roberts even argued that National Service would create peace by creating a military strong enough to deter thoughts of invasion.<sup>245</sup> National Service was meant to deter foreign dangers, but also to indoctrinate discipline into the public. The NSL undoubtedly had the working class in mind when speaking of discipline. It was not a brutal form of discipline in the NSL’s eyes: Roberts drew the example of an adult version of the Boy Scouts in teaching character and patriotism.<sup>246</sup> Proponents of National Service even depicted it as a democratic form of recruitment in building a citizen army where no man could buy his way out.<sup>247</sup> Richard Jebb used Australia as an example where, after National Service and Imperial Preference were introduced, the Labor Party dropped its opposition.<sup>248</sup> But the theme of discipline and the need for the public to have duties as much as they had rights rang across the NSL. Roberts argued,

“...in a democratic nation the working classes are themselves the ruling classes, and that the interests of England and of the Empire are their interests. ... [the aristocratic] class considered it as its sacred right and inalienable privilege to serve the nation in war. Now...when the working men of this country have by the gradual extension of the franchise succeeded to the political influence and supremacy of the old aristocratic class, is it too much to hope that, as their condition of life improves,

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<sup>244</sup> Amery, *Union and Strength*, 122.

<sup>245</sup> *The Times*, 29/06/11, 6.

<sup>246</sup> Roberts, *Message*, 43-4.

<sup>247</sup> *Hansard*, HL Debate, National Service (Training and Home Defence) Bill, 12/07/09, Vol. 2 cc319. Croft, *Path of Empire*, 266.

<sup>248</sup> Jebb, *Britannic Question*, 160.



they will seek in the same spirit to secure that right and that inalienable privilege—  
service in war?”<sup>249</sup>

Few in the NSL extended this argument to the conclusion that universal military training should be coupled with universal suffrage. Instead, the emphasis was on how discipline and training would create a ‘Nation in Arms’ that could deter any foreign power from invasion and improve the skills of the recruitment pool if war did break out.<sup>250</sup>

The NSL’s platform was not only one of sacrifice and grit. One of Roberts’s important contributions to the NSL was to push the emphasis on National Service as a form of social reform. The Boer War had not only exposed a lack of military skill, after all, but also a lack of public health. For Roberts, “social reform is a preliminary to any thorough system of national defence...” with Britain acting as a true motherland, concerned about those who did their duty by her.<sup>251</sup> Just as training developed character and patriotism, deprivation could damage it.

Advocates for National Service like Roberts argued that, without social reform on offer, “the call to ‘sacrifice’ themselves [the working-classes] for their country must seem an insult to their reason; for those conditions amidst which they live make their lives already an unending sacrifice.” Page Croft put it in a blunter fashion, partly blaming Free Trade along with deprivation for undermining patriotic spirit.

“Those who complain most of the tyranny of labour and the indifference of the workers are the very men who for years have been offering the tired, ill-paid and hungry the musty formulas of worn-out economic dogma and the platitudes of drift.

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<sup>249</sup> Roberts, *Message*, 39-40.

<sup>250</sup> *Hansard*, HL Debate, National Service (Training and Home Defence) Bill, 12/07/09, Vol. 2 cc268.

<sup>251</sup> Roberts, *Message*, 44.

The British working-man is at heart an Imperialist. He is more; he is a romantic idealist. But even a worm may turn, and how much more the man you neglect, and will not lead? Offer him a stone, and he will throw it at your head; give him bread, and he is ready to follow with loyalty and enthusiasm. ...if they have been indifferent, and if patriotism is dying, then the leading classes alone are to blame.”<sup>252</sup>

Social Reform and National Defence were not contradictory aims to the Radical Right. They were to be complementary with each other and with imperialism. The imperial Britain that Milner and those like him envisioned required a strong people and a strong people had to be healthy and industrious.<sup>253</sup>

Another case of interdependency between the causes backed by the Radical Right was the idea that National Service was not a replacement for the Royal Navy, but a supplement. The Royal Navy as well as the army faced controversial reforms in the face of a new world during the 1900s. For the Navy, this was a response to German naval plans and the question of ‘imperial overstretch.’ Part of Admiral Sir John ‘Jackie’ Fisher’s solution was to withdraw some of the overseas squadrons into the North Sea to deter the German navy. Aaron Friedberg argued that Fisher’s reforms were far-sighted in recognising that Britain could not defend all the seas but could at least hold the North Sea.<sup>254</sup> Andrew Thompson also argued that Fisher’s reforms could be represented as Britain achieving regional supremacy by conceding that it could not operate a globally dominant navy.<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> Ibid., 44-5. Croft, *Path of Empire*, 117. Milner, *Nation and Empire*, 353-4.

<sup>253</sup> Milner, *Nation and Empire*, 139. Amery, *Fundamental Fallacies*, 40-1.

<sup>254</sup> Friedberg, *Weary Titan*, 287.

<sup>255</sup> Thompson, *Imperial Britain*, 130.

To the Radical Right, this was not only horrifying ideologically but also a poor military strategy. Rather than defend the Empire, Britain was ditching it in the face of German naval advances.<sup>256</sup> In domestic terms, far from Fisher's intent to increase naval mobility, the NSL believed that naval 'retreat' would limit the Royal Navy's essential mobility of action. The risks of naval paralysis were made obvious to the NSL when Britain's reliance on foreign food was brought into question. The Radical Right, when faced with the prospect of 'imperial retreat', sought to reverse this process with National Service which would serve to deter any plans for sudden attack by land, while freeing the navy to secure shipping routes. For adherents of the Radical Right like Milner, Amptill, and others, without National Service the Royal Navy would be "...hampered by having to do coast guard duty around these shores." With National Service, however, Milner argued that "no invader shall set his foot on the shores of this country without having cause to regret it," and so Britain could then afford to send out its naval ships to where they were needed.<sup>257</sup> The NSL did not see the choice as a larger land army or a larger navy but instead National Service was to be a means of providing the benefits of both. The Radical Right insisted that the Empire required not only National Service but also the two-power standard (namely that Britain's keelage match the combined size of the next two largest naval powers).<sup>258</sup> Roberts and Admiral Charles Beresford—the latter an NSL member and both men disaffected by government policy—

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<sup>256</sup> Roberts, *Message*, 10, 6.

<sup>257</sup> George Shee-Raglan, 23/11/09, BLO, Milner 155. Croft, *Path of Empire*, 39. Milner, *Nation and Empire*, 166. *Hansard*, HL Debate, National Service (Training and Home Defence) Bill, 12/07/09, Vol. 2 cc320-1. *The Times*, 29/06/11, 6.

<sup>258</sup> F. Ware-Bonar Law, 29/09/08, PA, BL/18/4/75. Amery, *Union and Strength*, 3. Croft, *Path of Empire*, 37.

collaborated to emphasise the fear of invasion.<sup>259</sup> By 1911, the subject of aerial defence and air forces was raised by supporters of National Service including Amery and Winterton.<sup>260</sup>

National Service as a policy and platform easily slotted into the Radical Right's ideology. It was inspired by fears of decline and decay, sought a 'constructive' means of reversing this slow demise, and rested on a strong paranoia about Germany's intentions.<sup>261</sup> The theme of sacrifice to avoid ruin was an undercurrent in both the Tariff Reform and National Service campaigns.<sup>262</sup> If Britain was to remain a titan, it would need as much a strong military as it did a strong economy, with National Service, the two-power standard, social reform, and Tariff Reform upholding both. Free Trade to the Radical Right was innately tied to naval enfeeblement with Maxse decrying the Liberal government's arrival in 1906 as meaning "[w]e are to demobilise our sea-going squadrons for the sake of Free Imports."<sup>263</sup>

Some in the Radical Right showed a contempt for any form of militarism that was milder than the NSL's own. Militarist sentiment from the Liberals was rejected as pseudo-patriotism whereby "men who go to the music halls and sing "Rule Britannia" and patriotic songs...then go home and cheer the Party who does not want to put any compulsion upon them to come out and serve their country."<sup>264</sup> The Radical Right displayed a similar attitude towards Free Trade Imperialism, sneeringly terming it "gingerbread imperialism."<sup>265</sup> This attitude would hamper the Radical Right's chances of success. As the wartime years would show, the public were perfectly capable of balancing pre-war opposition to the 'Whole Hog'

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<sup>259</sup> Williams, *Defending the Empire*, 130.

<sup>260</sup> Amery, *Political Life Vol. I*, 412. Turnour, *Orders*, 62.

<sup>261</sup> F. Coetzee, *For Party or Country: Nationalism and the Dilemmas of Popular Conservatism in Edwardian England*, (New York, 1990), 117. Morris, *Scaremongers*, 46.

<sup>262</sup> Amery, *Union and Strength*, 108. Milner, *Nation and Empire*, 300. Adams, Poirier, *Conscription Controversy*, 18.

<sup>263</sup> L. Maxse-Lady Bathurst, 17/12/06, University of Leeds Special Collection, Glenesk-Bathurst 1990/1/3493.

<sup>264</sup> *Hansard*, HL Debate, Army (Annual) Bill, 21/04/13, Vol. 14 cc198.

<sup>265</sup> *Hansard*, HC Debate, Preferential Duties, 01/08/04, Vol. 139 cc327-8.

and National Service with a more aggressive outlook on trade and recruitment during the war.

Radical Right adherents saw Tariff Reform and National Service as parts of an interdependent platform and acted as such, for example Milner explicitly and Roberts implicitly. While the NSL's Executive Committee contained anti-Tariff Reformers like Lord George Curzon,<sup>266</sup> there is evidence that Roberts's sympathies were with Tariff Reform and Constructive Imperialism. When General Sir Ian Hamilton wrote *Compulsory Service* in critique of the NSL's arguments, Roberts used Amery's assistance to write his counter-publication *Facts and Fallacies*, having used Amery's help before in drafting his speeches in the Lords.<sup>267</sup> Roberts and Milner also found themselves in agreement across the Edwardian era, with Roberts taking cues from Milner's example. It is unlikely, for example, that even a moderate Tariff Reformer would have publicly attacked the way in which "Tariff Reform, which occupies the chief place in the Unionist programme, is supported only in a half-hearted manner by the leaders of the party..."<sup>268</sup> Roberts' willingness to implicitly endorse the 'Whole Hog' is important in placing him as a Radical Right adherent. National Service and the defensive reaction to naval withdrawals were key to the Radical Right ideology being more than solely Constructive Imperialism, but Tariff Reform remained the most fundamental aspect of the Radical Right's platform.

### **The Imperial Panacea**

Members of the Radical Right, along with other Tariff Reformers, took pains to insist that Tariff Reform was not a cure-all. In part this was because Tariff Reform was intended to be

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<sup>266</sup> 13<sup>th</sup> Annual NSL Report, 31/03/15, BL, Eur. F112/168.

<sup>267</sup> Amery, *Political Life Vol. I*, 217-8.

<sup>268</sup> Roberts, *Message*, 42.

the first step in a wider scheme of Constructive Imperialism, with Imperial Union the end-result.<sup>269</sup> Another element of the imperial platform had been a focus on the emigration of Britons towards the Dominions.<sup>270</sup> This was so that the human capital benefits would be focused on the Dominions as opposed to foreign states.<sup>271</sup> The other, more negative, reason for this insistence was that Tariff Reform by the mid-to-late-1900s did appear to be developing into a panacea for all of Britain's ills.

Interdependence was at the core of the Radical Right's platform, but Tariff Reform became an imperial policy, an industrial policy, and a social policy all in one. This was in addition to the defensive aspect in both blocking German economic infiltration and providing funds for military expansion without the need for further redistributive taxation.<sup>272</sup> The idea, meanwhile, that Britain's relative decline was a natural occurrence, given geography and population, was regarded as mere fatalism.<sup>273</sup> Chamberlain sought to institute a new economic framework through imperial union, which would bring about industrial regeneration and restoration of world power status.<sup>274</sup>

Alan Sykes argued that Tariff Reform quickly lost its imperial emphasis in favour of becoming a traditional protectionist campaign.<sup>275</sup> However, Thackeray's work on the TRL has shown that the imperial aspect of the Tariff Reform movement was by no means under-played and was one of the most popular lines.<sup>276</sup> Andrew Thompson has also shown that Tariff Reform

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<sup>269</sup> Chamberlain, *Imperial Union*, 65-6. Milner, *Constructive Imperialism*, 22. Wise, 'The Problem of Empire', 96.

<sup>270</sup> Tryon, *Tariff Reform*, 132-3.

<sup>271</sup> Milner, *Constructive Imperialism*, 22. Chamberlain, *Imperial Union*, 78. Turnor, *Land Problems*, 332.

<sup>272</sup> Chamberlain, *Imperial Union*, ix.

<sup>273</sup> Friedberg, *Weary Titan*, 76.

<sup>274</sup> Cain, 'Political Economy', 40.

<sup>275</sup> Sykes, *Tariff Reform*, 17.

<sup>276</sup> Thackeray, 'Chamberlain Day and the Popular Meaning of Tariff Reform', *The Historian Feature*, (2003), 23-4.

remained an imperial campaign.<sup>277</sup> Imperialism was a fundamental core of the Tariff Reform movement and especially so for the Radical Right.

The Radical Right, along with other Tariff Reformers, broadly assigned the policy a heavy task in restructuring the economy. ‘Tariff Reform Means Work For All’ was a popular slogan, promising that Britain could compete with American and German trusts without mimicking those same unpopular business structures in Britain.<sup>278</sup> The aim was not only to include jobs for all, but to ensure good wages as well. Henry Page Croft proclaimed that Imperial Preference would boost wages beyond what the Poor Law Commission’s Minority Report argued would heavily reduce poverty.<sup>279</sup>

In part this was because many in the Radical Right believed that Tariff Reform and Imperial Union was the only great idea and ideal respectively that could match the allure of socialism.<sup>280</sup> It was to provide a union of class, nation, and empire as opposed to the more disintegrative policies of Liberals and socialists. Prior to the First World War, many active Tariff Reformers saw their platform as less anti-socialist so much as an alternative to socialism. Austen Chamberlain told Balfour in 1907 that socialism’s victories came because “[it] speaks with a decided voice and because it has an attractive and positive policy...” which the Unionists had to replicate.<sup>281</sup> Milner asserted throughout his speeches that anti-Socialism could not serve as a platform.

“That there is an odious form of Socialism I admit, a Socialism which attacks wealth simply because it is wealth, and lives on the cultivation of class hatred. But ...[t]here

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<sup>277</sup> Thompson, *Imperial Britain*, 82.

<sup>278</sup> Green, *Ideologies*, 82.

<sup>279</sup> Croft, *Path of Empire*, 22.

<sup>280</sup> L. Amery-Bonar Law, 22/05/12, PA, BL/26/3/35.

<sup>281</sup> A. Chamberlain-A. Balfour, 24/10/07, BL, MS49736.

is a nobler Socialism, which so far from springing from 'envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness' is born of genuine sympathy and a lofty and wise conception of what is meant by national life. It realizes the fact that we are not merely so many millions of individuals, each struggling for himself, with the State to act as policeman, but literally one body-politic; that the different classes and sections of the community are members of that body, and that when one member suffers all the members suffer. From this point of view the attempt to raise the well-being and efficiency of the more backward of our people—for this is what it all comes too—is not philanthropy: it is business. ... There are a great many things, essential to the health and prosperity of the mass of the people, which public action, national or municipal, can alone secure, and they all mean money. No one can believe, for instance, that we have got to the end of our expenditure on education."<sup>282</sup>

Many in the Radical Right dreaded the thought of the Unionists discarding the idea of a 'constructive' programme in favour of negative anti-socialism.<sup>283</sup> This dread was shared with allies in the TRL. Bonar Law wrote to Page Croft in a relieved tone that the efforts of Tariff Reformers had kept the Unionist leaders from using fear of socialism to shelve Tariff Reform.<sup>284</sup>

The Radical Right did not think well of the socialism of the British Labour Party by any means. George Wyndham, a late convert to the Radical Right's platform, nevertheless embodied its view on Labour's socialism as an insular ideology with all the detriments of Liberalism and an additional desire for class-war.<sup>285</sup> Socialism's pre-war sin, however, was in

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<sup>282</sup> Milner, *Nation and Empire*, 161. Milner, *Constructive Imperialism*, 42.

<sup>283</sup> Turnor, *Land Problems*, 288-90.

<sup>284</sup> Law-H.P. Croft, 31/10/07, CA, CRFT1/5.

<sup>285</sup> J. Mackeil (ed.), *Life and Letters of George Wyndham, Volume 2*, (London, 1925), 540, 650.



being wrong rather than evil. Ronald McNeill in *The New Order* praised Marx's critique of laissez-faire but disputed his economic solution, with Tariff Reform being a superior solution.<sup>286</sup> If socialism was appreciated for offering a positive platform, it was more in the sense that it was another 'modern' idea. By contrast, Liberalism and Free Trade were the ideas of "old women and senile professors. They have got to clear out of the ring in which we are going to have a 'fight to the finish.'"<sup>287</sup>

The true enemy for the Edwardian Radical Right was laissez-faire embodied in the policy of Free Trade. The conception of trade following 'natural' currents and the state staying neutral appeared contrary to history.<sup>288</sup> When Chamberlain's proposals were criticised by a group of economics professors, the latter were mocked as Mandarins; guardians of an out-dated order whose lack of modern thought and expertise was outpaced by their loyalty to their discredited ideas. George Tryon credited Britain's economic growth in the seventeenth and eighteenth century to being "without professorial instruction."<sup>289</sup> John Rolleston, criticising the financial impact of Free Trade, similarly mocked the "theoretical economists...these Professors of Political Economy," who disregarded concerns of skilled workmen losing their jobs and forced to accept lower wages and conditions as a failure of "adaptability". He portrayed them as having little practical understanding or experience or industries such as shipbuilding. Free Traders who attributed German success as owing to superior technology and ability were portrayed as denying the reality of the effect of foreign

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<sup>286</sup> R. McNeill, 'Socialism', J. Harris (ed.), *The New Order: Studies in Unionist Policy*, (London, 1908), 332.

<sup>287</sup> Mackeil (ed.), *Wyndham*, 539.

<sup>288</sup> Tryon, *Tariff Reform*, 15-6.

<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

subsidies and dumping, along with neglecting the threat of foreign competition to infant industries such as motorcars.<sup>290</sup>

The Radical Right rejected the theory that economic statesmanship lay with a neutral state. Worse, it was actively detrimental to the true purpose of statesmanship, which was embodied in being able and willing to act.<sup>291</sup> The idea of the state picking sides—British industry’s side—was celebrated.<sup>292</sup> The Radical Right saw Tariff Reform as representing a middle way between Socialism and Liberalism; to have the state protect industry without dominating it.<sup>293</sup> The ideals of Imperial Union and the fruits of Tariff Reform were judged the best antidote to socialism and Britain’s troubles.

It is unlikely that Tariff Reform, or indeed any policy, could have met the expectations placed on it by the Radical Right. Part of Page Croft’s insistence on the power of the Canadian market relied on estimates that the Canadian population would soon surpass Britain’s.<sup>294</sup> It was a bold prediction that never came true. As for the ambition for an imperial market, Andrew Thompson pointed out the economic realities prevented the Dominions from ever substantially replacing America and Europe as Britain’s primary export market.<sup>295</sup> It was not only the benefits of Tariff Reform for Britain that the Radical Right over-promised. Peter Cain highlighted that the reality of geographical distance prevented the envisioned empire-wide industrialisation that Tariff Reform was meant to encourage.<sup>296</sup> He argued that Tariff Reform, to truly encourage industrial revival, or at least the growth of

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<sup>290</sup> J. Rolleston, ‘The Financial Results of Free Trade’, J. Harris (ed.), *The New Order: Studies in Unionist Policy*, (London, 1908), 390-1, 380-2.

<sup>291</sup> Amery, *Fundamental Fallacies*, 40.

<sup>292</sup> Chamberlain, *Imperial Union*, 64.

<sup>293</sup> J.L. Garvin-L. Amery, 06/03/07, CA, AMEL2/5/6. Harris, ‘Unionist Philosophy’, 7, 12.

<sup>294</sup> Croft, *Path of Empire*, 25.

<sup>295</sup> Thompson, *Imperial Britain*, 105, 109.

<sup>296</sup> Cain, ‘Constructive Imperialism’ 58.

infant industries into national/imperial champions, would have necessitated a degree of economic planning that was anathema to its champions during the Edwardian era.<sup>297</sup> Tariff Reform at the time was intended to substitute direct intervention of that scale, not serve as a platform for it. In indirect terms, however, the Radical Right believed that Imperial Preference was vital as not only the first step in Imperial Union but also for course-correcting Britain's economy.<sup>298</sup>

Tariff Reform was not entirely meant to reject non-colonial trade. Milner hinted that, as Imperial Preference meant not Empire Free Trade but reciprocating colonial offers, it was acceptable to extend the same principle to foreign states willing to make a similar offer.<sup>299</sup>

Thomas Comyn-Platt made a similar case for a preference to Britain's allies, if asserting that it should and would be smaller than the Imperial Preference.<sup>300</sup> This open attitude would be reflected in the Radical Right and TRL's embrace in 1916 of the Paris Economic Resolutions.

As for the 'dear food' cry, Chamberlain and Milner accused the Free Traders of hypocrisy.

Free Trade in Britain did not preclude import duties. There were a small number of duties on foodstuffs like tea, coffee, and sugar which at times the Tariff Reformers hinted could be cut to a lower level as the reductions would be compensated for by the revenue from the new duties.<sup>301</sup> Page Croft and Joseph Lawrence offered simpler arguments. The reason bread prices would fall would be that increased supplies of wheat from the colonies and a stimulated British agricultural sector would fill the market gap and more.<sup>302</sup> The economic

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<sup>297</sup> Cain, 'Political Economy', 51.

<sup>298</sup> Boyd (ed.), *Chamberlain's Speeches Volume 2*, 267-8.

<sup>299</sup> Milner, *Constructive Imperialism*, 29.

<sup>300</sup> T. Comyn-Platt, 'Foreign Policy', J. Harris (ed.), *The New Order: Studies in Unionist Policy*, (London, 1908), 162.

<sup>301</sup> Milner, *Constructive Imperialism*, 24. Chamberlain, *Imperial Union*, 41-2.

<sup>302</sup> Croft, *Path of Empire*, 29-30. Joseph Lawrence-W.A.S. Hewins, 21/02/08, LSE Archives, TC6/4/18.

realities of supply and demand were to triumph over the ‘Mandarin’ worship of Cobden’s theories.

When it came to the question of food taxes, however, the Radical Right’s response was more to emphasise the worthiness of the sacrifice. Richard Jebb tried to argue that there was no sacrifice entailed in Tariff Reform.<sup>303</sup> In this, few on his own side agreed. Joseph Chamberlain in his early speeches almost made the same claim but corrected himself and asserted the sacrificial theme. Quoting Adam Smith, he argued “[d]efence is greater than opulence.”<sup>304</sup> In the Commons, he admitted to Liberal cheers that food taxes were a necessary part of his proposals.<sup>305</sup>

Tariff Reform was a question of national character as much as it was an economic and imperial debate.<sup>306</sup> If Liberals used Germany and the idea of Germans having to eat horse flesh in order to attack Tariff Reform, the Radical Right saw the Netherlands as a warning of Free Trade Britain’s future. Joseph Chamberlain dreaded that an over-focus on services and exchange over manufacturing and production would entail “the destruction of all that is best in England... if we sink into the position of Holland, which is rich—richer than ever it was before—but still an inconsiderable factor in the history of the world.”<sup>307</sup> George Tryon argued that any such additional wealth would fade as Britain would learn, like the Flemish merchants in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as factories shut down from imbalanced trade competition that “distribution is but the servant of production.”<sup>308</sup> A

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<sup>303</sup> Jebb, *Britannic Question*, 238.

<sup>304</sup> Chamberlain, *Imperial Union*, 35-6, 18-9.

<sup>305</sup> *Hansard*, HC Debate, Fiscal Policy of the Country, 28/05/03, Vol. 123 cc185.

<sup>306</sup> Thompson, *Imperial Britain*, 109.

<sup>307</sup> Boyd (ed.), *Chamberlain’s Speeches Volume 2*, 268.

<sup>308</sup> Tryon, *Tariff Reform*, 23-6.

ticking-clock hung over Britain to not only save its economy from foreign domination but to also preserve its empire from gradual disintegration.<sup>309</sup>

The Empire represented a higher ideal for the Radical Right. Milner more than once complained of the materialism and consumerism that could dominate the Tariff Reform debate.

“I wish we could get out of the way of discussing national economy so much from the shopping point of view...the whole argument nauseates me. What sort of opinion must these gentlemen have of their fellow countrymen, if they think the question of...half a farthing on the pat of butter is going to outweigh in their minds every national consideration.”<sup>310</sup>

That the consumer perspective was what decided whether Tariff Reform would succeed or not was a subject neglected by the Radical Right. Chamberlain had a better appreciation of the politics of the consumer and sought to skirt round the details while asserting the principle that the fate of the empire was worth “a farthing or two.”<sup>311</sup>

The platform of the Edwardian Radical Right was fundamentally rooted in the idea that Britain faced, and had to make, a hard choice. In National Service, the nation would have to accept the duty of military training, and in Tariff Reform, it had to discard cheapness for imperial union and domestic economic stability. Despite this, the Radical Right believed that the public’s patriotism would make them receptive to these sacrifices if put to them directly and clearly.

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<sup>309</sup> Chamberlain, *Imperial Union*, 30. Amery, *Political Life Vol. I*, 263.

<sup>310</sup> Milner, *Constructive Imperialism*, 13, 61.

<sup>311</sup> Chamberlain, *Imperial Union*, 160-1.

In the field of social reform, the Radical Right's adherents more often than not believed themselves to be advanced and forward-looking. Milner advocated a series of old-age pensions that were more generous than the government's own legislation.<sup>312</sup> The National Union of Conservative Associations in 1907 would pass a resolution that tied together the need to fight socialism with constructive policies through Tariff Reform.<sup>313</sup> Despite his reluctance, Balfour was successfully pressured into supporting Jesse Collings's smallholdings policy to further aid the agricultural sector.<sup>314</sup> In *The New Order*, Arthur Steel-Maitland supported the implementation of Wage Boards with the power to fix minimum wages in certain industries.<sup>315</sup> The *Morning Post* article in 1908 by Ware that called for Imperial Preference and National Service endorsed a similar scheme,

“The Boards formed of an equal number of representatives of employers and employed, with an impartial chairman, would have the right of fixing, from time to time, minimum rates of wage for their respective areas, which would be delimited in accord with the circumstances of the particular trade...”<sup>316</sup>

One of Joseph Chamberlain's final speeches urged his supporters to keep to a 'higher patriotism' which opposed Irish Home Rule and upheld Imperialism but also sought social reform and took as much an offensive strategy to the latter as it did the former.<sup>317</sup> Milner asserted that the two objects of practical patriotism were first to support a strong empire and second to ensure public health through social reform and secure employment.<sup>318</sup> The

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<sup>312</sup> Milner, *Nation and Empire*, 301.

<sup>313</sup> Dutton, *Loyal Opposition*, 258.

<sup>314</sup> Green, *Crisis of Conservatism*, 210.

<sup>315</sup> A. Steel-Maitland, 'Labour', J. Harris (ed.), *The New Order: Studies in Unionist Policy*, (London, 1908), 373, 376.

<sup>316</sup> F. Ware-Bonar Law, 29/09/08, PA, BL/18/4/75.

<sup>317</sup> Boyd (ed.), *Chamberlain's Speeches Vol 2*, 364.

<sup>318</sup> Milner, *Constructive Imperialism*, 10.

Radical Right often believed that the duties of the British people had to be impressed upon them, but also that duty was mutual.<sup>319</sup>

The focus of the Edwardian Radical Right, however, was on the 'big' questions of Imperial Union and National Defence. Social reforms were not enacted purely for their own sake but also for the sake of furthering the national discipline required for both.<sup>320</sup> Tariff Reform as the great imperial panacea was also made an explicit condition of those reforms both by providing funds and by creating the environment to make the reforms viable.<sup>321</sup> As the years progressed, the Radical Right would bifurcate between those who remained committed to 'constructive' social reforms and those who shifted to an anti-socialist outlook. What kept the platform together until the First World War, however, was mutual belief in the dangers facing Britain and that the solution lay in the ideas of men like Chamberlain, Milner, and Roberts.

### Conclusion

The Edwardian Radical Right's platform was rooted in defence and renewal of former global hegemony through both Tariff Reform and National Service. Social reform was an essential outcome and a perceived good in its own right, but also a happy and natural result of Tariff Reform and National Service rather than an equal pillar of the Radical Right ideology. Sacrifice was often brought up in speeches as both increases in prices and the act of military service, and the Radical Right expected this sacrifice to be welcomed as a cost of strength and security over opulent impotence.

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<sup>319</sup> Harris, 'Unionist Philosophy', 9-10.

<sup>320</sup> Scally, *Social Imperialism*, 138.

<sup>321</sup> Milner, *Nation and Empire*, 301-2. Turnor, *Land Problems*, 299. Chamberlain, *Imperial Union*, 53-4.

Yet the Radical Right did not envision its ideology as purely one of Britain making do with less or eternal austerity. The vision was the acceptance of a small cost in exchange for sustainable and long-term growth in prosperity and security. The 'weary titan' would be revived and the social fabric would be renewed. For the Radical Right, however, the task in 1903 to convince the public to support its ideological policies would prove arduous.



### III. 'Converting the Free Trade Nation': The Edwardian Radical Right From 1903-1909

#### Introduction

This chapter will detail the extent of the Radical Right's successes, or at least the successes of the policies it endorsed, and the factors behind its ultimate failure. If the nation was to be convinced to support the Radical Right's ideology, the Unionist Party's support and resources were necessary. The lack of a formal Radical Right organisation meant that there was no single crusade for the whole platform. Two attempts at offering an explicit manifesto through the hardline Tariff Reformer group, the Confederates, and an article in the *Morning Post* also failed. This meant that the Tariff Reform and National Service fights were mostly fought separately, in organisational terms, by means such as Radical Right individual participation in the TRL and NSL respectively. In turn, the success and failure of the Radical Right's platform was reliant on the success and failure of these broader pressure groups, as much as individual activities, to convert both the Unionists and the country. For the Tariff Reform aspect of the Radical Right platform, the fight against Free Traders in the Unionists was much easier and was assisted when many internal critics were removed after the 1906 election.

Arthur Balfour, leader of the Unionist Party, represented a greater problem. Balfour, far from the weak and vacillating leader sometimes portrayed, had strong views on trade, defence, and party leadership and policy, which were at odds with the Radical Right's outlook. He would only be convinced to shift policies when convinced of the merits of doing so or of the lack of alternatives in the face of party insistence. As a leader, Balfour would come to represent the flaws of the Unionist leadership and wider political class in the eyes of the Radical Right. Joseph Chamberlain would be used as an example of what a Unionist

leader ought to be like and at times it was hoped that Chamberlain would seize Balfour's place.

Chamberlain, however, would suffer a stroke in 1906 and his absence left a gaping hole. The Radical Right thus lacked an individual to serve as an envisioned replacement for Balfour. The search for a 'leader' did not mean a direct replacement for Balfour as leader of the Unionists, at least after Chamberlain's stroke, but instead a figurehead for the Radical Right to rally around. Lords Roberts and Milner were the only two acceptable replacements for Chamberlain to the Radical Right and both failed to fill the void. Roberts was leader of the NSL after 1905 and focused his efforts on building the group up. He had private sympathy for Tariff Reform as envisioned by others in the Radical Right, and hinted as such publicly, but was constrained by the need to preserve unity in the NSL. Milner, in contrast, was more willing to publicly advocate an interconnected programme of Tariff Reform, National Service, and social reforms, but he had neither the interest in nor the talent for a Chamberlain-style campaigning tour.

Unable to rely on a single charismatic leader, the Radical Right were left reliant on its participation in the 'legion of leagues' as activists to deliver its ideology. The TRL would be the most successful of these groups, much to the Radical Right's pleasure, but the Radical Right seemed to have trouble appreciating the broader factors behind these successes. This is especially clear when seeing the inability and lack of desire to encourage bodies akin to WUTRA within the NSL or the NL, instead insisting on male domination of the organisational structure. As for the NL, the organisation's turn away from bipartisanship was in part caused by the Radical Right through both the splintering of the IML—the closest thing to a 'pure' Radical Right group until the 1917 National Party—and the involvement of those Radical

Right adherents like Alan Burgoyne who remained inside the NL. Whilst the NL did become more partisan by 1909-10, however, it was more to the Unionist Party's benefit than the Radical Right's. If anything, the NL/IML split displayed the Radical Right's inability to commit single-mindedly to either detachment or conversion in relation to larger bodies like the NL and/or Unionist Party.

Overall, the Radical Right had a few conditional successes in converting the Unionist Party and the nation. Persuasion with the threat of harsher action at least succeeded in bringing the Unionist Party, especially Balfour, towards Tariff Reform in the shape of the 'Whole Hog'. Limited advances were made regarding National Service through the growth of the NSL, while the NL did reposition itself towards the Radical Right's ideological preference in order to prevent the IML's growth. However, the Radical Right's appreciation of the broad swathe of tactics needed to convert public opinion appears limited and even the Unionists, let alone the nation, were unconvinced on National Service. As for Tariff Reform, its pre-eminence would be reliant on Unionist favour, Balfour's personal manoeuvres, and the belief that public opinion could swallow food duties.

### **War on Free Trade Unionists**

The Radical Right recognised that little in British politics was possible without the backing of one of the two great parties.<sup>322</sup> For the 'Whole Hog' to be adopted, the Unionist Party's support was necessary. Given this context, the Unionist Free Traders (also known as 'Free Fooders') were the Radical Right's mortal enemies on Tariff Reform. Free Trade was more than an economic policy. It also grew out of a moral and ideological idea of Britain. Lord Salisbury's sons—James (also known as Lord Salisbury as the 4<sup>th</sup> Marquess), Hugh, and

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<sup>322</sup> *National Review*, Volume 59, Issue 351, 05/12, 414. Jebb, *Britannic*, 61.

Robert Cecil—were the most active Unionist Free Traders and the longest to hold out as such. By no means were they the only Free Traders in the party, Lord Derby was another long-lasting Unionist Free Trader as the representative of Lancashire, but they were the most vocal and commonly criticised by the Radical Right. For Robert Cecil, the Whole-Hoggers' whole approach to politics was sordid and materialistic.<sup>323</sup>

Hugh Cecil, while recognising that those like the Radical Right represented a part of the Tory tradition, identified that part as the aspect of Toryism most open to socialism and thus the one that had to be checked.<sup>324</sup> If the Radical Right disdained laissez-faire, Hugh Cecil was the MP closest to the ideals of laissez-faire when it came to economic policy. His libertarianism extended beyond the economy and regarded the entire political platform of the Radical Right with utter disgust.<sup>325</sup>

Salisbury, meanwhile, was subtler than his brothers in expressing his opposition to the Radical Right. He guised himself to Selborne as a disinterested, outside observer.<sup>326</sup> Lord Balcarres, a Balfourite driven to frustration by the Radical Right's demands, recognised, however, that Salisbury was as opposed to Tariff Reform as his brothers.<sup>327</sup> His philosophical objections were much the same as those of Hugh and Robert not only to Tariff Reform but also National Service; believing such policies were German intrusions onto the British tradition of freedom.<sup>328</sup> Unlike his brothers, nonetheless, Salisbury had no illusions or fantasies of departing from the party. As time progressed, he would find a place for himself within the party that would receive support from Dogmatists like Page Croft.

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<sup>323</sup> R. Cecil-A. Balfour, 25/01/06, BL, MS51071.

<sup>324</sup> H. Cecil, *Conservatism*, (London, 1913), 247.

<sup>325</sup> H. Cecil-R. Cecil, 10/01/15, BL, MS51157.

<sup>326</sup> Boyce (ed.), *Selborne Papers*, 42-3.

<sup>327</sup> Vincent (ed.), *Crawford Papers*, 90.

<sup>328</sup> Salisbury-Selborne, 20/05/08, BLO, Selborne 5.

The Cecils' departure would not have been mourned by many in the Radical Right. Amery gleefully recalled the 1903 Conservative Conference at which Hugh Cecil threatened defection if the party backed Tariff Reform.<sup>329</sup> To the Radical Right, the Cecils were a potential threat to any Tariff Reform majority as during the 1900 Parliament when the Free Fooders had enough parliamentary weight to interfere with any attempt to pass Tariff Reform. The self-attributed 'Free Fooder' label also irritated the Radical Right. Tryon decried how Free Trader Unionists could accept Hicks-Beach implementing the corn duty in the first place but then attack "the idea that this duty should be *reduced* by the remission of the duty on corn from within the Empire...."<sup>330</sup> The corn duty being introduced in the context of the expensive Boer War and that, for Free Fooders, the time came to scrap the duty when the conflict ended was not discussed as much by the Radical Right.

The difference in worldviews can be better appreciated from Amery's letter to Roberts on one of the Cecil brothers' reasons for opposing National Service. Amery lamented that the Cecil in question (possibly Hugh) appeared to write off the idea of preparing for war as "the unknown factor of generalship practically decides everything; That defeat in war is not really so very serious, as it never really destroys a nation; [and] That we have got on very well ourselves with inadequate military preparation..."<sup>331</sup> To enact National Service was also regarded as dangerous to the spirit of individualism within Britain.

By contrast, in the same letter to Roberts, Amery argued that numbers and training were more important in winning war than genius, asking "...[d]oes Cecil suggest that we should not bother about keeping up an adequate navy because Nelson was a better admiral than

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<sup>329</sup> Amery, *Political Life Vol. I*, 260.

<sup>330</sup> Tryon, *Tariff Reform*, 118-9.

<sup>331</sup> L. Amery-Roberts, N.D., CA, AMEL1/2/17.

Villeneuve?...As to the argument about the destruction of individualism by discipline, I would say that true discipline is the very foundation and starting point of real individualism."<sup>332</sup>

Adherents of the Radical Right frequently complained that Britain's approach to oncoming crises and its own stagnation was lackadaisical and lacked foresight. For de Broke the blame lay with "...the responsible leaders of public opinion, and to the educated classes generally, who have allowed national thought to live from hand to mouth in such a manner as to bring the country within sight of overwhelming disaster." Chamberlain and Amery made similar complaints about "the attempt to go on from hand to mouth...doing anything rather than meet the difficulty in the face" and how "in this country the fatal habit of thinking in compartments...has grown so strong."<sup>333</sup> For those in the Radical Right, voluntarism was another clear example of the political class's failure to either solve the problem of decline or even acknowledge it. The divide between Unionist Free Traders and the Radical Right was primarily over Tariff Reform. It is important, however, to understand the two largely divergent philosophical perspectives on Toryism and politics that fed into the party feud.

With Chamberlain's Birmingham speech announcing his crusade, the battle between the Tariff Reformers and the Unionist Free Traders began. It was not a fight between equals. The Tariff Reformers were much more effective in establishing their organisation and competing in the democracy. Geoffrey Searle depicted the divide between the Free Traders like the Cecils and the Radical Right as characterised by the former's discomfort with and the latter's embrace of the methods, if not the substance of, Edwardian democracy.<sup>334</sup> The

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<sup>332</sup> L. Amery-Roberts, N.D., CA, AMEL1/2/17.

<sup>333</sup> *National Review*, Volume 59, Issue 351, 05/12, 413. Boyd (ed.), *Chamberlain's Speeches Vol 2*, 263-4, Amery, *Union and Strength*, 60.

<sup>334</sup> G. Searle, *Corruption in British Politics 1895-1930*, (Oxford, 1987), 115-6.

anti-Tariff Reform faction in the Unionists were mockingly referred to as a collection of “out of place young gentlemen and old gentlemen out of place.”<sup>335</sup> Excepting the Cecils, and after the defection of younger Free Traders like Winston Churchill, it was left to the old and reactionary former Cabinet ministers to uphold Free Trade.<sup>336</sup>

The disparity between the older Free Traders and the younger Tariff Reformers did not go unnoticed. One manifestation of the Radical Right’s self-perception as modernists was the belief that Joseph Chamberlain was the only frontbencher over sixty who still had political value.<sup>337</sup> The Free Traders were visibly uncomfortable with the demands of modern politics. For example, in the face of a local party revolt in favour of Tariff Reform, George Hamilton wrote off both his party and his constituents as idiots.<sup>338</sup> Yet the TRL, in contrast, was one of the most effective organising bodies within the Unionist Party.<sup>339</sup> Similarly, it took little time for Chamberlain to seize control of the Liberal Unionist Association. Retaliation from the Unionist Free Traders took place outside the field of internal party politics and in the electoral arena. In response to Chamberlain’s success, the Duke of Devonshire, the former Lord Hartington, advised voters to support the Free Trade candidate in by-elections, whether he was a Unionist or a Liberal.<sup>340</sup> This was coupled with attacks on Chamberlain’s proposals by Unionist Free Trader ministers, much to Austen Chamberlain’s outrage.<sup>341</sup>

With these developments began an open season for the TRL to challenge and replace Unionist Free Traders in their own seats. Across the Unionist Party, Free Traders were

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<sup>335</sup> *Hansard*, HC Debate, Preferential Duties, 01/08/04, Vol. 139 cc328.

<sup>336</sup> R. Rempel, *Unionists Divided: Arthur Balfour, Joseph Chamberlain, and the Unionist Free Traders*, (Newton Abbott, 1973), 12.

<sup>337</sup> Kennedy, *Antagonism*, 342.

<sup>338</sup> H. McCreedy, ‘The Revolt of the Unionist Free Traders’, *Parliamentary History*, 10:2, (1962), 191.

<sup>339</sup> Thackeray, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age*, 23-4.

<sup>340</sup> Barnes, Ramsden, *Age of Balfour and Baldwin*, 13.

<sup>341</sup> A. Chamberlain-Lord Londonderry, 02/11/05, CRL, AC17/3/11B.

toppled by de-selection or outright opposition. Throughout the years 1903-1906, the Radical Right adherent J.W. Hills replaced Arthur Elliot in Durham, Charles Ritchie was de-selected in his seat, and Ion Hamilton Benn ran an insurgent campaign against Hugh Cecil as an independent Tariff Reformer during the 1906 general election.<sup>342</sup> Benn came third and cost Cecil the seat, but this was acceptable as a victory to the Radical Right. Page Croft recalled Joseph Chamberlain saying that he would prefer an open Liberal Free Trader to an untrustworthy Unionist Free Trader.<sup>343</sup> In public, Chamberlain made clear that he “would infinitely rather be part of a powerful minority than a member of an impotent majority.”<sup>344</sup> Given that Benn was then selected as the sole Unionist candidate for that same seat in 1910, the party’s sympathies were obvious. As Hugh Cecil bitterly noted, the Unionist Party would be unified through the elimination of dissidents.<sup>345</sup> For those Free Traders who acquiesced, the Cecils had nothing but scorn, especially for Robert Yerburgh, the head of the NL, whom Hugh Cecil called ‘Mr Pliable.’<sup>346</sup>

Spite was the most that Free Fooders could offer against the Tariff Reformers. By 1906, they had been reduced to a rump within the party reliant on London seats.<sup>347</sup> The Radical Right, however, faced a greater barrier to its platform becoming the Unionist platform; Arthur Balfour. Many Tariff Reformers, even those outside the Radical Right like William Bridgeman, believed Balfour’s familial ties made him too concerned with keeping the Cecils in the tent.<sup>348</sup> Joseph Chamberlain took seriously the refusal to expel the Cecils. Even a

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<sup>342</sup> Coetzee, *Party or Country*, 52. *The Times*, 30/07/04, 7.

<sup>343</sup> Croft, *Strife*, 70.

<sup>344</sup> *The Times*, 04/11/05, 11.

<sup>345</sup> Dutton, *Loyal Opposition*, 11. K. Manton, ‘Edwardian Conservatism and the Constitution: The Thought of Lord Hugh Cecil’, *Parliamentary History*, 34:3, (2015), 368-9.

<sup>346</sup> Coetzee, *Party or Country*, 139.

<sup>347</sup> Rempel, *Unionist Free-Traders*, 198.

<sup>348</sup> Williamson (ed.), *Bridgeman Diaries*, 28.



speech that Maxse—who had loathed Balfour—applauded only disappointed Chamberlain. Particularly galling had been Balfour’s insistence on belonging to the ‘Free Trade’ section of the Unionists, which Chamberlain believed was made “so that Hugh may claim him as on his side, and this is what has already been done by Lord Robert Cecil in East Marylebone.”<sup>349</sup> Objections to Balfour, however, extended far beyond merely having sentiment for his cousins.

### **Balfour: The Agnostic Heretic**

Arthur Balfour’s leadership served to define the Radical Right’s frustrations with the Unionist Party in its failure to either force Balfour to become the leader the Radical Right desired or to remove him from his position until 1911. Balfour has often been associated with a policy of feeble vacillation on the Tariff Reform question. His policy proposals were seen as less his own views and more an attempted halfway house between the ‘Whole Hog’ and Free Trade, refusing to recognise that such compromises pleased no one.<sup>350</sup> To the Radical Right, he embodied the Unionist Party’s failure to offer a constructive and definite policy.<sup>351</sup> Balfour’s speeches on philosophy—one being titled *A Defence of Philosophic Doubt*—did little to help his image as an aloof aristocrat who could not win over the people. His apparent detachment from the trade question contrasted deeply with the attitude of the Radical Right. As Radical Right adherents like Joseph Lawrence, Amery, Page Croft, and George Lloyd themselves confessed, the campaign for Tariff Reform was akin to a religious crusade with Joseph Chamberlain as the imperial prophet.<sup>352</sup> By contrast, Balfour appeared

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<sup>349</sup> J. Chamberlain-L. Maxse, 21/12/05, WSRO, Maxse 453/187.

<sup>350</sup> Barnes, Ramsden, *Age of Balfour and Baldwin*, 24.

<sup>351</sup> Turnour, *Pre-War*, 17. Amery, *Political Life Vol. I*, 274.

<sup>352</sup> Joseph Lawrence-A. Balfour, 06/11/07, BL, MS49791. J. Charmley, *Lord Lloyd and the Decline of the British Empire*, (Weidenfield, 1987), 9. Croft, *Strife*, 46. Amery, *Political Life Vol. I*, 236. A. Chamberlain-A. Balfour, 23/11/10, CRL, AC8/6/16.

to be a man neglecting vital opportunities for both party and nation without a care.

Rowland Hunt made a sharp critique of Balfour, harkening back to the 1906 election where he argued the public had declared,

“...‘We must have a leader who knows his own mind, who will say what he thinks, and give us a lead in Imperial policy, and in the policy of social reforms.’ They [the public] would not follow a leader who had not a definite policy, and whom they could not understand. If colonial preference was to win at the next election, its advantages and necessity would have to be advocated and explained inside and outside the House. There must be a lead from their leader, pious opinions were no use. There were only two remedies for curing the poverty and wretchedness of the poor of the country—tariff reform or colonial preference, and socialism.”<sup>353</sup>

Hunt was only rare among the Radical Right in that he openly declared his hostility in the Commons—as Maxse did in the press<sup>354</sup>—as opposed to making bitter remarks in private correspondence. Lady Bathurst, proprietor of the *Morning Post*, by 1911 condemned Balfour as the bane of the Unionist Party for his refusal to endorse the ‘Whole Hog’ and National Service.<sup>355</sup> Lord Winterton confessed after the 1906 election, that while he and other Tariff Reformers publicly only sought a change in policy towards the ‘Whole Hog’ “most of us, if the truth be told, were dissatisfied with [Balfour’s] leadership also.”<sup>356</sup> The Radical Right wanted a leader who could present a constructive programme, and Balfour was not that man.

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<sup>353</sup> *Hansard*, HC Debate, King’s Speech (Motion For An Address), 19/02/07, Vol. 169 cc792-3.

<sup>354</sup> *The Times*, 12/02/06, 10.

<sup>355</sup> Lady Bathurst-H.A. Gwynne, 26/07/11, University of Leeds Special Collections, Glensesk-Bathurst 1990/1/4077.

<sup>356</sup> Turnour, *Pre-War*, 22

Balfour's true problem, however, was not that he lacked a policy on trade or was weak. If anything, Balfour was too strong in his views and his position. E.H.H. Green and R.J.Q. Adams have challenged the idea of Balfour as either merely seeking middle-of-the-road compromises or of being a feeble leader. In fact, Balfour had a strong sense of authority and once said he would rather take policy advice from his valet than from a party meeting.<sup>357</sup> In the field of defence, Balfour sincerely doubted the odds of a shock-invasion of Britain in the event of military conflict and was uncomfortable with the principle of compulsory military training.<sup>358</sup> As for economics, Balfour was not a Free Trader by any means, as actual Unionist Free Traders like John St Loe Strachey, editor of *The Spectator*, told Maxse.<sup>359</sup>

During the 1890s, Balfour had been sympathetic to ideas outside the conventions of traditional economics. Like the Radical Right, he believed Cobden had not predicted that the world outside Britain would reject Free Trade, and that Cobden underestimated the benefits of the empire.<sup>360</sup> He was no more comfortable with the zealotry of Hugh Cecil than he was with Page Croft's. During the Chamberlain-Ritchie showdown, Balfour's sympathies were with Chamberlain instead of Ritchie, whose resignation threats he resented.<sup>361</sup> When the corn duties were first introduced, he made it clear in the Commons that he regarded Free Trade not as a dogma but as a policy to be judged on its merits and demerits.<sup>362</sup> A new world necessitated a new policy. As for the Unionist Free Traders, Balfour and his supporters

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<sup>357</sup> Green, *Ideologies*, 22, 30. R.J.Q. Adams, *Balfour: The Last Grandee*, (London, 2007), 74.

<sup>358</sup> A. Balfour-Roberts, 18/11/05, NAM, Roberts 7101/23/8/21.

<sup>359</sup> J.L. Strachey-L. Maxse, 16/02/06, WSRO, Maxse 455/263.

<sup>360</sup> Green, *Ideologies*, 30.

<sup>361</sup> Adams, *Balfour*, 277.

<sup>362</sup> *Hansard*, HC Debate, Ways and Means [14<sup>th</sup> April] - Report, 22/04/02, Vol. 106, cc1047-8.

such as Balcarres felt that the likes of the Duke of Devonshire, especially compared with Chamberlain, were dead-weight and only worth their reputation and status.<sup>363</sup>

As time progressed, however, relations between the Chamberlain and Balfour camps deteriorated. Balfour's Sheffield speech outlined his vision of Tariff Reform, which was rooted in retaliation rather than in imperial unity. By 1904, Joseph and Austen Chamberlain both felt that Balfour was failing to restrain those in the Cabinet who supported Free Trade from attacking Tariff Reform.<sup>364</sup> If Chamberlain was meant to be scouting ahead, why was the army firing at his back? Balfour meanwhile insisted on his Sheffield policy and made clear to Austen that he felt the Chamberlainite approach would only alienate the self-governing colonies. Austen a few days afterwards mourned that the distance between him and Balfour was greater than he appreciated.<sup>365</sup>

Matters worsened when Balfour attempted to balance the ideals of Tariff Reform with what he felt was practicable. The Edinburgh policy was a two-election scheme whereby if the Unionists won the next general election, then they would hold an Imperial Conference with a 'free hand' and then fight another election on whatever scheme the conference produced. To the Chamberlains, it appeared a further procrastination and emblematic of the ministry's 'flabbiness' on policy.<sup>366</sup> Balfour, conversely, warned Joseph Chamberlain that the spectre of food taxes was very real and alarming to voters and that while Chamberlain's single-election plan was simpler—and maybe more effective—Balfour would not be moved.<sup>367</sup>

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<sup>363</sup> Vincent (ed.), *Crawford Papers*, 66.

<sup>364</sup> J. Chamberlain-A. Lyttelton, 24/09/04, CRL, JC30/3/20/2. A. Chamberlain-Balfour, 24/08/04, CRL, AC17/3/1.

<sup>365</sup> Chamberlain, *Politics From Inside*, 30, 32.

<sup>366</sup> A. Chamberlain-Selborne, 03/09/04, BLO, Selborne 73.

<sup>367</sup> A. Balfour-J. Chamberlain, 18/02/05, BL, MS49774.

At that point, Chamberlain stayed his hand to avoid quarrelling with Balfour. By 1905, Chamberlain used the annual party conference in Newcastle to implicitly attack Balfour's leadership in both Balfour's refusal to exile the likes of Hugh and Robert Cecil but also depicted Balfour's policy as one of feebleness and confusion.

"You must not suffer it to be whittled down by the timid or the half-hearted minority of your party. ... You must not ask the majority, be it nine-tenths, or, as I think, ninety-nine-hundredths, to sacrifice their convictions to the prejudices of the minority. ...No army was ever led successfully to battle on the principle that the lamest man should govern the march of the army. ...I say you must not go into the battle which is impending with blunted swords merely in order to satisfy the scruples of those who do not wish to fight at all; ...I think that is understood."<sup>368</sup>

The claim that it was referring to Hugh Cecil fooled few. Coupled by wild applause and the conference endorsing Chamberlain's policy over Balfour's, the speech was celebrated by the Radical Right as forcing an end to Balfour's "wobbles".<sup>369</sup> As noted before, Tariff Reform was at the heart of the Radical Right ideology, making its success vital to the Radical Right and Chamberlain's conference triumph a particularly sweet victory. Balfour, meanwhile, saw his authority collapsing. Lord Midleton, a Balfourite, tried ineffectively to paint the conference as Balfour 'sparing' Chamberlain, but to little avail.<sup>370</sup> Balfour would resign as Premier by December 1905 and allow the Liberals to take office and hold an election.

The resulting landslide defeat, beginning with Balfour losing his own seat, did not help his case. Neville Chamberlain reported party activists complaining about Balfour and hoping

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<sup>368</sup> Vincent (ed.), *Crawford Papers*, 87. *The Times*, 22/11/05, 12.

<sup>369</sup> L. Amery-L. Maxse, 25/11/05, WSRO, Maxse 453/153.

<sup>370</sup> Boyce (ed.), *Selborne Papers*, 41.

that Joseph Chamberlain would seize the leadership.<sup>371</sup> Viscount Ridley, President of the TRL, told Law that Chamberlain was being pressed by his younger supporters—the Radical Right—to make an attempt at the leadership.<sup>372</sup> As Amery admitted, he and others urged such a push, but Chamberlain refused.<sup>373</sup> Instead, he sought to ease Tariff Reform’s victory through a party meeting to first embed Tariff Reform—his Tariff Reform at that—and to reform the party’s organisation.

Balfour recognised what the party meeting risked. There were problems with the organisation of the Unionist Party. Having the Central Office and National Union controlled through the Whips’ Office was unsustainable even without the Tariff Reform split. John Barnes, John Ramsden, and David Thackeray have all highlighted the genuine case put forward by Tariff Reformers that democratisation of the party machine was necessary.<sup>374</sup> This was especially the case when the TRL, a separate pressure-group, was a superior election-machine to the official Central Office. Candidates like Bridgeman had already resorted to using the TRL over official party organisation and found their campaigns stronger for it.<sup>375</sup> Fleming regarded achieving the reform of the party’s organisation as one of the Radical Right’s achievements.<sup>376</sup>

The Radical Right, however, believed that party democratisation would also bring about Tariff Reform’s ultimate victory. Chamberlain’s scheme for organisation reform entailed not just merging the Conservative and Liberal Unionist organisations—outside his stronghold of

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<sup>371</sup> N. Chamberlain-Hilda Chamberlain, 01/02/06, CRL, NC18/1/2.

<sup>372</sup> Viscount Ridley-Bonar Law, 05/01/06, PA, BL/18/2/10.

<sup>373</sup> Amery, *Political Life Vol. I*, 292.

<sup>374</sup> Barnes, Ramsden, *Age of Balfour and Baldwin*, 45-6. Thackeray, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age*, 30.

<sup>375</sup> Thackeray, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age*, 27.

<sup>376</sup> Fleming, *Britannia’s Zealots*, 75.

Birmingham—but also absorbing the TRL.<sup>377</sup> This, coupled with Balfour embracing the ‘Whole Hog’, would have appeared abject surrender to Chamberlain’s platform. For those such as Viscount Morpeth, this was the point. Balfour could remain leader and the party be unified, but policy would be determined by Chamberlain.<sup>378</sup>

Balfour had a strong sense of authority and for a man who distrusted making policy by party meeting, the humiliation of having his policy denounced but being asked to keep serving galled him. Balfour was determined to reject a paper crown, however. He warned Chamberlain that he could not have it both ways. If Balfour’s policy was rejected, he would feel compelled to resign, and Chamberlain would have to fill the void.<sup>379</sup>

Such an outcome was embraced by the Radical Right with Winterton and other Tariff Reformer MPs hoping for Chamberlain’s rise.<sup>380</sup> Page Croft and Maxse, meanwhile, discussed forming a Reveille Committee—four years before one emerged during the Lords Crisis—to endorse such an independent line.<sup>381</sup> Of all those who the Radical Right would look to for leadership after Chamberlain, he was the only one with the will and ability to challenge the party machine and succeed.

The party meeting—set to be held in February—was rendered moot, however, by the Valentine Compact, an arrangement between Chamberlain and Balfour to avoid any open divide at the meeting. Balfour’s leadership was endorsed while Balfour agreed to declare Tariff Reform “the first constructive work” of the Unionists and to reform the Unionists’ organisational structure.

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<sup>377</sup> Marsh, *Entrepreneur in Politics*, 634.

<sup>378</sup> Viscount Morpeth-L. Maxse, 08/02/06, WSRO, Maxse 455/251.

<sup>379</sup> A. Balfour-J. Chamberlain, 08/02/06, BL, MS49774.

<sup>380</sup> Turnour, *Orders*, 16-7.

<sup>381</sup> H.P. Croft-L. Maxse, 02/02/06, WSRO, Maxse 455/232.

At the meeting itself, Hewins felt that Balfour stumbled over his words while Chamberlain had command of the room.<sup>382</sup> It seemed a reflection of the outcome; Balfour forced into a policy beyond his desire and Chamberlain as de facto if not de jure leader. Other Unionists noticed a similar dynamic at the meeting. Bridgeman believed only Chamberlain's threats forced Balfour into agreeing to the meeting and compromise, the Balfourite Lord Newton compared Balfour to a hostage, and Lord Balcarres noted the difference in reception between Chamberlain and Balfour.<sup>383</sup> It appeared that Tariff Reform had won and would keep winning within the Unionists. Balfour was depressed enough at the turn of events to consider resigning from the leadership anyway.<sup>384</sup>

Joseph Chamberlain's stroke in late 1906 changed everything. In the early days of the Tariff Reform movement, Chamberlain may have supported Balfour's leadership but his political profile and record gave him the political weight to halt any attempt at moderating party policy on tariffs. With Chamberlain incapacitated, Balfour had no rival to pressure him towards the terms of the Valentine Compact.

The Tariff Reform movement, however, along with the Radical Right, was more than just Chamberlain's crusade. Leo Maxse asserted as much to Bonar Law when he complained that too many were waiting for a lead from the Chamberlains in Highbury to act.

“...[I]t seems to me disastrous to allow the Tariff Reform movement to hibernate. Should Chamberlain return to politics the position would be infinitely better if the agitation has maintained full steam ahead in the interval. If he does not return our present inactivity may prove to be ruinous. Those of us who were Tariff Reformers

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<sup>382</sup> Hewins, *Apologia* Vol. 1, 169.

<sup>383</sup> Williamson (ed.), *Bridgeman Diaries*, 23. Dutton, *Loyal Opposition*, 31. Vincent (ed.), *Crawford Papers*, 92.

<sup>384</sup> A. Balfour-G. Goschen, 15/02/06, BL, MS49706.



before Chamberlain became a Tariff Reformer, and who regard the cause as greater than any man, ought...ignore any suggestion to slow down, from whatever quarter they may come.”<sup>385</sup>

Instead, the TRL had to move for its own sake and push Balfour into action. For the TRL, the emergence of the Confederacy—a clique of Whole Hoggers who sought to revive the Tariff Reform campaign which included many Radical Right adherents—helped shake the TRL out of its own paralysis.<sup>386</sup> The Radical Right’s role as a motivating force for more moderate colleagues was an example of its success during this era.

As regarded Balfour himself, his confidant Jack Sandars warned him in January 1907 that the new Tariff Reform campaign that included Amery and Maxse showed no signs of slowing down and that his leadership was in danger.<sup>387</sup> Some in the TRL like Austen Chamberlain and Viscount Ridley were more concerned by than pleased with the anti-Balfour tone used across the TRL. Yet, it became clear that the usual malcontents such as Ware and Maxse were not alone in directing their anger at Balfour.<sup>388</sup> The Unionist Party was ready to revolt if Balfour did not follow through on his pledge.

Balfour did not solely need the stick to speak out in favour of Tariff Reform. He praised Radical Right adherents like Hewins as “a fiscal reformer who really knows something about his case...”. He also told Amery that he was “one of the few people from whom writings on the great controversy I anticipate [with] great pleasure”, in regard to *Fundamental Fallacies of Free Trade* which sought to help Tariff Reformers ‘corner’ Free Traders.<sup>389</sup> Balfour’s

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<sup>385</sup> L. Maxse-Bonar Law, 02/01/07, PA, BL/18/3/28.

<sup>386</sup> Fleming, *Britannia’s Zealots*, 46.

<sup>387</sup> J. Sandars-A. Balfour, 22/01/07, BL, MS49765.

<sup>388</sup> Viscount Ridley-A. Chamberlain, 15/01/07, CRL, AC/7/6/2.

<sup>389</sup> A. Balfour-J. Sandars, 24/01/07, BL, MS49765. Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 54.

instincts on trade still drew him closer to the 'Whole Hog'. The 1907 Imperial Conference was another flashpoint as, during the conference, Britain alone rejected the principle of Imperial Preference which the Dominions endorsed. Hugh Cecil sneered at the Australians as being "underbred", but Balfour was impressed by the imperial commitment.<sup>390</sup> It did appear to Balfour that the 'Whole Hog', far from frightening off the Dominions, was an object of desire for them. On top of changes to party and imperial dynamics, Balfour had become convinced that Tariff Reform was the only way for the state to afford its social and military commitments.<sup>391</sup> Partial conversion as much as coercion pushed Balfour into making more public and vocal endorsements of Tariff Reform by mid-1907. This development was exemplified by the Unionists pushing a vote of censure against the government for its refusal to accept the colonial offer.<sup>392</sup> By 1908, while Balfour was indisputably leader, Tariff Reform was embedded as the first constructive work of the Unionist Party.

Despite this, the Radical Right distrusted Balfour. Balfour remained opposed to National Service and appeared too eager to collaborate with the Liberals on the question of both naval and land defence.<sup>393</sup> Balfour, in contrast, was as opposed to the idea of the Opposition pushing forward its own programme as Salisbury had been, believing it was for governments to propose legislation.

