Alternatives to State-Socialism in Britain

Other Worlds of Labour in the Twentieth Century

Edited by Peter Ackers & Alastair J Reid

Palgrave Studies in the History of Social Movements

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Around the world, social movements have become legitimate, yet contested, actors in local, national and global politics and civil society, yet we still know relatively little about their longer histories and the trajectories of their development. This series seeks to promote innovative historical research on the history of social movements in the modern period since around 1750. We bring together conceptually-informed studies that analyse labour movements, new social movements and other forms of protest from early modernity to the present. We conceive of 'social movements' in the broadest possible sense, encompassing social formations that lie between formal organisations and mere protest events. We also offer a home for studies that systematically explore the political, social, economic and cultural conditions in which social movements can emerge. We are especially interested in transnational and global perspectives on the history of social movements, and in studies that engage critically and creatively with political, social and sociological theories in order to make historically grounded arguments about social movements. This new series seeks to offer innovative historical work on social movements, while also helping to historicise the concept of 'social movement'. It hopes to revitalise the conversation between historians and historical sociologists in analysing what Charles Tilly has called the 'dynamics of contention'.

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Editors

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To Moira and Margaret

SERIES EDITORS' PREFACE

Around the world, social movements have become legitimate, yet contested, actors in local, national and global politics and civil society, yet we still know relatively little about their longer histories and the trajectories of their development. Our series reacts to what can be described as a recent boom in the history of social movements. We can observe a development from the crisis of labour history in the 1980s to the boom in research on social movements in the 2000s. The rise of historical interest in the development of civil society and the role of strong civil societies as well as non-governmental organizations in stabilizing democratically constituted polities have strengthened the interest in social movements as a constituent element of civil societies.

In different parts of the world, social movements continue to have a strong influence on contemporary politics. In Latin America, trade unions, labour parties and various left-of-centre civil society organizations have succeeded in supporting left-of-centre governments. In Europe, peace movements, ecological movements and alliances intent on campaigning against poverty and racial discrimination and discrimination on the basis of gender and sexual orientation have been able to set important political agendas for decades. In other parts of the world, including Africa, India and South East Asia, social movements have played a significant role in various forms of community building and community politics. The contemporary political relevance of social movements has undoubtedly contributed to a growing historical interest in the topic.

Contemporary historians are not only beginning to historicize these relatively recent political developments; they are also trying to relate them

to a longer history of social movements, including traditional labour orga-
nizations, such as working-class parties and trade unions. In the *longue
durée*, we recognize that social movements are by no means recent phe-
nomena and are not even exclusively modern phenomena, although we
realize that the onset of modernity emanating from Europe and North
America across the wider world from the eighteenth century onwards
marks an important departure point for the development of civil societies
and social movements.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the dominance of national
history over all other forms of history writing led to a thorough nation-
alization of the historical sciences. Hence social movements have been
examined traditionally within the framework of the nation state. Only dur-
ing the last two decades have historians begun to question the validity of
such methodological nationalism and to explore the development of social
movements in comparative, connective and transnational perspective, tak-
ing into account processes of transfer, reception and adaptation. Whilst
our book series does not preclude work that is still being carried out
within national frameworks (for, clearly, there is a place for such studies,
given the historical importance of the nation state in history), it hopes to
encourage comparative and transnational histories on social movements.

At the same time as historians have begun to research the history of
those movements, a range of social theorists, from Jürgen Habermas to
Pierre Bourdieu and from Slavoj Žižek to Alain Badiou as well as Ernesto
Laclau and Chantal Mouffe to Miguel Abensour, to name but a few, have
attempted to provide philosophical-cum-theoretical frameworks in which
to place and contextualize the development of social movements. History
has arguably been the most empirical of all the social and human sciences,
but it will be necessary for historians to explore further to what extent
these social theories can be helpful in guiding and framing the empirical
work of the historian in making sense of the historical development of
social movements. Hence the current series is also hoping to make a con-
tribution to the ongoing dialogue between social theory and the history
of social movements.

This series seeks to promote innovative historical research on the history
of social movements in the modern period since around 1750. We bring
together conceptually informed studies that analyse labour movements,
new social movements and other forms of protest from early modernity
to the present. With this series, we seek to revive, within the context of
historiographical developments since the 1970s, a conversation between

historians on the one hand and sociologists, anthropologists and political scientists on the other.

Unlike most of the concepts and theories developed by social scientists, we do not see social movements as directly linked, a priori, to processes of social and cultural change and therefore do not adhere to a view that distinguishes between old (labour) and new (middle-class) social movements. Instead, we want to establish the concept 'social movement' as a heuristic device that allows historians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to investigate social and political protests in novel settings. Our aim is to historicize notions of social and political activism in order to highlight different notions of political and social protest on both the left and right.

Hence, we conceive of 'social movements' in the broadest possible sense, encompassing social formations that lie between formal organizations and mere protest events. But we also include processes of social and cultural change more generally in our understanding of social movements: this goes back to nineteenth-century understandings of 'social movements' as processes of social and cultural change more generally. We also offer a home for studies that systematically explore the political, social, economic and cultural conditions in which social movements can emerge. We are especially interested in transnational and global perspectives on the history of social movements, and in studies that engage critically and creatively with political, social and sociological theories in order to make historically grounded arguments about social movements. In short, this series seeks to offer innovative historical work on social movements, while also helping to historicize the concept of 'social movement'. It also hopes to revitalize the conversation between historians and historical sociologists in analysing what Charles Tilly has called the 'dynamics of contention'.

Alternatives to State-Socialism in Britain makes what is likely to become a highly controversial intervention in the debate about the nature of the twentieth-century British labour movement. Instead of foregrounding abstract categories such as 'class', or focusing on Marxist and state-centred strands of labour activism and zooming in on party elites, Peter Ackers and Alastair Reid and their contributors direct our attention to a different set of political locales and ideologies. They examine what they regard as a largely neglected and specifically British tradition of the labour movement: they bring to the forefront a fundamental 'commitment to pluralism' and 'civil society' that was rooted in 'national traditions that mix and match older liberal and conservative values with newer elements of ethical socialism, anarchism and social democracy'.

The editors and their authors thus engage with recent studies of the labour movement and of class which foreground the sociocultural dimensions of class. But, building on Jonathan Rose's insights into the 'intellectual lives of the working classes', they contest the explicit or implicit focus on what they regard as 'state-socialism', Marxism and materialism in existing studies on the labour movement. They claim that this focus on the state and on class has never had unchallenged support within the movement. Through three sections, which examine associations, leaders and intellectuals, this volume argues instead that 'liberal-pluralist intellectuals were always much closer to the everyday spirit of the British people than Marxist pretenders'. Overall, then, this book provides a pronouncedly post-materialist and post-Cold War look at the British labour movement: it emphasizes cultures of politics rather than realities of social inequality.

This volume, which focuses on cultures of democracy in the 'short twentieth century', is to be seen as a direct companion to Eugenio Biagini and Alastair Reid's edited collection on *Currents of Radicalism* (1991), which focuses on the nineteenth century. Its contributions emphasize cooperation rather than confrontation and (liberal) pluralism rather than socialism. Thus, this book makes a direct intervention into the debate about the nature of the Labour Party's status as a movement or an organization which has played a significant role in debates about the nature and status of the politics of labour and class in Germany and in other continental European countries as well.

Future research will perhaps have to explore whether this really was a matter of 'alternatives' to state-socialism, or whether we might be able to detect linkages, overlaps and ambiguities between state-socialist and pluralist proposals. It also remains an open question as to how we might connect José Harris's argument about British notions of 'civil society' to the findings of this volume. Harris argues that it was characteristic of British debates that they did not regard state and civil society as polar opposites, but as connected spheres. Ackers and Reid have left us with plenty of material that provides food for thought for these discussions.

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Other Worlds of Labour: Liberal-Pluralism in Twentieth-Century British Labour History

Peter Ackers and Alastair J. Reid

INTRODUCTION: FRAMING THE DEBATE

In many ways, debates in the field of British labour history resemble controversies in religious history over the nature of the British Reformation. Most historians have had a strong presentist ideological commitment—in this case socialist politics and ideas rather than Protestant or Catholic faith—and their history has been written not only to justify this, but also, as a propaganda tool to 'win the battle of ideas' and hasten the building of their particular brand of socialist society. On the most dogmatic wing, Communist historians have expected British working people to fulfil Marx and Engels' role of 'the proletariat' and stage class conflict to overthrow capitalist society. Their obvious failure to do so has been explained by introducing factors which interfered with underlying mechanisms, such as the 'labour aristocracy' (from Lenin) or 'labourism'

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(from Engels): blaming the peculiarities of British society and preserving the purity of Marxist theory. Even moderate Fabian socialists, who have eschewed class conflict and revolutionary change, harnessed their historical writing to a progressive teleology which moved smoothly, if gradually, from capitalism to socialism. In both cases, socialism had a very specific meaning, as a system of state ownership and planning of all economic life.

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, this state-socialist dream is now dead and gone, leaving only a memory of brutal oppression and economic inefficiency. However, it has left a strong, lingering imprint on British labour history and our understanding of working-class life in twentieth-century British society. This is true in two senses, both of which we explore here. One is an interpretation of working people as if they were members of a proletariat, fighting capitalism and aspiring to socialism. The other is an approach to middle-class thinking as if its left-leaning variants were always concerned with using the levers of central government. State-socialist accounts of labour history tend to conflate the two in a global confection of workers and socialist intellectuals marching together in one direction. In this book, by contrast, we uncover a much stronger, simultaneously more central and more diverse, British commitment to pluralism: deep-rooted in national traditions that mix and match older liberal and conservative values with newer elements of ethical socialism, anarchism and social democracy. This is not a residual, obstructive confusion, as state-socialist historians have suggested if they have recognized it at all, but rather a living political tradition that values associational forms of life above the state.

This essay develops the argument through three stages. First, we explore the roots of the state-socialist approach and show how this still informs much of recent labour history. Next, we sketch a vibrant and wide-ranging alternative pluralist intellectual tradition, which responds to the associational movements in popular British life in various ways, some more focused on institution building, some more focused on the potential of informal groups. Finally, we chart change and continuity in this tradition through the 'short twentieth century' from 1918 to 1979, particularly during the post-war period of state collectivism.

The State-Socialist Conventional Wisdom in British Labour History

Sidney and Beatrice Webb laid the Fabian state-socialist foundations of British labour history with their *History of Trade Unionism* (1894) and *Industrial Democracy* (1897). Both studies analysed associational forms,

but only as stepping-stones to a socialist society managed by experts. G.D.H. Cole's *The World of Labour: A Discussion of the Present and Future of Trade Unionism* (1913) was another foundational work, from which we take our title and theme. Cole wrote under the influence of a pre-war surge of syndicalism and was sceptical of the state, but subsequent labour history responded firstly to the 'success' of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution and the Soviet experiment in central planning, at a time when capitalist economies appeared to be failing; and secondly to the 1945 landslide election victory of the British Labour Party, and its partial fulfilment of its ascribed socialist destiny. Even after Khrushchev's 1956 exposure of Stalinism, alongside the persistence in the West of a period of unprecedented economic prosperity, the ideal of state-socialism remained strong among left-wing intellectuals and was reinvigorated by an unanticipated revival of interest in Marxism from the late 1960s. Thus the rehearsal of very old themes in Eric Hobsbawm's *Worlds of Labour*, written by a historian who was still a member of the Communist Party, appeared to wide acclaim as late as 1984.

Once labour history entered the universities and became professionalized, the field did move away from oversimplistic state-socialist explanations.[1] Yet as it became institutionalized in departments and peer-reviewed journals, a shared assumption continued to underpin most studies that increasingly effective self-organization of the working classes was a prelude to the replacement of capitalist liberal democracy by a publicly owned, centrally planned socialist state. Indeed, these were still usually 'committed' historians—from the Communist Party Historians' Group to democratic socialists in the Labour Party—who saw labour history as part-and-parcel of the socialist struggle. History was a road leading in one direction and any detours tended to be ignored. Working-class movements were judged by how far they contributed to socialist goals, even when these ideas were weak among ordinary working people. Thus John Saville, who had left the Communist Party in 1956, focused his 1988, *The Labour Movement in Britain*, on 'the emergence of the particular variety of British Labour socialism in the first half of the twentieth century'. He argued that 'the most important achievement of British Labour in the twentieth century has been the progressive incorporation of social welfare policies into public politics' but, as a Marxist assuming that 'the labour movement' was on the road to socialism, he concluded that the Labour Party had in the end failed to achieve its real destiny. Likewise, James Hinton's 1983, *History of the British Labour Movement* took *Labour and Socialism* for its main title.[2]

More recently there have been a number of more or less revisionist studies of particular sectors and localities, including by the present authors, but the state-socialist paradigm remains surprisingly persistent in broad surveys of the social experience of working people and remarkably unquestioned in studies of the development of labour politics.[3] As a result, academic labour history has continued to amplify certain features of working-class life, while ignoring others. Marx and Engels's ghostly, imagined 'proletariat' still haunts the shelves of subsequent generations of socialist intellectuals, awaiting 'the organization of the proletarians into a class, and consequently into a political party'.[4] So much more is written on strikes than on cooperation between workers and employers, while enlightened employers are neglected or disparaged. Certain aspects of working-class life, most notably religion, are routinely fenced off from the official labour movement, which is presented as almost entirely secular and largely confined to its supposedly 'socialist' elements. Yet most twentieth-century British working people, labour activists and intellectuals, were still deeply influenced by a wide variety of ideas about employment, religion and politics inherited from the past.[5]

Post-1956 state-socialist history has taken three main forms, drawing directly or indirectly on different strands of Marxism.[6] The first emphasizes 'class struggle', in a sophisticated adaption of socialist agitprop, designed to win converts to the cause. Thus Edward Thompson composed *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963) while a New Left and Committee for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) activist. Famous for his emphasis on agency and moral possibility, he challenged Communist Party economic determinism, insisting that 'the working class' could have a more fluid composition and be 'present at its own making'.[7] Today, decades since the Labour Party abandoned Clause 4, this approach might seem outdated. Yet unwittingly the concept of 'New Labour', rather than stimulating the charting of an evolving liberal-pluralist lineage, has given fresh life to leftist myths about 'Old Labour' as a genuine socialist movement: one which has been abandoned by opportunists with no real roots in authentic working-class traditions.

Such is Selina Todd's tone in *The People. The Rise and Fall of the Working Class 1910–2010* (2014) which follows Thompson in celebrating the detail of individual lives and adopting a flexible, agency-driven definition of class. Todd's innovation is to integrate the history of women, by stressing the role of domestic servants, a group which had little connection with the world of trade unionism, dominated as that still was by men

in industrial employment. Rather than acknowledge the complexity of popular identities, she reaches for the notion of common class experience. Just as Thompson assimilated handicraft artisans and factory workers, so Todd casually asserts that, 'in the years after 1910, servants were central to the modern working class that was emerging … [and] the labour movement was beginning to make an impact on British political life'.[8] Thus, despite valuable efforts at recovering women's experience, Todd takes an essentially agitational approach to the past: inequality leads to frustration and resistance, which can be labelled 'working-class struggle'. Defeat, in the 1926 'General Strike' or 1979 'Winter of Discontent', is then simply due to ruling-class repression. Other strong influences, for example of the 'feminized' churches or more conservative family values, are barely touched on.[9] Once more there is the danger that, as the lives of the old manual working classes become more distant from our own contemporary experience, we begin to sentimentalize, so that socialist commitment becomes a form of nostalgia.

The second strand of state-socialist history comes from a cooler, more analytical 'mode of production' Marxist root. This presents a concrete and sober analysis of changing material conditions, explaining failures as well as celebrating successes. Eric Hobsbawm's Olympian historical tone echoed 'the analyses of the current political situation' presented to many a Communist Party central committee: 'I wish to underline something which a Marxist analysis alone will help us to understand[:] … the long-term perspective of the changing structure of British capitalism and the proletariat in it.' This analysis centred on 'objective' economic obstacles to a shared socialist consciousness. Thus the labour movement was hampered first by a specially privileged 'labour aristocracy', then by general prosperity brought about by 'imperialism', and finally by the entrenchment of narrow economic 'sectionalism' throughout later twentieth-century collective bargaining.[10] The long-awaited socialist proletariat had still not arrived and the task of labour history to was to explain why not: a style of analysis which, rather surprisingly, has lingered on long after any explicit hope for the accomplishment of state-socialism has been extinguished.

A version of this approach can be seen in Mike Savage and Andrew Miles's 1994 *The Remaking of the British Working Class, 1840–1940*, which—despite the Thompsonian title—mainly addresses long-term structural changes in working lives.[11] Thus they look in detail at, for example, the replacement of traditional paternalist employment by impersonal bureaucracy; the emergence of separate working-class residential

areas, as the middle classes left for the suburbs; and the decline in inter-marriage between manual and white collar workers. It was this 'steady trend towards the unification of the working class' that laid the basis for Labour's political breakthrough. Savage and Miles pay attention to local politics and regret the tendency to 'essentialize' the working class, but this is still what they do themselves: in place of 'class analysis' we now have Marxist sociology, and the Labour Party is still seen as inherently a working-class party with a state-socialist programme. A more open-ended and flexible sociology, dating back to Weber, would be alert to the difference between a focus on 'status groups', sharing common ways of life, and a claim to have demonstrated the existence of economic class conflict, based on a consciousness of inequality and a determination to bring it to an end.[12]

The third strand of state-socialist history finds any form of materialist analysis narrow and old-fashioned, preferring a wider political and cultural evaluation of class and power relations in society as a whole. In Marxist terms, its emphasis is on comparative 'social formation'. The most notable contribution here is that of Perry Anderson's 'origins of the present crisis', which rejected both what he saw as the emotional naivety of Edward Thompson and the narrowness of Hobsbawm's materialism. The British obstacles to proletarian consciousness lay deeper still, in the absence of a full-blown prior 'bourgeois revolution'. As a result, the continued 'hegemony' of the English aristocracy was accompanied by small-minded empiricism among intellectuals and timid reformism among organized workers: the British working class remained resistant to the mature 'global' continental social thinking informing Marxism.[13] Despite, or perhaps because of, its broad chronological and geographical sweep, this approach has been little discussed among British labour historians, who still generally prefer Thompson's defence of experience or Hobsbawm's focus on measurable economic evidence.

However, Ross McKibbin's 1998, *Classes and Cultures: England 1918–1951*, adopts a similar approach to Anderson, while reaching different conclusions. He explores the way of life of 'the working class', finding this deeply divided and intensely inward looking. But this is secondary to the main social and political dynamic of the period: the increasing dominance of a united, confident and assertive middle class, based on the expansion of the public sector and the rise of technical and scientific occupations. This underlay the 'natural' electoral dominance of the Conservative Party for most of the twentieth century, especially marked in the 1930s and

1980s. Thus Labour's 1945 triumph was an unusual and unsustainable by-product of the particular circumstances of the Second World War: with a crisis of military incompetence discrediting the Conservatives in 1940 and war production restoring temporarily the fortunes of the traditional northern working class.[14] The Labour Party remained subordinate to middle-class values and did nothing to embed social democracy in the nation's public culture by, for example, reforming the education system or tackling the elite domination of sporting bodies. Yet this thought-provoking analysis has an Achilles heel too. When actual events do not fit McKibbin's personal preferences for strong social democracy, the explanation is an inhibiting disability in popular consciousness, rather than a free and conscious choice of something else. In truth, Anderson's 'absent centre' of Britain's intellectual life was filled with liberal-pluralism, while McKibbin's 'socially withdrawn working class' was deliberately opting for local associational life, religion and ethical socialism.

All three of these approaches are based on an assumption that the trend of twentieth-century history was necessarily towards some form of state-socialism, and a consequent focus only on those ideas and actions which can be seen as contributing to or inhibiting that outcome. As a result, they have a good deal in common: they all reduce trade unions to a channel of conflict; overlook mass participation in the cooperative movement; neglect local government as an arena of activity; exaggerate the decline of religious involvement; dismiss different styles of leadership; and present a one-dimensional picture of progressive thought. And, although less inclined to relate their analysis to the long-term development of 'the working class', most recent specialist studies of the politics of the left in Britain have continued to take the same assumption for granted and consequently narrow their analysis in similar ways. Thus the conventional emphasis in studies of left-wing thought is still to see its mainstream concerns revolving around the use of the levers of the central state to reduce economic inequality.[15] This consciously builds on and extends the work of a previous generation of scholars on the early twentieth-century shift in British intellectual life from laissez-faire to government intervention, and from traditional liberalism to a 'Progressive Alliance' between the Liberal and Labour parties.[16] Meanwhile, even the expansion of twentieth-century political history to include explorations of wider political culture has also tended to assume that the main dilemmas for the left revolved around the building of popular support for a parliamentary programme of state-centred policies.[17]

AN ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVE: LIBERAL-PLURALISM IN LABOUR HISTORY

Turning to a very different but equally ambitious survey of working-class lives, we find that Jonathan Rose's 2001, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes*, provides us with myriad fresh and valuable insights. By asking what ordinary people actually read, Rose reconstructs a world that belies any notion of a 'forward march of labour' towards a bright socialist future. For he finds not some homogeneous collective mentality, but individual working-class autodidacts seeking self-improvement through a plurality of literary resources and in collaboration with like-minded folk in mutual improvement societies. The Bible in English funded endless discussion and, well into the twentieth century, working-class reading remained permeated with Nonconformist religious values, transmitted by old favourites such as John Bunyan's *A Pilgrim's Progress*. Even as readers gradually secularized, they rejected socialist political writing or modernist literary innovation in favour of classic English literature with self-improving themes. This stimulated imagination, critical thinking, ethical values and the use of language, in a rich and varied personal and cultural life. Neither the militant, modern 'proletariat' invented by Marx, nor the plebeian 'false consciousness' feared by later thinkers in his tradition, this was a literary culture of self-improvement and liberal democratic citizenship.

Meanwhile, state-socialism in practice entailed a massive concentration and centralization of power, leading in some cases to full-scale totalitarianism on the Soviet and National Socialist models.[18] This was soon obvious to maverick intellectuals, such as George Orwell and Jack Common, and also to mainstream British working-class leaders, such as Ernest Bevin and Walter Citrine, who steered the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and the Labour Party away from Communism, to stress liberal democratic roots and a strong, independent civil society. Religious Nonconformity, fresh from battles with a hierarchical state church, fostered ideals of denominational and congregational autonomy, of 'free churches', that seeped into other movements. Trade unions were equally attached to traditions of voluntary association and chary of state control: a position represented in different ways by Citrine's independent but cooperative approach and, later, Frank Chapple's business unionism. Progressive employers, such as Edward Cadbury, met such men with active industrial relations pluralism, recognizing and negotiating with trade unions; belying claims that Liberals

'had few ideas as to how to deal with issues concerned with class relations between employers and workers'.[19] The 'Co-operative Commonwealth' presented itself as an associational alternative to centralized state control of economic activity. Working-class women activists campaigned through local government to create services, which not only met individual needs but also provided opportunities for community participation. Even visionaries, such as G.D.H. Cole, Michael Young and Colin Ward, discussed pluralist versions of social ownership and other new civil society organizations, such as housing associations: all designed to evade the heavy hand of the state.