In turn, the Radical Right had no choice but to go along with Balfour. His position was assured by the system of relationships and alliances that defined the nature of front-bench

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<sup>390</sup> N. Blewett, 'Free Fooders, Balfourites, Whole-Hoggers: Factionalism Within The Unionist Party, 1906-1910', *Historical Journal*, 11:1, (1968) 108.

<sup>391</sup> A. Balfour-A. Chamberlain, 23/10/07, CRL, AC17/3/19.

<sup>392</sup> *Hansard*, HC Debate, Colonial Preference, 15/07/07, Vol. 178 cc363-4.

<sup>393</sup> Williams, *Defending the Empire*, 96-7.

politics in Edwardian Britain.<sup>394</sup> Lord Winterton in his memoirs complained as much.<sup>395</sup>

Joseph Chamberlain's absence would go unfilled for the rest of the Radical Right's existence, although not for a lack of searching.

### **In Search of Caesar**

The Radical Right had a leader in Joseph Chamberlain and never truly succeeded in finding one after his political departure. George Wyndham praised Chamberlain as a man who mastered the arts of observation and imagination in ways that not even Disraeli could.<sup>396</sup>

Chamberlain could both recognise and negotiate with the political realities he faced while also having a vision of how to change those realities towards his ideal. After his departure from politics, the Radical Right sought and found no suitable successor who had pragmatism, democratic nous, and a platform that adherents could attach themselves to.

Austen Chamberlain was Joseph Chamberlain's son, but he was not regarded as his heir.

David Dutton described Austen Chamberlain as being forced into a role to which he was ill-suited and in which the elder Chamberlain's followers found him wanting.<sup>397</sup> His affection for Balfour—while shared with other former Balfour Cabinet members otherwise sympathetic to the Radical Right such as Selborne<sup>398</sup> and Wyndham<sup>399</sup>—often separated him from the Radical Right, who complained of that same sentiment.<sup>400</sup> Austen's loyalty even irritated his father who had to push Austen into being more active in the renewed Tariff

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<sup>394</sup> R. Fanning, 'Rats Versus Ditchers: The Die-Hard Revolt and the Parliament Bill of 1911', A. Cosgrove, J. Maguire (ed.), *Parliament and Community*, (Belfast, 1983), 206-7.

<sup>395</sup> Turnour, *Pre-War*, 232.

<sup>396</sup> Mackeil (ed.), *Wyndham*, 585.

<sup>397</sup> D. Dutton, *Austen Chamberlain: Gentleman in Politics*, (Bolton, 1985), 26.

<sup>398</sup> Selborne even defended the Edinburgh policy against Austen Chamberlain's criticisms. Boyce (ed.), *Selborne Papers*, 37-40.

<sup>399</sup> Williams, *Defending The Empire*, 148.

<sup>400</sup> L. Maxse-Bonar Law, 02/01/07, PA, BL/18/3/28.

Reformer pressure on Balfour in early 1907.<sup>401</sup> The Radical Right, would need to find a new champion from outside the former members of Balfour's Cabinet.

The two names that emerged were Alfred Milner and Lord Roberts. Both men were applauded as men of imperial minds and patriotic fervour, and the *Morning Post* declared them the heroes of the National Service cause.<sup>402</sup> Of the two, Milner was the only one formally approached to pick up Joseph Chamberlain's crown. The offer took on a material reality when some in the TRL proposed that Milner be made the President of the TRL with Leo Amery and Halford Mackinder serving as his lieutenants.<sup>403</sup> The position would have allowed him to better claim Joseph Chamberlain's position as leader of the Tariff Reformers, and of the Radical Right. He refused on account of a lack of funds being available,<sup>404</sup> but the offer was one of many by his devoted followers to draw him into active partisan politics. Amery was incessant in his attempt to establish Milner in Unionist politics, rather than to stay attached to his self-image of being non-partisan.<sup>405</sup>

Milner's appeal for the Radical Right was apparent; he had an imperial record in South Africa and had weight across the Unionist Party. Yet it was enough that Balfour asked Sandars to visit and see if he intended to challenge Balfour as leader. At the dinner, Sandars assured Balfour that Milner had no plans of trying to intrude into the front bench or take Balfour's place.<sup>406</sup> It was not for a lack of trying by the Radical Right. One advantage Milner had over Joseph Chamberlain for the Radical Right was that, unlike the latter, he was willing to openly endorse National Service. Even before Chamberlain's stroke, Fabian Ware

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<sup>401</sup> Mary Chamberlain-A. Chamberlain, 13/02/07, CRL, AC/4/2/1.

<sup>402</sup> *Morning Post* cutting, 29/10/10, CA, AMEL1/2/17.

<sup>403</sup> Scally, *Social Imperialism*, 106.

<sup>404</sup> Amery, *Political Life Vol. I*, 299.

<sup>405</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 55-6.

<sup>406</sup> J. Sandars-A. Balfour, 13/01/07 BL, MS49765.

complained to Milner that supporters of both Tariff Reform and National Service who had, “backed Joe for all they were worth...are holding back their money feeling uneasy owing to the obvious mistakes they see he has made...” and that the nation needed “a man” to give the proper lead on those issues and that Ware was willing “to devote my life to getting this country straight, and I want you to tell us how to do it—nobody else can...”<sup>407</sup>

Milner’s interventions during this period often came less from his own initiative and more at the prodding of those younger men who admired him. When Milner finally agreed to put himself forward as a public-facing politician, it was at his prized protégé Leo Amery’s behest, with the latter hoping Milner would cover “the whole field.”<sup>408</sup> Milner then made a series of speeches during 1907 where he outlined what he defined as ‘Constructive Imperialism.’ In one speech, he professed faith in Balfour, but warned that the Unionist Party was failing to show that it had a constructive platform and that this had to be remedied.<sup>409</sup> For Milner,

“...the ideals of national strength and Imperial consolidation on the one hand, and of democratic progress and domestic reform on the other...are essentially related and complementary to one another. The upholders of the Union, the upholders of the Empire, the upholders of the fundamental institutions of the State, must not only be, but must be seen and known to be, the strenuous and constant assailants of those two great related curses of our social system—irregular employment and unhealthy conditions of life—and of all the various causes which lead to them.”<sup>410</sup>

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<sup>407</sup> F. Ware-Milner, 28/06/05, BLO, Milner 32.

<sup>408</sup> Amery, *Political Life Vol. I*, 298-9.

<sup>409</sup> Milner, *Constructive Imperialism*, 38-41.

<sup>410</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

Milner saw his aim as deterring the Unionist Party from sinking into a negative anti-socialist platform. Instead, he sought to present his constructive platform as one rooted in Tariff Reform, Imperial Union, National Service, and Social Reform. It was an articulation of the very platform that the Radical Right believed in. As Frederick Scott Oliver told Amery, if Milner kept up such speeches, he might have presented himself as the leader of the Radical Right.<sup>411</sup>

However, Milner was an ineffective democrat; and he was not interested in being an effective one. In the same letter in which Oliver praised Milner's speech, Oliver wrote that he could tell from the transcript alone that Milner disliked speech-making.<sup>412</sup> Similar testimony was recorded by Austen Chamberlain, who received an account of one of Milner's speeches from his sister Ivy, who said Milner "was full of good stuff, but badly delivered, from vast sheaves of notes from which he read largely, losing himself at intervals."<sup>413</sup> His acolytes had higher ambitions than he held for himself. By the end of 1907, Milner told Amery as much when declaring that he was finished with his campaign.

"I have done enough speaking to satisfy even you, and if I have achieved no positive good, I hope I have at least prevented some mischief. The Unionist Party... were all 'rushing violently down a steep place' into the bog of a purely Conservative narrow middle-class and negative policy. I think I have helped to spoil that rotten game and kept the constructive and Imperial ideas to the front."<sup>414</sup>

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<sup>411</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 57.

<sup>412</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>413</sup> Chamberlain, *Politics From Inside*, 110.

<sup>414</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 62.

Milner was also reluctant to give up his self-imposed status as a 'free lance' who could pick and choose his moments to act.<sup>415</sup> One biographer harshly described him as a Unionist counterpart to the ex-Prime Minister Lord Rosebery but with less rhetorical skill; shying from the spotlight and the obligations it gave.<sup>416</sup> Austen Chamberlain, when defending Ridley as the TRL's President, argued that Milner lacked the same organisational and popular touch.<sup>417</sup> Milner was haunted constantly by accusations from his Liberal critics that he was more German than British with his advocacy of Tariff Reform and National Service.<sup>418</sup> By 1910 Milner had hardened his refusal from 1906 to try for the leadership and made it clear to Amery that he had no plans to return to politics any time soon.<sup>419</sup> This would only change when the constitutional crises of 1909-14 escalated.

Roberts, unlike Milner, did not explicitly commit himself to both Tariff Reform and National Service, and instead focused on the latter. As Joseph Chamberlain had been for the early Tariff Reform cause, Roberts filled the role of a one-man campaigning machine despite his advanced age.<sup>420</sup> He did have ties to active Tariff Reformers, however, including Milner, Amery, F.S. Oliver, and Henry Page Croft. During the debate over the Territorial Force Bill in 1907, Roberts tied discipline and social reform together by arguing National Service would keep Britain's children from being cut adrift after compulsory education and ending up as "loafers".<sup>421</sup> In much the same way Milner envisioned a means of combining extending time in education with schemes of National Service so as to improve the health of children and

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<sup>415</sup> Milner, *Nation and Empire*, 153.

<sup>416</sup> J.L. Thompson, *The Forgotten Patriot: A Life of Alfred, Viscount Milner of St James and Cape Town, 1854-1925*, (Madison, 2007), 382.

<sup>417</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 58.

<sup>418</sup> A. Gollin, *Proconsul in Politics: A Study of Lord Milner in Opposition and in Power*, (London, 1964), 11.

<sup>419</sup> *Ibid.*, 169-70. Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 58.

<sup>420</sup> Marsh, *Entrepreneur in Politics*, 590. Hendley, *Crucible*, 12-3.

<sup>421</sup> *Hansard*, HL Debate, Territorial and Reserve Forces Bill, 09/07/07, Vol. 177 cc1301-2.

imbue them with patriotism.<sup>422</sup> The example of Roberts as a soldier willing to forgo his retirement in the service of warning the nation of danger appealed to the Radical Right.

As a leader, however, Roberts had his own limitations. For one, he was committed to the NSL and could not dedicate time to Tariff Reform beyond favourable mentions.<sup>423</sup> The reality of British political campaigning weighed against Roberts. Much like Milner, the ex-field marshal lacked Joseph Chamberlain's ability as a politician and campaigner in a democratic state. He was an ineffective speaker who lacked presence in a room.<sup>424</sup> Even admirers such as F.S. Oliver admitted that Roberts was easy to out-argue.<sup>425</sup> On top of lacking presence and rhetorical flair, the former field marshal was also prone to gaffes that only fed into pre-conceptions about National Service being a warmonger's policy.

Thus in 1912, Roberts made a speech in Manchester in which he tried to express his admiration for Germany's foreign policy approach which he argued was "'Germany strikes when Germany's hour has struck.' ....it is an excellent policy. It is, or should be, the policy of every nation prepared to play a great part in history." For his critics, his phrasing appeared to support the policy of pre-emptive war and forced Roberts on the defensive in later speeches.<sup>426</sup> Roberts himself appeared aware that he was not the most effective leader for National Service, as he pleaded with Balfour to take up the question himself.<sup>427</sup> For all of Roberts's protestations that National Service was not a partisan cause, much like the other

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<sup>422</sup> Milner, *Nation and Empire*, xiv-xlv.

<sup>423</sup> One example of Roberts's favourable mentions was when he praised Manchester having overflow meetings on Tariff Reform as proof that the city was not "petrified" in its views and tied this to the city being open to National Service despite the latter also being opposed to Cobdenism. Roberts, *Message*, 2-3.

<sup>424</sup> Adams, Poirier, *Conscription Controversy*, 13.

<sup>425</sup> F.S. Oliver, *Ordeal by Battle*, (London, 1915), xxiii.

<sup>426</sup> *Ibid.*, 336. Roberts, *Message*, vii.

<sup>427</sup> Roberts-A. Balfour, 07/04/09, BL, MS49765.



militarist league leaders he was aware that his success relied on the consent of the Unionist machine.

With neither Milner nor Roberts willing, or even able, to take Chamberlain's place, the Radical Right was left without a leader. There was no one whose voice could fill the philosophical void that Lord Malmesbury claimed had to be filled if there was a chance of success.<sup>428</sup> Instead, the Radical Right would have to rely on pressure from below to convert the Unionist Party and nation.

### **The Radical Right and the Nation**

Winning over public opinion to Tariff Reform would be difficult enough, so it is no surprise that the Radical Right failed to convert public opinion to its platform. Edwardian Britain was what Frank Trentmann termed a 'Free Trade Nation.' To Liberals, Free Trade was more than just the absence of import duties but represented a philosophy of freedom, liberty, and internationalism.<sup>429</sup> They, like the Radical Right, connected Tariff Reform and National Service (calling the latter 'conscription') as parts of a greater whole.<sup>430</sup> In the absence of a national leader who could embody the whole platform, the Radical Right had to rely on the 'legion of leagues' to effectively challenge two embedded conventions in British politics; Free Trade and the voluntary principle. While there was only one league that could be termed 'Radical Right' (the IML) it lacked numerous adherents who stayed loyal to the NL. However, given the Radical Right's structural nature, the leagues were vital in attempts to influence national policy. First, by how much influence adherents wielded as individuals

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<sup>428</sup> Harris, 'Unionist Philosophy', 4.

<sup>429</sup> F. Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation: Commerce, Consumption, and Civil Society in Modern Britain*, (Oxford, 2008), 2.

<sup>430</sup> *Ibid.*, 1. Coetzee, *Party or Country*, 114-5.

within those leagues, and secondly the extent to which the leagues themselves succeeded in winning over Britain.

Among the members of this legion, the TRL was the most successful and vibrant.<sup>431</sup> Despite a dip in 1906 after Chamberlain's stroke and the resulting inactivity, the TRL rallied again in 1907 and 1908 with an imperialist programme.<sup>432</sup> This was in part owing to the efforts of the Confederates. Founded by Page Croft, Thomas Comyn Platt, and Bernhard Wise, they included in their numbers Alan Burgoyne, J.W. Hills, Leo Maxse, Lord Malmesbury, Charles Hunter, Arthur Steel-Maitland, Ronald McNeill and others.<sup>433</sup>

As Wise admitted, the group's relationship to the TRL leadership was one of detachment-by-necessity and the Confederates served as "free lances."<sup>434</sup> The distance between these 'free lances' and the TRL leadership, however, could be greater than that of a general and a scout. Winterton admitted that "our [the Confederates] methods of elimination in the constituencies of Conservative undesirables on the Tariff issue were often severe and even brutal."<sup>435</sup> Such brutality incurred the condemnation of Viscount Ridley and Austen Chamberlain at times.<sup>436</sup> The Confederacy, however, was not intended as a conciliatory body. Its founders saw it as the political equivalent of a strike-force that represented the will of local activists against an apathetic Central Office that refused to expel the remaining Free Fooders.<sup>437</sup>

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<sup>431</sup> Thackeray, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age*, 6.

<sup>432</sup> Thackeray, 'Chamberlain Day', 23.

<sup>433</sup> Witherell, *Rebel on the Right*, 214-20.

<sup>434</sup> B. Wise-M. Chamberlain, 27/12/06, CRL, AC4/11/237.

<sup>435</sup> E. Turnour, *Pre-War*, 76.

<sup>436</sup> Fleming, *Britannia's Zealots*, 51.

<sup>437</sup> Croft, *Strife*, 44-5. B. Wise-Milner, 20/12/06, BLO, Milner 218.

Secrecy of membership proved the most useful asset for the Confederates as it fed a sense of paranoia among their opponents. Bonar Law, for example, was wrongly associated with the Confederates by Robert Cecil and others.<sup>438</sup> The Confederates themselves also sought to present a common platform, which was attempted through the publication of *The New Order*. The book did not sell well, as Wise confessed to Law years later.<sup>439</sup> The Confederacy's importance, however, was not as a policy-unit but as a source of inspiration for the TRL's revival by showing that its spirit did not die with Joseph Chamberlain's exit from politics.

The TRL advertised itself as a modern, forward-thinking group that sought to counter unemployment and underemployment. One additional advantage of the TRL relative to the other pressure-groups of the Radical Right was its effective utilisation and embrace of women activists through the Women's Unionist and Tariff Reform Association. WUTRA proved an answer for those women activists such as Mary Maxse and Violet Cecil who complained of the Primrose League's refusal to engage in the Tariff Reform debate.<sup>440</sup> The TRL was thus able to deliver a wider message to the electorate and take advantage of women activists.

One proof of the TRL's success was that it was the only one of the legion of leagues that could dictate back to the Unionist Party. The Confederates aided this, but the TRL's organisation, funding, and use of electoral technologies and techniques elevated it to the point that it was more like another political party than a pressure group.<sup>441</sup> Willoughby de Broke used the TRL as an example of what he meant by the necessity of either creating a

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<sup>438</sup> Witherell, *Rebel on the Right*, 62.

<sup>439</sup> B. Wise-Bonar Law, 12/11/11, PA, BL/24/3/16.

<sup>440</sup> D. Thackeray, 'Home and Politics: Women and Conservative Activism in Early Twentieth Century Britain', *Journal of British Studies*, 49:4, (2010), 829-30.

<sup>441</sup> Thompson, *Imperial Britain*, 191.

party machine or acquiring its support if policy proponents wanted to succeed in Britain when he called it “the most powerful league in the country.”<sup>442</sup>

By 1908, the results seemed to speak for themselves, as the Unionist Party began to win by-elections off the back of the ‘Whole Hog’ platform and an economic downturn. Ridley would later complain to Austen Chamberlain that the Tariff Reform movement had been so effective at having “organised” MPs into supporting the ‘Whole Hog’ that they did not see if they were converted.<sup>443</sup> Despite this, the TRL stood out by 1909 as an example of a pressure-group that did not have to plead for support from the Unionist Party. This was aided by the fact that Tariff Reform was an exclusively Unionist cause and that there was ideological cohesion across the TRL, despite differences on questions such as Balfour’s effectiveness as a leader.

The TRL had appeared to convert not only the Unionist Party but also the nation itself. Milner, Amery, and Ware via the *Morning Post* in 1908 argued as much, claiming that “the striking successes won by the Unionist Party in recent elections....have by the common consent of all observers brought the early return of a Unionist Government to power within the range of practical politics.”<sup>444</sup> The events of 1910-11 would show that they had overestimated the TRL’s success, but it still made great strides and displayed a modern and effective organisation.

The TRL did not achieve all that it set out to do, however, nor did the Radical Right succeed in one of its major hopes: converting the working class to Tariff Reform. The TRL might have won over the iron, steel, and engineering industrial employers, but the workers remained

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<sup>442</sup> *National Review*, Volume 59, Issue 351, 05/12, 414.

<sup>443</sup> Viscount Ridley-A. Chamberlain, 02/01/13, CRL, AC9/5/72.

<sup>444</sup> Green, *Crisis of Conservatism*, 155. *Morning Post*, 12/10/08, 7.

aloof.<sup>445</sup> The trade unions were not unconditionally in favour of Free Trade. The 1898 TUC criticised the use of foreign bounties and sweated imports, but they drew the line at food taxes.<sup>446</sup> Given the centrality of food taxes to the Radical Right, this meant it could not provide a form of Tariff Reform that the trade unions could swallow.

The Radical Right had three responses. The first was to assert that Cobden had been against trade unions as well and so the trade unions should turn their backs on Free Trade or face the destruction of their own industries.<sup>447</sup> Much the same was attempted with Lancashire, asserting that Protectionism was what had built Lancashire, and even implicitly accusing the region of hypocrisy, given it had also relied on forcing open Indian markets.<sup>448</sup> The strategy had little success in converting either workers or Lancashire. The second approach, primarily used by Joseph Chamberlain, was to leave dark hints that without Tariff Reform, social reforms would have to be reversed to lower production costs and keep British goods competitive.<sup>449</sup> The third, pursued by Amery and J.W. Hills, was to establish the Trade Unionist Tariff Reform Association.<sup>450</sup> It sought to create a body for trade unionists in favour of Tariff Reform to organise and convert others in the working class. TUTRA was a failure from the start, given that it received little support from Unionists or the TRL while the labour movement did not engage with the body.<sup>451</sup>

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<sup>445</sup> F. Trentmann, 'Political Culture and Political Economy: Interests, Ideology, and Free Trade', *Review of International Political Economy*, 5:2, (1998), 220.

<sup>446</sup> Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation*, 179.

<sup>447</sup> Chamberlain, *Imperial Union*, 132-3. Boyd (ed.), *Chamberlain's Speeches Vol. 2*, 177.

<sup>448</sup> Amery, *Fundamental Fallacies*, 38. Tryon, *Tariff Reform*, 33-4. Amery, *Union and Strength*, 27. P. Cain, 'Constructive Imperialism', 56.

<sup>449</sup> Chamberlain, *Imperial Union*, 53-4.

<sup>450</sup> Amery, *Political Life Vol. I*, 336.

<sup>451</sup> A. Sykes, 'Radical Conservatism and the Working Classes in Edwardian England: The Case of the Worker's Defence Union', *The English Historical Review*, 113:454, (1998), 1181-2.

This was a problem shared with both the NSL and NL. The NL, upon learning that it was seen as an aristocratic organisation, sought to reform itself in order to appeal more to the working class.<sup>452</sup> The NL could at least count on the tradition of navalism to aid this objective. By contrast, there was a strong element of suspicion towards army service in the working class that the NSL either did not appreciate or did not realise existed.<sup>453</sup> Roberts would be vindicated in saying that the British working man would rally to the national cause if there was a war.<sup>454</sup> World War One proved as much. The nature and context of that support, however, was not appreciated. Instead, the NSL believed that its best means of reaching the working class was to circumvent the trade unions and make a direct appeal.<sup>455</sup> When the NSL was having to spend time insisting it was not seeking conscription, however, the lack of success spoke for itself.

The problems facing the NL and NSL were worsened by their lack of modern organisational structure and approaches compared to the TRL. The question of women activists revealed the limitations of both the NL and NSL. Military matters were seen as a masculine issue that had to be led on by men. Thus, neither the NL nor the NSL had an equivalent to WUTRA, nor did they desire one. The NL made more use of female activists but resented this usage and sought to limit the influence and role of women.<sup>456</sup> As for the NSL, controversy broke out when Mary Maxse and Violet Cecil insisted that the NSL reform its organisation to give women activists a louder voice and influence to match their contribution. Lord Amptill, Leo Amery, and others in the NSL treated the demands as shrewish and their authors as

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<sup>452</sup> Thompson, *Imperial Britain*, 55.

<sup>453</sup> D. Silbey, *The British Working Class and Enthusiasm for War, 1914-1916*, (London, 2005), 105.

<sup>454</sup> Roberts, *Message*, 8.

<sup>455</sup> A. Summers, 'Militarism in Britain Before The Great War', *History Workshop*, 2:0, (1976), 121.

<sup>456</sup> Coetzee, *Party or Country*, 31-2. Biscoe Tritton-P. Hannon, 21/02/17, PA, HNN/2/3.

overstepping their place.<sup>457</sup> Violet Cecil later complained of the lack of local organisation reform and that the NSL executive remained bitter at her efforts.<sup>458</sup>

This backlash against Maxse and Cecil's efforts was counter-productive not only by the standards of Edwardian political campaigning but also by those of late-Victorian political campaigning. Groups like the NSL and NL denied being Unionist pressure groups, but the 1910 general elections and 1911-1914 Ulster Crisis would show how the militarist leagues more often than not followed the lead of the Unionist Party. Daniel Ziblatt highlighted this subordination of pressure groups as a strength of the Unionists.<sup>459</sup> The Tariff Reform movement's success in being the only pressure group to challenge the Unionist Party's organisational structure in terms of influence, in contrast, came in part from superior use of campaigning resources and groups like WUTRA.<sup>460</sup> In those respects, the TRL and WUTRA surpassed the more traditional Primrose League, which was accused of allowing its social dimension to overwhelm rather than complement its political aims.<sup>461</sup>

The Radical Right were able to accept the greater role and voice of women in WUTRA. However, the masculinist and aggressively militarist worldview at the core of the Radical Right's conception of national defence and campaigning for national defence blunted any extension of this advantage into the militarist leagues that adherents participated in. The out-dated outlook of the NSL would even affect its ability to convert male voters or working-class men who were unable to vote but able to campaign. Lord Roberts's appeal allowed the NSL to expand but also slowly became exclusive to Unionist supporters and those already

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<sup>457</sup> Riedi, 'Violet Milner', 938-9. Thackeray, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age*, 47.

<sup>458</sup> Memorandum by Lady Edward Cecil, ??/07/10, BLO, Violet Milner 56.

<sup>459</sup> Ziblatt, *Conservative Parties*, 30.

<sup>460</sup> *National Review*, Volume 59 Issue 351, 05/12, 414., Thackeray, *Conservatism in the Democratic Age*, 24, 28.

<sup>461</sup> Thackeray, *Conservatism in the Democratic Age*, 28, 19.

close to endorsing the Unionists and/or the NSL, whilst others on the centre-left or left became more negative.<sup>462</sup> In regard to the actual group structure, it meant that Roberts saw women in a traditional, passive role in national defence i.e. “men must work and women must weep.”<sup>463</sup>

For other Radical Right adherents, the question of expanding and/or strengthening women’s role in groups like the NSL caused a division less in principle and more in tactics. Those who would become Constructivists during the First World War, such as Amery and Milner, favoured public gestures of compromise to help all sides save face.<sup>464</sup> There was more appreciation for the role women might play, and the need to create broad coalitions of activists and supporters, as the Unionist Party leadership did. How far such Constructivists understood how to attain that coalition was another matter, but their position was an improvement over Dogmatists like Lord Amphyll who openly disparaged Maxse and Cecil’s attempt to reform the NSL.<sup>465</sup> Yet the same ideology that connected these men during these years also bound the likes of Violet Cecil, who departed the Victoria League for its attempt to avoid political controversies like those over Tariff Reform and National Service. In turn, however, that ideology meant that Cecil’s preferred NSL rejected her push for it to reform itself as well, which would contribute to its wartime collapse where the VL endured.<sup>466</sup>

The militarist leagues thus remained ossified in their structure and in how they conceived of patriotism and militarism.<sup>467</sup> In this, the NSL at least resembled the Radical Right’s worldview, but the First World War would reveal the limitations of this approach. The

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<sup>462</sup> Hendley, *Crucible*, 234.

<sup>463</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>464</sup> Riedi, ‘Violet Milner’, 939.

<sup>465</sup> *Ibid.*, 939.

<sup>466</sup> *Ibid.*, 936. Hendley, *Crucible*, 3.

<sup>467</sup> Hendley, *Crucible*, 14.



membership of the NSL and NL in the meantime would only truly surge because of outside forces, namely the escalation of tensions with Germany after 1910.

Not only were the militarist leagues unable to adapt to modern democracy, but their captivity to events extended to reliance on the Unionist machine's mercy when it sought to influence elections. Neither group could convince the Unionist leadership to place their causes above partisanship. If anything, the NL and NSL were forced into humiliating displays of submission to the Unionist Party's party objectives. In the case of the NSL, the cause of National Service was by no means exclusive to the Radical Right. Milner, Amery, Page Croft, Winterton, and others within the Radical Right were involved, but so were the likes of Lord Derby, Curzon, and even the Unionist Free Trader St Loe Strachey.<sup>468</sup> The NSL was a coalition of the Radical Right and more traditionalist Unionists who otherwise distrusted the sort of appeals Joseph Chamberlain had made. What united the NSL—and constrained its ability to act beyond the Unionist Party—was that its cause was near-exclusively backed by Unionists, without the actual official backing of the party.

The case of Thomas Kincaid-Smith, the Liberal MP for Stratford-upon-Avon who resigned his seat in 1909 to fight on a platform of National Service,<sup>469</sup> exemplified the results of this dependency. Kincaid-Smith had not just backed National Service. He had pushed forward a bill in 1908 advocating its introduction which adherents of the Radical Right including J.W. Hills, Rowland Hunt, G.L. Courthope, Viscount Morpeth, and Evelyn Cecil supported alongside Austen Chamberlain.<sup>470</sup> Lord Milner wrote to Balfour requesting that the local Unionist party stand down and support Kincaid-Smith to help provide a victory for National

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<sup>468</sup> Johnson, *Militarism and the British Left*, 129-30.

<sup>469</sup> *The Times*, 06/04/09. 12.

<sup>470</sup> *Hansard*, HC Debate, National Military Training (No. 2) Bill, 07/07/08, Vol. 191 cc1489.

Service.<sup>471</sup> Balfour refused, however, on the grounds that he could not dictate terms to the local Unionists on behalf of a Liberal who opposed other aspects of Unionist policy for the sake of a proposal the Unionists did not even support.<sup>472</sup> The local Unionists, meanwhile, pointed out that Kincaid-Smith was a Liberal who supported National Service, rather than an ex-Liberal siding with the Unionist programme, and claimed the Unionist candidate would be sound enough on national defence.<sup>473</sup>

Not only did the Unionists stand and win the seat with a pro-voluntarist candidate, but the NSL were forced to remain neutral and leave Kincaid-Smith to come third.<sup>474</sup> The NL went through a similar experience in the 1902 Hampstead by-election when, despite the Liberal candidate George Rowe being a member of the NL, the pressure group backed the Unionist candidate Thomas Milvain who was not even a member.<sup>475</sup> Roberts recognised the necessity of such partisanship and, while hoping the NSL could have avoided it, admitted to Alan Percy, future Duke of Northumberland, that the NSL needed Unionist backing.<sup>476</sup> In this context, Roberts's sharp reproof to Maxse in 1912 that the NSL was not a Unionist league and claiming the Unionists were only little better than the Liberals<sup>477</sup> appears less an assertion of a bi-partisan character. Instead, it was an implicit but bitter aside about the NSL's failure to achieve such official support.

Yet, militarism was by no means solely a tradition of the Radical Right any more than imperialism was. The Navy League's status as a Radical Right pressure group, or at least

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<sup>471</sup> Milner-A. Balfour, 06/04/09, BLO, Milner 35.

<sup>472</sup> A. Balfour-J. Sandars, 12/04/09, BL, MS49765.

<sup>473</sup> *The Times*, 07/04/09, 12.

<sup>474</sup> *The Times*, 12/04/09, 8. Milner-Roberts, 25/04/09, NAM, 7101-23-45-103.

<sup>475</sup> Coetzee, *Party*, 35-6.

<sup>476</sup> Roberts-A. Percy, 28/04/11, NAM, 7101-23-125-1.

<sup>477</sup> Roberts-L. Maxse, 19/07/12, WSRO, Maxse 466/125.

exclusively a Radical Right league, is easily questionable. Matthew Johnson's work on the British Left's approach to militarism prior to 1914 has shown that the Liberals were more supportive of the NL than has been appreciated.<sup>478</sup> Whereas the Radical Right believed National Service to be necessary for naval strength, Liberals saw the Navy as a means of avoiding conscription. The NL, like the NSL, also included Unionist Free Traders including Robert Yerburgh.<sup>479</sup>

Yet there were limits to the NL's ability to operate as a bi-partisan entity. Many of the Liberals who supported the NL in the 1906 Parliament, for example, were elected in seats that had only swung to the Liberals in the 1906 landslide.<sup>480</sup> After the 1910 general elections, many of them lost their seats. In turn, the NL's emphasis on remaining a broad church and avoiding direct criticisms of naval policy did not go undisputed. The Imperial Maritime League (IML) emerged as a direct result of the belief that the NL was unwilling to actually act on the threats to Britain's navy for fear of appearing controversial.<sup>481</sup> Unlike the NL, the IML was an openly partisan group that aligned itself with the Unionists.<sup>482</sup> Many adherents of the Radical Right including Lord Winterton, Rowland Hunt, Leo Maxse, H.A. Gwynne, Willoughby de Broke, and Lord Ampthill joined the IML, giving it an exclusively Radical Right character that even the NSL lacked.<sup>483</sup>

Much like the Confederates for the TRL, the IML's main effect was to inspire the NL to act upon its inertia.<sup>484</sup> For the TRL, this took the form of renewed campaigning. The NL,

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<sup>478</sup> Johnson, *Militarism and the British Left*, 16-7.

<sup>479</sup> *Ibid.*, 84-5, 85.

<sup>480</sup> *Ibid.*, 78-9.

<sup>481</sup> Turnour, *Pre-War*, 140.

<sup>482</sup> Summers, 'Edwardian Nationalism', 80.

<sup>483</sup> Coetzee, *Party or Country*, 83. H.F. Wyatt-L. Maxse, 1913, WSRO, Maxse 468/287.

<sup>484</sup> N.C. Fleming, 'The Imperial Maritime League: British Navalism Conflict, and the Radical Right, 1907-1920', *War in History*, 23:3, (2016), 300-1.

meanwhile, acted to maintain its support from those inside and outside Parliament who were uneasy about the split's threat to the navalist cause.<sup>485</sup> Other adherents of the Radical Right who stayed in the NL such as Alan Burgoyne and Patrick Hannon, the latter a key organiser of the legion of leagues, were involved in this process.<sup>486</sup> One key element of the change was that the NL took on a more partisan tone than it had done before. Rhodri Williams argued that one achievement of the Radical Right was that it pushed Balfour into abandoning his policy of trust in certain Liberal frontbenchers and sharpening his rhetoric against the Liberals.<sup>487</sup> In the case of the NL, this achievement was replicated outside Parliament.

While Matthew Johnson argued that the Liberals and Labour had accommodated militarism prior to 1914,<sup>488</sup> there is evidence that this accommodation with the militarist leagues ended by 1910 as the NL shifted towards greater endorsement of the Unionists. This shift helped solidify the Unionists' reputation as the party of patriotism and militarism before and during the First World War, allowing them to reap the electoral benefits.<sup>489</sup> Unlike the Radical Right, however, the Unionist appeal was not restricted to aggressive militarism. Instead, and ironically, the Unionist Party also had the more inclusive appeal embodied in the most successful league within the Radical Right; the TRL.<sup>490</sup>

Having reformed itself, the NL cut off much of the IML's potential appeal. The latter sank into irrelevance as quickly as it had emerged.<sup>491</sup> That the Radical Right did not have a unified

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<sup>485</sup> *The Times*, 22/06/09, 12.

<sup>486</sup> Fleming, *Britannia's Zealots*, 59.

<sup>487</sup> Williams, *Defending the Empire*, 135.

<sup>488</sup> Johnson, *Militarism and the British Left*, 2.

<sup>489</sup> Keohane, *Party of Patriotism*, 60.

<sup>490</sup> Thackeray, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age*, 7.

<sup>491</sup> Fleming, *Britannia's Zealots*, 60.

approach to the IML's splintering reveals the lack of co-ordination and inability to stiffen the ties of ideology that connected them. Was it better to attempt to reform an organisation from within or to act separately outside? This question would repeat itself in 1911 and 1917 for the Radical Right. Before then, however, the NSL, NL, and IML were all shown to be dominated by the Unionist Party and not by the Radical Right.

As for the nation, the NSL's appeal was primarily restricted to rural areas and the South-East, with its membership especially consisting of retired military officers. Its main urban presence was in Birmingham, which had a relatively high number of members for an urban area, consolidating the city's status as the citadel of the Radical Right's ideology.<sup>492</sup> The NSL, however, lacked a nation-wide following. Roberts would lament to Amery that, while he hoped Amery's *Union and Strength* "is widely read...the apathy in this country is so extraordinary...I at times feel almost in despair about it."<sup>493</sup>

The main challenge for the NSL during this period was the Liberal War Secretary Richard Haldane's introduction of the Territorial Army (TA). Amery would write off Haldane's reforms as merely affecting divisional organisation.<sup>494</sup> Few would have agreed with such a harsh judgement. Even Roberts praised Haldane as one of the ablest War Secretaries he knew.<sup>495</sup> The main benefit of the Territorial Army for Roberts, however, was that Haldane offered a phrase that he could use ('the Nation in Arms') and a body that could be co-opted in a National Service scheme. Milner compared the TA to the skeleton of a body to which the NSL sought to give muscles and flesh.<sup>496</sup>

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<sup>492</sup> Coetzee, *Party or Country*, 65, 115.

<sup>493</sup> Roberts-L. Amery, N.D. [1913], CA, AMEL2/5/12.

<sup>494</sup> Amery, *Union and Strength*, 137.

<sup>495</sup> Roberts, *Message*, 21.

<sup>496</sup> Milner, *Nation and Empire*, 168.

For Haldane, much like the way in which Liberals supported navalism and the NL as an alternative to conscription, the TA was to be the best defence against conscription.<sup>497</sup> This did not stop NSL members from trumpeting their participation in the Territorial Associations and using their participation to justify their claims that the current scheme was not enough.<sup>498</sup> Roberts himself focused on the fact that the Territorial Army itself was supposed to need 315,000 men at a minimum but only had 264,000 at most. Haldane's scrapping of plans for having drilling in schools (after attacks from the Left) was also used by Roberts as proof that Haldane had disappointed his own ideals.<sup>499</sup>

Both imperialism and militarism remained popular forces in Edwardian politics, to the point where critics of patriotism felt more defeated than did its aggressive proponents like the Radical Right.<sup>500</sup> This did not mean the Radical Right were the sole, or even main, beneficiaries. If there was partisan consolidation of these two forces, it was the Unionists who benefitted. Anti-Germanism itself could be used against the Radical Right, as Milner and his proposals were frequently tarred as attempting to Germanise Britain's political system.<sup>501</sup>

Invasion literature was another subject that could prove more bi-partisan than it appeared. Some in the Radical Right had embraced such stories. Alan Burgoyne, for example, wrote *The War Inevitable* in 1908. The story detailed a German invasion and how, after a pastiche of Lord Roberts and First Sea Lord Fisher helping to defeat the invasion, Britain would then

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<sup>497</sup> Johnson, *Militarism and the British Left*, 106.

<sup>498</sup> Roberts, *Message*, 20. *Hansard*, HL Debate, National Service (Training and Home Defence) Bill, 12/07/09, Vol. 2 cc316.

<sup>499</sup> *Hansard*, HL Debate, Territorial and Reserve Forces Bill, 25/06/07, Vol. 176 cc1047.

<sup>500</sup> D. Jackson, *Popular Opposition to Irish Home Rule in Edwardian Britain*, (Liverpool, 2009), 13.

<sup>501</sup> Gollin, *Milner*, 4-5.

adopt Imperial Preference and National Service.<sup>502</sup> Roberts never went so far as that, but he did aid and praise books such as *The Invasion of 1910*.<sup>503</sup>

The NSL, or at least its higher-ranking members, were more ambivalent about the genre.

The play *An Englishman's Home* did boost enlistment to the Territorial Army. Milner, however, was disappointed that patriotism could apparently only manifest itself through such crude displays.<sup>504</sup> Just as some in the Radical Right resented the thought of having to cater to the priorities of consumers when discussing Tariff Reform, there was a lack of appreciation that over compulsory military service the public might have to be approached on its own terms.

In turn, however, invasion-literature was not an assembly line that took readers and viewers and produced advocates of National Service. Christian Melby has shown that invasion-literature writers at times stressed their political neutrality while readers took what they desired to take from the books.<sup>505</sup> John Grigg compared the phenomenon to that of how economic downturns did not instantly mean that the public abandoned Free Trade.<sup>506</sup> The Radical Right's failure to appreciate this would sow the seeds for its failure to exploit the First World War to advance its aims.

### Conclusion

The Radical Right's main source of influence and success was in provoking others into taking action through renewed activity (TRL) or stiffening their partisanship (NL). The Radical Right

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<sup>502</sup> Burgoyne, *War Inevitable*, 311-2.

<sup>503</sup> I.F. Clarke, *Voices Prophesying War, 1763-1984*, (London, 1970), 47-8.

<sup>504</sup> Milner-'Majorie', 29/03/09, BLO, Milner 35.

<sup>505</sup> C. Melby, 'Empire and Nation in British Future-War and Invasion-Scare Literature, 1871-1914', *Historical Journal*, 63:2, (2020), 394-6.

<sup>506</sup> J. Grigg, *Lloyd George: The People's Champion, 1902-1911*, (London, 1978), 17.

may have had mixed success in advancing its own platform, but the interdependency of this platform's components was real. With Unionist electoral victory looking likely, the Radical Right had good reason to feel optimistic about its chances for further success. As Milner accepted, despite the difficulties facing the NSL, at least "our other horse" was in excellent stride.<sup>507</sup>

The Radical Right's limitations were primarily the lack of a post-Joseph Chamberlain leader or a single manifesto to rally around in order to create organisational unity and coherence to match the common ideological thread. The Radical Right's attempts to convert public opinion were focused on individual publications, limited group publications like *The New Order* and the *Morning Post* article in 1908, and on individual roles within the 'legion of leagues' of which Radical Right adherents were members. With regard to the Unionist Party, the objective was to either convince or coerce the broader Unionist Party and Balfour towards adopting Tariff Reform and National Service. The Radical Right did succeed in pushing the NL in a more anti-Liberal direction through both the IML's departure and the reforms pushed by those who stayed inside the NL.

These efforts were not co-ordinated, however, and in terms of organisation the Radical Right proved unable to turn a common ideological outlook into unified group action. Bar the IML, in which only some of the Radical Right participated, there was no 'Radical Right' pressure group. The TRL, NL and NSL were broader coalitions that included the Radical Right. Furthermore, the Radical Right failed to take lessons from the TRL, such as using women activists akin to WUTRA, in its participation in the NL, IML, or NSL. This undermined the Radical Right's self-perception as a forward-thinking and modernist ideology in a Britain

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<sup>507</sup> Milner-'Majorie', 29/03/09, BLO, Milner 35.



dominated by nineteenth-century thinking. Even so, from a political standpoint, the Radical Right by 1909 was in a much better position in terms of converting the Unionists on Tariff Reform, and even National Service, than in 1903, and in terms of Tariff Reform had reasons to believe the nation was won over too.

Over the next two years, however, the 'Whole Hog' would be sacrificed, and the NL and NSL's concerns explicitly subordinated for what the Unionist Party (and the Radical Right themselves) regarded as a mortal struggle for the constitution. The Radical Right would thus end up more bound within, and reliant on, the Unionist Party structure and identity than ever before. Its failures over the next two years would turn lingering distrust of Balfour into outright contempt and spark a revolt that would finally remove Balfour from power.

## IV. The Edwardian Radical Right During The 1909-1911 Constitutional Crises

### Introduction

This chapter will cover in a broadly chronological fashion the two years of constitutional crises, particularly the 1911 Ditcher/Hedger split, as the closest the Radical Right came to achieving a co-ordinated organisational body. The Imperial Maritime League (IML) lacked enough members and declined shortly after the Navy League (NL) reformed itself while the Confederates, despite their attempts with *The New Order*, failed to produce a coherent public manifesto. As for the National Party in 1917, it would suffer a similar fate to the IML. The Halsbury Club, even though Halsbury himself was not an adherent of the Radical Right, had many members who aspired to a wider programme, particularly those in the Radical Right like Milner, Amery, de Broke, etc. who also saw the club as a means for bolder action. The Ditchers (House of Lords members who voted against the Parliament Act in 1911) and the Halsbury Club were both clear challenges to Balfour's authority and leadership.

The constitutional crises of 1909-11, beginning with the People's Budget in April 1909 and ending in the passage of the Parliament Act in August 1911, were vital in the history of the Radical Right. First was the Budget Crisis of 1909 wherein House of Lords rejected a budget passed by the House of Commons which was resolved by the outcome of the January 1910 election. However, the Hung Parliament that resulted then led to the Lords Crisis over the possible rejection of the Parliament Act 1911 (which removed the second chamber's veto over legislation) which only ended with the Hedgers (peers who did not vote) abstaining from the vote, enabling the Act to pass. The Ditcher/Hedger split was a contentious issue within the Unionists and saw Radical Right adherents play key roles during and after the Parliament Act debates. By the end of the crises the Unionist Party reacted to what

appeared the de facto abolition of the Lords by adopting a harsher rhetoric along the lines sought by the Radical Right. After years of frustration and distrust, the Radical Right also played an important role in forcing Balfour first to reform the party's organisation and then to stand down. At the same time, however, Tariff Reform suffered a heavy blow with the introduction of a referendum pledge on the food taxes, while the Unionists remained out of office. Not only that, but the Lords allowed the Parliament Act to pass, avoiding another showdown with the government. Even the victories won—the organisational reforms and leadership change—would prove less beneficial for the Radical Right than they first seemed.

Gregory Phillips argued that the Ditchers were their own self-contained movement, isolated from the dynamics of the Radical Right prior to 1911.<sup>508</sup> Fleming offers a stronger case in contending that the Ditchers, while sharing personnel and ideas with the empire-first Unionists and legion of leagues, were a distinct sub-vector connected to the others by de Broke.<sup>509</sup> Moreover, there were Ditchers who were opposed to the Radical Right. These included the Free Trader Cecils, the traditionalist 8<sup>th</sup> Duke of Northumberland, and even Lord Halsbury, the supposed leader of the Ditchers, although he was more the public face than the organising force.

The driving forces behind the Ditchers, however, including de Broke and Selborne, were tied to the Radical Right. The complaints about Balfour's leadership in 1911 were the same as they had been in the years prior.<sup>510</sup> Many Hedgers saw themselves as the opposition to the Radical Right and they included far more anti-Tariff Reformers than did the Ditchers.<sup>511</sup> If the Ditchers were not openly disavowing Balfour, outside observers were able to see the

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<sup>508</sup> Phillips, *Die-Hards*, 114.

<sup>509</sup> Fleming, *Britannia's Zealots*, 32, 45.

<sup>510</sup> Fanning, 'Rats', 197.

<sup>511</sup> J.L. Strachey-Curzon, 01/09/11, BL, Eur. F112/89. Fanning, 'Rats', 197.

connection between prior discontent with Balfour, especially over Tariff Reform, and the Ditcher revolt of 1911. The Halsbury Club was divided between senior members—including Chamberlain, Selborne, and Halsbury—who sought to dissociate their rebellion from its consequences, and the junior members who embraced those consequences. Most of the Radical Right were among the latter.

At the start of the constitutional crises, the Radical Right were the loudest supporters of the Lords' rejection of the budget that introduced graduated taxation and land valuation. Like the wider Unionist Party, the Radical Right believed that the Budget was in defiance of the constitution while also presenting a challenge to Tariff Reform that had to be met. The question of whether Free Trade could fund military and social commitments hung over the budget question. The disappointment of the January 1910 election was compounded later that year. The 1910 constitutional conferences, held between Liberal and Unionist leaders to create a compromise, fed distrust. Fear that Balfour and Lansdowne would betray the Unionist cause inspired the formation of the Reveille Movement, with such discussions for such a group dating back to 1906. Fear became outrage when Balfour made his pledge at the Albert Hall in December 1910 to put food taxes to a referendum. By 1911, Balfour's decision to support Lansdowne's abstention strategy on the Parliament Bill in the face of Asquith's threat to have the King mass-appoint peers was the final straw. Defeat, if anything, worsened the mood of the Ditchers, with the formation of groups like the Halsbury Club appearing to deepen the party divide. Balfour recognised that the revolt from below had to be conceded to with his resignation.

The Radical Right, having helped topple Balfour and achieve reform of the party machine, were optimistic for the future in November 1911. That then-Canadian Prime Minister Wilfrid

Laurier's attempt to ratify a trade reciprocity treaty between Canada and the US resulted in Canadian Conservative Robert Borden's electoral triumph and only strengthened the belief that the time for imperial union was nearing. However, the years 1909-11 not only demonstrated the limits of the Radical Right's independence from the broader Unionist fold, but also sowed the seeds for its later failures and demise. Balfour's referendum pledge created a barrier to achieving the 'Whole Hog' that would prove more formidable than the Radical Right would appreciate.

As for the National Service League (NSL), many of its main personalities would be distracted by the Budget and then the Lords Crisis. It saw an upsurge in supportive MPs, but otherwise remained in the shadows with January 1910 marking the low point of its influence.<sup>512</sup> Some in the Radical Right thought of splintering from the Unionists during the aftermath of the Parliament Act's passage, but ultimately adherents chose to remain inside the party tent. As H.A. Gwynne warned Maxse, the Unionist Party was "the only weapon we have with which to...help on the causes which both you and I have strongly at heart...".<sup>513</sup> Attempts to use the Halsbury Club to seize the party machine, however, would fail also. The effort again exposed the Radical Right's limitations in forging a distinct identity from the Unionist mainstream and in finding a national leader.

This chapter will show how the Radical Right shifted from quiet suspicion of Balfour to open alienation from him and how the Ditchers' rhetoric and origin lay in the 1900s-era Radical Right critique of Balfour. The chapter will also, however, show that Daniel Ziblatt's estimation of the strength of Unionist Party identity<sup>514</sup> would again be vindicated as a

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<sup>512</sup> Williams, *Defending The Empire*, 183.

<sup>513</sup> H.A. Gwynne-L. Maxse, 18/07/11, WSRO, Maxse 463/99-101.

<sup>514</sup> Ziblatt, *Conservative Parties*, 39.

constraint on the Radical Right's ability and willingness to diverge organisationally from the Unionists. There was little protest within the NSL, NL, and IML at subordinating their campaigns in 1910. By November 1911, the Radical Right itself would lose much of the driving force behind splintering or solidifying as a faction once Balfour's resignation was announced.

### ***The Budget Crisis: 1909***

#### **The People's Budget**

When the Unionists faced a term in opposition in 1906, Balfour had promised his party that it would still control the fate of the nation whether in government or opposition. George Dangerfield in *The Strange Death of Liberal England* and Roy Jenkins' study of the 1909-11 crises, both used this remark to show that Balfour was unscrupulous and his 'poodle'—as Lloyd George sneeringly called the Lords—was unthinking until it turned rabid on Balfour.<sup>515</sup> That the Lords let the Trade Disputes Bill pass in order to avoid working-class outrage only furthered the Liberal belief that the Lords' Veto was being used as a partisan tool.

Yet this depiction of the Lords' use of the Veto has been challenged. Jane Ridley, for example, showed more sympathy in detailing how the Unionists believed that they were fulfilling a vital check on the power of the party-dominated Commons and executive via the second chamber.<sup>516</sup> The continuity between the Lords' use of the veto in 1906-10 and its

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<sup>515</sup> G. Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England*, (1966), 21, 46. R. Jenkins, *Mr Balfour's Poodle: An Account of the Struggle Between The House of Lords and the Government of Mr Asquith*, (1954), 18-9.

<sup>516</sup> J. Ridley, 'The Unionist Opposition and the House of Lords, 1906-1910', *Parliamentary History*, 11:2, (1992), 235.

prior use by Salisbury was also investigated by Corrine Weston who showed that the logic and justifications employed ('Mandate Theory') were much the same.<sup>517</sup>

If the Unionists were operating under a sincere interpretation of the constitution, however, it was not one that the Liberals recognised. Attempts at reversing the 1902 Education Act and passing a Licensing Act had failed. Liberal outrage was coupled with despair as the public seemed to turn away from the government. Even the 'New Liberalism', which was more open to state intervention in the economy and society, lacked the dynamic appeal usually associated with it.<sup>518</sup>

The Unionists, on the other hand, were rallying round Tariff Reform. The Unionist Free Traders received little sympathy from Conservative Central Office, with Balcarres complaining that Robert Cecil—safe from the consequences—was encouraging other Free Fooders to hold the line.<sup>519</sup> Given that the Central Office predicted an electoral majority of twenty in 1909, having unanimity in the party on the Tariff Reform question was vital.<sup>520</sup> Unionist commitment to the Whole Hog was even Selborne's primary condition for joining the Cabinet after the end of his term as Governor-General of South Africa.<sup>521</sup> The by-election swing towards Tariff Reform only strengthened the Radical Right's hopes that the nation as well as the Unionists were converted.<sup>522</sup> Between the Lords' Veto and Tariff Reform's advance, the Unionists and Radical Right felt optimistic.

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<sup>517</sup> Weston, *Referendal Theory*, 150.

<sup>518</sup> Blaxill, *War of Words*, 212.

<sup>519</sup> Vincent (ed.), *Crawford Papers*, 133.

<sup>520</sup> Rempel, *Unionist Free Traders*, 178.

<sup>521</sup> Boyce (ed.), *Selborne Papers*, 44-5.

<sup>522</sup> Green, *Conservatism*, 155. J.L. Garvin, *Tariff and the Budget: The Nation and the Crisis*, (London, 1909), 10.

The People's Budget was designed by Lloyd George to counter the Lords' Veto, but not by forcing an inter-chamber confrontation as Leo Amery believed.<sup>523</sup> Instead, as Bruce Murray showed, the People's Budget was a means by which Lloyd George could circumvent the Lords' Veto and pass land valuation as a preliminary for a land tax.<sup>524</sup> It also sought to balance the need to fund measures such as old-age pensions and the British response to the naval arms race with Germany. The 1908 German naval bill spearheaded by Alfred von Tirpitz sparked fears that Britain would lose its naval supremacy, which in turn fed calls for rapid naval expansion, including dreadnoughts. 'We want eight and we won't wait' was a popular slogan used by the NL and other navalists which the Liberals had to acknowledge. If Britain wanted eight and wouldn't wait, then it would have to pay. Such were the terms on which Lloyd George presented his Budget in 1909.<sup>525</sup>

The People's Budget was not solely a means of challenging the Veto. Lloyd George would soon welcome a 'Peers VS the People' election over the budget, but he did not design his budget for rejection. The Budget was instead intended by the Liberals to avoid the Lords' Veto. It was also a demonstration of how Lloyd George could vindicate Free Trade as capable of funding the government's commitments against the claims of Tariff Reformers that Free Trade was defunct.<sup>526</sup>

The very reasons that Lloyd George initiated the People's Budget would be cited by the Radical Right—and most of the Unionist Party—in support of rejection.

### **The Path to Rejection**

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<sup>523</sup> Amery, *Political Life Vol. I*, 343.

<sup>524</sup> B.K. Murray, 'The Politics of the People's Budget', *Historical Journal*, 16:3, (1973), 555.

<sup>525</sup> *Hansard*, HC Debate, Revenue and Expenditure for 1909-10, 29/04/09, Vol. 4 cc474-5.

<sup>526</sup> Grigg, *People's Champion*, 170, 174.



The Unionist Party since the 1880s had led an active offensive strategy in asserting the rights of the House of Lords as a Second Chamber. The demand by the Lords for a 'mandate' for certain legislative acts had succeeded in not only blocking Liberal legislation such as temperance measures but also in preventing Irish Home Rule from being enacted. Mandate Theory was effective in justifying using the Lords' Veto to block Home Rule and appeared to have been accepted by the public. At least that was the interpretation given to the result of the 1895 election, which Rosebery made a contest about the question of the Lords.<sup>527</sup> Even after 1906, the House of Lords allowed the Trade Disputes Act, which gave trade unions special immunity from damages incurred during strikes, to pass. By 1909, the Radical Right was confident enough to argue that the Lords were a chamber that protected the rights of the people.<sup>528</sup>

Michael Bentley has argued that Balfour and Lansdowne's selective and partisan use of the Veto was unlike Salisbury's more pragmatic use.<sup>529</sup> One example was that Salisbury, despite loathing the introduction of death duties, accepted its passage through the House of Lords. However, Salisbury only did this while asserting the right of the Lords to veto financial legislation if such trends as the death duties continued.<sup>530</sup>

If anything, Salisbury's legacy was embodied in the resistance to the People's Budget and even to the Parliament Act. Mandate Theory for Salisbury was not just about asserting the power and rights of the Lords but also breaking the morale-sapping habit of compromise and surrender that he felt had infected the Conservatives.<sup>531</sup> Even Disraeli in 1881 had

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<sup>527</sup> Blaxill, *War of Words*, 139.

<sup>528</sup> Garvin, *Tariff*, 11-2.

<sup>529</sup> M. Bentley, *Lord Salisbury's World: Conservative Environments in Late Victorian Britain*, (New York, 2001), 168.

<sup>530</sup> Ramsden, *Appetite for Power*, 178.

<sup>531</sup> Weston, *Referendal Theory*, 98.

flirted with the Conservatives martyring themselves over the Irish Land Bill.<sup>532</sup> The Radical Right would take the same view throughout the constitutional crises of 1909-11.

The People's Budget entailed higher tobacco, spirit, and death duties, along with a graduated income tax, but it was the land clauses that sparked the most direct controversy.

The clauses were perceived not only as an assault on the landed classes to which many Unionists belonged, but also as a case of 'tacking', whereby non-financial legislation was attached to a budget. The Speaker at the time, James Lowthar, confessed later that under the rules on tacking introduced by the Parliament Act, he would not have accepted the land valuation clauses as budgetary clauses.<sup>533</sup> For the Radical Right, who saw Liberal social reforms and rhetoric as "stirring up class hatred...trying to rob Peter in order to pay Paul... crude sort of bribery, offering them everything for nothing,"<sup>534</sup> that was offensive enough.<sup>535</sup>

What struck at the hearts of adherents, however, was first the challenge to Tariff Reform and second to the Lords. The Unionists were as aware as the Liberals that the demands on the government were not diminishing any time soon.<sup>536</sup> Aaron Friedberg showed that this very question haunted financial debates in the Salisbury and Balfour ministries and had been one reason for the corn duty's introduction.<sup>537</sup> One of the main arguments for Tariff Reform was that it was the only means by which the Unionists could fund the demands placed on the state.<sup>538</sup> The only alternatives were either harsh retrenchment of military and

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<sup>532</sup> Williams (ed.), *Salisbury-Balfour Correspondence*, 62.

<sup>533</sup> J. Grigg, *Lloyd George: From Peace to War, 1912-1916*, (London, 1985), 104.

<sup>534</sup> Milner, *Constructive Imperialism*, 215-6.

<sup>535</sup> Turnor, *Land Problems*, 290, Milner, *Constructive Imperialism*, 215. *Hansard*, HL Debate, Finance Bill, 29/11/09, Vol. 4 cc1206. Garvin, *Tariff*, 8. Croft, *Strife*, 42-3. Turnour, *Orders*, 32-3. Amery, *Political Life Vol. I*, 342.

<sup>536</sup> Colonel Denny-A. Balfour, 02/11/09, BL, MS49860.

<sup>537</sup> Friedberg, *Weary Titan*, 116.

<sup>538</sup> R.J.Q. Adams, *Bonar Law*, (London, 1999), 80.

social spending—a political impossibility—or sharp tax rises which Unionists doubted would be effective, let alone desirable. Balfour embraced the TRL claim that “the great extension of the system of import duties contemplated by Fiscal Reform will enable us to lighten the excessive import duties now levied on certain commodities” like sugar.<sup>539</sup> If the People’s Budget were allowed to pass, the financial argument for Tariff Reform would be undermined. In fact, Unionist Chancellors from Hicks-Beach to Ritchie to Austen Chamberlain had underestimated the ceiling on potential tax revenue without tariffs. The pre-war Liberal government would prove through budgets like the one in 1909 that Free Trade finance could still fund rising obligations—both military and social—on the state.<sup>540</sup>

The Radical Right’s reasoning, however, was not purely mercenary. The Radical Right shared Unionist belief in the rights of the Lords. In the face of what appeared blatant class legislation and tacking, rejection and putting the question to the people was the only legitimate course of action. Few Unionists would have disagreed. Balcarres, as a Unionist whip and loyal Balfourite, predicted that allowing passage of the Budget would shatter party morale.<sup>541</sup> Joseph Chamberlain and Amery made the same arguments in demanding rejection to protect Tariff Reform and the Lords.<sup>542</sup> Despite John Grigg’s claims, Balfour was not forced by Tariff Reformer pressure into rejection.<sup>543</sup> Lord Lansdowne was more hesitant when it came to rejection, just as he would lack Balfour’s instinctive sympathy for the Ditchers in 1911.<sup>544</sup> Balfour, however, had little hesitation in following the policy of 1884-86

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<sup>539</sup> A. Balfour-A. Chamberlain, 24/12/09, CRL, AC8/3/8.

<sup>540</sup> Friedberg, *Weary Titan*, 297.

<sup>541</sup> Vincent (ed.), *Crawford Papers*, 132.

<sup>542</sup> Garvin, *Tariff*, 5. Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 66.

<sup>543</sup> Grigg, *People’s Champion*, 196.

<sup>544</sup> S. Kerry, *Lansdowne: The Last Great Whig*, (London, 1917), 199.

and 1892-95 in forcing a showdown between the chambers.<sup>545</sup> In his eyes, if the Lords submitted now then why even have a Second Chamber?<sup>546</sup>

The Unionists saw the debate not as 'Peers VS the People' but as 'Peers *with* the People.'

The purpose of rejection was to have the people decide if what appeared to be an unprecedented budget was constitutional or not. The Radical Right had had a more recent attempt at expounding this doctrine, if in a more limited fashion, with Lord Roberts's National Service Bill in July 1909.

Roberts had intended to introduce a bill since 1908 but preferred "to wait until Milner returns from Egypt", desiring Milner's open and vocal support.<sup>547</sup> There were no illusions that the Bill would pass the Commons. Instead, as Ampthill phrased it, using similar language to his and other future Ditchers' reasons for voting against the Parliament Bill in 1911. Themes included the acceptance that the vote might seem foolish considering it would not pass the Commons; that the purpose was to publicise the debate itself; and challenging the power of party by prioritising the needs of the nation over the command of the party leadership. As Lord Ampthill surmised,

"We are not so unreasonable as to think for one moment that this Bill can pass into law in the present session, or in the lifetime of the present Government, or, possibly, even of the next Government. We know that that is impossible in the present political circumstances. Nevertheless, in introducing this Bill we have an important and a legitimate object in view, and that is to secure the acceptance of the principle which we advocate. We are anxious that your Lordships' House should have the

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<sup>545</sup> Barnes, Ramsden, *Age of Balfour and Baldwin*, 31.

<sup>546</sup> A. Balfour-R. Finlay, 23/11/09, BL, MS49860.

<sup>547</sup> Roberts-L. Maxse, 28/02/08, WSRO, Maxse 458/658.

honour, as we regard it, of affirming the principle of universal military service, and of thus giving a lead to the nation. That is our principal object. We have other objects of lesser importance.

In the first place, we wish to make our own policy clear. ... we wish to find out from the highest authorities and those who have the present responsibility for the Government of this country what, if any, are their objections to the policy which we advocate. We wish to find out who is on our side and who is not. We wish to try our own strength so that the 80,000 in this country who have rallied round our flag may gain even greater confidence than they have now in the cause which they have at heart. In fact, my Lords, this is, to use a military metaphor, a little reconnaissance in force, in which we hope to give their baptism of fire to some of those who aspire to be leaders in our cause. We wish to prove to those who think with us that the members of the League who belong to this House will not deny their faith even though they may suffer the scourge of the "whips" of their political leaders."<sup>548</sup>

This initiative had a similar logic to Joseph Chamberlain's attempt at producing an 'unauthorised programme' in 1894-95 for the Unionists to launch from the House of Lords. Even as tensions over the budget escalated, however, the Unionist and Liberal front benches were able to collaborate to defeat the bill, to War Secretary Richard Haldane's relief.<sup>549</sup> The Duke of Northumberland was tasked with submitting a wrecking amendment to sink the proposed bill. Lord Amphill attacked Northumberland's amendment as a clear attempt to shirk the military question.<sup>550</sup> This did not stop the Lords from narrowly voting

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<sup>548</sup> *Hansard*, HL Debate, National Service (Training and Home Defence) Bill, 12/07/09, Vol. 2 cc314-5.