So what is this protean idea of pluralism and civil society, which has an appeal across a broad spectrum from anarchists to Burkean conservatives?[20] Mark Bevir stresses historical contingency rather than a fixed core with 'essential properties or necessary trajectories'.[21] However, even he still sees enough continuity to conclude that 'the traditions of modern pluralism that arose in the late nineteenth century continued to echo throughout the twentieth century', as new ideas evolved from old liberal principles.[22] Thus Jacob Levy highlights the influence of a Gladstonian Liberal, Lord Acton, who, following Montesquieu and Tocqueville, advocated limiting political centralization through the separation of powers and federalism in both church and state. And such ideas had a major influence on British pluralism, from F.W. Maitland and J.N. Figgis through to socialists such as Harold Laski.[23] Moreover, Marc Stears argues that, while pluralism also affected guild socialism during and after the First World War, some adherents were more organicist and functionalist than others. While all favoured devolving power from the state down to occupational groups, the Cole circle emphasized individual choice in relation to membership of groups and active participation in their democratic self-government, which put their pluralism squarely within the nineteenth-century liberal tradition.[24]

Subsequently, twentieth-century British pluralism in all its forms and phases focused on trade unions as the largest and most powerful of the country's voluntary associations. However, the intellectual approach divided into two strands, which though politically often far apart, never lost intellectual contact with each other. Cole, Laski, R.H. Tawney and Bertrand Russell initiated a radical-utopian variety in the aftermath of the Great War, aiming to reverse New Liberal and other statist tendencies by devolving functions from central government down to grassroots workers' control. This strand fed through to post-war thinkers such as Michael Young and the 1960s generation of libertarian socialists. Closer to the

practical spirit of mainstream trade unionism were the Oxford School of Industrial Relations, led by Hugh Clegg and Allan Flanders, which proposed a conservative-realist variety of pluralism during the Cold War.[25] Whereas the radical-utopian strand had been born during the optimistic, early phase of the Russian Revolution, conservative-realists reacted to the full experience of Communism and National Socialism, championing inherited British traditions of voluntary association. However, despite this important distinction, as Richard Whiting shows, the theme of trade unions as voluntary associations remained a constant over the course of the twentieth century, from Cole in the 1920s to Clegg in the 1970s.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS CORPORATISM AS PLURALISM

Apart from the ubiquitous Cole, one connection between these two strands was Walter Milne-Bailey's *Trade Unions and the State* (1934). Milne-Bailey, a TUC research officer, had written a guild socialist pamphlet in the early 1920s and been strongly influenced by Laski, who provided 'generous counsel throughout the writing' of his book.[26] As a result, Milne-Bailey's defence of unions in the difficult aftermath of the General Strike rested on pluralist foundations: free individuals must be guaranteed the opportunity to participate in voluntary associations independent of the state. And he retreated from guild socialist workers' control inside the firm, in favour of greater consultation between three equally legitimate players—trade unions, employers and the state—hoping for a more democratic 'corporatist' government of industry.

Post-war industrial relations pluralists, notably Flanders and Clegg, built on this foundation, stressing the countervailing power of strong independent trade unions within orderly collective bargaining and rejecting more ambitious channels of workplace democracy. In Clegg's formulation, 'the trade union is thus industry's opposition—an opposition which can never become a government'.[27] Flanders encountered Milne-Bailey's legacy directly, in the TUC Research Department between 1943 and 1946[28] and, while Clegg's first publication was a Fabian Society pamphlet which rejected workers' control, it had been commissioned by Cole as a report on a discussion group in which they had both participated.[29] Thus we find a meaningful intellectual tradition, from Cole and Laski, through Milne-Bailey, to Flanders and Clegg, which reveals the ideas of the latter as a conscious and thoughtful revision of the earlier, more utopian pluralism. When the utopian workers' control strand revived in the 1960s, the process

reversed itself.[30] This vibrant and wide-ranging liberal-pluralist approach needs to be returned to its rightful place at the centre of our understanding of twentieth-century British labour's theory and practice, displacing the current monopoly position of state-socialist ideas and assumptions. In this collection, we find pluralist ideas bubbling up from the down-to-earth activities of trade unionists, cooperators, religious Nonconformists and women community activists. Practical leaders are represented, such as Cadbury, Citrine and Chapple, alongside professional thinkers, such as Cole and Young; all speaking in a common liberal-pluralist idiom. So how far were the intellectual formulations of pluralism influenced by observations of actual British voluntary associations, and what impact, in turn, did they have on these?

For radical-utopians, such as Cole and Laski, empirical observation played a secondary part and ideas developed in a series of formal moves in response to other positions in political theory, mainly Idealism and Fabianism. They followed Figgis in shifting the location of community from the national and large-scale to the local and small-scale; then they reacted against the assumption of pre-existing communities in favour of individuals making choices; and finally they pursued ideas about the bonds of public spirit that could still hold a wider society together.[31] Such bold, clear and challenging ideas briefly became the focus for intellectual debate in Britain and the USA, but sheer abstractness distanced them from practical policy. Even so, Cole at Oxford and Laski at the London School of Economics (LSE)—the two most important university centres for labour activists—had a lasting intellectual influence, even if it took other, more pragmatic souls to put liberal-pluralist ideas into practice.[32] As James Moher shows, at the TUC men such as Citrine, Milne-Bailey and Herbert Tracey forged a new role for trade unions, moving away from confrontational industrial action, towards a more wide-ranging and constructive 'corporatist' national policy.[33]

Clegg, Flanders and the legal theorist Otto Kahn-Freund, by contrast, did their own spade work. Bracketing shared anti-totalitarian assumptions, in a proper positivist manner, they paid close attention to the empirical detail of British industrial relations and labour law, and built close contacts with post-war trade unions. Kahn-Freund completed specialized research into the law of inland transport as early as 1939. Flanders worked with Citrine at the wartime TUC, as well as with a future general secretary, George Woodcock, then head of research, and published a pioneering 1964 study of productivity agreements at an Esso oil refinery.[34] Clegg's

early pluralism had a strongly inductive quality, learning from the real practices of British trade unions as voluntary associations. Thenceforth, he rationalized observed collective bargaining behaviour into a pragmatic pluralist theory of industrial democracy, which challenged both Cole's utopianism and the Webbs' state-socialism. Though he lacked a trade union background, active tribunal work and a major 1956 Leverhulme Project on trade union history and contemporary union practice provided Clegg with a fruitful alternative. He worked closely with the General and Municipal Workers' Union, writing their official history, and hosted regular social events for trade unionists at Nuffield College, Oxford.

Close attention to institutional realities and direct contacts with trade unions, allowed these industrial relations pluralists to shape public policy in the 1960s, notably with the 1968 Donovan Report on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations.[35] Clegg and Kahn-Freund sat on the commission, alongside Woodcock of the TUC, while Flanders appeared as a key witness and Bill McCarthy became the research director. Clegg produced a definitive personal draft, which characteristically resisted legal intervention into the voluntary world of industrial relations practice. A variety of 'bargained corporatism' through national incomes policy was the capstone of Clegg and Flanders's vision for stable social democratic settlement, a natural development of earlier liberal-pluralist ideas.[36] As Calum Aikman demonstrates, while pluralist industrial relations intellectuals absorbed trade union practices, they also refined these into ideas which were subsequently echoed by moderate trade unionists such as Chapple.

Liberal-pluralist industrial relations has thus been a central and neglected element of post-war social democracy, not only in Britain but also across continental northern Europe. The leading post-war Labour Party revisionist intellectual, Anthony Crosland, though often statist in social policy thinking, was forced by the sheer power of the unions at the time to take notice of this. In 1958, he and Clegg attended a Congress for Cultural Freedom conference in Vienna, on 'Workers' Participation in Management', and Crosland's report was a summary of Clegg's arguments over the previous ten years. In *A New Approach to Industrial Democracy* (1960), Clegg in turn acknowledged Crosland's influence, while arguing that the only guarantee of industrial democracy, and thus of a free society, was the strength of the independent trade union opposition in collective bargaining, and that the nature of industrial ownership was more or less irrelevant. As he observed, this strand of social democracy was a 'return to traditions of liberal thought which preceded the rise of socialism'.[37]

OTHER FORMS OF PLURALISM: EDUCATIONALISM AND LIBERTARIANISM

While the conservative-realist branch of post-war liberal-pluralism stuck close to the practical, institutional world of trade unions and social democratic politics, the radical-utopian branch produced an efflorescence of countercultural experiments, some with real policy implications. All held one principle in common: an objection to overbearing state-socialist planning. And these ideas resonated across the political spectrum. For instance, Isaiah Berlin introduced a 'value pluralism', shaped not just by the encounter with Stalinism, but also by the thinking of Jacob Talmon, whose identification of a link between 'monism' and political extremism had in turn been influenced by his mentors Laski and Tawney.[38] Meanwhile, as David Goodway argues, Cole himself did not simply succumb to state-socialism, as is often assumed. Even his pragmatic 1929 *Next Ten Years in British Economic and Social Policy*, which accepted the need for more centralized economic planning to deal with unemployment, retained a chapter on 'worker's control'. And his final, five-volume *History of Socialist Thought* (1953–60), apparently a lengthy account of Marxism and social democracy, in fact attempted 'the retrieval of a valuable and neglected tradition of "federalistic" socialist pluralism'.[39] In this way, liberal-pluralism became a mainstream influence on the country's intellectual and public life throughout the twentieth century, not some occasionally recurring fringe interest.

This is the context for understanding the trajectory of Michael Young, who had studied with Laski at the LSE and became for a while the key social policy intellectual for the Labour Party after 1945. As Stephen Meredith demonstrates, Young was less concerned with the formal dispersal of institutional power—championed by industrial relations pluralists—than with the informal creativity of families and neighbourhoods; less reliant on the effectiveness of formal politics and more interested in the potential of relationships within small groups. His vision of social change displaced state policy in favour of personal transformation through participation in a range of innovative learning experiences. Thus Young belonged to a distinctive 'educationalist' current within liberal-pluralism;[40] a neglected strand of British anti-statism which inherited the more experimental elements of Protestant Nonconformity described by Andy Vail.[41]

Shaped by a 1930s education at Dartington Hall School, Young later became Lord Young of Dartington, served as one of the school's trustees

and wrote a book about its founders, the Elmhirsts. Leonard Elmhirst had worked closely with the Bengali literary figure Rabindranath Tagore, pursuing the integration of poetry, music, art and life. Together, they created a progressive school for India, founded on Romantic notions about free, natural child development and releasing imagination through play. Backed by his rich American wife, Dorothy, Leonard then replanted this approach in Devon, with the educational ambition of changing society by changing the individuals that compose it. Dartington became a commonwealth within which self-government and cooperation would be learned through doing rather than merely talking.[42] Young described the school as having a 'Counter-Prospectus', echoing 'the middle-class beard-and-sandals brigade'. Often associated with socialist politics, this bohemian tradition pursued a non-commercial and artistic lifestyle, including loose clothing, vegetarianism, sexual freedom, new religions and progressive education. All this was an attempt to create an alternative society within the existing one. Young traced three distinct historical phases: early discussions stimulated by the Fellowship of the New Life from the 1880s; the clustering of like-minded folk in the Garden Cities in the early twentieth century, and the countercultural experiments of the 1960s and 1970s.[43]

The Fellowship of the New Life (1882–98) was led by Thomas Davidson and Edward Carpenter and imbibed the distinctively American version of the Romanticism of Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman. As Mark Bevir argues, this embraced 'immanentism': a sense of the divine presence in all nature and human beings, which simultaneously gave powerful legitimacy to individual intuition, sympathy and comradeship. For some this equated with socialism, for others with anarchism, but for all it accompanied a ruralist emphasis on a simple life close to nature and an idealist emphasis on building a new world through consciousness, feeling and education. This ethical approach proposed changing society by forming small communities to stimulate individual self-development and act as models for the rest of the population—a very different approach from bureaucratic state nationalization. These Owenite ideals produced not only small rural communes,[44] but also filtered into the more popular and working-class religious movements of the Brotherhood Church and the Labour Church; the latter closely linked to the success of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) in Lancashire and Yorkshire.[45] This ethical emphasis on small-scale, direct democracy and natural fellowship also then fed into guild socialism.[46] Largely forgotten following Labour's 1930s state-socialist turn, these utopian 'cranks' are given full status in Bevir's history of British

socialist ideas, while Edward Carpenter is described by David Goodway as 'the sage and prophet of the Labour Party during its first thirty years'.[47]

Another offshoot was the Garden City movement. Ebenezer Howard, had read Emerson and Whitman in the USA, learnt from Thomas Davidson and was steeped in the decentralizing and self-governing principles of radical Nonconformity through his Congregationalist parents.[48] His first Letchworth residents were drawn to a realization of William Morris's utopian *News from Nowhere* (1890); not merely a pleasant place to live but a new type of cooperative community. Several members of Carpenter's Millthorpe commune moved to Letchworth in the 1900s, including George Adams, his former sexual and business partner in market gardening and sandal making. Another close associate and Letchworth resident was the Arts and Crafts architect Raymond Unwin, a devotee of Ruskin and Morris, who became a major influence on national house-building developments between the wars. John Bruce Wallace was another prominent early resident. Originally Congregationalist and a founder of the Brotherhood Church, he made Letchworth the base for his new Alpha Union, to cultivate spiritual values and promote progressive education.[49]

At first sight, there appears to be less continuity after 1945. The severity of 1930s mass unemployment, the trauma of the Second World War and the shock of the Holocaust seemed to demand tougher, less naively optimistic approaches. Yet, beyond Young, other connections emerged. Colin Ward, the most significant British left libertarian thinker of the post-war period, was strongly influenced by Arts and Crafts ideas and the Garden City movement. Indeed, he worked during the 1970s as the Education Officer of the Town and Country Planning Association, founded by Howard.[50] Moreover, with Allen Ginsberg's rediscovery of Walt Whitman and the popularity of the American Beat poets, the 'Whitman/Ginsberg long line' became a reference point for the modernists of the 'British Poetry Revival', for whom poetry was an unusually public matter, cultivating a liberated imagination as the basis for wider social change.[51]

Thus even the 1960s cultural revolution bore some imprint of the older liberal-pluralism. Two leading intellectual figures of the British counter-culture, Alexander Trocchi and R.D. Laing, were shaped respectively by Guy Debord's Situationism and Martin Heidegger's Existentialism. Yet their basic outlook resembled the ethical socialism of earlier decades: emphasizing creativity and self-expression in small groups, looking to personal change as the basis of social change and embracing value pluralism.[52] In an unexpected echo of the Settlement Movement 60 years

earlier, they too addressed the East End of London.[53] Trocchi joined the 'Fun Palace' project of radical theatre director Joan Littlewood and visionary architect Cedric Price, with the aim of providing free arts for ordinary people—never actually built but planned for a riverside Isle of Dogs site.[54] Meanwhile, Laing established a self-directed therapeutic community at Kingsley Hall in Bow, an interwar Arts and Crafts building originally established as a settlement for poor children by the activist Baptist sisters Doris and Muriel Lester.[55] And, of course, ten years earlier Michael Young and Peter Willmott had already established the Institute of Community Studies in Bethnal Green, to research community-based welfare.[56] These are just a few of the experiments in living that attempted to create a new society in post-war Britain by relying on community energy and creativity rather than state provision. And, though many younger activists thought everything they did was brand new, this may now be seen as part-and-parcel of a distinctive educationalist current within liberal-pluralism, going back to the 1880s. At times too, this radical-utopian branch offered vision and inspiration for the more practical work of the Labour Party, as explored by Stuart White.

But can we lump together such disparate forms of organization as national collective bargaining and small-scale utopian experiments into a meaningful liberal-pluralist approach? Indeed, could they possibly be the building blocks of any sort of coherent society? Certainly there are tensions, as between a social democratic emphasis on formal institutions and an anarchistic reliance on informal relationships. However, all liberal-pluralism eschews state-socialist methods and outcomes, and the best answer is that these piecemeal solutions already co-existed in twentieth-century British society. The Burkean conservative objection that progressive thought always addresses abstract classes of people with no respect for deep-rooted national traditions is clearly highly pertinent as a criticism of state-socialism.[57] However, pluralists as different as Hugh Clegg and Colin Ward were agreed on a gradualist pursuit of the experimental possibilities already inherent in existing arrangements. As Clegg proposed, 'a free society consists of a large number of overlapping groups, each with its own interests and objectives which its members are entitled to pursue so long as they do so with reasonable regard to the rights and interests of others'.[58] More revolutionary pluralists, such as Cole, sometimes expended energy on drawing maps for how the parts and the whole of their ideal society would fit together.[59] But this was always a self-contradictory activity for, as John Stuart Mill foresaw as early as 1859 in *On Liberty*, the main

benefit of individual freedom for society as a whole would be to unleash innovation: resulting in social consequences which would be unexpected, negotiable, flexible and continuously developing.

Conclusion: Change and Continuity in the Short Twentieth Century

Thirty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, British labour history still needs a radical rethink; one that goes way beyond a yet more nuanced and qualified evaluation of Marx's socialist proletariat.[60] The 'spectre … haunting Europe' bore little relation to the real, flesh-and-blood working classes; and liberal-pluralist intellectuals were always much closer to the everyday spirit of the British people than Marxist pretenders. *Alternatives to State-Socialism* and *Other Worlds of Labour* are thus calls for a really fresh approach to British labour history. We shift attention from the politics of the Labour Party, and particularly its minority state-socialist tradition, to other forms of self-organization and collective self-help that arose within communities of working people; and to thoughtful responses to these movements from a range of working-class leaders and middle-class intellectuals. An earlier collection, *Currents of Radicalism*, edited by Eugenio Biagini and Alastair Reid in 1991, attempted something similar for the period from the middle of the nineteenth century up to the First World War. This left open the possibility that a clear pathway to state-socialism, as both an aspiration and an achievement, had been opened up by the First World War and the interwar depression. Our aim here is to close that door: instead, we have found community, civil society, associational democracy and liberal-pluralist ideas remaining much closer to the centre of British labour's thought and action than is usually assumed.

The British working classes entered the twentieth century with a wide range of civil society organizations: trade unions of many types; organizations linked to socialist and non-socialist political parties; employer-sponsored self-help organizations; retail and producer cooperatives; women's, ethnic and youth bodies; religious movements of all types and denominations; mutualist welfare organizations (for savings, temperance, housing, health); adult education and cultural societies; and sport and leisure associations (for walking, cycling, gardening, holidays). There are also many interesting stories of individual self-help and upward social mobility. But it is beyond the scope of one collection to cover all this. And our strategy is to address directly 'the labour movement', as defined by Sidney and

Beatrice Webb. For them this movement was divided into three wings—the trade unions, the cooperative movement and the Labour Party—with an emerging socialist spirit driving all of them towards state-centred solutions to working-class problems of poverty and disenfranchisement. By the mid-1930s the Webbs' progressive teleology was running close to a similar Marxist schema. Then a democratic, parliamentary variant of state-socialism shaped the 1945 Labour government with its strong emphasis on centralized welfare provision, large-scale nationalization and indicative planning. As middle-class socialist experts claimed to represent the interests of the working classes through national politics and state solutions, cooperative and other civil society approaches were marginalized.

So our aim is threefold. First, to challenge what has since emerged as the prevalent state-socialist reading of core labour institutions, notably the trade unions and the cooperative movement and to suggest credible alternative historical readings. Second, to extend the range of institutions and ideas involved in mainstream working-class efforts at self-organization, by drawing in women's community campaigns, the churches and progressive employers. Finally, to explore historical questions of change and continuity across the various strands of working-class lives. For example, how far did Nonconformist and liberal ideas and associational forms outlive each of the two World Wars and the intervening 1930s depression, and in what ways were they changed or challenged by them? Equally, how were the roles of trade unions and the cooperative movement reshaped by the advent of 'welfare capitalism' after 1945 and then the 'cultural revolution' of the 1960s? What new ideas and forms of organization emerged and how were these transitions felt and managed in the lives of the individuals discussed?

The historical period on which this volume focuses is loosely defined as lying between the First World War at the start and the 1979 election of the Thatcher Conservative government at the end. This is close to Hobsbawm's 'short twentieth century', but with a British twist since, arguably, Margaret Thatcher was a more immediate national turning point than the collapse of Communism.[61] A third, middle turning point is the end of the Second World War and the 1945 Labour government.

The first half of our period saw the First World War and post-war reconstruction, the rise of organized labour to a central role in British society, and what Keith Middlemas terms the emergence of 'corporate bias'.[62] For the first time, trade unions became central actors in most workplaces and developed industry-wide relations with employers and government. In a society where the overwhelming majority of people were manual workers

of some type or other, this collective organization on the part of producers drove other political and social developments. Many workers were not in trade unions, so their personal experience stands outside this trend; but trade unions were the powerful new institutions linking the workplace, working-class communities and national politics. Hence the Labour Representation Committee, formed in 1900 as a political lobbying group for trade unions, became the Labour Party of government in 1924, as the vote was gradually extended to the entire adult population. Equally, cooperation also became an organized, national consumer force in this new mass twentieth-century 'industrial society'.[63]

These developments give the state-socialist approach to labour history a surface credibility. The Webbs were not fantasizing in the early 1920s when they considered the unions, the cooperative movement and the Labour Party as having the potential to be three wings of an emerging 'labour movement', representing 'the working class' (singular) as producers, consumers and citizens, and marching towards 'socialism' in some shape or form. Many observers at the time thought this way, in hope or fear, since the real working classes were a great unknown to middle-class opinion.[64] However, the Conservative Party dominated national politics between the wars, with a heavy reliance on working-class votes, from both women and men. Moreover, most historians would now acknowledge that explicitly socialist ideas—most notably Marxism—had little impact on the mass of British working people.[65]

If the Webbs' hopes are comprehensible, for a time when the state-socialist tide appeared to be flowing their way and the Soviet Union still seemed to many a great success, we can see now that they were far too partisan and dogmatic to grasp the complex transitions taking place. We might go further still and reject the entire historical utility of any notion of a 'labour movement'. There are, of course, good grounds for thinking that often these institutions were less than central to many ordinary people's lives. Many did not join trade unions, shop at the Co-op or vote Labour; moreover, many of those who did so only felt lukewarm attachment and more of their time was spent in the family, the pub, the football ground and the dance hall. Certainly, 'the working class never became the homogenous mass that certain commentators appear to imagine'.[66] Nevertheless, the 'labour question' remained central to twentieth-century British society and politics until 1979 and many working people did continue to form or join social movements. So we agree with the state-socialists that labour history is still worth looking at as an interesting field in its own right.

The second half of our period, from the end of the Second World War to the triumph of Thatcherite Conservatism, is often associated with a social democratic consensus between Labour and Conservative parties that drew labour into the new welfare capitalism. The 1945 Labour government consolidated the reforms of the wartime coalition to transform the socio-economic context of working-class life. Following the mass unemployment of the 1930s, Keynesian policies to maintain full employment greatly increased the bargaining power of trade unions, whose influence had been much widened during the war, with Bevin as Minister of Labour and Citrine as an influential Privy Councillor. Politicians attempted to extend corporatist or tripartite relations between the state, the TUC and the soon-to-be-unified Confederation of British Industry (CBI) as a central way of governing society. A new 'Welfare State' provided a free National Health Service and secondary education, along with an ambitious 'safety net' of welfare benefits. A programme of nationalization of 'essential' industries, such as coal and rail, created a 'mixed economy'.

The state sector began to grow dramatically during these post-war years and this raises interesting questions about the potentially negative impact of 'statism' – as an ideology and professional practice – on the associational, civil society institutions, such as trade unions, cooperatives and voluntary forms of welfare, which had characterized the original, pre-war labour movements. At the same time, other new economic and social trends associated with 'affluence', mass consumption and more permissive attitudes began to erode old labour institutions and values.[67] There was a shift from blue collar to white collar work. Trade unions, founded on male breadwinner principles, such as the 'family wage', were challenged by the growth of married women's work and calls for equal pay; the Co-operative stores faced competition from the new supermarkets; working-class churchgoing and associational life began to give way to secular leisure activities and state provision.

With hindsight, what had seemed a stable, long-term social democratic solution to the problems of 1930s working-class poverty and insecurity lasted only a couple of generations. So, by the end of our period, in the late 1970s, we see the complete breakdown of the post-war settlement. Unresolved tensions between trade unions and the social democratic state rendered British corporatism unworkable—in contrast to the successful and stable systems found in most north European countries. The crisis of corporatism and social democracy led directly to the victory of Thatcherism and the triumph of what we now call 'neo-liberalism'. The

'New Right' not only transformed British society and especially the role of labour within it, but also cut with the grain of longer-term trends towards a 'post-industrial' society, such as the decline of male, manual, manufacturing work, growing gender and ethnic diversity and rising consumerism. These trends began well before 1979, but this year conveniently marks the end of an era and the beginning of a very different sort of society. For instance, the statistics on trade union membership and the coverage of collective bargaining peaked in 1979 and have fallen ever since.[68]

The rise and fall of organized labour in British society therefore can be seen an underlying theme of this collection. One might even argue that the close of our period marks the 'end of labour history'. Today terms like 'the labour movement', 'industrial relations', even 'trade unions', can sound anachronistic, rather old-fashioned and out-of-touch with the times we live in. Yet before 1979, all these phrases were in everyday popular usage. All the major newspapers had industrial correspondents who spoke this language, as did politicians and employers. Strikes were major public events that brought down a Conservative government in 1974 and a Labour one in 1979. But our book is also about ideas and values, visions of society, held by ordinary people and intellectuals; and these seem to have outlived the circumstances in which they first arose and still concern us today—a normative theme to which we return in our conclusions to this collection.

Notes

1. See J. Allen, A. Campbell and J. McIlroy (eds), *Histories of Labour. National and International Perspectives* (Pontypool, 2010) for a measured defence of the state-socialist mainstream, especially 'Introduction', and Campbell and McIlroy, 'Britain: the twentieth century'.
2. J. Saville, *The Labour Movement in Britain* (London, 1988), pp. 2, 3, 5; J. Hinton, *Labour and Socialism. History of the British Labour Movement* (Brighton, 1983).
3. See P. Ackers, 'Colliery deputies in the British coal industry before nationalization', *International Review of Social History*, 39 (1994), pp. 383–414; P. Ackers and J. Payne, 'Before the storm: the experience of nationalization and the prospects for industrial relations partnership in the British coal industry, 1947–1972 – rethinking the militant narrative', *Social History*, 27

(2002), pp. 184–209; A.J. Reid, *United We Stand. A History of Britain's Trade Unions* (London, 2004); A.J. Reid, *The Tide of Democracy. Shipyard Workers and Social Relations in Britain, 1870–1950* (Manchester, 2010).

4. K. Marx and F. Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (1848, London, 1968), p. 90.

5. M. Worley (ed.), *The Foundations of the British Labour Party. Identities, Cultures and Perspectives, 1900–39* (Farnham, 2009) recognizes diversity, but privileges industrial conflict and a growing desire for nationalization as the background to the rise of gradualist state-socialism.

6. See P. Anderson, *Arguments within English Marxism* (London, 1980).

7. E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London, 1963), p. 9. Though see S. Middleton, 'E.P. Thompson and the cultural politics of literary modernism', *Contemporary British History*, 28 (2014), pp. 422–37 for the centrality of radical intellectuals to Thompson's own conception of 'agency'.

8. S. Todd, *The People. The Rise and Fall of the Working Class 1910–2010* (London, 2014), pp. 15, 18. See also S. Todd, *Young Women, Work, and Family in England, 1918–1950* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 9–10, 225–8.

9. See C.G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain* (London, 2001) for women's strong attachment to the churches until the 1960s.

10. E.J. Hobsbawm, 'The forward march of labour halted?' in M. Jacques and F. Mulhern (eds), *The Forward March of Labour Halted?* (London, 1981), pp. 1–19, especially pp. 1–2; 'Trends in the British labour movement since 1850', in *Labouring Men. Studies in the History of Labour* (London, 1964), pp. 316–43.

11. M. Savage and A. Miles, *The Remaking of the British Working Class, 1840–1940* (London, 1994), p. 89. Though Savage is well aware of the difficulties in taking this position: see his *The Dynamics of Working Class Politics. The Labour Movement in Preston, 1880–1940* (Cambridge, 1987), and *Class Analysis and Social Transformation* (Buckingham, 2000).

12. See P. Ackers, 'Trade unions as professional associations', in S. Johnstone, and P. Ackers (eds), *Finding a Voice at Work. New Perspectives on Employment Relations* (Oxford, 2015), pp. 107–9.

13. See P. Anderson, 'Origins of the present crisis', *New Left Review* 23 (1963), pp. 26–54; and 'Components of the national culture', *New Left Review* 50 (1968), pp. 3–57.

14. The point about the military crisis of 1940 is developed in R. McKibbin, *Parties and People. England 1914–1951* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 106–39.

15. See for example, B. Jackson, *Equality and the British Left. A Study in Progressive Political Thought, 1900–64* (Manchester, 2007).

16. For a tip of the iceberg see, P. Clarke, 'The social democratic theory of class struggle', in J. Winter (ed.), *The Working Class in Modern British History. Essays in Honour of Henry Pelling* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 3–18.

17. L. Black, *The Political Culture of the Left in Affluent Britain. Old Labour, New Britain?* (Houndmills, 2003); J. Nuttall, *Psychological Socialism. The Labour Party and Qualities of Mind and Character, 1931 to the Present* (Manchester, 2006); L. Beers, *Your Britain. Media and the Making of the Labour Party* (Cambridge, Mass., 2010); M. Hilton et al., *The Politics of Expertise. How NGOs Shaped Modern Britain* (Oxford, 2013).

18. F.A. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom* (London, 1944/2001).

19. Savage and Miles, *The Remaking*, p. 78.

20. It is worth noting here the importance given in R. Scruton, *The Meaning of Conservatism* (New York, 1980) to 'autonomous institutions that are not subordinate to government aims', pp. x, 152.

21. M. Bevir, 'A history of modern pluralism', in M. Bevir (ed.), *Modern Pluralism. Anglo-American Debates since 1880* (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 1–20, especially p. 10.

22. Bevir, 'History of modern pluralism', p. 17.

23. J. Levy, 'From liberal constitutionalism to pluralism', in Bevir (ed.), *Modern Pluralism*, pp. 21–39. For the 'traditional whig' roots of pluralism, see D. Nicholls, *The Pluralist State* (London, 1975), pp. 21–33; and for the more common emphasis on recent German influences, see D. Runciman, *Pluralism and the Personality of the State* (Cambridge, 1997).

24. M. Stears, *Progressives, Pluralists, and the Problems of the State. Ideologies of Reform in the United States and Britain, 1909–1926* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 96–121; M. Stears, 'Guild Socialism', in Bevir (ed.), *Modern Pluralism*, pp. 40–59.

25. P. Ackers, 'Finding the future in the past? The social philosophy of Oxford industrial relations pluralism', in K. Townsend and A. Wilkinson (eds), *Research Handbook on the Future of Work and Employment Relations* (Cheltenham, 2011), pp. 45–66. Clegg in particular disliked abstraction and valued national traditions: conservative traits.

26. D. Lyddon, 'Walter Milne-Bailey, the TUC Research Department, and the 1926 General Strike: the background to "A Nation on Strike"', *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations*, 29/30 (2010), pp. 123–51.

27. B. Jackson, 'Corporatism and its discontents: pluralism, anti-pluralism and Anglo-American industrial relations, c. 1930–1980', in Bevir (ed.), pp. 105–28, quotation from pp. 108, 115.

28. J. Kelly, *Ethical Socialism and the Trade Unions. Allan Flanders and British Industrial Relations Reform* (London, 2010), pp. 47–8.

29. P. Ackers, 'Collective bargaining as industrial democracy: Hugh Clegg and the political foundations of British industrial relations pluralism', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 45 (2007), pp. 77–101, especially pp. 81–4, 89.

30. P. Ackers, 'An industrial relations perspective on employee participation', in A. Wilkinson et al. (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Participation in Organizations* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 52–75.

31. Stears, *Progressives*, pp. 88–123, 168–98.

32. Stears, *Progressives*, pp. 207–8.

33. See also Lyddon, 'Walter Milne-Bailey'.

34. Kelly, *Ethical Socialism*, pp. 54–6.

35. P. Ackers, 'Game changer: Hugh Clegg's role in drafting the 1968 Donovan Report and redefining the British industrial relations policy-problem', *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations*, 35 (2014), pp. 63–88; A.J. Reid, *United We Stand. A History of Britain's Trade Unions* (London, 2004), pp. 300–1; Kelly, *Ethical Socialism*, pp. 121–8.

36. C. Crouch, *The Politics of Industrial Relations* (London, 1979).

37. Ackers, 'Collective bargaining', p. 90; for close connections between Flanders and leading Labour Party revisionists see Kelly, *Ethical Socialism*, pp. 83–106, 111–15.

38. J.-W. Muller, 'Value pluralism in twentieth-century Anglo-American thought', in Bevir (ed.), *Modern Pluralism*, pp. 81–104, in particular p. 89 n. 28.

39. A.W. Wright, *G.D.H. Cole and Socialist Democracy* (Oxford, 1979), p. 137. For the more conventional view that pluralism effectively disappeared from the scene after the peak of guild socialism in 1920, see Runciman, *Pluralism*, pp. 195–219, and Stears, *Progressives*, pp. 267–71.

40. This useful term is borrowed from a critical emphasis on the limits of the post-1945 counterculture; see H. Ichihashi 'Comment', in K. Kondo and M. Taylor (eds), *British History 1600–2000. Expansion in Perspective* (London, 2010), pp. 203–7.

41. For another a significant stimulus on Young's approach see A. Campsie, 'Mass Observation, left intellectuals and the politics of everyday life', *English Historical Review*, online February 2016.

42. M. Young, *The Elmhirsts of Dartington. The Creation of an Utopian Community* (London, 1982), pp. 79, 83, 98, 139–40.

43. Young, *Elmhirsts*, pp. 131–4, 339–40.

44. See J.F.C. Harrison, *Robert Owen and the Owenites in Britain and America. The Quest for the New Moral Order* (London, 1968/2010).

45. M. Bevir, *The Making of British Socialism* (Princeton, 2011), pp. 235–55 for the core ideas and pp. 256–97 for their wider influence; also pp. 217–34 for parallel developments in British liberal thinking. For a classic exploration of these themes see S. Yeo, 'A new life: the religion of socialism in Britain, 1883–1896', *History Workshop*, 4 (1977), pp. 5–56; and for a consideration within the broader context of modernism see, T. Linehan, *Modernism and British Socialism* (Houndmills, 2012).

46. Bevir, *Making of British Socialism*, pp. 311–12.

47. D. Goodway, *Anarchist Seeds beneath the Snow. Left-Libertarian Thought and British Writers from William Morris to Colin Ward* (Liverpool, 2006), pp. 35–61, quotation from p. 53.

48. R. Beevers, *The Garden City Utopia. A Critical Biography of Ebeneezer Howard* (Houndmills, 1988), pp. 1–39.

49. M. Miller, *Letchworth. The First Garden City* (2nd edition, Chichester, 2002), pp. 39–40, 77, 82, 89. For Bruce Wallace, see also W.H.G. Armytage, *Heavens Below. Utopian Experiments in England, 1560–1960* (London, 1961), pp. 342–5, 374–5.

50. C. Ward and D. Goodway, *Talking Anarchy* (Nottingham, 2003), pp. 15, 64–8, 70–3; Goodway, *Anarchist Seeds*, pp. 309–25; C. Levy (ed.), *Colin Ward. Life, Times and Thought* (London, 2013).

51. E. Mottram, 'The British Poetry Revival', in R. Hampson and P. Barry (eds), *New British Poetries. The Scope of the Possible* (Manchester, 1993), pp. 15–50, especially pp. 41–3; R. Sheppard, *The Poetry of Saying. British Poetry and its Discontents, 1950–2000* (Liverpool, 2005), especially pp. 40–7.

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53. State socialists were disillusioned by the repeated failure of the East End working class to be revolutionary: see G. Stedman Jones, *Outcast London. A Study in the Relationship between Classes in Victorian Society* (Oxford, 1971), especially pp. 337–49.

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55. A. Laing, *R.D. Laing. A Biography* (London, 1994), pp. 101–17; J. Clay, *R.D. Laing. A Divided Self* (London, 1996), pp. 121–40.

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57. See K. Minogue, *The Liberal Mind* (Indianapolis, 2000), p. viii; and Scruton, *The Meaning*, p. 9.

58. H. Clegg, 'The Oxford School of Industrial Relations', Warwick Papers in Industrial Relations, No. 31 (Coventry, 1990), p. 4.

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60. In Allen et al., *Histories of Labour*, p. 124, Campbell and McIlroy argue that labour historians have to deal with 'complexity, contradiction and contingency', but we fear yet more variations on a tired, old theme.

61. E.J. Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes. The Short Twentieth Century, 1914–1991* (London, 1994).

62. K. Middlemas, *Politics in Industrial Society* (London, 1979).

63. See G. Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (1935; Stanford, 1997).
64. See M. Cowling, *The Impact of Labour, 1920–1924* (Cambridge, 1971).
65. R. McKibbin, 'Why was there no Marxism in Great Britain?' *English Historical Review*, 99 (1984), pp. 297–331; B. Hindess, 'The decline of working-class politics: a reappraisal', p. 233, in B. Pimlott and C. Cook (eds), *Trade Unions in British Politics* (London, 1991).
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Other Forms of Association

Trade Unions: Voluntary Associations and Individual Rights

Richard Whiting

Trade unions have been among the most important and distinctive organizations in British associational life in the modern period. For much of the twentieth century this status seemed secure. Trade unions were usually included in the lists of those organizations that, lying between the state and the individual, gave practical expression to the nature of citizenship. Governments accepted and supported them, both in their particular economic role but also as an important interest in the polity. However, from the middle of the century onwards that position was challenged, as their power was seen as both threatening the greater good and placing unacceptable restraints upon the freedom of the individual. It was in this later period that the trade unions' embrace of two strands of British political culture became especially clear: on the one hand, the deep roots trade unions enjoyed in experiences of voluntary organization and association that went back before the industrial revolution and to the work of the guilds; on the other, the belief in the freedom and rights of individuals against the power of corporate life that was also part of legal tradition. This chapter examines both of these aspects of the trade unions' role

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in associational life: the meaning and significance that they had for their members, but also the problem that had been identified at the beginning of the twentieth century; that is, How far would powerful trade unions actually frustrate the freedoms of the individuals they were meant to serve?[1]

Trade unions were firmly located within civil society. In the modern period 'civil society' has been taken to cover those institutions and organizations that lie between the state and the individual, as intermediate sources of power and influence. As such, they have furthered the interests of democracy by acting as a limit upon the centralized power of government and of employers. They have also supported citizenship by giving individuals self-confidence and belonging as a defence against isolation and defeatism.[2] Moreover, it has long been recognized that a feature of an individual's liberty is the freedom to form associations with people of his or her choice to defend their interests.[3] However, because trade unions have become powerful organizations connected with people's fundamental interests at work, and reliant upon their collective force, the tension between the individual and the group has been real enough. And, as will be discussed in the later sections of this chapter, Margaret Thatcher was able to make it the centrepiece of her political appeal. Much of the consideration of associational life in this chapter is focused on the period from roughly the 1960s through to the 1980s. This saw both striking continuities from earlier years in nature of trade unions as associations, and then an equally significant challenge to those customs and practices by the Thatcher governments.

Trade Unions and Membership Loyalty

At the beginning of the twentieth-century trade unions had a secure place amongst those associations that formed part of the liberal democracy. J.N. Figgis, in his *Churches in the Modern State*, presented a list of organizations, which included the trade unions, that were essential to the development of personal identity:

> His school or college, his parish or county, his union or regiment, his wife or family, is the most vitally formative part of the life of most men; and in so far as England has anything to show the world, it is the spectacle of individuals bred up or living within these small associations which mould the life of men more intimately than does the great collectivity of the state.[4]

G.D.H. Cole was also clear about the importance of associations for providing mechanisms for the socialization of the working class. As he argued in *Social Theory*,

> The workers, through their trade unions, clubs and other societies have shared with the other classes what is largely absent for the lower middle classes—the opportunity for free association, with a communal object and the consequent appreciation of the social structure of the world around them.[5]

Cole's statement of the political importance of the associational life of which trade unions were a part was certainly true for those holding some kind of office in the union. This offered considerable scope for involvement, and even a stepping stone to further activity, either in the labour cause, perhaps as a local councillor, or through service on various public bodies. But activists were unusual: Frank Chapple, the electricians' leader, described shop stewards as being 'part of a tiny neurotic band of activists'.[6] For the ordinary member, the significance of the trade union in individuals' lives may have to be pitched more modestly. The varied lives that people led, and the different importance that they may have attached to work, probably weakened the status of the trade union as a factor in personal identity. Certainly, away from the craft-based unions, we might envisage an instrumental rather than a moral attachment to the union. Many people moved in and out of different occupations, where the level of unionization, and the expectation that employees would join the relevant trade union, must have varied quite strikingly. Many trade unions had high rates of turnover in their membership and not all trade unionists would have been lifetime members. The growing diversity of social life must have meant that trade unions could hardly have offered much by way of recreational fulfilment as a means of bringing the member closer to the organization.[7]

But commitment to the union may well have been forged along other routes. The very fact that unions required sets of rules and regulations, operated various funds and also provided other services, such as educational ones, encouraged the support and allegiance of the membership.[8] For a union to run its affairs properly and correctly was important in securing its status within public opinion.[9] However, while its rules were a source of a union's independence and self-confidence, their status did not go unchallenged. The Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers'

Associations, which sat from 1965 to 1968, conventionally referred to as the Donovan Commission, gathered plenty of evidence about the sometimes chaotic character of union rule books that had developed piecemeal over many years. Some wanted to give the state greater powers over the content of union rules so that common procedures might be followed, for example in union elections. Commenting on such proposals, Hugh Clegg, the leadingleading industrial relations academic of his day, argued that much would be lost by abolishing constitutions 'which have grown up over a hundred years and to which individual members are often attached', and pointed out that 'one of the reasons why British trade union government, despite its faults, is relatively clean, is because of the traditional respect which members give to their constitutions'.[10]

The instruments and methods of self-government therefore created bonds within the membership and secured the unions' status within society. For a commentary on the place of trade unions within British life in the later 1970s that suggested they were of more than of instrumental significance we can turn to the views of Otto Kahn-Freund, the leading labour lawyer of his day, and Professor of Comparative Law at Oxford University between 1964 and 1971. His analysis comes across most clearly in his final book, *Labour Relations: Heritage and Adjustment*, published in 1979.

What had particularly caught Kahn-Freund's eye was the growth of workshop organization that had flourished especially in the 1960s and 1970s with its element of direct democracy. The system was particularly sensitive to the wishes of the workforce, much more so than was the case with the normal structure of local branch, district or regional committee, then the national office. It also rested on the loyalties of the membership to their own trade or occupation, and also to their organization. This loyalty was to the association, rather than to a class. This loyalty had long historical roots, and the impulses upon which it drew were part of a national heritage common to society as a whole rather than being confined to a particular class. He described a habit of craft protection that went back to the guilds:

> No arguments favoured by economists, and, on the other side, no such thing as an appeal to working class solidarity could breach the walls of that fortress, that Bastille of customs, institutions, rules whose spirit was and is as far away from that of capitalist market economics as from that of the Marxist class struggle.

The crucial point was that these habits had also influenced the general unions for the less skilled workers: 'so potent is this survival from the Middle Ages that it has outlived the craft unions themselves'.[11]

These characteristics of defence of the craft or occupation, and the intense loyalty to a corporate organization, were not peculiar to the working class but common to the rest of society: 'where else in the world do you find this intense "we" feeling towards organized and traditional social groups, schools and colleges, clubs and trade unions, that is regarded as a matter of course in this country?'[12] This is precisely the same observation that Figgis had made over 50 years earlier and which was noted at the beginning of this chapter. Moreover, it was not an observation confined to social democratic or 'left' patterns of thought. When, in the 1970s, the noted conservative journalist T.E. Utley argued for the virtues of moderation in political debate, he suggested that 'to set about trying to reform the economy without taking into account the real force of such sentiments as loyalty to a trade union would be to court disaster'.[13] That trade union membership carried meanings and significance that went beyond the specifically material was even recognized by those Conservatives who, in the later 1970s, were examining measures to weaken the trade unions as malign influences upon the economy. The authors of the well-known 'Stepping Stones' document, which highlighted the unions as the principle obstacle to economic recovery, admitted that 'we realise we cannot ask the unions, or their members, to give up their current feelings of comradeship, protectiveness or group strength if we do not guarantee them similar feelings of strength, togetherness and security under any new arrangement we may propose'.[14] There can be little doubt as to the significance of trade unions as sources of attachment and feeling at that time.

What was the reality that supported such analyses? The element of continuity that comes through in these accounts was provided by the revival of shop-floor unionism which had developed in the post-1945 period under the stimulus of full employment and factory-level bargaining. By some kind of historical U-curve, the workplace unionism of the early twentieth century had returned under conditions of full employment.[15] The shop stewards' committees in large factories provided rich opportunities for activists to play their part not only in an economic but also in a political and social mini-system. Such committees sometimes had large memberships who met regularly as a group as well as being involved in the departments they represented. They operated with a good deal of autonomy, and played key roles in determining how the inevitable conflicts at work

were either smoothed over or developed into strike action. At times they could suffer from public exposure, and be humiliated by a mass meeting overturning their strategy.[16] They engaged in a fairly constant battle to restrict the amount of overtime that their members wanted to work so that employment opportunities might be created for other union members who needed them.

On most committees there was a high turnover of stewards, but for those who stayed the course it was possible to be in a senior position for many years, and to have a strong sense of how their own organization had developed over time. As one convenor described his organization,

> The meetings held up to recent times were held in works toilets and were surreptitious, however in approx. 1960 there was a radical change in pattern, the shop stewards realised that the movement they were in was an honourable one, it was brought into being for the protection of the worker and to obtain and maintain his rights and so they stood back and examined themselves, the old cloth-cap type of representative gradually faded out, they realised that all past jealousies must go and a new element of younger shop stewards came to the front, of course they had the ground prepared for them but they realised they needed to be educated and to understand the high power modern day idiom of management, a number in our ranks studied in various forms, took advantage of weekend schools and other mediums of education and gradually management became aware that it was not dealing with rabble but in fact was now having to understand and deal with an educated and efficient factory organisation.[17]

In order to be effective in negotiating with management, stewards had to demonstrate that the workers themselves were reasonably well disciplined and cooperative in their behaviour in the factory: absenteeism, late starting, early finishing and refusal to cooperate with company personnel all threatened to undermine the stewards' position in wage bargaining.[18] As one shop steward argued,

> It is important to ensure that every person recognises that he can affect another person's well-being either directly or indirectly, through attitudes to work, attendance at work etc. and it is through the medium of the shop steward that this attitude and need for co-operation is conveyed to the shop floor.[19]

This awareness of the factory as some kind of social system extended to workers' links with welfare: stewards provided advice for members in their

dealings not only with practical health and safety questions but also over welfare benefits and pensions. This was not only confined to the factory. The welfare state was not perfect, and shop stewards were perhaps in the best place to see where the gaps were. A quite common kind of support was for retired union members, sometimes through organizing trips and visits to the seaside. At the Chrysler plant near Coventry the stewards introduced through the firm a small levy off workers' pay to contribute to union funds for the elderly.[20] These broad dimensions of a trade unionist's activities also showed continuities with the past. Sid Weighell, the general secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen, remembered his father's activities in the 1930s: he 'virtually ran the union single handed as well as the local Labour Party at election times. Our front room became a sort of citizen's advice bureau and social security office. Everybody seemed to know our house was the place to go if you lost your job or your home or needed advice.'[21]

There is little doubt that the shop steward's role gave ample scope for the expression of values and character through leadership, in the context of what were complex business organizations. These abilities were developed through education not only about particular aspects of a factory's business but also about the broader policy framework that bore upon workers' lives. In the activities they engaged in, in the procedures they followed about their own organization, through the elections they held and the social events they organized, and even in the carefully maintained minute books they have left, they demonstrated the qualities their predecessors had shown. These were impressive examples of the kind of personal confidence and involvement in a wider world that Cole had identified much earlier in the century as the benefits of associational life.