<sup>549</sup> Johnson, *Militarism and the British Left*, 96-7. Williams, *Defending The Empire*, 154.

<sup>550</sup> *Hansard*, HL Debate, National Service (Home Defence and Training) Bill, 12/07/09, Vol. 2 cc315.

for Northumberland's amendment. As Phillips noted, a good many future Ditchers voted with Lansdowne and not Roberts.<sup>551</sup> Those Ditchers within the Radical Right, however, were nearly unanimous in supporting Roberts's bill, including de Broke, Ampthill, Milner, Earl Bathurst (husband to Lady Bathurst), Lord Leith of Fyvie, Earl Malmesbury, and Viscount Ridley.<sup>552</sup> The episode itself did not influence the Radical Right's response to the People's Budget, but much of the rhetoric used in favour of the National Service Bill (of making a stand to acquire publicity and a 'straight' debate rather than victory in itself) would be repeated during the Ditcher/Hedger split.

Any sense of bitterness at the defeat, however, was cast aside as the oncoming anti-Budget campaign took precedence as did the likely general election. For the Unionists, it was nothing less than the Lords' duty to force an election through rejection. The January 1910 election was faced with confidence. The Radical Right had faith that Tariff Reform would deliver a majority.<sup>553</sup> The failure to do so spelt the end for Unionist Party support of the Whole Hog policy.

### ***The General Elections: 1910***

#### **The January 1910 Election**

The January 1910 election revolved around two issues. The first was whether the Lords were right or wrong to reject the Budget. The second was whether Tariff Reform had won over the country or Britain remained a Free Trade Nation.<sup>554</sup> Luke Blaxill has used analysis of electoral speeches by candidates to show that Tariff Reform's reputation as a vote-loser has

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<sup>551</sup> Phillips, *Die-Hards*, 93.

<sup>552</sup> *Hansard*, HL Debate, National Service (Home Defence and Training) Bill, 13/07/09, Vol. 2 cc469-70.

<sup>553</sup> N. Blewett, *The Peers, the Parties, and the People: The General Elections of 1910*, (London, 1972), 131.

<sup>554</sup> Garvin, *Tariff*, 5-6.

been overstated. Unlike 1906 where three platforms (the Whole Hog, Balfour's policy, and Free Trade) incoherently competed against each other, the Unionists had a single, clear policy on offer.<sup>555</sup> Tariff Reform may not have been an election-winning policy, but neither was it electoral poison. Instead, judging from the Liberal focus on the Lords while avoiding mentions of Free Trade, it was the House of Lords issue that lost the election for the Unionists.<sup>556</sup> Milner and Chamberlain feared as much and Maxse even warned Law prior to the election that "Tariff Reform seems to have been allowed to some extent to be put in the background" and so the Unionists risked fighting on ground chosen by the Liberals.<sup>557</sup> It did not help that peers such as Lord Onslow told their workers that the People's Budget meant they would be sacked in favour of cheaper labour, feeding the Liberal case of the election being 'Peers VS The People.'<sup>558</sup> This context is important as the question of why the promised majority never came to pass fed into the campaign for a food-tax referendum in December. The Radical Right backlash to which fed into adherents' participation in the Ditcher revolt.

In January, at least, the Liberals were reduced to a Hung Parliament, and Steel-Maitland, Mackinder, William Ormsby-Gore, and other newly elected MPs who were adherents to the Radical Right's ideas made a favourable impression.<sup>559</sup> By contrast, the Unionist Free Traders were destroyed as a parliamentary group.<sup>560</sup> Others from the Radical Right like Amery and Hewins, however, were not elected, and missed much of the constitutional

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<sup>555</sup> Blaxill, *War of Words*, 220, 226.

<sup>556</sup> *Ibid.*, 222, 220.

<sup>557</sup> Marsh, *Entrepreneur in Politics*, 652. Thompson, *Forgotten Patriot*, 278. L. Maxse-Bonar Law, 29/07/09, PA, BL/18/4/100.

<sup>558</sup> *The Times*, 16/06/09. 8.

<sup>559</sup> Williamson (ed.), *Bridgeman Diaries*, 37-8. Vincent (ed.), *Crawford Papers*, 122. Chamberlain, *Politics From Inside*, 204.

<sup>560</sup> Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation*, 68.

crisis.<sup>561</sup> Meanwhile, controversy over Tariff Reform revived. To the Radical Right, the problem was that Tariff Reform and its relation to a 'constructive' social reform programme had been left in the background in favour of focusing on the Lords. Christopher Turnor and Hewins argued that "many votes were lost in the northern counties because...sufficient prominence was not given in the Unionist programme to the various social reforms needed."<sup>562</sup> Lord Salisbury and Balfourites like Lord Lansdowne and Jack Sandars, however, felt differently about Tariff Reform as a winning policy.

The January 1910 election did not solely affect Tariff Reform. The NL prior to the election had continued its pivot towards a more Unionist-focused appeal, supporting far fewer Liberal candidates than Unionist candidates.<sup>563</sup> The NL were no more generous when discussing the aftermath. The blame for the Liberals losing their majority was placed on a failure to defend the Royal Navy.<sup>564</sup> That the most pro-NL Liberals were the ones who lost their seats was not given as much focus.<sup>565</sup> Nor was the Liberal government's continued commitment to winning the naval race with Germany.

Despite this, strands of militarism that were formerly more bi-partisan—such as that embodied by the NL—continued to be subsumed into the Unionist Party. The natural consequence was that the NL became more reliant on the attention and affection of the party. Neville Chamberlain was able to have the President of a local NL branch removed from his position for refusing to assist at one of his meetings.<sup>566</sup> The NSL had it worse. The

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<sup>561</sup> L. Amery-W.A.S. Hewins, 29/01/10, LSE, TC6/4/1. Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 66-7. Beatrice Chamberlain-A. Chamberlain, 26/02/10, CRL, AC5/2/3.

<sup>562</sup> Turnor, *Land Problems*, 222.

<sup>563</sup> Coetzee, *Party or Country*, 122.

<sup>564</sup> Johnson, 'Liberal Party and the Navy League', 152.

<sup>565</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

<sup>566</sup> N. Chamberlain-L. Maxse, 07/07/09, WSRO, Maxse 460/299.



January election did see the NSL achieve a drastic surge in MPs who supported its platform.<sup>567</sup> This success, however, only highlighted the dependence on Unionist desire and fortunes. Roberts tried to defend the NSL from Maxse's complaint that its efforts had slackened during the last months of 1909,

"I am afraid you think that the National Service League has been a little slack lately. We have not, except perhaps in the matter of public speaking. The number of organising secretaries has increased considerably and county work is going on well. It seemed advisable not to draw people's attention from the main issue of the Election—at least this was the opinion of the Unionist leaders—but as soon as the election is over, I hope there will be a general movement in aid of National Defence."<sup>568</sup>

In between claims about the NSL's expanded organisational capacity and campaigning, Roberts above admitted that the NSL's campaigns were dictated by the interests of the Unionist Party. Any revitalised campaign had to wait for Unionist Party leaders to believe that no other topic of controversy (such as the House of Lords in 1909-1911 and soon Ulster by 1912-1914) demanded all hands on-deck. The NSL would have to wait longer for its leaders and sympathetic MPs to donate their time and attention to it, as the constitutional crisis escalated.

A Hung Parliament was precisely the result that Asquith had dreaded. The Liberals were reliant on the votes of the Irish Nationalists if they wanted to pass the Budget and stay in office.<sup>569</sup> The price for support was the abolition of the Lords' Veto; a demand shared and

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<sup>567</sup> Kennedy, *Antagonism*, 385.

<sup>568</sup> Roberts-L. Maxse, 01/01/10, WSRO, Maxse 461/540.

<sup>569</sup> Asquith-N/A, 06/10/09, BLO, Asquith 46.

welcomed by most Liberals and Labour. For the Unionists, what the Liberals proposed was nothing less than the creation of a single-chamber dictatorship. It was bad enough that the Liberals appeared to threaten the very concept of checks and balances on the executive. That it seemed to be for purely partisan gain and survival galled the Unionists even further.<sup>570</sup> Unionists rallied to defend the Lords while the Liberals prepared to push the Parliament Act forward, replacing the Lords' Veto with a suspensory veto of only two years. In the background, however, Balfourites and Free Fooders—and even Garvin of the Radical Right—began to consider how to sugar the Tariff Reform pill. Much of the Radical Right, meanwhile, blamed the continuing inefficient state of Unionist organisation for the election result, as opposed to Tariff Reform failing as an election-winning policy.<sup>571</sup>

### **The Constitutional Conference**

The death of King Edward VII put a pause to the crisis. In a letter to Balfour, Asquith claimed that to force a newly crowned king into a political controversy would be a national embarrassment. Instead, a constitutional conference was held to attempt to find a solution that both sides could tolerate. The proceedings of the conference—confined to the Unionist and Liberal leaders—left even Conservative Chief Whip Lord Balcarres unaware of what was being discussed and what offers were being made.<sup>572</sup>

The most vocal supporters of the conference within the Radical Right were J.L. Garvin and F.S. Oliver. Both men hoped that Lloyd George might have emerged with a plan that Tariff Reformers and even supporters of National Service like themselves could rally around. Lloyd George offered to Balfour a referendum on National Service and a compromise on Tariff

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<sup>570</sup> Barnes, Ramsden, *Age of Balfour and Baldwin*, 34.

<sup>571</sup> Amery Memorandum sent to F.E. Smith, B. Law, A. Chamberlain, H. Mackinder, etc, 1910, CA, AMEL1/2/4.

<sup>572</sup> Vincent (ed.), *Crawford Papers*, 160-1.

Reform.<sup>573</sup> In the Criccieth Memorandum of August 1910, one of Lloyd George's approaches to Balfour, he hinted at sympathy for the Swiss system of compulsory training for a militia of five hundred thousand, if remaining vague on the Tariff question. A later Memorandum in October 1910 softened the language on compulsory service, instead offering an impartial enquiry with an 'open mind', but also pushed for preference for colonial goods on existing duties with an impartial enquiry on Free Trade.<sup>574</sup>

While the memorandums were non-starters, they did display a limited overlap with the ideas of the Edwardian Radical Right. Indeed, more than once in his career, Lloyd George would be suspected of abandoning Free Trade. F.S. Oliver suggested as much to Amery near the final days of the conference.<sup>575</sup> Garvin and Oliver were not alone in believing a coalition represented the best means of avoiding a crisis and delivering an imperial and defence-minded platform. Amery displayed similar sympathies to the idea of a coalition in 1910, particularly as a means of passing a strengthened imperial and defence policy whilst solving the Irish problem, and he agreed with Milner's sentiment that "[t]he greatest political disaster of recent times was the breakdown of the Constitutional Conferences of 1910."<sup>576</sup>

The majority of the Radical Right, however, had little time for the conference. The main result of Balfour's talks with Asquith was to heighten suspicions that a betrayal was in the works. As de Broke warned Maxse, the conference would inevitably collapse once the question of the Lords' Veto emerged, and he had "indignation and contempt for the letter that F.E. Smith wrote to the Times... as it surrenders our whole position." Instead, de Broke suggested that a movement was needed within the Unionists "to fight...against enemies

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<sup>573</sup> A.J.P. Taylor (ed.), *Lloyd George: A Diary*, (London, 1971), 9.

<sup>574</sup> Scally, *Social Imperialism*, 381-2, 384.

<sup>575</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 71.

<sup>576</sup> Amery, *Political Life Vol. I*, 362. Milner, *Nation and Empire*, xxx.

within and without.”<sup>577</sup> Balfour pointed out to Lloyd George that agreeing a deal at the conference would make him a second Robert Peel.<sup>578</sup> If Balfour was aware of the dangers of party backlash, the cause of the conference’s failure was less Radical Right pressure and more the failure to produce a compromise amenable to the party leaders in the first place. The conference collapsed over the Lords’ Veto and Home Rule, which was the very ground that the Radical Right feared Balfour would give way on.<sup>579</sup> The Liberals refused Unionist demands that any ‘constitutional’ legislation where the Houses were divided should be put to a referendum, which was believed to be a deathblow for any Home Rule Bill.

The end of the conference was welcomed by the majority of the Radical Right, but the cloud of distrust remained. One manifestation of this was the Reveille Movement. Discussions for such a movement had taken place between Page Croft and Maxse since 1906, which sought to rally their ideological allies.<sup>580</sup> Frustration at the apparent lethargy within the party caused by the conference pushed forward Page Croft, who called for “a Duke of Wellington” to take the lead.<sup>581</sup> Old complaints about Balfour had returned, with Maxse calling Balfour “a tactician without conviction” whilst Jesse Collings lamented how difficult it was to make Balfour constructive on land reform, believing that a more crusader-type leader would win an election.<sup>582</sup> The platform of the Reveille was another attempt at defining a manifesto for the Radical Right, even if such explicit terms were not used. The main points were outlined in *The Times*:

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<sup>577</sup> De Broke-L. Maxse, 19/06/10, WSRO, Maxse 461/661-4.

<sup>578</sup> Taylor (ed.), *Lloyd George Diary*, 9.

<sup>579</sup> H.H. Asquith-George V, 14 June 1910, BLO, Asquith 23. H.H. Asquith-A. Balfour, 9 June 1910, BL, MS49692.

<sup>580</sup> H.P. Croft-L. Maxse, 02/02/06, WSRO, Maxse 453/232.

<sup>581</sup> Croft, *Strife*, 53.

<sup>582</sup> L. Maxse-Bonar Law, 29/09/10, PA, BL/18/6/124. J. Collings-L. Maxse, 02/09/10, WSRO, Maxse 462/701-10.

“(1) Defence.-Maintenance of the supremacy of the Navy and an adequate Army; the naval programme to be completed, if necessary, by a naval loan; (2) Trade Reform.-A scientific tariff to be framed for the defence of British industries against unfair foreign competition, coupled with a scheme of industrial insurance;. (3) Empire Union.-Imperial Preference for the establishment of trade partnership throughout the Empire to be immediately initiated; (4) Land Reform.-Small ownership for which facilities may be granted to working men to purchase land on easy terms with the assistance of Government credit; (5) Poor Law Reform to meet modern conditions.”<sup>583</sup>

The three themes of Imperial Union, National Defence, and Social Reform were brought up, although Page Croft explicitly prioritised the first two. The inseparability of domestic and defence policies was another Radical Right nostrum that was directly discussed, as was Tariff Reform as a means of funding social reforms.<sup>584</sup>

Whether the Reveille was a movement to aid or to pressure the party leadership was a question that divided the group as quickly as it emerged. Halford Mackinder had claimed that the Reveille was operating under the patronage of the Chief Whip Alexander Acland-Hood. Willoughby de Broke also claimed that there was nothing in the Reveille platform that should offend any Unionist.<sup>585</sup> However, Page Croft’s emphasis on the Reveille responding to how “their [Unionist] policy had been too indefinite...” signalled the thinly veiled critique.<sup>586</sup> For some, any pretence of friendliness towards Balfour had to be removed. Maxse, responding to Mackinder’s comments, demanded that Page Croft clarify whether

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<sup>583</sup> *The Times*, 08/10/10, 10.

<sup>584</sup> Witherell, *Rebel on the Right*, 226-8.

<sup>585</sup> *The Times*, 08/10/10, 10.

<sup>586</sup> *Ibid.*

the Reveille would support or critique Balfour, making the latter conditional for his continued support.<sup>587</sup> Maxse had little interest in offering declarations of loyalty to Balfour. Evidently, Page Croft assured Maxse that such was not the case, as he withdrew his threats.<sup>588</sup> Lord Malmesbury represented the middle ground, meanwhile, in claiming that the Reveille was loyal but that it objected to the deficient tactics, weak programme, and cautious leadership of recent years.<sup>589</sup> All three were things that the Radical Right found objectionable about Balfour before 1910, tying a large portion of the eventual Ditcher revolt to pre-1910 criticisms of Balfour.

There proved to be no time to try to be rid of Balfour or to take action beyond publishing manifestos. With the end of the constitutional conference came the need for another election. Austen Chamberlain pushed Balfour in September to take his chance and offer an alternative constructive programme rooted in Tariff Reform.<sup>590</sup> The Radical Right had similar hopes and would be outraged at what happened instead. Balfour by December 1910—even after rejecting the principle of referenda on financial legislation at the conference<sup>591</sup>—would adopt the pledge that ended the Whole Hog policy of the Unionists.

### **The December 1910 Election**

The Albert Hall pledge, whereby a referendum would be held on food duties if a post-election Imperial Conference requested them, came with little warning. The impact then fed into the rhetoric and reasoning for the Ditcher revolt, especially Radical Right participation.

In a letter to Austen Chamberlain, Balfour used Bonar Law's report of a food tax referendum

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<sup>587</sup> L. Maxse-H.P. Croft, 19/10/10, CA, CRFT1/16.

<sup>588</sup> L. Maxse-H.P. Croft, 22/10/10, CA, CRFT1/16.

<sup>589</sup> Witherell, *Rebel on the Right*, 135.

<sup>590</sup> Sykes, *Tariff Reform*, 226.

<sup>591</sup> K. Manton, 'British Unionism, the Constitution, and the Referendum, 1907-1914', *Historical Research*, 85:229, (2012), 522.

being a potentially useful asset in pro-Free Trade Manchester as a reason to consider the policy. In a later letter that same day, Balfour made it into a *fait accompli* by arguing that there was no time for a Shadow Cabinet meeting.<sup>592</sup> Over the last year, the idea had found favour with Jack Sandars and Lord Lansdowne,<sup>593</sup> the latter asserting that if the Tariff Reformers believed in the referendum then they ought to accept it for their own policy.<sup>594</sup> Lansdowne either did not realise or ignored that Tariff Reformers supported the referendum as a means of resolving inter-chamber conflict. A referendum on financial policy when both chambers would be in agreement, assuming a Unionist majority in the Commons, was a different beast altogether.

As for Law's letter, his tone was more equivocal than Balfour suggested to Chamberlain. His report to Sandars suggested that a referendum pledge on food duties would be popular with the upper and middle classes. Among the working classes, however, he felt the pledge would dampen their enthusiasm, ruin the morale of the party activists, and risked creating problems if the Unionists did win the election.<sup>595</sup> To Balfour, he displayed a similar amount of ambivalence towards the proposal.<sup>596</sup> Even a Balfourite like Balcarres was wary of such a pledge, fearing that it would prevent Austen Chamberlain and Law from entering a potential Cabinet and leaving the pro-referendum pledge Salisbury, Derby, and Londonderry to fill their places. Such a Cabinet to Balcarres spelt party revolt, while he believed the benefits would not outweigh the danger of a mid-campaign split.<sup>597</sup>

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<sup>592</sup> A. Balfour-A. Chamberlain, 28/11/10, CRL, AC8/7/1.

<sup>593</sup> Vincent (ed.), *Crawford Papers*, 167.

<sup>594</sup> Lansdowne-A. Balfour, 25/11/10, BL, MS49730.

<sup>595</sup> Bonar Law-J. Sandars, 29/11/10, PA, BL/18/8/15.

<sup>596</sup> Bonar Law-A. Balfour, 26/11/10, PA, BL/18/8/14.

<sup>597</sup> Vincent (ed.), *Crawford Papers*, 167.

Balfour had read Law's letter and either misinterpreted its cautious tone or used it as a fig-leaf for his own conversion. There were also strong similarities between the Albert Hall pledge and the Edinburgh policy Balfour had once held to, though replacing a second election with a referendum. This is not to suggest that Balfour had always intended since 1907 to revert to his old policy. Instead, a political tactic he felt had merit opened a way back to his initial policy. That it entailed a referendum, a natural evolution from Mandate Theory, only made the proposal more attractive. As Lansdowne claimed, the Radical Right were not opposed in principle to referenda. Maxse and Joseph Chamberlain were always open to them in principle and in 1907 peers such as Baron Montagu of Beaulieu spoke out in favour of them.<sup>598</sup> However, there was a difference between supporting a referendum and supporting the Albert Hall pledge. Austen Chamberlain put forward the most direct case that a referendum was unsuitable for economic policy.<sup>599</sup> Another problem with the pledge for the Radical Right was that it was supposed to pressure the Liberals into offering a referendum on Home Rule. Yet, the Liberals, already opposed to the principle of the referendum, had little reason to match the Unionist pledge.<sup>600</sup> So, as it seemed to the Radical Right, Balfour had again neutered Tariff Reform in the name of short-term tactics.<sup>601</sup> Some of the Radical Right did try to go along with Balfour's pledge. Selborne, who had once opposed a referendum on Tariff Reform on the grounds that a Unionist majority would mean bi-cameral consensus, shifted his tone for Balfour's sake.<sup>602</sup> Viscount Ridley and Page Croft initially swallowed their doubts to avoid completely derailing the election campaign.<sup>603</sup>

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<sup>598</sup> Hutcheson, *Maxse and the National Review*, 63, 66. *Hansard*, HL Debate, House of Lords (Reform) Bill, 06/05/07, Vol. 173 cc1292.

<sup>599</sup> A. Chamberlain Memorandum, 23/01/11, CRL, AC49/6/2.

<sup>600</sup> R. Hunt-A. Chamberlain, 12/01/11, CRL, AC8/7/16. *National Review*, Volume 56, Issue 335, 01/11, 728-9.

<sup>601</sup> L. Maxse-Bonar Law, 14/12/10, PA, BL/18/6/145.

<sup>602</sup> Weston, *Referendal Theory*, 182.

<sup>603</sup> Viscount Ridley-A. Chamberlain, 12/12/10, CRL, AC8/7/25.



An official statement by the Reveille Movement, however, asserted that the pledge was dependent on the Liberals accepting a referendum on Home Rule too,

“Our efforts at compromise have been taken for weakness, and our attempts at conciliation for fear. ...The referendum, a straightforward endeavour to submit Home Rule and Tariff Reform to the electors, has been labelled as a dodge, and this most democratic offer has been rejected by that party which fears nothing more than a straight vote on a straight issue. So be it.”<sup>604</sup>

With the Liberals insisting on a free hand on Irish Home Rule, the Reveille Movement claimed the same right for the Unionists on Tariff Reform. Most of the Radical Right, in private or in public for those who could not control themselves, burst into outrage over Balfour’s pledge, to the extent that Liberal candidates joked at how Balfour’s ‘masterstroke’ had backfired.<sup>605</sup> Said outrage would feed into Radical Right participation in the Ditcher revolt.

After the campaign, the disappointing result only worsened matters. W.A.S. Hewins claimed that the referendum pledge had ruined his campaign and cost him enough working class votes to lose his seat.<sup>606</sup> Amery, looking back on the campaign, complained of similar confusion and felt that Balfour had tried to pacify the Free Fooders yet again to the detriment of the party as a whole.<sup>607</sup>

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<sup>604</sup> *The Times*, 22/12/10, 6.

<sup>605</sup> *Beverley and East Riding Recorder*, 10 December 1910, 5.

<sup>606</sup> W.A.S. Hewins-A. Chamberlain, 15/12/10, CRL, AC8/7/14. W.A.S. Hewins-A. Chamberlain, 14/12/10, CRL, AC8/7/23. W.A.S. Hewins-A. Balfour, 11/12/10, BL, MS49779.

<sup>607</sup> Amery, *Political Life Vol. I*, 365.

The defenders of the pledge, on the other hand, argued that it had responded to the pleas of countless candidates and activists and had saved seats in Free-Trade Lancashire.<sup>608</sup> Lord Derby sought Law's agreement that the referendum pledge had indeed helped the situation.<sup>609</sup> Law stuck to his original views. He qualified Derby's argument by saying that the referendum had helped with richer voters, lost poorer ones, and risked problems if the Unionists ever regained office, adding that the referendum proposal should be conditional on one for Home Rule.<sup>610</sup> His remark that the activists would feel demoralised was putting it delicately in the Radical Right's case. Amery represented the more moderate viewpoint in suggesting that now, after so much delay, "we must at all costs, and whatever the row and friction, reconstruct the whole party organisation. It...will prevent our ever winning or ever holding our own if by any fluke we do get in on the demerits of our opponents."<sup>611</sup> Balfour on this point finally succumbed to pressure and established the Unionist Reorganization Committee, which made harsh criticisms of Central Office and pointed to the TRL as an example of a more effective machine.<sup>612</sup>

Leadership, however, was another issue for the Radical Right. The first calls for open revolt or even schism burst out in private during the early months of 1911. Page Croft lost little time throwing over the referendum pledge and insisting on a return to the Whole Hog, deriding the tactics of weak leaders.<sup>613</sup> Maxse and Rowland Hunt both made it clear that "Unionists have...to choose between Tariff Reform and Arthur Balfour, as well as between Unionism and Arthur Balfour, because Arthur Balfour so palpably means continuous

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<sup>608</sup> Lansdowne-A. Chamberlain, 14/12/10, BL, MS49730

<sup>609</sup> Derby-Bonar Law, 20/12/10, PA, BL/18/6/149.

<sup>610</sup> Bonar Law-Derby, 29/11/10, PA, BL/18/8/15,

<sup>611</sup> L. Amery-Bonar Law, 16/12/10, PA, BL/18/6/146.

<sup>612</sup> Fleming, *Britannia's Zealots*, 53-4. Thackeray, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age*, 23, 30.

<sup>613</sup> Witherell, *Rebel on the Right*, 149-50.

disaster.”<sup>614</sup> Richard Jebb tried to push Austen Chamberlain into leading the Tariff Reformers into a more distant relationship with the Unionists or to pressuring Balfour to resign so that he could take his place.<sup>615</sup> Chamberlain had mocked Lansdowne’s argument about the benefits of the referendum and sought to detach himself from the pledge.<sup>616</sup> As always, however, he had no intention of moving against Balfour. To Austen, even by early 1911, Balfour was without peer.<sup>617</sup> Jebb’s irritable reply complained about how a Milner-like detachment was difficult to accept from someone as embedded in the front bench as Austen.<sup>618</sup> The December 1910 election was important not only for the Radical Right, but also in creating an atmosphere wherein a broader party revolt offered an opportunity for the Radical Right to either splinter or convert a wider Unionist grouping. Jebb and Chamberlain’s exchange, meanwhile, was an early sign of the mutual frustrations over the Balfour question between senior and junior members of the Halsbury Club, a club that was formed during the Ditcher/Hedger split.

### ***The Lords Crisis: 1911***

#### **The Ditchers and the Parliament Act**

The Lords Crisis—representing the peak of Radical Right organisational unity—was ultimately over the question of the Parliament Act, an act which would remove the Lords’ absolute veto over legislation, replacing it by a delaying power. The bill was born from demands by Irish Nationalists, the Labour Party, and Liberal activists and backbenchers, all of whom the government relied on for its majority. Asquith, however, had also acquired a

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<sup>614</sup> L. Maxse-Bonar Law, 14/12/10, PA, BL/18/6/145, R. Hunt-A. Chamberlain, 12/01/11, CRL, AC8/7/15.

<sup>615</sup> R. Jebb-A. Chamberlain, 06/12/10, CRL, AC8/7/17.

<sup>616</sup> C. Petrie (ed.), *The Life and Letters of the Right Hon. Sir Austen Chamberlain*, (London, 1939), 268. Chamberlain, *Politics From Inside*, 307-11.

<sup>617</sup> Petrie (ed.), *Life and Letters*, 269.

<sup>618</sup> R. Jebb-A. Chamberlain, 08/12/10, CRL, AC8/7/18.

promise from George V before the December 1910 election that if the Liberals won, and the Lords used their veto, then the king would make a mass-appointment of Liberal peers to force the bill through.

Unionists, up to July 1911, were united in denying the Parliament Act's legitimacy and insisting that the Lords had to oppose it no matter what. The loss of the Lords' Veto was believed by both Hedger and Ditcher to be nothing less than the abolition of the Second Chamber and the establishment of a single-chamber dictatorship.<sup>619</sup> The Radical Right would so loathe the act that six years later right-wing journalist Arnold White would allege that a pro-German conspiracy lay behind Asquith's ill-gotten pledge from George V.<sup>620</sup> The Ditchers and Hedgers did not divide over the Parliament Act. They instead split apart over how to respond to Asquith's declaration that he had the King's promise to mass-appoint peers to force the bill through.<sup>621</sup> To the Hedgers, there was no choice but to abstain. The Unionist majority in the Lords was too useful an asset to give up in the oncoming battles over Irish Home Rule and Welsh Disestablishment. To fight when the situation was futile was worse than useless, it was actively counter-productive.<sup>622</sup>

To the Ditchers, such a logic was justifying surrender and nothing more.<sup>623</sup> The point of resistance was to resist. If the Lords did not go all the way to defend their principles against the Parliament Act, then what was the point of acting in the first place? With the exception of a handful like Steel-Maitland, Ridley, and Morpeth—now Lord Carlisle—the Radical Right were firmly on the side of the Ditchers.<sup>624</sup> Milner was willing to cut his self-imposed exile

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<sup>619</sup> A. Balfour-Horsfall, 26/11/10, BL, MS49861. Winterton, *Pre-War*, 216.

<sup>620</sup> A. White, *The Hidden Hand*, (London, 1917), 59.

<sup>621</sup> H.H. Asquith-A. Balfour, 20/07/11, BLO, Asquith 46.

<sup>622</sup> *The Times*, 26/07/11, 6. Lansdowne Letter to Unionist Peers, 24/07/11, PA, WB2/33.

<sup>623</sup> R. Hunt-L. Maxse, 23/07/11, WSRO, Maxse 463/113.

<sup>624</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 79-80. Ridley-L. Maxse, 03/08/11, WSRO, Maxse 463/134.

short for the sake of the Ditchers, but not “if the whole thing is just a theatrical performance. But if there is to be a real fight after all, I shall support the party of ‘No Surrender.’”<sup>625</sup> Within the Commons, Page Croft rallied MPs to endorse the Ditcher revolt, and outside Parliament Joseph Chamberlain endorsed a fight to the end.<sup>626</sup> The Ditcher/Hedger split extended all the way up to the Shadow Cabinet, where Edward Carson, Austen Chamberlain, Lord Selborne, George Wyndham, and Lord Halsbury ranked among the Ditchers. As for the role of the Radical Right, Willoughby de Broke served as one of Halsbury’s top lieutenants and actively organised Ditcher resistance. Halsbury himself was less the leader so much as a figurehead for the Ditcher revolt as contemporary observers recognised.<sup>627</sup>

The Ditchers did not pay much attention to the seriousness of Asquith’s threat. Some believed that Asquith was merely bluffing about either the pledge or the scale of appointments that it entailed. De Broke and Wyndham bought into rumours that the King would only appoint enough peers to see through the passage of the Parliament Act.<sup>628</sup> The inclusion of Liberal peers was even regarded by a few Ditchers as a convenient way to resolve the party imbalance within the Lords.<sup>629</sup>

Other Ditchers held a more fatalistic perspective. Selborne hoped that the Lords’ act of martyrdom would shock the public into turning against the government for what they had

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<sup>625</sup> Milner-Selborne, 19/07/11, BLO, Milner 37.

<sup>626</sup> Fleming, *Britannia’s Zealots*, 73-4. Marsh, *Entrepreneur*, 658. H.P. Croft-L. Maxse, 12/06/11, WSRO, Maxse 463/77-8.

<sup>627</sup> Weston, *Referendal Theory*, 191-3.

<sup>628</sup> De Broke-Lansdowne, 25/07/11, PA, WB2/33. G. Wyndham-de Broke, 03/08/11, PA, WB2/73.

<sup>629</sup> Williamson (ed.), *Bridgeman Diaries*, 43.

done.<sup>630</sup> Lord Ampthill, just as he did when backing Roberts' National Service Bill in 1909, made his stand less on success and more on the act of publicity,

“You may call us fools, if you like; not to regard the consequences, or what you believe, possibly with too great confidence, will be the consequences. But similarly you might designate as a fool the man who rushes in to resist an outrage which is being perpetrated in the street by two or three miscreants. The action of such a man, even though he be overpowered and personally injured, may have the effect of delaying the final consummation of the crime until the arrival of assistance. Similarly you may designate as a fool a man who goes to Court to protect his honour even though the expense should bring about his ruin. That man, if he has defended his honour, has a greater satisfaction in the years that come hereafter, even though he be broken and impoverished, than if he had neglected that duty.”<sup>631</sup>

Finally, there was the argument offered by Maxse to Sandars that “that men who surrendered over the Parliament Bill, which Asquith has himself told us involves Home Rule, are equally capable of surrendering Home Rule...”.<sup>632</sup>

Given the Hedgers' argument being rooted in reluctant acceptance that the past two years' effort had been a failure, it is little surprise that Balfour had instinctual sympathy for the Ditcher case, as did some of his circle. Balcarres and Lansdowne competed to win Balfour over to the Ditcher and Hedger side respectively, particularly over the idea that the King

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<sup>630</sup> Weston, *Referendal Theory*, 199.

<sup>631</sup> *Hansard*, HL Debate, Parliament Bill, 09/08/11, Vol. 9 cc961-2.

<sup>632</sup> L. Maxse-J. Sandars, 24/07/11, BL, MS49860.

would appoint 150 peers at most.<sup>633</sup> The Ditchers were also considered by Balfour and Sandars to include the best fighting men in the party.<sup>634</sup>

It was not purely sympathy, however, that kept Balfour from being too vocal a Hedger. Some in the party believed that had Balfour tried to stop a Ditcher dinner, he might have faced revolt right then and there.<sup>635</sup> Senior Ditchers still sought to insist that their stand was not against the leadership. One innocently phrased their stand as “not actually resisting Lord Lansdowne; we have followed his lead, only we have gone further.”<sup>636</sup> The sensitivity of senior Ditchers to the reality of the revolt was made apparent at times. One example was when Austen Chamberlain complained of the implication of disloyalty when Balfour wrote a letter committing himself to Lansdowne’s position and insisting there was no viable alternative to abstention.<sup>637</sup> Fleming used these insistences of loyalty to argue that the Ditchers were not openly anti-Balfour rebels.<sup>638</sup>

If the Ditchers did not declare their rebellion with words, however, they (especially the Radical Right adherents among them) certainly did with their actions. As Balfour had told Joseph Chamberlain in 1906, a party leader being denounced on a major policy question could not then be asked to act as if they had the full confidence of the party. The Ditchers had created that very situation.

The Hedgers were fully aware of this. Strachey asserted to Curzon that a victory for the Ditchers would be nothing less than a victory for the Chamberlain school of politics advocated by Selborne and de Broke that offered no quarter, took no prisoners, and sought

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<sup>633</sup> Vincent (ed.), *Crawford Papers*, 213. Boyce (ed.), *Selborne Papers*, 62.

<sup>634</sup> Fanning, ‘Rats’, 198.

<sup>635</sup> Williamson (ed.), *Bridgeman Diaries*, 47.

<sup>636</sup> *Hansard*, HL Debate, Parliament Bill, 10/08/11, Vol. 9 cc1062.

<sup>637</sup> A. Chamberlain-A. Balfour, 26/07/11, BL, MS49726. *The Times*, 26/07/11, 8.

<sup>638</sup> Fleming, *Britannia’s Zealots*, 74.

total victory.<sup>639</sup> Strachey doubted the leaders could remain if the Ditchers succeeded in their defiance. Curzon pointed this out on the day of the Parliament Bill vote and that, for all the Ditchers spoke of loyalty, their actions pointed elsewhere.<sup>640</sup> If the senior Ditchers such as Halsbury, Chamberlain, and Selborne believed they could actively rebel without undermining Balfour, they were deluded. At the lower levels, the Ditchers and their supporters were well aware of what they were doing. Such clear-eyed rebellion was not restricted to the Radical Right either. In mid-1911 William Bridgeman came close to rejecting the role of a junior whip, such was his dislike of Balfour's leadership.<sup>641</sup>

The Radical Right section of the Ditchers broadly thirsted for either Balfour's collapse, or for even more drastic measures. Rowland Hunt tied the Ditcher demand for a stand on policy to frustration at Balfour's referendum pledge and his past reluctance to endorse the 'Whole Hog', and went to the point of advocating a new leader.

"In my opinion the present position has come about because the Leader of the Opposition has been playing with the Unionist party and the people of this country for more than seven years. He has told us that he is struggling to bring in Tariff Reform and Preference. Yet he told Professor Hewins that he did not want to come into power on Tariff Reform and Preference...and that is confirmed both by Lord Ridley and by Mr. Fabian Ware. We cannot go on under such a leader. ...we cannot have anything more fatal to a party than to have a man for a leader extremely clever, with great personal, almost hypnotic, charm, but who, while saying that the first constructive policy of the Unionist party was Tariff Reform and Preference, has done

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<sup>639</sup> J.L. Strachey-Curzon, 01/08/11, BL, Eur. F112/89.

<sup>640</sup> *Hansard*, HL Debate, Parliament Bill, 10/08/11, Vol 9, cc1067-8.

<sup>641</sup> Williamson (ed.), *Bridgeman Diaries*, 40.



all he can to stop it all these years. ... I suppose that I have burned my boats. The last time I asked for first fault I did not regret it. ... I shall have pointed out to the Lords, the trustees of the liberties and just rights of the nation, the criminal folly of the policy of funk.”<sup>642</sup>

It was not only Hunt who envisioned the Ditcher revolt as a great repudiation of Balfour’s legacy as leader. Gwynne promised Lady Bathurst after her diatribe against Balfour that the Ditcher revolt would finish him off.<sup>643</sup> Others were willing to go further if Balfour survived even the Ditcher revolt. Some within the Unionist Party approached de Broke to consider forming a new party.<sup>644</sup> Such talk of a new party would only escalate after the vote on the Parliament Act. By the time of final debate between the Ditchers and Hedgers, the Lords Crisis had become not only a debate on the point of the Lords’ policy of resistance but also one on the point of the Unionist Party itself. Halsbury was not an adherent of the Radical Right but his proclamation that Unionist policy once adopted had to be pushed to the end spoke to the worldview it represented.<sup>645</sup>

By a margin of seventeen votes, the Ditchers were defeated in the end in what Winterton called “the Great Surrender.”<sup>646</sup> The Parliament Act passed owing to the votes of Bishops and Unionist peers who brought themselves to back the bill.<sup>647</sup> Some in the Radical Right took the loss worse than others. De Broke’s wife would claim after his death that his decline began with the depression he felt at the defeat in August.<sup>648</sup> In the immediate months after

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<sup>642</sup> *Hansard*, HL Debate, Creation of Peers, 07/08/11, Vol. 29 cc865-9.

<sup>643</sup> Phillips, *Die-Hards*, 134.

<sup>644</sup> Max Tilney-de Broke, 24/07/11, PA, WB2/34.

<sup>645</sup> *Hansard*, HL Debate, Parliament Bill, 10/08/11, Vol. 9 cc1071.

<sup>646</sup> Turnour, *Orders*, 55.

<sup>647</sup> P. Norton, ‘Resisting the Inevitable? The Parliament Act 1911’, *Parliamentary History*, 31:3, (2012), 453.

<sup>648</sup> Verney, *Passing Years*, xvi-xvii.

the defeat, however, the Radical Right were anything but depressed. Adherents were infuriated and, like many other grassroots Unionists, willing to keep the crisis going.<sup>649</sup>

### **The Halsbury Club and the Fall of Balfour**

The actions taken by the Ditchers won them widespread sympathy and admiration across the party, while the Hedgers were castigated. Where Curzon was cursed as a traitor, de Broke was celebrated as having saved the soul of the party.<sup>650</sup> Local parties refused to pass motions of confidence in Balfour or Lansdowne, and the Bedford Liberal Unionists' refusal to give Lansdowne the Chair forced the Liberal Unionist Conference to be moved elsewhere.<sup>651</sup> In the whips' office, Bridgeman insisted that Balfour would have to resign or face a revolt across the grassroots.<sup>652</sup> The decision to abstain on the Parliament Act had been the final straw for many. A rising contingent within the party (a number of the Radical Right among them) believed that if Balfour would not go, then they would. The Radical Right perspective was spreading fast across the Unionist Party.

Some approached Willoughby de Broke with offers of support for any splinter party that was composed of the Ditchers.<sup>653</sup> Frans Coetzee mocked the idea of such a party finding any success but did not deny the sentiment for one existed.<sup>654</sup> Rowland Hunt thought to use the IML to help "the foundation of a new patriotic party" with a platform rooted in Tariff Reform.<sup>655</sup> De Broke was certainly open to the idea. He would take these sentiments and

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<sup>649</sup> *Irish Independent*, 12/08/11, 6.

<sup>650</sup> N/A-Curzon, 12/08/11, BL, Eur. F112/89. Suffolk Unionist Secretary Major C.H. Tippet-de Broke, 14/09/11, PA, WB/3/30.

<sup>651</sup> Dutton, *Loyal Opposition*, 151.

<sup>652</sup> Williamson (ed.), *Bridgeman Diaries*, 49.

<sup>653</sup> A.B. Larkins-de Broke, 15/08/11, PA, WB/3/39.

<sup>654</sup> Coetzee, *Party or Country*, 137.

<sup>655</sup> R. Hunt-de Broke, 14/08/11, PA, WB/3/34.

pass them onto Selborne with the plain statement that he and others were unwilling to continue supporting Balfour and Lansdowne.<sup>656</sup>

Not all of the Radical Right felt that separation was the best course. Milner advised Amery to gather the younger Unionists and promote a common policy agenda that rested on Tariff Reform, and to ignore Balfour.<sup>657</sup> Thomas Comyn Platt also supported the less extreme alternative of seizing control of the party to put it on a 'constructive' platform, if also being clear that if this was not possible, then the rebels should strike out on their own.<sup>658</sup> Some adherents who discussed splintering would later join, or try to join, the National Party in 1917. Regarding a takeover of the platform, Neville Chamberlain told Austen of how Milner, Carson, Selborne, and de Broke (three of the four being Radical Right adherents) were preparing a grouping to promote a 'forward' policy.<sup>659</sup> This grouping is what would become the Halsbury Club.

The presence of the Cecils in the Halsbury Club has been used to show that it lacked the coherence to act as a policy platform. Selborne and Lord Lovat both used the Cecils as proof that a separate party would not be viable or that extending the Ditcher movement would be a poor idea.<sup>660</sup> The Cecils, however, were a minority in the group and not an invested one at that. Salisbury only flirted with the Halsbury Club and eventually departed from it after realising its existence was a repudiation of Balfour.<sup>661</sup>

As for the Halsbury Club itself, de Broke had asked Amery to circulate its existence to "only known and tried Die Hards [underlined by de Broke]" who he felt were "solid [underlined by

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<sup>656</sup> D. Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy*, (New York, 1999), 525.

<sup>657</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 82.

<sup>658</sup> T. Comyn-Platt-N/A, ??/08/11, PA, WB/3/88.

<sup>659</sup> Green, *Crisis of Conservatism*, 271.

<sup>660</sup> Selborne-G. Wyndham, 22/08/11, PA, WB/3/62. Lovat-de Broke, 17/08/11, PA, WB/3/44.

<sup>661</sup> Fanning, 'Rats', 203. Dutton, *Loyal Opposition*, 156.

de Broke]...if they are sound [underlined multiple times], could you let me know?" The list included adherents of the Radical Right such as Alan Burgoyne, Amery, Waldorf Astor, Henry Chaplin, Page Croft, William Ormsby-Gore, Rowland Hunt, George Lloyd, Halford Mackinder, George Sandys, Martin Archer-Shee, Lord Winterton, George Tyron, Richard Cooper, and others.<sup>662</sup> The Radical Right were not restricted to being low-ranking members of the Halsbury Club either. When the Halsbury Club made its formal statement, Comyn-Platt was named Secretary while the Executive Committee included Amery, Astor, Lloyd, Milner, Ormsby-Gore, and Winterton.<sup>663</sup> If the Halsbury Club was not a Radical Right group, there was nevertheless a strong contingent capable of influence. If there was truly a divide within the Halsbury Club, it was between those who sought to make the Halsbury Club an aggressive body and those who desired a means of calming tempers and reconciling the Ditchers with Balfour.

Selborne used the Cecils as a shield against proposals for any co-ordinated action that strayed too far into being an independent line. While he told Wyndham that "the Cecils are indispensable to us, but on Tariff Reform...their views are extremely different to those of the rest of us...", he would later claim to Austen Chamberlain that Tariff Reform had enough acceptance to be considered a part of the programme.<sup>664</sup> Austen himself refused his brother Neville's urging to become a leader of the Ditchers.<sup>665</sup> He confessed later that despite his unease about the concept, he and Selborne participated in the Halsbury Club primarily to "prevent some of our friends from doing anything foolish" like splintering or becoming openly anti-Balfour.<sup>666</sup> The attempts to avoid deepening the Ditcher divide failed, however.

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<sup>662</sup> De Broke-L. Amery, 07/10/11, CA, AMEL1/2/12.

<sup>663</sup> Boyce (ed.), *Selborne Papers*, 78.

<sup>664</sup> Selborne-G. Wyndham, 22/08/11, BLO, Selborne 74. Selborne-A. Chamberlain, 04/09/11, CRL, AC9/3/58.

<sup>665</sup> Dutton, *Loyal Opposition*, 156.

<sup>666</sup> Chamberlain, *Politics From Inside*, 322. Boyce (ed.), *Selborne Papers*, 69.

Balcarres recognised what Chamberlain did only later on: the Halsbury Club could only formalise the defiance represented by the revolt.<sup>667</sup> The club, however, was more an expression than a cause of that continued alienation.

The Radical Right had little intention of reconciling itself to Balfour any longer. It is true that Austen Chamberlain tried to insist that the 'controllers' of the Halsbury Club were with Balfour heart and soul.<sup>668</sup> But if so, it was a constant fight for the controllers to display their power over the other members. Selborne's temper snapped at one point when he insisted to de Broke that Balfour was "rightly" beloved by the party and that he would not stand for plots against him.<sup>669</sup> For the seniors (in rank as much, if not more than, age) among the Ditchers, Balfour was a source of frustration, but seen as essential and admired by the party. The juniors, however, including the Radical Right but also sceptics like Bridgeman, believed that this admiration and closeness to Balfour blinded the leadership to the reality of party opinion.<sup>670</sup>

In August 1911, Unionist MP Robert Sanders thought that despite the strong feeling against Balfour's leadership, the situation would improve. By October, he admitted that the rank and file were as outraged and hostile as ever.<sup>671</sup> The Halsbury Club almost broke in two over this continued hostility. During a dinner the senior members of the Halsbury Club called for a vote of confidence in Balfour and Lansdowne, which the junior members refused.

Chamberlain and Halsbury made the choice simple: pass the vote or they would resign.

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<sup>667</sup> Vincent (ed.), *Crawford Papers*, 231.

<sup>668</sup> *Ibid.*, 234.

<sup>669</sup> Selborne-de Broke, 25/08/11, PA, WB/3/63.

<sup>670</sup> Williamson (ed.), *Bridgeman Diaries*, 50.

<sup>671</sup> R. Blake (ed.), *Real Old Tory Politics: The Political Diaries of Sir Robert Sanders, Lord Bayford, 1910-1935*, (London, 1984), 33-4.

Balcarres believed that this nuclear option worked, but Winterton claimed it was redundancy, not authority, that stayed his and others' hand,

“...to the younger members of the Club...though our organisation was not formed to oppose either Leader, its whole reason for existence was a definite hostility to certain specific acts of that leadership. We thought that to acclaim the Leaders by such a resolution would make us all look very disingenuous, or very ridiculous. ... It is sufficient to say that we were vigorous in our denunciation of the proposed resolution, and several of the ‘Front Benchers’ were equally vigorous in the opposition direction. In fact, they threatened to leave the Club if our view, which was embodied in our proposed amend, was adopted. ... [F.E.] handed me a bit of paper, with the words on it, ‘If you knew what I know, you would not go on with your amendment.’ When I asked him what he meant, he said that Balfour would resign in three or four days...”<sup>672</sup>

The ability of senior members to control the junior members was slipping. In turn, these divisions (and lack of a central leader figure for more open revolt) limited the Radical Right's ability to use the Halsbury Club to either promote policy or challenge Balfour. More junior in political status than age, Gwynne complained of these attempts to underplay the anti-Balfour feeling and yearned for a chance to force hands. Maxse did his part by announcing his intention to put a pro-Ditcher resolution to the Party Conference in November, supported by Earl Bathurst and Jesse Collings.<sup>673</sup> Steel-Maitland, meanwhile, warned that Conservative Association chairs dared not push for pro-Balfour motions at meetings of their

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<sup>672</sup> Vincent (ed.), *Crawford Papers*, 241. Turnour, *Pre-War*, 230-1.

<sup>673</sup> Hutcheson, *Maxse and the National Review*, 380, 382.

local parties for fear of revolt.<sup>674</sup> Before any showdown at the conference, however, Balfour had announced his resignation. After eight years of alienation, distrust, and hatred, the Radical Right finally saw the end of Balfour's leadership.<sup>675</sup>

At the November 1911 conference at which Maxse had intended to present his anti-Balfour resolution, he was booed by the crowd. Rather than a display of solidarity with Balfour, however, the jeers were more an act of protest against re-opening old wounds.<sup>676</sup> Green argued that few mourned Balfour's resignation.<sup>677</sup> John Ramsden was less charitable and argued the booing was a way for the Unionist Party to pretend that it did not force Balfour out.<sup>678</sup> As Balfour pointed out, the local parties were in an uproar and the Ditcher revolt had troubled him immensely both politically and personally. He had offered leadership and the party rejected it. A memorandum by Arthur Steel-Maitland, recently made Chair of the Conservative Party, only furthered Balfour's sense that he himself was becoming the problem.<sup>679</sup>

The Radical Right certainly did not mourn Balfour's political passage. Winterton recalled being accosted by a member of 'high society' who accused him and others of toppling the best leader the party had ever known. He, however, had no regrets and defended Maxse,

"Too many people assume that once a man has been selected to lead a Party, he should be allowed to retain his office for the rest of his life, irrespective of whether he is a success or a failure. ... A Party Leader, it is true, has often to do things of which his followers do not wholly approve; if they trust him, they will grumble, but

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<sup>674</sup> Chamberlain, *Politics From Inside*, 347.

<sup>675</sup> Fleming, *Britannia's Zealots*, 67.

<sup>676</sup> Vincent (ed.), *Crawford Papers*, 254.

<sup>677</sup> Green, *Crisis of Conservatism*, 307.

<sup>678</sup> Barnes, Ramsden, *Age of Balfour and Baldwin*, 65.

<sup>679</sup> Vincent (ed.), *Crawford Papers*, 224-5, 228-9.

eventually acquiesce. But directly that Leader loses their confidence, the sooner he goes, the better. ... [The] idea of the sacrosanctity of a political Leader is absurd, and Mr. Maxse, neither for the first or last time in his stormy public life, did good work in combating it.”<sup>680</sup>

### ***The Canadian-American Reciprocity Treaty Crisis: 1910-1911***

During the latter end of the 1909-11 crises, another incident emerged that caused panic across the Radical Right. Canada, the largest of the Dominions, was about to sign a reciprocity treaty with the United States that would have lowered trade barriers between the two. As Joseph Chamberlain had warned in the 1880s, Canada adopting such an arrangement with the US would threaten any chance of furthering imperial economic ties.<sup>681</sup> Law gave the same warning to the Tariff Reformers: that food taxes would be harder to justify if Canada, which pushed for them, were to break the imperial bond with the reciprocity treaty.<sup>682</sup> The Radical Right—being a part of the Constructive Imperialist movement—regarded the treaty as nothing less than a mortal threat to the empire itself. Page Croft after the treaty’s defeat depicted it as an American gambit to prevent imperial union, which would have also raised wheat prices in Liverpool.<sup>683</sup> The disintegration of ties between Britain and its ‘sister states’ had seemingly begun. As Milner warned Amery, if the treaty passed, the whole scheme of Tariff Reform would have to be re-formatted.<sup>684</sup> Amery disagreed, but the threat was real enough.

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<sup>680</sup> Turnour, *Pre-War*, 231-3.

<sup>681</sup> Boyd (ed.), *Chamberlain’s Speeches Vol. 1*, 296.

<sup>682</sup> Bonar Law-Wilfrid Ashley, 16/09/11, PA, BL/18/8/21.

<sup>683</sup> Croft, *Path of Empire*, 32-3.

<sup>684</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 82.



Rowland Hunt, Alan Burgoyne, J.F. Remnant, and Page Croft also showed their concern about the reciprocity treaty and did not hesitate to use the Commons to do so.<sup>685</sup> Nor was their reaction restricted to Parliament. Outside the Commons came the founding of Imperial Mission: a pressure group that sought to promote the unity of the empire. Page Croft, Maxse, and de Broke all used Imperial Mission to praise Robert Borden and the Canadian Conservatives' opposition to the treaty and to assert opposition to 'the status quo.'<sup>686</sup> Balfour's speeches on the subject of Imperial Preference were welcomed by the group in 1910, but they publicised their hope for further speeches on Reciprocity.<sup>687</sup> Balfour, however, would disappoint Page Croft's Imperial Mission group with the referendum pledge. Despite this, Tariff Reformers went so far as to make appeals directly to Canada to reject the treaty.<sup>688</sup>

Wilfrid Laurier, the Premier of Canada during the 1902 Imperial Conference who had made the reciprocal offer that sparked the TRL's birth, had gone from an being imperial hero to an antagonist by 1907. Unlike Australian Premier Alfred Deakin, whose open support for Tariff Reform won him adulation from Tariff Reformers, Laurier by 1907 had alienated his former admirers for his reluctance to go as far as Deakin.<sup>689</sup> Amery even speculated that Laurier was part of a divide between Imperialists and Localists within the empire.<sup>690</sup> In more aggressive terms, Amery wrote Laurier off as a foreigner to the imperial nation embodied by the empire in 1907 and decades later only moderated his judgement of Laurier's actions as

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<sup>685</sup> *Hansard*, HC Debate, United States and Canada (Tariff Agreement), 20/02/11, Vol. 21 cc1518-22.

<sup>686</sup> Croft, *Strife*, 60.

<sup>687</sup> Imperial Mission Resolution, 02/08/10, CA, CRFT1/3.

<sup>688</sup> S.J. Potter, 'The Imperial Significance of the Canadian-American Reciprocity Proposals of 1911', *Historical Journal*, 47:1, (2004), 100.

<sup>689</sup> Chamberlain, *Politics From Inside*, 79-80.

<sup>690</sup> L. Amery-Denison, 15/07/07, CA, AMEL2/5/6.

opportunism.<sup>691</sup> This contrasted with his praise in 1912 of the Laurier of 1897 who had pushed for reciprocity.<sup>692</sup> Not all in the Radical Right shared this view. Winterton in his memoirs defended Laurier in spite of the reciprocity treaty as a better friend of the Empire than had been appreciated.<sup>693</sup> For most of the Radical Right, however, Laurier was no longer a man of the empire as he had been in 1902.

Laurier's motives, however, from the imperial offer in 1902 to the man of reciprocity in 1911, were guided by domestic factors. Much the same could be said for Deakin.<sup>694</sup> Laurier's support for the Reciprocity Treaty was to secure support from farmers in Western Canada who supported Free Trade. In much the same way, his earlier backing of imperial preference was to preserve his position with the protectionist manufacturers of the east.<sup>695</sup> Even in 1911, Laurier asserted that he stood by what he had said and offered in 1902.<sup>696</sup> This did not stop Maxse from calling him a traitor to not only the Empire but also Canada.<sup>697</sup> S.J. Potter has argued that the intervention by the Constructive Imperialist press did help opposition to the treaty.<sup>698</sup> The main beneficiary of this backlash was Robert Borden's Conservative Party in Canada.

Borden's victory was greeted as a triumph of Constructive Imperialism and a sign that Canada still believed in the dream of imperial unity.<sup>699</sup> Page Croft claimed the rejection of reciprocity "might rank with Waterloo and Trafalgar" as imperial victories, although adding that "should the Mother-country continue to wallow...and refuse to acknowledge the

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<sup>691</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 58. Amery, *Political Life* 1, 311.

<sup>692</sup> Amery, *Union and Strength*, 247.

<sup>693</sup> Turnour, *Pre-War*, 61.

<sup>694</sup> Potter, 'Reciprocity Proposals', 89.

<sup>695</sup> Thompson, *Imperial Britain*, 96.

<sup>696</sup> W. Laurier Ottawa Speech, 07/03/11, PA, BL/41/M/17.

<sup>697</sup> L. Maxse-Lord Northcliffe, 10/03/11, BL, MS62175.

<sup>698</sup> Potter, 'Reciprocity Proposals', 100.

<sup>699</sup> *The Times*, 18/10/11, 10.

glorious stand for Empire Union which Canada has made....our ingratitude will drive the Britons overseas into the arms of the foreigner and we shall thoroughly deserve our fate.”<sup>700</sup> This over-optimistic reading of events was challenged by people on the ground. Albert Grey, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl Grey and Governor-General of Canada, warned Page Croft against such an over-ambitious interpretation.<sup>701</sup> Laurier gave the same warning to Law and claimed the Conservative victory came from a backlash by Canadian manufacturers who were not anxious for Imperial Preference.<sup>702</sup> Laurier underplayed the sentimental aspect of his defeat, but that sentiment was arguably as much if not more an opposition to being economically subsumed into the US as one in favour of imperial union.<sup>703</sup> Borden, when congratulating Law on his rise to the leadership, claimed that his victory came from a desire for Canada to be autonomous within the empire.<sup>704</sup> Much hope would be placed in Borden by the Radical Right. The new Prime Minister, would prove disappointingly moderate however, relative to the hopes placed on him.<sup>705</sup> The Radical Right, however, believed that the imperial cause had snatched victory from the jaws of defeat and in time for the architect of the Albert Hall pledge to be toppled.

### Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the years 1909-1911, especially 1910-11, represented the high-water mark of organisational unity among the adherents of the Radical Right. It might be argued that the loss of policy influence, represented by the Albert Hall pledge and the acquiescence of the ‘legion of leagues’ to the Unionist focus on the People’s Budget and

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<sup>700</sup> Croft, *Path of Empire*, 1-2, 27.

<sup>701</sup> Witherell, *Rebel on the Right*, 173.

<sup>702</sup> W. Laurier-Bonar Law, 25/10/11, PA, BL/18/7/201.

<sup>703</sup> Thompson, *Imperial Britain*, 96. Potter, ‘Reciprocity Proposals’, 92.

<sup>704</sup> R. Borden-Bonar Law, 20/10/11, PA, BL/18/7/197.

<sup>705</sup> Thompson, *Forgotten Patriot*, 284.

then Parliament Act, was compensated by the successful drive to remove Balfour. The years 1909-1911, however, also revealed the stark and fundamental weakness of the Radical Right in both the ultimate failure to solidify as a faction and in the lack of a leader or produced manifesto from the Halsbury Club. Politically senior members of the Club were resistant whilst politically junior members lacked any individual to stand as a rallying point. The driving force that allowed otherwise sceptical Unionists to be won over was removed with Balfour's departure, whilst the Ulster Crisis and Andrew Bonar Law's leadership would only further bind Unionists together.

The years 1911-14 would see the Radical Right being nearly subsumed back within the party machine. The failure to either fully break out from the Unionist fold, and the Radical Right's reliance on the party machine, limited any potential success for the Radical Right. 1909-1910 saw a partial reabsorption back into the party fold until alienation owing to first the constitutional conference and then the Albert Hall pledge led to Radical Right discontent. The Ditcher crisis represented the best chance for the Radical Right to either assert its independence or seize power within the party. The odds of success, however, were not great and the absence of a willing national leader meant the Radical Right could neither break out from the party machine nor fully control it. Its achievements remained organisational reform of the Unionists and Balfour's departure. In November 1911, many in the Radical Right assumed Law's leadership represented the first of many successes to come.

## V. 'Blood In The Streets': The Edwardian Radical Right During The Ulster Crisis, 1911-1914

### Introduction

Ultimately, this chapter will show that the years 1911-1914, were indeed a period of declining influence and coherence for the Radical Right, although it retained a distinct identity into the First World War, as seen in the Ulster Crisis.<sup>706</sup> In part, the Radical Right's decline came from its limited successes: namely the removal of Balfour as Unionist leader and the reform of party organisation. Bonar Law's early months as leader appeared beneficial for the Radical Right as adherents hoped for a reversal of the Albert Hall pledge and the eventual adoption of National Service as party policy. By late 1912 and early 1913, however, those great hopes would be broken. The stronger voice given to the grassroots of the Unionist Party actually embedded the abandonment of the 'Whole Hog' whilst National Service as formal Unionist policy remained only a distant possibility. Despite Tariff Reform remaining a strong part of the Unionist manifesto in 1914, as Cain argues, it was not in the form intended by the Radical Right i.e. the economic foundation of Constructive Imperialism's goal of a gradual imperial union.<sup>707</sup> Similar subtle advances were made for National Service, primarily the limited acceptance of the compulsory service principle in Unionist defence policy, but this was far from the grand ambition of the Radical Right. The Radical Right would be frustrated by Unionist hesitance to maintain the Whole Hog or adopt National Service, yet the reliance on the party's patronage was more apparent than ever. This reliance was no more obvious in part from the acquiescence displayed by the likes

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<sup>706</sup> The Ulster Crisis describes the dispute over the Third Irish Home Rule Act between supporters and opponents which risked breaking out into armed revolt primarily in Ulster with active and passive support from the wider Unionist Party and sympathisers in the nation and army.

<sup>707</sup> Cain, 'Political Economy', 59.

of Milner and Roberts than during the Ulster Crisis. Many within the Radical Right put aside the wider platform and campaigning activities, especially within the National Service League (NSL), for the sake of supporting the Ulster Unionist armed resistance against the Third Home Rule Bill. Once again, the constitutional struggle—this time for the Union—gave greater prominence to the violent rhetoric and bold, stubborn political approach demanded by the Radical Right, even whilst it was subsumed into the Unionist fold. Even those individuals who favoured a federal solution to Home Rule, such as Milner and Amery, rallied for armed revolt. Edward Carson, although more a Balfourite than a Chamberlainite, through his leadership of the Ulster Unionists became a hero for the Radical Right. Carson would shape, but not decide, the Radical Right's approach to the Irish Home Rule controversy during the Ulster Crisis and beyond.