The contrast between this life of the activist and those of the ordinary members was clear. Shop stewards often spoke of the apathy of the ordinary members, but the relationship clearly fluctuated over time, depending on conditions in the factory. One convenor gave a perceptive view of the behaviour of his membership:

The members in our factory are no different from those in other factories, they are extremely apathetic. Where the standard of living is good, the management understanding and co-operative, where there is a free exchange of opinion, etc., then there is no need for militancy or a highly interested organisation. The majority are satisfied everything is done to their liking, indeed the only time there is trouble amongst our members is when the

Stewards are acting contrary to the wishes of the membership. The apathy is the making of the shop stewards, they have spoonfed the membership to such an extent that it does not need to help itself.

But he then went on to make a crucial qualification:

There is no need however for a shake away from this attitude as the feeling would automatically change should things start to go wrong. We do know that when the time comes the members are fully behind the movement which we have created and are thankful for and satisfied with the service which they get.[22]

There are some echoes here of Cole's thoughts on the meaning of associational life for individuals to be found in his *Social Theory*, in his awareness of the limited sense of commitment that members might have towards their associations. Cole assigned considerable significance to the nature of associational life, as a brake upon the power of the state, and the means though which people acted. He wanted to place them at the centre of political analysis.[23] But, however important an association might be, it could not represent the individual in any complete sense. Social organization left the individual intact. There was always 'a vital sphere of individuality whose self-expression is personal'.[24] So a trade union membership inevitably contained many different levels of commitment to the activities of the association.

Trade Unions and Individual Choice

However, the nature of trade unions meant that the question of the individual's involvement in the organization could not always be left as a matter of choice. Collective action depended on loyalty to, or at least acquiescence in, the aims of the group. Such moments could test a person's core beliefs. Those whose partial commitment led to a refusal to participate in collective action had to pay some kind of price; indeed, paying a price permitted the withholding of their full commitment. According to Cole, when people join associations,

They merely put into the common stock as much of their personalities as they regard necessary for the common purpose, laying themselves under no penalty or under different or limited penalties, if they fail to act according to the decision of the association.[25]

This went to the heart of the balance between the interests of the individual and the collective wishes of the association. In certain conditions, the penalties for dissent were far from limited and sometimes severe. By way of example, a member of the Association of Supervisory Staffs, Executives and Technicians refusing to join an official strike was usually expelled. If he continued working at the same place then all that transpired for him was the saving of his union subscription. But finding work at another enterprise where the union was strong was unlikely to be successful, since members there would not work with him. According to Clive Jenkins, the Association's General Secretary, that decision would lie with the members, but the advice from the union would be 'that they should not work with him. The man had committed in our view a grave moral offence as well as specifically breaking our rules.'[26]

Work groups often developed strong views about those who stood against the majority view. Sometimes the members caused problems for their unions by taking matters into their own hands, by trying to impose a kind of rough justice over those errant people who had gone against the grain. Such an instance achieved some brief public notoriety in the case of the 'noose trial' at the Cowley car factories in Oxford in 1966. In this case a small number of members refused to join an unofficial strike, and the other members of the department organized a mock trial in a works yard that imposed fines on the non-strikers. Part of the reason for the public *frisson* that arose came from the noose that was apparently hanging up in the yard. Trade unions imposed fines on members who refused to follow collectively agreed strike action, but this could only be done at branch or district level; they could not be imposed by the workers themselves. The shop stewards at the factory tried to stop the fines being imposed and assured those who were subject to them that they did not have to be paid. This kind of problem was not confined to Cowley; another shop stewards' committee who gave evidence to the Donovan Commission commented that 'There but for the grace of God go we.'[27]

Trade unions drew upon the collective spirit of their members, but they also had to mitigate the social power of the work group, if the interests of individuals were to be protected. Inevitably, opinions varied as to how far this was necessary. Those who supported trade unions as voluntary associations believed that their self-government was of the essence of their character and that they should be trusted to run their own affairs with as little determination of their rules and procedures by outside bodies as possible.[28] This rested on the view that the behaviour of people at work to one

another would usually allow for the resolution of any particular difficulties. Those less enamoured of trade unions inevitably thought differently. Commenting on the 'kangaroo' court at Cowley which has been referred to above, the Conservative MP Nicholas Ridley argued that 'There is probably a lot more bullying and victimisation than ever reaches the newspapers. The whole problem of shop floor bullying needs attention.'[29]

The question of whether or not there was a conflict between the trade union and the individual was sometimes resolved by saying that the right to associate with whom a person chose in defence of their interests was a necessary attribute, and indeed fulfilment of, an individual's identity. However, as a matter of practical politics, debates about trade unions were often couched precisely in the conflict between the individual and the collective interest. These gathered pace in the 1960s. The focus was on trade unions as arenas of justice. Trade unions had significant disciplinary powers over their members and also little scrutiny from the state.

The matter of providing internal means of appeal against union decisions was important not only for the individual member but also for the unions. Having proper rules and procedures that provided some kind of justice for their members was a way for the unions of conforming to the norms of wider society, and confirming the legitimacy of their organizations. The Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU) operated a Court of Appeal at its annual conference where members could appeal against any decision taken at any level of the union that they felt had harmed their interests. The decisions of the Court often served to ease the severity of penalties exacted lower down the union organization. In 1962, for example, some branches fined those who had refused to join a one-day token stoppage, on the grounds of their opposition to union policy and the crossing of picket lines. The Court turned these fines into severe reprimands, on the grounds that a one-day stoppage was a demonstration and not a strike.[30] The union was proud of such a method of justice, but in its form it did not seem to be widespread within the trade union world.

What seemed to set the AEU process apart was the willingness of its Court to consider the justice of the penalties that had been imposed on members. An enquiry by the Donovan Commission into the disciplinary and appeals procedures of five unions showed that the Electrical Trades Union was unusual in having a high proportion of members making successful appeals against discipline imposed by the branches. This was especially so where a branch had imposed a penalty when an individual was readmitted after a period of non-membership. In the main,

the Commission found that 'appeals procedures cases are reviewed rather than re-heard'. Often the appeal case was heard by the same body that had made the original decision and the matter was dealt with entirely on paper with no new evidence being heard. The chief concern was usually to ensure that the penalty was imposed at the proper level in the union, and that the rules had been correctly applied. The Commission's survey concluded that 'appeals are not generally dealt with by appeal tribunals as normally understood'.[31]

However, in labour relations, the use of tribunals to deal with individual grievances was becoming much more prominent. The context was set by the increasing interest in the notion of a person's property right in their job. For some the notion of a property right was a misnomer. It could not be transferred, and it was significantly limited by the competing claims of the property rights of the employer. But as recognition of a stake someone had in their job, and as an indication of the way a person's work had a profound bearing on their independence, status, and sense of dignity, it was valuable. The notion of a person's property right in their job was not new, but it had acquired a greater prominence in the 1960s in policy discussions about redundancy and unfair dismissal. Legislation in 1965 on redundancy and in 1971 on unfair dismissal (as part of the Industrial Relations Act) recognized the need in certain circumstances both for compensation for loss of a job beyond the wages that had been paid, and the right to argue a case before an industrial tribunal. Human relations at work, rather than just the material conditions of labour, were brought within a legislative framework.[32] Once it was accepted that a person deserved some consideration in the way they were treated at work, and some recognition of the commitment they had made to their job, then the position of the individual trade union member came into play. If workers were to have recourse to appeal before an independent tribunal if they either lost, or were dismissed from, their job, did they not deserve equal rights when they were expelled from their union?

An important aspect of this debate was legal rather than sociological.[33] That is, the assessment rested on the accordance with certain principles for bringing justice to the individual, rather than on whether or not the unions were actually poorly run and neglecting their members' interests and rights in a way that was quantitatively significant. Most informed observers agreed that British unions were well run and largely free from corruption. Surveys showed that very few members had grievances with their unions.[34] However, this did not save the unions from scrutiny. The

power of unions over their members with only imperfect means of internal appeal did not fit with most of the discussions about the rights of the individual in the 1960s and thereafter. Many unions had rules allowing them to fine or expel members that were quite general, such as acting contrary to the interests of the union. So whether or not the unions were in practice abusing their position was not quite the point; it was the correspondence of their rules with the rights of their members that mattered. And while many argued that the law played no part in collective industrial relations, that was not the case for the dealings between a union and its members. Here the law had a clear purpose and legitimacy.

The Closed Shop

Many of the members' grievances about expulsion or readmission arose from the closed shop, and this institution undoubtedly focused very sharply the debate about the rights of associations versus those of the individual. The closed shop was usually justified on the grounds that it supported good industrial relations. Some managements liked strong unions that were able to discipline their members and keep them to agreements. The closed shop also supported trade unions where the workforce was subject to a high turnover and irregular work; the actor's union, Equity, was a classic example. The closed shop was therefore defended on the basis of its established place in collective industrial relations as well as ensuring that trade unions had the freedom to function effectively. If the fundamental contribution trade unions made to a person's security and rewards from work was accepted, then the closed shop was simply one way of meeting a basic right of association, even if it did rest on the right to insist on membership and to exclude people from it.

There was, of course, another side to the question of the legitimacy of the closed shop. During the proceedings of the Donovan Commission, Lord Collison, sometime general secretary of the National Union of Agricultural Workers, was presented with the argument by Cyril Grunfeld that the closed shop was justified on the grounds of the importance of the unions in national industrial policy. He responded with a very clear alternative perspective:

> One of the things trade unionism was established to achieve was industrial freedom. The whole of the law of this country—although I am speaking not as a lawyer but as a layman—was established to protect the freedom of

the individual within certain reasonable limits. The question of the closed shop is one we have to sort out, and I am asking you: are you quite sure it is proper to suggest that industrial considerations are more important than the personal considerations?

Grunfeld's answer was that the closed shop could not be banned just because of a small number of difficult individual cases, and 'one hopes that unions will behave decently'.[35]

Was Grunfeld's response adequate? In the closed shop a person's employment was conditional on being a member of an appropriate trade union. In such a situation, the notion that a trade union might be regarded as a voluntary association was untenable. It took away a basic right of choice about whether to be a union member or not. The practical consequences of this were fundamental. A member who was dissatisfied with the behaviour and policies of his union could not resign as in the case of a normal voluntary organization because of the devastating consequences of losing employment, not only in a particular plant but in a trade more generally. On the other hand, from the trade union side, it was frequently argued that the non-unionist benefited from the efforts and sacrifices of the trade union without paying for them, and without taking on the obligations of trade union membership. In cases where a clear majority wanted union membership to be a condition of employment, should not the minority accede to the will of the majority? Was it not the same sense of obligation that a citizen expects to give to the state where he or she may sometimes disagree profoundly with what is being done in their name but still accepts the overall obligations that it imposes?

One of the most perceptive treatments of these issues was provided by Bill McCarthy's book *The Closed Shop in Britain*, published in 1964. From the outset, McCarthy rejected the simple distinction between the trade union as a voluntary organization where there was no requirement to be a member, and the completely different conditions of coercive trade unionism under the closed shop. All trade union activity had, in his view, an irreducible element of compulsion. Getting members to observe a strike call, or to restrict overtime working, on pain of disciplinary sanction, involved coercion. Bringing all the workers in an enterprise into trade union membership was a straightforward way of overcoming the threat to solidarity from the non-unionist. The fact that a union member in a closed shop had to obey a strike call or face the devastating consequence of expulsion protected the solidarity of the union membership: 'nothing exposes

the menace of non-unionism like a strike, nothing gives rise to bitterness like the spectacle of one's workmate walking through the picket lines'.[36] Moreover, employees had only very limited choice of which trade union they belonged to, and unions usually wanted to achieve 100% membership even where there was no formal closed shop. No trade union was therefore a strictly voluntary body.[37] Once the need and desirability of workers being able to combine against their employers was accepted, then the case against the closed shop as a special and rather pathological form of organization was weakened. Once the right of workers to combine in order to improve their economic position was conceded—much as employers were allowed to combine in order to defend their trading position—then the right to not to work with non-trade unionists, and to persuade others not to do so, was established.

On the other side, McCarthy was sceptical of the general justifications for the closed shop in terms of the need to accept common obligations where there was a common benefit, and the analogy between the obligations due by a member to a trade union and by a citizen to the state. Many people benefited from the work of associations that they did not necessarily support or participate in.[38] Moreover, membership of a state was a far more fundamental obligation than the much more specific and limited relationship that was generated by being employed in a particular enterprise. But even in the case of the state, there were clear limits to the extent of a citizen's obligations to the common good. For example, in times of war, the state permitted conscientious objections to military service.

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the arguments on both sides of the closed shop were so fundamental that they did not permit of reconciliation or compromise. What was at stake was so important—the need for effective collective action against the right of the individual to choose whether or not to be in a trade union—that there was no watertight way of arriving at a value-free preference for one against the other. McCarthy had recognized that whatever safeguards might be put in place to deal with injustices arising from the closed shop, its ultimate acceptance was a matter, not surprisingly, of political choice. In the face of the tension between the rights of workers to combine in the most effective fashion as a way of meeting the employer on something like level terms, and the interests of individuals who wanted to stand outside the trade union, it was better to keep the closed shop. This was the same line taken in the Donovan Commission report, that the right to join a trade union was of greater weight than the right not to be a member because the former upheld

collective bargaining which was supported by public policy.[39] This was also the view of Henry Phelps Brown, one of the leading labour economists of the post-1945 period and a distinguished historian of the trade union movement. Once a formal system of industrial relations was in existence, 'the accession of power to the trade union, and the subordination of the individual, are the counterparts of the place accorded to the trade union in the constitution of the system'.[40]

There was no question, in McCarthy's mind, that cases of hardship and injustice did arise from the closed shop. Groups of workers often developed feelings of animosity to particular individuals that lay behind formal reasons to exclude that person from membership. Even though workers' rights lay with themselves, and not with the trade unions, none the less, the closed shop gave much more power to workers via their union than the open shop. Workers in firms where the union was not universal tended to be more tolerant of the non-unionist than in where it was nearly universal. Moreover, while a small number of cases of individual injustice had made their way through courts and become well known, there was no way of knowing how many suffered from the obligation to be a trade union member. A further difficulty was that the state of union rules in the 1960s did not give confidence that members who found themselves up against their union would get fair treatment. Unions had rules that gave them great discretion over the grounds on which a member could be fined or expelled. Where union membership was a condition of employment it should have been detached as far as possible from the tribalism of the workplace. However, trade unions' internal machinery did not always correspond with natural justice in providing an aggrieved member with access to an independent body where they could defend themselves against the decision of the union.

McCarthy was sympathetic to the proposals in *The Giant's Strength*, which had been published in 1958 by a group of Conservative lawyers, and which is often regarded as the opening statement in the Conservatives' campaign to reform the unions. The proposal here was for scrutiny of trade union rules by the Registrar of Friendly Societies to ensure freedom of entry to unions, and a right of appeal to an independent body in cases of dispute between a member and his union.[41]

McCarthy had an opportunity to participate in the practical operation of such an idea when the TUC set up an Independent Review Committee in 1976 to hear cases of those who had been expelled from trade unions where a closed shop operated. It was an attempt to introduce

a credible voluntary mechanism at a time when the permitted exemption from a closed shop had been restricted to that of religious conviction. Furthermore, someone who lost his job because he had been expelled from his union in a closed shop could not appeal under unfair dismissal legislation. It was an attempt by the trade union movement to provide a mechanism of their own to deal with cases where a person had been apparently harshly treated as a result of a closed shop, and therefore to avoid the state's involvement in internal trade union affairs. It was chaired by Lord Wedderburn, with Lord McCarthy and G.H. Doughty being the other members.[42] In most cases the Independent Review Committee recommended reinstatement to a union, but often reoccupation of the same job was not thought possible. Moreover, it was a weakness of the Independent Review Committee's operation that it could not provide monetary compensation for the loss of a job, which is what was achieved in statutory provision for redundancy and unfair dismissal.

Lord Wedderburn, as chair of the committee, had been very keen to publicize its activities within the union movement in order to demonstrate that it could provide a legitimate means of resolving grievances about the closed shop.[43] It was undoubtedly within the traditions of the trade union movement, in searching for a voluntary rather than the statutory solution to problems arising for members, and which Michael Foot, the Secretary of State for Employment who was responsible for the trade union legislation of the 1974–79 Labour governments, had favoured.

The Conservative Reform of Trade Union Law

Such efforts of the TUC to preserve the closed shop by providing a conciliation and dispute resolution service were already responding to concerns from the Labour side that cases of individual injustice needed independent arbitration. When the Conservatives came into office in 1979, such efforts from within the trade union movement counted for little. The Conservatives provided a completely different public policy framework from the one that had hitherto supported the closed shop. Instead of the acknowledgement that the role of the trade unions placed the collective interest ahead of the individual's, Margaret Thatcher's approach to the trade unions was based on a firmly held individualism that had been a feature of her political career. 'The individual' appeared as a motif in her speeches as leader of the opposition, and picketing and the closed shop both showed the tension between collective and individual inter-

ests in trade union action. She hated the closed shop.[44] Picketing had become the most important aspect of trade union affairs in political discussion in the 1970s. It had arisen dramatically during the miners' strike of 1972 but had persisted, and acquired fresh prominence, in the Grunwick dispute of 1976–78, when the might of the trade union movement was unable to move a small photographic processing firm in London to grant trade union negotiating rights, and instead seemed only to bring disorder onto the streets. Picketing was the most visible sign during the 'Winter of Discontent' of 1979 that both unions and government were helpless in the face of local union members who wanted to stop the movement of goods and block access to services.

The economic policy that the Conservatives had developed in Opposition expressed a 'neo-liberal' critique of trade unions for the harm they caused to the economy.[45] This had been much inspired by Friedrich Hayek and others.[46] But Hayek's focus in particular was different from Thatcher's specification of the individual as the entry point to the antiunion campaign. Hayek's analysis did not place the individual so firmly centre stage. His key insight was about the possibility of 'spontaneous order' arising from a market economy that would save nations from the evils arising from state planning.[47] Trade unions were an impediment to the workings of such spontaneous forces, but Hayek did not have much interest in the individual. What gave energy to Thatcher's populism was the challenge to the freedom of the individual and to the law posed by the trade unions. It was not solely an economic critique.[48]

The Thatcher governments introduced a succession of measures regulating trade union affairs, not only in terms of the public action they could take by limiting secondary picketing and by narrowing the definition of what was a legitimate trade dispute, but also in the way they should run themselves, including how they should elect their executive bodies and what rights their members should have. They also restricted and then abolished the closed shop.[49] This greater control over the trade unions was only part of a set of events and developments that in a remarkably short time transformed their position from one of strength to one of weakness. Unemployment between 1979 and 1982 weakened their bargaining power. The strikes by health service workers and local authority employees in 1979 had discredited the trade union movement, and the growth of the service sector displaced the conditions of employment in manufacturing occupations that had historically supported trade unions.[50]

Unions began to survey their memberships to find out what they thought in the new climate. The weakness of the unions compared to their position in the 1970s was clear. A NUPE survey showed that the contrast between the 1970s when the union was often able to win their members' battles, and the 1980s when they often could not, was well understood.[51] A Labour Party report on discussions with trade union members was equally discouraging. It found that they had little sense of being part of a movement with a long history, and for them trade unions were a weak force in their lives, and occupied a role rather similar to the Church of England, with formal status but little practical significance. Trade union membership was not seen as a source of personal identity. Their role as trade union members was seen as a separate department of their life from most of their activities as individuals, and much less important.[52]

Gradually, the trade union leaders realized that their members approved of many of the Thatcher reforms. When members of the Civil and Public Services Association were balloted on the Conservatives' trade union reforms, 71% agreed that strikes should only be undertaken after a secret ballot, and 85% agreed that the governing bodies of unions should be elected every five years by postal ballots.[53] Strike ballots were generally more popular with members than with union leaderships. In the Inland Revenue Staffs Federation a far higher percentage of lay members wanted ballots before industrial action (94%) than did their executive committee (30%).[54]

A survey of members of the Inland Revenue Staffs Federation confirmed the sense of detachment many members felt for their union, but also offered a more complex picture. This survey reported that many members did not expect it to play a significant part in their working lives, nor did they anticipate being called upon to take a more active role themselves.[55] But alongside such limited connection with the Federation went other views that spoke rather differently. Even if the majority reported the expectation that they would not play a significant part in Federation affairs, a number of respondents expressed a willingness to take on a more active role themselves in the organization. The survey team also reported a high level of debate about the process of decision-making towards industrial action, with vivid recollections of meetings during the civil servants' industrial action of 1980–81, and also of the miners' pithead ballots that had failed to support industrial action. The NUPE membership survey also reported lively discussions about the role of ballots in democratic decision-making. Ballots were attractive not just for giving members some influence

over policy, but also for providing a mandate, when they supported strike action, that a government could not deny.[56] At a more pragmatic level, and even in the surveys that reported the strongest perceptions of unions as of quite marginal significance, there was also a very evident appreciation and importance of union support in handling individual problems, or dealing with unfair dismissals and job security.

One of the most interesting findings in the survey of opinion in the Civil and Public Services Association was that 61% agreed that union members who had refused to join a strike, even one supported by a majority vote, should have protection in the law against any discipline by the union.[57] This measure was incorporated into the 1988 Employment Act. It caused surprise amongst both the trade unions and business organizations. Was this taking things too far? The requirement for unions to ballot their members extensively seemed to guarantee that they would follow majority opinion, and therefore it was legitimate to require that those who disagreed none the less accepted the will of the greater number. Disciplinary action against those who still felt their individual interest was paramount served to protect the basic principle that majority opinion should be followed, as long as the penalties were seen to be fair. The trade union 'problem' also seemed to have been solved by the mid- to late 1980s, with limitations on the closed shop, and the defeat of the miners' strike in 1985. To offer individual members the freedom to ignore strikes which had been supported by the membership seemed to show an excess of zeal. However, far from being an oddity, the measure was consistent with the Conservatives' approach to trade unions at that time. It affirmed the legal reality that at the heart of the employment relationship was the individual contract of employment. The individual's decision over whether to break or observe that contract was a superior consideration to any decision the collective membership had come to, however much that had been buttressed by a ballot.[58] However much the trade unions had won a place for themselves in associational life for much of the twentieth century, and established collective bargaining as the practical force in industrial relations, this piece of Conservative legislation had placed in the foreground the individual's interest at defining moments in his or her relationship with their employer and their union. To present a tension between individualism and collectivism has been argued to be a false position, because individuals pursue their interests in association with others, and need their support and that of governments to do so. However, the Conservatives had shown that a

campaign to reform the trade unions could effectively articulate a rather traditional antithesis between the collectivity and the individual to challenge some of the assumptions about associational life.

CONCLUSIONS

The displacement of trade unions as powerful associations in British public life has had a very significant effect on employees. Even if the bigger ambitions for a 'labour movement' have been put to rest (and their existence has always been fragile), the value of collective organization for individuals is being felt precisely by its absence. But this is not an urgent matter in public debate. Instead, 'equality' is the main focus for discontent. The reversal from the 1980s of what had been a long-term trend towards greater equality has been sustaining anxieties about social division. Greater equality can be a priority in welfare policy, but the traditional criteria of income and wealth distribution still hold sway. But the goal of achieving more equal societies, even if an honourable target, is an elusive one, not only in terms of the mechanisms to bring it about but also what precisely is being aspired to. What seems more important to many people is tackling the imbalance in power at work, and this is what trade unions have been able to achieve. They have not been instruments of equality—indeed, they have often been defenders of inequality. Many of their members have not been poor. But some representation of their interests has mattered to employees, and so the loss of prominence of the trade unions has been all the more significant.