The Radical Right remained within the broader Unionist structure, in part an achievement of Law's hardline policy and speeches, while retaining a coherent ideology that survived into the war. In part, this came from a continued push for National Service as the NSL expanded as well as the backlash among Tariff Reformers against Law's renewed commitment to an additional electoral test for food duties. Even within the context of the Ulster Crisis, in which the Radical Right were stout defenders of the Unionist support for armed revolt against Irish Home Rule, some complained that Law overly focused on Ulster or believed that the Unionist leadership would end up compromising or failing to commit to a fight to the end. By 1914, while some individual adherents kept faith, such suspicions were arising among the Radical Right, which threatened to lead them—or at least many of the Dogmatists—into striking a more independent line from Law's policy. The outbreak of the First World War, however, prevented this development and later spelt the end of the Edwardian Radical Right.

Law's refusal to martyr his leadership for the 'Whole Hog' alienated the Radical Right, some of whom began to look on him with a similar suspicion as had been shown to Balfour. Law, in turn, distrusted the Radical Right's political instincts.<sup>708</sup> The inability to break the referendum pledge, and the resulting damage done to the Tariff Reform League (TRL), were seen as having broken the Tariff Reform movement.<sup>709</sup> David Thackeray, while showing that the TRL survived well into the war, acknowledged that 1913 marked its nadir until 1917.<sup>710</sup> The Radical Right, however, did not solely experience defeat. The TRL was on the path to recovery by 1914, and the NSL saw membership rise and the principle of compulsory service accepted by the Unionist Party for the first time. It was restricted to cadet corps drilling, but the first step had been taken.

One of Law's achievements as leader was that he successfully brought the Radical Right back into the fold and into collaboration with the party machine.<sup>711</sup> More importantly, up to 1914, he did so on his terms. Law's pessimistic and modest personality was seen as having hidden a strong sense of ambition and personal authority.<sup>712</sup> This was helped by his hard line on the Ulster Crisis, to the extent of backing Ulster's right to armed revolt against the Third Irish Home Rule Act.

Alan Sykes, however, overstates the extent to which the Radical Right was 'subsumed' by the Unionists.<sup>713</sup> Doubts hung over the Radical Right about Law's commitment to a general election and/or referendum as a means of deciding Home Rule and his prioritising Ulster

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<sup>708</sup> Summers, 'Edwardian Nationalism', 72. Sykes, *Tariff Reform*, 1.

<sup>709</sup> Barnes, Ramsden, *Age of Balfour and Baldwin*, 67.

<sup>710</sup> Thackeray, 'Crisis of the Tariff Reform League', 48.

<sup>711</sup> Dutton, *Loyal Opposition*, 170. Ramsden, *Appetite for Power*, 236.

<sup>712</sup> Amery, *Political Life Vol. I*, 386. Vincent (ed.), *Crawford Papers*, 254.

<sup>713</sup> Sykes, 'Radical Right and the Crisis of Conservatism', 676.

Exclusion over a broader defence of the Union. Even those who flirted with federalism such as Amery and Milner embraced the politics of violence more actively than Law did.<sup>714</sup>

The British Covenant and the British League in Support of Ulster and the Union (BLSUU) did represent two strands of a patriotic mindset, as Thackeray argues.<sup>715</sup> But the split between the British Covenant and the BLSUU—at least in the case of the founders of both—was not akin to the division between moderate, more ‘peaceable’ bodies like the TRL and Women’s Unionist and Tariff Reform Association (WUTRA) and a violent, exclusive strand represented by the wartime British Empire Union and British Worker’s League to which BLSUU belonged. Instead, the split was an early example of what would divide the Constructivist and Dogmatist strands of the Radical Right during the Lloyd George Coalition. However, during the Ulster Crisis itself the difference between the two did not even extend to a clear split on the effectiveness of the leadership (embodied by Law and Carson during the Ulster Crisis and Lloyd George in the years 1916-18). Instead, the difference was how the likes of Milner and Amery (who would be wartime Constructivists) reacted to Unionists with actual philosophical objections to the BLSUU’s aims and approach.

Amery and Milner were no less violent or partisan than de Broke. If they sought a settlement or conference, it would be from a position of victory. What divided them from de Broke was their appreciation of the need to adopt a tone that enabled co-operation with the more moderate Unionists such as Neville Chamberlain and Robert Cecil who were alienated by the BLSUU’s open call to participate in insurrection. The British Covenant, by contrast, offered both broader and less direct means of resistance, if nonetheless aimed at

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<sup>714</sup> Gollin, *Milner*, 180.

<sup>715</sup> Thackeray, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age*, 80.



sabotage of the state in aid of armed revolt. Practicality more than principle would divide the Constructivists and Dogmatists by 1917. However, the Ulster Crisis serves as a useful indicator of whom within the Edwardian Radical Right would generally end up in which strand. Constructivists were relatively more able to collaborate with the leadership and work in a broad tent, while Dogmatists—to use de Broke’s words on a good ‘Die-Hard’—“although he may not say so, never entirely trusts his leaders not to sell the pass behind his back.”<sup>716</sup>

### **Bonar Law and the Radical Right**

Law had not been the first choice of leader for many Radical Right adherents. Some Radical Right adherent critiques after 1913—in response to the January Memorial—would continue into the First World War. Yet Law also played a key role in keeping the Radical Right, and other sections of the Unionist Right, within the Unionist Party fold.

When Austen Chamberlain agreed to stand down, his loss was mourned but his example applauded by de Broke, Page Croft, Astor, Ware, and Ridley.<sup>717</sup> Austen Chamberlain may not have inherited Joseph Chamberlain’s personality or sense of ambition, but he did inherit a firm faith in Tariff Reform as an imperial programme. After Law’s u-turn on food taxes, many in the Radical Right castigated Law as a false Tariff Reformer; nothing more than a protectionist. R.J.Q. Adams agrees with the summation of Law as a Chamberlainite, but more a retaliationist than a Constructive Imperialist.<sup>718</sup> In other words, more interested in economic protectionism than forging an Imperial Union. Law’s inability to reverse the Albert

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<sup>716</sup> Verney, *Passing Years*, 245.

<sup>717</sup> De Broke-A. Chamberlain, 12/11/11, CRL, AC9/4/9. H.P. Croft-Chamberlain, 12/11/11. CRL, AC9/4/18. W. Astor-A. Chamberlain, 15/11/11, CRL, AC9/4/43. F. Ware-A. Chamberlain, 14/11/11, CRL, AC9/4/44. Ridley-A. Chamberlain, 13/11/11, CRL, AC9/4/45.

<sup>718</sup> Adams, *Bonar Law*, 25.

Hall pledge, however, was his original sin with certain members of the Radical Right. Leo Amery and W.A.S. Hewins never forgave Law for his 'betrayal' in 1913. Amery castigated Law as lacking nerve on Tariff Reform, and claimed Joseph Chamberlain believed Law was no Tariff Reformer.<sup>719</sup> Hewins was barely kinder in saying Law "does not know where he is and has no convictions."<sup>720</sup> Law was thus written off as a man who failed to fulfil the destiny demanded of him, having latched himself to a wagon he had no intention of riding with to the end.

If Law was simply an industrial protectionist during the 1900s, then he hid it well. When Walter Long in 1907 claimed that food taxes were unnecessary and unwanted by Deakin and Laurier, Law leapt to their defence and argued that Deakin and Laurier had indeed insisted on food taxes as a necessity.<sup>721</sup> His part in the food-tax pledge has also been used to hint at weakening fervour. Law's support, however, was always conditional and more hesitant than those tying him to the pledge like Balfour and Derby claimed. As for Amery's derisive judgement, he certainly felt different before the January Memorial (Law's de facto reversion to the Albert Hall pledge), wherein he praised Law's first leadership speech, firm in defending Tariff Reform and attacking Liberal defence and Home Rule policy, as "incisive and quite definite in its leadership."<sup>722</sup> Austen Chamberlain, no friend of Law's, noted that his two political passions were Tariff Reform and Ulster.<sup>723</sup>

The Radical Right were also by no means united in having contempt for Law. His campaign in 1911 included such adherents of the Radical Right as Ion Hamilton Benn, Arthur Shirley

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<sup>719</sup> Amery, *Political Life Vol. 1*, 387.

<sup>720</sup> Hewins, *Apologia Vol. 1*, 298.

<sup>721</sup> W. Long-Bonar Law, N.D., PA, BL/18/3/49. Bonar Law-W. Long, 03/12/07, PA, BL/18/8/5.

<sup>722</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 84.

<sup>723</sup> A. Chamberlain, *Down The Years*, (London, 1935), 224.

Benn, and J.F. Remnant.<sup>724</sup> Nor did a lack of direct support for his leadership campaign preclude admiration for and belief in Law. Leo Maxse often confided in Law his frustrations with Balfour and in 1906 told Law that many looked to him for an independent lead on Tariff Reform.<sup>725</sup> Maxse was not alone in this. Page Croft may have supported Austen Chamberlain, but he still abolished the Reveille Movement after Law's election as a symbol of his trust in the leadership.<sup>726</sup> In his memoirs, unlike Amery who used Joseph Chamberlain as a tool of castigation against Law, Page Croft compared Law to Joseph Chamberlain as "the first fighting leader the Conservative Party had in the House of Commons...".<sup>727</sup> Winterton also praised Law as a great debater, popular in the Unionist Party, and a source of motivation for the rank and file.<sup>728</sup> Law during his first year in power gave little reason to have doubt in him either. He promised Austen Chamberlain that he would scrap Balfour's Albert Hall pledge and told Balcarres that he had no intention of giving the Unionist Free-Trader Henry Bowles any latitude.<sup>729</sup> This was naturally good news for the Edwardian Radical Right, given Tariff Reform's centrality for the Constructive Imperialist vision that was foundational for the Radical Right, and the 'Whole Hog's' centrality to that conception of Tariff Reform.

Law, however, to avoid embarrassing Balfour with a repudiation so soon after his resignation, delayed the decision to reverse the pledge.<sup>730</sup> The victory against the Reciprocity Treaty in Canada also had the opposite effect on many Unionists that it had on the Radical Right: the sense of urgency among Unionists was lost. Imperial Mission, for

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<sup>724</sup> Vincent (ed.), *Crawford Papers*, 247.

<sup>725</sup> L. Maxse-Bonar Law, 02/02/06, PA, BL/18/3/28.

<sup>726</sup> H.P. Croft-Bonar Law, 30/11/11, PA, BL/24/4/92.

<sup>727</sup> Croft, *Stife*, 171.

<sup>728</sup> Turnour, *Pre-War*, 233-4, 248.

<sup>729</sup> Chamberlain, *Politics*, 408. Vincent (ed.), *Crawford Papers*, 102.

<sup>730</sup> Chamberlain, *Politics From Inside*, 415. Williamson (ed.), *Bridgeman Diaries*, 65.

example, never grew beyond a dozen or so MPs.<sup>731</sup> Robert Borden, meanwhile, stressed to Law the necessity of food taxes but also refused to make an open intervention into internal Unionist politics.<sup>732</sup> Early in 1912, the Shadow Cabinet other than the usual opponents (Londonderry and Derby) endorsed the proposal to abandon the food tax pledge, with Balfour making no objections.<sup>733</sup> The Liberal refusal to offer a matching referendum on Home Rule was used as a justification. Selborne and Austen Chamberlain both argued that the food taxes were issues that had to be confronted and that candidates simply had to put forward the case as opposed to retreating into what they believed was the confusion of 1906.<sup>734</sup>

The positive reaction from the 1912 party conference when Lansdowne announced the cancellation of the pledge suggested that the Unionists had been waiting for this very moment. Balcarres certainly felt that the conference was Law's moment of triumph with a five-minute standing ovation for the end of the pledge, while the party as a whole were more confident about their chances of electoral victory.<sup>735</sup> Instead, despite the conference's jubilation at the food-tax pledge's removal, the party grassroots revolted for fear of electoral defeat. Daniel Jackson described the Edwardian era as the high-point of provincial influence and nowhere embodied this more than the swing-region of Lancashire.<sup>736</sup> The TRL, for all its advanced organising skills, was unable to break into the northern industrial regions

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<sup>731</sup> Fleming, *Britannia's Zealots*, 54.

<sup>732</sup> Barnes, Ramsden, *Age of Balfour and Baldwin*, 75.

<sup>733</sup> Chamberlain, *Politics*, 422. Vincent (ed.), *Crawford Papers*, 264-5.

<sup>734</sup> Boyce (ed.), *Selborne Papers*, 84. A. Chamberlain-R. Cecil, 29/11/11, CRL, AC9/3/12.

<sup>735</sup> Vincent (ed.), *Crawford Papers*, 264-5.

<sup>736</sup> Jackson, *Popular Opposition*, 23.

owing to this strong regional culture.<sup>737</sup> The voice of Lancashire and Yorkshire dominated the debate of 1912-13 whereas the TRL had dominated in the 1900s.

The backlash was more than Lancashire reasserting its opposition to Tariff Reform, however. The revolt's impact was so large because the front bench had improved its communications with the backbenches in contrast to the Balfour era. The party whips were shocked at the extent to which MPs, parliamentary candidates, and party activists rejected the food taxes.<sup>738</sup> An early sign of this had emerged in mid-1912 as candidates had sought to avoid the subject of food duties, to the point that the Confederacy threatened to resume its activity, until Law forced the latter to remain dormant.<sup>739</sup> The irony was not lost on the whips that, after years of pushing for a harder and more decisive policy from a remote leadership, the grassroots now rejected that stronger policy.<sup>740</sup>

For a suspected Protectionist under the guise of a Tariff Reformer, Law was willing to commit to the act. As Law complained to Selborne, the Unionists wanted to remove food duties but did not seem to have much idea of what they wanted the Tariff Reform policy to be without those duties.<sup>741</sup> Selborne tried to reassure Law that the moment would pass as it had done for Salisbury during the 1880s, but confessed he "saw a want of faith, a vacillation, an opportunism, which disgusted me...".<sup>742</sup> Law made it clear that he had no intention to lead if his party would not follow. If Lancashire Unionists refused to endorse his policy, he would hold a party meeting and force a choice between backing his policy or forcing his

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<sup>737</sup> Thackeray, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age*, 59.

<sup>738</sup> Vincent (ed.), *Crawford Papers*, 290. Williamson (ed.), *Bridgeman Diaries*, 65-6. Blake (ed.), *Sanders Diaries*, 55.

<sup>739</sup> *The Times*, 15/06/12, 7.

<sup>740</sup> Blake (ed.), *Sanders Diaries*, 58.

<sup>741</sup> Boyce (ed.), *Selborne Papers*, 94.

<sup>742</sup> Selborne-Bonar Law, 19/12/12, PA, BL/28/1/64.

resignation. The very same course was urged upon him by the Radical Right, who wanted him to go down fighting.<sup>743</sup> The problem was that there was no one to take his place. The Shadow Cabinet had supported Law's decision in dropping the food-tax pledge, Long was ill, and Austen Chamberlain was even more committed than Law to defending the 'Whole Hog' against pressure for restoring the food-tax pledge.<sup>744</sup> Even if he was invited back, the policy question would remain.

Law, however, was open for a way out, and Edward Carson provided it for him with the January Memorial.<sup>745</sup> The January Memorial was a paper to be signed by Unionist MPs declaring their faith in Law's leadership and confidence in his policies, and requesting that he not resign. The memorial's purpose was to allow Law to save face in re-adopting the food-tax pledge—this time insisting an election rather than a referendum—and asserting the party's confidence in him. The Unionist leader was too valuable for the anti-Home Rule cause to be allowed to fall. It was effectively a plea for Law to restore the old policy while positioning him as the unquestioned leader. The alternative, as presented by the Radical Right, was for Law to become a martyr for the 'Whole Hog'. As even Amery, noting Ronald McNeill in one speech "beginning strongly but ending feebly", and other Whole Hoggers admitted, the pro-food tax faction's numbers could only be guessed at "fifty or sixty Members". Even fewer advocated Law's political martyrdom as "not more than twenty-five wished him to do so."<sup>746</sup> Law thus chose to accept the January Memorial as the party rallied around it to show their unity and loyalty. Those who did not sign included Amery, Martin Archer-Shee, Allen Bathurst, Charles Bathurst, William Burdett Coutts, George Touche, Lord

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<sup>743</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 89.

<sup>744</sup> Dutton, *Loyal Opposition*, 192. Vincent (ed.), *Crawford Papers*, 297.

<sup>745</sup> Adams, *Bonar Law*, 89.

<sup>746</sup> Vincent (ed.), *Crawford Papers*, 296. Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 90. Amery, *Political Life Vol. I*, 414-5. Chamberlain, *Politics*, 508, 511-2.

Winterton, and George Lloyd; all of whom were adherents of the Radical Right.<sup>747</sup> Others tried to hold out, including Charles Beresford and Jesse Collings.<sup>748</sup> Some who did sign like Ronald McNeill had initially defended Law's policy and argued that the oncoming Ulster Crisis, if anything, necessitated solidarity behind the leadership.<sup>749</sup> In the end, however, only those eight did not sign.

Amery could not decide if Law was more to blame or the Unionist Party itself,

"I am utterly appalled by the feebleness and disloyalty of the whole proceedings and by the light they cast on the prospects of the future. How are we ever going to carry through a policy of reconstruction bold enough, broad enough, and strong enough to see us through the next generation with men who run away at the slightest provocation? ...Bonar Law is a splendid fellow in many ways, but what is wanted is a leader who will call the party together and address them somewhat as follows...'You Dogs, I hear some of you have been getting together in holes and corners and growling about my policy. I hear you have also in public places been whimpering and apologizing for it. ...Go home. Read my speeches. If you have any doubts come straight to me and tell them, and don't gnaw them in a corner like an old bone. And keep your head and tails up in public. I have spoken.'"<sup>750</sup>

He also declared to Deakin that with Tariff Reform gone, the Unionist Party had displayed its "general feebleness, want of will, and want of foresight", which risked vacating the field of

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<sup>747</sup> Vincent (ed.), *Crawford Papers*, 302.

<sup>748</sup> Bonar Law Memorial draft, 1913, PA, BL/41/M/10.

<sup>749</sup> *The Times*, 24/12/12, 6.

<sup>750</sup> L. Amery-L. Maxse, 10/01/13, CRL, AMEL2/5/12.

constructive thought to socialism.<sup>751</sup> Milner attempted to comfort Page Croft prior to the Memorial but felt the u-turn was disappointingly inevitable.<sup>752</sup>

If the Radical Right were alienated from Law, then Law was also alienated from the Radical Right. 1913, rather than 1910, appears to be the year when Law became more cautious on Tariff Reform. The realisation that the Unionist Party was not a party of Whole-Hoggers removed the practical reasons for heeding their counsel.<sup>753</sup> Chief Whip Balcarres, meanwhile, felt that the opponents of the January Memorial had exposed their lack of political judgement and had enjoyed influence beyond what their skill justified.<sup>754</sup> Either way, the Unionist Party had re-committed itself to the Albert Hall pledge, not by Free Trader subterfuge or leadership vacillation, but through the clear, concise, and loud voice of both backbench MPs and grassroot activists, once the backbone of the Whole Hog. As Viscount Ridley would lament to Austen Chamberlain, their past victories had been shown to be more the result of organisation than conversion of MPs.<sup>755</sup>

Law, meanwhile, reverted to his conservative instincts. He had long been cautious about advocating 'constructive' programmes. When the *Morning Post* pushed its 'unauthorised programme' in 1908, Law tried to dissuade Fabian Ware, the then-editor, from following through and sought to eliminate the sections on universal old-age pensions for over seventies and for combatting sweated labour.<sup>756</sup> He was wary of change and of Unionists who pushed for 'forward' policies, and this instinct seemed vindicated by the experience of not only the food-tax pledge but also the Unionist Social Reform Committee.

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<sup>751</sup> L. Amery-A. Deakin, 10/01/13, CA, AMEL2/5/12.

<sup>752</sup> Milner Diary, 01-2/01/13, BLO, Milner 276.

<sup>753</sup> Adams, *Law*, 85.

<sup>754</sup> Vincent (ed.), *Crawford Papers*, 299.

<sup>755</sup> Viscount Ridley-A. Chamberlain, 02/01/13, CRL, AC9/5/72.

<sup>756</sup> Bonar Law-F. Ware, 08/09/08, PA, BL/18/8/10.



The USRC, set up to offer social reform policies, included numerous Confederates and has been associated with the progressive aspect of the Unionist Party by historians like Jane Ridley and E.H.H. Green.<sup>757</sup> Much like the Radical Right and *The New Order*, the USRC positioned itself as a middle way between laissez-faire and socialism.<sup>758</sup> Selborne used a similar theme when he presented a programme of Imperial Preference combined with Social Reform in 1912.<sup>759</sup> The policies backed by the USRC, however, attracted a backlash from the small-c conservative corners of the party and Law had little intention of fighting against that backlash.<sup>760</sup> If the USRC had a policy impact, it lay with the post-1918 Conservative Party. As for Law, he shared Balfour's belief that the role of an Opposition was to oppose government policies rather than to create a programme of their own.<sup>761</sup>

The Unionist Party, however, did offer a platform beyond Ulster and reaction. David Thackeray has argued that the Unionists developed a programme that included contributory National Insurance, rural smallholdings, and a defence of both the Welsh Church and the Union.<sup>762</sup> This was not quite what Milner had had in mind when he advocated a constructive programme. It was enough, however, for the Unionists to recover their position in rural constituencies.<sup>763</sup> The Unionists, moreover, for all their complaints against the Coal Mines Minimum Wage Bill, did not vote against it on the third reading or in the Lords.<sup>764</sup>

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<sup>757</sup> Ridley was more optimistic about the USRC while Green pessimistic. J. Ridley, 'The Unionist Social Reform Committee, 1911-1914, Wets Before The Deluge', *Historical Journal*, 30:2, (1987), 393. Green, *Crisis of Conservatism*, 285-8.

<sup>758</sup> Green, *Conservatism*, 286.

<sup>759</sup> Selborne Memorandum, ??/07/12, BLO, Selborne 79.

<sup>760</sup> Blake (ed.), *Sanders Diaries*, 50.

<sup>761</sup> Vincent (ed.), *Crawford Papers*, 257-8.

<sup>762</sup> D. Thackeray, 'Rethinking the Edwardian Crisis of Conservatism', *Historical Journal*, 54:1, (2011), 206-7.

<sup>763</sup> P. Readman, *Land and the Nation in England: Patriotism, National Identity, and the Politics of Land, 1880-1914*, (London, 2008), 173-6.

<sup>764</sup> J. Grigg, *Lloyd George: From Peace to War, 1912-1916*, (London, 1985), 22.

As it was, the Radical Right had less time for schemes of social reform as the Ulster Crisis escalated. What is crucial is that the approach to the issue was becoming more disparate. The disintegration of the Radical Right had begun. Whatever disillusionment some in the Radical Right felt about Law as well, the Unionist leader remained supported by the party. With the January Memorial, the party strove to put the leadership crisis behind it and rally again under Law.

The Radical Right were not without some voice in the party. Law's New Style was certainly influenced by its political approach. The reform of party organisation, the long-standing demand now fulfilled, brought immense benefits for the Unionists as they outpaced the Liberals, much to the former's frustration.<sup>765</sup> Even the January Memorial did not stop the Unionist Party from being tightly associated with Tariff Reform. Peter Cain argues that, while the Constructive Imperialists might have failed to achieve their exact platform, Tariff Reform was nonetheless embedded in the Unionist platform by 1914.<sup>766</sup> The Radical Right, however, had suffered a sharp defeat over the food-tax pledge and knew it. Those like Amery, Maxse, and de Broke never gave Law the same benefit of the doubt as before.

The Marconi Scandal did not help. With Liberal Cabinet ministers, including Lloyd George and Attorney-General Rufus Isaacs, accused of insider-trading, it appeared that financial corruption, now more than ever, entered the list of the Liberals' many sins in the eyes of both Unionists and the Radical Right. Leo Maxse led the Radical Right in organising a campaign of attack on the Liberals.<sup>767</sup> Maxse's Radical Plutocrat Inquiry in particular was designed to expose the Liberals' ties to 'plutocratic' millionaires in order to undermine their

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<sup>765</sup> Thackeray, 'Rethinking the Crisis of Conservatism', 210.

<sup>766</sup> Cain, 'Political Economy', 59.

<sup>767</sup> L. Maxse-G. Tryon, N.D., WSRO, Maxse 467/915.

image as men of the people. Law, however, was hesitant to adopt a harder line. He did not approve of what happened with Marconi, which he described as a spoils system.<sup>768</sup>

Nevertheless, he and others on the Unionist front bench were aware that the selling of honours and peerages—which Maxse hoped to expose as well—was not a uniquely Liberal sin.<sup>769</sup> To avoid charges of hypocrisy, Law sought to not make waves.

Feelings were much more bitter among the Radical Right, as exemplified by Joseph Chamberlain's lament that the Unionists were being too polite.<sup>770</sup> Maxse's efforts to highlight the scandal were endorsed by adherents like George Tryon, de Broke, and H.A. Gwynne, the latter of whom told Maxse that their papers, along with the *Daily Express*, were the last defenders of political purity.<sup>771</sup> Amery endorsed going after Lloyd George especially, arguing he ought be labelled "'Saint Sebastian of Limehouse'".<sup>772</sup> That the front bench was more hesitant inspired only disgust among the Radical Right.<sup>773</sup>

Between the Memorial and Marconi, Law proved a disappointment for many in the Radical Right. What kept them in line, however, was first the Ulster Crisis being the priority for them and second that Law remained popular in the party. Law's hard-line stance on Ulster and willingness to compromise on Tariff Reform gave him a strong party position. One manifestation was in 1914 when WUTRA gave a unanimous vote of confidence in Law and Carson's Ulster policy.<sup>774</sup> The Radical Right were also pleased with Law's policy in this area and followed his lead because of it, until the bloodshed drew near.

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<sup>768</sup> Barnes, Ramsden, *Age of Balfour and Baldwin*, 80.

<sup>769</sup> Searle, 'Revolt From The Right', 25-6. Searle, *Corruption*, 191-5.

<sup>770</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 94.

<sup>771</sup> De Broke-L. Maxse, 18/10/12, WSRO, Maxse 467/917-8. G. Tryon-L. Maxse, 20/10/12, WSRO, Maxse 467/926. H.A. Gwynne-L. Maxse, 02/04/13, WSRO, Maxse 468/316.

<sup>772</sup> L. Amery-L. Maxse, 15/07/13, WSRO, Maxse 468/361-2.

<sup>773</sup> De Broke-L. Maxse, 31/08/13, WSRO, Maxse 468/394.

<sup>774</sup> Head of WUTRA Mary Maxse-Bonar Law, 20/06/14, PA, BL/32/4/23.

## The Radical Right and the 'Legion of Leagues' 1911-1914

Given the importance of the 'legion of leagues' as one of the main means of Radical Right promotion of its platform via policies, the successes and failures of the pressure groups (particularly the TRL/NSL) is key to evaluating Radical Right success and failure. The January Memorial has been associated with the demise of the TRL and Tariff Reform movement. Given the weight of party opinion in favour of the food-tax pledge, and the centrality of food duties to the imperial aspect of Tariff Reform, it can appear as if Tariff Reform did die out by 1913.<sup>775</sup> At a dinner shortly after the January Memorial, Austen Chamberlain recalled seeing his fellow Whole-Hogger reactions: "Hewins was sanguine but not, as we thought, very practical; Wyndham was loquacious but not very helpful; Selborne was silent but sensible; but not at all hopeful, and George Lloyd was pessimistic, whilst Amery took a cheerier view of possibilities."<sup>776</sup> The question of what to do in the face of such a reversal as Law's hung over the movement.

But Tariff Reform did not die. Furthermore, there may have been no chance of re-establishing a Confederate movement. Viscount Ridley believed the funds were not there and Bonar Law sharply warned Page Croft against any threats to do so.<sup>777</sup> Law, however, also warned Salisbury that Tariff Reform—even in a limited form—was essential for funding the modern obligations of government.<sup>778</sup> Tariff Reform would remain associated with the Tory brand. The TRL itself survived four more years. Law's concessions were condemned at the 1913 TRL Conference and were treated as the absolute tolerable minimum.<sup>779</sup> If Law

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<sup>775</sup> Sykes, *Tariff Reform*, 1.

<sup>776</sup> Chamberlain, *Politics From Inside*, 519.

<sup>777</sup> Coetzee, *Party or Country*, 71. Bonar Law-H.P. Croft, 10/11/13, CA, CRFT1/5.

<sup>778</sup> Adams, *Bonar Law*, 80.

<sup>779</sup> Hewins, *Apologia Vol. I*, 300, 304. Croft, *Strife*, 67. W. Astor-L. Maxse, 15/03/13, WSRO, Maxse 468/309.

demanding Page Croft keep to the Memorial, then neither did he lessen his own commitment to it. Meanwhile, after the nadir of 1913, the TRL held meetings and rallies while keeping a stable level of membership.<sup>780</sup> The imperial cause, meanwhile, remained as relevant as ever if more focused on a small set of men whom the Chamberlains deemed reliable, including Amery, Page Croft, Hewins, Maxse, Ridley, and Garvin.<sup>781</sup> The Memorial was an undoubted setback for the TRL, but by 1914 it was on the path to recovery, which the war would help immensely by giving new urgency to both the anti-German and the pro-imperial themes.

The NSL, meanwhile, enjoyed better luck in advancing its policy. Law, while sympathetic to both Roberts and National Service, believed public opinion would be less receptive.<sup>782</sup> With incidents such as the Second Moroccan crisis (a dispute between Germany and France in 1911 that threatened war) and the deterioration in Anglo-German relations, however, the NSL experienced an upswing in membership and support both outside and inside Parliament. F.S. Oliver put it bitterly but accurately when he argued that it was only October 1912 when Roberts's message "can be said to have arrested serious attention."<sup>783</sup> Alan Percy in 1913 offered the more optimistic perspective that "our [NSL] meetings have been a great success all over the country. The 'Peace at any price' people have been getting so angry that I feel we must be making progress."<sup>784</sup>

Opinion within internal structure of the military appeared to move from Sir Ian Hamilton's opposition to an openness to the idea of compulsory service, if not to the extent that it was

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<sup>780</sup> Croft, *Strife*, 67. Thackeray, 'Crisis of the Tariff Reform League', 49.

<sup>781</sup> M. Chamberlain-A. Chamberlain, 25/01/13, CRL, AC4/2/158.

<sup>782</sup> Johnson, *Militarism and the British Left*, 97-8.

<sup>783</sup> Oliver, *Ordeal*, 311.

<sup>784</sup> A. Percy-L. Maxse, 26/11/13, WSRO, Maxse 468/452.

supported by DMO Sir Henry Wilson.<sup>785</sup> A quarter of men belonging to Territorial Associations were believed by the NSL to be either members or supporters.<sup>786</sup> As Frans Coetzee noted, however, membership did not always mean dedication to the goal of the organisation, given the strong social aspect to pressure groups in Edwardian times.<sup>787</sup> Yet the NSL did enjoy success beyond recruitment numbers. Within Parliament, rising segments of the Unionist Party were beginning to believe that some form of National Service was necessary for defence. George Wyndham, one of the Unionists' representatives on defence matters, discussed his hope with Amery about the two going into the War Office if the Unionists took power.<sup>788</sup> Wyndham hinted in Parliament that the question raised by Roberts—whether there was no alternative to the status quo—deserved deeper discussion than it had been given.<sup>789</sup> Wyndham's death cut short his plans with Amery, but he was symbolic of a broader shift within the party. Even Balfour, while still mocking thoughts of an invasion, admitted he was less sure of Britain's defences than he had been in 1905.<sup>790</sup>

The main victory of the NSL (and Radical Right's faith in National Service) was in the adoption of compulsory drilling for cadets as Unionist policy.<sup>791</sup> It was not National Service by any means, but it was still a break with the voluntary tradition. Combined with the context of rising sympathy within the Shadow Cabinet for National Service, it did appear as if the Unionist Party was making steps towards the NSL's platform. As for wider public opinion, Rhodri Williams argued that the result of by-elections with pro-National Service

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<sup>785</sup> A. Percy-L. Maxse, 22/05/13, WSRO, Maxse 468/337. Adams, Poirier, *Conscription Controversy*, 30-1.

<sup>786</sup> Roberts, *Message*, 20.

<sup>787</sup> F. Coetzee, M. Coetzee, 'Rethinking the Radical Right in Germany and Britain Before 1914', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 21:4, (1986), 515-537.

<sup>788</sup> Amery, *Political Life Vol. I*, 411.

<sup>789</sup> *Hansard*, HL Debate, National Service (Territorial Force), 11/04/13, Vol. 51 cc1568.

<sup>790</sup> Vincent (ed.), *Crawford Papers*, 287.

<sup>791</sup> Johnson, *Militarism and the British Left*, 97.

Unionist candidates showed that the feared immense public backlash was not present.<sup>792</sup> Williams supposed that these results showed that National Service was more popular than Westminster appreciated.<sup>793</sup> While not going so far, it is possible that National Service in 1913-14 had become akin to how Blaxill described Tariff Reform; not a vote-winner but not a vote-loser.<sup>794</sup> The extent of actual hostility, as opposed to indifference, to National Service was a topic of discussion. *The Times* believed that if National Service was introduced, amidst political controversy, there would be no large-scale resistance to the scheme.<sup>795</sup> By the First World War, this would appear to be the case.

If such a war did come, the Radical Right knew who it would fight beside. Willoughby de Broke insisted that Imperial Mission could only be given the funds of the disbanded Reveille if it also campaigned in favour of the Anglo-French Entente. He also attested to the popularity of the Entente and its anti-German direction among working-class audiences, although he felt the middle-classes were less receptive.<sup>796</sup> The Unionist Party had at least cornered the market on navalism and anti-German militarism, and Roberts's efforts helped contribute to the latter.

Roberts's attention would pivot away from National Service, however. Another cause, seen as a battle for the soul of the nation, seized his attention. When de Broke approached Milner to support the former's National Service bill in 1914, Milner explained that another cause required "all my attention...neglecting other things, including all my own private business."<sup>797</sup> Milner and Roberts by October 1913 admitted that whatever other causes they

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<sup>792</sup> Williams, *Defending The Empire*, 223.

<sup>793</sup> *Ibid.*, 224.

<sup>794</sup> Blaxill, *War of Words*, 220, 222.

<sup>795</sup> *The Times*, 19/04/13, 9.

<sup>796</sup> De Broke-L. Maxse, 06/04/12, WSRO, Maxse 466/62. De Broke-L. Maxse, 15/05/12, WSRO, Maxse 466/74-5.

<sup>797</sup> Milner-de Broke, 06/03/14, PA, WB/10/1.

championed, it was “neither possible nor desirable to distract public opinion from the Ulster crisis.”<sup>798</sup> Both men agreed with Law in November 1913 when he proclaimed that all political controversies and debates came second to Irish Home Rule.<sup>799</sup> F.S. Oliver recalled how Roberts from late 1913 onwards dedicated his time and efforts to helping the Ulster cause.<sup>800</sup> Both men would work on closer terms with the Unionist leadership than they had done before. Roberts supported Law in opposing the government’s efforts to force Home Rule on Ulster.<sup>801</sup> He would even serve as the President of Milner’s British Covenant.<sup>802</sup>

If Law has been criticised for jettisoning ideas of a positive platform, much the same could be said of the Radical Right. As Milner would tell F.S. Oliver, fighting Home Rule was the only choice and all other issues had to be put aside.<sup>803</sup> Witherell argued that the likes of Page Croft were uncomfortable with the imperial policy being ignored in favour of Ulster.<sup>804</sup> If this was the case, Page Croft did not let that stop him from being willing to join the fight in Ulster.<sup>805</sup> Nearly all of the Radical Right felt much the same; believing that the common struggle against Home Rule was the perfect antidote against the Liberal government and that any method and means was legitimate if it stopped Home Rule.

### **‘The Hibernian Caesar’: Edward Carson and the Radical Right**

During the crisis, the leader of the Ulster Unionists, Edward Carson, would for the first time emerge as a leadership figure for the Radical Right to follow. Edward Carson’s appeal to the Radical Right derived from his image as an uncompromising and charismatic force. His sharp

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<sup>798</sup> Roberts-Milner, 28/10/13, BLO, Milner 16. Milner-Roberts, 30/10/13, BLO, Milner 16.

<sup>799</sup> *The Times*, 22/11/13, 9.

<sup>800</sup> Oliver, *Ordeal*, xviii.

<sup>801</sup> Roberts-Bonar Law, 02/08/12, NAM, 7101-23-125-2.

<sup>802</sup> Johnson, *Patriot*, 301.

<sup>803</sup> Adams, *Bonar Law*, 117.

<sup>804</sup> Witherell, *Rebel on the Right*, 202, 206.

<sup>805</sup> Croft, *Strife*, 84.



legal mind and oratory lent themselves to speechmaking, in contrast with Milner and Roberts. Thomas Comyn-Platt, for example, was in awe of how Carson could rally a crowd into a roaring fervour.<sup>806</sup> It was during the 1911 Ditcher revolt that Carson emerged into prominence as a national leader in the eyes of the Radical Right. Willoughby de Broke wrote admiringly of Carson's moral fortitude during the crisis, scolding any Unionist who appeared to treat politics as a game.<sup>807</sup> It was as the leader of Ulster, however, that he truly shone in the eyes of the Radical Right. H.A. Gwynne and de Broke both pledged themselves to his service and to the anti-Home Rule cause.<sup>808</sup> Milner would proclaim that whatever Carson did "I am completely in accord with you...".<sup>809</sup> In the same letter, Milner hinted that his age was beginning to catch up to him and that he sought retirement. The Radical Right needed a leader, and Carson appeared the perfect replacement for Joseph Chamberlain in both character and image of unyielding leadership.<sup>810</sup>

The Radical Right may have considered Carson to be one of them, but the feeling was not mutual. Prior to the Lords Crisis, Carson had been a loyal Balfourite since the 1890s who credited his career to the former leader.<sup>811</sup> He regarded the predominance of Whole-Hoggers in the 1906 parliamentary party as a cause for alarm rather than joy, given the danger this represented for Balfour.<sup>812</sup> Ulster Unionist MPs such as James and Charles Craig were closer to the Radical Right mould than Carson was. Both Craigs were avid Tariff Reformers and had voted for Kincaid-Smith's National Service bill.<sup>813</sup> Carson, on the other

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<sup>806</sup> Jackson, *Popular Opposition*, 88.

<sup>807</sup> Verney, *Passing Years*, 301.

<sup>808</sup> H.A. Gwynne-E. Carson, 20/03/14, PRONI, D1507/1/5/15. De Broke-Carson, 12/04/12, PRONI, D1507/B/4/5.

<sup>809</sup> Milner-E. Carson, 09/12/13, BLO, Milner 40.

<sup>810</sup> Croft, *Strife*, 120.

<sup>811</sup> E. Carson-Balfour, 30/01/06, BL, MS49709.

<sup>812</sup> Dutton, *Loyal Opposition*, 14.

<sup>813</sup> *Hansard*, HC Debate, National Military Training (No. 2) Bill, 07/07/08, Vol. 191 cc1489. A. Jackson, *The Ulster Party: Irish Unionists in the House of Commons, 1886-1911*, (Oxford, 1989), 291-2.

hand, made clear his opposition to the Confederacy's campaign.<sup>814</sup> Yet, while James Craig was admired, Carson received more adulation from the Radical Right throughout the Ulster Crisis.

Even if Carson had been ideologically aligned with the Radical Right, he had personal problems as well. Alvin Jackson convincingly displayed Carson's greater affinity for the legal profession and tendency to offer limited commitment to politics when it did not relate to Ulster.<sup>815</sup> That commitment to his career as a lawyer even led him to defend Lloyd George in court over the Marconi Scandal. Indeed, in contrast with the Radical Right's interpretation of Marconi, Carson believed the scandal had been overblown and was a case of poor judgement at worst.<sup>816</sup> Carson's career commitments were not the only impediment to his being a second Joseph Chamberlain. A tendency to panic over his own health also led to sudden retreats to German spa-towns and away from Westminster.<sup>817</sup> Lastly, Carson was not the zealous enemy of compromise that his speeches made him appear. More than once he flirted with federalism as a means of guaranteeing Ulster equal and non-differential treatment in the United Kingdom if it avoided violence.<sup>818</sup> As for the crisis itself, Carson was closer to Law throughout than he was to any member of the Radical Right. In fact, Law worked to keep Carson in the fold to the point where Lansdowne tried to warn Law off the partnership.<sup>819</sup>

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<sup>814</sup> E. Carson-Lady Londonderry, 26/01/09, D2846/1/1/26.

<sup>815</sup> A. Jackson, *Judging Redmond and Carson: Comparative Irish Lives*, (Dublin, 2018), 61.

<sup>816</sup> Jackson, *Redmond and Carson.*, 60. A. Jackson, *Edward Carson (Life and Times)*, (Louth, 1993) 19-20.

<sup>817</sup> Jackson, *Life and Times*, 7-8.

<sup>818</sup> J. Smith, 'Federalism, Devolution, and Partition: Sir Edward Carson and the Search for Compromise on the Third Irish Home Rule Bill, 1913-1914', *Irish Historical Studies*, 35:410, (2007), 505.

<sup>819</sup> Lansdowne-Bonar Law, 26/09/13, PA, BL/30/2/27.

Law's and Carson's views of an acceptable settlement, however, were closer to one another's than were Carson's and the Radical Right's, or even Law's and Lansdowne's. By late 1913, Carson accepted permanent exclusion of six Ulster counties from Home Rule as the basis, if at a minimum, of a settlement.<sup>820</sup> It was not the reality of Carson that the Radical Right sought, but Carson's image as the Hibernian Caesar reigning in Ulster who Liberals scorned and dreaded.<sup>821</sup> If Carson was a monarchical figure, however, he resembled a feudal king who was aware that his court had expectations that had to be met. Carson followed the lead of Ulster just as much as Ulster followed his, if not more.<sup>822</sup>

Leo Amery, none the less, spoke for the Radical Right when he described Carson as an individual who seemed to embody the will of a whole movement in belief and strength.<sup>823</sup> That was what the Radical Right sought from Carson, a man whose "faith shone like a steady beacon."<sup>824</sup> Law acknowledged this very fact when explaining why Carson was so important to keep on-side.<sup>825</sup> The lack of administrative ability that James Craig compensated for would come back to haunt Carson during the Lloyd George Coalition and sink his chances as a Prime Minister in waiting. Until then, however, throughout most of the Ulster Crisis, Carson's role as the man of Ulster was what made him into the hero of the Radical Right long into and even after the war.

The Radical Right did not need such a hero to justify armed revolt. For them, along with much of the Unionist Party, Ulster's justification lay in the circumstances it had been placed in. The passage of the Parliament Act, the belief that the constitution had been suspended,

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<sup>820</sup> E. Carson-Bonar Law, 20/09/13, PA, BL/30/2/15.

<sup>821</sup> G. Peel, *The Reign of Sir Edward Carson*, (London, 1914), 51.

<sup>822</sup> Blake (ed.), *Sanders Diaries*, 71-2.

<sup>823</sup> Jackson, *Popular Opposition*, 250.

<sup>824</sup> Croft, *Strife*, 120.

<sup>825</sup> Bonar Law-D.B. Keith, 17/03/14, PA, BL/34/2/40.

the Ulstermen's position as a loyal minority, and the lack of any supposed electoral mandate all fed into a belief that an illegitimate government was committing an illegitimate act. To the Unionists, it seemed the government had removed every check and balance that existed to keep the executive from such suppression of the people's rights. To Selborne, for example, political authority was naturally invested in the Crown and the people, which the Liberal Parliament Act and Home Rule Act defied.<sup>826</sup>

In the end, Law spoke for the Unionist Party when he declared at Blenheim that he would stand by Ulster through any "act of resistance...".<sup>827</sup> Where he parted ways with the Radical Right, however, was in his insistence that an election or referendum would resolve the issue and he would drop his opposition if Home Rule won a mandate.<sup>828</sup> The Radical Right—particularly but not solely the Dogmatists—felt differently.<sup>829</sup>

### **Unity in Rebellion? The Milnerites and the Die-Hards**

The Ulster Crisis has been used as a means of dividing the Radical Right into two groups. One is usually termed 'Milnerite' or 'Social Imperialist' and is perceived as more moderate and supportive of federalism as a bi-partisan solution. The other is either designated as the Radical Right or as 'Die-Hards' and is perceived as more partisan and opposed to any form of compromise.<sup>830</sup> David Thackeray offers a form of this interpretation by dividing Milner and Amery's British Covenant—associated with a more moderate platform—from de Broke's BLSUU which was more associated with violence.<sup>831</sup> To an extent, there was indeed a division of tactics between the two movements, and there were even those on the Radical

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<sup>826</sup> Boyce (ed.), *Selborne Papers*, 90-1.

<sup>827</sup> *The Times*, 29/07/12, 7.

<sup>828</sup> *Newcastle Chronicle* cutting, 30/10/13, PA, BL/40/4/102.

<sup>829</sup> De Broke-Bonar Law, 11/09/13, PA, BL/30/2/10.

<sup>830</sup> Searle, 'Revolt From The Right', 29, 32-3.

<sup>831</sup> Thackeray, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age*, 80.

Right who were horrified at the ease and eagerness with which the Unionists endorsed armed revolt. The divide between the Covenant and BLSUU, however, was less on substance and more based on method and offering a broader span of action. Opponents of violence, moreover, were not Milnerites, given Milner's own position during the crisis.

F.S. Oliver, J.L. Garvin, and W.A.S. Hewins were the three within the Radical Right who were opposed to the violent rhetoric on display. Selborne and Austen Chamberlain were discomfited by the rhetoric, but Selborne did accept the principle of armed revolt while Chamberlain believed the government had no moral right to pass the Home Rule Act.<sup>832</sup> Chamberlain was always semi-detached from the Radical Right, but it would only be during the war that he would emerge as a small 'c' conservative.<sup>833</sup> One motive for the outright opponents of violence was their imperialism, as they knew that sympathy in the Dominions lay with the Home Rulers.<sup>834</sup> Ironically for someone who believed "blood in the streets" was vital for national revival, F.S. Oliver complained to Amery and Law of the tone and tactics used.<sup>835</sup> Oliver even cited the Unionist refusal to support dialogue for a federalist solution as a reason that he became disaffected with the party.<sup>836</sup> As for Garvin, he confined himself to complaining to Milner that while he supported the British Covenant, he was unhappy with what it represented about the party's direction.<sup>837</sup> Hewins, meanwhile, refused to even sign

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<sup>832</sup> D. Dutton, 'Conservatism in Crisis: 1910-1915', S. Ball, A. Seldon (ed.), *Recovering Power: The Conservatives in Opposition Since 1867*, (New York, 2005), 124.

<sup>833</sup> Dutton, *Gentleman in Politics*, 154.

<sup>834</sup> Jackson, *Redmond and Carson*, 145-6. Hewins, *Apologia Vol. 1*, 291.

<sup>835</sup> Searle, 'Revolt From The Right', 27. F. S. Oliver-Bonar Law, 10/08/12, PA, BL/27/1/32. F.S. Oliver-L. Amery, 31/03/14, CA, AMEL2/5/3.

<sup>836</sup> E. William, S. Gwynn (ed.), *The Anvil of War: Letters Between F.S. Oliver and His Brother, 1914-1918*, (London, 1936), 71.

<sup>837</sup> J.L. Garvin-Milner, 03/03/14, BLO, Milner 41.

the British Covenant, and expressed his disgust that the Unionists had become no different from the revolutionary Left.<sup>838</sup>

Selborne and Chamberlain did not go so far as Hewins or the two journalists, but neither could hide their own discomfort. In a letter to Comyn-Platt, Selborne asserted that he was not against the justifications for rebellion, but believed a bad precedent was being set.<sup>839</sup>

The two, much like F.S. Oliver and Garvin, supported federalism as did Lord Lansdowne.<sup>840</sup>

Chamberlain, meanwhile, had no objections to a reference to the Liberals being dictators being inserted in a 1914 catalogue of his father's speeches.<sup>841</sup> Regardless, Chamberlain believed that Ulster Exclusion would have been a hollow victory even if the public welcomed it. Selborne took a similar stance during and after the Ulster Crisis, preparing his departure from government in 1916 by declaring that Ulster Exclusion alone would never be an acceptable settlement.<sup>842</sup> If federalism did split the Radical Right, however it was not a split from the Milnerites nor was it a serious one. Fear of violence was more associated with select members of the Unionist front bench. Opposition to militant methods, however, did not mean support for compromise.

Milner's association with a softer, more moderate approach to the Home Rule Crisis emerged from his earlier support of a Home Rule All Around system. In the 1880s, he even declared that the Union did not interest him.<sup>843</sup> In the months after the Ditcher revolt, Milner, Amery, and Wyndham worked together on a common platform for the Ditchers to support. Milner's scheme entailed a six-point programme;

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<sup>838</sup> Hewins, *Apologia Vol 1*, 291, 304, 307.

<sup>839</sup> Boyce (ed.), *Selborne Papers*, 93.

<sup>840</sup> Smith, 'Federalism, Devolution, and Partition', 506.

<sup>841</sup> Boyd (ed.), *Chamberlain Speeches Vol. 2*, 181.

<sup>842</sup> Boyce (ed.), *Selborne Papers*, 115.

<sup>843</sup> Thompson, *Forgotten Patriot*, 52.

“(a) Tariff Reform. (b) Imperial Unity. (c) Defence. (d) Social Uplifting. (e) A sound Constitution. (f) A real United Kingdom. (a), (b), (c), (d) are all closely interconnected, and are the big Imperial issues and primary issues of principle; (e) and (f) are concerned with machinery and in a certain sense derivative.”

The latter two points were references to Lords Reform and a system of devolution and federalism. Milner, however, asserted in that same document that only the first four were interconnected—with which the Radical Right would have agreed—while the latter two were matters of machinery that could be taken or left.<sup>844</sup>

Milner was more than happy to abandon Home Rule All Around if it interfered with the chance to crush the Liberals. Even if he felt inclined to back federalism, he claimed the Liberals could not be trusted, using the lack of Lords Reform as evidence of this.<sup>845</sup> Joseph Chamberlain was much the same. An initial interest in federalism was smothered at the realisation that focusing on Ulster Exclusion was a winning policy.<sup>846</sup> It was not for nothing that most final statements members of his circle heard before his death were insisting either that the Unionists stay stubborn, or they increase their demands now that they were winning.<sup>847</sup>

Amery was another case of a member of the Radical Right who was open to the abstract idea of a settlement. He also frequently expressed his discomfort with a strict Ulster line, and irritated Law by repeatedly pushing for the emphasis to change.<sup>848</sup> For Amery, however, such a settlement could only follow victory. It was akin to how Page Croft supported a

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<sup>844</sup> Chamberlain, *Politics*, 369-70.

<sup>845</sup> Milner-Birchenough, 01/04/14, BLO, Milner 41.

<sup>846</sup> Marsh, *Entrepreneur in Politics*, 665-6.

<sup>847</sup> Amery, *Political Life Vol. I*, 465. Chamberlain, *Politics From Inside*, 21.

<sup>848</sup> L. Amery-‘Bugs’, N.D., CA, AMEL2/5/13.

federalist solution, but with the precondition that Ulster's demands be fully met.<sup>849</sup> If Amery wanted a convention it would only be "after our victory", with the Liberals smashed and humbled before a bi-partisan settlement could be built.<sup>850</sup> He even believed that Law and the rest of the front bench were fools for buying into Liberal gestures towards federalism.<sup>851</sup> If there was a Milnerite view, it was that federalism was a desirable resolution to be adopted after Asquith was toppled and only then. Milner even rejected Roberts's attempt to discuss federalism and convinced the former field marshal to drop the matter.<sup>852</sup> Milner was happy to reside within the Law-Carson approach and, in turn, Roberts informed Milner that "[Law] said how much he regretted your keeping aloof from, and how valuable your help would be, to the party. ...Do you not think that the time has come for you again to take a more prominent part than you have of late, in politics?"<sup>853</sup> The British Covenant, designed to replicate the Ulster Covenant of 1912, was Milner's way of making that re-entrance.

The difference between the British Covenant and BLSUU has come under investigation in recent years. David Thackeray made the case that the British Covenant was actually a more moderate and less bellicose document than the BLSUU's organisation, and re-directed the Unionists to a more moderate policy and rhetoric.<sup>854</sup> Thackeray argued that the BLSUU interfered with Unionists' attempts to become a broader, 'peaceable' party while the British Covenant better fitted such purposes.<sup>855</sup> N.C. Fleming has also argued that Milner's only interaction with the BLSUU was in re-directing it to aid the British Covenant movement.<sup>856</sup>

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<sup>849</sup> Witherell, *Rebel on the Right*, 206.

<sup>850</sup> L. Amery-E. Carson, 16/07/14, CA, AMEL2/5/13.

<sup>851</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 100.

<sup>852</sup> Gollin, *Proconsul*, 210-1.

<sup>853</sup> Roberts-Milner, 21/07/13, BLO, Milner 16.

<sup>854</sup> Thackeray, 'Rethinking the Crisis of Conservatism', 205.

<sup>855</sup> Thackeray, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age*, 75-6, 80.

<sup>856</sup> Fleming, *Britannia's Zealots*, 70.



Amery's promise to Robert Cecil (that the British Covenant would not show the same violence that Cecil told de Broke frightened him about the BLSUU) has been used to display this difference in character and nature between the British Covenant and BLSUU.<sup>857</sup> It was the case, moreover, that the British Covenant enjoyed a broader base of support within the Unionist Party. While the BLSUU by March 1913 had ten thousand members, including a hundred peers and a hundred and twenty MPs (including Beresford and Ronald McNeill), the British Covenant by July 1914 had two million signatures.<sup>858</sup> Moreover, Amery and Milner also criticised the BLSUU for being too specific and focused on the rifle/armed warfare aspect of the Ulster Crisis.<sup>859</sup>

However, the criticisms were not rooted in ideological distaste. Milner's avowed motive for the British Covenant was to "paralyse the arm" of the British state in order to prevent it from attacking Ulster.<sup>860</sup> The British Covenant oath which stated that the signatory would back any action to prevent Home Rule and the use of armed forces for Home Rule may not have been specifically violent like the BLSUU was, but it did not explicitly rule out force.<sup>861</sup> Nor were Milner and Amery 'moderate' on Ulster. Milner felt that even if the Liberals won an election "Ulster would still resist, and I should want to do everything in my power to make her resistance successful..." while Amery declared "there can be no measure which will not be justifiable if it is necessary to prevent Ulster from being crushed."<sup>862</sup>

Amery did emphasise the Covenant's difference from the BLSUU to Neville and Austen Chamberlain, but as a means of winning them over after they expressed their hesitance

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<sup>857</sup> R. Cecil-de Broke, 18/09/13, PA, WB/6/3.

<sup>858</sup> Jackson, *Popular Opposition*, 3.

<sup>859</sup> Thackeray, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age*, 75-6.

<sup>860</sup> Milner-E. Carson, 09/12/13, BLO, Milner 40.

<sup>861</sup> *The Times*, 09/03/14, 10.

<sup>862</sup> Milner-F.S. Oliver, 12/11/13, BLO, Milner 13. Amery, *Political Life Vol. 1*, 402-3.

about backing the Covenant, because of its similarities to de Broke's group.<sup>863</sup> Until then, however, Amery was relaxed about the potential overlap between the two and presented the Covenant plan to Law with de Broke. Amery's meeting with Neville and Austen Chamberlain evidently changed the situation after they asserted opposition to directly vowing extra-constitutional action. Only from then on did Amery assert the differences between the Covenant and the BLSUU.<sup>864</sup>

The problem with the BLSUU for those like Milner and Amery was not that it was violent, but that it left no capacity for other forms of sabotage. Milner envisioned the British Covenant as part of a general campaign of non-co-operation by signatories affecting the railways and ports.<sup>865</sup> The BLSUU was more straightforward, in that members such as Winterton organised commandos to travel to Ulster.<sup>866</sup> Milner, however, was similarly honest with Law that if the government moved against Ulster there would be no peace in Ireland "or here either."<sup>867</sup> In one memorandum, Milner even anticipated the BLSUU as the core of a national uprising.<sup>868</sup> Moreover, de Broke told Milner of how the BLSUU sought to arm everyone in Britain willing to actively fight alongside the Ulsterman.<sup>869</sup>

For Milner and Amery, the difference between the British Covenant and the BLSUU was less over which side was more 'peaceable' and more about expanding the definition of resistance and winning over those Unionists who were frightened of the BLSUU. Given the British Covenant's aim to paralyse the state against armed insurrection,<sup>870</sup> its position as a

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<sup>863</sup> L. Amery-N. Chamberlain, 16/01/14, CA, AMEL2/3/1.

<sup>864</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 97-9.

<sup>865</sup> Thompson, *Forgotten Patriot*, 296.

<sup>866</sup> Turnour, *Pre-War*, 292-3.

<sup>867</sup> Milner-Bonar Law, 24/10/13, PA, BL/30/3/50.

<sup>868</sup> Milner Memorandum, N.D., BLO, Milner 689.

<sup>869</sup> De Broke-Milner, 06/01/14, BLO, Milner 680.

<sup>870</sup> Milner-E. Carson, 09/12/13, BLO, Milner 40.

‘peaceable’ counterpart to the BLSUU is questionable and if it became so, it was not by its creator’s intent. The BLSUU certainly did not see the Covenant as a repudiation of any sorts, as de Broke happily accepted Milner’s lead.<sup>871</sup> It is difficult to see how the British Covenant represented an intentional and direct ideological contradiction from the BLSUU. The BLSUU represented the will to take direct, violent action while the British Covenant offered the means to take action outside that specific sphere.

The British Covenant was the more mainstream and acceptable manifestation of the same sentiments and motives as those that drove the BLSUU. Thomas Comyn-Platt, as the Secretary of the BLSUU, had to convince donors that the BLSUU had a pacific fund as well as one for military ends.<sup>872</sup> The British Covenant, in contrast, had less trouble reaching out to such donors owing to its broader appeal. It is unlikely, for example, that Liberals uncomfortable with the Home Rule Bill would have supported the BLSUU in the way that *The Times* depicted with the British Covenant.<sup>873</sup> Milner’s great success in his eyes was to secure Law’s backing.<sup>874</sup> Law’s support, however, was conditional on the Covenant having enough ‘big names’ to guarantee success.<sup>875</sup> Such names included Austen and Neville Chamberlain and Robert Cecil.

The British Covenant was able to rally a broader coalition on the ground as well. The BLSUU’s directly military character meant that only men could apply and participate in the group. By contrast, the British Covenant’s more indirect means of resistance—if still focused on enfeebling the state against armed insurrection—allowed for women to sign the pledge.

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<sup>871</sup> De Broke-L. Amery, 16/01/14, CA, AMEL2/5/13.

<sup>872</sup> T. Comyn-Platt-A. White, 04/12/13, NMM, WHI/82.

<sup>873</sup> *The Times*, 09/03/14, 10.

<sup>874</sup> Milner Diary, 20/04/14, BLO, Milner 157.

<sup>875</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 98.

Accordingly, hundreds of thousands of women joined in the British Covenant and were able to support Ulster's planned defiance through indirect resistance. The British Covenant was akin to WUTRA and the Primrose League in this respect, both organisations making plans to assist women and children being evacuated from Ulster and other means of support for the Ulster Provisional Government.<sup>876</sup> In this, the British Covenant not only offered the security of avoiding outright armed confrontation that allowed the likes of Austen Chamberlain and Robert Cecil to sign on, but also gave avenues for those women like Violet Cecil who were adherents of the Radical Right, to join in the Ulster campaign<sup>877</sup> without disrupting the social and cultural barriers to women's involvement in questions of military affairs.

There was not a split between the British Covenant and the BLSUU except over this coalition-building and tactics. Amery, for example, felt that the BLSUU was too focused on Ulster and neglected matters on the British side.<sup>878</sup> The head of the UVF, George Richardson, through his secretary gave similar advice to de Broke over how best to use the BLSUU.<sup>879</sup> Milner was no less eager for bloodshed than de Broke. Just as de Broke argued that the public "only understand methods of a more sledgehammer type", and BLSUU members insisted the time for talk was over, Milner told Selborne that the time came "for action which is different, not only in degree but in kind, from what is appropriate to ordinary political controversies."<sup>880</sup>

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<sup>876</sup> Thackeray, *Conservatism in the Democratic Age*, 76. Riedi, 'Violet Milner', 940.

<sup>877</sup> Riedi, 'Violet Milner', 937.

<sup>878</sup> Amery, *Political Life Vol. I*, 441.

<sup>879</sup> Captain F. Hall-De Broke, 23/03/14, PA, WB/10/4.

<sup>880</sup> *Hansard*, HL Debate, Address in Reply to His Majesty's Most Gracious Speech, 10/02/14, Vol. 15, cc.43. W.H. Nightingale-De Broke, 17/10/13, PRONI, D1507/A/4/10. Boyce (ed.), *Selborne Papers*, 102-3.

Like de Broke, Milner and Amery also supported amending the Army Annual Act via the Lords to rule out any use of the army to coerce Ulster into Home Rule.<sup>881</sup> The Act was seen as a means for the front bench to display its firm commitment to Ulster.<sup>882</sup> The plan was stopped by internal resistance within the Unionist Party. Opponents even included Ronald McNeill, an adherent of the Radical Right.<sup>883</sup> The amendment plan by then, however, was made redundant by the Curragh Mutiny, in which officers in Ireland indicated their willingness to resign their commissions rather than be used against Ulster.

The Curragh Mutiny was applauded by both the Radical Right and the Unionist Party. With the help of Henry Wilson, Director of Military Operations and a 'political soldier' who Law praised as able in giving and receiving advice, the Unionists were aware of the whole proceedings.<sup>884</sup> The army being unwilling to fight against Ulster changed the dynamics of the crisis. The motives of the uncertain officers and men were less opposition to the principle of Irish Home Rule than distaste for the Irish Nationalists themselves for their pro-Boer stance during the Boer War, and the soldiers' personal sympathy for Ulster's specific case.<sup>885</sup> This did not stop Rowland Hunt from distributing literature to the army urging soldiers to resist demands to move against Ulster.<sup>886</sup> Milner offered the milder policy to Law whereby officers who resigned their commissions over coercing Ulster would be allowed to return if the Unionists won power.<sup>887</sup> Charles Beresford advocated much the same for sailors who refused to assist coercing Ulster into Home Rule.<sup>888</sup> The adulation from most adherents of

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<sup>881</sup> I.F.W. Beckett, *The Army and the Curragh Incident*, (London, 1986), 64.

<sup>882</sup> Dickinson-De Broke, 24/03/14, PA, WB/10/7.

<sup>883</sup> Blake (ed.), *Sanders Diaries*, 74.

<sup>884</sup> Bonar Law-A. Balfour, 23/11/12, BL, MS49693. Beckett, *Curragh Incident*, 28.

<sup>885</sup> Beckett, *Curragh Incident*, 3.

<sup>886</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>887</sup> Thompson, *Forgotten Patriot*, 294.

<sup>888</sup> *The Times*, 23/03/14, 8.

the Radical Right and most Unionists contrasted with Austen Chamberlain and Selborne who dreaded the consequences of the Curragh Mutiny being vindicated. What frightened them was not defeat, but the precedent set by such a victory.<sup>889</sup> None the less, both Constructivists and Dogmatists welcomed the onset of armed revolt as a means of stopping Home Rule.

### **Pacified or Petrified? The Radical Right in 1914**

Despite private complaints from some, by late 1913, most of the Radical Right were reconciled to the party leadership's authority. The Radical Right did not die in 1914, but the specific issues with the Unionist leadership had been paved over. Bitterness over the January Memorial remained, but the necessity of defending Ulster pushed all other questions aside. The fact that the Unionist Party after years of defeat had regained the initiative and forced the Liberals onto the defensive was celebrated. The stakes also necessitated unity. Leo Maxse declared in the *National Review* that "either this country must destroy the Asquith government or the Asquith government will destroy the country."<sup>890</sup> That the nation seemed ready to do the former especially rallied the Radical Right. The emphasis on Ulster helped to destabilise the government and cost it swing-voters.<sup>891</sup>

Law's leadership, however, played its own part. His New Style and more open approach to backbenchers had strengthened party loyalty and affection.<sup>892</sup> Law's firm rhetoric on Ulster kept faith high that there would be no surrender or curtailing concessions. That it worked

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<sup>889</sup> Chamberlain, *Politics From Inside*, 625. Boyce (ed.), *Selborne Papers*, 92.

<sup>890</sup> Morris, *Scaremongers*, 383.

<sup>891</sup> Jackson, *Popular Opposition*, 6.

<sup>892</sup> Fleming, *Britannia's Zealots*, 68-9.

only made it better. By leading from the front, Law was able to keep the Radical Right within the party machine.<sup>893</sup> His alliance with Carson made it easier, as Milner, Gwynne, and de Broke would not break with Carson, and Carson and Law's approach and outlook were similar enough to make for a productive partnership. Asquith, meanwhile, because of his reliance on Irish Nationalists and Liberal sentiment, could neither detach nor coerce Ulster given the military's unreliability.<sup>894</sup>

Asquith, however, was not the only one facing difficult questions. Law's policy of "pragmatic extremism", as John Ramsden termed it,<sup>895</sup> had succeeded in undermining Asquith's position. As events looked to be making Law the next Prime Minister, however, a different approach would be needed. The Ulster Crisis developed beyond Law's control. If deaths in Belfast would break Asquith's government as Law warned, it would then fall to Law to keep those deaths as the final ones.<sup>896</sup>

The Howth gun-running by the Irish Volunteers was met by attempted intervention and shooting by the authorities whereas the UVF Larne gun-running lacked government interference.<sup>897</sup> None the less, the Irish Nationalists were not going to stay silent and lose Home Rule. It was also clear that the Home Rule Act would receive Royal Assent. Law becoming Prime Minister would mean he would have to amend or overturn the legislation, against the backdrop of civil war in Ireland. The Ulster Provisional Government (UPG) establishing itself, the Irish Volunteers mobilising while the British Army refused to act,

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<sup>893</sup> J. Smith, "Paralysing the Arm': The Unionists and the Army Annual Act, 1910-1914', *Parliamentary History*, 15:2, (1996), 206-7. Saltoun-de Broke, 16/01/14, PA, WB/7/10.

<sup>894</sup> Jackson, *Popular Opposition*, 186. J. Craig-Bonar Law, 23/03/14, PA, BL/32/1/54, Beckett, *Curragh Incident*, 21-2, 69, 277-8.

<sup>895</sup> Barnes, Ramsden, *Age of Balfour and Baldwin*, 67.

<sup>896</sup> Bonar Law-A. Balfour, 15/10/13, PA, BL/33/6/80.

<sup>897</sup> M.L. Connelly, 'The Army, the Press, and the 'Curragh Incident', March 1914', *Historical Research*, 84:225, (2011), 555-6.

fighting between the two sides breaking out, and the British Army aiding the UVF were real dangers. More than one soldier implicitly stated that they would not stop the UPG and would prevent Irish nationalist groups like the Ancient Order of Hibernians from trying to do so.<sup>898</sup> In such an environment, Law would have come to power amidst chaos in Ireland. All the while, the Radical Right along with other Unionists would have been at least passive participants in the conflict.

As 1914 went on, many in the Radical Right pushed Law to abandon his focus on Ulster. Amery, de Broke, and the *National Review* insisted on moving back to a traditional campaign that championed the principle of the Union.<sup>899</sup> De Broke made clear that he intended the BLSUU “to pitch the Appeal in a National and Imperial note, instead of narrowing the issue to Ulster only.”<sup>900</sup> Demands for a reversion away from Exclusion were not constrained to the most violent of the Radical Right either. Even the anti-violence Hewins believed in abandoning exclusion in favour of a harder defence of the status quo.<sup>901</sup> During the 1916 negotiations for Home Rule, Lloyd George produced a scheme of Ulster Exclusion but with an Irish Council for both Belfast and Dublin to send representatives to. Law claimed such a deal was little different from what the Unionists would have accepted in 1914.<sup>902</sup> The Radical Right, however, and along with other Unionist backbenchers and the likes of Lansdowne and Long, rejected such an arrangement in 1916. Selborne was even willing to

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<sup>898</sup> Beckett, *Curragh Incident*, 349, 351, 374.

<sup>899</sup> L. Amery-N. Chamberlain, 25/07/14, CA, AMEL1/3/3. L. Amery-Bonar Law, 25/07/14, CA, AMEL2/3/1. De Broke-L. Maxse, 11/01/13, WSRO, Maxse 468/259-60.

<sup>900</sup> De Broke-Maxse, 11/01/13, WSRO, Maxse 468/259-60.

<sup>901</sup> Hewins, *The Apologia of an Imperialist: Forty Years of Empire Policy, Volume 2*, (London, 1929) 1.

<sup>902</sup> Adams, *Bonar Law*, 217-8.



resign from the Cabinet over it.<sup>903</sup> Dutton perhaps overstated the matter when saying that Law was doomed, but victory on Ulster was going to be costly.<sup>904</sup>

The seeds of the Radical Right turning against Law were already present. Hitherto, Law could get away with assuring those fearing a compromise that the Liberals, owing to Irish Nationalist leader John Redmond's pressure, would never offer an actual settlement.<sup>905</sup> As time went on, that became less of an option. The final attempt at negotiating a settlement was the Buckingham Palace Conference in July. Despite best efforts, the question of Tyrone and Fermanagh broke the conference. To the Radical Right, its collapse was a relief. Milner praised Carson for evading "the Buckingham Palace trap."<sup>906</sup> Others, however, believed that Law's mistake was to agree to the conference in the first place.<sup>907</sup> Even those outside the Radical Right noticed the damage to party morale and fear of a retreat that plagued the grassroots, who hardened themselves against compromise.<sup>908</sup>

De Broke informed Robert Cecil in 1913 that he held a lingering distrust of the Hedgers, which included Law, and so kept them in sight.<sup>909</sup> Milner also warned Carson that he felt "some of our British Unionists are bold enough, when talking generalities, but always get 'cold feet' when confronted with any definite proposal."<sup>910</sup> The experience of the Hedgers and the Memorial remained at the back of the Radical Right's minds. With the conference's failure, the expectation now was to take the fight to the government. Milner gloried in the

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<sup>903</sup> Boyce (ed.), *Selborne Papers*, 178.

<sup>904</sup> Dutton, *Loyal Opposition*, 236.

<sup>905</sup> Bonar Law-de Broke, 26/01/14, PA, WB/7/13.

<sup>906</sup> Milner-E. Carson, 21/07/14, PRONI, D1507/A/6/40.

<sup>907</sup> Vincent (ed.), *Crawford Papers*, 339-40.

<sup>908</sup> Blake (ed.), *Sanders Diaries*, 73, 78.

<sup>909</sup> De Broke-R. Cecil, 21/09/13, BL, MS51161.

<sup>910</sup> Milner-E. Carson, 12/03/14, PRONI, D1507/A/6/3.

thought of forcing Asquith to march to his own destruction.<sup>911</sup> To speed events up, Amery suggested to Carson the use of an ultimatum before the UPG would come into operation.<sup>912</sup>

The Radical Right remained within the party fold, but the situation threatened to change this. Going by the reaction to the 1916 Lloyd George Compromise, at least the Dogmatist section of the Radical Right would have rejected Law offering anything other than the abolition of the Home Rule Act. Instead, the spark of another war would delay such a revolt and accelerate the process of the Radical Right's disintegration.

### **Conclusion**

As mentioned in this chapter, the Radical Right during the years 1911-1914 faced defeats and decline but were not wholly 'subsumed' as Sykes argued. In fact, there were signs of life in both the aftermath of the 'Whole Hog's' defeat in January 1913 and in the acceptance of the compulsory service principle via cadet training by the Unionist Party. The Ulster Crisis especially represented a chance for the Radical Right to engage in a fight it both predicted and sought against the Liberal government, but also in a potential Unionist government.

Law may have disappointed as a Tariff Reformer, but the principle of Tariff Reform remained even if the Radical Right did not appreciate the extent of remaining Unionist attachment to the policy. Through the Ulster Crisis itself, Milner returned to internal Unionist politics while by 1914 more of the younger adherents of the Radical Right like Amery and Hewins had entered Parliament compared to December 1910.

The Radical Right's frustration and suspicion—even during the Ulster Crisis—allowed the ideology to survive with the potential for greater organisational coherence during the crisis.

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<sup>911</sup> Milner-E. Carson, 21/07/14, BLO, Milner 41.

<sup>912</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 100-1.

This would apply if armed revolt had broken out, whether during the revolt or during Law's attempt to resolve the crisis in the likely event that he became Prime Minister through an electoral victory. During July 1914, however, the Radical Right remained tied to the Unionist party machine and the political mainstream.<sup>913</sup> As the war years would teach those who remained in the political field, any progress in converting the Unionists would have to entail building alliances with the grassroots and backbenchers.

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<sup>913</sup> Barnes, Ramsden, *Age of Balfour and Baldwin*, 84-5.

## VI. The War At Home: The Edwardian Radical Right From 1914-1916

### Introduction

This chapter will show that during the First World War the Radical Right would—despite some individual victories within broader coalitions—mostly see failure of its specific ambitions and endure further decline. The war was meant to be the vindication of the Radical Right's ideology. However, the Radical Right failed to exploit this within Parliament or outside. Inside Parliament, its small size, and the strength of party traditions, loyalties, and politics precluded any creation of an independent bloc led by any of the Radical Right. By the end of 1916, contrary to Searle's argument that the Edwardian Radical Right experienced new life during the war, the Radical Right was near disintegration.<sup>914</sup>

This especially symbolises the Radical Right's failure on its own terms as both private and public writings depicted Germany as an enemy that Britain would have to confront. Page Croft, for example, warned there was no European war from which Britain could stand aloof.<sup>915</sup> Alan Burgoyne, like other invasion-literature authors, used Germany as the invading power that Britain had to overcome in order to adopt an imperial programme along the lines advocated by the Radical Right since 1903.<sup>916</sup>

There was some admiration for Germany's methods, although not for the nation itself. That Germany supposedly integrated domestic and foreign policy into a single national policy was a point of praise.<sup>917</sup> Despite this, the Radical Right regarded Germany primarily as Britain's rival that could not be ignored.<sup>918</sup> The refusal to adopt measures such as National Service or

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<sup>914</sup> Searle, 'Critics of Edwardian Society', 96.

<sup>915</sup> Croft, *Path of Empire*, 40.

<sup>916</sup> Burgoyne, *War Inevitable*, 310-2.

<sup>917</sup> Hewins, *Apologia Vol. 2*, 41-2.

<sup>918</sup> Jackson, *Popular Opposition*, 96.

a more assertive foreign policy were meanwhile blamed as having encouraged Germany to believe Britain would stay aloof. Such criticisms came from a number of Radical Right adherents. F.S. Oliver claimed “England was not prepared morally or materially. Her rulers had left her in the dark as to the dangers which surrounded her.” Amery decried how “we had taken no...measures in the military sphere to show that we meant to take a serious part in a continental war”, while Hewins blamed “the want of principle, bad policy, and neglect” for Britain’s early casualties.<sup>919</sup> In turn, adherents of the Radical Right identified its own efforts as having been essential to keeping Britain capable of winning the war.<sup>920</sup> For the Radical Right, the key to that victory was finally discarding Free Trade, enacting conscription,<sup>921</sup> and committing to the imperial ideal.

The Radical Right was not entirely without influence and victories. The early days of the war also saw the Radical Right play a role in the decision to go to war as well. John Young and Keohane both argued that a ‘pogrom’ in July 1914—led by adherents of the Radical Right using the term ‘pogrom’ themselves—did succeed in its aim: namely, pushing the Unionist leadership to a more vocal re-assertion of support for intervention.<sup>922</sup> The ‘pogrom’ of 1914 would be the highpoint of Radical Right influence until Alfred Milner’s entry into the War Cabinet in December 1916.

The Edwardian Radical Right were also happy with the advancement of certain policies even as its ties unravelled. The Liberal Free Trade model appeared delegitimised as represented

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<sup>919</sup> Oliver, *Ordeal*, 37. Amery, *My Political Life, Volume II, Peace and War, 1914-1929*, (London, 1953), 11. Hewins, *Apologia Vol. 2*, 42.

<sup>920</sup> Hewins, *Apologia Vol. 2*, 3.

<sup>921</sup> The term ‘National Service’ was still used at times, despite the changing context towards compulsory foreign service, but by 1915-16 ‘conscription’ had replaced it.

<sup>922</sup> J. Young, ‘Conservative Leaders, Coalition, and Britain’s Decision for War in 1914’, *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 25:2, (2014), 232. Keohane, *Party of Patriotism*, 12.

in 1915 by the introduction of the McKenna duties. The TRL, by contrast, experienced a wartime revival on the theme of imperial unity and anti-German economic measures.<sup>923</sup> By January 1916, conscription was enacted, and in April-May 1916 Unionist backbench pressure—applauded by the Radical Right—forced the government to widen conscription even further.

As a whole, matters like the conscription controversy proved that Unionist Party was better suited for the politics of war and militarism than the Radical Right appreciated. John Ramsden noted that the Unionists' pre-war policies now appeared prescient.<sup>924</sup> Nigel Keohane agreed and highlighted the lack of ideological hesitance to embrace war politics.<sup>925</sup> Thus, the partisan benefits went to the Unionist Party rather than to the Radical Right exclusively.<sup>926</sup> Andrew Bonar Law, not Alfred Milner, was the primary beneficiary of the politics of World War One.

The Radical Right itself was dispersed geographically during the war. As Winterton would admit, many of their number were serving abroad and believed the actual fighting of the war was more important than the parliamentary aspect.<sup>927</sup> For the 'legion of leagues', this robbed them of their more active members and fed into the collapse of the militarist NL and NSL.<sup>928</sup> In the latter's case, three years was all it took to make it defunct.<sup>929</sup> The shift to parliament-focused politics yielded mixed results at best. The formation of the Unionist Business Committee (UBC) and Unionist War Committee (UWC) did reflect Unionist

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<sup>923</sup> Thompson, *Imperial Britain*, 184-5.

<sup>924</sup> Ramsden, *Appetite for Power*, 222-4.

<sup>925</sup> Keohane, *Party of Patriotism*, 60.

<sup>926</sup> Ramsden, *Appetite for Power*, 224.

<sup>927</sup> Turnour, *Orders*, 77.

<sup>928</sup> Coetzee, *Party or Country*, 159.

<sup>929</sup> Hendley, *Crucible*, 21.

backbench frustration with the failures of the front bench. Hewins, a member of the Radical Right, founded the former, while adherents of the Radical Right hoped the latter would disrupt the position of the party leaders.<sup>930</sup>

The lack of a viable alternative with which to challenge the front benches, however, continued to haunt the Radical Right, as did the reality of its dependence on the centre-right Unionists' collaboration to influence policy.<sup>931</sup> Milner was willing to lead but incapable whilst Carson was incapable but also likely unwilling too. Milner tried and failed to build his own opposition, first through the NSL as its new President and then through the British Worker's League (BWL). The Edwardian Radical Right was left to drift still lacking a national leader whilst also failing to exploit the split in the labour movement.

As for the UWC, the backlash against Lloyd George's Irish Home Rule proposals in 1916 and the 'Nigeria Debate' over economic concessions in captured German colonies showed that the UWC would not always follow Carson's lead or act as the Radical Right wished it to. The backbench groups were more pressure-valves than an embryonic opposition, and the UWC was willing to threaten Law but not topple him.<sup>932</sup> The Radical Right thus could not act on its own nor did it succeed in fully utilising Unionist backbench groups for its advantages.

Instead, the Radical Right once again would have to hope for a saviour figure.

By 1916, Lloyd George appeared to be that man. Comparisons with Joseph Chamberlain littered Lloyd George's career as he emerged as the Prime Minister who might win the war, albeit not entirely trusted by the Radical Right. The hopes of a Lloyd George-Carson-Milner War Cabinet, however, were misplaced. The reality of parliamentary politics, not always

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<sup>930</sup> Hewins, *Apologia* Vol. 2, 8, 11. Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 128.

<sup>931</sup> Fleming, *Britannia's Zealots*, 77.

<sup>932</sup> Keohane, *Party of Patriotism*, 42.

appreciated by the Radical Right, made a Lloyd George-Law partnership the only viable one to topple Asquith. This outcome showed how the wartime years, meant to lead to Radical Right vindication, instead exposed its accelerating decline, followed by death in 1917-18.

### **The Radical Right and the 'Pogroms' in 1914**

Like much of Britain, the Radical Right's focus was on Ulster until the end of July 1914. The initial lack of urgency in the July Crisis arose not from a belief that peace would hold, but instead from a conviction that Britain would not abandon its Entente partners. Maxse believed Asquith's government to be "the worst Government England has ever had—but this Government would be mad as well as bad if it stood aside while France was attacked by the common enemy."<sup>933</sup> As the crisis continued, however, and the government appeared to lean towards neutrality, the Radical Right panicked.<sup>934</sup> Paul Cambon, the French Ambassador, complained to George Lloyd about Britain's apparent lack of honour, which led George Lloyd to warn Amery and others about the Cabinet's reluctance to go to war.<sup>935</sup> Henry Wilson confirmed these rumours and joined the small Radical Right group—Lloyd, Amery, Beresford, Alan Percy, and Maxse—in pressuring the Unionist front bench to act. Cambon had claimed that Edward Grey told him the Unionists were refusing to support the war. Given the Unionists' foreign policy statements, this seems difficult to believe, and the Radical Right doubted Grey's claim from the start.<sup>936</sup> What the Radical Right 'pogrom', as Wilson termed it, aimed to do was make the Unionist front bench assert to Grey their support for France and for the government if it chose war.

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<sup>933</sup> L. Maxse-Ludovici Naudeau, 14/05/14, WSRO, Maxse 469/501.

<sup>934</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 104-6. Charmley, *Lord Lloyd*, 34-5.

<sup>935</sup> Austen Chamberlain Memorandum, 1914, CRL, AC14/2/1. Amery, *Political Life Vol. II*, 11-19. Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 103-6.

<sup>936</sup> Amery, *Political Life Vol. II*, 19.



The Radical Right did not cause Britain to join the war. That resulted from the invasion of Belgium. What the Radical Right achieved was to push the Unionist front bench into making more active pronouncements of their original policy such as the letter on 2<sup>nd</sup> August pledging support for the government if it declared war. As John Young noted, the Radical Right overstated its own importance in pushing Britain into war but did represent a vital force for those few days.<sup>937</sup> Nigel Keohane agreed with Young and argued that the ‘pogrom’ represented the first of many front and backbench debates about the apparent lack of vigour in the Unionist Party’s war policy.<sup>938</sup>

At the time, however, more credit was given to Unionist front bench members, particularly Austen Chamberlain, for promoting an activist policy.<sup>939</sup> Neville Chamberlain believed Austen along with Amery and George Lloyd were responsible for Britain joining the war.<sup>940</sup> Such a statement far overstated Unionist influence, let alone the Radical Right’s. The sentiment did reflect, however, that the Radical Right—even in its moments of influence—needed a leader. Austen, however, was unlikely to have filled the ever-vacant leadership for long. When the Radical Right sought to push the Unionists into demanding a more rapid mobilisation of the British Expeditionary Force, Austen scolded Amery in what the latter felt was a stuffy fashion about the need to avoid a backlash from the government and to follow proper channels.<sup>941</sup>

The July Days were also important for the Radical Right in another way: the apparent public support for the war. The rates of working-class volunteering for the war did seem to

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<sup>937</sup> Young, ‘Britain’s Decision for War in 1914’, 232-3.

<sup>938</sup> Keohane, *Party of Patriotism*, 12-5.

<sup>939</sup> J. Craig-L. Maxse, 08/02/15, WSRO, Maxse 470/69-72.

<sup>940</sup> N. Chamberlain-A. Chamberlain, 15/08/14, CRL, AC14/2/4.

<sup>941</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 108.

vindicate the Radical Right's belief in the public and working class as being patriotic and ready to fight for Britain.<sup>942</sup> Milner had said in 1908 that he believed the British working class were not an "unpatriotic, anti-national, down-with-the-army, up-with-the-foreigner, take-it-lying-down class of Little Englanders...", as the Radical faction of the Liberal Party supposedly asserted. Instead, Milner believed that if given a direct and constructive platform along the lines he advocated, the public would rally to the cause.<sup>943</sup> The British public for the first half of the war indeed 'self-mobilised' in support for the war.<sup>944</sup> It was an active self-mobilisation that outpaced the government's hopes. The German Embassy was attacked by hostile crowds, while Bertrand Russell believed that he and other opponents of the war were an insignificant minority from the start.<sup>945</sup> Britain did now appear to be a country ready to embrace the Radical Right worldview.

Yet it was only the invasion of Belgium that saw massive public support in favour of the war. The Radical Right, along with the Unionist Party, supported the war in the name of the entente with France and ensuring Britain's security and honour.<sup>946</sup> Belgium merely compounded the case. For the public, however, Belgium would prove vital. The public was outraged because the invasion of Belgium crossed numerous ideological lines and alienated Liberals as well as Unionists. Adrian Gregory's work on the Home Front has shown that the popular myth of a public eager to 'rush to war' disguised the scale of opposition prior to Belgium's invasion and the more nuanced nature of support for the war.<sup>947</sup> Recruitment,

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<sup>942</sup> Turnour, *Orders*, 69. Silbey, *Working Class Enthusiasm*, 1.

<sup>943</sup> Milner, *Nation and Empire*, 253.

<sup>944</sup> J. Horne, 'Introduction', J. Horne (ed.), *State, Society, and Mobilisation in Europe During The First World War*, (Cambridge, 2002), 5.

<sup>945</sup> Morris, *Scaremongers*, 1-2, 363.

<sup>946</sup> Amery, *Political Life Vol. II*, 18. Keohane, *Party of Patriotism*, 16.

<sup>947</sup> A. Gregory, *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War*, (Cambridge, 2008), 11-2, 15.

moreover, was driven by economic motives just as much as purely patriotic ones.<sup>948</sup> The Radical Right's inability to appreciate this foretold its failure to break out of its pre-war limitations even in the more welcoming environment of wartime Britain.<sup>949</sup>

The parliamentary adherents of the Radical Right, meanwhile, were reduced in numbers as many flocked to fight the war they had been predicting. Winterton would reflect that, "[p]erhaps, had a large number of young MPs, who were, like me, on service with their units, come home and formed a group to urge conscription on a reluctant Parliament, we should have succeeded in our efforts; but, rightly or wrongly, we felt that our duty lay elsewhere."<sup>950</sup> Charles Bathurst asserted as much to Law.<sup>951</sup>

Matthew Johnson in an article on the 'Service Members' has shown that those serving MPs still played a part in politics, particularly over conscription, with generals like Wilson and Callwell encouraging them to do so.<sup>952</sup> For the Radical Right, however, with a limited parliamentary presence already, the absences of the serving MPs were adverse. Amery urged George Lloyd to return from the Front, but was rebuffed repeatedly.<sup>953</sup> Those MPs who remained at home would have to find new means of influence. Neil Fleming argued that the effect of the war was to make the Conservative Right move from using leagues to using backbench parliamentary groups to influence the front bench.<sup>954</sup> The Unionist Business Committee (UBC) and Unionist War Committee (UWC) were early examples of this

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<sup>948</sup> Ibid., 31. Silbey, *Working-Class Enthusiasm*, 7-10, 108-9.

<sup>949</sup> L. Amery-N. Chamberlain, 12/08/15, CA, AMEL1/3/3. F.S. Oliver-L. Amery, 29/09/15, CA, AMEL1/3/4. Hendley, *Crucible*, 4, 9.

<sup>950</sup> Turnour, *Orders*, 77.

<sup>951</sup> C. Bathurst-Bonar Law, 08/11/14, PA, BL/35/2/14.

<sup>952</sup> M. Johnson, 'Leading From The Front: The Service Member in Parliament, the Armed Forces, and British Politics During the Great War', *English Historical Review*, 120:544, (2015), 627-8. Amery, *Political Life Vol. II*, 63.

<sup>953</sup> Charmley, *Lord Lloyd*, 44.

<sup>954</sup> Fleming, *Britannia's Zealots*, 77-8.

and revealed the benefits and limitations—pre-existing and new—of the Radical Right’s attempt to influence the war through these means.

### **The Unionist Business Committee and the Revival of Imperial Preference**

One recurring conflict in the wartime Unionist Party was the backbench belief that the Unionist front bench—first in Opposition and then as coalition ministers—were impotent in influencing policy and did not appear committed to challenging that impotence. The conflict began with the party truce agreed between Asquith and Law. Both leaders agreed that, to preserve unity in the face of war, contentious party legislation would be avoided.<sup>955</sup> The Unionists believed that Irish Home Rule and Welsh Disestablishment fell under the terms of the truce. When Asquith then pushed the two bills to receive Royal Assent, there was outrage among senior Unionists.<sup>956</sup> Law’s decision was to avoid a challenge and instead to protest with a walk-out from the Commons when the bills were set to be passed.<sup>957</sup> Law followed a policy preferred by the party grassroots. Many Unionist MPs had already headed to the Front by this time and George Younger warned Law that backbenchers and the grassroots wanted a policy of protest rather than actual conflict.<sup>958</sup> J.W. Hills agreed with the need to voice opposition without impeding the war effort.<sup>959</sup> Law would claim that Asquith had bound the party’s hands in patriotism, and turned it around as proof that the Unionists were indeed too patriotic to cause division, unlike the Liberals.<sup>960</sup> Hills approved of

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<sup>955</sup> *Hansard*, HC Debate, Government of Ireland (Amendment) Bill, 30/07/14, Vol. 65 cc1601-2.

<sup>956</sup> Keohane, *Party of Patriotism*, 17-8.

<sup>957</sup> *Hansard*, HC Debate, Suspensory Bill, 15/09/14, Vol. 66 cc882-893.

<sup>958</sup> G. Younger-Bonar Law, 05/09/14, PA, BL/34/5/16.

<sup>959</sup> J.W. Hills-Bonar Law, 06/09/14, PA, BL/34/5/20.

<sup>960</sup> Gleanings and Memoranda July-Dec. 1914, October 1914, BLO, PUB 220/43.

Law's strategy, but others in the Radical Right saw it as the start of a pattern of over-hesitancy to challenge Asquith.<sup>961</sup>

Law's approach to the truce was more nuanced than the Radical Right appreciated. While Law sought to avoid any great parliamentary divide, he did permit the Unionist press in 1914 to criticise the government over operations in Antwerp and over Prince Louis of Battenberg's position as First Sea Lord.<sup>962</sup> When Arthur Lee vocally protested against Beresford's call for Louis to be interned, Law sided with Beresford over Lee.<sup>963</sup>

As for the Radical Right, the topics of Antwerp and lack of munitions were subjects of mockery and despair when it came to Asquith's managing of the war.<sup>964</sup> Frustration with the government's ineptitude was matched by frustration with the Unionist front bench's apparent silence in the name of the truce.<sup>965</sup> Milner even drafted a letter for Shadow Cabinet members frustrated with Asquith to give to Law, demanding a sharper policy.<sup>966</sup>

In this letter, Shadow Cabinet ministers Walter Long and Lord Curzon probed Law about ending the truce unless the government brought the Unionists closer into decision-making. The sense of possessing equal responsibility but no power irritated many Unionists. Law agreed that this was a problem and agreed to end the truce if the Liberals tried to use it for a bill to abolish plural voting, but warned that the alternative to the status quo was a coalition, which he opposed.<sup>967</sup> Ending the truce was not brought up on Law's end; nor did

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<sup>961</sup> Hewins, *Apologia Vol. 2*, 32, 44, 51, 68-9. Wilson (ed.), *Rasp*, 163. William, Gwynn (ed.), *Anvil*, 120, 139. Boyce (ed.), *Selborne Papers*, 188.

<sup>962</sup> Keohane, *Party of Patriotism*, 20.

<sup>963</sup> A. Clark (ed.), 'A Good Innings' *The Private Papers of Viscount Lee of Fareham*, (London, 1974), 135-6.

<sup>964</sup> A. Percy-L. Maxse, 11/11/14, WSRO, Maxse 469/596. Roberts-L. Maxse, 20/10/14, WSRO, Maxse 469/568. A. Percy-L. Maxse, 01/11/14, WSRO, Maxse 469/582-3. William, Gwynn (ed.) *Anvil*, 101. Hewins, *Apologia Vol. 2*, 6.

<sup>965</sup> Hewins, *Apologia Vol. 2*, 29.

<sup>966</sup> Thompson, *Forgotten Patriot*, 315.

<sup>967</sup> Boyce (ed.), *Selborne Papers*, 119-20.

he discuss the matter of National Service, which Long pushed for if the truce was to continue.<sup>968</sup>

W.A.S. Hewins disagreed. His solution was to form a backbench body that would criticise the government and press it to adopt not only more effective policies for munitions production but also a 'constructive' economic policy.<sup>969</sup> In January 1915, the Unionist Business Committee was formed, with sub-committees on industry, supplies, aliens, and other economic questions.<sup>970</sup> Hewins used his control of the Tariff Commission (TC), originally designed for an industry-by-industry investigation to determine the level of duties in Tariff Reform, to link it to the UBC.<sup>971</sup> The TC had previously studied the question of munitions supply before the war and while the UBC's founding members included MPs such as Evelyn Cecil, Arthur Shirley Benn, and Charles Beresford,<sup>972</sup> its membership was not restricted to the Radical Right, as Stanley Baldwin was present at the founding meeting and Walter Long was sent to chair the UBC.<sup>973</sup> Despite the presence of a Balfourite frontbencher, however, the UBC was born from the legacy of Tariff Reform—particularly the efforts of a Radical Right adherent (Hewins)—and manifested the backbenches' desire to be heard.

The UBC played an important role as the first backbench group of the war. Its impact went beyond this, however. The UBC was not only willing to criticise and oppose the government but also to go against the direction of the Unionist front bench. When Lloyd George sought to regulate the drink trade, arguing it harmed the war effort, the UBC rallied against the

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<sup>968</sup> *Ibid.*, 120-6. Long likely meant conscription but up to mid-1915, National Service and conscription were used interchangeably by some Unionists.

<sup>969</sup> Hewins, *Apologia Vol. 2*, 12.

<sup>970</sup> Keohane, *Party of Patriotism*, 20.

<sup>971</sup> P. Fraser, 'The British "Shells Scandal" of 1915', *Canadian Journal of History*, 18:1, (1983), 77. Hewins, *Apologia Vol. 2*, 8.

<sup>972</sup> Hewins, *Apologia Vol. 2*, 11.

<sup>973</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

measure. Law had promised Lloyd George that the Unionists could be open to the new regulation.<sup>974</sup> When Law asked Hewins to stand down, however, Hewins refused and asserted the UBC's right to ignore Law on the matter, and Unionist opposition forced the measure to be abandoned.<sup>975</sup> The UBC thus defined the limits of the party truce during the first months of 1915. The munitions shortage was a constant focus for criticism of the government, and the Shells Scandal of May 1915 would see the UBC play a role in breaking the last Liberal government.

The Shells Scandal emerged from the shortage of shells that was blamed for sabotaging the British attack in the Battle of Aubers Ridge. Lloyd George as Chancellor and Kitchener at the War Office each blamed the other, with Lloyd George believing that munitions production had to be separated from the War Office and would benefit from a new approach.<sup>976</sup> Sir John French, as Commander in Chief of the BEF, helped leak reports of the shells shortage and embarrassed the government. What worsened the crisis was that around the same time Sir John Fisher resigned as First Sea Lord over the Gallipoli campaign. The Gallipoli campaign had been criticised by the Radical Right before,<sup>977</sup> and it was the Fisher resignation that made Law insist that either the government offer a clear policy statement with a change in personnel, or he would push for a parliamentary debate that would break the government.<sup>978</sup>

The UBC and the Shells Scandal, however, helped put Law in a position where the truce was impossible to continue as it was. Hewins encouraged Richard Cooper to raise questions on

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<sup>974</sup> Bonar Law-Lloyd George, 07/04/15, PA, BL 37/5/5.

<sup>975</sup> Hewins, *Apologia* Vol. 2, 30.

<sup>976</sup> G. Riddell, *Lord Riddell's War Diary*, (London, 1933), 91.

<sup>977</sup> A. Percy-L. Maxse, 11/11/14, WSRO, Maxse 469/596. C. Beresford-L. Maxse, 17/04/15, WSRO, Maxse 470/148.

<sup>978</sup> Bonar Law-H.H. Asquith, 17/05/15, CRL, AC13/3/41.

shells shortly after French's leak and rejected what he saw as Law's pressure on him to soften his line. At the same time, Hewins pushed Law to match the UBC in pushing for "the effective organisation of our industries for war purposes."<sup>979</sup> The Shells Scandal generated a debate on government control of industry and how much of industry should be mobilised for war.<sup>980</sup> The Radical Right, along with most Unionists, were on the side of 'total war.' Arthur Steel-Maitland believed that the right economic policy was as important to victory as efficient munitions production.<sup>981</sup> Victory needed economic mobilisation and that required breaking with laissez-faire. Hewins would later regard the Shells Scandal as Liberalism's death-knell with "the revelation...[of] the bankruptcy of Liberalism", and with its loss of legitimacy would come the start of a constructive policy.<sup>982</sup> He naturally credited this development to the UBC.

The UBC was effective as a small, wartime parliamentary pressure-group, and broke ground as the first of such, but it was no basis for an alternative Opposition. Its main victories were to put munitions on the agenda and block Lloyd George's drink proposals.<sup>983</sup> Hewins tried to claim after the war that the UBC "was not in any sense aggressive or hostile to the Government," but at the time Hewins celebrated any damage to the Asquith government and asserted "the sooner it is reconstituted the better...we ought to have at once a War Ministry."<sup>984</sup> Even if Hewins had been open about opposing the government, however, the UBC lacked the scale for a substantive battle. Hewins frequently overstated its size when its true ceiling was around 40 and it averaged around 29 members.<sup>985</sup> The collapse of the last

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<sup>979</sup> Hewins, *Apologia* Vol. 2, 30-32.

<sup>980</sup> Fraser, 'Shells Scandal', 69-70.

<sup>981</sup> A. Steel-Maitland-L. Maxse, 01/11/15, WSRO, Maxse 471/384.

<sup>982</sup> Hewins, *Apologia* Vol. 2, 33, 39.

<sup>983</sup> Keohane, *Party of Patriotism*, 45. Fleming, *Britannia's Zealots*, 80.

<sup>984</sup> Hewins, *Apologia* Vol. 2, 8, 29.

<sup>985</sup> Barnes, Ramsden, *Age of Balfour and Baldwin*, 112. Keohane, *Party of Patriotism*, 48.



Liberal government was a show of power, but primarily as a part of wider backbench frustration that the UBC did not create so much as articulate.<sup>986</sup> Law gave his ultimatum to avoid the UBC being the one to force events. This conjuncture would be mirrored in 1916 with the UWC and the Asquith Coalition, showing the backbench committees' effectiveness in pressuring the Unionist leadership and the Cabinet but not in deciding governments. The Radical Right's grander ambitions limited its sense of achievement.

After 1915, the UBC lost what importance it had relative to the UWC. Its main impact related more to economic questions and again more as part of a broader movement against Free Trade and for Tariff Reform.<sup>987</sup> The Radical Right, and other Tariff Reformers, had been quick to merge pre-war claims about German economic penetration, and the dangers of Free Trade to national defence, with wartime rhetoric. Arnold White, in a critique that mirrored Tariff Reformer critique of laissez faire economics, directly attacked, "the day when cheapness was raised to the godhead by Cobden...until war taught us that security is cheaper than cheapness".<sup>988</sup>

The UBC was another manifestation of this resurgence of the Tariff Reformer movement, particularly the Constructive Imperialist element. Hewins tied the UBC to the Tariff Commission explicitly and felt a sense of ownership about both, believing that without him the UBC would collapse and that the TC ought to scrap itself if the chance to merge into the Colonial Office presented itself.<sup>989</sup> But the UBC did not cause the McKenna Duties of 1915

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<sup>986</sup> Fleming, *Britannia's Zealots*, 78.

<sup>987</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>988</sup> White, *Hidden Hand*, 12.

<sup>989</sup> Hewins, *Apologia Vol. 2*, 166.

on luxury goods, nor did it inspire the 1916 Paris Economic Conference or its Resolutions, which truly opened the way for the TRL's rebirth.

The McKenna Duties were restricted to luxury goods, but the introduction of import duties had a similar effect to Hicks-Beach's duty on corn in 1902. Robert Boyce described the war as the second of the three moments—Chamberlain's 1903 speech being the first and the Great Depression the third and final—that signalled the end of Free Trade.<sup>990</sup> The way back for Imperial Preference had been opened again in 1915 while Free Trade was weakened. J.A. Hobson would compare the backlash against Free Trade to the Boer War giving birth to Joseph Chamberlain's TRL.<sup>991</sup> The war comparison was accurate. The Free Trade Union's organisation during the war was feeble compared to that of the TRL.<sup>992</sup> Some Liberals advised others to avoid defending Free Trade in the anti-German environment.<sup>993</sup> Liberals like Alfred Mond even hinted to Hewins that if they had to abandon Free Trade, Imperial Preference was preferable to flat-out Protection.<sup>994</sup> The Radical Right welcomed the chance to attack Free Trade as having been associated with enabling German economic penetration.<sup>995</sup>

The Paris Economic Conference (PEC) in 1916, a French initiative, was another break with Free Trade as it promoted a scheme of inter-Allied preference and post-war measures to economically lockout the Central Powers.<sup>996</sup> Hobson resigned from the Liberals in protest

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<sup>990</sup> R. Boyce, *British Capitalism at the Crossroads, 1919-1932: A Study in Politics, Economics, and International Relations*, (Cambridge, 1987), 3.

<sup>991</sup> R. Bunselmeyer, *The Cost of War, 1914-1918: British Economic War Aims and the Origin of Reparations*, (London, 1975), 27.

<sup>992</sup> Thackeray, 'Crisis of the Tariff Reform League', 51.

<sup>993</sup> T. Wilson, *The Downfall of the Liberal Party*, (London, 1967), 24-5.

<sup>994</sup> Hewins, *Apologia Vol. 2*, 53, 55-6.

<sup>995</sup> A White-L. Maxse, N.D., WSRO, Maxse 471/328-30.

<sup>996</sup> Paris Economic Conference Resolutions, 28/03/16, PRONI, D1507/B/11/3. Paris Economic Resolutions, 04/08/16, BLO, Milner 129.

against Asquith's reluctant agreement to the PEC.<sup>997</sup> Both the McKenna Duties and PEC, along with the apparent imperial solidarity shown by the self-governing colonies, inspired the TRL revival.<sup>998</sup> The campaign promoted the interdependence of the Empire and encouraged a boom in both branches and membership. The Paris Economic Resolutions (PER) were embraced by Tariff Reformers as a means of Imperial Preference and supporting allies. Milner had previously hinted at his openness to including explicit allies in an Imperial Preference scheme.<sup>999</sup> The Paris Economic Resolutions were an institutionalisation of that idea. Thackeray argued that the war allowed ideas of Constructive Imperialism to not only survive but also thrive in the new wartime atmosphere.<sup>1000</sup> Of all the Radical Right leagues, the TRL was the only one to enjoy success until 1917. The First World War gave Constructive Imperialism a new life, but the UBC and the Radical Right did not cause this success so much as benefit from it. Neither was the UBC much of a government-in-waiting as long as it lacked a viable leader to present against Asquith.<sup>1001</sup>

### **The NSL, the BWL, and Milner**

Asquith quickly became the central problem with the British war-effort in the eyes of the Radical Right.<sup>1002</sup> He seemed incapable of making the necessary decisions for victory, or of doing more than tread water. Decisions came only after much delay, pressure, and numerous compromises. Nothing better embodied this for Asquith's opponents than the question of conscription.<sup>1003</sup> Many in the Radical Right believed that the lack of National

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<sup>997</sup> Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation*, 249-50.

<sup>998</sup> Thackeray, 'Chamberlain Day', 23-4.

<sup>999</sup> Milner, *Constructive Imperialism*, 29.

<sup>1000</sup> Thackeray, 'Crisis of the Tariff Reform League' 50.

<sup>1001</sup> Adams, Poirier, *Conscription Controversy*, 153.

<sup>1002</sup> H. Wilson-L. Maxse, 01/03/16, WSRO, Maxse 472/602-4. J Collings-L. Amery, 30/09/15, CA, AMEL1/3/3.

<sup>1003</sup> Amery, *Political Life Vol. II*, 69. Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 124-5. Wilson (ed.), *Rasp*, 113-4. Boyce (ed.), *Selborne Papers*, 146.

Service before the war had convinced Germany that Britain would not intervene in the conflict.<sup>1004</sup> The only reason there was any faith in the Asquith Coalition after May 1915 was the prospect that conscription would finally be introduced.<sup>1005</sup>

When it became clear that this was not the case, many Unionists became depressed and complained that the Coalition appeared more an alliance of front benches that silenced criticism.<sup>1006</sup> In reality, the Asquith Coalition side-lined the Unionists and would take months to enact conscription. Many in the Radical Right believed that Law had lost his spine.<sup>1007</sup>

Law, in turn, believed that breaking the Coalition or toppling Asquith risked a general election, which might remove some anti-war opponents but would leave an embittered Liberal Party and turn the war into a partisan question.<sup>1008</sup> H.A. Gwynne reluctantly agreed that an election would be disastrous, but others felt that Law still lacked the strength or desire to force Asquith's hand.<sup>1009</sup>

Adherents of the Radical Right believed that the war would be won if only the nation found "a man" who could take charge, show drive, and enact the right measures.<sup>1010</sup> Milner and Carson were the main two candidates in whom all hope of victory was laid.<sup>1011</sup> Milner's appeal was in his experience as an administrator and his record as a Constructive Imperialist and supporter of National Service. His support-base went beyond the Radical Right, if not as a war leader. Austen Chamberlain had volunteered to give up his place in Asquith's new

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<sup>1004</sup> Oliver, *Ordeal*, 36. Amery, *Political Life Vol. II*, 11. Hewins, *Apologia Vol. 2*, 42. White, *Hidden Hand*, 12. Turnour, *Orders*, 69.

<sup>1005</sup> Wilson (ed.), *Rasp*, 94. Amery, *Political Life Vol. II*, 66. De Broke-L. Maxse, 05/06/15, WSRO, Maxse 470/195.

<sup>1006</sup> Williamson (ed.), *Bridgeman Diaries*, 87. H.A. Gwynne-L. Maxse, 17/05/15, WSRO, Maxse 470/195.

<sup>1007</sup> Hewins, *Apologia Vol. 2*, 34.

<sup>1008</sup> Adams, *Bonar Law*, 184-5.

<sup>1009</sup> Wilson (ed.), *Rasp*, 94-5.

<sup>1010</sup> Hewins, *Apologia Vol. 2*, 36. Oliver, *Ordeal*, 434.

<sup>1011</sup> H Wilson-L. Maxse, 11/12/15, WSRO, 11/12/15. Amery, *Political Life Vol. II*, 80-1.

Cabinet if Milner was offered a position, but Asquith refused.<sup>1012</sup> Milner's main role in the Asquith Coalition was his part in Selborne's Food Committee, particularly by suggesting Charles Bathurst, Christopher Turnor, and others for the committee.<sup>1013</sup> The report proposed a minimum price for wheat for a number of years, and an agricultural aid package that entailed higher wages, expansion of arable land, and an expert committee on agricultural production.<sup>1014</sup> The scheme was favoured by Law, but Milner believed that the opposition of "fanatical Cobdenism on the one side and the dislike of an interference with landlords and farmers on the other..." sank his proposals.<sup>1015</sup> Milner would come to regard the Unionist front bench as a collection of mandarins little better than the Liberals. Selborne, meanwhile, was told by Asquith that fears about the threat from submarines to the food supply were too dramatic.<sup>1016</sup> Asquith impressed few with his apparent lethargy over many aspects of the war, food included.

The Radical Right welcomed Milner's semi-detachment from the Asquith Coalition. Few had high hopes for it, and critics felt that its main effect was to close off avenues for holding the government to account.<sup>1017</sup> Amery sneeringly called it a government of "United Mandarins" and hoped for Carson and Milner to take charge, although admitting that the former lacked knowledge and the latter lacked a profile.<sup>1018</sup> Amery even assured Milner that it was good that he remained outside the government, as it would give him clean hands when crisis inevitably struck and forced backs to the wall.<sup>1019</sup>

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<sup>1012</sup> A. Chamberlain-Bonar Law, 21/05/15, PA, BL/50/3/26.

<sup>1013</sup> Boyce (ed.), *Selborne Papers*, 128-9.

<sup>1014</sup> Grigg, *Peace to War*, 129.

<sup>1015</sup> Milner-Philip Gell, 20/08/15, BLO, Milner 350. Boyce (ed.), *Selborne Papers*, 142.

<sup>1016</sup> Boyce (ed.), *Selborne Papers*, 135.

<sup>1017</sup> De Broke-Maxse, 10/07/15, WSRO, Maxse 471/258.

<sup>1018</sup> Amery-'Fitz', 27/07/15, CA, AMEL1/3/3.

<sup>1019</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 116.

The idea of such a crisis coming as a spiritual punishment to Britain appealed to the Radical Right. Roberts hoped that a port-town raid might force the public and government into action, while Maxse hoped for a German invasion to do the trick.<sup>1020</sup> The main role for Milner, however, was to prepare the outline of a “a complete policy, in which National Service [conscription] fits as an essential lever, but which also deals with all the other problems, munitions, finance, food and so on...Milner policy or national policy, as distinct from the Party or Mandarin policies must be something clear and defined in the public mind.”<sup>1021</sup> Amery had long urged Milner to take such steps but Milner was now prepared to at least try to build his Milnerite coalition.

Milner sought to use two pressure-groups to accomplish this: the NSL and the BWL. The NSL after Roberts’s death in 1914 had sunk into abeyance with its organisation decaying and its periodical out of circulation.<sup>1022</sup> Matthew Hendley believed that Roberts was the heart, soul, and animating force of the NSL, and his passing represented the death of the old, aggressive militarism that the NSL embodied.<sup>1023</sup> Milner, when taking the Presidency of the NSL in 1915, tried and failed to keep that militaristic spirit alive. His failure, and the NSL’s collapse, reflected the Radical Right’s larger failure to benefit from the Zeitgeist of the war. Milner aimed to revive the NSL’s sense of purpose with a new campaign that backed outright conscription,<sup>1024</sup> without shrinking from criticism of the government. Milner rejected the idea of the NSL being ‘quiet’ and cared little that George V scolded him for threatening wartime unity.<sup>1025</sup>

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<sup>1020</sup> Roberts-Maxse, 20/10/14, WSRO, Maxse 460/568. L. Maxse-V. Maxse, 29/06/15, BLO, Violet Milner 19.

<sup>1021</sup> Amery-Milner, 15/08/15, BLO, Milner 250.

<sup>1022</sup> Hendley, *Crucible*, 13.

<sup>1023</sup> *Ibid.*, 12, 17-21.

<sup>1024</sup> Grigg, *Peace to War*, 329.

<sup>1025</sup> Annual NSL Meeting, 16/06/15, BLO, Milner 373. Milner Diary, 28/08/15, BLO, Milner 86.

The NSL, however, was pre-empted by a letter in the *Morning Post* that united Liberals like Alfred Mond and Josiah Wedgwood with Unionists such as Patrick Hannon, Willoughby de Broke, and Neville Chamberlain in pushing for an organised effort and a need for change.<sup>1026</sup>

The cross-party demand reflected the future UWC and LWC alliance, but also stole the NSL's thunder. The NSL itself had become an old man's organisation, with many of its senior members retiring or dying.<sup>1027</sup> Its pre-war stigma also affected its wartime efforts and undermined any attempt to grow from apparent vindication.<sup>1028</sup> Milner tried to renew the organisation by merging it with the Royal Colonial Institute (RCI). The merged body would have three core objectives,

“1. To secure the permanent union of all parts of the Empire. 2. To advocate the adoption throughout the Empire of the principle of National Service and the organisation and co-ordination of all its Naval and Military Forces for united action in its defence. 3. To promote the increase and diffusion of knowledge respecting the Empire, to encourage trade and industry and guide the movement of population, within its bounds. ...”<sup>1029</sup>

In summary, the NSL's objective was made secondary to Imperial Union and even there fully coloured by the Constructive Imperialist conception of sustainable national defence. For the Radical Right, the appeal was obvious given its ideology was primarily Constructive Imperialism blended with National Service in response to Edwardian era-specific concerns about outside military dangers. For those in the NSL who were not in the Radical Right, however, there was much less ideological appeal. Naturally, the traditional Conservative

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<sup>1026</sup> *Morning Post*, 16/08/15, 6.

<sup>1027</sup> Hendley, *Crucible*, 44.

<sup>1028</sup> Fleming, *Britannia's Zealots*, 91.

<sup>1029</sup> Scheme for Amalgamation of RCI and NSL under the title 'Imperial Union', N.D., BLO, Milner 155.

presence embodied by Lord Curzon sank the attempted merger.<sup>1030</sup> The NSL's death-spiral continued.

Milner's other option then presented itself: the BWL. It was originally the Socialist National Defence Committee (SNDC), splintering from the British Socialist Party over the latter's anti-war stance.<sup>1031</sup> The BWL first caught attention from political circles with the pro-war Charles Stanton's victory over the official Labour and pro-Union of Democratic Control (a pro-compromise peace group seen as pacifist) candidate in Merthyr Tydfil in 1915. That it was Labour leader Keir Hardie's former seat only increased the interest in what might be an imperialist labour party.

Milner came into contact with Victor Fisher, a member of the SNDC, via R. Macleod, Secretary of the NSL, and the two found much in common.<sup>1032</sup> Milner had long supported the idea of a Unionist Labour Party, and believed it necessary to rally back the working-class from Labour's form of Socialism.<sup>1033</sup> As he told Lady Roberts, he sought "to further a purely working class movement, which I hope will knock out the 'Independent Labour Party' and start a 'Workers League' among the Trade Unionists, which will make Imperial Unity and Citizen Service 'planks' on its platform...[a] League of Patriots for the furthering of all the objects which men, who put country first, have at heart...".<sup>1034</sup> It was hoped to offer the platform that the Radical Right had endeavoured for the Unionists to adopt and believed the working classes would not only accept, but embrace. That the BWL was willing to attack

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<sup>1030</sup> Hendley, *Crucible*, 48.

<sup>1031</sup> P. Ward, *Red Flag and the Union Jack: Englishness, Patriotism, and the British Left*, (Rochester, 1999), 124.

<sup>1032</sup> P.A. Lockwood, 'Milner's Entry into the War Cabinet, December 1916', *Historical Journal*, 7:1, (1964), 121.

<sup>1033</sup> Milner, *Constructive Imperialism*, 85.

<sup>1034</sup> Milner-Lady Roberts, 25/02/16, BLO, Milner 87.



pacifist meetings increased its appeal not only to Milner but also to sections of the Unionist press.<sup>1035</sup>

Milner quickly became a patron of the BWL and urged Unionists to give it a chance. In one appeal to Willoughby de Broke, he mentioned meeting some representatives with Amery and Christopher Turnor, and highlighted both his and de Broke's self-conception of placing nation over party and rejecting being 'party men.' The appeal of the BWL was clear in the apparent overlap in policy ideas with Milner and de Broke alike,

"It is understood that there may always be a great many points on which we differ, but their idea is that, not only on the burning question of the hour but on matters which will be of the greatest importance in the huge national reconstruction...there could be something like co-operation between us on fundamentals—such matters, for instance, as National Service, Imperial Union, the encouragement of home production, and an economic system embracing the Empire, and putting such questions as migration from one part of the Empire to another and the change of Imperial goods, on something like a rational basis instead of the present chaotic system of leaving everything to chance. .... I found these men intelligent, patriotic, and not at all-narrow minded. They represent, I think, the essential patriotism of the working class, and though they have no doubt strong class feelings and prejudices, they are people with whom I feel that I personally could get on, and I believe a great many of the younger Unionists, who are not hidebound partisans and do not care at all about the machine, could...too. I need not point out to you what an advantage it would be if any considerable section of the working class could, without giving up

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<sup>1035</sup> *Morning Post*, 03/11/16, 6.

their special class aspirations, ...be induced to look at national questions in a broader and less exclusively class spirit. ... I should also try and get one or two other independent Unionists, either in the Lords or Commons. The difference is that they are mostly youngish men, and therefore mostly either away at the Front or engaged in military duties at home. Still, I think one or two could be found.”<sup>1036</sup>

As noted in Chapter III, Radical Right adherents had long argued and sought ‘proof’ that the working-class (especially those in the labour movement) yearned for a platform like theirs. The BWL’s programme did resemble Milner’s own ideals and the ideas of the pre-war Unionist Social Reform Committee. John Stubbs in his study of the movement argued that Milner sought to use discussions of a merger between the NSL and BWL to establish his ‘National Party’:<sup>1037</sup> not a political party in itself, but a group that could fulfil similar functions along with younger Unionist MPs.<sup>1038</sup>

Milner certainly did envision a merger between the NSL and BWL if the scheme for the RCI merger failed. Stubbs, however, overstates the power that Milner had over both groups. Matthew Hendley brought attention to the opposition to such a merger within the NSL and the BWL.<sup>1039</sup> It was true that the BWL opened itself to the principle of cadet training and some form of compulsory service, if with strong pre-conditions to avoid its use against strikes.<sup>1040</sup> However, the BWL rejected merging with the NSL itself. The NSL’s image, as James Seddon put it bluntly, was that of a conscriptionist and Tory body that was distrusted

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<sup>1036</sup> Milner-de Broke, 01/10/15, PA, WB/11/4.

<sup>1037</sup> J.O. Stubbs, ‘Lord Milner and Patriotic Labour, 1914-1918’, *English Historical Review*, 87:234, (1972), 722, 731.

<sup>1038</sup> ‘Some Notes on the Present War Situation’, 12/03/16, BLO, Milner 352.

<sup>1039</sup> Hendley, *Crucible*, 51-2.

<sup>1040</sup> Outline of a Scheme for National Training After the War, ??/08/16, BL, Eur. F112/168.

by the working class and trade-unionists alike.<sup>1041</sup> In short, the NSL's appeal to the Radical Right was what alienated the BWL from it. The pre-war efforts to appeal to the working class were a clear failure. The NSL, through Curzon again, opposed merging with the BWL.<sup>1042</sup> With the NSL incapable of succeeding as it was and incapable of changing itself, Milner lost interest in the group and moved his focus elsewhere. The NSL would continue to stagnate and decay until 1917 even as Patrick Hannon tried to feed it funds from the British Commonwealth Union (BCU), a right-wing business group that funded many Radical Right groups during the war.<sup>1043</sup>

The BWL was far being from a Radical Right Labour Party either. Studies on the British Left prior to the First World War have shown that the BWL did not simply emerge as a 'radical right' group but instead from a 'super patriot' faction of the radical Left.<sup>1044</sup> Not only was this tendency, despite supporting universal military training, distinct from the Radical Right's conception of National Service, but those leftist 'super patriots' actively sought to highlight those differences. For the Social Democratic Federation (SDF), the NSL's National Service was seen as conscription as pushed by Tariff Reformer Tories, whilst the SDF's own conception of a Citizen Army was intended as a repudiation of the Radical Right's militarism.<sup>1045</sup>

Even if the First World War radicalised some of the 'super patriots' of the Left to contact the Radical Right, this did not mean they shared the Radical Right's ideology. Victor Fisher in a letter to de Broke explained that he had read de Broke's 'National Toryism' article and,

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<sup>1041</sup> Report of a Meeting of the Joint Conference of a Sub-Committee of the NSL and BWNL, 23/08/16, BL, Eur. F112/168.

<sup>1042</sup> Hendley, *Crucible*, 52, 55.

<sup>1043</sup> Fleming, *Britannia's Zealots*, 91. Hendley, *Crucible*, 55.

<sup>1044</sup> Ward, *Red Flag*, 108-9, 138.

<sup>1045</sup> Johnson, *Militarism and the British Left*, 118.

while admiring its themes and intentions, had his doubts about de Broke's 'National Toryism',

"How would you deal with modern industrial organisation? The Toryism of Bolingbroke cannot help here. ...[if you intend to humanise industry by] social contract, do you think that social ownership would be very long delayed? But that is Socialism! ...The Tory National Party of tomorrow will never 'qualify for its inheritance' if it is going to attack both the ideal of constructive Socialism and the organisation of Trade Unions. ...if you intend to pin the fortunes of your National Party to a resolute defence of the Establishment...you are embarking on a very hazardous journey..."<sup>1046</sup>

De Broke was among the least constructive of the Dogmatist side of the Radical Right; once confessing that he did not even know what he wanted.<sup>1047</sup> The Radical Right as a whole, however, lacked appreciation of how and why the working class consented to the war.

Amery did consider ideas of co-partnership between Labour and Capital with even the trade union side serving as the co-partner, allegedly after he read the suggestion in *The British Citizen*, the BWL's paper.<sup>1048</sup> Amery, however, felt that one great appeal of controls on industry lay in preventing the wage boom that industrial workers were experiencing.<sup>1049</sup>

That the wages came in a context of living costs increasing by 20% did not seem to affect Amery's outlook. Nor did the fact that even the strike wave of 1917 was much smaller than pre-war levels and that living standards for those workers were key for morale.<sup>1050</sup> The 1917

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<sup>1046</sup> V. Fisher-de Broke, 06/11/15, PA, WB/11/24.

<sup>1047</sup> Cannadine, *Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy*, 529.

<sup>1048</sup> L. Amery-Wardle, 25/08/17, CA, AMEL1/3/6.

<sup>1049</sup> Amery-N. Chamberlain, 12/08/15, CA, AMEL1/3/3.

<sup>1050</sup> Grigg, *Peace to War*, 217. Gregory, *Great War*, 202. Silbey, *Working Class Enthusiasm*, 17.

engineering strike, for example, was a direct response to not only the extension of labour 'dilution' but also declining living standards, and avoided criticising the war itself.<sup>1051</sup>

Amery's mind may have changed over the two years between the latter statement and the former, but he was rare among the Radical Right in doing so. Instead, F.S. Oliver spoke for more in the Radical Right by rejecting the idea that three million "well-to-do" workers really reflected the working class.<sup>1052</sup> That the working-class would identify more with those three million than they would with the BWL or F.S. Oliver—as Unionists themselves recognised as time went on—reflected how neither managed to win over the labour movement.<sup>1053</sup>

But if the BWL could rebuff the Radical Right, it could not rebuff the Unionist Party.

Negotiations on a shared platform were dominated by the Unionists, who could overrule the BWL on policies that were too statist. Many of the BWL's proposals resembled those of the USRC, and a few temporary nationalisation schemes represented the limits to which the Unionists would go.<sup>1054</sup> The agreed programme between the two had public works vetoed in favour of imperial co-operation and emigration, while agriculture was accepted as an essential industry.<sup>1055</sup> Hewins believed it to be a step forward in talks.<sup>1056</sup> In reality, it reflected the dependence the BWL had on the Unionist Party and its failure to represent those in the working class who did not already support the Unionists. The trade-unionists who worked within the BWL were considered by contemporaries to be out of touch with modern labour, while the organisation relied on Waldorf Astor for funding.<sup>1057</sup> Milner even

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<sup>1051</sup> D. Stevenson, 'Britain's Biggest Wartime Stoppage: The Origins of the Engineering Strike of May 1917', *History*, 105:365, 269-70, 280, 287.

<sup>1052</sup> F.S. Oliver-Amery, 29/09/15, CA, AMEL1/3/4.

<sup>1053</sup> Thackeray, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age*, 111.

<sup>1054</sup> Hewins, *Apologia Vol. 2*, 80. Williamson (ed.), *Bridgeman Diaries*, 104.

<sup>1055</sup> Keohane, *Party of Patriotism*, 126.

<sup>1056</sup> Hewins, *Apologia Vol. 2*, 80.

<sup>1057</sup> Fleming, *Britannia's Zealots*, 88. Sykes, *Radical Right*, 36.

described the middle-class profile of Victor Fisher, who was meant to be the face of working-class patriotic labour, as a reason he was the ideal leader for the BWL.<sup>1058</sup>

If the BWL was the working-class organisation of the Radical Right's dreams, meanwhile, the belief that it could be a 'patriotic labour' party of any size or influence was another dream that stayed a dream. The BWL might have attracted more Labour support if Labour was more anti-war. However, Labour was not an anti-war party—although the conflict did split the party—and where it opposed conscription, it also knew when to back down. Arthur Henderson, for example, appealed to the Trade Unions Congress in January 1916 that refusing conscription would lead to an election and see a landslide for the conscriptionists.<sup>1059</sup> Henderson would be praised in Amery's memoirs as an example of patriotic labour,<sup>1060</sup> but during the war that title went to the BWL. The difference between the two was that Henderson represented Labour. By contrast, Neville Chamberlain felt that the BWL's programme was too similar to constructive Unionist ideas, undermining the purpose for the BWL itself.<sup>1061</sup> The main significance of the BWL for the Radical Right was to show the latter's inability to understand or accept that working-class patriotism operated on its own terms.

As Milner acknowledged to Amery, any Radical Right movement would need support from "the Commons, the Press, and if Victor Fisher turns up trumps, the new Labour Party" if it wanted to topple Asquith.<sup>1062</sup> Milner had parliamentary admirers but no following. The same applied to the press, and he evidently never mentioned his ties to the BWL in

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<sup>1058</sup> Milner 'Enclosure: Re: Industrial Unrest', 26/05/17, PA, LG/F/38/2/5.

<sup>1059</sup> N. Mackenzie, J. Mackenzie (ed.), *The Diaries of Beatrice Webb*, (London, 2000), 362.

<sup>1060</sup> Amery, *Political Life Vol. II*, 97.