More generally, the debates and conflicts about the role of trade unions as associations also suggest that in a liberal society there can be no straightforward answer to the competing claims of collective and individual rights. As Hobhouse argued at the beginning of the twentieth century, 'upon the whole it might be said that the function of Liberalism is not so much to maintain a general right of free association as to define the right in each case in such terms as to make for the maximum of real liberty and equality'.[59] The status of trade unions will inevitably be dependent on the political priorities that shape public policy at any given time, as well as the opinions and instincts that guide public thought. In the second decade of the twenty-first century, for many employees trade unions have lost the secure position they once had. They have experienced the often changing balance between collective and individual interests that will always be found within liberal political systems.[60]

Notes

1. A.V. Dicey, 'The combination laws as illustrating the relations between law and opinion in England during the nineteenth century', *Harvard Law Review*, 17 (1904), p. 514. L.T. Hobhouse, *Liberalism* (1911), reproduced in *Liberalism and Other Writings*, ed. J. Meadowcroft (Cambridge, 1994), p. 18.

2. S. Macedo, 'Capitalism, citizenship and community', in J. Stapleton (ed.), *Group Rights. Perspectives since 1900* (Bristol, 1995), pp. 225–6.

3. For the argument that collective organization should be conceptualized in terms of the rights of individuals rather than those of trade unions see W. McCarthy, *Freedom at Work: Towards the Reform of Tory Employment Laws* (London: Fabian Society Tract No. 508, 1985), pp. 13–14.

4. J.N. Figgis, *Churches in the Modern State* (London, 1913), p. 48.

5. G.D.H. Cole, *Social Theory* (London, 1920), p. 2.

6. F. Chapple, *Sparks Fly! A Trade Union Life* (London, 1984), p. 209.

7. W. Milne-Bailey, *Trade Unions and the State* (London, 1934), p. 94.

8. Milne-Bailey, *Trade Unions and the State*, p. 109.

9. H.M. Drucker, *Doctrine and Ethos in the Labour Party* (London, 1978), p. 17.

10. Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations (Donovan), *Report*, Cmnd.3623 (London: HMSO, 1968), para. 625, and *Minutes of Evidence*, 35, Inns of Court Conservative and Unionist Society, qs 5728 and 5738.

11. O. Kahn-Freund, *Labour Relations. Heritage and Adjustment* (Oxford, 1979), p. 43.

12. Kahn-Freund, *Labour Relations*, p. 34. It should be emphasized that his was not an uncritical assessment. Kahn-Freund wondered if shop-floor organization was not too democratic, and opposed to the public interest in growth and efficiency.

13. T.E. Utley, 'The significance of Mrs Thatcher', in M. Cowling (ed.), *Conservative Essays* (London, 1978), p. 47.

14. http://www.margaretthatcher.org, 'Stepping Stones report-final text, 14 Nov. 1977', THCR 2/6/1/248 'Stepping Stones' paper, appendix. The paper's author was John Hoskyns, who was assisted by Norman Strauss.

15. Hugh Scanlon, the engineers' leader, commented that 'the effect of twenty-five years of economic upswing since 1945 was to re-create pre-1914 conditions at potentially a higher level, and to place the whole question of industrial democracy on a new plane of importance for the labour movement today'. H. Scanlon, 'UK', in C. Levinson (ed.), *Industry's Democratic Revolution* (London, 1974), p. 232.

16. Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick (MRC), MSS 315 A/1/1/4, Chrysler Joint Shop Stewards' Committee minutes, 10 Jan. 1977. An important contemporary study described the more experienced shop stewards as 'leaders *par excellence*'. E. Batstone, I. Boraston and S. Frenkel, *Shop Stewards in Action. The Organization of Workplace Conflict and Accommodation* (Oxford, 1977), p. 41.

17. National Archives (NA), Ministry of Labour papers, LAB 28/235, Maurice Machin, 'Evidence of Garrington's Joint Shop Stewards' Committee to the Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations', April 1966, p. 6.

18. MRC, MSS 315/A//1/1/2 Chrysler Joint Shop Stewards' Committee minutes, 6 Oct. 1969.

19. NA, Donovan Commission Papers, LAB 28/235, Maurice Machin, 'Evidence of Garrington's Joint Shop Steward Committee to the Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations', April 1966, p. 5.

20. NA, Donovan Commission Papers, LAB 28/523, Research paper by A.I. Marsh and P.J. Cope, 'Trade Union Benefits and Finance', pp. 82–3. MRC, MSS 315/A/1/1/3, Chrysler Joint Shop Stewards' Committee, minutes, 4 Nov. 1974, 4 March 1975.

21. S. Weighell, *On the Rails* (London, 1983), p. 14.

22. NA, LAB 28/235, 'Evidence of Garrington's of Bromsgrove Joint Shop Stewards' Committee', p. 16.

23. Cole, *Social Theory*, p. 9. For a full analysis of Cole's pluralist views within the context of contemporary thought about the state, see D. Runciman, *Pluralism and the Personality of the State* (Cambridge, 1997), chs 8–10.

24. Cole, *Social Theory*, pp. 140–1; M. Stears, 'Guild Socialism', in M. Bevir (ed.), *Modern Pluralism. Anglo-American Debates since 1880* (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 52–6.

25. G.D.H. Cole, *Labour in the Commonwealth: A Book for the Younger Generation* (London, 1918), p. 204.

26. Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations, *Minutes of Evidence,* 53 (London: HMSO, 1967), q. 2270 (Clive Jenkins in response to Lord Robens).

27. NA, Papers of the Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations, LAB 28/22, '"Workers' Courts" at Theale and Cowley', note by the Chairman, Nov. 1966, and also *The Guardian*, 12, 18, March and 20 April 1966. NA, LAB 28/235, Evidence of Garrington's Joint Shop Stewards' Committee', p. 12.

28. See the views of C. Grunfeld in *Modern Trade Union Law* (London, 1966), pp. 1–2, and in his evidence to the Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations, *Minutes of Evidence*, 12 (London: HMSO,1966), p. 417. Grunfeld was Reader in Law at the University of London at the time.

29. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Conservative Party Archive, Conservative Research Department, 3/17/1, Policy Group on Industrial Relations, 'Management', paper by Nicholas Ridley, 16 Dec. 1966. I am grateful to Mr Kane Daniell of the Conservative Party for permission to quote from this material, and to Jeremy McIlwaine, archivist for the collection, for facilitating its consultation.

30. MRC, Records of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, MSS 259/AEU/4/1/41A, Proceedings of the 44th National Committee, 42nd Final Appeal Court, cases 56 and 63.

31. NA, LAB 28/26, Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations, 'Complaints against Trade Unions on the Grounds of Unfairness or Irregularities', Note by the Secretary, RC/P/165, 7 April 1967, p. 6.

32. R. Whiting, 'The reform of working life in Britain, 1963–71', *The Historical Journal*, 50, 2 (2007), pp. 423–48.

33. O. Kahn-Freund, 'Trade unions, the law, and society', in *Selected Writings* (London, 1978), p. 129.

34. The Donovan Commission surveyed 494 trade union members and 412 non-members about whether or not they felt that members had been treated fairly by their unions and union elections conducted fairly. It found that only 1% believed they or others had been treated unfairly by a union, and less than 1% thought that elections had not been carried out fairly. NA, LAB 28/26, 'Complaints against Trade Unions', p. 2.

35. Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations, *Minutes of Evidence*, 12, Collison to Grunfeld, qs 1929 and 1932.

36. W.E.J. McCarthy, *The Closed Shop in Britain* (Oxford, 1964), p. 115. W.E.J. McCarthy (1925–2012), Research Director for the Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations; adviser to Barbara Castle 1968–70; fellow of Nuffield College, Oxford.
37. McCarthy, *Closed Shop*, p. 9.
38. McCarthy, *Closed Shop*, p. 181.
39. Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations (Donovan), *Report*, Cmnd.3623 (London: HMSO, 1975 reprint), para. 599.
40. H. Phelps Brown, *The Origins of Trade Union Power* (Oxford, 1983), p. 183.
41. McCarthy, *Closed* Shop, pp. 252–4. The Inns of Court Conservative and Unionist Society, *A Giant's Strength. Some Thoughts on the Constitutional and Legal Position of Trade Unions in England* (London, 1958), pp. 54–5.
42. The work of the committee is described and analysed in K.D. Ewing and W.D. Rees, 'The TUC Independent Review Committee and the closed shop', *Industrial Law Journal*, 10, 1 (1981), pp. 84–100.
43. Wedderburn was 'concerned, particularly in the present political climate, that unions were not giving sufficient publicity to the existence of the committee; it was his impression that the number of cases had declined since its inception'. MRC, TUC Archive, MSS 292D/2.41/1A, Independent Review Committee minutes, 10 Oct. 1977.
44. M. Parris, *Chance Witness. An Outsider's Life in Politics* (London, 2013), p. 195. Parris was a member of Thatcher's office staff when she was Leader of the Opposition.
45. For an analysis of neo-liberal thought in relation to the trade unions, see B. Jackson, 'Neo-Liberalism and the trade unions, c. 1930–1979', in C.V. Griffiths, J.J. Nott and W. Whyte (eds), *Classes, Cultures and Politics: Essays in British History for Ross McKibbin* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 263–81. For the development of economic policy when the Conservatives were in Opposition, see J. Tomlinson, 'Thatcher, monetarism and the politics of inflation', in B. Jackson and R. Saunders (eds), *Making Thatcher's Britain* (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 62–77.
46. For a subtle analysis of the different strands of thought within the critique of the unions, and of the limits of the influence of such

thinking on the Conservatives' legislative programme of the 1980s, see S. Auerbach, *Legislating for Conflict* (Oxford, 1990), ch. 11.

47. F.A. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom* (London, 1944; 2001 edition), p. 17.

48. Shirley Robin Letwin, *The Anatomy of Thatcherism* (London, 1992), chs 6 and 12.

49. The closed shop was finally ended by the 1990 Employment Act, although earlier legislation had restricted its operation. See P. Dorey, 'Individual liberty versus industrial order: Conservatives and the trade union closed shop', *Contemporary British History*, 23, 2 (2009), pp. 221–44. For consideration of the debates of the 1980s about how far external regulation and the rule of law could enhance the right of association see P. Elias and K. Ewing, *Trade Union Democracy. Members' Rights and the Law* (London, 1987), ch. 8.

50. For a powerful and broad-ranging analysis of these changes see A. Offer, 'British manual workers: from producers to consumers, c.1950–2000', *Contemporary British History*, 22, 4 (2008), pp. 537–71.

51. MRC, Records of the National Union of Public Employees, MSS 218/15/11, 'Northern College. NUPE members' attitudes to politics and trade unions', July 1985.

52. MRC, NUPE MSS 218/15/11, 'Labour Party report on discussions with trade union members', 27 April 1987.

53. MRC, NUPE, MSS 281/15/12, CPSA membership survey, 'Attitudes to Conservative Trade union reforms', 6 July 1987.

54. MRC, NUPE, MSS 281/15/12, 'Organisation, Communication and Decision-making in the Inland Revenue Staff Federation' members' survey 1983.

55. MRC, NUPE, MSS 281/15/12, 'Organisation, Communication and Decision-making in the Inland Revenue Staff Federation' members' survey 1983.

56. MRC, NUPE, MSS 218/15/11, 'NUPE members' attitudes to politics and trade unionism', p. 8.

57. MRC, NUPE, MSS 281/15/12, CPSA membership survey, 'Attitudes to Conservative Trade Union Reforms', 6 July 1987.

58. MRC, TUC archive, MSS 292D/108.2/36, meeting of the employment and organization committee with the secretary of state for employment (Norman Fowler), 24 June 1987, discussing

the government's Green paper, *Trade Unions and Their Members.* P. Davies and M. Freedland, *Labour Legislation and Public Policy. A Contemporary History* (Oxford, 1993), p. 507.

59. Hobhouse, *Liberalism*, p. 18.
60. For the argument that trade unions require for their security a value system different from the liberal perspective, one that recognizes 'the honouring of obligations and ties of solidarity, reciprocity and communal belonging' within a civic republicanism, see Alan Bogg's discussion of Michael Sandel's critique of liberalism in 'Michael Sandel and trade unions', *International Union Rights*, 18, 4 (2012), pp. 22–3.

The Co-operative Party: An Alternative Vision of Social Ownership

Rachael Vorberg-Rugh and Angela Whitecross

While the social, cultural and economic aspects of the British cooperative movement have benefitted from a recent resurgence in scholarly interest, the political aspects of the movement remain largely unexplored and often overlooked.[1] Co-operative movements have existed and continue to thrive around the globe, but the establishment of a distinct political party is unique to Britain.[2] Although the cooperative movement represented a central pillar of working-class life for much of the twentieth century, the existence of this Co-operative Party and its complex relationship with the Labour Party is still barely visible in wider accounts of the politics of this period.[3]

There are four main ways in which 'cooperative politics' may be understood. First, the cooperative movement was itself a political project: a mass movement which sought to reform social and economic relations through

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voluntary democratic enterprise and the equitable distribution of its rewards. Second, around the turn of the twentieth century the cooperative movement began to reconsider its 'apolitical' stance toward parliamentary politics, culminating in the formation of the Co-operative Party in 1917. The political programme and parliamentary record of this party thus constitute a second strand of cooperative politics. A third facet can be found in the relationship between the Co-operative Party and other cooperative bodies, mirroring the complexities of the movement's myriad federal organisations and the diversity of views contained within them. For cooperative political identity was contested ground between the Co-operative Party and other key actors, notably the Co-operative Union, the movement's education and policy arm, and the Co-operative Wholesale Society (CWS), the national wholesale, distribution and manufacturing business owned by local cooperative societies.[4] A fourth aspect of cooperative politics is in the relationship between the cooperative movement and the Labour Party, both before and after the formal alliance between the Co-operative and Labour Parties, agreed in 1927.

Founded in 1917, the Co-operative Party was established with three objects:

(a) The Direct Representation of Co-operators in Parliament and on Local Governing Bodies, for the purpose of safeguarding the interests of Voluntary Co-operation, and resisting any legislative or administrative inequality hampering or limiting its progress.
(b) The Formation of a Government based upon Democratic Principles.
(c) The Establishment of the Co-operative Commonwealth, wherein the incentive in industry shall be Production for Use and not for Profit, and in which the economic basis of society shall be the Common Ownership of the Essential Means of Life.[5]

Although it was created as an independent political party, within ten years of its establishment it entered into a formal electoral agreement with the Labour Party, with which it has remained aligned ever since. Thus, the Co-operative Party holds an exceptional position in the history of labour politics, as the only independent party with which the Labour Party has maintained a formal relationship, following the disaffiliation of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) in 1932.[6]

Worley has illustrated how the development of the Labour Party up until 1945 was informed by a multitude of organisational and ideological

factors, and his edited collections include chapters by Robertson examining the Co-operative Party and its relationship with the Labour Party. She illustrates how local Co-operative Parties influenced the character of the Labour Party at the local level, and suggests that the Co-operative Party made valuable contributions in this arena—particularly where consumer interests were concerned.[7] In contrast, other historians who have studied this relationship suggest that the cooperative influence on Labour's broader policies was minimal, particularly during the period of Labour government after 1945, in spite of their overlapping membership and common ideological roots.[8] Manton describes it as 'curious' that the Labour Party did not look to the cooperative movement for inspiration or take cooperative ideas seriously.[9] In some ways the cooperative movement's vision of a 'co-operative commonwealth' – a society in which there would be 'equal access to the means of living and the common enjoyment and control of what is commonly produced' – was not significantly different from the Labour Party's commitment in 1918 to what became known as 'Clause Four' of its constitution.[10] While the Labour Party increasingly focused on the state as the main method of transformation, the cooperative movement continued to see voluntary association as the primary means to achieve social change.[11] However, Manton argues that the cooperative movement's case against nationalisation alienated many in the Labour Party because it defended the rights of voluntary consumer cooperatives by using the language of the free market.[12]

This chapter presents a more nuanced assessment, highlighting the organisational and ideological differences between the two parties and the impact of these factors on Co-operative and Labour Party relations at the national level as the organisations developed in the twentieth century. Although the Co-operative Party and the cooperative movement more generally articulated an alternative vision to state-socialism by advocating social ownership, lingering ambivalence over political action among cooperators, structural constraints within and between the Labour and Co-operative Party organisations, and the increasing disparity in size and political power between the two parties weakened the Co-operative Party's influence on Labour policy.

Organised chronologically, the chapter begins with an examination of cooperative politics in the years leading up to the formation of the Co-operative Party, focusing on the changing concerns of the wider movement before and during the First World War. Subsequent sections track the Co-operative Party's development and examine the implications

of its relationship with the Labour Party, from the electoral agreement between the two parties in 1927 to the Labour Government of 1945–51. Lastly, it assesses the extent to which the Co-operative Party represented another world of labour, and suggests that cooperative politics in the latter decades of the twentieth century offers a fruitful arena for further research. Overall, this chapter argues that the ideology of voluntary cooperation offered an alternative political vision to that of the 'forward march' of socialism through nationalisation, and that the Co-operative Party's contribution to labour politics should not be neglected.

Cooperative Politics Before the First World War

On 21 December 1844 the 'Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers' opened a small cooperative store in an east Lancashire mill town about 12 miles from Manchester.[13] The Rochdale Pioneers, as they came to be known, were a group of artisans who collectively raised £28 in capital to found a cooperative provisions shop. Their society would become the inspiration behind the modern British cooperative movement.[14] The central elements of the Rochdale system included a democratic structure based on 'one member, one vote', as opposed to the joint-stock business model of 'one share, one vote'. A second key principle, voluntary and open membership, ensured that any adult man or woman could join the cooperative on the same terms as existing members.[15] The profits of the enterprise were distributed on the basis of use, through a dividend on purchases, while capital invested in cooperative shares earned a fixed rate of interest. Other aspects of the Rochdale model included the provision of educational resources to members, a pledge to sell only pure and unadulterated goods and a requirement that trade be conducted on a cash-only basis. Finally, the society included a commitment to religious and political neutrality in its rules.[16] The question of politics, and how cooperatives should engage with the political sphere, has been the subject of much debate ever since.

In his centenary history of the cooperative movement, G.D.H. Cole contended that political neutrality in the context of 1844 meant that the Rochdale society would take a neutral stance between the various types of socialists, Chartists and Anti-Corn Law League adherents from which it drew its initial membership.[17] As the movement developed and conditions changed, however, so too did the understanding of political and religious neutrality:

what had meant abstention from faction fights within the working class came to mean neutrality in a wider sense, as between the two great organised parties which were contending for mastery of the Government, and as between church and chapel and the various brands of church and chapel doctrine.[18]

In practice, cooperative political neutrality in the nineteenth century came to mean that cooperatives did not endorse the political programmes of either the Liberal or Conservative parties. Although several cooperative leaders in this period were elected to local authorities and to parliament, they did so through the existing political parties and not under the auspices of the cooperative movement. At the national level, most of the active cooperators in parliament in the nineteenth century were affiliated with the Liberal Party, including Walter Morrison, Alexander Macdonald, Arthur Acland, and Henry Vivian.[19] Locally, the picture varied according to the political circumstances of the communities in which cooperatives were embedded, making it difficult to generalise.[20]

The movement's unwillingness to engage in parliamentary politics belied cooperatives' small 'p' political goals. While trade unions sought to organise workers in the productive sphere, cooperators hoped to create a more equitable society by organising the means of consumption and distribution. Although worker cooperatives played an important role within the movement throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it was the consumer organisations that dominated, economically and ideologically.[21] By pooling their resources and creating consumer-owned businesses, cooperators sought to build an alternative socio-economic system. The ideal of the 'co-operative commonwealth' remained central to cooperative aims throughout the nineteenth century and much of the twentieth. From the early 1890s cooperators described their efforts as building a 'state within a state',[22] using the movement's accumulated resources to build their own collectively owned and democratically governed organisations. Rather than attempt change via existing state institutions, the movement hoped to replace them, albeit gradually, with cooperative alternatives. In today's parlance, the movement preferred civil society action to direct political engagement.

By 1900, cooperators had achieved remarkable success in building their state within a state. There were more than 1400 consumer cooperatives affiliated with the Co-operative Union, representing over 1.7 million members.[23] Cooperative stores became fixtures in most working-class communities, offering a wide array of food and household goods

and serving as a means of small savings and investment. The CWS and its Scottish counterpart (SCWS) were secondary cooperatives devoted to supplying cooperative stores across Britain, and were owned and run by their member societies, who elected the Boards of Directors and directed policy at quarterly delegate meetings. By 1900 the Wholesales connected societies with supplies through a national system of salesrooms and depots, while CWS and SCWS factories produced a wide variety of cooperative branded goods for sale in cooperative shops and sourced many items from their depots in North America, Europe and Australasia. Altogether the movement employed over 83,000 people, held more than £23 million in share capital and represented between 6% and 7% of Britain's retail trade.[24] More than simply an economic powerhouse, the movement also offered an extensive array of educational and social resources, organised locally by societies and connected nationally through the Co-operative Union and two weekly newspapers, the *Co-operative News* and the *Scottish Co-operator*. All of these factors combined to create what Gurney calls a 'culture of co-operation'.[25]

The movement's remarkable progress in the late nineteenth century coincided with the growth of state involvement in the everyday lives of its citizens, in ways that challenged its ambiguous relationship to legislative politics. Although cooperative businesses wanted to provide an alternative to capitalism, they nonetheless operated within the existing market framework. As local and national authorities became more involved in regulating business activities, cooperatives found it increasingly necessary to engage with the state. In 1881 the Co-operative Union set up its first Parliamentary Committee, to monitor legislation that might have an impact on the movement, such as taxation, trade policies and revisions to the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts.[26] As Carbery notes, cooperatives increasingly recognised that they did not exist in a vacuum: 'even if they were prepared to refrain from influencing politics, political events would have an influence on them'.[27] Throughout this period, cooperatives' limited engagement with parliamentary politics was primarily defensive in nature, seeking to amend legislation that might prove inimical to cooperative interests rather than putting forward a positive agenda.

As the electorate expanded and political alignments shifted, the question of direct cooperative involvement with local and parliamentary politics became increasingly contentious, gathering momentum in the 1890s and becoming a frequent topic of debate in the years leading up to the First World War. There were several reasons for this, including rising political

activity among cooperators' chief retail competitors and the private shop-keepers, who sought to limit the movement's steady expansion through local and national regulation.[28] Another key factor was the rise of the ILP and political labour, which drew support from some cooperative leaders and members. However, the cooperative movement's localised structure made it difficult to achieve unanimity on a national level. The more than 1400 cooperative societies across Britain varied widely in their circumstances, ranging from small societies in remote mining communities to large urban cooperatives with thousands of members. Cooperative societies were directly responsible to their members, who reflected the diversity of political opinion amongst the working-class populations from which the movement drew most of its membership. Few local cooperative leaders were keen to advance political views which might divide their membership or dissuade people of different political persuasions from shopping in cooperative stores. Those cooperators who did participate in local government were therefore careful to distinguish between their individual political views and their society's neutrality.

At the national level, some cooperative leaders expressed dissatisfaction at their limited influence in parliament, and in 1891 the Parliamentary Committee asked the Co-operative Union to consult its regional boards on the question. In a subsequent report, it was revealed that only the Midland and Southern sections were in favour of direct representation in parliament. However, the Parliamentary Committee used its platform to advocate for cooperative representatives seeking election to local government boards.[29] A few years later, the question came up again at the 1897 Co-operative Congress in Glasgow, where SCWS President William Maxwell used his inaugural address to advocate direct involvement in politics. With full understanding of the contentiousness of the issue, his arguments in favour of cooperative political representation were primarily defensive. Commenting that 'I do not seek to introduce politics into co-operation, but I am most anxious to see co-operation introduced more into politics', he went on to note that, while many other interests were represented in parliament, the large and powerful movement's voice was 'small and almost unheard'. The same situation, he argued, was the case at the local level, where 'in many towns co-operators are in the majority of the ratepayers, and yet the conduct of the town's business is left to those who have no interest in the growing power of the people through co-operation'.[30] In an apparent victory for Maxwell, the Glasgow Congress passed a resolution that it felt 'the time has arrived for the direct

representation of the Co-operative Movement in Parliament and other Councils of the United Kingdom'.[31] However, in practice Congress resolutions were not binding on the local cooperative societies, many of whom declared themselves unwilling to subscribe funds to the political effort. Of the over 1400 societies circularised, only 52 were willing to send subscriptions, while 77 declared against political action and the vast majority of societies remained silent. Subsequent Congresses deferred decisions on the question, and in 1900 a series of regional conferences voted overwhelmingly against cooperative parliamentary representation.[32] This result stood in marked contrast to the establishment of the Labour Representation Committee, the predecessor of the Labour Party, a few months earlier.