<sup>1061</sup> N. Chamberlain-Hilda Chamberlain, 19/11/17, CRL, NC18/1/138.

<sup>1062</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 127.

public,<sup>1063</sup> suggesting his hopes for the BWL never truly came to fruition. The Radical Right's long-held idea of converting the labour movement floundered as much in war time as it did in peacetime. Stubbs admitted that for all his ambitions Milner apparently lost interest in the BWL too.<sup>1064</sup> Instead, Milner felt that his role lay in aiding the war leader rather than holding the throne himself. For the Radical Right, that leader emerged when Carson resigned from the Cabinet over the lack of support for the Salonika campaign.<sup>1065</sup> Gwynne would declare him the very example of "the man" the country needed.<sup>1066</sup> Carson's resignation also opened the door for him to take up leadership of the newly formed UWC, the much larger counterpart to the UBC.

### **The Unionist War Committee and the Radical Right**

The Unionist War Committee was founded as a result of Unionist backbench frustration with the Asquith Coalition and its failure to resolve the problems that had plagued the Liberal government. The delay in conscription—with the use of schemes such as the National Register and Derby Scheme—during 1915 whittled down backbench patience until January 1916 saw the founding of the UWC. Carson, having resigned from the Cabinet, was a ready-made leader for the movement. His attack on the Cabinet as a mere debating society resonated with the UWC's own frustrations.<sup>1067</sup> That the Military Service Bill extended conscription only to unmarried men made even conscription's introduction appear half-

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<sup>1063</sup> Thackeray, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age*, 95.

<sup>1064</sup> Stubbs, 'Patriotic Labour', 753.

<sup>1065</sup> William, Gwynn (ed.), *Anvil*, 122. A. Steel-Maitland-E. Carson, 14/10/15, PRONI, D1507/B/8/9. Amery, *Political Life Vol. II*, 77. Wilson (ed.), *Rasp*, 141.

<sup>1066</sup> H.A. Gwynne-Ruby Carson, 02/03/16, PRONI, D1507/A/15/5.

<sup>1067</sup> Amery, *Political Life Vol. II*, 77.

hearted. Carson, by contrast, seemed decisive and willing to champion a different sort of politics that included pressuring the government to do more.<sup>1068</sup>

The Radical Right especially admired Carson and envisioned him as the national leader of a national policy as well as a national party, the UWC being a vital part of the latter. Gwynne sent Carson, along with Law, a copy of *Morning Post* journalist Ian Colvin's plan for a National Policy. In the document, Colvin argued that the policy's philosophy had to be,

“[T]he maxim: Britain for the British. The question of Tariff Reform is given new force and life by this appeal; it is no longer an economic but a National question. Tariff Reform as a means of fighting Germany would arouse enthusiasm in many who remain unmoved by economic arguments. ...Conscription ought not to be shirked; but when dealt with should be put on the highest ground: security for our homes...equality of sacrifice...the value of military training in the youth of the nation.” Colvin was correct to identify that “the Unionist policy of Union and Tariff Reform was devised to meet this...conflict with Germany. It derived new strength from the struggle, whereas all the Liberal cries were proven false or antiquated.”<sup>1069</sup>

Many of Colvin's recommendations neatly lined up with the Radical Right's mixture of Constructive Imperialism and pro-National Service/conscription sentiment both before and during the war, along with concern that the Unionists ought to fully embody this platform and the purported public mood. Colvin's mistake, however, would be to assume that the Unionists would not benefit from these associations, even if the Radical Right believed the Unionists were insufficiently dedicated to either.

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<sup>1068</sup> E. Carson-L. Amery 05/02/16, CA, AMEL1/3/3.

<sup>1069</sup> Wilson (ed.), *Rasp*, 149-50.



Carson himself was willing to play along. At a dinner celebrating the UWC's role in the extension of conscription to married men, Carson was celebrated with Gwynne in attendance and Milner presiding, the latter praising Carson for conscription's passage and declaring him "one of the leaders of the nation".<sup>1070</sup> Months earlier, at a reception in January 1916, Carson had endorsed the idea of a National Policy and argued that he perceived it as "a policy of the Empire and nothing else but the Empire and [its] interests."<sup>1071</sup> For Gwynne, the National Policy was legislation solely to win the war, aiming for fiscal and political Imperial Union, blocking German migration and trade, and the promotion of co-operation and co-ordination between capital and labour.<sup>1072</sup> Many of the Radical Right's pre-war ideas resonated in Gwynne's words, if enhanced by the wartime atmosphere. Two months later, at a meeting of the UWC, Carson pushed a resolution—unanimously accepted by all 130 MPs—that if a full programme of conscription was not adopted by the government, the UWC would push for Unionist exit from the Coalition.<sup>1073</sup> Bonar Law recognised that the discontent with the government had reached new and dangerous levels and that action on conscription was needed.<sup>1074</sup>

The biggest victory for the UWC was the rebellion against the government's Military Service Bill in April 1916 that aimed to extend conscription. It had been the result of compromise between Arthur Henderson, representing Labour, and the conscriptionists who had the support of the Army Council. Despite Law's warnings that the Unionists might ditch the leader himself if the Military Service Bill did not push married-men conscription far enough,

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<sup>1070</sup> *The Times*, 05/05/16, 5.

<sup>1071</sup> *The Times*, 13/01/16, 5.

<sup>1072</sup> Wilson, *Morning Post*, 128-30.

<sup>1073</sup> Adams, Poirier, *Conscription Controversy*, 153.

<sup>1074</sup> Bonar Law-J.P. Croal, 01/04/16, PA, BL/53/6/69.

Asquith continued with the bill as it was.<sup>1075</sup> When the government presented the bill in a Secret Session on 25<sup>th</sup> April, the session itself had resulted from the UWC's pressure.<sup>1076</sup> The secrecy likely helped the government avoid public humiliation, however, as Walter Long was skewered by the UWC and Asquith was forced to withdraw the bill that same day.<sup>1077</sup> The bill that replaced it was closer to the UWC's ideal, and married men were conscripted. If the UWC was celebrated by Hewins as restoring the functions of the Commons, the UWC proved the power of the legislature to assert its will on the executive.<sup>1078</sup>

For Carson, it was a triumph, and the Radical Right were ecstatic. The hope was now for the UWC to take a more independent line and work in co-operation with its Liberal counterpart, the LWC.<sup>1079</sup> Both the UWC and LWC asserted their interest in collaborating.<sup>1080</sup> Amery had approached Hewins in September 1915 to help organise a Unionist counterpart for the pro-conscription Liberals' plan for a deputation.<sup>1081</sup> The head of the LWC, Freddie Guest, was even willing in 1915 to take the initiative if the Unionists did not.<sup>1082</sup> To Gwynne, it appeared that the LWC and UWC demonstrated how "both parties have started a National Party."<sup>1083</sup> Most of the members of the LWC would become Lloyd George Liberals, those Liberals who stuck with the Coalition after Asquith's removal.

For Milner and Amery, Carson's prominence merited him a special place at the dinners of the 'Monday Night Cabal', a dining group of Milnerites that sought to promote a new government in place of Asquith's in which Carson and Lloyd George would be occasional

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<sup>1075</sup> Bonar Law-H.H. Asquith, 17/04/16, BLO, Asquith 16.

<sup>1076</sup> Fleming, *Britannia's Zealots*, 83.

<sup>1077</sup> Hewins, *Apologia Vol. 2*, 69. Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 128-9.

<sup>1078</sup> Hewins, *Apologia Vol. 2*, 13. Keohane, *Party of Patriotism*, 30.

<sup>1079</sup> Amery, *Political Life Vol. II*, 67.

<sup>1080</sup> *The Times*, 14/01/16, 9.

<sup>1081</sup> L. Amery-W.A.S. Hewins, 08/09/15, LSE, TC/6/4/1.

<sup>1082</sup> F.S. Oliver-A. Chamberlain, 26/07/15, AC14/6/35.

<sup>1083</sup> Wilson (ed.), *Rasp*, 157.

guests.<sup>1084</sup> Alvin Jackson would describe early 1916 as the high point of Carson's influence.<sup>1085</sup>

Carson's limitations remained, however. Jackson also described Carson as being happier as a complainer than the actual person making decisions.<sup>1086</sup> His health-shocks and hypochondria continued as even in January 1916 rumours spread of him making an exit from politics.<sup>1087</sup> Gwynne and Amery frequently told Carson's wife of their best wishes for his health, but coupled this with references to their hopes of him being an active politician.<sup>1088</sup> Gwynne reflected how that the potential resignation of Unionist ministers over conscription left him "in the position of a man who cries for rain and who then has his house washed away... the whole edifice is tottering and may fall at any moment; and I am not ready for it to fall yet for Carson is not well enough to come in."<sup>1089</sup> Even during vital political controversies, Carson would be missing in action. Lloyd George would blame this on Carson's new wife,<sup>1090</sup> but it appeared that Ruby Carson encouraged Carson more than discouraged him.<sup>1091</sup> She was likely aware that he did not care to be pressured into activity. She warned Amery that too many pleas to focus on politics over law risked alienating Carson entirely.<sup>1092</sup> As Maxse subtly critiqued, "Sir Edward has the enviable reputation of not reading letters."<sup>1093</sup> The Radical Right thus had to wait for Carson to feel up to the task at

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<sup>1084</sup> Amery, *Political Life Vol. II*, 81.

<sup>1085</sup> Jackson, *Life and Times*, 44.

<sup>1086</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>1087</sup> Jackson, *Redmond and Carson*, 17.

<sup>1088</sup> H.A. Gwynne-R. Carson, 24/03/16, PRONI, D1507/A/15/18. L. Amery-R. Carson, 26/03/16, PRONI, D1507/A/15/21.

<sup>1089</sup> Wilson (ed.), *Rasp*, 166-7.

<sup>1090</sup> Clark (ed.), *Innings*, 161.

<sup>1091</sup> H.A. Gwynne-R. Carson, 24/03/16, PRONI, D1507/A/15/18.

<sup>1092</sup> R. Carson-L. Amery, N.D. [02/16?], CA, AMEL1/3/3.

<sup>1093</sup> L. Maxse-R. Carson, 15/06/16, PRONI, D1507/A/17/18.

hand. His was not the stuff of a Caesar who was to win the war. Milner would complain to Amery about Carson's apparent hot/cold approach to meeting him regularly:

"He's a queer fish. We are the best of friends when we meet, but he's always engaged, when I ask to see him, and never makes any counter proposals, which is disconcerting. ...The whole thing [Monday Night Cabal] does therefore hang very much on the unknown quantity, Carson. I have a great belief in him, but I feel that, as far as he is concerned, the thing will only be a success if he goes into it *con amore* and not if he just lets himself be persuaded to take it up in a half-hearted fashion to please us. My own attitude to the thing is therefore rather an undecided one. I am prepared to go into it wholeheartedly, as I did with the 'Covenant' Movement, and...I am prepared to make any sacrifice of time and energy necessary to make it a success. But I want to see the *possibility* of success before starting..."<sup>1094</sup>

Even if Carson was ready to take command, however, the UWC would not always follow. Nor would the Radical Right, as was shown during the attempt to pass a Home Rule compromise in 1916. The Easter Rising by the Irish Republican Brotherhood had brought the Irish Question back into British politics with a bang. Lloyd George was tasked with finding a compromise. Lloyd George's proposals were effectively Home Rule for Ireland, Ulster Exclusion, and an Irish Council that was composed of representatives from the Dublin and Belfast Assemblies.<sup>1095</sup> He acquired the support of John Redmond and Edward Carson for the compromise. Robert Scally argued that Carson's position weakened after the Easter Rising as it exposed his parochial outlook.<sup>1096</sup> In fact, far from his parochialism dooming him,

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<sup>1094</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 127.

<sup>1095</sup> Secret Proposed Amendment to the 1914 Home Rule Bill, ??/06/16, PRONI, D1507/A/17/4.

<sup>1096</sup> Scally, *Social Imperialism*, 295.

it was more his moderation and pragmatism that first exposed the fragility of his grip on the UWC.

The compromise encountered furious opposition from sections of the Unionist Party, including many in the Radical Right. Maxse believed that it was another attempt by mandarins to reward revolt and override the views of 'the man in the street.'<sup>1097</sup> Maxse was not wrong that opposition within the Unionists went beyond those who would become Dogmatists in 1917-18.<sup>1098</sup> Hewins also thought little of the scheme and believed it an attempt to revive federalism.<sup>1099</sup> Beyond the Radical Right, opposition to the compromise rallied in shared outrage across the Unionists. As William Bridgeman described it, the compromise may have addressed Ulster's concerns, but not those of English Unionists.<sup>1100</sup> Selborne resigned from the Cabinet over the issue, and both Long and Lansdowne were prepared to follow him for the sake of the Southern Unionists.<sup>1101</sup> Salisbury would even invite de Broke and Hewins to join his Imperial Unionist Association to oppose the compromise.<sup>1102</sup> This development marked an early shift by the Dogmatist section of the Radical Right towards working with Salisbury. At a meeting of the UWC, Waldorf Astor, Halford Mackinder, and Ronald McNeill defended the deal on the grounds of loyalty to Carson, but the opposition won out.<sup>1103</sup> John Gretton, an active member of the UBC and Radical Right adherent, would report to Hewins that Carson was downcast at the failure of the compromise.<sup>1104</sup> The compromise would ultimately collapse over Lansdowne demanding

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<sup>1097</sup> L. Maxse-R. Carson, 15/06/16, PRONI, D1507/A/17/8. L. Maxse-Bonar Law, 06/07/16, WSRO, Maxse 473/174. L. Maxse-A. Steel-Maitland, 13/07/16, WSRO, Maxse 473/721.

<sup>1098</sup> See page 20-1, 68-9 for 'Dogmatist' definition.

<sup>1099</sup> Hewins, *Apologia Vol. 2*, 75.

<sup>1100</sup> Williamson (ed.), *Bridgeman Diaries*, 101.

<sup>1101</sup> Boyce (ed.), *Selborne Papers*, 178-80.

<sup>1102</sup> Salisbury-de Broke, 26/06/16, PA, WB/11/45. Hewins, *Apologia Vol. 2*, 84.

<sup>1103</sup> R. McNeill-E. Carson, 22/06/16, PRONI, D1507/A/17/25.

<sup>1104</sup> Hewins, *Apologia Vol. 2*, 87.

exclusion be made explicitly permanent and Redmond opposing such a statement, but the Unionist opposition proved that Carson was no Caesar of the UWC. As with the Ulster Crisis, he was a feudal king with feudal obligations. As noted in Chapter IV, Carson was open to six-county exclusion and reluctant acceptance of Home Rule's eventual passage. Some of his would-be followers, however, felt differently.

It is questionable, however, if this meant the UWC would have matched those in the Radical Right opposed to the Lloyd George compromise and followed through on revolt. Fleming has argued that the UWC's main victory was in defeating the compromise on Home Rule.<sup>1105</sup> If so, the triumph might have come from Lloyd George and Law not pressing the issue, rather than an actual confrontation. If still a victory, it might have easily turned into a defeat. Leo Maxse often based his arguments on the premise that he spoke for "the Man in the Street" and insisted to Arthur Steel-Maitland that, whatever Unionist parliamentarians did in regard to the Lloyd George compromise, "the rank and file...have long been simmering with indignation at the continual sacrifices of Unionist principles by Unionist leaders..."<sup>1106</sup> However, Maxse may have only been speaking of himself and other hardliners. There is evidence that the Unionist grassroots would have supported the compromise if their leaders committed to it, judging from how the provincial press rallied to Law's defence of the compromise.<sup>1107</sup> As Steel-Maitland warned Godfrey Locker-Lampson, the cause of the Southern Unionists was a questionable hill to die on.<sup>1108</sup>

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<sup>1105</sup> Fleming, *Britannia's Zealots*, 84.

<sup>1106</sup> L. Maxse-Bonar Law, 06/07/16, WSRO, Maxse 473/714. L. Maxse-A. Steel-Maitland, 13/07/16, WSRO, Maxse 473/721.

<sup>1107</sup> Keohane, *Party of Patriotism*, 80. Adams, *Bonar Law*, 219.

<sup>1108</sup> A. Steel-Maitland-G. Locker-Lampson, 20/06/16, National Records of Scotland, GD193/170/1/310-11.

Had Law and Lloyd George pushed the issue, the UWC might have reluctantly acquiesced.

Bridgeman believed as much when he feared Law and Carson pushing the deal onto the party. He reluctantly believed that 60% of the party would go along with the

compromise.<sup>1109</sup> The Radical Right might then have experienced a moment akin to the Nigeria Crisis a few months later, when Unionist loyalty to the party leader won out.

Instead, Lloyd George did not follow up on his promise to resign if the compromise was not accepted. Frances Stevenson, his secretary and mistress, disapproved of Lloyd George

skirting around his vow.<sup>1110</sup> Lloyd George was content to complain to Carson and offer a

further partnership with him, but otherwise accepted the defeat.<sup>1111</sup> Had Law, Lloyd George,

and Carson all fought together to push the compromise forward, it is likely that the party

grassroots might have forced the hand of the parliamentary party. The Irish Nationalist

opposition to permanent exclusion for Ulster would have still defeated the compromise,

admittedly. As it stood, however, the UWC did help ensure the rejection of the compromise,

if only because neither Lloyd George nor Law wished to fight for it. Key for the Radical Right,

meanwhile, was that there was no concerted move to act under Carson's lead and the

fragility of UWC willingness to rebel.

When Law and Carson were willing to fight against each other, the UWC gravitated towards

loyalty to Law over Carson. The Nigeria debate would symbolise both this loyalty and the

limits it had reached by October 1916. With the seizure of German colonies and assets in

Africa, a debate emerged over what to do with the trade monopolies. The Colonial Office

had sought to break up the monopolies, while Liverpool merchants wanted to make them

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<sup>1109</sup> Williamson (ed.), *Bridgeman Diaries*, 105, 107-8.

<sup>1110</sup> Taylor (ed.), *Lloyd George Diary*, 109.

<sup>1111</sup> Lloyd George-E. Carson, 03/06/16, PRONI, D1507/A/17/7,

British.<sup>1112</sup> During the debate, both Law and Carson sought to position themselves as the defenders of Tariff Reform. Carson pushed for an amendment ensuring a British monopoly and argued that the amendment was the patriotic, imperial policy. Furthermore, Carson argued it would not defy implementation of the PER as he claimed it merely replicated French policy towards Britain.<sup>1113</sup> Law, meanwhile, insisted that the government's position was Tariff Reform orthodoxy while the amendment did not represent Imperial Preference but instead locking out trade with the non-imperial world, even France.<sup>1114</sup> The 'Nigeria Debate' challenged not only Law's leadership but also the wider direction of government policy. Law, however, saved the government by making the debate a question of leadership: his or Carson's.<sup>1115</sup>

In making the vote a confidence issue, Law exposed the limitations of the UWC as a vehicle for either Carson or the Radical Right. Carson's embrace of the challenge served to alienate Unionist MPs who were otherwise sympathetic to the frustration with Law's 'soft' attitude towards Asquith.<sup>1116</sup> The size of the UWC had meant that it included average and moderate backbenchers who turned away from the threat of open revolt. During the conscription debates, members like Stanley Baldwin had moderated the threat to force a general election in late 1915 to the act of merely sending a delegation.<sup>1117</sup> Amery complained of this apparent commitment to loyalty as a barrier to effective action when the UWC would worry "at the idea of passing a resolution about universal compulsory service lest it should in any

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<sup>1112</sup> J. Stubbs, 'The Impact of the Great War on the Conservative Party', G. Peele, C. Cook (ed.), *The Politics of Reappraisal, 1918-1939*, (London, 1975).

<sup>1113</sup> *Hansard*, HC Debate, Sale of Enemy Property, 08/11/16, Vol. 87, cc352, 360.

<sup>1114</sup> *Ibid.*, cc362-3, 359-60.

<sup>1115</sup> *Ibid.*, cc. 364.

<sup>1116</sup> Williamson (ed.), *Bridgeman Diaries*, 111.

<sup>1117</sup> Keohane, *Party of Patriotism*, 48-9.



way make things awkward for Bonar Law!”<sup>1118</sup> Charles Beresford would confess to Maxse that the apparent wilful impotence of the wider Unionist backbenches drove him out of the Commons.

“The real reason I left the House of Commons was that on four separate occasions I convened meetings of Members (the most I ever got was 47) to put forward written proposals to be taken to the Prime Minister and sent to the Press. There was great enthusiasm as first, but the meetings always ended in the same way with such remarks as—‘Oh, we must be careful; we shall undermine our leaders and hurt the Government.’ The whole thing so disgusted me that when I was offered a Peerage, though it disgraced me 9 places, I accepted it, thinking I could be of more use in the House of Lords.”<sup>1119</sup>

The UWC was far from a Radical Right group, and more the bellwether for the average backbench MP. Moreover, the Radical Right itself split over the Nigeria debate. McNeill, Winterton, Rowland Hunt, George Tryon, Hewins, Charles Bathurst, John Gretton, Rupert Gwynne, Alan Burgoyne, and Richard Cooper backed Carson. However, Law was supported by Halford Mackinder, Arthur Steel-Maitland, Gilbert Parker, J.F. Remnant, Ion Hamilton Benn, and even George Touche, who had opposed the January Memorial.<sup>1120</sup> Amery was absent for much of 1916 having been called abroad, only finding out about the fall of Asquith after surviving a shipwreck.

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<sup>1118</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 128.

<sup>1119</sup> C. Beresford-L. Maxse, 10/10/16, WSRO, Maxse 473/815-6.

<sup>1120</sup> *Hansard*, HC Debate, Sale of Enemy Property, 08/11/16, Vol. 87, cc364.

It was a narrow victory for Law who recognised the danger that the Nigeria vote represented.<sup>1121</sup> For the Radical Right, however, it showed that the UWC's potential was limited to proposing conscription and opposing Home Rule.<sup>1122</sup> Even then, whether Unionist MPs might have submitted on the latter as they did on Nigeria was never tested. The UWC's main role besides promoting conscription was to assert to Law that his leadership was conditional and that he had to act to regain the confidence of his party. Law still had time. His whips had made clear to him that MPs voting with Carson considered this action as opposition to the Coalition rather than to him.<sup>1123</sup> Law finally accepted that a drastic change in government was needed. On this point, an ally had emerged for whom the Radical Right had found a new sense of admiration albeit conditional. By no means had these new supporters blinded themselves to his flaws or past conflicts, but Lloyd George's drive and effectiveness had been enough to win them over.

### **The Charlatan Statesman: David Lloyd George and the Radical Right**

Lloyd George's opposition to the Boer War had made him an early target of Radical Right contempt. During that war, his son had to be pulled out of school for bullying over his father's speeches while Lloyd George himself was almost lynched by pro-war mobs.<sup>1124</sup> He was the Chancellor of the People's Budget and the Limehouse speech who had alienated many in the Radical Right. His part in the Marconi Scandal had further fed the belief that he was a hypocritical and corrupt class-warrior. Lloyd George, however, was also the man who made the 1911 Mansion House speech and whose support for war in 1914 kept the Liberal

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<sup>1121</sup> Keohane, *Party of Patriotism*, 49.

<sup>1122</sup> Fleming, *Britannia's Zealots*, 84.

<sup>1123</sup> Adams, *Bonar Law*, 223.

<sup>1124</sup> Grigg, *People's Champion*, 53. J. Grigg, 'Lloyd George and the Boer War', A. Morris (ed.) *Edwardian Radicalism 1900-1914: Some Aspects of British Radicalism* (London, 1974), 21.

government from fracturing. His views on foreign policy had not changed,<sup>1125</sup> but the context of military competition and danger from Germany revealed different aspects of his thinking. The same went for economics when Reginald McKenna complained to Austen Chamberlain years before the war about how Lloyd George protested against the Free Trade principle of pursuing the cheapest option, even if it meant buying foreign over British goods.<sup>1126</sup> The belief that cheapness should not be the priority in trade policy was a common point of critique from the Tariff Reformers.

During the war, Lloyd George appeared to be moving further down a similar path. As Minister of Munitions after the Shells Scandal, Lloyd George proved himself capable and willing to show drive. He supported the Unionists in believing that the economy had to be geared towards the war with direction and co-ordination from the government, in contrast with the traditional Liberal idea of placing economic freedom over 'total war' plans.<sup>1127</sup> Lloyd George's push for measures such as conscription impressed parts of the Radical Right, with Milner proclaiming him the best minister within the Asquith Coalition.<sup>1128</sup> His open support for conscription appeared a repudiation of Liberalism not only to the Radical Right but also to the Liberals themselves.<sup>1129</sup> Friends such as Lord Riddell and internal opponents alike felt "he is going the same road as [Joseph] Chamberlain" in being a former Radical who departed for the Tories.<sup>1130</sup> Milner believed that his programme's best chance of success was that "Perhaps a great *Charlatan*—political scallywag, buffoon, liar, stump orator and in other respects popular favourite—may some day arise, who is nevertheless a

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<sup>1125</sup> Grigg, *Peace to War*, 127.

<sup>1126</sup> Chamberlain, *Politics From Inside*, 87.

<sup>1127</sup> Keohane, *Party of Patriotism*, 25.

<sup>1128</sup> Thompson, *Forgotten Patriot*, 315.

<sup>1129</sup> Taylor (ed.), *Lloyd George Diary*, 60-1. T. Wilson, *Downfall*, 70.

<sup>1130</sup> Riddell, *Riddell Diary*, 136-7, 104.

*statesman...and who, having attained and maintaining power by popular art, may use it for national ends.*" <sup>1131</sup> Lloyd George appeared to be that very charlatan statesman come at last.

At first, Lloyd George was fitted into the Radical Right's ideal War Cabinet as a lieutenant to Milner or an equal partner to Carson.<sup>1132</sup> Much of 1915 saw Lloyd George still suspected as an untrustworthy man who nevertheless was part of the solution to the Asquith problem, even Beresford adding in pencil "I have faith in Lloyd George, *though I do not trust him* [pencil in italics]..."<sup>1133</sup> By 1916, however, Lloyd George was being positioned as the head of a hypothetical War Cabinet. Amery would describe Lloyd George as the only man fit for "kingship" during the war other than Carson and Milner.<sup>1134</sup> The precise membership of the hypothetical War Cabinet varied, with Henry Wilson including Edward Carson, Austen Chamberlain, a Labour member, and one extra (possibly Milner, given Wilson's prior praise) serving with Lloyd George.<sup>1135</sup>

Even future opponents embraced Lloyd George's apparent potential. Gwynne felt confident enough in Lloyd George to send him plans for a Patriotic League whose platform was to win the war, protect Britain's navy, break Germany's trade and finances, and offer compensation for disabled men, under the slogan 'Britain for the British.'<sup>1136</sup> Months later, when visiting Lloyd George, he insisted that a Lloyd George-Carson partnership was essential for Britain's victory.<sup>1137</sup>

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<sup>1131</sup> G. Searle, *Country Before Party: Coalition and the Idea of 'National Government' in Modern Britain 1885-1987*, (London, 1995), 70.

<sup>1132</sup> Gollin, *Milner*, 276. Wilson (ed.), *Rasp*, 168.

<sup>1133</sup> Wilson (ed.), *Rasp*, 140.

<sup>1134</sup> Amery, *Political Life Vol. II*, 80.

<sup>1135</sup> H. Wilson-Milner, 20/04/16, BLO, Milner 352.

<sup>1136</sup> Wilson (ed.), *Rasp*, 151-2.

<sup>1137</sup> Taylor (ed.), *Lloyd George Diary*, 95.

Lloyd George welcomed the chance to work with Carson. Lloyd George was the leader of the pro-conscription Liberals while Carson led the UWC. Just as the LWC and UWC collaborated, so too did their leaders. During their attempt to resolve the post-Easter Rising situation in Ireland, Lloyd George also asked for Carson's time to discuss the need for immediate action given the deteriorating state of the war,

“We cannot allow things to remain as they are. ...The management of the war on the part of the Allies is fortuitous and flabby, and unless something is done immediately the British Empire and civilisation will sustain the greatest disaster since the days of Attila. I must therefore have a talk with you with a view to taking immediate action to force a decisive change in the control of the war.”<sup>1138</sup>

Lloyd George had even considered resigning with Carson over the Dardanelles and Asquith's refusal to commit himself to conscription.<sup>1139</sup> Riddell certainly believed that Lloyd George's resignation would lead to an alliance with Carson and the formation of a pro-‘total war’ Opposition.<sup>1140</sup> Just as Lloyd George's ties to Carson strengthened, so too did the Radical Right's appreciation for Lloyd George's talents. Even those who would remain supporters of the Lloyd George Coalition during the war—the Constructivists—were aware of his flaws and untrustworthiness, however.

The seeds of Dogmatist disillusion with Lloyd George—further discussed in Chapter VII—were sown with the *Morning Post's* criticism of Lloyd George for his complaints about CIGS William Robertson's and Commander in Chief Douglas Haig's approach to the war.<sup>1141</sup> Lloyd

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<sup>1138</sup> Lloyd George-E. Carson, 03/06/16, PRONI, D1507/A/17/7.

<sup>1139</sup> Riddell, *Riddell Diary*, 142.

<sup>1140</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>1141</sup> Wilson (ed.), *Rasp*, 98-9.

George was sceptical of the benefits of continued offensives on the Western Front and sought to redirect troops to other fronts in the east.

Gwynne would say to Asquith in 1918 that he had not supported Lloyd George during the final months of the Asquith Coalition.<sup>1142</sup> In reality, as Lloyd George and Lord Riddell observed, the *Morning Post* quickly silenced critiques of Lloyd George and returned to supporting him in November 1916 as the War Secretary began to make his move against Asquith.<sup>1143</sup>

One of the main reasons why the Radical Right accepted Lloyd George in place of Carson or Milner—the latter doing the same with the Monday Night Cabal dinners—was the acknowledgement of parliamentary realities. The Unionists lacked a majority in the House of Commons and any government would need at least a strong section of the Liberals backing it to survive. As Austen Chamberlain remarked, no Unionist government or Prime Minister would have been accepted by the Commons as it was.<sup>1144</sup> Arthur Balfour tried to explain this to W.A.S. Hewins, but the latter mocked it as “the party view.”<sup>1145</sup> Britain, however, had a party-dominated political system. The party view was the realistic view. Lloyd George was ultimately wrong to call it “an Asquith Parliament”<sup>1146</sup> but it could only be a Lloyd George Parliament otherwise. Furthermore, as Lloyd George knew, if he was to change that parliament without an election, he would need the help of the Unionist leader to do so.

Law throughout the war was seen by the Radical Right, and even his own frontbenchers, as a feeble man who was unable to stand up to Asquith.<sup>1147</sup> His apparent hesitance to force

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<sup>1142</sup> Wilson (ed.), *Rasp*, 205.

<sup>1143</sup> Riddell, *Riddell Diary*, 223.

<sup>1144</sup> Chamberlain, *Down The Years*, 115-28.

<sup>1145</sup> Hewins, *Apologia Vol. 2*, 51.

<sup>1146</sup> Taylor (ed.), *Lloyd George Diary*, 141.

<sup>1147</sup> Boyce (ed.), *Selborne Papers*, 188.

Asquith's hand on conscription or to threaten resignation especially grated on the Radical Right. Henry Wilson even wrote a scolding letter that told Law off for agreeing to the Asquith Coalition and advising him to resign.<sup>1148</sup> Wilson at least acknowledged Law's ability from the early Tariff Reform and Ulster debates.<sup>1149</sup> Others in the Radical Right were less willing to give such credit to Law. Amery's vision of a War Cabinet saw Law excluded just as Asquith would be.<sup>1150</sup> F.S. Oliver shared the belief that Law had all of Asquith's flaws, using his wartime record as supposed proof of incompetence.<sup>1151</sup>

Law's wartime leadership, however, has been defended by Adams and Keohane. For one thing, Law was willing to leave the government. Adams pointed out that Law had been willing to resign over the Dardanelles.<sup>1152</sup> Grigg agreed and noted that both Law and Lloyd George regretted not resigning with Carson.<sup>1153</sup> Crawford and Amery both acknowledged this readiness to resign, although Amery heard from Carson that Asquith purportedly tricked Law into staying on by leaving him out of the War Council, thus making it appear like pique if he did so.<sup>1154</sup> It was not the first time that Law came close to exiting the Cabinet either, as he had been prepared to join Lloyd George in resigning during the Cabinet gridlock over conscription in April 1916.<sup>1155</sup>

Law's support for the Asquith Coalition, as he put it firmly to Wilson, was rooted in the belief that an election would wreck the unity of the nation and undermine the war

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<sup>1148</sup> H. Wilson-Bonar Law, 24/03/16, PA, BL/52/4/29.

<sup>1149</sup> H. Wilson-L. Maxse, 24/03/16, WSRO, Maxse 472/638.

<sup>1150</sup> Charmley, *Lord Lloyd*, 50-1.

<sup>1151</sup> William, Gwynn (ed.), *Anvil*, 139.

<sup>1152</sup> Adams, *Bonar Law*, 201. Williamson (ed.), *Bridgeman Diaries*, 90.

<sup>1153</sup> Grigg, *Peace to War*, 317.

<sup>1154</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 126.

<sup>1155</sup> Taylor (ed.), *Lloyd George Diary*, 107.

effort.<sup>1156</sup> Keith Jeffery believed that Law's logic showed a stronger grasp of public opinion than did Wilson's.<sup>1157</sup> As for strength, Keohane argues that Law may have seemed weak, but most complaints about his lack of strength from the Radical Right emerged because he refused to do what his critics commanded.<sup>1158</sup> Law was aware that he led by the will of his followers, but he was willing to protect his authority. He would only meet National Union representatives on his terms, and rebuffed Carson on the question of submitting recruitment figures to the UWC even at the height of its unity and power.<sup>1159</sup>

Milner was one of the few in the Radical Right who appreciated that Law's position made him necessary to any move against Asquith.<sup>1160</sup> The Nigeria debate, in turn, made Law realise that party loyalty could only be tested so many times. If he did not move soon, either he would be deposed or the party would split.<sup>1161</sup> Despite tensions with Carson over the Coalition and with Lloyd George over Law being denied the Ministry of Munitions in 1915, Law agreed to join the duo in forcing a change in government.<sup>1162</sup> Law's hope, unlike Carson, was not for regime change if he could help it but for reform of the War Cabinet to reduce its numbers and have a Chair who could make decisions.<sup>1163</sup> That was why he supported Lloyd George's December ultimatum to Asquith for a small War Cabinet that excluded the Prime Minister.<sup>1164</sup> Lloyd George, in turn, felt that Law's critics did not appreciate his strengths or his necessity to the government.<sup>1165</sup>

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<sup>1156</sup> Bonar Law-H. Wilson, 31/03/16, PA, BL/53/6/68. Vincent (ed.), *Crawford Papers*, 359. Keohane, *Party of Patriotism*, 43.

<sup>1157</sup> K. Jeffery, *Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson: A Political Soldier*, (Oxford, 2006), 173-4.

<sup>1158</sup> Keohane, *Party of Patriotism*, 51. Bonar Law-E. Carson, 04/04/16, PA, BL/53/6/70.

<sup>1159</sup> Keohane, *Party of Patriotism*, 50.

<sup>1160</sup> Clark (ed.), *Good Innings*, 149.

<sup>1161</sup> Taylor (ed.), *Lloyd George Diary*, 322. Grigg, *Peace to War*, 499.

<sup>1162</sup> Grigg, *Peace to War*, 255. Adams, *Bonar Law*, 225.

<sup>1163</sup> Adams, *Bonar Law*, 227-8.

<sup>1164</sup> Lloyd George-H.H. Asquith, 01/12/16, CRL, AC15/3/2.

<sup>1165</sup> Riddell, *Riddell Diary*, 319.



It was not the Radical Right, but the partnership between Lloyd George and Law that would decide the birth and survival of the Lloyd George Coalition during the war. Lloyd George made clear to Law numerous times that the situation rested with him.<sup>1166</sup> This was not only meant to stiffen Law against Asquith. Lloyd George believed that Law made the difference between a new War Cabinet and a Lloyd George/Carson-led opposition.<sup>1167</sup> Such an outcome would have torn the Unionists and nation in two in Law's eyes, making his choice to align with Lloyd George easy. It was Law's presence in the triumvirate that allowed it to carry more weight against the 3 C's (Chamberlain, Curzon, and Robert Cecil) and Walter Long's protest at Law's initiative.<sup>1168</sup> The front bench, however, were not willing to save Asquith, and did nothing to stop Law and Lloyd George.<sup>1169</sup>

If Law was disliked from above, he maintained support from below and that party loyalty made him essential to Lloyd George. The Unionist backbench revolts were born from apparent weakness on the part of the leadership rather than from it acting over-mightily.<sup>1170</sup> Such a split left little room for the Radical Right to truly rally a coalition to change the Unionist Party, let alone the nation. During the December 1916 political crisis, where Lloyd George (given assurances of support by Law and Carson) insisted on a small War Cabinet independent of Asquith's control, Asquith's refusal leading to his own resignation, Law's support was vital for Lloyd George more than any other Unionist's. As Milner conceded, during the December showdown itself, Law proved "surprisingly sound."<sup>1171</sup> Law's

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<sup>1166</sup> Lloyd George-Bonar Law, 02/12/16, PA, BL/117/1/30.

<sup>1167</sup> Taylor (ed.), *Lloyd George Diary*, 129.

<sup>1168</sup> Grigg, *Peace to War*, 456.

<sup>1169</sup> Unionist Front Bench Letter to Asquith, 03/12/16, CRL, AC15/3/4.

<sup>1170</sup> Keohane, *Party of Patriotism*, 42.

<sup>1171</sup> Milner-V. Cecil, 05/12/16, BLO, Milner 353.

willingness to make such shifts helped keep the Unionists united and the Radical Right marginalised.

By contrast, Carson was out of London for much of the confrontation between Asquith and Lloyd George, having to be fetched and brought back.<sup>1172</sup> Lloyd George even claimed to Frances Stevenson that he had to do more to prompt Carson into action than he did Law with Carson claiming to be “sick of the whole thing, but D. tells him it is his duty to come in and help him.”<sup>1173</sup> Once again, the real Edward Carson proved very different from the Radical Right Caesar. Milner, meanwhile, played no inside role and had to wait for the announcement of Asquith’s resignation in December 1916. If the press played a role, it was not the *Morning Post* or *National Review* but *The Times* with its article celebrating Asquith’s marginalisation that made Asquith demand a larger War Cabinet chaired by himself.<sup>1174</sup> The Radical Right’s role in Asquith’s collapse was minimal at best, but it celebrated his removal all the same.

Asquith’s departure did not bring about a Radical Right regime. The Lloyd George Coalition would be an alliance between Lloyd George and the Unionists, which included the Unionist front bench that Milner disdained. The only Unionist capable of forcing the front bench into line was Law, who firmly rebuffed Long’s demand that Law answer to him and the 3 Cs.<sup>1175</sup> Even so, neither Law nor Lloyd George had any intention of casting aside Chamberlain, Long, or Balfour, the latter of whom Lloyd George was pleased to have in his Cabinet.<sup>1176</sup> It did not hurt that they helped secure his support among the Unionists, as did making Law the leader

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<sup>1172</sup> Clark (ed.), *Good Innings*, 161.

<sup>1173</sup> Taylor (ed.), *Lloyd George Diary*, 126.

<sup>1174</sup> Asquith-Lloyd George, 01/12/16, CRL, AC5/3/3.

<sup>1175</sup> Adams, *Bonar Law*, 236.

<sup>1176</sup> Scally, *Social Imperialism*, 341. Riddell, *Riddell Diary*, 230.

of the Commons. That this pleased the Unionists, while Milner was left frustrated by the presence of “the Unionist Mandarins” in the Cabinet, reveals the disparity between the Unionist mainstream and the Radical Right.<sup>1177</sup>

The Unionist frontbenchers had no more trust for Lloyd George than the Radical Right did. In fact, Lloyd George believed that for all the criticism of Law’s hesitance by critics, it was the refusal of his fellow Unionist frontbenchers to act alongside him that limited Law’s span of action.<sup>1178</sup> For example, Austen Chamberlain still had enough influence to insist on Milner’s inclusion in the War Cabinet.<sup>1179</sup>

Lloyd George would blame the Unionist front bench for Carson not entering the War Cabinet and instead being given the Admiralty.<sup>1180</sup> Evidence shows, however, that lobbying from the King and too much faith in Carson’s capabilities as an administrator decided his role, while Carson refused to push or defend his case.<sup>1181</sup> Chamberlain was content to have Milner with Carson in the War Cabinet or for Milner to take Carson’s proposed place. Milner’s entry into the War Cabinet provided the best means of Constructivist entry into the government but the means of his appointment revealed the Radical Right’s failure. It remained dependent on support from the party machine or the grassroots support in order to carry influence. Law even warned Amery that he was not popular in Parliament.<sup>1182</sup> The Radical Right’s own part in setting up the Lloyd George Coalition was primarily in giving the

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<sup>1177</sup> N. Chamberlain-Ida, 09/12/16, CRL, NC18/1/92. Riddell, *Riddell Diary*, 231. Milner-V. Cecil, 05/12/16, BLO, Milner 353.

<sup>1178</sup> Grigg, *Peace to War*, 333.

<sup>1179</sup> A. Chamberlain-Chelmsford, 08/12/16, CRL, AC15/3/8.

<sup>1180</sup> Grigg, *Peace to War*, 482-5.

<sup>1181</sup> Jackson, *Life and Times*, 47-8.

<sup>1182</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 132.

means for casual and political meetings through the Monday Night Cabal and in being part of a broader Unionist backlash against the Asquith Coalition.

### Conclusion

The peak of the Radical Right's individual influence was in the July Days where face-to-face lobbying pushed the Unionist leadership towards a more active reiteration of its policy.

After this, however, the Radical Right became dispersed as many went to the Front while the remnants had to rely on alliances within Parliament. Fleming was correct that the UBC and UWC showed that pressing for reform within the party was more viable than splitting from it and would shape the post-war Right's approach.<sup>1183</sup> The Radical Right, however, also had to contend with the limitations of working within such party coalitions. The UBC was closer to a Radical Right group, but its influence was limited to 1915 and formed part of the Tariff Reform revival in which the Radical Right participated but did not lead. As for the UWC, the Radical Right never managed to capture the group, nor did it become a Carson-for-leader vehicle, as shown during both the Irish Home Rule controversy and the Nigeria debate. The closest the UWC came to alignment with the Radical Right was over conscription (which the Unionist Party was agreed on) and Ireland (which might not have been the case if Lloyd George, Law, and Carson had insisted on the compromise).

The 'legion of leagues', meanwhile, disintegrated, with the only success story until 1917 being the TRL. As Thackeray has shown, the TRL's success came down to it offering a wider and more inclusive appeal to the nation than did the militarist leagues.<sup>1184</sup> This would not stop it from collapsing in 1917, but that collapse would come from a split over how to

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<sup>1183</sup> Fleming, *Britannia's Zealots*, 91.

<sup>1184</sup> Thackeray, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age*, 6-7.

approach the emerging National Party. The Radical Right thus had to rely on individual lobbying and waiting for a leader to emerge who could carry the 'National Policy' its adherents believed was necessary to win the war against Germany. Milner, however, was too remote and Carson was unwilling to commit and unable to deliver. Amery recognised another problem with Carson's that the UWC embodied: "He [Carson] is a splendid leader if he has to sustain and advise unanimous followers. He can't quite control and make unanimous a body that is divided."<sup>1185</sup> As a result, the Radical Right turned to Lloyd George, who in turn relied on Law. Law himself would be moved by party pressure, but this was only achieved through the Radical Right collaborating with Unionists outside its ideological sphere. In the actual events in December that doomed Asquith, the Radical Right played a minimal, if any, role.

As Keohane noted, however, Milner's entry into the War Cabinet would be the second highpoint of Radical Right influence, and the likes of Amery, William Ormsby-Gore, Charles Bathurst, and J.W. Hills were given official roles in the new ministry. The unanimous endorsement of the principle of Imperial Preference at the 1917 Imperial War Conference (IWC) only furthered hopes that the war would bring about the first steps towards Imperial Union. These minor victories, however, did not end the divide between the Constructivists, inclined to support Lloyd George, and the Dogmatists, who could not overcome their suspicion of the Prime Minister. The Radical Right's unity was reliant not on formal organisational ties but on a common vision of both problems and solutions, and disagreements over the Lloyd George Coalition—followed by victory in war—spelt the end of the Radical Right in 1917-18.

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<sup>1185</sup> L. Amery-V. Cecil, 25/04/16, BLO, Violet Milner, 31.

The TRL, the last of the Radical Right leagues, would shatter as a result of an attempt to rally it behind the Dogmatist-founded National Party. The splintered TRL would join the NSL, NL, and IML in having collapsed by 1918. Victory for the nation in 1918 would spell defeat for the Edwardian Radical Right: its platform constructed from a belief that Britain faced a looming threat and that imperial consolidation coupled with National Service was necessary for survival. With the eventual defeat of Germany, however, and the public's rejection of 'hard' militarism, the Radical Right's platform beyond Constructive Imperialism was outdated both materially and ideologically, while its internal ties had dissolved. The closest attempt made during the war to forming a Radical Right group—the National Party—would display the extent to which the Radical Right both needed the Unionist Party and failed to convert it. The Radical Right's failure to build a machine, find a leader, or rally the Unionists came into the open as it finally disintegrated. By 1918, the Radical Right would have been separated and subsumed into different movements, all under the Unionist umbrella.

## VII. The End of the Edwardian Radical Right, 1917-1918

### Introduction

This chapter will, with a broadly chronological approach, detail the disintegrative process of the Radical Right and aftermath leading to the 1918 general election. By 1917-18, the Radical Right had already dissolved into separate circles, primarily Constructivists who worked within the Lloyd George Coalition and Dogmatists who were outside. There were common ideas on Constructive Imperialism and the need for a strong army, but much of what made the Edwardian Radical Right what it was had dissolved.

Neither 'Constructivist' nor 'Dogmatist' were contemporary terms, any more than 'Radical Right.' The former terms are creations of this thesis. Another point to make is that Constructivists were not defined solely by being in office nor were they perfectly content in office (Charles Bathurst resigning during the war)<sup>1186</sup> but they all avoided outright opposition and generally kept faith in Lloyd George. It would only be after the war that they would come to oppose him. As Green distinguished between the politics of Maxse and of William Bridgeman,<sup>1187</sup> the Constructivists could collaborate with those more moderate figures in the Unionists like the latter and Lloyd George Coalition whereas the Dogmatists could not. This was despite the Constructivists sharing similar blind spots and frustration as the Dogmatists held with the Unionist leadership.<sup>1188</sup>

The formation of the Lloyd George Coalition fed the hopes of the Radical Right that Lloyd George would be the Prime Minister to embody its ideology. Few, if any, were under illusions about him. That his rise to power brought Milner and Carson with him and excluded

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<sup>1186</sup> A.F. Cooper, *British Agricultural Policy, 1912-1936: A Study in Conservative Politics*, (Manchester, 1989), 35.

<sup>1187</sup> Green, *Crisis of Conservatism*, 239-41.

<sup>1188</sup> Williamson (ed.), *Bridgeman Diaries*, 230.

the Asquithian Liberals pleased the Radical Right all the more.<sup>1189</sup> The hopes that Lloyd George might be the next Joseph Chamberlain were encouraged further by the application of the principle of equality between Britain and the Dominions at the 1917 Imperial War Conference and the unanimity with which Imperial Preference was accepted.<sup>1190</sup> It did appear as if Lloyd George was the Prime Minister to deliver the 'National Policy' sought by the Radical Right.

The dreamt-of triumvirate of Lloyd George, Milner, and Carson, however, disintegrated. Law had taken Milner's place as the third man in the anti-Asquith trio. When Milner actually achieved a place in the inner circle, Carson had lost his owing to his failure as an administrator in the Admiralty.<sup>1191</sup> Milner had more luck as he became a confidant of Lloyd George during the war years and used his position to secure acolytes like Amery entry into office when Austen Chamberlain had warned of a scarcity of places. Those like Amery, William Ormsby-Gore, George Tryon, and others who joined the government embraced their role and would reach ministerial rank within the Unionist Party, if never attaining leadership, during and after the coalition; the willingness to continue working within the front bench defined the Constructivists.

Others in the Radical Right, however, were disillusioned quickly. By mid-1917, the Dogmatists—those who were unable to leave the margins and backbenches of the Unionist Party—revolted against Lloyd George. A key example was Lloyd George's dispute with Robertson and Haig. Whereas Milner and his circle supported Lloyd George, the Dogmatists were loyal to the right of the military to have no civilian interference whatsoever. The

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<sup>1189</sup> Amery, *Political Life Vol. II*, 98. William, Gwynn (ed.), *Anvil*, 163. L. Maxse-L. Amery, 29/12/16, WSRO, AMEL1/3/4.

<sup>1190</sup> L. Maxse-L. Amery, 27/12/16, WSRO, Maxse 473/857-8. Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 235.

<sup>1191</sup> William, Gwynn (ed.), *Anvil*, 173. Thompson, *Forgotten Patriot*, 337. Jackson, *Life and Times*, 49.



Dogmatists did not target Milner specifically, but the likes of Amery were free game for Gwynne to curse as “a little pipsqueak who knows as much about strategy as I know about astronomy.”<sup>1192</sup>

The Dogmatists primarily sought two means of fighting Lloyd George. The first was the National Party, a splinter-party from the Unionists, which was the closest thing to a Radical Right party, and the second was in Parliament, particularly via the UWC in 1918. The National Party was not purely a Dogmatist affair, as Amery and F.S. Oliver were involved in discussions prior to its formation. When the National Party went public, however, only a handful of MPs and Peers were willing to break ranks, while Milner’s presence in the War Cabinet was enough for sympathetic Constructivists to stay with the Unionists. Henry Page Croft’s efforts to strengthen the National Party only destroyed the TRL in the attempt. The National Party was a dead letter from the start.

Within Parliament, some Dogmatists hoped that the UWC could be revived as an anti-Lloyd George vehicle over the question of ‘press barons’ being appointed to the Cabinet and Lloyd George’s escalating feud with Robertson and Haig. The same parliamentary realities and perceived need for national unity that preserved Asquith until December 1916, however, worked in Lloyd George’s favour, and Law and Lloyd George were able to contain the Right.<sup>1193</sup> Even the Irish conscription controversy (the announcement of conscription in Ireland in 1918 met with extensive outrage) would be resolved by the end of the war. Despite Dogmatist attempts, the National Party failed to be an opposition outside Parliament, as did the UWC within Parliament.

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<sup>1192</sup> Wilson (ed.), *Rasp*, 271.

<sup>1193</sup> Fleming, *Britannia’s Zealots*, 77.

The far-right by-election successes of 1917-18 have been associated with the Radical Right, given the anti-German and 'win the war' rhetoric of the Independent Right. The eccentric Noel Pemberton-Billing and the swindler Horatio Bottomley's projects enjoyed greater success than the National Party did. The Radical Right, however, rejected Billing and Bottomley and believed them more dangerous than useful.<sup>1194</sup> Where there was collaboration, it was focused mostly, if not solely, on pressing for an enhancement of the internment and anti-alien policies of the Lloyd George Coalition. The First World War saw a surge in xenophobia primarily aimed at Germans in Britain, but also targeted Jews as antisemitism began to rise in importance and intensity among the Radical Right, the Dogmatists especially but not exclusively.

The surge in xenophobia, while somewhat beneficial to the Radical Right and later its remnants, did not prevent the public from embracing liberal internationalist ideas such as the League of Nations. Given the success of the NWAC's rhetoric and its ties to old liberal-internationalist ideas embodied by the League, the public evidently disagreed with the Radical Right's more militarist perspective on the ideal post-war world. Britain was willing to become a 'peaceable' country in mind as well as method, which left little room for the Radical Right's aggressively militaristic worldview.<sup>1195</sup>

The Radical Right's ideology rested not on a foundation of social gatherings or formal political cliques but instead a common set of agreed-upon plagues that infested Britain and cures that would alleviate Britain's decline and enable it to retain world supremacy. The common solution for both Constructive and Dogmatists remained Constructive Imperialism

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<sup>1194</sup> Wilson (ed.), *Rasp*, 293.

<sup>1195</sup> Thackeray, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age*, 127.

with National Service during the war, as well as the need for peace through victory, but the means for that solution brought dispute. For Constructivists, Lloyd George was to be the charlatan statesman who would fulfil his duty as the next Joseph Chamberlain, whilst to Dogmatists he represented the problem. This disagreement signalled the end of the Radical Right, after two years of wartime marginalisation, and the victory against Germany that had been sought for would in fact end any chance of resurrection for the Radical Right's specific ideology.

### **The Constructivists and the Dogmatists**

'Constructivist' and 'Dogmatist' are not contemporary terms, but ones assigned by this dissertation to describe the split of the Radical Right. Dogmatists was chosen to describe those who could not even compromise with the Lloyd George Coalition for more than a year and spent the wartime and post-war years on the political margins, if not out of politics all together. Constructivists, meanwhile, is a descriptor for those who were able to support the government during the war and in the immediate post-war years, only to break with it by the early 1920s over the lack of a 'constructive' programme. Constructivists were moderate only relative to the Dogmatists, Leo Amery being a prime example of one able to rise the political ranks relative to Dogmatists like Page Croft or Leo Maxse, but still regarded by more mainstream Unionist/Conservatives as an uncompromising hardliner. The key, however, is that this wartime split helped end the Radical Right. Given its ties were more ideological than organisational, the loss of the common worldview (specifically whether Lloyd George was part of the solution or problem) that held the Radical Right together represented its own demise. After the war, while those who had been adherents and were still in politics would come together again—primarily as Constructive Imperialists—the changed domestic

and global political environment left no room for a programme like the Radical Right's, giving no chance of a return after the 1917-18 demise.

The Constructivists were not enamoured with Lloyd George. They saw themselves as less members of a Lloyd George 'National Party' so much as the man being the figurehead of their movement. Law envisioned much the same, only for the Unionist Party by making him as reliant on it as Joseph Chamberlain had been.<sup>1196</sup> In turn, the new Prime Minister knew that his new supporters' loyalty was conditional on his utility to them.<sup>1197</sup> By no means would Lloyd George be powerless, but a man like Milner was believed necessary. Milner's acolytes like F.S. Oliver believed "[Lloyd George] has his faults...but if he can only be kept ballasted I feel sure that he will win the war."<sup>1198</sup> Milner would find working with the Prime Minister exhausting and the 'Welsh Wizard' impossible to pin down.<sup>1199</sup> Lloyd George was admired by the Constructivists, and even Dogmatists originally, but many also felt they had to keep an eye on him.

This did not preclude some affection. Lloyd George found himself liking Milner as well for their similar background and belief in social reform.<sup>1200</sup> The entry of Milner and Carson into the Cabinet was enough to calm the Constructivists' fears. Amery even hoped that Carson's entry into the War Cabinet by the end of 1917 was an early move towards supplanting Law as the leader of the Unionists.<sup>1201</sup> The opposite turned out to be the case, in that Carson's move was to get him out of a military department and into a position where administrative ability mattered less. The Constructivists, however, had better luck, with many experiencing

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<sup>1196</sup> Barnes, Ramsden, *Age of Balfour and Baldwin*, 109.

<sup>1197</sup> Taylor (ed.), *Lloyd George Diary*, 148.

<sup>1198</sup> William, Gwynn (ed.), *Anvil*, 164. J. Grigg, *Lloyd George: War Leader, 1916-1918*, (London, 2002), 232-3.

<sup>1199</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 181.

<sup>1200</sup> Riddell, *Riddell Diary*, 232, 243.

<sup>1201</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 163.

their first time in office. Amery was made one of the secretaries of the War Cabinet<sup>1202</sup> while J.W. Hills and Charles Bathurst were given roles in the Ministry of Munitions and Ministry of Food respectively.<sup>1203</sup> Amery was even offered a job at the Colonial Office until it was given to Hewins instead. In Hewins's case, he hoped to merge the Tariff Commission into the Colonial Office to institutionally embed its efforts.<sup>1204</sup>

It was not only patronage that the Constructivists enjoyed but also influence on policy. Selborne and Milner's food proposals were finally accepted. On top of that, the Corn Production Act to boost internal agriculture was passed in what Riddell believed was a break with Free Trade and Hewins felt was the death of Liberalism.<sup>1205</sup>

The biggest Constructivist victory, however, was what seemed to be victory in the Tariff Reform crusade. With unanimity for Imperial Preference in the Imperial War Cabinet, Joseph Chamberlain's aim had seemingly been fulfilled.<sup>1206</sup> The demands of the PER were written off as being perfectly compatible with Tariff Reform by simply putting inter-Allied preference on top of Imperial Preference but prioritising the latter no matter what pressure was brought to bear.<sup>1207</sup> Lloyd George had been seen by his mistress as an eventual Tariff Reformer since before the war.<sup>1208</sup> Now, for the Constructivists, it did appear as if Lloyd George was fulfilling his destiny as the new Joseph Chamberlain.

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<sup>1202</sup> Amery, *Political Life Vol. II*, 92.

<sup>1203</sup> Riddell, *Riddell Diary*, 278. 'John Waller Hills', ODNB. [Last accessed 14/12/2021; <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-45568>]. 'Charles Bathurst', ODNB. [Last accessed 14/12/2021; <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-30642>].

<sup>1204</sup> Hewins, *Apologia Vol. 2*, 103.

<sup>1205</sup> Riddell, *Riddell Diary*, 243. Hewins, *Apologia Vol. 2*, 140.

<sup>1206</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 151, 158.

<sup>1207</sup> Amery-Page Croft, 07/03/17, CA, AMEL1/3/6.

<sup>1208</sup> Taylor (ed.), *Lloyd George Diary*, 144.

Yet there were limits to the Constructivists' victories. Amery would admit in his memoirs that he had badly misinterpreted the IWC in 1917 as a final victory for Tariff Reform.<sup>1209</sup> Lloyd George's interest in imperial affairs was always short-term and he gave little thought to grand imperial ambitions.<sup>1210</sup> The IWC itself did not go as far as Milner and Amery hoped it would. If anything, their aggressive approach backfired. Hewins believed Milner had pushed the matter too hard and alienated the Dominions.<sup>1211</sup> As for Hewins himself, his promotion into the Colonial Office came less from genuine ideological sympathy by Lloyd George than from his position as a troublemaker.<sup>1212</sup> As for the government positions, many were junior and secured through Milner's patronage. J.W. Hills, for example, believed that his career had ended with the acceptance of the administrative post.<sup>1213</sup> Arthur Steel-Maitland, meanwhile, complained about his lack of Cabinet rank despite the promises given to him by Law.<sup>1214</sup> Milner also played favourites. Amery, his protégé and legacy-bearer, was secured the best roles Milner could get him, whereas Waldorf Astor needed Garvin's help to gain a job.<sup>1215</sup> George Lloyd cited Milner's lack of outreach to him as a reason he chose to stay in the army and not return to politics.<sup>1216</sup>

Nor did the BWL benefit much from Milner's entry into the War Cabinet. By 1918, the BWL were so irrelevant that Lloyd George was barely aware of them.<sup>1217</sup> As for the group's best

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<sup>1209</sup> Amery, *Political Life Vol. II*, 106-7.

<sup>1210</sup> Thompson, *Imperial Britain*, 170.

<sup>1211</sup> Thompson, *Forgotten Patriot*, 338-9.

<sup>1212</sup> Hewins alleges in his diary [Hewins, *Apologia Vol. 2*, 254] of a vote where the government almost lost that Law apparently said it would have doomed the government. *Hansard*, HC Debate, New Ministries Bill, 02/08/17, Vol. 96 cc2414.

<sup>1213</sup> 'John Waller Hills', ODNB. [Last accessed 14/12/2021; <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-45568>].

<sup>1214</sup> A. Steel-Maitland-Bonar Law, 19/07/17, PA, BL/82/2/10.

<sup>1215</sup> Gollin, *Milner*, 379.

<sup>1216</sup> Charmley, *Lord Lloyd*, 63.

<sup>1217</sup> Thackeray, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age*, 95.

chance of survival, local Unionist parties complained at having to stand down for BWL seats while Victor Fisher proved an alienating personality to the Unionists.<sup>1218</sup> Fisher's criticism of the introduction of Irish conscription in 1918 won him few friends.<sup>1219</sup> The BWL would reach its peak in 1917 with rising branches and membership numbers.<sup>1220</sup> Amery even hoped in November 1917 that it would be the "Unionist Labour Party" he had spent years before trying to create.<sup>1221</sup> In a year's time, however, the BWL was regarded by Unionists as an awkward companion at best and by Labour as a nail to be hammered down.

With the January 1918 constitution of the Labour Party agreed upon, BWL MPs were ordered to return to the Labour fold or face being cast out.<sup>1222</sup> Many of its MPs chose the former, while those who chose the latter responded with too much aggression for the BWL's own good. The Unionist Party initially welcomed its attacks on pacifist meetings, but by 1918 preferred to work with the National War Aims Committee (NWAC) when it came to mobilising public support for the war.<sup>1223</sup> The BWL was too violent for the Unionist Party by that time and had alienated most of the voters it was meant to gain.<sup>1224</sup>

In the general election itself, the BWL likely took working-class votes that the Unionists would have otherwise won, while its MPs would become Lloyd George Liberals.<sup>1225</sup> The BWL's sole achievement was defeating Arthur Henderson and Ramsay MacDonald with the aid of 'the coupon', a document signalling that a candidate was endorsed by the Lloyd

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<sup>1218</sup> Blake (ed.), *Sanders Diaries*, 101-2, 105-7.

<sup>1219</sup> *British Citizen and Empire Monthly*, 13/04/18, 173.

<sup>1220</sup> Thompson, *Forgotten Patriot*, 341.

<sup>1221</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 178.

<sup>1222</sup> R. Douglas, 'The National Democratic Party and the British Worker's League', *Historical Journal*, 15:3, (1972), 540.

<sup>1223</sup> Thackeray, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age*, 106.

<sup>1224</sup> N. Chamberlain-Ida Chamberlain, 29/06/18, CRL, NC18/1/174. N. Chamberlain-Ida Chamberlain, 16/02/18, CRL, NC18/1/153.

<sup>1225</sup> Douglas, 'British Worker's League', 542. Keohane, *Party of Patriotism*, 127.

George Coalition.<sup>1226</sup> Any joy from such victories soured, however, as Victor Fisher lost his own seat when the local Unionists refused to stand aside for him.<sup>1227</sup> The patriotic labour experiment thus died a miserable death in 1918, and so ended another project of the Radical Right.

Even so, the Constructivists were content with the Lloyd George Coalition and believed it the best government to win the war.<sup>1228</sup> The Dogmatists, however, lost faith within six months. The Dogmatists primarily consisted of journalists such as Gwynne and Maxse, but included parliamentarians such as Page Croft, Richard Cooper, Charles Beresford, and Lord Amptill. Where the Constructivists could unite around Milner, the Dogmatists were much more disparate. They were ultimately unable to reconcile themselves with the Lloyd George Coalition, even if some had trouble articulating the grounds for their actual opposition. Winterton would describe them as having more sincerity than brains.<sup>1229</sup>

Many of them were cautiously optimistic about the new coalition, if more because Asquith was finally removed and Maxse hoped “we can keep his nose in the mud, though I believe he entertains wild hope of resurrection.”<sup>1230</sup> By mid-1917, that faith was shattered and curdled into frustration with Lloyd George, especially on the matter of military strategy. Dogmatists believed that the road to victory lay via respecting Robertson and Haig’s authority and giving them total deference in military affairs.<sup>1231</sup> To Gwynne, for example, even when he supported Lloyd George in 1916, he complained that the then-Secretary of

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<sup>1226</sup> Blake (ed.), *Sanders Diaries*, 122.

<sup>1227</sup> V. Fisher-A. Steel-Maitland, 13/01/19, Scottish Record Office, GD193/274/57.

<sup>1228</sup> Amery, *Political Life Vol. 2*, 172. Gwynn (ed.), *Anvil*, 340-343.

<sup>1229</sup> Turnour, *Orders*, 80.

<sup>1230</sup> Wilson (ed.), *Rasp*, 211. L. Maxse-L. Amery, 29/12/16, CA, AMEL1/3/4.

<sup>1231</sup> Wilson (ed.), *Rasp*, 219.



State for War did not simply submit to Robertson and Haig's judgement.<sup>1232</sup> Lloyd George's refusal to do this marked him out as a faulty war leader who had to be removed. Gwynne reached the point of performing mental gymnastics to explain why, despite his having opposed Asquith before, the ex-Prime Minister might be a better war leader given a second chance.<sup>1233</sup>

Few other Dogmatists reached such a point, and Maxse did not try to dispute Amery's assertion that Asquith would have lost the war by August 1917.<sup>1234</sup> Beresford came close with supporting Asquith as Chancellor, but only under Carson as Prime Minister. Some Dogmatists were more realistic in their political judgement. Page Croft even warned the Constructivist F.S. Oliver to avoid mention of rule by soldiers in the National Party manifesto,

"...so many senior officers have proved putrid in this war that even our citizen soldier might hesitate to quite agree. I like the phrase...but can we risk so bold a statement? There is to me a great distinction between 'the man who has fought' and 'the soldier.' ...our generals who are commonly known as 'the soldiers' and who were admirable for an army of 50000 men but have not shone in the army of two million in any way except the courage of a mad bull."<sup>1235</sup>

What united the Dogmatists regardless was the belief that the Western Front was the only place where victory could be won.<sup>1236</sup>

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<sup>1232</sup> Woodward, *Lloyd George and the Generals*, 88.

<sup>1233</sup> Wilson (ed.), *Rasp*, 205.

<sup>1234</sup> L. Amery-L. Maxse, 03/08/17, WSRO, Maxse 474/163.

<sup>1235</sup> C. Wrigley, "In Excess of Their Patriotism': The National Party and Threats of Subversion", C. Wrigley (ed.), *Warfare, Diplomacy, and Politics: Essays in Honour of A.J.P. Taylor*, (London, 1986), 102.

<sup>1236</sup> L. Maxse-L. Amery, 29/12/16, CA, AMEL1/3/4.

Constructivists, by contrast, sided with Lloyd George and believed that Robertson and Haig were wasting too many men for too few victories. Milner became aggressive in his denunciation of Robertson and Haig and joined Law in urging Lloyd George to stand up to the military men.<sup>1237</sup> The key moment was the debate over the Flanders Offensive during the latter half of 1917, where the mounting casualties led to Milner's near-total alienation from Robertson and Haig, almost surpassing Lloyd George's.<sup>1238</sup> Henry Wilson, once admired by all the Radical Right, became seen by the Constructivists as one of the four key men to winning the war,<sup>1239</sup> while Dogmatists' prior desire for him to become CIGS in 1915 pivoted to disgust at his succeeding Robertson in that very role in February 1918.<sup>1240</sup> Milner, however, felt that Wilson's greater flexibility over the Western Front, if still supportive of prioritising that front, would mean his status as CIGS would improve civilian-military relations.<sup>1241</sup> The two sides disagreed over the causes of the initial success of Germany's March 1918 offensive. Amery blamed Haig's refusal to engage in war game conferences where Herbert Studd and Hereward Wake previously outlined a scenario similar to the offensive while Percy blamed Lloyd George for 'starving' the Fifth Army of troops it needed.<sup>1242</sup>

The adherents of the Radical Right were bound together by a common ideological thread. This meant that there was no single event whereby the adherents parted ways or separated into rigid blocs. By mid-1917, however, the common view on the problems plaguing Britain

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<sup>1237</sup> Milner-Lloyd George, 08/02/18, PA, LG/F/38/3/10. Riddell, *Riddell Diary*, 268.

<sup>1238</sup> D. French, *The Strategy of the Lloyd George Coalition, 1916-1918*, (Oxford, 2002), 149, 218.

<sup>1239</sup> Lloyd George, Alfred Milner, and Maurice Hankey, the Cabinet Secretary, were the other three. Amery, *Political Life Vol. II*, 172. William, Gwynn (ed.), *Anvil*, 343-4.

<sup>1240</sup> Jeffery, *Political Soldier*, 150. Wilson (ed.), *Rasp*, 260.

<sup>1241</sup> French, *Strategy of the Lloyd George Coalition*, 220.

<sup>1242</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 210. Amery, *Political Life Vol. II*, 139. A. Percy-L. Maxse, 20/08/18, WSRO, Maxse 475/324.

and the solutions was lost. For the Constructivists, the answer lay with Lloyd George, while the Dogmatists, if lacking a clear alternative, felt Lloyd George was part of the problem. The Edwardian Radical Right broke up into separate strands, all of which, even the National Party by the early 1920s, would be subsumed into the Unionist Party.

The Constructivists could at least claim some influence via their presence in the government, if reliant on ties to Milner, the Unionists, and Lloyd George. Yet Constructivists also failed to appreciate the strength of party loyalties, as was shown when Lloyd George had to remind Amery that Walter Long had backing from MPs and so could not be cast aside.<sup>1243</sup> The Dogmatists, meanwhile, failed both within and outside Parliament in garnering influence. The main role they played was to begin joining with Salisbury to form the post-war Die-Hards. As Fleming observed, during the First World War the Right proved incapable of uniting as a solid bloc.<sup>1244</sup> Henry Page Croft's attempt to remedy this weakness would only exacerbate the problem and destroy the last of the 'legion of leagues'.

### **The National Party and the Death of the TRL**

The National Party's main impact in 1917 would be the splintering, and thus demise, of the TRL, which until then had been the main and most successful pressure group that Radical Right adherents participated in. Page Croft identified himself as a soldier returning from the Western Front at the urging of the generals, to help put the Home Front to rights.<sup>1245</sup> In his memoirs, he described himself as a politician in name only and truly a soldier for the first half of the war.<sup>1246</sup> Philip Williamson was more sceptical, and highlighted Page Croft's

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<sup>1243</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 216-7.

<sup>1244</sup> Fleming, *Britannia's Zealots*, 96.

<sup>1245</sup> Croft, *Strife*, 110, 128.

<sup>1246</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

conflict with his divisional general over his political activities.<sup>1247</sup> Page Croft admitted that his combined use of his positions as a soldier on the ground and as an MP to advance what he felt were the best policies saw him criticised by his superior for breaking the chain of command. He further confessed that such tensions made Henry Wilson's offer to return to Parliament tempting.<sup>1248</sup>

Page Croft's political activities certainly went beyond military affairs with his part in the 1916 TRL 'New Crusade' against businesses that opposed the PER.<sup>1249</sup> He would also raise the vote of thanks to Carson and Gwynne during the UWC dinner in January 1916 where Gwynne articulated his 'National Policy.'<sup>1250</sup> Whatever the precise validity of his narrative, Page Croft returned to Parliament with a sense of alienation from the state of politics that drove him to launch the National Party.

Discussions over a 'National Party' were not limited to Dogmatists like Page Croft or Alan Percy. The Constructivists Leo Amery and F.S. Oliver expressed interest in the idea, with the latter even drafting the National Party's manifesto.<sup>1251</sup> Milner himself in 1915 hoped for "a group of independent 'Nationalists.'" to form the nucleus of a National Party.<sup>1252</sup> Another figure briefly involved in talks was Henry Wilson. Wilson had become depressed with his lack of advancement in the military in part owing to his partisan aid to the Unionists during the Ulster Crisis. He thought of moving into politics, with Amery, Maxse, Page Croft, and Wilson's aide-de-camp Vere Ponsonby, 2<sup>nd</sup> Viscount Duncannon (a Unionist MP and

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<sup>1247</sup> Williamson (ed.), *Bridgeman Diaries*, 134.

<sup>1248</sup> Croft, *Strife*, 102-3, 110.

<sup>1249</sup> Thackeray, 'Crisis of the Tariff Reform League', 56.

<sup>1250</sup> K. Wilson, 'National Party Spirits: Backing Into The Future', M. Hughes, M. Seligmann, (ed.), *Leadership In Conflict 1914-1918*, (Barnsley, 2000), 244.

<sup>1251</sup> Sykes, *Radical Right*, 40.

<sup>1252</sup> Wrigley, 'Excess', 99.

adherent of the Radical Right) encouraging him.<sup>1253</sup> Wilson envisioned a Commons seat in Ulster or England and a seat in the War Cabinet beside Milner, Lloyd George, Carson, and a Labour member.<sup>1254</sup> Law's veto put an end to such dreams. Wilson's own fascination with the idea of leading a National Party died the moment he was offered promotion within the military. Keith Wilson described it as a mere flirtation to kill time.<sup>1255</sup> With Wilson gone, however, the National Party lost the closest thing they might have had to a national leader. Instead, they would have to go it alone.

Twenty-one MPs supposedly expressed interest in the National Party, but when the time came, local constituency pressure reduced the figure from twenty-one to seven. Those seven were Page Croft, Viscount Duncannon, Richard Cooper, Alan Burgoyne, Rowland Hunt, Richard Rawson, and Douglas Carnegie. Of those seven, two (Rawson and Carnegie) would drop out of politics on grounds of poor health and another two (Burgoyne and Hunt) were forced to return to the Unionists by local pressure.<sup>1256</sup> Page Croft and Richard Cooper would be the sole remaining National Party MPs by 1918. The platform itself explicitly tied the party to the Tory tradition, with reference to Benjamin Disraeli's 1832 Wycombe speech.<sup>1257</sup> Its condemnation of the Unionist Party also referenced the betrayal of Tariff Reform by the January Memorial, supposedly for the sake of the Union, which itself was compromised by Law's support for Lloyd George's Home Rule compromise in 1916.<sup>1258</sup> On top of that, it criticised Law's refusal to make the coalition with Asquith conditional and

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<sup>1253</sup> Fleming, *Britannia's Zealots*, 89.

<sup>1254</sup> Wilson, *Morning Post*, 41.

<sup>1255</sup> Wilson, 'National Party Spirits', 245-6.

<sup>1256</sup> Croft, *Strife*, 130, 133.

<sup>1257</sup> *National Opinion* Foreword, 10/17-12/18, CA, CRFT4/1.

<sup>1258</sup> W.D. Rubinstein, 'Henry Page Croft and the National Party, 1917-1922', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 9:1, (1974), 140.

backed Carson's stand on the Nigeria debate.<sup>1259</sup> The National Party was the closest thing that the Radical Right would have to a party that embodied its whole platform.

Few hopes were entertained for the National Party by even its ideological bedfellows.

Gwynne freely admitted as much in a letter to Lady Bathurst,

"There are not enough big men leading. But really when you come to the big men, you find they are all tarred with the same brush... We must have new men to do it. Between ourselves, I am not sure that the men we have got are the best, but Page Croft is a hard-working man without very great brains, but he is honest, and I think willing to sacrifice himself for the good of the country. Duncannon has got brains and courage and enthusiasm and I think he is the better man of the two. They are quite a small party but they want a leader and I don't see where the leader is to come from. Still as they are putting into practice what we have been preaching for the last two years, I think we can do nothing else but support them."<sup>1260</sup>

Once more, Gwynne's lack of judgement affected his view of the National Party. The editor put his faith in Duncannon as being more serious about the party than Page Croft (whom he regarded as not 'big enough').<sup>1261</sup> It was Page Croft, however, who stuck with the project while Duncannon returned to the front. Regardless, Gwynne's praise for the National Party members who were throwing their careers away shows the pessimism which even its admirers felt about its future.<sup>1262</sup> Others were less charitable. George Lloyd sneeringly spoke

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<sup>1259</sup> *National Opinion* Foreword, 10/17-12/18, CA, CRFT4/1.

<sup>1260</sup> Wilson (ed.), *Rasp*, 227.

<sup>1261</sup> *Ibid.*, 227, 233.

<sup>1262</sup> *Ibid.*, 230.

of how “they lack[ed] brains”, while Austen Chamberlain warned Neville that the party was not worth even touching.<sup>1263</sup>

The absence of a leader was focused on as a fundamental problem with the party. Walter Long mocked the National Party to Law, but added that a leader with a national profile would have made all the difference.<sup>1264</sup> Long claimed that Hewins was that potential leader, if never approached, to which Hewins demurred but agreed that the lack of a recognisable face damaged the party’s hopes.<sup>1265</sup> Whether Hewins could have been that leader figure is questionable given his lack of public profile, but Carson or Milner might have carried the weight to attract alienated MPs.

Carson, however, saw the National Party as an embarrassment.<sup>1266</sup> As for Milner, he was content in the Lloyd George Coalition, and so the Constructivists stayed with the Unionists. William Ormsby-Gore told Page Croft that, “I know I am in agreement with your programme but... Wherever Milner leads I shall follow and whatever party he is in, I shall be in.”<sup>1267</sup> As for the National Party itself, its leadership fell to Page Croft as Duncannon returned to the front, while Lord Ampthill was semi-detached from the start. He would tell Arnold White in 1919 that he would never stir for position and lacked ‘push’ and told de Broke prior to the war that he was reluctant to ever strive for office.<sup>1268</sup> Ampthill showed no sense of urgency about aiding the National Party as a wartime party.<sup>1269</sup> With no leader beyond Page Croft, the National Party had to rely on defections from below.

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<sup>1263</sup> Charmley, *Lord Lloyd*, 62-3. A. Chamberlain-N. Chamberlain, 12/09/17, CRL, NC1/27/10.

<sup>1264</sup> W. Long-Bonar Law, 19/09/17, PA, BL/82/4/19.

<sup>1265</sup> Hewins, *Apologia Vol. 2*, 165.

<sup>1266</sup> Wilson, ‘National Party Spirits’, 246.

<sup>1267</sup> W. Ormsby-Gore-H.P. Croft, 07/09/17, CA, CRFT1/17.

<sup>1268</sup> Ampthill-A. White, 11/03/19, NMM, WHI/136. Ampthill-de Broke, 18/02/14, PA, WB/8/85.

<sup>1269</sup> Ampthill-L. Maxse, 29/09/17, WSRO, Maxse 474/227.

Here too, the National Party had little luck. The Unionist Chief Whip Edmund Talbot initially worried that activists would flock over to the National Party.<sup>1270</sup> The grassroots, however, stayed loyal. The local Kensington North and Ludlow Unionists were key in forcing Alan Burgoyne and Rowland Hunt, the MPs of those respective seats who joined the National Party, to return to the Unionists.<sup>1271</sup> That the National Party's platform, designed to rally a cross-class coalition, was so generic as to be indiscernible from Unionist or even Lloyd George Liberal rhetoric further undermined its position as an independent party.<sup>1272</sup> Even financially, the National Party had to fight for survival. Alan Sykes has argued that the National Party's main advantage over other right-wing parties like the BWL was that it had security of funds.<sup>1273</sup> The National Party's income, however, came from a short list of wealthy donors.<sup>1274</sup> Page Croft described having to save the party from collapse by appealing to those donors.<sup>1275</sup> The National Party was as financially dependent on the charity of wealthy backers as the BWL was.

The National Party still sought to live up to its name (along with the ideals of 'Union' that the Radical Right had believed in) through the party's platform. Abstract support for social reform was present in the National Party's public pronouncements through its periodical *National Opinion*. Here in its manifesto, the National Party supported the setting of minimum wage levels through agreements between managers and workers in each industrial sector.<sup>1276</sup> This was mixed in with agricultural protection through the Corn

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<sup>1270</sup> E. Talbot-Bonar Law, 11/09/17, PA, BL/82/4/11.

<sup>1271</sup> Keohane, *Party of Patriotism*, 54.

<sup>1272</sup> Searle, *Corruption*, 326.

<sup>1273</sup> Sykes, *Radical Right*, 40.

<sup>1274</sup> Blake (ed.), *Sanders Diaries*, 89.

<sup>1275</sup> Croft, *Strife*, 138-9.

<sup>1276</sup> *National Opinion* 04/18, 10/17-12/18, CA, CRFT4/1.



Production Act to provide industrial balance.<sup>1277</sup> The National Party asserted that an economy relied on production.<sup>1278</sup> Along with economic reforms, nationalistic proposals such as having children salute the Union Jack and barring non-Britons from being members of the National Party resembled the Radical Right's ideal of social reform and imperialist nationalism existing side by side.<sup>1279</sup> Much like Ian Colvin's pitches to Carson and Law, *National Opinion* also asserted a policy of, "Britain and all its Dominions and Dependencies for the British and all the races under British rule...not Britain for the Boches."<sup>1280</sup> It synthesised the traditional Imperial Unity platform with the anti-German mood of wartime Britain.

The sale of honours, cited by Page Croft as a reason he split from the Lloyd George Coalition, was brought up as requiring reform too.<sup>1281</sup> Such reform would be one of the few victories Page Croft would experience by the early 1920s. Coupled with all this was Page Croft pitching himself to Lady Bathurst as her ideal politician, "I too am pro-Tariff Reform, for strong government in Ireland, for a free hand to Ulster. ... I do not love the Jews. ... I am for a small Regimental Army and Universal service on a two-year basis."<sup>1282</sup> Much of the National Party's platform thus appears strikingly similar to the Radical Right's.

In theory, the National Party was offering a 'constructive' programme. In reality, the social reformist parts of the programme faded or remained abstract. Despite its name, the National Party was made up of aristocratic MPs whose members in the peerage were often

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<sup>1277</sup> *National Opinion*, 09/18, 10/17-12/18, CA, CRFT4/1. Rubinstein, 'National Party', 142.

<sup>1278</sup> Rubinstein, 'National Party', 141.

<sup>1279</sup> *National Opinion* 02/18 'Patriotism in Schools', 10/17-12/18, CA, CRFT4/1. Wrigley, 'Excess', 104.

<sup>1280</sup> *National Opinion* 'The Task of the National Party', 10/17-12/18, CA, CRFT4/1.

<sup>1281</sup> Croft, *Strife*, 128-9. Searle, *Corruption*, 324.

<sup>1282</sup> H.P. Croft-Lady Bathurst, 16/10/17, University of Leeds Special Collections, Glenesk-Bathurst 1990/1/2978.

the fathers of those MPs.<sup>1283</sup> Its advocacy of industrial peace was also coloured by Page Croft's admission that the National Party's formation was also prompted by "vast expenditure incurred in order to placate home workers who had only to threaten to strike and immediately wages were raised. ...We saw the awful reckoning of this squandermania and dared to urge economy."<sup>1284</sup> Far from being a 'constructive' project, the party was closer to being a predecessor to the 1920s Die-Hards, as Page Croft transitioned towards a less statist outlook on economics. Rubinstein argued that the National Party was more economically conservative than the Unionist Party, let alone the 'forward' section of the TRL.<sup>1285</sup>

Page Croft's own drive into anti-socialism would lead him to complain that not enough was being done to intervene in Russia after the October Revolution: in response to which Austen Chamberlain bitterly complained of Page Croft's armchair-general comments.<sup>1286</sup> Some Unionists feared that the National Party might steal the Unionist thunder by backing peacetime conscription.<sup>1287</sup> Yet the National Party did not do so, showing that it was not completely out of touch with what would be the post-war mood.

If the National Party was going to survive without a 'big name' it would need a strong organisation. As local Unionist activists were not defecting, that left a pressure-group which Page Croft had a long relationship with; the TRL. He had been one of its most effective organisers and an eager participant in its campaigns before and during the war. He also saw in the TRL the basis for his National Party. Imperial Mission had already been subsumed into

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<sup>1283</sup> Wrigley, 'Excess', 96.

<sup>1284</sup> Croft, *Strife*, 129.

<sup>1285</sup> Rubinstein, 'National Party', 139.

<sup>1286</sup> A. Chamberlain-H.P. Croft, 07/05/18, CA, CRFT1/6.

<sup>1287</sup> Keohane, *Party of Patriotism*, 101.

the National Party and he sought to recruit sympathisers for his aims into positions of authority in the party.<sup>1288</sup> At the TRL conference in September 1917, however, the motion to merge into the National Party was defeated while a simple one that merely welcomed the National Party produced a sharp split between what Thackeray describes as Gradualist Unionists and Imperial Activists.<sup>1289</sup> Thackeray included Constructivists such as Milner, Amery, and Winterton with the latter, but these three remained outside the National Party. Page Croft and Duncannon's exit from the TRL, the latter of the two having succeeded Viscount Ridley as head of the TRL in 1913, devastated the organisation.<sup>1290</sup> Austen Chamberlain sought to keep them in the TRL but the damage had already been done.<sup>1291</sup> Membership plummeted, local TRL branches collapsed across the country, and the TRL was a shadow of its former self by 1918, waiting to perish by 1922 with a whimper.<sup>1292</sup> Fleming was right to say that the TRL had wasted a good hand.<sup>1293</sup> It was destroyed, however, by Page Croft's attempt to make the TRL into a more ambitious group than it had the capacity or desire to be. The TRL's legacy in reforming Unionist campaigning and political culture would continue with WUTRA and culminate with Baldwin.<sup>1294</sup> It even kickstarted the campaign against Free Trade that by 1932 would triumph. The TRL, however, failed to create Imperial Union or serve as the foundation of the Radical Right's vision of a new Britain.

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<sup>1288</sup> Thackeray, 'Crisis of the Tariff Reform League', 56. Witherell, 'Henry Page Croft', 365.

<sup>1289</sup> Thackeray, 'Crisis of the Tariff Reform League', 51-4.

<sup>1290</sup> *Ibid*, 58.

<sup>1291</sup> A. Chamberlain-H.P. Croft, 24/10/17, CA, CRFT1/6.

<sup>1292</sup> TRL Executive Committee minutes 03/18-01/19, LSE, TC11/1/1. *The Times*, 12/10/22, 9.

<sup>1293</sup> Fleming, *Britannia's Zealots*, 90-1.

<sup>1294</sup> Thackeray, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age*, 1, 9-10.

The National Party itself could not decide what it wanted to be. Was it the patriotic opposition to the Lloyd George Coalition or was it just a friendly critic? Page Croft was inclined to straddle the line between the two and was attacked by both sides for doing so. E.A. Fitzroy, Unionist MP and future Speaker, had sympathised with the National Party but parted ways with it when it stood in seats during by-elections. For Fitzroy, that skirted too close to opposition, and Lord Montagu of Beaulieu felt the same, resigning as well.<sup>1295</sup> Ampthill as one of the founders was also content to avoid explicitly opposing Lloyd George throughout the war.<sup>1296</sup>

On the other side, among the more dedicated party workers, opposition to the coalition was to be a given and Page Croft's attempt to cast the National Party as merely wanting the Coalition to commit to its platform outraged them.<sup>1297</sup> The Unionist whip Robert Sanders recalled chatting with the supposed manager of the National Party's office during talks between the Unionists and the National Party, "[the manager] said the N.P. could get on all right with the Conservatives but could not stick the Coalition. I said Page Croft professed to support the coalition. He said the National Party was sick of Page Croft and hoped to get rid of him."<sup>1298</sup>

Page Croft claimed to be open to receiving the Coalition Coupon, denoting candidates approved by the Lloyd George Coalition in the 1918 general election, but the party's Principal Agent rejected any suggestion of taking the Coupon.<sup>1299</sup> Either way, Law refused to offer the National Party any space to breathe and challenge the Unionists from the right.<sup>1300</sup>

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<sup>1295</sup> Wrigley, 'Excess', 115. Searle, *Corruption*, 326.

<sup>1296</sup> Ampthill-L. Maxse, 29/09/17, WSRO, Maxse 474/227.

<sup>1297</sup> Searle, *Corruption*, 326.

<sup>1298</sup> Blake (ed.), *Sanders Diaries*, 111.

<sup>1299</sup> J. Turner, *British Politics and the Great War: Coalition and Conflict 1915-1918*, (New Haven, 1991), 316.

<sup>1300</sup> Bonar Law-E. Talbot, 11/09/17, PA, BL/84/6/123. H.P. Croft-P. Hannon, 30/11/18, PA, HNN/12/1.

In the 1918 election, the National Party did secure the largest number of votes a minor party would ever attain until the 1960s Celtic Nationalist parties.<sup>1301</sup> As a party, however, it did not live up to its name by any means. Most of its branches were in London, and it had none in Scotland or Wales.<sup>1302</sup> As a Radical Right party, even one composed of Dogmatists, it served as a microcosm of all the reasons for the Radical Right's failure; reliance on grassroots and backbench sympathy to succeed, a platform that was more exclusive than intended, an approach to coalition-building that alienated more than it convinced, and an over-ambitious goal. Those policies that had traction such as Tariff Reform, wartime conscription, and anti-Germanism, also associated more with the Unionist Party as a whole.

As Keohane argued, the Unionist Party's success was in defining patriotism around what it could fundamentally deliver.<sup>1303</sup> The Edwardian Radical Right, in contrast, offered an unattainable form of patriotism that did not resonate with the public. The Dogmatists especially suffered from this: Maxse insisting the National Party go after Lloyd George as a "mouthpiece of 'Defeatism'", for example.<sup>1304</sup> The story of the National Party confirmed that policy victories and influence would only come from capturing support within the Unionist Party. The Dogmatists, however, found this easier said than done in the case of the UWC.

### **Last Gasp of the UWC**

The UWC's importance declined after the passage of the Military Service Bill in May 1916. Radical Right hopes for the UWC as a parliamentary opposition had been disappointed in 1916. The same was true in 1918 for right-wing opponents of the Lloyd George Coalition like

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<sup>1301</sup> Rubinstein, 'National Party' 135-6.

<sup>1302</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>1303</sup> Keohane, *Party of Patriotism*, 121.

<sup>1304</sup> L. Maxse-H.P. Croft, 19/01/18, CA, CRFT1/16.

the Dogmatists who sought to destabilise the government. Conscription, the most contentious point of division with the leadership in 1916, and the best rallying-point for rebels, was resolved. By 1918, however, discontent among Unionists flared over Lloyd George's relationship with Robertson and Haig, his appointment of newspaper owners including Lords Northcliffe, Rothermere, and Beaverbrook to government posts, and lastly Ireland. The Home Rule debate did not end after the failure of Lloyd George's 1916 proposals. Instead, the question was eventually submitted to the Irish Convention, a conference of representatives for the Ulster Unionists, Southern Unionists, and Irish Nationalists. Carson's resignation from the War Cabinet was believed by some to be so that he could aid the search for a settlement.<sup>1305</sup> The Convention's difficulties, however, were not all that led to Carson's departure from the War Cabinet.

The public reason was to assist in Irish negotiations, but the conflict between Lloyd George and the Admiralty fed into Carson's decision to resign. His support for Jellicoe and both men's failure to defeat the food supply threat from German submarines led to Carson's movement to the War Cabinet.<sup>1306</sup> Eric Geddes, as Carson's replacement, then removed Jellicoe as First Sea Lord. Carson evidently felt residual loyalty to Jellicoe when defending him even after he had been moved out of the Admiralty. Alvin Jackson argued that some in the Lloyd George Coalition believed that Ireland was only a cover for Carson's outrage at Jellicoe's sacking.<sup>1307</sup> He also highlighted that the incoherent motives for Carson's resignation, coupled with his failure in the Admiralty when he had attacked Asquith in 1916 over the submarine threat, damaged his political position among even his followers.<sup>1308</sup>

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<sup>1305</sup> Vincent (ed.), *Crawford Papers*, 385.

<sup>1306</sup> Jackson, *Life and Times*, 49-50.

<sup>1307</sup> Jackson, *Carson and Redmond*, 199-200.

<sup>1308</sup> *The Times*, 14/01/16, 9. Jackson, *Life and Times*, 56-7.

Carson thus could not serve as a fantastical Caesar in waiting for Dogmatists as he did in 1914-16.

Instead, the entry of peers into the UWC encouraged the rise of a new leader in Lord Salisbury, an old antagonist of the Tariff Reform movement.<sup>1309</sup> Salisbury was not a member of the Radical Right. He was as close to an incarnation of 'quietist' small 'c' conservatism within the Unionist Party as there could be among its grandees and seniors. He openly contrasted himself with Austen Chamberlain who represented the desire for 'positive' change.<sup>1310</sup> As he once told Selborne, he believed that the purpose of the Conservative Party was "[t]o defend certain capital institutions and in everything else to go slow."<sup>1311</sup> The Radical Right in the Edwardian days did not believe in going slow. Yet by 1918 Salisbury had proven some of his credentials to future Die-Hards with his attacks on Home Rule in 1916. There is little evidence that Salisbury was envisioned as a replacement for Lloyd George as a war leader. What Salisbury's role in the UWC provided instead was another bridge for the Dogmatists to transition into the Die-Hards and away from ideas of 'constructive' politics. For the Dogmatists, the time to openly criticise Lloyd George came in February 1918 with Beaverbrook's appointment as Minister of Information. Beaverbrook's appointment compounded complaints of 'press barons' in the halls of power, and galled Unionist MPs.<sup>1312</sup> Revolt only broke out, however, as it coincided with Robertson's final fight for his job and his eventual replacement by Wilson. Lloyd George's Paris speech in November 1917 that demanded a Supreme War Council (SWC) to co-ordinate Allied plans, and which also criticised the current British military approach, infuriated the Dogmatists. Unionist

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<sup>1309</sup> Fleming, *Britannia's Zealots*, 85.

<sup>1310</sup> Salisbury-A. Chamberlain, 12/02/10, CRL, AC8/5/10.

<sup>1311</sup> Salisbury-Selborne, 04/09/16, BLO, Selborne 6.

<sup>1312</sup> Vincent (ed.), *Crawford Papers*, 386.

backbenchers rallied to the military's defence, and Dogmatists believed the whole scandal "began with the Marconi Incident" in enabling Lloyd George's corruption.<sup>1313</sup>

The press-baron question also brought Austen Chamberlain into the open as a potential leader of the opposition in Parliament from the right. Austen had previously warned Lloyd George that if the latter made further speeches in the vein of the Paris speech, he would become a more vocal critic of the government.<sup>1314</sup> In February 1918 Carson was approached by Chamberlain to aid him in a campaign of pressure on the Coalition.<sup>1315</sup> Austen Chamberlain's emergence as a critic of the Coalition made him appear to those on the Right as the man who could challenge Lloyd George.

Chamberlain, however, was not interested in being an anti-Coalition man. His exit from the Cabinet in 1917 had not been over policy differences but due to fallout from the failed Mesopotamia campaign during which he had been Secretary of State for India.<sup>1316</sup> He actually supported the idea of the SWC even with Wilson as the British representative.<sup>1317</sup> Up until the controversy over press involvement in civilian-military disputes, Chamberlain had been quiet about Lloyd George's actions. He was not blind to the opposition's flaws either. He made clear his equal disdain for Robertson and Haig's own use of journalists to help fight their battles with Lloyd George.<sup>1318</sup> In this, Chamberlain was far from what Dogmatists hoped him to be.

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<sup>1313</sup> C. Beresford-L. Maxse, 07/03/18, WSRO, Maxse 475/206.

<sup>1314</sup> A. Chamberlain-Hilda Chamberlain, 20/11/17, CRL, AC5/1/47.

<sup>1315</sup> A. Chamberlain-E. Carson, 22/02/18, PRONI, D1507/B/39/3.

<sup>1316</sup> A. Chamberlain-Lloyd George, 10/04/18, CRL, NC1/27/31.

<sup>1317</sup> N. Chamberlain-Ida Chamberlain, 24/11/17, CRL, NC18/1/139.

<sup>1318</sup> R. Self (ed.), *The Austen Chamberlain Diary Letters: The Correspondence of Sir Austen Chamberlain with his Sisters, Ida and Hilda, 1916-1937*, (Cambridge, 1995), 70.



One particular target of Austen's ire was Colonel Charles Repington, military correspondent for the *Morning Post* and whom Neville Chamberlain felt should have been jailed for his role.<sup>1319</sup> Repington in February 1918 was almost charged under the Defence of the Realm Act 1914 for his stories about Lloyd George's attempt to set up the SWC with Wilson as the British representative. His use of leaks and secret information horrified the Unionists, who regarded his avoidance of prosecution as a sign of weakness.<sup>1320</sup> H.A. Gwynne defended Repington as a necessary evil, claiming "Repington is the best military writer in Europe" as well as a defender of Robertson.<sup>1321</sup> For Gwynne, as with a number of Dogmatists, his issue with the 'press barons' seemed less about the purity of government and more that those newspaper owners sided with the Prime Minister over the military. Naturally, Austen Chamberlain was unmoved and came around to Lloyd George's argument, believing that Robertson undermined an already poor case with his antics.<sup>1322</sup>

Even if Chamberlain disagreed with Lloyd George, he believed in being a friendly if forceful critic of the government.<sup>1323</sup> He did not want Lloyd George toppled, only scolded, and for the purpose of making the Coalition stronger and more effective.<sup>1324</sup> In one of his speeches attacking the press barons' role in the government, he scolded Asquithian Liberals who cheered his speech.<sup>1325</sup> Chamberlain avoided open challenges, however, for both idealistic and practical reasons. The government's collapse was the last thing he wanted. He also wanted to avoid Lloyd George emerging vindicated and triumphant from a victorious vote of

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<sup>1319</sup> N. Chamberlain-Ida Chamberlain, 16/02/18, CRL, NC18/1/153.

<sup>1320</sup> Blake (ed.), *Sanders Diaries*, 101.

<sup>1321</sup> Wilson (ed.), *Rasp*, 245, 260.

<sup>1322</sup> Self (ed.), *Chamberlain Diary*, 74.

<sup>1323</sup> A. Chamberlain-E. Carson, 22/02/18, PRONI, D1507/B/39/4.

<sup>1324</sup> Self (ed.), *Chamberlain Diary*, 77.

<sup>1325</sup> *Hansard*, HC Debate, Government and Press Relations, 11/03/18, Vol. 104, cc77.

confidence.<sup>1326</sup> Chamberlain was aware of what kept many otherwise critics quiet and loyal; the question of what would happen if Lloyd George really was removed from office.

There was only one other politician who could take Lloyd George's place, and that was the old wartime Radical Right *bête noire* Asquith. Asquith could call upon the loyalty of many Liberals and possibly convince Labour to support his return to office, but like Lloyd George, he also needed Unionist support. Gwynne was alone in thinking Asquith's return was desirable. He dreamt delusions where Asquith would serve under Robertson or in some other combination that balanced his prior opposition to and present support for Asquith.<sup>1327</sup>

Most Unionists were not as willing to engage in such mental gymnastics. Having spent two years wanting Asquith gone, Unionist backbenchers refused to do anything that risked his return. Austen Chamberlain believed that the real reason the UWC backed Lloyd George was that defeating Lloyd George meant bringing back Asquith.<sup>1328</sup>

The Unionist backbenchers, meanwhile, were not interested in regime change or in seriously disrupting the government in the way certain Dogmatists were. The UWC was no more willing to be a consistent vehicle of opposition in 1918 than it had been in 1916.

Salisbury went too far for most UWC members, who were closer to Chamberlain's conception of constructive criticism.<sup>1329</sup> By the time of the Maurice Debate in May 1918, when General Frederick Maurice claimed that Lloyd George had denied Haig troops and thereby contributed to the German Spring Offensive's near success, the divide was more between Lloyd George and Asquith Liberals. Attempts by Carson and Salisbury to encourage

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<sup>1326</sup> A. Chamberlain-Ida Chamberlain, 22/02/18, CRL, AC5/1/62.

<sup>1327</sup> Wilson (ed.), *Rasp*, 246-8.

<sup>1328</sup> A. Chamberlain-Ida Chamberlain, 09/03/18, CRL, AC5/1/64.

<sup>1329</sup> Fleming, *Britannia's Zealots*, 93.

the UWC to revolt were blunted when MPs like Amery brought up Asquith.<sup>1330</sup> Lloyd George's victory in the debate then ensured his absolute security in office for the rest of the war.<sup>1331</sup> Austen Chamberlain joined the Cabinet again on the grounds that crisis did not call for critique.<sup>1332</sup> The threat to the Lloyd George Coalition from the Right had come and gone by February 1918, much to the despair of Dogmatists like Lady Bathurst.<sup>1333</sup>

Irish conscription was a brief topic of controversy that was born from the Spring Offensive. Unionists had long complained that the Southern Irish were not putting in their fair share of the sacrifice, and Ireland's exemption from conscription only further angered Unionists of all stripes. With the German offensive, more men had to be found. Austen Chamberlain warned Bonar Law that a 'comb-out' of men aged 50-55 would only be accepted by society if the Irish exemption was lifted.<sup>1334</sup>

As the crisis on the Western Front escalated, Lloyd George presented a rushed joint-package: Home Rule would be passed, but so would conscription for Ireland. Irish society broke out in protest and boycott. The backlash in Ireland led even Constructivists such as J.W. Hills and Charles Bathurst to insist that the protests removed any right the Irish had to ask for Home Rule.<sup>1335</sup> Similarly, Constructivists and Dogmatists, along with the rest of the Unionist Party, agreed that Ulster's exclusion was a precondition to any arrangement.<sup>1336</sup> Carson criticised the joint measure as proof that Lloyd George had proved indecisive over the question and sought to 'bribe' the Irish into loyalty.<sup>1337</sup> As Carson admitted, however, he

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<sup>1330</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 219-20.

<sup>1331</sup> Blake (ed.), *Sanders Diaries*, 108.

<sup>1332</sup> Self (ed.), *Chamberlain Diary*, 85.

<sup>1333</sup> Wilson (ed.), *Rasp*, 290.

<sup>1334</sup> A. Chamberlain-Bonar Law, 05/04/18, CRL, NC1/27/29.

<sup>1335</sup> Blake (ed.), *Sanders Diaries*, 105.

<sup>1336</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 217-8.

<sup>1337</sup> A. Ward, 'Lloyd George and the 1918 Conscription Crisis', *Historical Journal*, 17:1, (1974), 114.

had no solution in mind himself but was compelled to complain.<sup>1338</sup> The crisis in terms of Unionist outrage that might have been utilised by Dogmatists—or at least possibly benefitted from such a backlash by Unionists—was ultimately ended before any serious revolt could break out, although the Irish protest movement continued to have serious consequences. The Spring Offensive was defeated, and the Allies began the Hundred Days Offensive that would spell the end of the war. In each crisis, the Dogmatists' impotence against Lloyd George was revealed and each potential leader of a revolt either refused the call or came up short.

Both inside and outside Parliament, the remnants of the Radical Right faced failure. If the public became more open to Tariff Reform, Imperial Union, and conscription, it was to the Unionists' benefit, and to Unionists like Law rather than Page Croft. Even when voters seemed open to a far-right platform, it was not the National Party that benefitted but the new, Independent Right.<sup>1339</sup>

### **The Independent Right**

Just as the Unionists on the centre-right benefited more from the war in both the short and long-term, the short-term electoral benefits on the right went to those other than the Radical Right's remnants. It displayed the Radical Right's failure to make a public impact. As the war entered its second half, by-elections in Britain showed a swing towards independent right-wing candidates. Adrian Gregory attributed this swing to the German zeppelin air raids on London, submarine warfare, and by 1917-18 the October Revolution in

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<sup>1338</sup> Blake (ed.), *Sanders Diaries*, 103.

<sup>1339</sup> 'Independent Right' in this thesis will be used for those during WWI who lacked substantive ties to the Unionist Party or Labour Party (in the BWL's case) during the Edwardian era.

Russia and the German Spring Offensive.<sup>1340</sup> The main three subdivisions of the Independent Right were Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst, Noel Pemberton-Billing's Vigilantes, and Horatio Bottomley's *John Bull*.

The Pankhursts were suffragette leaders who offered their services to the war effort. Amery would recall them appearing in disguise having been in France, owing to their campaign of direct action before the war.<sup>1341</sup> During the war, however, Christabel Pankhurst shared many of the Radical Right's sentiments about Asquith's inability to run the war and how "the Coalition Government has turned out to be a sad snare. The same people have continued to hold the real power and criticism has been gagged."<sup>1342</sup> Pankhurst would also use Australian Prime Minister William Hughes's visit to Britain in 1916 to accurately summarise both the problem the wartime Radical Right had in trying to find a replacement for Asquith. The issue had dated back to Joseph Chamberlain's stroke,

"If we had a good as, or better than Hughes, it would not be so bad. But we have not. .... I saw very clearly that he was willing to stay provided the rest of us had played our part...But we have failed to do it and we shall pay dear for our actions. ...Unless we can somehow become more effective, what will be the end of it all? ...how can we hope to succeed on the whole vast question, diplomatically, militarily, and economically, of preventing the Compromise Peace that Asquith and Co have in view. To be in the right and ineffectual as at present is intolerable from the point of

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<sup>1340</sup> Gregory, *Great War*, 245.

<sup>1341</sup> Amery, *Political Life Vol. II*, 29.

<sup>1342</sup> C. Pankhurst-L. Amery, 27/10/15, CA, AMEL1/3/4. C. Pankhurst-L. Maxse, 02/07/16, WSRO, Maxse 473/709-11.

view of self-respect and what is far worse, this ineffectualness means a danger to the nation that we are more apt to minimise than to exaggerate, so appalling is it.”<sup>1343</sup>

The Radical Right proved incapable of either producing a leader figure after Chamberlain or providing the organisation and/or publicised manifesto for a potential leader figure to stand on. As Pankhurst highlighted, this left the Radical Right more often than not complaining from the side-lines yet incapable of moving out into the field. It was not only over the politics of war where Pankhurst lined up with the Radical Right. She was also an early critic of liberal ideas about a post-war “League of Peace”, which she believed would enable German domination of Europe through subtle manipulation.<sup>1344</sup>

H.A. Gwynne mocked Pankhurst’s contributions as nonsensical and unhelpful,<sup>1345</sup> but her political judgement proved stronger than his (not a difficult feat). Pankhurst pointed out that the right-wing critics of the government failed to offer any form of organisation to serve as a platform for alternative leaders.<sup>1346</sup> The example she had in mind was William M. Hughes in 1916. The absence of any unified organisation was one of the Radical Right’s great flaws and one that was never truly remedied.

Gwynne would eventually concede that Pankhurst was patriotic, but he believed her untrustworthy given her suffragette past.<sup>1347</sup> Of all the Independent Right, Christabel Pankhurst was closer to the Constructivist mindset than Bottomley and Billing who were akin to the Dogmatists. She accepted the Coalition Coupon in 1918 and stood in Smethwick

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<sup>1343</sup> C. Pankhurst-L. Maxse, 02/07/16, WSRO, Maxse 473/709-11.

<sup>1344</sup> ‘Freedom or Slavery’ by C. Pankhurst, *The Suffragette*, 08/10/15, NMM, WHI/117.

<sup>1345</sup> Wilson (ed.), *Rasp*, 152.

<sup>1346</sup> C. Pankhurst-L. Maxse, 27/06/16, WSRO, Maxse 472/698-702.

<sup>1347</sup> Wilson (ed.), *Rasp*, 242.

on a platform of Imperialism combined with feminism.<sup>1348</sup> Pankhurst, however, would lose by a narrow margin to the Labour candidate. In a letter to Maxse, she blamed her defeat in part on trade-unionist hostility but also on voters who stayed home as they could not vote for a Unionist candidate.<sup>1349</sup> Even so, she was content with that level of engagement in politics and to remain under the umbrella of the Lloyd George Coalition.

The same was not the case for the rest of the Independent Right. Adrian Gregory argued that the right-wing wave was the result of a middle-class 'counter-revolutionary' backlash in 1918. The majority of the British Empire Union's (BEU) branches were in London or South-East England where most of the zeppelin and Gotha bomber raids took place.<sup>1350</sup> The two figures who profited most from this backlash were Bottomley and Billing. Bottomley specifically was an ex-Liberal MP who built a wartime reputation as the enemy of German influence in Britain and of anti-war activists. His paper *John Bull* pushed for a harder policy of internment and through this found a positive public reception. Billing, meanwhile, won the Hertford by-election in 1916 when John Rolleston stood down. Using his parliamentary seat, Billing built his platform on the need for more airpower, anti-Germanism, and the theory of a 'Hidden Hand', a conspiracy wherein Germans had control over aspects of British high society. Both men rooted their campaigns in an aggressive anti-German populism which Unionist candidates broadly countered by co-opting the associated policies and rhetoric.<sup>1351</sup> Of those independent right-wing candidates who stood in by-elections, only Billing won his seat, while Bottomley was already an MP from the start of the war.

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<sup>1348</sup> N. Gullace, 'Christabel Pankhurst and the Smethwick Election: Right-Wing Feminism, the Great War, and the Ideology of Consumption', *Women's History Review*, 23:3, (2014), 330-1.

<sup>1349</sup> C. Pankhurst-L. Maxse, 01/01/19, WSRO, Maxse 476/1.

<sup>1350</sup> Gregory, *Great War*, 208, 234.

<sup>1351</sup> Thackeray, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age*, 124.

The Hidden Hand was not exclusively Billing or Bottomley's conspiracy theory. The Radical Right embraced it as well, with Arnold White writing a book by that very title which he used to directly criticise Free Trade as being one of the means by which the Hidden Hand weakened Britain.<sup>1352</sup> Ellis Powell, editor of the *Financial News*, tried to connect the Hidden Hand to the Marconi Scandal (to little avail), while Lord Leith of Fyvie in the National Party complained of the German presence in banking.<sup>1353</sup> Billing, however, had the most electoral and publicity success with the theory. His 'Black Book' that alleged thousands of the British elite were implicated in homosexual acts and blackmailed by the Germans led a libel trial. In an article called 'The Cult of the Clitoris', Billing accused actress Maud Allen of being a lesbian spy and brought the Asquiths—who had prior ties to Allen—into the case. The court room erupted into cheers when Billing was found innocent, and the case revealed the extent of public antipathy towards Asquith along with his family.<sup>1354</sup> In political terms, the fall-out led to Law promising MP T.E. Hickman that an investigation into the Black Book would be held.<sup>1355</sup> Billing's Vigilante Party, meanwhile, outpaced the National Party in the East Islington by-election by coming second.<sup>1356</sup> It appeared that the true right-wing force was not Page Croft's National Party but Billings' Vigilantes.

Even the Dogmatists, however, were more horrified than gladdened by the outcome of the Maud Allen trial. To Gwynne, writing with dread rather than pleasure, "a Billing, or a Bottomley, has it now in his power to bring about almost a revolution..." He blamed the Lloyd George Coalition for bringing about the conditions for Billing's success but all the same

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<sup>1352</sup> White, *Hidden Hand*, 20, 23-4

<sup>1353</sup> P. Panikos, 'The British Empire Union in the First World War', *Immigrants and Minorities*, 8:1-2, (1989), 114-5.

<sup>1354</sup> Gregory, *Great War*, 241-2.

<sup>1355</sup> Blake (ed.), *Sanders Diaries*, 106.

<sup>1356</sup> *The Times*, 26/10/17, 3.



“I am watching Billing very carefully, for, frankly, I am frightened of him.”<sup>1357</sup> Alfred Douglas, ex-lover of Oscar Wilde and an ally of Billing’s who testified in the Allen trial, had complained in 1916 to Arnold White of how even Leo Maxse refused to publish his articles about a homosexual conspiracy at the heart of government.<sup>1358</sup> Maxse’s defence was that the time was not suitable when Asquith had just been removed by Lloyd George. In reality, it might have been that Douglas’s zealotry alarmed Maxse just as Billing’s grandiose theories grew too lurid even for him.<sup>1359</sup>

The likes of Billing were to Maxse and Gwynne what the latter pair were to Amery. The Independent Right were distinct from, and arguably better known than, the Radical Right during the war. When D.H. Lawrence confessed his doubts about democracy after seeing how the public embraced the war, he named not Milnerism but “Bottomleyism” as representing what the public chose.<sup>1360</sup> Unlike Billing, Bottomley sought an alliance with Page Croft’s National Party. Once, after a pro-internment rally, Page Croft recalled Bottomley approaching him about an alliance and having to give an evasive answer about whether he trusted him.<sup>1361</sup> Page Croft would be similarly evasive in response to Bottomley’s request that the two form the nucleus of a pro-political honesty and pro-business opposition.<sup>1362</sup>

There was, however, limited and scattered co-operation with Bottomley, if not with Billing. Page Croft did not entirely keep his distance from Bottomley, and neither did personalities like Charles Beresford and Arnold White when it came to rallies in favour of further

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<sup>1357</sup> Wilson (ed.), *Rasp*, 292-3.

<sup>1358</sup> A. Douglas-A. White, 27/12/16, NMM, WHI/134.

<sup>1359</sup> Searle, *Corruption*, 255-6.

<sup>1360</sup> J. Ramsden, *Don’t Mention the War: The British and the Germans Since 1890*, (London, 2006), 127.

<sup>1361</sup> Croft, *Strife*, 139-40.

<sup>1362</sup> H. Bottomley-H.P. Croft, 07/12/18, CA, CRFT1/5.

internment of Germans in Britain. Billing, by contrast, proved too destructive a personality. His legacy was primarily in the role played by Henry Hamilton Beamish, future founder of the antisemitic group The Britons, in writing *Vigilante's* journal and so boosting his own profile. As for Bottomley, however, even after the war Page Croft would remember arriving with Norah Dacre-Fox—suffragette and National Party member—to support the Bottomley-backed Charles Townsend in The Wrekin by-election.<sup>1363</sup> Adrian Gregory believed there was enough common ground between the two—along with Beresford, White, the ‘patriotic labour’ trade unionist Havelock Wilson, and Dacre Fox—to form a primordial fascist group in November 1918.<sup>1364</sup> Such a possibility, however, ended with the victorious end of the war whilst Bottomley’s attempt to deepen ties between his parliamentary group and Page Croft’s National Party after 1918 proved a non-starter.<sup>1365</sup>

The Independent Right also had its own limitations. Billing was expelled from Parliament for breaking its rules,<sup>1366</sup> and his position collapsed as quickly as it was built up. Bottomley would survive the 1918 general election but, like the National Party, suffered from a backlash when it looked as if he would oppose the Coalition. Instead, he pivoted to arguing that Lloyd George had followed his example and was thus deserving of support.<sup>1367</sup> The main impact of the Independent Right was to show that the public—at least in the South East and London—was still devoted to ‘winning the war’ and hating Germany. The anti-German mood was especially roused by the question of internment.

### **Internment and Xenophobia**

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<sup>1363</sup> Croft, *Strife*, 140, 145.

<sup>1364</sup> Gregory, *Great War*, 248.

<sup>1365</sup> H. Bottomley-H.P. Croft, 07/12/18, CA, CRFT1/5.

<sup>1366</sup> *Hansard*, HC Debate, Suspension of Mr. Billing, 01/07/18, Vol. 107 cc1410-2.

<sup>1367</sup> Gregory, *Great War*, 248.

In the early months of the war, F.S. Oliver wrote to his brother complaining that the panic over German spies had made an acquaintance give up their German-breed dog.<sup>1368</sup> Oliver believed that the spy fever was nothing but hysteria. In this, he was—as so often—alone among the Radical Right. ‘Spy fever’ struck Britain hard during the First World War and many Unionists, the Radical Right prominently so, exploited this panic.<sup>1369</sup> This was no act of cynicism. Asquith letting the American-born financier Edgar Speyer visit Downing Street was to Unionists an early sign that he was not taking the war seriously.<sup>1370</sup> From German waiters to German-born members of high society, paranoia was rife over their involvement in sabotaging the war effort.<sup>1371</sup> Total internment and deportation of Germans was seen as an article of faith that the government should pursue to win the war. Roberts told Maxse that “I should...see every German sent off to Holland” and lamented that the government did not seem to consider such mass-deportation proposals, “What fools we are.”<sup>1372</sup>

For the Radical Right, the belief that Germans in Britain were getting off lightly came from the belief that German influence had penetrated Britain. This especially took the form of undermining the causes of Tariff Reform and National Defence prior to the war. For example, Leo Maxse insisted that if John Brunner, British-born (with a German name) but having favoured reconciliation with Germany before 1914, did block the creation of an Officer Training Corps at Liverpool University then he ought to lose his Chancellorship.<sup>1373</sup> In

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<sup>1368</sup> William, Gwynn (ed.), *Anvil*, 55.

<sup>1369</sup> Ramsden, *Appetite for Power*, 222-3.

<sup>1370</sup> Vincent (ed.), *Crawford Papers*, 334-5.

<sup>1371</sup> S. Yarrow, ‘The Impact of Hostility on Germans in Britain, 1914-1918’, T. Kushner, K. Lunn (ed.), *The Politics of Marginality: Race, the Radical Right, and Minorities in Twentieth Century Britain*, (London, 1990), 97-8.

<sup>1372</sup> Roberts-L. Maxse, 20/10/14, WSRO, Maxse 469/568.

<sup>1373</sup> L. Maxse-Derby, 20/03/15, WSRO, Maxse 470/107.

Parliament, internment was demanded by the Radical Right as German-born citizens were regarded as aiding German naval movements and celebrating German victories.<sup>1374</sup>

Outside Parliament, the Anti-German Union was formed in 1914, which then became the British Empire Union.<sup>1375</sup> The BEU's success was in the introduction of stronger anti-alien legislation.<sup>1376</sup> For the Radical Right, the BEU was a welcome home. Its slogan 'Britain for the British' was a recurring trope of Radical Right rhetoric during the war.<sup>1377</sup> Its high-ranking members also included members of the Radical Right. Lord Leith of Fyvie served as its President, while it shared offices with the *Morning Post*; the Bathursts being Vice-Presidents of the organisation. Its platform was rooted in consolidation of the empire, opposition to laissez-faire, and support for a vigorous war policy, but with the new addition of denying the ability of migrants to become true British citizens.<sup>1378</sup>

Unlike its pre-war causes, the Radical Right's extreme policies of internment and expatriation were now in step with the public mood. If anything, much of the public went further than the Radical Right. Adrian Gregory ties this to the public's belief that Britain was forced into the war by Germany and so Germany bore the moral weight of each personal loss from the war.<sup>1379</sup> Incidents such as the sinking of the *Lusitania* further fed into public outrage, with anti-German riots in 1915. The Asquith government was left to play catch-up with the public outrage as Reginald McKenna as Home Secretary passed the Alien Restriction Act, which allowed the government to demand that aliens register with the

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<sup>1374</sup> *Hansard*, HC Debate, Restriction of Aliens, 10/09/14, Vol. 17 cc591-2. *Hansard*, HC Debate, Uninterned Enemy Aliens, 29/06/16, Vol. 22 cc472.

<sup>1375</sup> Thackeray, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age*, 90.

<sup>1376</sup> Panikos, 'British Empire Union', 125-6.

<sup>1377</sup> Wilson (ed.), *Rasp*, 149-50. *National Opinion* 'The Task of the National Party', 10/17-12/18, CA, CRFT4/1.

<sup>1378</sup> Panikos, 'British Empire Union', 115. Wilson (ed.), *Rasp*, 4-5.

<sup>1379</sup> Gregory, *Great War*, 38, 69.

police and have their movements restricted.<sup>1380</sup> This was not enough for the public, many of whom demanded that more be done.

The supposed timidity of the government was a popular point of criticism of the Coalition first under Asquith and then under Lloyd George. In August 1918 Page Croft and Bottomley led a 'Win the War' rally in Hyde Park with seventy thousand attendees, and a petition with a million signatures demanded more be done on interning and deporting Germans.<sup>1381</sup>

*National Opinion* explicitly stated that the National Party would not accept foreigners as members.<sup>1382</sup> The BWL policy was much the same.<sup>1383</sup> It was the public, however, that ensured the Radical Right would get the concessions it sought. The 1918 election campaign pushed the Lloyd George Coalition into preparing the 1919 Aliens Act, which strengthened the 1914 legislation.<sup>1384</sup> By 1919, the German community in Britain was halved from what it was in 1914.<sup>1385</sup>

Germans were not the only victims of the unleashed xenophobia. Prior to the war, anti-semitism was present in the Radical Right, as manifested by Arnold White's anti-alien campaign and by Maxse with his casual denigration of George Goschen as a "Free-Fooder Jew."<sup>1386</sup> The Marconi Scandal furthered its vehemence and importance for some, such as Rowland Hunt who would complain of alien votes and foreign gold controlling Britain.<sup>1387</sup> As a whole, however, anti-semitism was not a core aspect of the Radical Right's ideology,

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<sup>1380</sup> Yarrow, 'Impact of Hostility on Germans in Britain', 98.

<sup>1381</sup> Croft, *Strife*, 139.

<sup>1382</sup> *National Opinion* Foreword, 10/17-12/18, CA, CRFT4/1

<sup>1383</sup> Sykes, *Radical Right*, 36.

<sup>1384</sup> Yarrow, 'Impact of Hostility on Germans in Britain', 109.

<sup>1385</sup> Ramsden, *Don't Mention The War*, 95-6.

<sup>1386</sup> S. Johnson, "A Veritable Janus at the Gates of Jewry': British Jews and Mr Arnold White', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 47:1, (2013), 41-68. Maxse-Northcliffe, 31/01/08, BL, MS62175.

<sup>1387</sup> C. Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society, 1876-1939*, (London, 2016), 102.

although after the war certain adherents made it fundamental to their own worldview.<sup>1388</sup>

Until then, it featured primarily as anti-alien rhetoric, with East European Jews being the main immigrant demographic for the time-period, regarded as ‘paupers’ whose inclusion only led to ghettos and little economic benefit.<sup>1389</sup> Page Croft was more willing than Joseph Chamberlain to feed into popular anti-semitism via anti-alien rhetoric but it was not a key aspect of his worldview, and even Unionists considered pro-Jewish let slip antisemitic remarks.<sup>1390</sup>

By the end of the war, however, anti-semitism would become more vocal and more important to a number of the Radical Right, especially Dogmatists such as Page Croft and Alan Percy. Others indulged in similar tropes too. Constructivists like Amery in 1914 believed that only Hugh Cecil “and of course the Jewish influence” opposed going to war, and in his memoirs he insisted that Jews in the East End ‘shirked’ their duty to the country.<sup>1391</sup> This was despite the fact that recruiting offices often turned Jews away.<sup>1392</sup>

The advocates of the ‘Hidden Hand’ thesis quickly moved from being solely anti-German to alleging that Jewish influences were involved as well. Maxse’s lament about the power of “the International Jew”<sup>1393</sup> referenced the belief that Jews were especially involved in cosmopolitanism and its ideals, which the Radical Right disdained. F.S. Oliver in his *Ordeal by*

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<sup>1388</sup> Fleming, *Britannia’s Zealots*, 40.

<sup>1389</sup> Chamberlain, *Imperial Union*, 137. Milner, *Constructive Imperialism*, 82.

<sup>1390</sup> Fleming, *Britannia’s Zealots*, 39.

<sup>1391</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 105. Amery, *Political Life Vol. II*, 114.

<sup>1392</sup> D. Cesarani, ‘An Embattled Minority: The Jews in Britain During The First World War’, J. Kushner, T. Linehan, *The Politics of Marginality: Race, the Radical Right and Minorities in Twentieth Century Britain*, (London, 1990), 65.

<sup>1393</sup> L. Maxse-H.P. Croft, 13/01/16, CA, CRFT1/16.

*Battle* condemned the influence of “financiers with international ties”, another Jewish stereotype.<sup>1394</sup>

In trying to gain Lady Bathurst’s support for the National Party, Page Croft insisted that he “[did] not love the Jew.”<sup>1395</sup> This was not just pandering to a potential patron’s prejudice. Page Croft was among those in the Radical Right whose populist language would grow more hostile as the war progressed. The ‘Hidden Hand’ aspect of anti-semitism was further developed after the October Revolution. Page Croft, when not petitioning the Cabinet to send men into Russia in the midst of a war with Germany, was among those who emphasised the Jewish names of Bolshevik leaders.<sup>1396</sup> The addition of the Soviet dimension would further feed anti-semitism among the Die-Hards after the war.

The rush of xenophobia had two consequences for the Radical Right before its 1917-18 disintegration. First it emboldened and enhanced anti-semitism among the Radical Right which would feed into certain adherents’ activities during the post-war period. Second, the BEU’s efforts on internment and deportation represented the peak of the British public’s receptiveness to policies advocated by the Radical Right, as opposed to the milder version offered by Unionists. This phenomenon, however, was restricted to the war and the BEU in itself did not have sizeable influence on the public mood so much as benefited from it.<sup>1397</sup> Much like the UBC with Tariff Reform, the BEU was riding a wave rather than creating it.

Unlike Tariff Reform, however, which can be majorly credited to the TRL’s efforts, the public outrage against Germany came from a wider ideological pool. The public’s ability to

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<sup>1394</sup> Oliver, *Ordeal*, 41.

<sup>1395</sup> Wilson, ‘National Party’, 249.

<sup>1396</sup> Henry Page Croft circular to Milner, Law, George Barnes, A. Chamberlain, and Lloyd George, 04/05/18, CA, CRFT1/6. *National Opinion* ‘Weak Blockade’ 04/18, 10/17-12/18, CA, CRFT4/1.

<sup>1397</sup> Panikos, ‘British Empire Union’, 125-6.

reconcile aggressive deportation with belief in organisations like the League of Nations was something the Unionist Party could exploit but the Radical Right could not. Liberal internationalism was meant to have been burnt away by the fires of war. The National War Aims Committee, however, would show that it was alive and well, if it had adapted to the wartime context.

### **The National War Aims Committee (NWAC)**

The NWAC proved that the liberal internationalist worldview (presumed dead and damned by the Radical Right) had more life than assumed, showing further how the Radical Right misread the country. By 1917, the self-mobilisation of support for the war had lost its steam. Rising casualties and the war's end appearing more distant than ever sapped morale. Page Croft took fright at rumours of pacifists intensifying their campaigning in Lancashire.<sup>1398</sup> Modern warfare required the consent of the broad majority of the populace to enduring the military and economic conditions of 'total war.' Britain's continued war effort relied on that public support being "re-mobilised", as John Horne put it.<sup>1399</sup> The Lloyd George Coalition's work in this regard was aided by the maintenance of civilian living standards in both wages and food supply.<sup>1400</sup> The introduction of a bread subsidy after the engineering strike of May 1917 was seen as part of an 'appeasement' of working-class concerns during the period.<sup>1401</sup> The Radical Right failed to understand that the wage increases it resented were important in this regard. The same was the case for the Radical

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<sup>1398</sup> Blake (ed.), *Sanders Diaries*, 86.