Although the movement did not achieve a consensus in favour of direct political representation, its engagement with political issues increased in the early twentieth century, notably on the question of free trade.[33] The imposition of increased duties on corn and sugar by the Conservative government in 1902 and the growth of Joseph Chamberlain's campaign for imperial preference through the Tariff Reform League drew ire from across the cooperative movement. Cooperative businesses relied on cheap imported food, often sourced from the Wholesales' international depots. Although a few individuals were concerned that cooperators were being drawn into a party political debate,[34] many leaders and grass roots members expressed staunch support, marshalling their arguments around the impact of high food prices on working-class families. In 1903 the Co-operative Union organised mass free trade demonstrations in cities including Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Glasgow, London, Manchester, and Newcastle, while the Women's Co-operative Guild organised a rally in Manchester that drew thousands of women.[35] The extent to which concern over the issue of free trade trumped the aversion to party politics was graphically demonstrated by the Parliamentary Committee's joint action with the Liberal-affiliated Cobden Club, which co-organised some of the demonstrations and supplied the movement with free trade literature.[36]

Between 1905 and 1913, questions of political representation and affiliations with the wider labour movement were a source of ongoing controversy. Many cooperators continued to argue for political neutrality, using three main arguments: (1) that political action would divide the movement and damage trade; (2) that engagement in politics would be too expensive for local societies; and (3) that voluntary mutual action was preferable to state involvement.[37] However, many cooperators were becoming convinced that some form of cooperative representation was

necessary to protect their interests at both local and national levels. Thus, the 1905 Co-operative Congress passed a motion in favour of political representation, albeit with an amendment stating that cooperatives should refrain from aligning with any political party.[38] Nonetheless, an increasingly vocal group of cooperative leaders pressed for a 'fusion of forces' strategy, arguing that cooperatives should affiliate with trade unions and the Labour Party to present a united front. Proponents of this approach maintained that the three organisations shared many aims, objectives and strategies, as well as a significant crossover in individual membership. By working together using the combined capital of the trade union and cooperative movements, the argument ran, a wider 'labour movement' could be created as a significant political force. While Maxwell and other fusion-of-forces proponents were careful to promote cooperatives' distinct identity, they nonetheless feared that unaffiliated cooperative political action would divide the electorate. Alliance with the developing Labour Party, seen as most sympathetic to cooperative aims, was thus the best path to achieving the movement's political agenda.[39] At the 1912 Congress, Maxwell proposed a conference between the Co-operative Union, the Trades Union Congress (TUC), and the Labour Party to discuss areas where the three bodies might collaborate. His motion succeeded, and the conference was duly held in February 1913.[40] However, this meeting became a source of controversy at the 1913 Co-operative Congress. Opposition to the inclusion of the Labour Party in the conference was led by movement stalwart Edward Owen Greening, who repeated the familiar arguments for cooperative political neutrality. Thus, while the 1913 Congress passed a motion endorsing the conference, it was amended with the following language: 'Whilst approving of concerted action with trade unions and other organised bodies for raising the status of labour, [this Congress] cannot sanction union with the political Labour Party.' The amendment passed overwhelmingly, by a vote of 1346 to 580.[41]

The Rise of the Co-operative Party to 1945

In stark contrast, only four years later in 1917, the Co-operative Congress in Swansea passed a motion stating that 'the time has now arrived when cooperators should secure direct representation in Parliament and on all local administrative bodies', by a vote of 1979 to 201.[42] In October 1917, a special conference in London voted to establish a National Co-operative Representation Committee (renamed the Co-operative Party in 1919)

under the direction of the Parliamentary Committee, which was authorised to establish a political programme and set up local Co-operative Councils. This remarkable shift in cooperative opinion in favour of political action was the result of the movement's experiences during the First World War. Perhaps the most crucial issue was one that went straight to the heart of cooperative businesses: the nation's food supply. Given that cooperatives had the country's most extensive distribution network and were important manufacturers of staple goods, many cooperative leaders expected to play a prominent role in government strategies. For much of the war, these expectations were frustrated. Government advisers drawn from the ranks of private retailers who had been hostile to cooperation used their influence with politicians and civil servants to keep the cooperative movement at arm's length from policy formation.

Meanwhile, working-class consumers struggled with shortages and rising food costs, as retail prices doubled between 1914 and 1917.[43] As most working-class households spent two thirds of their income on food, rising costs hit them disproportionately. Across the country, cooperative societies sought to keep prices down and implemented voluntary rationing programmes to ensure equitable distribution—policies which attracted a flood of new members, with membership rising from over 3.1 million to nearly 3.9 million between 1914 and 1918.[44] Despite their numbers, cooperatives remained virtually shut out of the various government bodies designed to coordinate the nation's food supply until the latter part of 1917, when concerns over rising levels of unrest pushed Liberal Prime Minister David Lloyd George to include more labour and cooperative representatives in expanding government ministries, including the Ministry of Food.[45] Other features of the wartime experience, notably discrimination against cooperative employees by military tribunals and the government's inclusion of previously untaxed cooperative dividends in the Excess Profits Tax, led many cooperative members and leaders to believe that they needed to be represented in local and national government.[46] Writing in November 1917, the Bolton Co-operative Society's president, William Bradley, summed up the wartime politicisation of many cooperators:

> This war had made Co-operators see their weakness with respect to the Government, and he had been led to believe that, like other organisations, they would have to take political action and have direct representation of Co-operation in Parliament … He had not advocated parliamentary representation until recently, but he felt something must be done … They had

over three million members, and yet they had not been able to get representation on many bodies affecting them, and had not a share in arranging prices of food. He did not think that was right.[47]

Another feature of the First World War was the increasing level of collaboration between cooperatives and other labour organisations, through the War Emergency Workers' National Committee (WNC) and other bodies.[48] Established in the early days of the war, the WNC included representatives from the Co-operative Union and the Women's Co-operative Guild alongside trade union, socialist and Labour Party leaders. The committee monitored and responded to government policy on a range of issues, including the civilian food supply and the rising cost of living. While the cooperative contribution remains underexplored, it is clear that the movement's participation in the WNC was a key factor in labour organisations' efforts to 'speak in the name of the consumer'.[49] For cooperative leaders, the WNC provided access to a network of local and national organisations, and gave them valuable experience of political collaboration. During 1916 and 1917, cooperators organised mass protests against government food policies, while the WNC assisted in providing speakers and connecting societies with local trades councils, unions and political groups.[50] Yet, even as cooperative opinion shifted toward political representation during this period, tensions over its relations with political Labour remained. In October 1917, the Co-operative Union withdrew its representatives to the WNC, expressing concern over that body's close connection with the Labour Party at a time when the movement was setting up its own party. The row was smoothed over and cooperative representatives returned to the WNC in January 1918, but the incident is illustrative of the continued ambivalence toward the Labour Party on the part of some cooperators.[51]

Initially, the fledgling Co-operative Party drew considerable support from local cooperative societies, 563 of which affiliated to the Co-operative Representation Committee in 1918.[52] However, this figure represented less than half of the total societies in the UK, suggesting that there were many areas in which cooperative political action did not take root. Moreover, the organisational structure of the Co-operative Party meant that it was not self-governing. As a department of the Co-operative Union it was bound by decisions made by the annual Co-operative Congress. Thus its direction was influenced by many societies which were not directly affiliated.[53] This structure was to hamper the party's ability to take independent action and inhibit its ability to provide a strong political voice.

As the Co-operative Party sought to establish its programme and political machinery, relations with the Labour Party remained an area of concern. In one of its earliest meetings, the Co-operative Representation Committee set up a subcommittee with TUC and Labour Party officials 'to draw up a working basis of friendly cooperation in political matters', but there was no formal alliance.[54] The first cooperative candidates ran in seats not contested by Labour: the first successful candidate, A.E. Waterson, was elected as the MP for Kettering in the General Election of 1918, though he then joined the Labour Party in the House of Commons.[55] Following Waterson's election to parliament, the question of whether the Co-operative Party should ally with Labour returned to the fore. In 1920, a draft agreement for a 'Labour and Co-operative Political Alliance' emerged, designed to prevent clashes in local and national elections and coordinate policies and endorsements across the Co-operative Party, Labour Party and the TUC. However, at the 1921 Co-operative Congress, the scheme was rejected, by a narrow margin of four votes. This decision reflected the organisational difficulties faced by the Co-operative Party, and a continued division within the broader movement as to the direction political action should take. The unsettled state of Co-operative-Labour affairs continued during the 1922 General Election, when Waterson lost his seat but four new Co-operative Party MPs were elected; once again they then worked closely with their Labour colleagues.[56] In the 1923 General Election, all four Co-operative MPs retained their seats and were joined by two additional MPs (see Table 3.1). The ensuing minority Labour government included three Co-operative MPs, including A.V. Alexander as Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade. Although the Co-operative Union sanctioned the Co-operative MPs' inclusion in the government, the question of the two parties' political alliance remained unresolved.[57]

As Carbery and others have noted, the early 1920s constituted the last opportunity the Co-operative Party would have to secure an agreement based on the equality of the two sides.[58] At the time of the Co-operative Party's founding in 1917, Labour was still a minority party, contesting a limited number of parliamentary constituencies. In these circumstances, the Co-operative Party might field candidates in constituencies not contested by Labour, and expect some success in doing so. From 1918, however, Labour focused its attention on becoming an all-encompassing national political party, revising its constitution and developing constituency organisations across the country—a decision Cole suggests may

Table 3.1 Co-operative Party candidates at General Elections, 1918–59

General Election	1918	1922	1923	1924	1929	1931	1935	1945	1950	1951	1955	1959
candidates	10	11	10	10	12	18	20	34	33	40	38	30
elected	1	4	6	5	9	1	9	23	18	16	19	16

Source: B. Smith and G. Ostergaard, *Constitutional Relations between the Labour and Co-operative Parties: An Historical Review* (London, *c.*1960), p. 3.

actually have been hastened by the cooperative movement's entry into parliamentary politics.[59] By 1924 the Labour Party, helped by the split in the Liberal Party from 1916, had become the nation's second largest party and, moreover, a party of government.

This change in dynamic led to the formation of the Joint Committee of the Labour Party and the Co-operative Party, comprising members of both parties' Executive Committees in 1925. The committee was formed to consider the national relationship and moderate any local agreements necessitated by the changed circumstances of the Labour Party.[60] In 1927 a formal agreement between the Labour Party and the Co-operative Party, negotiated by the joint committee, was ratified by delegates at the Co-operative Congress in Cheltenham. At a national level, this agreement provided for the establishment of a joint subcommittee representative of both executives, set up an exchange of minutes between both national executives and allowed for joint campaigns on special subjects to be undertaken during elections.[61] Locally, it provided for affiliation between local Co-operative Parties or Councils and Divisional Labour Parties which would give them similar rights and responsibilities to other affiliated organisations.[62] Crucially, however, this agreement was optional, and was 'not intended to interfere with existing arrangements' where cooperative societies are already affiliated or an arrangement has been established'.[63] Although delegates at the Cheltenham Congress of 1927 voted in favour of this agreement, it only passed by a narrow majority of 17, indicating the deep divide within the wider cooperative movement regarding a formal alliance with the Labour Party.[64] In contrast, the Labour Party approved the agreement at its annual conference in 1927 without disagreement or discussion, signalling a level of indifference to its implications at this stage, or perhaps a wider indifference to the Co-operative Party as a political organisation.[65]

The Cheltenham Agreement, as it became known, provided structure and direction to local alliances which had emerged due to shared ideological roots and an overlap in their 'rank and file membership'.[66] In addition to its practical benefits, the agreement also reflected the common ground between the parties. This had been emphasised by Alf Barnes during the debate at the Cheltenham Congress, when he had stated that the Labour Party was the only party in parliament which stood for the same principle which underpinned the cooperative movement: 'common ownership of the things essential to life'.[67] The Cheltenham Agreement is hugely significant in marking the beginning of a formal national relationship between

the Co-operative Party and the Labour Party which remains in place today. Whilst the terms of this agreement have been subject to renegotiation, the consistent feature is that the Co-operative Party has continued to retain its identity as a separate political party, and that there is no national affiliation between the Co-operative Party and Labour Party.[68]

The problems this would pose became evident in the organisational debates which continued to take place between the two parties during the 1930s. For example, at its Hastings Conference in 1933, the Labour Party changed financial procedures in constituencies to prevent domination by one organisation and placed a greater financial responsibility upon Constituency Labour Parties.[69] Whilst there is no evidence to suggest that this was in any way targeted at curbing the influence of the Co-operative Party in constituencies, it was to have a significant impact on the electoral alliance between the two parties and the minutes of the Joint Committee of the Co-operative Party and Labour Party became overwhelmingly concerned with the organisational issues which it brought to the fore.[70] The main undercurrent in these discussions was the issue of affiliation. The Labour Party told the Co-operative Party that a way of overcoming the new regulations was for local cooperative societies to affiliate directly to the Labour Party.[71] Such local-level affiliation was already an accepted practice. However, local cooperative societies—many of which were large, financially successful businesses—still made their own decisions as to whether or not to affiliate to a political organisation. For example, the Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society had chosen to affiliate directly to the Labour Party (and not the Co-operative Party) in 1922,[72] but the Co-operative Party's leadership did not want to see all the funds provided by local societies bypassing its local branches in favour of local branches of the Labour Party. Meanwhile, at the national level the Co-operative Party was not affiliated to the Labour Party, and had from the outset made it clear that affiliation was not on the agenda.[73] Indeed, the Co-operative Party remained under the authority of the Co-operative Union in order that their policies would reflect the views of the entire cooperative movement—so the argument ran—and affiliation to the Labour Party would ultimately undermine that authority. Moreover, in 1933 the Co-operative Party was rallying the movement around the issue of taxation of cooperative dividends, and cooperative unity was considered to be essential. Consequently, to prevent dissention inside the cooperative movement there could be no hint that affiliation to the Labour Party was on the agenda.

However, the Labour Party was unimpressed with the Co-operative Party's unwillingness to budge on the question of affiliation. A memo from the Labour representatives on the Joint Committee in 1933 to the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party outlined how it had been anticipated that the increasing 'identity of interests' between the two parties would eventually lead to affiliation.[74] On the other hand, this memo also suggested that the Co-operative Party had been taking advantage of Labour Party constituency organisations to put forward its own parliamentary and local government nominees, thus insinuating that the Co-operative Party was seeking to build up a potentially rival political organisation.[75] This Labour Party concern reflected the aftershocks of the 1931 split in the Labour government and the disaffiliation of the ILP in 1932, heightening sensitivity regarding the Co-operative Party developing as an independent party. Whilst the implications of the ILP split have been addressed, the organisational challenges which dominated the relationship between the Labour Party and the Co-operative Party are rarely mentioned outside cooperative histories.[76] However, an exploration of this unique arrangement contributes to our understanding of the myriad organisational influences on the Labour Party in the twentieth century, and the challenges it faced in developing a unified party that could encompass a range of popular organisations.[77]

Ultimately, the Co-operative Party relied on its electoral alliance with the Labour Party to achieve both parliamentary and local representation. The development of local alliances and the continued growth of the Labour Party meant that by the 1930s securing representation without its assistance was neither a viable nor desirable option. By 1938 it appears that the cooperative movement had realised the contradictory position of its own party. At a meeting of the National Co-operative Authority[78] in November 1938 the chair, Sir Fred Hayward, who was also a member of the Executive of the Co-operative Union, outlined how local cooperative societies and parties had been encouraged to affiliate to local Labour Party organisations whilst nationally the two parties remained unaffiliated. He also highlighted the multiple obligations for Co-operative MPs who were responsible not only to their own Congress but also to their constituencies and to the Labour Party in parliament. Hayward contended that the Co-operative Party had, whether intentionally or not, become part of the Labour Party machine, thus making it virtually impossible to return to the conditions of 1933.[79] Due to the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, a new agreement was not brokered until 1946, when the

cooperative movement was forced into making some concessions—most notably a stipulation that all cooperative candidates had to be individual members of the Labour Party.[80]

Intertwined with the organisational relationship between the Labour Party and the Co-operative Party were parallel tensions over ideology and policy. For, following the crisis of 1931, the Labour Party moved in an increasingly statist direction. *Labour's Immediate Programme*, published in 1937, outlined the measures that the party would implement within one term of government: including the nationalisation of the Bank of England, coal, gas, electricity, land and transport; central economic planning; and social reforms such as improving education, welfare and health services.[81] At the Co-operative Party conference in 1937, Barnes outlined how 'in its main principles of action it corresponds to the Co-operative Party's One Parliament Programme adopted in 1933 and published as the *Britain Reborn* set of pamphlets'.[82] Indeed, the Co-operative Party had also focused on the development of a political programme during the 1930s, and this series of pamphlets complemented Labour's policies by advocating that key industries and services, such as power and transport, should be nationalised.[83]

Although *Britain Reborn* made notional comments about the role of the cooperative movement in restructuring agriculture, the pamphlets as a whole did not provide a clear blueprint for a society arranged on cooperative lines. One reason for this was the political culture in which the Co-operative Party operated during the period 1931 to 1945. In examining the interwar period, Gurney has argued that 'powerful political forces and cultural trends worked against the universalising ambition of co-ops'. He cited the issue of taxation, boycotts by private manufacturers and 'ongoing and vicious attacks' on the principle of dividend by the *Daily Mail* and *Daily Express* as evidence of hostility to the movement.[84] Elsewhere Killingback has demonstrated that during the 1930s cooperative societies were attacked on two fronts; through a political campaign by small shopkeepers and action taken by private enterprise to attack mutual trading.[85] Combined with these direct attacks on the cooperative movement, working people, who represented the bulk of its membership, also suffered throughout the 1930s—a decade of high unemployment and rising consumer prices. Moreover the entire country was confronted with growing tensions internationally throughout the 1930s, culminating in the outbreak of the Second World War. As a result, Whitecross's examination of Co-operative Party conference reports throughout the 1930s and

1940s reveals the high level of importance its leaders placed on creating an environment of unity and cohesion regarding policy. This was due in part to the close political relationship between the Co-operative and Labour Parties and the need to work within Labour's electoral machine, but also reflected an effort to maintain a unified voice within the broad church of the cooperative movement.[86]

The Cooperative Movement and the Labour Government of 1945

The formation of the Labour government in 1945 opened a brief period of new optimism in the British cooperative movement. An article in the *Co-operative Review* crowed that the 'end of the war and the return of Labour Government with full power will mean new horizons for the Co-operative Movement' and provide a 'real opportunity for co-operative development in the new Britain'.[87] Gurney emphasised this enthusiasm in his assessment of the movement in the immediate post-war phase, commenting, 'at the end of World War II, the members of the British cooperative movement were in a buoyant mood'. He added that the movement was hoping to benefit directly from the Labour Party being in power.[88] Despite this initial optimism, Gurney and others have indicated that these expectations were not fulfilled as the cooperative movement was to remain politically isolated during the period of Labour government.[89] This period was indeed marked by both the marginalisation of cooperative ideas in Labour's policies and the exclusion of representatives of the cooperative movement from public bodies such as the Economic Planning Board.[90] As a recent history of the CWS has suggested, 'there was a real absence of strong political support for cooperative ideas when most needed'.[91] However, the absence of support from the Labour Party for cooperative ideas can be explained by factors other than deliberate hostility. First, the complexity of cooperative political identity meant that cooperative methods of ownership were not always advocated by the cooperative movement itself. Second, the structural relationship between the Co-operative and Labour parties meant that the former remained on the periphery and was consequently unable to protect and promote the movement as effectively as it would have liked. Nonetheless, whilst cooperative methods of ownership were indeed marginalised in Labour Party policy, the Co-operative Party did begin to articulate an alternative viewpoint regarding state-socialism that had growing attractions for many.

Already by 1946, public reservations about the Labour Party's focus on nationalisation were beginning to emerge within the Co-operative Party and the broader cooperative movement. Jack Bailey wrote in the Co-operative Party's *Monthly Letter* in June 1946 that 'so little thought has been given in the British Labour Movement to socialist method that nationalisation is the one and only form of social ownership'.[92] He explained that, when asked why the cooperative movement should be expected to be treated differently to private enterprise, the answer was because it *was* different: the key difference between nationalisation and cooperation as forms of social ownership was that nationalisation was achieved by compulsion whilst cooperation was voluntary.[93] At the end of 1946 the Executive Committee of the Co-operative Party began to reconsider its political programme. An article in the *Monthly Letter* noted that many changes had occurred since the publication of its last political programme, *The World We Want*, in 1943: the war had ended and many of the reforms advocated in that programme (social security, a national health service, the nationalisation of coal mines, the Bank of England, electricity and transport) had been implemented by the Labour government.

By 1948 the Co-operative Congress was becoming somewhat critical of Labour's policies, with delegates arguing that the movement needed to clarify its relationship with the state in response to the recasting of national political power and purpose. In his presidential address, A.J. Tapping raised a number of searching questions, including 'where does the movement fit into new forms of planned economy?' Tapping declared that 'although the government bears us some goodwill it also needs to recognise the positive qualities and possibilities of the Co-operative Movement'.[94] The following resolution passed, which echoed the president's address:

> That this Co-operative Congress places on record its gratification at the successes with which the present government has carried out policy for the public control of essential industries and services. It recognises however that further development of the policy of nationalisation must affect sections of the industry in which the Co-operative Movement is already established. It believes that in very large fields of enterprise the Co-operative Movement has established the best method by consumers' organisation of meeting the needs of the people and calls upon the whole Labour Movement to accord to that method a clear and increasingly important place in future schemes of economic and social advance. In order that all sections of the working-class movement may work in harmony to achieve the most efficient method of satisfying consumer need it instructs the National Co-operative Authority

to prepare a full statement of the place which the Co-operative Movement should occupy in developing collectivist economy. This statement after prompt consideration, to be submitted to National Council of Labour for inclusion in the programme at the next General Election.[95]

This resolution marked the first time the movement expressed, through its Co-operative Congress, the need to determine a distinctive political voice. Similarly, at the Co-operative Party Conference that year, a composite resolution stated its belief that a Socialist Britain 'could be achieved by a balanced use of the methods of Nationalisation, Municipalisation and Co-operation'.[96]

In many ways this emphasis on state, municipal and cooperative methods each having a distinct role to play in the restructuring of society, was just an echo of a long-established position expressed, for example, in 1925 by Barnes, then Chairman of the Co-operative Party, when he had stated, 'if we analyse the nationalisation movement, the municipalisation movement and the co-operative movement, we see that for a considerable period there is plenty of room for growth for each other without coming into conflict with another to any serious extent'.[97] However, faced with the reality of the Labour Party's statist interpretation of a socialist society after 1945, the entire cooperative movement (not just the Co-operative Party) was being compelled to reconsider the distinctive contribution of cooperative methods to the achievement of socialism. Initially the nationalisation and welfare programme implemented by the 1945 Labour government did not impinge directly on cooperative business interests. An article by C.W. Fulker, Secretary of the Parliamentary Committee of the Co-operative Union, reflected that the mass of legislation passed during the first parliamentary session had caused little concern for the cooperative movement and that in terms of future legislation there was no sign of clashes on any major points of principle.[98] However, by 1948–49 the Labour Party's extension of nationalisation as a means to socialism was beginning to cause anxiety within the cooperative movement over its potential to impinge on existing cooperative interests.

This anxiety intensified when the Labour Party's plans for a second term were set out in its 1949 policy statement, *Labour Believes in Britain*, outlining a new shopping list of industries for nationalisation, including industrial assurance, sugar, cement and meat wholesaling.[99] However, one of the major providers of industrial assurance was the Co-operative Insurance Society (CIS), which had been an integral part of the cooperative movement since 1867.[100] Both the proposal to

nationalise a cooperatively-owned business and the general ambivalence to the movement reflected in the policy statement frustrated cooperators. Bailey, then secretary of the Co-operative Party, commented in the Co-operative Party's *Monthly Letter* that there was nothing in this policy statement from the Labour Party which would either strengthen or promote cooperation. Instead, he concluded, 'it points to the state as if it were the highest peak of organisation'.[101] This incident, as Gurney has argued, brought tensions between the cooperative movement and the Labour Party to a head.[102]

At the 1949 Co-operative Congress there was a clear attempt to define a response to the Labour Party's proposed programme.[103] Nevertheless, it soon became clear that determining the role of the cooperative movement in a socialist state would be no easy task, as these remarks from T.H. Gill, President of Congress suggested:

> None of us will be prepared to submit to the conception of an all powerful corporate state. On the other hand we are satisfied that the ownership and control of the basic economy of the country must be in the hands of the nation. There is a vast territory in between, and it is necessary that we should know clearly how far public interest is to be protected still further by extensions of public control, and how far freedom will be possible for the co-operative movement to function and develop not only as a corrective to consumer exploitation, but also as a way of life to which people can adhere of their own free will.[104]

Gill deftly summarised the ideological predicament which the cooperative movement faced: it desired the common ownership and control of the nation's economy, but did not want a level of control which would eradicate the free will of the people or inhibit the development of the voluntary cooperative movement. Up until this juncture, the movement had supported the Labour Party's nationalisation plans, which focused on universal services in sectors where cooperatives had only negligible trade interests. However, as a result of these discussions a resolution was unanimously passed encouraging immediate negotiations to be sought with the Labour Party to allow for the development of the cooperative movement and to ensure that the 'co-operative method of voluntary organisation' was recognised as an integral part of the national economy.[105]

A growing interest in intellectual reflection on these issues in the late 1940s was already evident in the publication of a selection of essays on *The Co-operative Movement in Labour Britain*, in 1948. Bailey's essay

in particular, on 'The consumer in politics', made a strong case for the defence of the voluntary principle and provided a further insight into cooperative thinking on the issue.[106] In it, he noted that some socialists viewed the continued existence of voluntary cooperation as unimportant and argued that cooperators must adapt to socialism particularly because 'the Co-operative Movement should be well content if it obtained from the State monopoly powers in the distribution of certain commodities'.[107] Even G.D.H. Cole, in his pamphlet *A Guide to the Elements of Socialism*, published by the Labour Party in 1947, had suggested that one way to overcome the problems between state ownership and cooperation, for instance in the case of milk, would be to give cooperative societies, as agents of a state board, a monopoly over milk retailing.[108] However, according to Bailey, such arguments ignored the voluntary character of the British cooperative movement, 'which neither coerces, nor wishes to be coerced', and, he argued, socialists should 'jealously' preserve voluntary cooperation if they wanted to enlarge and increase freedoms.[109] Similarly, an article in the *New Statesman* in 1949 suggested that there was no future for the cooperative movement unless it abandoned voluntary cooperation and began to act as an agent for the state.[110] In response to this article, Bailey argued that this was clearly a dilemma of the author's own creation, as many fields of the economy should provide scope for various agencies—cooperative, state and private.[111]

Thus British cooperators were strongly opposed to the idea that state-imposed cooperation would enable the movement to find a place within a socialist society: even if the state were to grant full control to the cooperative movement for the distribution of a commodity, this would not be welcomed as it would be at odds with the principle of voluntary association.[112] This deep-rooted significance of the voluntary principle to the wider movement had also been underlined by international issues over the previous decade or so. Thus the proceedings of the 1937 Conference of the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA), held in Paris, had included a discussion of the current application of the Rochdale Principles and stated that 'the idea of obligatory membership of a Co-operative Society never entered into conception of the Rochdale Pioneers, neither in planning their society, or subsequent development'.[113] As in the case of 'political neutrality', the Rochdale Pioneers' statement in favour of 'voluntary and open membership' had taken on new meaning in the context of the 1930s, as the ICA had struggled to deal with Fascist and Nazi takeovers of cooperative movements in Germany, Austria and Italy.[114] At the 1937

conference the ICA executive committee had stressed the need to protect freedom of association in the face of the state's power to impose restrictions and compulsions on cooperatives and their members.[115] As a result, voluntarism had been strongly reinforced as an explicit principle of the cooperative movement and a potential source of tension between the Co-operative and Labour parties.

Despite the increasing realisation within the cooperative movement that it needed to be more proactive in promoting cooperative methods of ownership and control, the scope for cooperative contributions to Labour policy development remained limited. The main weakness was that, due to the structural relationship between the two parties, there was minimal cooperative representation on the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party and at Labour Party Conferences, both of which held important policymaking functions. However, there appears to have been a slight change in the attitude of the Labour Party to the cooperative movement and, contrary to previous assessments, there is evidence that it did begin to take cooperative policy concerns more seriously and to consult with cooperative leaders.[116] An examination of the Research Department records of the Labour Party from 1945 reveal an earlier internal document examining *The Co-operative Movement in a Collectivist Economy*, which had already raised questions regarding its relationship with the cooperative movement:

> The problem that faces the Labour Party at the moment is a difficult one. It must decide in principle whether to conduct the consultations with the co-operative movement a) on the short term basis of the nationalisation projects put forward in the last manifesto, together with a few other relative questions such as milk and coal distribution; or b) on a longer-term basis, involving serious discussion of the place of the movement in a socialist society.[117]

While it had also stated 'there is the very real problem of the voluntary principle of co-operation to be faced and resolved', the overall tone of this document suggests that Labour had for some time been willing to consult more closely with cooperators regarding the nature of their relationship.[118]

Unfortunately little was done before the policy tensions between the Labour and Co-operative parties regarding nationalisation were highlighted during the 1950 General Election campaign by their opponents in the Conservative Party, which published a series of three pamphlets

seeking to 'woo' cooperators using propaganda such as, 'sooner or later they [the Labour Party] mean to nationalise your co-op'.[119] At the 1950 Co-operative Party Conference, chairman William Coldrick reflected that 'it has now become apparent that the Co-operative Movement has become too important to be ignored, even by our political opponents'.[120] Within a few months the cooperative movement was represented at the Dorking Conference in May 1950, held by the Labour Party to discuss future policy. The importance of this conference was noted by the *Co-operative Review*:

> the passing by Congress, with virtual unanimity, of the special report on the place of the Co-operative Movement in a collectivist economy, together with an initiation of policy talks at Dorking by the Labour, Trades Union and Co-operative Movements may mark a new epoch in co-operative participation in the political life of this country.[121]

More significantly, such internal voices were not the only ones to express this opinion. An article from the *New Statesman and Nation*, which was reprinted in the *Co-operative Review*, stated, 'seen in perspective, the Dorking Conference will be remembered as the first occasion on which the Labour Party formally recognised the right of the Co-operative Union to share in the formulation of Socialist Policy'.[122] The *New Statesman* article contended that the Labour Party's lost electoral ground in the General Election of 1950 had changed the atmosphere, leading Labour to realise the effective limits of nationalisation and recognise consumers' importance alongside producers in modern society. In consequence, cooperative ideas and methods might have a greater role to play. However, within little over a year a further General Election in October 1951 left Labour struggling to define its policy on nationalisation and social ownership to such an extent that any last-minute attempts to involve cooperative ideas in its policy programme were likely to be futile. Then, as Rhodes indicated in his study of the Labour–Co-operative relationship, Labour's defeat in 1951 meant there was no immediate need for further discussion of any proposed legislation affecting the cooperative movement. He concluded, 'with the end of the Labour Government a distinct phase in Co-operative-Labour' relations had terminated.[123]

The Co-operative Party did continue to develop its policies on social ownership independently, but this process only served to highlight the internal difficulties of the movement. For example, a much-heralded

policy statement, *The People's Industry—A Statement on Social Ownership*, was published by the National Committee of the Co-operative Party in 1951, emphasising the important contribution voluntary cooperative methods could play in a socialist society.[124] But the limitations under which the Co-operative Party continued to operate were epitomised by the Co-operative Union's response: despite the positive reception of this statement at the 1952 Co-operative Party Conference it was not raised for discussion at the subsequent Congress on the grounds that there had been too little time for the Union to consider it fully. The Union's General Secretary, R. Southern, acknowledged that this decision had led to criticism from many within the movement, and it certainly highlighted the lack of authority the Co-operative Party had in making progressive statements when it could so easily be stifled by the bureaucracy of the Co-operative Union.[125]

Conclusions

This chapter has focused on cooperative political development up to 1951, tracing the protracted birth of the Co-operative Party and its complex, often fractious relationship with the Labour Party. Unfortunately, the political development of the Co-operative Party and the cooperative movement in the second half of the twentieth century has received little scholarly attention. The limited evidence which exists suggests that several of the key elements identified in this essay—namely, cooperative movement ambivalence about political engagement, structural constraints on the Co-operative Party within the movement, the increasing size and power differential between the Co-operative and Labour Parties and ideological differences over the role of the state versus voluntary action—continue to have an impact on labour politics up to the present day, even as the electoral agreement between the Labour and Co-operative parties remains in effect.

From the 1950s Labour and Co-operative party relations were affected by a further issue: cooperatives' declining economic performance. The 'long boom' period of 1945–73 included monumental changes in living standards, consumer behaviour and social structure, all of which had a dramatic impact on retailing—and the cooperative movement struggled to adapt. Between 1957 and 1971, consumer cooperatives saw their retail market share fall by over a third, to less than 8%, while multiple retail chains grew rapidly.[126] Perhaps the most studied aspect of the post-war

cooperative movement is the Co-operative Independent Commission (CIC), established in 1955 to recommend strategies to meet the demands of a rapidly changing commercial environment.[127] Chaired by Labour MP (and future Labour leader) Hugh Gaitskell, the CIC included academics and cooperative leaders as well as Labour's Anthony Crosland. Its report, authored largely by Crosland and published in 1958, argued for wide-spread rationalisation of the movement, along similar lines to growing multiple retailers, and criticised the cooperatives' voluntary, democratic structures as inefficient and outmoded. As Black and others have noted, the CIC report's dismissive attitude to cooperative concerns did not assist the process of implementing its reforms.[128]

Beyond the 1950s the Co-operative Party and its relationship with the Labour Party is woefully under-researched. Studies by Robertson, on the issue of consumer protection, and Stewart, both on the abolition of Resale Price Maintenance in the 1960s and on the Co-operative–Labour relationship during the formation of the Social Democratic Party in the 1970s and 1980s, suggest that there is much more to be learned.[129] Further research may also prove fruitful in analysing the relationship between the Co-operative Party and 'New Labour' under Tony Blair, particularly during the Blair-sponsored establishment of a further Co-operative Commission in 2000–1 following an attempted hostile takeover of the CWS in 1997.[130] It should also be noted that very recent events suggest that cooperative involvement in politics, and the relationship between the Co-operative and Labour parties, remains a subject of some controversy within the movement. In May 2015 The Co-operative Group, successor to the CWS and the UK's largest consumer cooperative, held a vote at its AGM on whether or not to continue its annual subscription to the Co-operative Party's funds. Unusually, the Group's Board remained neutral on the question. In the end the funding was continued, but by a close vote of 55% to 45%.[131]

As this chapter has shown, the relationship between the cooperative movement, the Co-operative Party, and the Labour Party is complicated and unique. While the cooperative movement's entry into formal politics in 1917 may have ended the debate over political neutrality, debate over the purpose of the Co-operative Party and its alliance with the Labour Party continued to divide the movement. The Co-operative Party maintained its separate identity from Labour even as it struggled to develop a strong voice of its own, hampered by the movement's internal disunity and the Co-operative Party's status as a department of the Co-operative

Union. Within the Labour Party, cooperative political aims remained on the periphery and structural barriers between the two parties limited cooperative input, even when the Co-operative Party strengthened its policy agenda. Nonetheless, the Co-operative Party and the wider cooperative movement were important alternative threads woven amongst the diverse, multilayered organisational and ideological influences on the Labour Party. Although it was the weaker voice, the cooperative movement's ongoing effort to push for change through voluntary, civil society action represented a distinct alternative to the increasingly statist tendency of Labour Party thinking in the twentieth century.

NOTES

1. On the business history of cooperatives, see J.F. Wilson, A. Webster and R. Vorberg-Rugh, *Building Co-operation: A Business History of the Co-operative Group, 1863–2013* (Oxford, 2013); P. Battilani and H.G. Schröter, *The Cooperative Business Movement, 1950 to the Present* (Cambridge, 2012) and a special issue, 'The business of co-operation: national and international dimensions since the nineteenth century', *Journal of Business History*, 54, 6 (2012), pp. 825–1021. Other recent studies include A. Webster, L. Shaw and R. Vorberg-Rugh (eds), *Mainstreaming Co-operation: An Alternative for the Twenty-first Century?* (Manchester, 2016); A. Webster et al. (eds), *The Hidden Alternative: Co-operative Values, Past, Present and Future* (Manchester, 2011); L. Black and N. Robertson (eds), *Taking Stock: Consumerism and the Co-operative Movement in Modern British History* (Manchester, 2009); and N. Robertson, *The Co-operative Movement and Communities in Britain, 1914–1960: Minding their Own Business* (Farnham, 2010).
2. A. Bonner, *British Co-operation* (Manchester, 1961), p. 309, states that in a survey by the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) in 1934 the British cooperative movement was the only movement that had a political party of its own. Six national movements had close relations with socialist parties, and 39 had no organic relations, but all were seeking to influence legislation. For resources on the global cooperative movement today, see the ICA website, www.ica.coop. The Co-operative Party remained a department of the Co-operative Union (CU) until 2005.

3. See for example P. Readman, 'The state of twentieth-century British political history', *Journal of Policy History*, 21, 3 (2009), pp. 219–38. This article provides a broad overview but makes no reference to the Co-operative Party. The most recent book-length study of the Co-operative Party remains T.F. Carbery, *Consumers in Politics: A History and General Review of the Co-operative Party* (Manchester, 1969).

4. A separate Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society (SCWS) was established in 1868, and the Co-operative Insurance Society was jointly owned by the two Wholesales from 1913. See J. Kinlock and N. Butt, *History of the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society Limited* (Glasgow, 1981).

5. Report of National Emergency Conference (Westminster, 17–18 October 1917), quoted in A. Barnes, *The Political Aspect of Co-operation* (Manchester, 1926), pp. 34–5.

6. The Independent Labour Party (ILP) disaffiliated from the Labour Party in July 1932; see K. Laybourn, 'The ILP and the Second Labour Government, c. 1929–1931: the move towards revolutionary change', in J. Shepherd, J. Davies and C. Wrigley (eds), *The Second Labour Government, 1929–1931: A Reappraisal* (Manchester, 2012); and G. Cohen, *The Failure of a Dream: The Independent Labour Party from Disaffiliation to World War II* (London, 2007).

7. N. Robertson, '"A union of forces marching in the same direction?": the relationship between the Co-operative and Labour parties, 1918–39', in M. Worley (ed.), *The Foundations of the British Labour Party: Identities, Cultures and Perspectives, 1900–1939* (Surrey, 2009) and N. Robertson, 'The political dividend: Co-operative Parties in the Midlands, 1917–39', in M. Worley (ed.), *Labour's Grass Roots: Essays on the Activities of Local Labour Parties and Members, 1918–1945* (Aldershot, 2005).

8. M. Francis, *Ideas and Policies under Labour, 1945–1951* (Manchester, 1997), pp. 83–9; K. Manton, 'The Labour Party and retail distribution, 1919–1951', *Labour History Review*, 73, 3 (2008), p. 274.

9. Manton, 'The Labour Party', p. 274, and K. Manton, 'Playing both sides against the middle: The Labour Party and the wholesaling industry, 1919–1951', *Twentieth Century British History*, 18, 3 (2007), pp. 311–12.

10. Co-operative Party, *The Organisation of the Co-operative Party* (1953), p. 5. The original Clause 3a read, 'To secure for the producers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry, and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible, upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service.' See Labour Party Constitution of 1918, in P. Stansky (ed.), *The Left and War: The British Labour Party and World War I* (Oxford, 1969), p. 327.

11. Lesson notes on the history of the Co-operative Party, Lesson II—The Philosophy underlying the Co-operative Movement, p. 5. National Co-operative Archive (NCA), Manchester, CPY/9/1/3/2.

12. Manton, 'Playing both sides', p. 311.

13. On the Rochdale Pioneers, see NCA, '£28 that changed the world', online resource, www.archive.coop/hive/28-that-changed-the-world.

14. For a review of pre-Rochdale cooperation see Wilson, Webster and Vorberg-Rugh, *Building Co-operation*, pp. 24–33.

15. Before the First World War women's participation in cooperative governance was often constrained by local rules which restricted membership to one adult per family unit; see R. Vorberg-Rugh, '"The unit of the Co-operative movement … is a woman": gender and the development of the co-operative business model in Britain', in Wilson, Shaw and Vorberg-Rugh (eds), *Mainstreaming Co-operation*.

16. See *Laws and Objects of the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers* (1844), NCA, www.rochdalepioneersmuseum.coop/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/REPS-Laws-and-Objects-1844.pdf ; see also Wilson, Webster and Vorberg-Rugh, *Building Co-operation*, pp. 34–42.

17. G.D.H. Cole, *A Century of Co-operation* (Manchester, 1944), pp. 72–3.

18. Cole, *A Century of Co-operation*, p. 73.

19. On nineteenth-century cooperators in Parliament, see Cole, *A Century of Co-operation*, pp. 310–11, and Carbery, *Consumers in Politics*, p. 4.

20. Comparative studies on local cooperative societies and their political actions are few, particularly for the years before 1914. For the period 1914–60, see Robertson, *The Co-operative Movement and Communities*, pp. 155–80.

21. For a recent study of a British worker cooperative, see A. Bibby, *All Our Own Work: The Co-operative Pioneers of Hebden Bridge and Their Mill* (London, 2015).

22. The phrase originated in a speech by Lord Rosebery to the 1890 Co-operative Congress, and was widely used throughout the twentieth century. See *Co-operative Congress Report* (Manchester, 1890), p. 6.

23. *Co-operative Congress Report* (1901), p. 279. Consumer cooperatives were the dominant form of cooperative society in Britain; however, there were also many producer (or worker) cooperatives as well. For example see NCA, 'The workers who ran their own mill', www.archive.coop/hive/the-workers-who-ran-their-own-mill.

24. *Co-operative Congress Report* (1901), p. 279; J.B. Jefferys, *Retail Trading in Britain, 1850–1950* (Cambridge, 1954), p. 19.

25. P. Gurney, *Co-operative Culture and the Politics of Consumption in England, 1870–1930* (Manchester, 1996), p. 23.

26. The Industrial and Provident Societies Acts regulated cooperatives from 1852; see NCA, 'Acting on principle: how cooperatives became legal', www.archive.coop/hive/acting-on-principle. The Parliamentary Committee was reorganised as the Joint Parliamentary Committee in 1892, to include representatives from the Wholesales as well as the Co-operative Union.

27. Carbery, *Consumers in Politics*, p. 4.

28. See M.J. Winstanley, *The Shopkeeper's World, 1830–1914* (Manchester, 1983).

29. Carbery, *Consumers in Politics*, p. 5. The Women's Co-operative Guild also encouraged cooperative women to stand for local Boards of Guardians and other administrative bodies.

30. *Co-operative Congress Report* (1897), p. 6.

31. *Co-operative Congress Report* (1897), p. 138.

32. Carbery, *Consumers in Politics*, pp. 6–7.

33. For an excellent study of free trade in Britain, which includes the cooperative movement in its analysis, see F. Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation* (Oxford, 2008). Co-operative Congresses also passed resolutions in support of particular political positions, such as full adult suffrage and old age pensions, without endorsing specific parties.

34. See for example, letters to the editor in the *Co-operative News* (6 June, 1903), p. 675; (27 June, 1903), pp. 796–7.

35. See *Co-operative News* (1903), pp. 856, 1080, 1018, 1102, 1147, 1182, 1201, 1279, 1342, 1369, 1427, 1482, 1522, 1565.
36. *Co-operative Congress Report* (1904), p. 112.
37. See T. Adams, 'The formation of the Co-operative Party reconsidered', *International Review of Social History* 32 (1987), pp. 48–68, quotation from p. 54.
38. Carbery, *Consumers in Politics*, pp. 10–11.
39. K. Manton, 'The Labour Party and the Co-op, 1918–58', *Historical Research*, 82, 218 (2009), pp. 756–78, quotation from p. 769.
40. Carbery, *Consumers in Politics*, pp. 12–14.
41. *Co-operative Congress Report* (1913), pp. 492, 503.
42. *Co-operative Congress Report* (1917), pp. 561–2, 569.
43. A.L. Bowley, *Prices and Wages in the UK, 1914–20* (Oxford, 1921).
44. *Co-operative Congress Report* (1915), p. 696, and *Co-operative Congress Report* (1919), p. 742.
45. See Wilson, Webster and Vorberg-Rugh, *Building Co-operation*, pp. 152–65.
46. For a discussion of the war's importance in the Co-operative Party's establishment, see: Carbery, *Consumers in Politics*, pp. 16–23; Cole, *Century of Co-operation*, pp. 315–20; S. Pollard, 'The foundation of the Co-operative Party', in A. Briggs and J. Saville (eds), *Essays in Labour History 1886–1923* (London, 1971); Adams, 'Formation of the Co-operative Party'; Pollard, 'The Co-operative Party—reflections on a re-consideration', *International Review of Social History* 32 (1987), pp. 167–73; and Wilson, Webster and Vorberg-Rugh, *Building Co-operation*, pp. 150–69.
47. 'Co-operation & Profiteering', *Bolton Co-operative Record* (November 1917), p. 15.
48. The Women's Co-operative Guild also worked closely with women's organisations across the labour movement, through the Standing Joint Committee of Industrial Women's Organisations, established in 1916.
49. L.M. Barnett, *British Food Policy during the First World War* (Boston, 1985), p. 128.
50. See War Emergency Workers' National Committee collections (LP/WNC), Labour History Archive and Study Centre (LHASC), Manchester.

51. WNC collections, Box 8, File 1, LHASC.

52. Cole, *Century of Co-operation*, p. 320.

53. Cole, *Century of Co-operation*, pp. 321–2.

54. Co-operative Parliamentary Representation Committee minutes (January 9, 1918), NCA, CPY/2/1/1.

55. Cole, *Century of Co-operation*, p. 319.

56. These were A. Barnes (East Ham South), T. Henderson (Glasgow Tradeston), A.V. Alexander (Sheffield Hillsborough) and R.C. Morrison (Tottenham North).

57. Carbery, *Consumers in Politics*, pp. 29–30.

58. Carbery, *Consumers in Politics*, p. 28; see also B. Smith and G. Ostergaard, *Constitutional Relations between the Labour and Co-operative Parties: An Historical Review* (London, *c.*1960), p. 7.

59. Cole, *A Century of Co-ope*ration, p. 317.

60. Joint Committee of Labour Party and Co-operative Party (1925–39; total range available), Labour Party Archive (LPA), LHASC.

61. *Co-operative Congress Report* (1927), p. 94. The defined powers of the joint subcommittee were subject to the confirmation of the two national executives.

62. *Co-operative Congress Report* (1927), p. 94.

63. *Co-operative Congress Report* (1927), p. 94.

64. *Co-operative Congress Report* (1927), p. 433.

65. Rhodes, *Co-operative-Labour Relations*, p. 31.

66. Smith, *Constitutional Relations*, p. 4.

67. *Co-operative Congress Report* (1927), p. 433.