<sup>1399</sup> J. Horne, 'Remobilisation', J. Horne (ed.), *State, Society, and Mobilisation in Europe During The First World War*, (Cambridge, 2002), 199.

<sup>1400</sup> J.M. Winter, 'Paris, London, Berlin: Capital Cities At War, 1914-1920', *International Labour and Working-Class History*, 44:1, (1993), 114-5.

<sup>1401</sup> Stevenson, 'Engineering Strike', 284.



Right's failure to appreciate the ideological arguments made by the NWAC, which were designed to counter the arguments of the UDC.<sup>1402</sup>

Until recently, accounts of mobilising popular support for the war focused on the jingoistic and coercive aspect. For example, A.J.A. Morris argued that the tactics used against opponents of the Boer War, such as disrupting meetings, were replicated in the First World War.<sup>1403</sup> The coercive element did exist. The BWL and BEU did attack UDC meetings and violently break them up, while the authorities sided with the former in clashes. These attacks would then be either understated or celebrated in papers like the *Morning Post*.<sup>1404</sup> Even the NWAC had a few cases where local activists helped to break up UDC meetings with violence.<sup>1405</sup> Brock Millman used this to connect the NWAC to an attempt by Lloyd George to create a National Party with the NWAC as a source of violent stormtrooper-like activists.<sup>1406</sup>

David Monger, however, has shown that far from a secret machine of repression, NWAC was a genuine bi-partisan effort to rebuild consensus for the war and had few ties to the more violent BWL.<sup>1407</sup> David Thackeray, meanwhile, argued that Unionists feared that the recently formed National Federation of Discharged Sailors and Soldiers might adopt violent methods themselves. Government and Unionist emphasis thus became on campaigns that were 'peaceable.' As such, the BWL's violent tactics lost their limited appeal to Unionists.

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<sup>1402</sup> Blake (ed.), *Sanders Diaries*, 87, 89.

<sup>1403</sup> Morris, *Scaremongers*, 385.

<sup>1404</sup> Thackeray, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age*, 91. Gregory, *Great War*, 206-8.

<sup>1405</sup> Fleming, *Britannia's Zealots*, 92.

<sup>1406</sup> B. Millman, *Managing Domestic Dissent in First World War Britain*, (London, 2000), 248.

<sup>1407</sup> D. Monger, *Patriotism and Propaganda in First World War Britain*, (London, 2012), 60.

The BWL's insistence on such tactics led to local Unionists and WUTRA breaking ties and instead collaborating with the local bodies of the NWAC.<sup>1408</sup>

As for the NWAC itself, its arguments emphasised pre-war themes of liberal internationalism in a more suitable light. One recurring theme was that the First World War was not only a battle for survival but also a defence of Britain's values and seeing them triumph over German militarism.<sup>1409</sup> A proprietorial patriotism that revolved around Britain's values of liberal democracy and believed in a world without war was invoked.<sup>1410</sup> These values would appear to be incarnated in the League of Nations, which the NWAC championed as a fruit of victory if Britain stuck with the war.<sup>1411</sup> Similarly, Lloyd George's Caxton Hall speech to trade unionists in January 1918 even pre-empted Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points and contained many of the same themes.<sup>1412</sup> While not as important as the German Spring Offensive, the work by the NWAC was important for rallying the public and succeeded in remobilising support for the war.

The Radical Right, however, resented the concept of the League of Nations and believed it represented an echo from a past ideal that should have stayed dead. George Egerton has argued that Lloyd George supported but was not enthusiastic for the League, but he was more welcoming than Milner or Amery.<sup>1413</sup> F.S. Oliver, for example, explicitly emphasised the theme of fighting for survival rather than a values-based defence of Belgium.<sup>1414</sup> Maxse and Amery had long detested the idea of a "League of Peace", seeing it as a sign of

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<sup>1408</sup> Thackeray, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age*, 94, 106.

<sup>1409</sup> Horne, 'Introduction', 2.

<sup>1410</sup> Monger, *Patriotism and Propaganda*, 92-3.

<sup>1411</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>1412</sup> Grigg, *War Leader*, 384. Blake (ed.), *Sanders Diaries*, 95.

<sup>1413</sup> G. Egerton, *Great Britain and the Creation of the League of Nations: Strategy, Politics, and International Organisation, 1914-1919*, (London, 1979), 47, 98.

<sup>1414</sup> Oliver, *Ordeal*, 181, 430.

weakening faith in the war effort by ineffective Liberals. Amery confessed his fears that the war's end would bring "all sorts of schemes of League of Nations, guarantees for disarmament, etc. and neglecting the essential point, which is to build up the economic strength and defensibility of the British Empire as the best guarantee for peace," to which Maxse agreed and disparaged "the folly of these Leagues of Peace."<sup>1415</sup> Instead, the Radical Right sought a peace that consolidated the British Empire and its ties to its allies and sought to avoid any explicit anti-militarist rhetoric.<sup>1416</sup> Given that Germany's militaristic approach was a point of admiration for the Radical Right, it made sense to try and avoid delegitimising their own preferred model for Britain.

Amery felt that Lloyd George's reiteration of concepts like the League represented a failure to evolve from his past liberalism. Examples included Lloyd George mentioning democracy and the League at the 1917 IWC to Amery's annoyance, which became horror when Lloyd George floated ideas such as replacing armies with militias or allowing Germany to keep its East African colony.<sup>1417</sup> Lloyd George would later assert the need to maintain colonial gains in 1918,<sup>1418</sup> but the hesitation alarmed Amery nonetheless. The tension between Lloyd George's liberalism and the belief among Constructivists that Lloyd George's destiny was to be the new Joseph Chamberlain would intensify after the war.

In 1917-18, however, it was nothing more than a constant irritant to those Constructivists around Lloyd George. In his support for the League, however, Lloyd George would prove closer to the public spirit than were the Radical Right. The NWAC's success revealed the underestimated fortitude of a liberal internationalism that the Radical Right wrote off as

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<sup>1415</sup> L. Amery-L. Maxse, 27/12/16, WSRO, Maxse 473/857-8. L. Maxse-L. Amery, 29/12/16, CA, AMEL1/3/4.

<sup>1416</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 116.

<sup>1417</sup> *Ibid.*, 147, 152, 239.

<sup>1418</sup> Egerton, *League of Nations*, 82.

defunct and outdated in the modern world.<sup>1419</sup> In fact, it was the aggressive militarism championed by the NSL and embodied in Roberts that would find no room in the Britain that had won the war. After the war, the Radical Right would complain about the endurance and popularity of the League, whilst its more militaristic politics lost traction.<sup>1420</sup>

The NWAC's success was a sign that liberal internationalism had an enduring appeal and was capable of adapting to the war as it did in peace. Free Trade had been undermined, and conscription adopted, but the Radical Right failed to win the public over to the merits of compulsory military service. Nor did the war kill Liberalism, even if it did irreparable damage to the Liberal Party. Even the Free Trade ideal would survive into the post-war period, and among the Lloyd George Liberals. Lloyd George was not so besotted with the ideals of the League as to accept Wilson's insistence on Freedom of the Seas.<sup>1421</sup> Robert Cecil went so far as to claim that Lloyd George was apathetic about the League itself.<sup>1422</sup> Lloyd George however was a liberal imperialist and liberal militarist. The Constructivists during the war failed to appreciate this and would become alienated from Lloyd George when the distinctions between Lloyd George's imperialism and Constructive Imperialism became apparent. By that time, however, the militarism of the NSL was already defunct, with softer and more inclusive groups that sought to avoid controversial or partisan appearances such as the Victoria League enduring.<sup>1423</sup>

As for those aspects of the more aggressive imperialism and militarism that were popular with the public, these were not associated with the Radical Right exclusively. One exchange

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<sup>1419</sup> Hewins, *Apologia Vol. 2*, 39, 144. Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 248.

<sup>1420</sup> Amery, *Forward View*, 14. Croft, *Strife*, 254. Turnour, *Orders*, 85.

<sup>1421</sup> Amery, *Political Life Vol. II*, 171. Vincent (ed.), *Crawford Papers*, 397.

<sup>1422</sup> Egerton, *League of Nations*, 219.

<sup>1423</sup> Hendley, *Crucible*, 7, 58.

of letters on peace terms between Leo Amery and Robert Cecil was used by John Barnes and David Nicholson as symbolising the divide between Cecil the liberal internationalist Free Trader and Amery the militaristic Tariff Reformer. Cecil's ideal peace entailed the League of Nations, disarmament and guarantees from Germany. Amery dismissed such ideas as,

“[moralistic] fudge. The demand...arises largely from the habit, dear to the Squiff and indeed to the Radical mind generally, of treating this great tragic cataclysm with all it means for the saving or losing of our own souls as a nation and empire, and all the opportunities it may afford of increased greatness and security, as a scuffle amongst schoolboys...”

To Cecil, Amery's programme exemplified the “pure Germanism” that Britain was fighting.<sup>1424</sup> Cecil would later leave the Conservative Party (as the Unionist Party was termed again during the early 1920s and beyond) as he believed they were insincere about the values of the League, while Amery would stay inside the party. Unionist electoral success in 1918 and beyond, however, was possible because the party could reconcile Amery's desire for a strong empire and a harsh treatment of Germany, with accepting the League of Nations and getting behind the concept via co-operation in the NWAC. The Unionists benefitted from their association with aggressive militarism during the war while still transitioning into a ‘peaceable’ party which incorporated the softer imperialism of the Victoria League. If the NWAC was Lloyd George's attempt to re-establish moderate centrism during the war,<sup>1425</sup> then the difference between mainstream Unionists and the Radical Right

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<sup>1424</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 132-4.

<sup>1425</sup> Thackeray, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age*, 105.

was that the former could incorporate such centrism into their coalition alongside aggressive militarism and imperialism while the latter could not.

The main political beneficiary of victory would not even be Lloyd George, but the Unionist Party. The Radical Right's ultimate failure was that it could only enjoy those same benefits by its adherents subsuming themselves into a party that they felt did not truly embody a whole-hearted form of imperialism and militarism. By the 1918 general election, Amery felt that the result revealed that Liberalism, the ideology that dominated Britain in the nineteenth century had at last given way to Imperialism, an ideal fit for the Britain of the twentieth century.<sup>1426</sup> Even if this had been so, which the years after would prove otherwise, the Radical Right remained dead.

### **Conclusion**

The Edwardian Radical Right had disintegrated by 1917-18. There was overlap in sympathies and ideas between the Constructivists and Dogmatists, but the latter would become the Die-Hards who opposed the Coalition while the Constructivists broadly remained within the government as junior ministers until the 1922 revolt. The common platform was also scrapped, as National Service, let alone conscription, lost any organised support.

Far from being militarised by the war, the public demanded demobilisation as quickly as possible, and Lloyd George was quick to promise an end to conscription.<sup>1427</sup> That the system that the Radical Right believed was too old and rigid had seemed to win the war did the Radical Right's arguments no favours.<sup>1428</sup> Constructive Imperialism would continue to survive and call on the loyalties of the Radical Right's biggest personalities, including Amery

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<sup>1426</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 248.

<sup>1427</sup> Hendley, *Crucible*, 65.

<sup>1428</sup> Winter, 'Capital Cities At War', 116.

and Page Croft. Outside of that, however, the social reform question would stand to divide the two groups, with the Dogmatists moving towards the negative anti-socialism dreaded by the Constructivists.

Even in the war that the Radical Right had feared and fantasised would come, the public did not turn to it or its platform. Instead, its main victories were to break the paralysis of larger bodies that then made waves. The UBC was the first backbench organisation to force issues onto the wartime parliamentary agenda, while the UWC's approach towards rebellion in the Nigeria debate made Law move against Asquith. In the Lloyd George Coalition, the Constructivists' victories focused on Lloyd George accepting Imperial Preference. However, they were little different from the broader Unionist Party in such an aim, and the post-war years would show that these victories were far from absolute. All the while, the war destroyed the specific nature of the Radical Right altogether. The leagues were defunct, the envisioned enemy was defeated, and the electorate rewarded the party that the Radical Right believed was addicted to half-measures of implementation.

Chapter VII has detailed how the Edwardian Radical Right shattered on the rock of its supposed solution to Britain's wartime troubles, the Lloyd George Coalition. The Radical Right's pre-existing failures (both organisational and leadership-based) lingered into the war. By 1917-18, this manifested in Constructivist reliance on Milner for position and influence. This was matched by failed Dogmatist attempts to create a successful opposition to the Coalition. The National Party not only failed to recruit adherents like Milner, Amery, Tryon, Hills, and Ormsby-Gore, but ultimately helped wreck the TRL. As for the UWC as an internal parliamentary opposition, neither Unionist backbenchers nor Austen Chamberlain were willing to go beyond discomforting as opposed to disrupting or dismantling the Lloyd

George Coalition. The electoral beneficiaries of the non-Coalition right-wing resurgence during the years 1917-18 were those more independent from Toryism or Constructive Imperialism compared to the Radical Right. The National Party could only harness public xenophobia in conjuncture with other right-wing forces, whatever the distaste felt for the likes of Bottomley and Pemberton-Billing.

The 1918 electoral campaign, whilst strongly anti-German and seemingly rejecting Liberalism and socialism alike, was more a Unionist victory than a Radical Right triumph. The Unionist victory in 1918 was a triumph of being able to build a broad coalition that Constructivists aspired for but failed to achieve, and which Dogmatists disdained and were marginalised in. In the war that was meant to propel the Radical Right into victory, the Edwardian Radical Right perished.



### **Epilogue: After The Edwardian Radical Right**

While the Edwardian Radical Right fizzled out in the latter years of the war, certain ideological strands—primarily Constructive Imperialism—survived into the 1920s and 1930s. Constructive Imperialism itself had pre-dated the Radical Right and was at the philosophical core of the Radical Right ideology, so a brief discussion on how the likes of Amery, Milner, Page Croft, and others progressed after 1918 is relevant. A number of adherents who also continued their political careers still believed in certain ideas and policies held during the Edwardian era. Whilst Constructive Imperialism did survive, however, National Service had no such defenders in public. Overall, this epilogue will cover the individual careers of certain key adherents after the Radical Right's demise, and the fortunes of certain causes relevant to the Radical Right, primarily Constructive Imperialism and National Service. It then will cover the extent of a historical relation with British fascism, and other potential successor movements outside the Constructive Imperialist movement that was foundational to the Radical Right but pre-dated and survived it.

It is important to briefly analyse why Constructive Imperialism and Tariff Reform survived, and arguably won by the 1930s, and why other causes, such as the aggressive militarism embodied in National Service, did not. The Radical Right's specific inter-connected programme had lost relevance in the post-war era and the 'legion of leagues' which its adherents used to promote policies had either collapsed or drifted too far from their original purpose to be of use. Yet, Constructive Imperialism remained, and a number of adherents continued to act and rise in politics. Given the importance of the 'imperial panacea' that was Tariff Reform both during and after the existence of the Radical Right, some discussion of the policy's successes and failures after the Radical Right's demise is

necessary to understanding the Radical Right's limited successes and ultimate failure during its era. It is also key to understanding why the wartime Constructivists such as Amery, Ormsby-Gore, and Tryon would become disillusioned with the Lloyd George Coalition, while those Dogmatists who had separated from the Unionists would return to the fold. Even as Unionist critics of the Lloyd George Coalition would coalesce, including most if not all of the former Radical Right, the Edwardian Radical Right as an ideology and network remained dead as it had been in 1917-18.

As for the adherents themselves, their political paths fractured into various segments. Some withdrew from parliamentary politics, such as George Sandys and Rowland Hunt, both of whom stood down in 1918, and Willoughby de Broke, who sank into political depression. His memoirs—the final chapters written by Thomas Comyn Platt as de Broke died prior to finishing them—opened in part with a eulogy for all the causes de Broke held dear, in part blaming the defeat of the Ditchers in 1911 for sparking his decline as “[s]ince then everything he believed in has gone—thrown overboard by his own side. ...He felt there was little now left for which to fight.”<sup>1429</sup>

If this was the case, the lack of a violent showdown over Ulster in 1914 and the failure of his political style and philosophy to gain substantial, independent traction during the war did not help his spirits. On the opposite side of the former Radical Right was F.S. Oliver, who abandoned his involvement in politics out of resentment against the Unionist refusal to endorse federalism.<sup>1430</sup>

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<sup>1429</sup> Verney, *Passing Years*, xvi-xvii.

<sup>1430</sup> William, Gwynn (ed.), *Anvil*, 28.

As for Page Croft and the National Party, the closest thing to a Radical Right party and whose parliamentary presence consisted of himself and Richard Cooper, their fortunes did not improve after the 1918 election, and nor did the party offer much of a constructive programme. Witherell's biography described the pre-war Page Croft as believing in "the state as an activist institution that had the authority and responsibility to forward constructive and aggressive programs..."<sup>1431</sup> but in contrast the post-war Page Croft was more sceptical about the state's efficiency as an economic actor.<sup>1432</sup> During a vote on the 1919 Ministry of Transport Bill the only MPs to declare against the legislation were Page Croft and Cooper, on the grounds that a Ministry of Transport would lead to rail nationalisation.<sup>1433</sup> The National Party itself would collapse shortly after the 1918 election. In less than five years, Page Croft would return to the Unionist Party (now again referred to as the Conservatives by 1922). In the interim, the National Party was reformed into the National Constitutional Association (NCA), led by Lord Ampthill, and acted to collaborate with Lord Salisbury as an opposition to the Coalition.<sup>1434</sup> Page Croft would later remark that he and Salisbury agreed on all political questions bar Tariff Reform.<sup>1435</sup>

This development reflected the more negative aspect of Unionist opposition to the Coalition, which was rooted in opposition to its statist policies and its spending. The Anti-Waste League (AWL) was an expression of middle-class frustration with post-war taxation and spending levels, and some of the Radical Right soon aligned themselves with it. Ross McKibbin described it as a backlash against the power of the working class,<sup>1436</sup>

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<sup>1431</sup> Witherell, *Rebel on the Right*, 19.

<sup>1432</sup> Rubinstein, 'National Party', 142.

<sup>1433</sup> Croft, *Strife*, 143.

<sup>1434</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.

<sup>1435</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>1436</sup> R. McKibbin, *Parties and People: England 1914-1951*, (Oxford, 2010), 47-9.

complementing Adrian Gregory's argument that the 1917-18 Independent Right wave was born from the middle classes.<sup>1437</sup> Even Lord Selborne after the war adopted a similar mindset to Salisbury, whom he had scolded in 1917 for advocating that the Unionist Party should "go slow" in most matters.<sup>1438</sup>

Those who had been within the Radical Right such as Ronald McNeill, Rupert Gwynne, and John Gretton would also play a leading part in the anti-coalition Conservative grouping called the Die-Hards,<sup>1439</sup> and signed the latter's manifesto. This took the form of a letter to *The Times* that condemned high taxes and frivolous 'reconstruction' policies, along with negotiating with Irish and Indian Nationalists and delaying plans for the Lords' Reform that grassroot Unionists sought.<sup>1440</sup>

By contrast, Amery, Milner, and Lord Winterton all lamented the loss of what they believed to be constructive policies and saw the Lloyd George Coalition's u-turn on 'reconstruction' as another symbol of it becoming a mere 'anti-socialist' bloc.<sup>1441</sup> This is not to say that concern over levels of spending was solely felt by Die-Hards. Even those from the former Radical Right who still argued for 'constructive' policies such as Charles Bathurst, now Lord Bledisloe, acknowledged that social reforms were unaffordable in 1922.<sup>1442</sup>

The true dividing line between Die-Hards and those who maintained a 'constructive' mindset such as Milner, Amery, Winterton, George Tryon, J.W. Hills, and William Ormsby-Gore—many of whom were Under-Secretaries in the government who would eventually

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<sup>1437</sup> Gregory, *Great War*, 208.

<sup>1438</sup> Boyce (ed.), *Selborne Papers*, xvii-xviii.

<sup>1439</sup> Not to be confused with the term 'Die-Hards' used interchangeably with 'Ditchers' when discussing the 1911 Parliament Act debates, or the 1935 'India Act' rebels described later.

<sup>1440</sup> *The Times*, 08/03/22, 14.

<sup>1441</sup> Turnour, *Orders*, 90, 106. Amery, *Forward View*, 393-4. A. Milner, *Questions of the Hour*, (London, 1925), vii, 12, 19.

<sup>1442</sup> C. Bathurst-R. Cecil, 02/03/22, NRS, GD193/276/64.

turn against the Coalition—was drawn over the reasons for which they rejected Lloyd George. Those Constructive Imperialists who had endorsed the Coalition were disillusioned by what appeared a loss of initiative and inspiration within the government, which was epitomized by delays and compromises over Tariff Reform. Meanwhile, the main, if not solely, ‘constructive’ element that the Die-Hards inherited from the Radical Right was the commitment to Tariff Reform and, through it, to Constructive Imperialism.<sup>1443</sup>

The disillusionment of those like Amery, Hills, Winterton, and Ormsby-Gore with the Coalition arose from its apparent failure to enact Imperial Preference, anti-dumping measures, safeguarding, or to offer a positive programme of any kind.<sup>1444</sup> Milner’s resignation signalled that he felt the Coalition had abandoned any constructive outlook and had reverted to negative anti-Socialism.<sup>1445</sup> Milner was the only senior Constructive Imperialist in the government and his time in the Colonial Office had little impact equivalent to that of Joseph Chamberlain’s term there. Instead, Milner swallowed his increasing exasperation with Lloyd George, as “the reason why he was taking the Office at all was to get [Amery] started in a position by the time he left public life to be able to carry on his ideas on Imperial matters.”<sup>1446</sup> Others began to mobilise. Winterton organised a group with J.W. Hills, Ormsby-Gore, and other MPs from the USRC such as Samuel Hoare, Viscount Wolmer, Philip Lloyd-Graeme and Edward Wood to oppose a reversion to negative anti-Socialism.<sup>1447</sup>

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<sup>1443</sup> Fleming, *Britannia’s Zealots*, 97, 209.

<sup>1444</sup> Ramsden, *Appetite for Power*, 241.

<sup>1445</sup> Amery, *Political Life Vol. II*, 210, 226.

<sup>1446</sup> Barnes, Nicholson, (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 250, 252.

<sup>1447</sup> Turnour, *Orders*, 91.

Working beside men such as Wood and Stanley Baldwin against continuing the Coalition under Lloyd George proved more alluring and effective for Amery than did H.A. Gwynne's plea for him to exit the government and lead the Die-Hards.<sup>1448</sup> As Charles Bathurst (by then Lord Bledisloe) lamented to Robert Cecil, he could not see "why modern day Conservatives must...be either Die Hards and follow Page Croft and co, or Coalitionists..."<sup>1449</sup> By 1922, a middle road emerged as the party backlash against Austen Chamberlain and other Unionist frontbenchers' continued commitment to the Coalition grew. Among the former supporters of Lloyd George, Milner applauded Hills's rejection of Lloyd George, while Hills and Ormsby-Gore supported fighting the next election as an independent party.<sup>1450</sup>

Barnes and Nicholson argued that the early 1920s saw Amery take Milner's place as the leader of the 'advanced' imperialists.<sup>1451</sup> They (and William Bridgeman at the time) also considered Amery to have led the Under-Secretaries' revolt against the Coalition from within.<sup>1452</sup> The Under-Secretaries' revolt itself was a movement of junior ministers who sought to end what they believed was an unsustainable situation within the Lloyd George Coalition.

If Amery was not the leader of the Constructive Imperialists, then he was the most senior of them in regard to political position, and represented the mindset of Constructive Imperialists during the 1920s. Robert Scally once argued that the fall of the Lloyd George Coalition represented the end of Social Imperialism.<sup>1453</sup> In fact, the opposite was true. Lloyd

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<sup>1448</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 284.

<sup>1449</sup> Lord Bledisloe-R. Cecil, 02/03/22, NRS, GD193/276/64.

<sup>1450</sup> M. Cowling, *Impact of Labour, 1920-1924: The Beginning of Modern British Politics*, (London, 1971), 90, 205.

<sup>1451</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed), *Amery Diaries*, 13, 15.

<sup>1452</sup> *Ibid.*, 13., Williamson (ed.), *Bridgeman Diaries*, 160.

<sup>1453</sup> Scally, *Social Imperialism*, 27.

George's failure, and arguably lack of desire, to be the Prime Minister of Constructive Imperialism helped contribute to the destruction of his government. As Amery, Hewins, and Salisbury all noted, however, it was Law's return to politics that doomed Lloyd George as Prime Minister, just as Law had enabled him to take office.<sup>1454</sup> In Law, Unionists had an alternative Prime Minister and party leader to rally around in place of either Lloyd George or the 'coalitionists.' Law himself told MPs that one of his main concerns was not to endorse the Die-Hards, but to prevent a split that would empower the Die-Hards within the Conservative Party.<sup>1455</sup> The reliance on Law highlighted the continued absence of a leader with charisma and standing among the Constructive Imperialists.

There were some victories for the causes of the Edwardian Radical Right after the war. The main triumph for Die-Hards such as Page Croft was that the honours system that he felt had been corrupted by the likes of Lloyd George was reformed.<sup>1456</sup> For the Constructive Imperialists (which Page Croft remained if abandoning 'constructive' social reforms), there were victories against Free Trade. The 1919 Budget presented by Austen Chamberlain as Chancellor did introduce Imperial Preference, over Liberal objections.<sup>1457</sup> Other measures were introduced by the Coalition such as the Anti-Dumping Bill and most importantly the 1921 Safeguarding of Industries Act, which was applied to protect fabric gloves.

None the less, the reality of coalition politics limited the extent to which Imperial Preference and safeguarding could be implemented. The Lloyd George Liberals, and Lloyd George himself—despite the predictions of those around him and the hopes of the Constructive

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<sup>1454</sup> Hewins, *Apologia Vol. 2*, 261. Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 297. Boyce (ed.), *Selborne Papers*, 233.

<sup>1455</sup> G. Webber, *The Ideology of the British Right, 1918-1939*, (London, 1986), 22-3.

<sup>1456</sup> Croft, *Strife*, 142-3.

<sup>1457</sup> Self (ed.), *Chamberlain Diary*, 106.

Imperialists—remained Free Traders. The Safeguarding of Industries Act had to be delayed for two years owing to opposition from Coalition Liberals, and its implementation for fabric gloves was similarly opposed.<sup>1458</sup> It became clear to those Constructive Imperialists who had supported Lloyd George during the war that the imperialist bent of economic policy would always be limited by the Coalition. Amery himself began to suspect that the Unionist front bench were unwilling to challenge this, as they had grown comfortable with coalition politics.<sup>1459</sup>

By 1922, Unionist MPs met at the Carlton Club and voted to end the Coalition. The ejection of pro-Coalition Cabinet members opened the door for Amery to enter the Cabinet, while Halford Mackinder seemed in line for a Cabinet seat in Trade.<sup>1460</sup> Law's pledge in the 1922 election that he would not implement tariffs without another election was a difficulty, but his replacement as Premier by Baldwin in 1923 offered new hope. Baldwin felt that the only way to solve unemployment lay in Tariff Reform, and he had established a Tariff Advisory Committee chaired by Milner. Hewins was even approached by Neville Chamberlain, the Chancellor under Baldwin, to sit on this committee.<sup>1461</sup> However, Baldwin then called for an election over Tariff Reform in December 1923. Constructive Imperialists opposed this, believing that time was needed to prove Tariff Reform's effectiveness.<sup>1462</sup> They were further disappointed when Baldwin ruled out any agricultural duties.<sup>1463</sup> The resulting hung Parliament and Labour government with Liberal support did not entirely deter the Constructive Imperialists.

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<sup>1458</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>1459</sup> Amery, *Political Life Vol. II*, 226.

<sup>1460</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 300.

<sup>1461</sup> Hewins, *Apologia Vol. 2*, 276.

<sup>1462</sup> Turnour, *Orders*, 123. Barnes, Nicholson (eds.), *Amery Diaries*, 335.

<sup>1463</sup> Hewins, *Apologia Vol. 2*, 279.



Amery continued to believe, as he did in the Edwardian and wartime era, that Liberalism was “spiritually dead and has been so for thirty years or more” and so endorsed the approach of letting the Liberals have the onus of supporting Labour.<sup>1464</sup> This would then avoid the party slipping into the Coalitionist appeal of a purely anti-Socialist platform. Fellow former Radical Right adherents (but still Constructive Imperialists) William Ormsby-Gore and George Tryon similarly endorsed letting Labour take power with Liberal support rather than resorting to a Lloyd George Coalition-style government, which they disdained.<sup>1465</sup>

Unfortunately for Constructive Imperialist hopes, however, Baldwin after the defeat in 1923 agreed to shelve any radical introduction of tariffs, and settled for a compromise policy of only using the Safeguarding Act if certain industries requested it. After Conservative landslide in the 1924 general election, Amery felt that maintaining the prior tariff policy might have been worth halving the majority.<sup>1466</sup> Leo Maxse celebrated Neville Chamberlain’s appointment to the Ministry of Health, comparing it with Joseph Chamberlain choosing the Colonial Office in 1895, but also complained that Churchill’s appointment as Chancellor of the Exchequer threatened “Imperial development and...our industrial well being ...[and also] inflict considerable injury on British interest at home and abroad...”<sup>1467</sup> By 1929 Amery believed that Baldwin’s platform had degenerated into a similar negative anti-Socialism to that of the Lloyd George Coalition.<sup>1468</sup> In turn, Baldwin complained to close colleagues about Amery’s insistent push for tariffs.<sup>1469</sup>

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<sup>1464</sup> Barnes, Nicholson, *Amery Diaries*, 361

<sup>1465</sup> S. Ball, ‘The Legacy of Coalition: Fear and Loathing in Conservative Politics, 1922-1931’, *Contemporary British History*, 25:1, (2011), 72, 80.

<sup>1466</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 389.

<sup>1467</sup> *National Review*, Volume 84, Issue 502, 12/24, 489.

<sup>1468</sup> Amery, *Political Life Vol. II*, 477-9.

<sup>1469</sup> P. Williamson, *Stanley Baldwin: Conservative Leadership and National Values*, (Cambridge, 1999), 72-3.

Apart from Imperial Preference, however, the Constructive Imperialist movement did gain further successes in the 1920s. Milner and Amery at the Colonial Office worked on endorsing empire-migration schemes that led to the 1922 Empire Settlement Act.<sup>1470</sup> Milner in 1925 declared the Act a sign of awakening realisation across the empire that imperial development was the key to economic recovery.<sup>1471</sup> The Act, however, had a mixed impact, not least owing to Dominion reluctance to offer the generous funding needed to attract such migrants at the expense of domestic labour.<sup>1472</sup> Andrew Thompson argued that these migration schemes did not produce the lasting shift in political consciousness within the British Empire that Milner and Amery intended.<sup>1473</sup> Nor did they produce the socio-economic shifts envisioned by Constructive Imperialists.

What the Act did show was that the Constructive Imperialist movement had found a better appreciation of the need for a softer, subtler, and more inclusive form of promoting Imperial Unity. Other examples of this were first the Empire Marketing Board introduced by Amery in May 1926, and second the creation of the Empire Industries Association (EIA) in 1925 as a replacement for the TRL. Amery and Chamberlain had envisioned a role for themselves in the EIA, but the rapid return to government and Baldwin's pressure prevented this.<sup>1474</sup> Instead, Page Croft was approached as a longstanding and successful activist for the former TRL.<sup>1475</sup> Amery would credit Page Croft after the latter's death as having become the working leader, and life and soul, of the Tariff Reform movement.<sup>1476</sup>

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<sup>1470</sup> Barnes, Nicholson (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 245.

<sup>1471</sup> Milner, *Questions*, 34.

<sup>1472</sup> Fedorowich, E.K., *'Foredoomed to Failure': The Resettlement of British Ex-Servicemen in the Dominions, 1914-1930*, (LSE Thesis, 1990), 159-60, 203-4,

<sup>1473</sup> Thompson, *Imperial Britain*, 184-5.

<sup>1474</sup> Barnes, Nicholson, (ed.), *Amery Diaries*, 368-71, 378.

<sup>1475</sup> Croft, *Strife*, 178.

<sup>1476</sup> *The Times*, 10/12/47, 6.

Meanwhile, over the course of the mid-1920s to late-1920s, demand grew within the Conservative Party for the introduction of Imperial Preference, or at least that the Safeguarding Act be used for iron and steel despite Churchill's opposition. After the defeat of 1929, Baldwin was gradually pressured into going further and further towards Imperial Preference until in 1931 he adopted the principle without conditions.<sup>1477</sup> Outside the Conservative Party, former opponents of Tariff Reform made sympathetic gestures towards Imperial Preference. By mid-1930 the TUC General Council reiterated its openness to Imperial Preference over French proposals for a European Union, judging that accepting Imperial Preference was not a substantial risk compared to continued resistance to it.<sup>1478</sup> Amery and Page Croft opposed the National Government's formation, preferring a purely Conservative government over a repeat of the coalition experience.<sup>1479</sup> Even with Amery outside the National Government, however, its electoral landslide victory in 1931 spelt the end of Free Trade. The 1932 Import Duties Act was openly regarded by Neville Chamberlain as signifying victory for the crusade his father had embarked upon with his speech on 15<sup>th</sup> March 1903.<sup>1480</sup> Constructive Imperialists believed the Act represented a fatal blow to Free Trade and a victory for Imperial Preference.<sup>1481</sup> The Act's passage, however, was accompanied by further pressure from the Constructive Imperialists.<sup>1482</sup> This pressure in the Commons led to bitter exchanges between Neville Chamberlain<sup>1483</sup> and Amery over the

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<sup>1477</sup> Ramsden, *Appetite for Power*, 276.

<sup>1478</sup> K. Middlemass, *Politics in Industrial Society: The Experience of the British System Since 1911*, (London, 1979), 224.

<sup>1479</sup> Croft, *Strife*, 194. Amery, *Political Life Vol. II*, 511-2.

<sup>1480</sup> *Hansard*, HC Debate, Import Duties, 04/02/32, Vol 261 cc296.

<sup>1481</sup> Cooper, *Agricultural Policy*, 152.

<sup>1482</sup> Croft, *Strife*, 209-10.

<sup>1483</sup> Neville Chamberlain's relationship with the Constructive Imperialists could be seen as akin to William Bridgeman's. The two men shared the aim of Imperial Preference, but disagreed on methods, although Chamberlain, like Bridgeman, believed Amery to be unrealistic in the extent of his ambitions.

possible exclusion of foreign meats from duties. Amery believed that the Import Duties Act, while a victory, was only a partial one and that more work was needed to establish a common imperial agricultural and currency policy.<sup>1484</sup> Yet, even if it was incomplete, the Import Duties Act remained a victory over Free Trade.

This victory was primarily due to the Depression, but it was also gained in part because the TRL, and then the successive Imperial Preference movements, were more capable than the Radical Right had ever been of adapting to the reality and demands of the mass democracy—which included women voters—and to the concerns of consumers. Milner lamented that so many voters appeared concerned with the “shopping point of view”<sup>1485</sup> rather than the grand programme for an imperial nation’s rebirth. Britain was, however, a society of consumers as well as an imperial nation. The ability to appreciate this was what ensured success for those opposed to Free Trade. By the late 1920s, it was Free Trade’s failure to offer a mass appeal to consumers compared to that propagated by bodies like the EMB that spelt its failure.<sup>1486</sup> Even so, Peter Cain and Geraint Thomas are right to say that the Import Duties Act was more an act of pragmatism focused on domestic recovery and reform than imperial solidarity, which was discarded after World War Two.<sup>1487</sup>

At least, however, Tariff Reform had won. By contrast, the militaristic aspect of the former Radical Right’s programme found less luck post-war. The demands from the public and soldiers alike were for demobilisation and a return to the voluntary principle. Delays in the

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<sup>1484</sup> W.R. Louis, *In the Name of God, Go!* Leo Amery and the British Empire in the Age of Churchill, (London, 1992), 106.

<sup>1485</sup> Milner, *Constructive Imperialism*, 12-3.

<sup>1486</sup> D. Thackeray, ‘From Prudent Housewife to Empire Shopper: Party Appeals to Women Voters 1918-1928’, J. Gottlieb, R. Toye (ed.), *The Aftermath of Suffrage: Women, Gender, and Politics in Britain, 1918-1945*, (Basingstoke, 2013), 49.

<sup>1487</sup> Cain, ‘Constructive Imperialism’, 59. G. Thomas, *Popular Conservatism and the Culture of National Government in Inter-War Britain*, (Cambridge, 2020) 179, 113.

former even sparked mutiny threats within the army and an actual mutiny in Folkestone.<sup>1488</sup>

The Lloyd George Liberals were prepared to revolt at the slightest sign of conscription not being abolished.<sup>1489</sup> Lloyd George himself rooted his opposition to allowing Germany a conscript army on the grounds that it would weaken his ability to abandon conscription at home.<sup>1490</sup> Outside Parliament, the situation for 'hard' militarists was worse. Anne Summers correctly summarised the NSL's brand of militarism as having nowhere to go.<sup>1491</sup>

The NSL, having dissolved in 1917, had no successor organisation as the TRL did. As for the navalist leagues, the IML finally collapsed, while the NL adapted to its poverty of funds and members by pivoting towards sea-cadet training.<sup>1492</sup> Attempts to argue that introducing National Service prior to the war might have deterred Germany from aggression carried little weight with the public. Instead, the anti-militarist backlash of the 1920s troubled Amery, Page Croft, and Winterton, who despaired at what they saw as the idolatry of the League of Nations.<sup>1493</sup>

The defeat of Germany itself lessened the need for a 'Nation in Arms' ready to deter invasion. Far from this creating an ideologically friendly environment for the Radical Right as Burgoyne had envisioned in *The War Inevitable* or F.S. Oliver predicted during the war,<sup>1494</sup> however, the opposite occurred. With the conclusion of the Washington and London Naval Treaties, and further reductions in military spending, the 'imperial retreat' continued. H.A.

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<sup>1488</sup> Gregory, *Great War*, 283.

<sup>1489</sup> Blake (ed.), *Sanders Diaries*, 124.

<sup>1490</sup> Taylor (ed.), *Lloyd George Diary*, 170-1.

<sup>1491</sup> Summers, 'Militarism', 121.

<sup>1492</sup> Fleming, *Britannia's Zealots*, 91.

<sup>1493</sup> Amery, *Forward View*, 10. Turnour, *Orders*, 95, 118. Croft, *Strife*, 254.

<sup>1494</sup> Burgoyne, *War Inevitable*, 312. Gwynn (ed.), *Anvil*, 60.

Gwynne himself supported the Washington Naval Treaty despite it formally capping the size of Britain's navy.<sup>1495</sup>

Kenneth Morgan argued that the government had accepted that naval supremacy was impossible in a post-1918 world.<sup>1496</sup> In fact, the main divergence from pre-war policy was extending this acceptance to naval parity with the United States. Britain had already conceded global supremacy with Fisher's withdrawal of overseas squadrons to focus them in the North Sea so as to secure regional security.<sup>1497</sup> The Radical Right's military policy had been an explicit rejection of Fisher's logic, National Service being intended in part to enable the fleets to be deployed globally. That hope, however, had collapsed. Even if it was somehow viable practically, it would have been too controversial. Even the construction of a naval base in Singapore occasioned a partisan battle between the Conservatives and Labour. The militarism of the Radical Right, unlike the Constructive Imperialist aspect of its programme, was incapable of adapting to mass democracy and thus found itself delegitimised by 1918. That there was also no sense of impending military threat to Britain until the mid-to-late 1930s did not help matters either. Unlike Imperial Preference, National Service found no new champions or converts as the 1920s progressed.

With the defeat of enemies outside Britain, attention turned to the question of enemies within Britain. For some within the Conservative Right, especially the Die-Hards, this came in the form of the Jewish population. Anti-semitism had intensified in British society during the war: a trend which continued into the post-war period. Stanley Baldwin appointed William Joynson-Hicks as Home Secretary, who had a reputation for being antisemitic and had come

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<sup>1495</sup> H.A. Gwynne-A. Balfour, 15/03/22, BL, MS49797.

<sup>1496</sup> K. Morgan, *Consensus and Disunity: The Lloyd George Coalition Government, 1918-1922*, (Cambridge, 1979), 267.

<sup>1497</sup> Friedberg, *Weary Titan*, 299.

close to making the 1919 Aliens Act permanent.<sup>1498</sup> Even Austen Chamberlain felt that the Lloyd George Coalition's India Secretary Edwin Montagu, and the Die-Hard backlash against his policy in India, showed how Montagu—and even Disraeli— were unable to be truly English, owing to their Jewish background.<sup>1499</sup> The Die-Hards, however, took a more active approach than Austen Chamberlain's passive belief that Judaism and Britishness were irreconcilable.

H.A. Gwynne wrecked the reputation of the *Morning Post* by translating and endorsing the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a fabricated publication that claimed the Jews were attempting world domination, which *The Times* proved to be a forgery.<sup>1500</sup> His efforts were coupled with those of the Duke of Northumberland, Alan Percy. Having succeeded to his father in 1918, the Duke used his fortune to lead a consortium to purchase the *Morning Post* from Lady Bathurst. In addition, he supported *The Patriot*, a newspaper that made frequent reference to both a Jewish and a Bolshevik threat to Britain both at home and overseas.<sup>1501</sup> Lord Crawford jokingly compared Northumberland to Erich Ludendorff, the German military leader, in his frequent paranoia about Bolshevism.<sup>1502</sup> Northumberland, however, was not alone in connecting Judaism and Bolshevism. Leo Maxse and Page Croft both associated Jewish influence with the post-war strike wave.<sup>1503</sup>

Anti-semitism also allowed for connections between the British Fascisti, Britain's first fascist movement, and those who had been adherents of the Edwardian Radical Right. In 1919,

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<sup>1498</sup> D. Cesarani, 'William Joynson-Hicks and the Radical Right in England After The First World War', T. Kushner, K. Lunn (ed.), *Traditions of Intolerance: Historical Perspectives on Fascism and Race Discourse in British Society*, (Manchester, 1989), 132.

<sup>1499</sup> A. Chamberlain-Ida Chamberlain, 11/07/20, CRL, AC5/1/168.

<sup>1500</sup> Wilson, *The Morning Post*, 7-8.

<sup>1501</sup> Ibid., 3. M. Ruotsila, 'The Anti-Semitism of the 8<sup>th</sup> Duke of Northumberland's *The Patriot* 1922-1930', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 39:1, (1974), 71, 81.

<sup>1502</sup> Vincent (ed.), *Crawford Papers*, 442.

<sup>1503</sup> Cesarani, 'Joynson-Hicks', 123.

Henry Hamilton Beamish, a former member of The Vigilantes under Noel Pemberton-Billing, founded The Britons as an antisemitic organisation. The Britons sought to build bridges with the BEU in battling against German-Jewish-Bolshevik influence. They endorsed the BEU's slogan 'Britain for the British' and asked Edward Carson as President of the BEU to facilitate talks.<sup>1504</sup> Others involved with the Radical Right such as Patrick Hannon had direct ties with fascism through membership in the BF's Grand Council, and Page Croft through his sister's membership had ties with the BF as well.<sup>1505</sup> Martin Pugh in his history of fascism in inter-war Britain highlighted Lord Winterton's sympathy for the British fascists, even defending the British Union of Fascists' violent actions at the 1934 Olympia rally.<sup>1506</sup>

In turn, there is the question of whether the Radical Right were in fact a proto-fascist movement. The BUF's rhetoric and anxieties about Britain resembled those of the TRL and Constructive Imperialists like Milner.<sup>1507</sup> Rubinstein's study of the National Party concluded by arguing that the party's rhetoric and ideology, had the party itself not collapsed under its own failings, might have served as a prototypical British Fascism.<sup>1508</sup> Page Croft certainly had few qualms in using the BF as stewards at his rallies and meetings.<sup>1509</sup> Among the Die-Hards, at least, there was overlap between themselves and the early stages of the British fascist movement in sympathy and through membership of bodies like the BF. As for the British Union of Fascists, the largest of the fascist movements by the 1930s, the former

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<sup>1504</sup> Draft Resolution sent by E. Toulon-Smith, Secretary of The Britons to General Secretary of the BEU Reginald Wilson, 16/10/20, PRONI, D1507/B/41/13.

<sup>1505</sup> Sykes, *Radical Right*, 52.

<sup>1506</sup> M. Pugh, *Hurrah for the Blackshirts!: Fascists and Fascism in Britain Between The Wars*, (London, 2005), 148, 276, 310.

<sup>1507</sup> T. Linehan, *British Fascism, 1918-1939: Parties, Ideology, and Culture*, (Manchester, 2000), 17-8.

<sup>1508</sup> Rubinstein, 'National Party', 148.

<sup>1509</sup> G.C. Webber, 'Intolerance and Discretion: Conservatives and British Fascism, 1918-1926', T. Kushner, K. Lunn (ed.), *Traditions of Intolerance: Historical Perspectives on Fascism and Race Discourse in British Society*, (Manchester, 1989), 158.



Belfast MP W.E.D. Allen attempted to portray the UVF as the ideological forerunner for the BUF. The Nazi collaborator William Joyce celebrated Carson alongside Oswald Mosley as heroes of British fascism, providing a British history of the movement.<sup>1510</sup> The appeal for Joyce is apparent in the UVF's attempt at armed revolt. In a 1914 article, Vladimir Lenin saw it as a "revolution of the right" which he argued revealed the ability and will of Home Rule's opponents to throw away the thin veil of parliamentary politics in order to achieve victory in class struggles.<sup>1511</sup> It is unlikely Joyce ever read this article, but it very much represented how he would have seen it. Thomas Linehan also agreed that, for all the medievalism of the BUF, its historical focus on the UVF and the Edwardian crisis years of 1911-1914 served to show the BUF's inspirations, as Mosley often adopted the intellectual arguments of the Radical Right.<sup>1512</sup>

However, using Oliver Zimmer's description of fascism as an ultranationalist movement aiming at organic rebirth of the nation via mass mobilisation under a leader figure with violence as both means and end,<sup>1513</sup> the Edwardian Radical Right's status as a proto-fascist movement can be questioned. The first issue is that the Radical Right came closest to meeting this description in the Ulster Crisis, during which it aimed to topple the Liberal government and some were ready to use armed revolt to do so. Unlike Law, the Radical Right were less invested in the idea that a pro-Home Rule mandate from the electorate would settle the matter, and many did seek to enact a larger programme once the Unionists took office. However, the Radical Right did not seek to tie the UVF, British Covenant or the BLSUU to its other causes. If anything, Constructive Imperialism and National Service—the

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<sup>1510</sup> R. Benewick, *The Fascist Movement in Britain*, (London, 1972), 22-5.

<sup>1511</sup> V.L. Lenin, 'The Constitutional Crisis in Britain', accessed via Marxists Internet Archive [ <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1914/apr/10.htm>, accessed 09/12/2021]

<sup>1512</sup> Linehan, *Fascism*, 17.

<sup>1513</sup> O. Zimmer, *Nationalism in Europe, 1890-1940*, (Basingstoke, 2003), 81.

twin causes of the Radical Right embodied by Milner and Roberts—were explicitly put aside for the Ulster cause. Robert Paxton did note that violence played a strong role in fascist ideas about seizing and using power along with an explicit rejection of constitutional parliamentarianism,<sup>1514</sup> but the Radical Right's adherents did not believe *they specifically* would gain power through the Ulster Crisis, but more the Unionist Party as a whole through a general election. Nor were the parliamentary mechanisms meant to be toppled, but instead restored to a pre-Parliament Act 1911 status. There was overlap in language, particularly involving the empire and economy, between the Radical Right and British fascist movement, but there is a lack of direct evidence of a direct historical evolution from the former to the latter. If the Ulster Crisis was meant to serve as proof of the Radical Right's status as predecessors to fascism, such a definition would then have to also apply to the Unionist Party during those years. Furthermore, Carson serves as a poor fit as a Fascist leader, given his desire for a negotiated settlement and his subordination to the Ulster Unionist Council. He may have been admired by the Radical Right, but he was not one of them, let alone a British Mussolini.

One sizeable difference between the former Radical Right and the fascist movement was that the former had learned to remain within the powerful party machine of the Conservative Party. The Conservative leadership, moreover, was dedicated to creating a more 'peaceable' kingdom to avoid the threat of post-war violence.<sup>1515</sup> This meant that

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<sup>1514</sup> R. Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*, (London, 2005), 219-20.

<sup>1515</sup> J. Lawrence, 'Forging a Peaceable Kingdom: War, Violence, and Fears of Brutalisation in Post-First World War Britain', *The Journal of Modern History*, 75:3, (2003), 557-8.

Central Office officially deprecated the use of fascist stewards in meetings or the rough-and-tumble nature of pre-war rallies.<sup>1516</sup>

There is an argument that the Radical Right's spiritual successor was in fact the Neo-Tory movement of the 1930s. Bernhard Dietz's account of the backlash against modern democracy within the Conservative Party details the 'Neo-Tories' as an intellectual circle which organised itself through clubs and newspapers.<sup>1517</sup> Many right-wing Conservatives lost faith in modern parliamentary democracy after the stagnation of the 1920s and the 1929 general election, which saw Labour enter office once more. The sense of crisis was furthered by what Neo-Tories felt was the national spirit-sapping rise of anti-war literature, but the solution was not sought in the overt violence embodied by the BUF.<sup>1518</sup> For the Neo-Tories, the issue lay with Conservative impotence and acquiescence in the face of disaster which was embodied by Stanley Baldwin's leadership, seen as rustic and out of touch with the party.<sup>1519</sup> Much the same had been said of Balfour during the days of the Edwardian Radical Right. The overlaps even extended to personnel, as Lord Winterton had contacts while George Lloyd was positioned as a potential Prime-Minister-in-waiting during the early 1930s by the Neo-Tories who admired him.<sup>1520</sup> Like the Radical Right, the Neo-Tories sought to reverse national decline with a renewed party leadership that sought radical reform.

However, there are limits to the scope for presenting the Neo-Tories as a successor to the Edwardian Radical Right. In terms of campaigning, the Neo-Tories saw their audience as the

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<sup>1516</sup> D. Thackeray, 'Building a Peaceable Party: Masculine Identities in British Conservative Politics, 1903-1924', *Historical Research*, 85:230, (2012), 668.

<sup>1517</sup> B. Dietz, *Neo-Tories: The Revolt of British Conservatives Against Democracy and Political Modernity, 1929-1939*, (London, 2018), 1.

<sup>1518</sup> *Ibid.*, 74-7, 40, 1.

<sup>1519</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>1520</sup> *Ibid.*, 144-50.

tens of thousands whose profile fitted that of their own selves; members of the middle class who underwent an 'elite' education.<sup>1521</sup> There was little interest in matching the Edwardian Radical Right's focus on large pressure groups, nor was there any great confidence in the working class as a sleeping body of patriotism ready to be rallied. Within the parliamentary context itself, George Lloyd never fully emerged as a leader-in-waiting, and Dietz noted that it was questionable whether Lloyd desired to be such a figure. As for comparing the Neo-Tories with the Edwardian Radical Right, a fundamental difference in ideology emerges when comparing where the respective groups positioned their crises and solution. The Neo-Tories were a parochial set who believed more in the Merrie England of the Tudor era than in a modern Imperial Union.<sup>1522</sup> This naturally impeded ties with the Die-Hards during the 1930s. It also complicates any historical narrative seeking to connect the Edwardian Radical Right with the Neo-Tories.

The Die-Hards of the Government of India Act debates were the closest to direct historical successors for the Edwardian Radical Right (the wartime Dogmatist section at least) but were not the sole heirs. The Constructive Imperialist movement and Edwardian Radical Right were strongly intertwined, but the former outlived the latter as Amery, Winterton, and Page Croft's careers continued into the 1920s-40s. In the cases of Amery and Winterton, neither were Die-Hards on India, but they remained on the right of the Conservative Party and detached from the core decision-making circles. Amery would return to government when Winston Churchill became Prime Minister in 1940, while Winterton remained on the backbenches after a brief failed term as a minister under Neville Chamberlain. Others such as Ormsby-Gore and Tryon would become better embedded in

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<sup>1521</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-7.

<sup>1522</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

the Conservative mainstream, at the cost of being subsumed into the party itself. The disparate fates of the Edwardian Radical Right's adherents serve as a strong reflection of the broader failure to solidify an identity or organisation.

### **Conclusion**

The Edwardian Radical Right's story is ultimately one of failure. Its ideology was a reaction to a sense of multi-faceted national decline in geopolitical, economic, military, and social terms, which the Unionist governments of the Late Victorian era failed to confront, while the Unionist Party of Edwardian Britain appeared unable, and even unwilling, to act. This decline was believed to be reversible through the rapid adoption of militarism through compulsory universal military service and through imperial union via Tariff Reform (particularly food duties). These policies represented a stark shift in Britain's economic and political traditions, and convincing the electorate in a handful of years to accept, let alone embrace, either one was a monumental task for any political movement.

The years 1903-1918 were not chosen at random for the Radical Right's lifespan. The year 1903, specifically Joseph Chamberlain's formal endorsement of Tariff Reform, was chosen over 1902 or 1905—dates involving the NSL's founding and then Lord Roberts becoming President—in part because Constructive Imperialism embodied by Tariff Reform was the heart of the Radical Right ideology. Between 1902 and 1905, the NSL was primarily a marginal movement. Whereas many of the most vocal and active Radical Right adherents self-identified their decision to enter politics with Chamberlain's speech, activity within the NSL only began with similar intensity when Roberts became President in 1905. Hence, 1903 remains the most suitable point of origin.

As for the years 1917-18 marking the Radical Right's demise, this was because they saw the end of the Radical Right's common sense of a solution to the issues facing Britain. For Constructivists, the solution lay with the Lloyd George Coalition, whilst Dogmatists saw the coalition as part of the problem. With the emergence of the National Party in 1917, and de facto collapse of the TRL later that year, the parting of ways between Constructivists and Dogmatists left the Radical Right defunct. In 1918, the electoral failure of the National Party and the parallel failure to mobilise the UWC as a vehicle of formal right-wing opposition to the government, demoralised the Dogmatists into inactivity. Victory in the war, lastly, created such a different political atmosphere from that during the Edwardian era that fundamental aspects of the Radical Right ideology—notably National Service—were never re-adopted. Given also that a number of adherents dropped out of politics, and others like Page Croft discarded 'constructive' social reforms for more Salisbury-esque negative anti-socialism, there was little chance for the distinct nature of Radical Right ideology to return. What was left was what had pre-dated the Radical Right and been vital to it—Constructive Imperialism—which, while not a success beyond the 1930s, nevertheless had much better luck than the Radical Right as a whole.

The Radical Right's lack of a solid supporting parliamentary clique or group meant that its primary form of campaigning came through individual publications and speeches, as well as action within those pressure groups that supported individual aspects of the Radical Right ideology. Examples were the TRL for Tariff Reform and Constructive Imperialism, the NSL for National Service, the NL and IML for maintaining naval dominance, and the attempts during the war to coalesce with the BWL as the source of support from 'patriot labour' for the Radical Right. Yet of these groups, only the IML could be called a Radical Right pressure group in that its leading members primarily came from Radical Right adherents, and even so

the Radical Right did not unify under the IML. Others such as Burgoyne instead remained inside the NL, mirroring the wartime development whereby some adherents defected to the National Party while others remained inside the Unionist fold. The Radical Right thus could never seize control of the pressure groups it relied on, and so the collapse of many of those groups helped bury the Radical Right by 1917-18.

Even a solid and coherent faction with a dominant leading personality and a strong grip on the Unionist Party would have had trouble in fully winning over the electorate to both Tariff Reform and National Service. The Radical Right had neither. Without a well-publicised document that articulated the Radical Right ideology or a leader who could do so, and without capturing the Unionist party machine, the Edwardian Radical Right's chances of success were minute. It was unlikely that any attempt at producing either a coherent manifesto or an unquestioned successor to Joseph Chamberlain would have even been possible. Hewins after the war admitted that "people have been crying out for leadership, though they would not follow a leader if they had one and would not recognise him if he appeared."<sup>1523</sup>

The fissiparous nature of the Radical Right did not help matters, but greater unity would not have alleviated the problem that the Radical Right was also poor at coalition-building. It demanded control but often settled for either self-marginalisation or bitter acquiescence. Even those capable of entering the Unionist front bench such as Amery and Tryon were either regarded at best as well-meaning self-saboteurs or became incorporated fully into the party fold.<sup>1524</sup> For all its claims to be better suited for operating in a mass democracy,

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<sup>1523</sup> Hewins, *Apologia* Vol. 2, 232.

<sup>1524</sup> Williamson (ed.), *Bridgeman Diaries*, 230. *The Times*, 25/11/40, 7.

the Radical Right's causes failed to win over voters, or it used appeals that its adherents felt cheapened the platform.

One example was the failure to utilise the role of women activists in Edwardian era political campaigning. WUTRA was a prime example of effective political campaigning and was formed in response to apparent complacency and inefficiency in the Unionist mainstream to not only the questions of trade and the economy, but also specifically the use of activists and women (embodied by the Primrose League). Parts of the Radical Right were able to engage with WUTRA. Yet, when it came to the militarist leagues, adherents were either unable (in Violet Cecil's case) or unwilling (in Amery, Milner, Roberts, and Amphill's cases) to push forward a similar structure for the NSL. By no means would it have saved the NSL, given that those women like Violet Cecil who were most active in pushing for reforms had rejected the VL for its avoidance of controversies like Tariff Reform. In fact, the VL's avoidance of such controversies helped it survive into the wartime and post-war period.<sup>1525</sup>

Female influence within the Radical Right, given the latter's lack of an organisational body or a social structure allowing for informal, non-activist means of influence, was dependent on personal power. Primarily this came through control over journalistic bodies such as Lady Bathurst's ownership of the *Morning Post* which gave her power over editors like Fabian Ware and H.A. Gwynne and could force Henry Page Croft to advertise himself in 1917 as a follower of her views in order to garner support. Violet Milner (nee Cecil before marrying Lord Milner in the 1920s) would only gain similar power when her brother Leo Maxse died and she became editor of the *National Review*.<sup>1526</sup> Violet Cecil and Lady Bathurst were proof

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<sup>1525</sup> Riedi, 'Violet Milner', 936. Hendley, *Crucible*, 935-6.

<sup>1526</sup> Wilson, 'National Party Spirits', 249. Riedi, 'Violet Milner', 942.



that there were women adherents of the Radical Right, buying into the 'masculine' conception of national defence and into Constructive Imperialism, but the very logic of Edwardian 'masculine' militarism locked women activists out of influence in leagues like the NSL. By contrast, Constructive Imperialism (having pre-dated the Edwardian Radical Right and out-lasting it) were able to adapt presentation and organisation going into the 1920s and 1930s owing to the pre-war/wartime work of bodies like WUTRA and the TRL. For the wider Radical Right, however, its overall approach to women activists showed that for all its ambitions, it was not forward-looking but instead backward-looking on campaigning methods relative to the Edwardian era.

The Edwardian Radical Right resented its time but was nevertheless a creation of it. Its imperial, economic, and military policies were all reactions to the anxieties of drift and fear of decline. E.H.H. Green has noted that Tariff Reformers were aware that services were compensating for the decline in manufacturing, and Aaron Friedberg argued that, while it might have been possible to delay it, preventing the end of Britain's world primacy was impossible.<sup>1527</sup> However, as Green highlighted, movements like Chamberlain's were a rejection of this structural economic shift.<sup>1528</sup> In much the same fashion, the Edwardian Radical Right rejected the inevitability of relative decline. With the First World War being won by Britain, however, a defensive imperial-nationalism appeared unnecessary in the world to come, while the conflict served only to split the Radical Right. Yet, even leaving aside the war, the Radical Right was a victim of its own ambitions.

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<sup>1527</sup> Green, *Crisis of Conservatism*, 240. Friedberg, *Weary Titan*, 301.

<sup>1528</sup> Green, *Crisis of Conservatism*, 240.

This does not mean that the Edwardian Radical Right only merits study as a story of failure and purely about failure. It also serves as a useful contrast to those strands of British Conservatism that did succeed in offering a popular platform, such as the Unionists in 1918 or the Conservative Party during the inter-war period. If there is a key element to take from comparing the Radical Right and Neo-Tories, it is in Dietz's argument that the Neo-Tories were reacting against Baldwin and the Conservative Party's *success* in becoming a 'party of the people' by accepting reform.<sup>1529</sup> The Radical Right had sought to turn the Unionists into a 'National Party' with such a reputation. That it failed, when it and Baldwin's Conservatism had arguably similar historical ties in the idea of the Tories being social reformers and more directly in the TRL's campaigns, serves to highlight why the Radical Right is worth studying. By understanding precisely why the Edwardian Radical Right failed, it is easier to see why other aspects of British Conservatism succeeded, whether the Unionists as the 'party of patriotism' in 1918 or Baldwin's New Conservatism in the 1920s and 30s.

The Radical Right was best capable of succeeding when it could count on the moral support of the Unionist grassroots and backbenchers. This happened in the early months of 1907, the aftermath of the Ditchers' revolt, and the push for conscription in 1915-16, and victory resulted each time. The drawback was that this mobilisation took place primarily within the sphere of the Unionist Party (except for conscription, which included the Liberal War Committee). The benefits of these victories thus flowed to the Unionist Party as a whole, from the push to reform party organisation, leadership change from Balfour to Law in 1911, and a strengthened reputation as the party of patriotism in 1918. During the First World War, the Constructivists sought to place their faith in Lloyd George and Milner as men who

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<sup>1529</sup> Dietz, *Neo-Tories*, 83.

could win both the war and the peace, while the Die-Hards were incapable of doing so in the case of Lloyd George. Meanwhile, the Radical Right's failure to appreciate that imperialism and militarism were ideas with a broader ideological appeal than were possessed by Constructive Imperialism or the NSL respectively, or to appreciate the inclusive nature of the TRL's appeal compared to the NSL's exclusive model, meant it was denied the fruits of apparent vindication during the First World War.

The Radical Right's victories only resulted in its submergence back into the Unionist fold, although on a longer timetable than Alan Sykes maintained.<sup>1530</sup> In backing Law, and arguably Baldwin and his New Conservatism via the TRL, the Radical Right ironically helped form a Unionist Party that could win over the mass democracy while failing to do so itself. The Radical Right itself, meanwhile, suffered the NSL's fate. Matthew Hendley described the NSL's collapse as "a perfect example of an organisation...that could not survive their realisation."<sup>1531</sup>

Such an epithet can be applied to the Edwardian Radical Right itself, which perished with the very age it held in contempt.

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<sup>1530</sup> Sykes, 'Radical Right and the Crisis of Conservatism', 674-6.

<sup>1531</sup> Hendley, *Crucible*, 11.

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