68. Co-operative Party, *Party Support Handbook*, Section G, 'National Agreement between the Labour Party and the Co-operative Party' (2003). See http://party.coop/the-rule-book/.

69. Rhodes, *Labour-Co-operative Relations*, p. 38. Rhodes suggest that the purpose of this was twofold: to prevent domination of the trades unions whilst encouraging constituency Labour Parties to mobilise support by recruiting of individual membership.

70. Joint Committee of the Labour Party and Co-operative Party, LPA. Prior to 1933 the Joint Committee met quarterly and often lapsed longer than this. From 1933 there was a significant increase in the number of meetings taking place discussing primarily organisation.

71. Joint Committee of the Labour Party and Co-operative Party, Minutes of Meeting with Labour Party Representative of the Joint Committee, 25 April 1933, LPA.

72. See J. Attfield, *With Light of Knowledge: A Hundred Years of Education in the Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society, 1877–1917* (London, 1981), pp. 28–35.

73. CU, *Report of the First National Conference of the Co-operative Party* (Manchester, 1920), p. 10.

74. Joint Committee of Labour Party and Co-operative Party/Labour Party Memorandum NEC 20 December 1933, LPA.

75. Joint Committee of Labour Party and Co-operative Party/Labour Party Memorandum NEC 20 December 1933, LPA.

76. See Cohen, *The Failure of a Dream*, and Laybourn, 'The ILP and the Second Labour Government'.

77. For a full exploration of the organisational challenges between the Co-operative Party and the Labour Party, see A.F. Whitecross, 'Co-operative Commonwealth or New Jerusalem? The Co-operative Party and the Labour Party, 1931–1951' (PhD thesis, University of Central Lancashire, 2015).

78. Created in 1932, the National Co-operative Authority was an effort to create greater coordination across cooperative organisations and offer a more unified national voice; its members included representatives of the Co-operative Union, the Wholesales, the Co-operative Party and auxiliary organisations. See Wilson, Webster and Vorberg-Rugh, *Building Co-operation*, p. 196 and Whitecross, 'Co-operative Commonwealth', pp. 68–91.

79. CU minutes, National Co-operative Authority, 3 November 1938, NCA.

80. For the Agreement in full see J. Bailey, *Facing the Future Together* (Manchester, 1946), pp. 63–6.

81. Worley, *Labour inside the Gate*, p. 194.

82. *Co-operative Party Annual Conference Report* (1937), p. 10.

83. Co-operative Party, *Britain Reborn: No 1 Power and Fuel*, *Britain Reborn: No 2 Transport*, *Britain Reborn: No 3 The Countryside*, *Britain Reborn: No 4 Buy British*, *Britain Reborn: No 5 Men and Money*, *Britain Reborn: No 6 Work for All* (Manchester, 1931).

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Working-Class Women Activists: Citizenship at the Local Level

Ruth Davidson

In the first four decades of the twentieth century the meaning and practice of citizenship were in transition as a consequence of the struggle for, and subsequent staged attainment of, the equalisation of the franchise for men and women. The interwar years in particular have been characterised as a period when the party system was relatively weak with a strong associational culture that encouraged an active citizenship, and when social reform was possible to enact locally.[1] Such conditions could underpin a radical reforming agenda that emphasised local accountability and engagement in civic society.

How women, most especially working-class women, were integrated into these processes is less clear. Middle-class women were from the late Victorian period part of a reforming culture that sought to reshape political and social structures.[2] Working-class women activists were part of these political processes and there have been some significant reassessments of their roles, especially in suffrage history.[3] A more in-depth assessment across a wider geographical area, different types of activism and a broader period has yet to be undertaken. How did the working-class woman activist represent herself politically? What were her political

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and social reform ambitions? How different was she from the middle-class woman activist, especially in areas of gender equality? And how did these factors vary across time and region? This is a wide-ranging topic and the level of detail required are beyond the scope of one essay; however, this chapter will start the process and highlight a range of themes that appear significant for further investigation.

Interest in the field of civil society, and its contribution to the development of social well-being, has been increasingly explored by historians. For John Garrard, that civil society was filled with a wide range of voluntary and broadly self-regulating organisations was a fundamental part of training for participation in democratic processes. In this sense, civil society helped to produce 'a generalised liberal consensus, a passionate desire for full citizenship, an ability to articulate it, and advance interests after, even before, admission'.[4] Garrard has argued that in terms of access to civil society working-class women were 'markedly more impoverished' compared to middle-class women and working-class men. Nevertheless, he reflected that the 'vibrancy of civil infrastructure' meant that significant pockets of organised activity were still available to them.[5] As a result, from the late nineteenth century small numbers of working-class women were engaged in much the same types of public work as their middle-class peers. They were involved in voluntary organisations that focused on home visiting, health and education; they were elected onto School Boards, as Poor Law Guardians (PLGs) and onto district and borough councils; they were co-opted as members of council committees, particularly during and after the First World War; and they were appointed as Justices of the Peace (JPs). Unfortunately, the motivations and activities of many of these women are lost to the public record. For example, in Penge in 1896 Gertrude Furness, the wife of a decorator, was elected to the Croydon Board of Guardians and served on a range of committees, including workhouse visiting and general purposes, before retiring from the board after three years, leaving little trace. That local studies can uncover such women suggests that beyond the more well-known figures there are a swathe of others less remarked upon. However, in order to begin to uncover the motivations for such activism it is to the more well-known that we must look first.

Radical Women

Moderate Labour activists, according to Duncan Tanner, shared 'Nonconformity, a radical family tradition, and personal experience of cultural or economic deprivation'.[6] While Tanner drew these conclusions from

an exploration of Labour's male leadership, the backgrounds of working-class women activists reflect similar influences. Certainly many came from radical families. Valerie Hall noted of North-East miners' wives that many of the activists were inspired by family tradition.[7] In Lees, near Oldham, Ethel Brierley joined the union through family pressure: 'It was as well to be in the union … my mother put me in it.'[8] Cissy Foley was also part of an activist family: her father 'disappeared for weeks … stumping the country of behalf of Home Rule agitation'.[9] Amie Hicks and Julia Varley, two leading socialist women were, as Hannam and Hunt have noted, daughter and great-granddaughter, respectively, of Chartists.[10] Margaret Bondfield, the first Labour female cabinet minister, noted in her autobiography that her father had been a member of the Chard Political Union and had led an Anti-Corn-Law League procession through the town.[11]

Anne Summers has argued that many women saw their political action as putting their Christian conviction into practice.[12] Bondfield's father's radicalism was deeply intertwined with his faith as a Congregationalist, something his daughter shared. Her language reflected this in a speech in the Albert Hall in 1924, in which she condemned 'this habit of acting on the lower motive … [but] the Party remembered its old traditions and rose to the occasion'.[13] For Elizabeth Andrews, Welsh Labour Party woman's organiser, her activism was rooted in both the harshness of coalmining and her strong Nonconformist faith, noting 'that great principle in Christianity—That we are our brother's keeper.'[14] This principle underpinned her conception of political action: 'We were not only a political party, but a great Movement concerned about human personalities and their well-being.'[15] Phoebe Cusden, Reading councillor and JP, argued to her mother that 'a Christian who is also a socialist is a much more consistent follower of the Master than an individualist'.[16] There was evangelism in many women's language. Sarah Reddish, as Gillian Scott has noted, dwelt upon the 'large Socialistic vision of a new life which filled her mind', and on the 'sacred duty of each to labour for and promote the highest good of society, and that of society to promote the highest good of each individual comprising it'.[17] This wider spiritual mission was also inflected by gender. Rose Davies, Aberdare councillor, noted 'woman's special function, the Care of Life … the great call of today is for Love not Hate, Life not Death, and it is to that call that the True spirit of woman always answers.'[18] The Croydon Labour Party woman's officer, Margaret Gibbs, emphasised 'Peace, Liberty, Equality—let them stand and let us stand for them', and continued that these were 'particularly the work of women. We, who are the mothers of the race, must also be the mothers

of "The Cause"; … must nourish and cherish the germ of that Idea which shall remake the world.'[19]

Economic deprivation was also a central theme in these women's lives, and a spur to action. For some it was their experience of work. Stephen King noted of the first generation of Bolton activist women that the 'particular impact of such conditions upon women is perhaps testified by the emergence of Sarah Reddish, Cissy Foley, Alice Collinge and other Bolton women at the forefront of important organizations'.[20] Selina Cooper first spoke out against the demeaning and unhygienic conditions women endured in the mill.[21] Ada Nield Chew eventually resigned 'in an abortive attempt to prevent the dismissal of the other girls' after she had spoken out against unfair treatment at work.[22] For women it was not just the harshness of the industrial workplace but also the grind of bringing work home. As Ada Nield Chew recalled, 'I have myself, repeatedly, five nights a week, besides Saturday afternoons … regularly taken four hours, at least, work home with me.'[23] For many the experience of poverty and social injustice, both in their own family and in the community around them, was formative. Lucy Cox cited her parent's hardships as part of her political impetus.[24] Catherine Nealon from Croydon recalled the incident that first got her involved in social reform. She was living in an industrial town in Lancashire, when she 'saw a baby sucking water from a bottle because there was no milk in the house. The father had gone to prison for six weeks and the mother was out looking for work leaving the eldest girl, aged twelve, in charge of the family.'[25]

Grounding in such everyday constraints meant that working-class women activists felt embedded in their communities and, whilst there are few examples of them using radical language, they were very careful to represent themselves as part of the world of ordinary women. The first female JP in Brighton, and PLG for 13 years, Mrs E.J. Smith, commented in 1920 that 'I have no pretentions as to birth or special qualifications! I was born of working-class parents at Horsham in Sussex and had nothing but the ordinary school education … working for my living in various ways till my marriage.'[26] In the same article she reinforced her working-class status by noting how she found time 'to keep my home going, and make my own blouses etc., in spite of my public work'.[27] Mrs Hood, a JP and PLG from Enfield, noted how she did all her own housework but also fitted in a committee most days.[28] Mrs Simpson in her campaign to become a PLG noted that 'I am nobody of importance … I am doing all a working-class mother can to make life easier and happier for the poor and infirm of our own.'[29]

Alice Arnold was one who more explicitly stated her affiliation with 'the people': when campaigning for playing fields she took an assertive approach and argued that

> I am one of those people who have always held the opinion that everything on this earth should be for the benefit of the whole nation and not for a select few. I am prepared to go further; if we cannot get land at a reasonable price I am prepared to confiscate it, and return it to the right owners, the common people. We cannot have an A1 Nation when the good things of this world are kept from the mass of the people.[30]

This identification paid off for, despite being a somewhat maverick Labour councillor in Coventry, she was able to gain her seat because she was such a familiar local figure, particularly in the area containing the ordinance works, where she was a regular visitor. As Cathy Hunt has noted, she became the first Labour Alderman in 1931 and in 1936 was the longest-serving Labour member.[31] Karen Hunt has also argued for the importance of local roots. For Edith Chorlton, who began delivering papers at the age of 10, it was stated that 'Her strength of character, and ability to gain and hold the respect of the people who have known her from childhood is responsible for this attainment, while her intimate knowledge of the needs and the condition of this congested area is invaluable in her work.'[32] In Leeds, as Sylvia Dunkley has observed, Councillor Ada Hewitt, 'who lived in the overcrowded and decaying area of Holbeck … [, was] well aware of the intolerable conditions that working-class women had to grapple with … poorly ventilated back-to-back houses which lacked any garden or yard, wet clothes … would be strewn around the living room'.[33] In Exeter, her roots made Edith Splatt an invaluable representative of her community, excelling at detailed local work as she lived in a little terrace house. As she observed, 'Because there are so few of us women on the Council, people naturally come to us from the thirteen wards all over the city … for advice or help on their domestic needs.'[34]

Building Social Reform from the Ground Up

A core part of the radical agenda, as Pat Thane has explored in looking at local politics between 1880 and 1914, was that change was possible through action at the local level.[35] As Birte Siim has outlined, active citizenship was the key to democratic inclusion and such practices could be found 'in a number of political arenas, from neighbourhoods, the

workplace, informal organisations, social movements, and the welfare state to formal political organisations'.[36] Women were integral to the execution of this agenda. A range of voluntary endeavours and statutory opportunities, such as positions on School Boards, Poor Law Boards and on new tiers of local government, opened up opportunities for women from the latter part of the 1800s to engage in welfare activism within their communities.[37] Middle-class women, with the time and financial resources, were in the vanguard of this work. Nevertheless, working-class women, supported by organisations such as the Women's Co-operative Guild, the Independent Labour Party (ILP) and trade union bodies which were keen that a working-class voice should be heard locally, were also able to become involved in increasing numbers. The insights that working-class women activists brought to this work not only buttressed the social reform agenda but also, by emphasising mutual self-help and local democracy, offered an alternative to top-down welfare reform.

Women's social reform work has been characterised as being 'maternalistic', which Seth Koven and Sonya Michel have attributed to discourses that invoked 'women's capacity to mother and applied to society as a whole the values they attached to that role: care, nurturance and morality'.[38] Yet, as Marjanna Niemi has argued, it is questionable whether maternalism alone is sufficient to comprehend what was a complex mix of intentions and motivations.[39] Certainly, the examples of working-class activists, whether married or single, were not about dictating to working-class families how to live their lives. They sought to represent the working-class woman's voice in the development of services, to humanise the services and to provide services that were already available to her middle-class peers. Furthermore, in doing so they had an impact on the ethos of public bodies by attempting to make these institutions more accountable. They encouraged a sense that these services were what was due rather than charitable doles, and they challenged the perception that the home was a private domain outside the scope of public intervention.

The involvement of women in civic activism reoriented the way services were constructed and delivered. Time and again women saw the human consequences at the sharp end of policies and sought to soften the harshness of their imposition. There is no doubt that poverty and inequality still existed in many areas, but this activism certainly began to chip away at institutional inequities. Patricia Hollis noted the impact women had on the management of the Poor Law, especially the positive improvement that the implementation of boarding-out, cottage homes and fostering

had on the lives of workhouse children.[40] Female working-class Guardians were evident in this. In Croydon in 1902, when there was a motion for the return of barrack schools for the 'In and Out Children', Mrs Williams, a widowed boot and shoe dealer, mounted a staunch defence. She

> could not congratulate the committee on the recommendation … to act as the committee suggested would be a retrograde step … the cottage homes … [were] a great step in the advance of the children in their health and would also lead to greater independence on the part of the children.[41]

In Blackburn Mrs Bury noted, 'before women sat on our Board all girls with sad histories had to come alone before a large body of men. Now, after I had pleaded with the Board and got a resolution passed, the women Guardians and matrons dealt with the cases in a separate room.'[42] They could also fight the corner for individuals who had come up against bureaucracy, as Hannah Mitchell recalled of her time on the Public Assistance Committee: 'I could hold my own on a relief committee. I knew just how much food could be bought out of the allowance, knew the cost of children's clothes and footwear, could tell at a glance if the applicant was in ill health.' She continued that she knew to question when 'the sick note said "bronchitis" as it often did, when the high colour and sunken features clearly indicated tuberculosis'.[43]

As councillors, working-class women looked for practical solutions at the local level and sought to work constructively on the council. As Elizabeth Andrews stated, 'It is the PLODDERS that do the work of the WORLD, not the SHOUTERS', and added that the 'work of the Council is done day in and day out in a quiet but constructive way'.[44] Selina Cooper noted that it was only by being more cooperative that she was able to get onto the Visiting Committee.[45] However, it could take a while to get onto certain committees. In Exeter Edith Splatt fought to get onto the Estates Committee only finally succeeding in 1931, ten years after first becoming a councillor.[46] Alice Arnold, Hunt notes, similarly was concerned with local housing: 'As Chair of the Public Health Committee between 1931 and 1934, she was centrally involved in the city's slum clearance programme.'[47] Her aim was for 'airy, light houses on a planned estate'.[48] Activist women tended to assess civic issues from a woman's perspective. Hannah Mitchell said that parks 'to me meant trees, flowers and rest; to my male colleagues they seemed to mean football, bowling greens and tennis courts'. She continued: 'Tired mothers who

had trundled prams and "go-carts" all afternoon should not have to drag them home again before they could have a cup of tea. There is nothing in the world simpler to make than a cup of tea, and yet few things seem more difficult to get.'[49] In Exeter Edith Splatt argued against bowling pavilions for she 'could not support these proposals while there were needs more urgently required for the welfare of the community, such as a footpath of the south side of Blackboy Road … The children of Belmont were more in need of a shelter in the playing ground there than were the bowlers.'[50]

Whilst working constructively on public bodies, women activists were nevertheless keen that those bodies were managed properly and made accountable to the people they served; and they were not afraid to say so. In Croydon in October 1902, a contentious issue was the appointment of the son of a fellow Guardian as the Collector for the Poor Law Board. This appointment was hotly debated, with all the women voting against it and Mrs Williams challenging the male councillors: 'I should like to ask how many of the Guardians have been canvassed by Mr Stevens for his son.'[51] Neither did she let it drop. In November 1903, she brought to the committee's attention the failure of Mr Stevens's son to fulfil his collection duties, a failure which led to his censure by the board.[52] In Wolverhampton Emma Sproson caused uproar by exposing financial irregularities in the local fever hospital, something that caused her censure by the Labour Party and ultimately to the loss of her seat.[53] Lily Carling, JP, a labourer's wife in Bradford, when talking about reformatories noted the change of policies since the women 'developed a conscientious objection to signing away the best portion of a child's life into a place we are never allowed to see'.[54] Hannah Mitchell felt that health services were too expensive for the results obtained: 'Women as housewives have to do a lot with a little money. Public bodies, still mostly composed of men, seem to do little with a lot of money.'[55] Edith Splatt was elected as part of a slate of candidates put forward by the Exeter Ratepayers' Association (RA) 'to challenge the waste and profligacy' of the council.[56] She argued that the 'present serious financial position of the country calls for very careful reflection' and they needed to achieve the 'best possible value for the money'.[57] Elizabeth Andrews stated that Labour's aim was 'full value for the rates we pay'.[58]

In 1918, the Maternity and Child Welfare Act, a piece of permissive legislation, was introduced with a list of over 18 issues which it was felt should be addressed, but crucially it was left to local bodies to implement the legislation and to choose which aspects they wished to pursue.[59] The result of this was that across the country different levels of service

provision were established, some run entirely by the local authority, others by voluntary groups or a mixture of the two. As Lara Mark's work has shown, the political complexion of an area, the presence of activist women and traditions of voluntarism could all play a part in determining the shape of the services.[60] When it was working-class and Labour women who were involved in developing facilities it is clear that they did not conceive of voluntarism as an end in itself, but part of a process of encouraging the municipality to expand provision and ensure affordable and quality services for the working-class mother. In 1926 in Croydon Mrs Duncan Harris made this point with regard to convalescent work: '

> The Association had always started developments on a voluntary basis and then handed them over to the Public Health department … it was too important a responsibility to be entirely in the hands of a voluntary association.'[61]

Sarah Reddish set up an Infant Welfare Centre in 1908. In 1906 she had visited Ghent, seen a house where mothers could leave babies, and was impressed enough to get the help of the Medical Officer of Health (MOH) in Bolton where in 1908, under Women's Co-operative Guild auspices, a similar centre opened. The involvement of working-class women at the heart of this clinic meant they were sensitive to the approach they took, noting that 'the advice of a neighbour who has reared six and knows something about it has to be contradicted with caution'.[62] A similar sensitivity was demonstrated in Croydon where the Croydon Mother and Infant Welfare Association (CMIWA) had been set up initially by the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) during the First World War, and maintained a balance of middle- and working-class executive committee members. In one instance they had consulted working-class women in setting up a home-help scheme, and been told that

> middle-class people might engage an unknown home-help. But the poorer people would be very unwilling to admit an unknown home-help to their home and, until they did know her, would worry so as to undo the good of the help. They would rather depend on the in-and-out neighbour or get themselves up too soon.[63]

They had listened to this advice and only employed as home-helps local women whom the mothers would already know: it rapidly became a successful service.[64]

In Barnsley immediately after the First World War Mrs Wright, a co-opted member of the Public Health Committee, argued strongly for the need for a maternity home so that working-class mothers could receive the same level of care and rest as middle-class women. She challenged the prejudices of middle-class male councillors who felt that women should give birth in the home:

> She went round the table, addressed each member in turn and demanded to know where his wife had spent her laying-in period which it was generally accepted should last at least ten days. Most of the wives had been confined at home but had the assistance of live-in private nurses and of domestic servants. Mrs Wright then recalled her own experience when … she had struggled to nurse a new-born baby while the older children rampaged around her.[65]

Her daughter added that two years later Barnsley had a maternity home. In Coventry initial cooperation between different women's organisations quickly broke down with the middle-class women setting up their own voluntary clinic. The working-class women set up their own clinic too, but pressed for a municipal service and, in 1917, once the municipality was prepared to take this on, their Care of Maternity clinic ceased and they focused on running a nursery and maternity home.[66]

Whilst basic antenatal facilities were often provided by local authorities, a key role for female activists was trying to expand the range of the services. Home-helps were seen as critical and yet many local authorities failed to provide them. The privations suffered by ordinary women were brought vividly to life as Mrs Layton noted to the Local Government Board:

> I specially pressed for Home Helps, and I told of how one of my patients was left alone in the house for two days at her confinement, with a little child of three in her bedroom. The child ran downstairs and poured paraffin on the fire … No mother should be left alone at such times.[67]

Working-class activists were also involved in the provision of services within the clinics. In Coventry, Marjorie Lodge notes, 'working-class helpers were fairly common in Coventry baby clinics'.[68] One, Mrs Cowdrill, felt she understood working-class women's issues as when her husband had come back from the war she had 'slept and cooked and everything in a bedroom'.[69] The involvement of working-class women ensured that the

service provision was empathetic to women's needs and the evidence from Croydon would suggest that these services were well utilised.

Rather than castigating the working-class housewife and seeking individualist solutions to the problems of insanitary conditions in the home, working-class woman activists looked for collective solutions that made the municipality more accountable for their improvement. Welfare services thus began to complicate the divide between the private and public sphere. The equation of the home with a place of work was a constant trope amongst working-class women: even those women who had no paid employment described themselves as workers, arguing that they therefore deserved the rights of collective representation and action that male workers received. Indeed, the problems of the home required collective action and could not be resolved individually. Ada Nield Chew reflected this when she noted that 'their daily battle with dirt is waged' but also 'the impossibility of individual women in individual homes dealing with such a huge and vital a problem as this. To settle this in which is woven the health and well-being of the race, women will have to act together, in association.'[70] Elizabeth Andrews also spoke in a similar vein. 'No woman can hope to combat dirt and disease under these conditions … The Home is the Woman's workshop. It is the most important workshop in the land, so it is up to us to see that the Homes of the Workers will get the legislation and attention they deserve.'[71]

Such changes were controversial. The idea of pit-head baths designed to relocate the filth of the mine from the home back to the workplace undercut notions of who was responsible for washing and met resistance amongst both working-class women and men. As Elizabeth Andrews noted, 'we in Wales are much slaves to custom' and she challenged the objections to pit-head baths, noting 'many sad cases of suffering among women as a result of doing this job'.[72] In urban areas women councillors also looked to take aspects of the domestic grind out of the home and pressed for wash-houses. As Karen Hunt has noted, Edith Chorlton in Manchester

> laughingly remarked that she doubted if any member of the [council's baths and wash-houses] committee had served a better apprenticeship to the wash-tub than she had—certainly no member has shown a keener interest than Mrs Chorlton in getting the latest labour-saving devices installed.[73]

Hannah Mitchell explained the benefit of the service that 'A family wash could be done in a couple of hours, and the home kept free of wet clothes

and steam. A real public service appreciated by women.' Mitchell concluded that she managed to get a small wash-house opened in her ward which she felt was her memorial even though was not invited to open it.[74] Jennie Arnott's arrival on the baths committee in Leeds, as Sylvia Dunkley notes, saw her arguing for the first wash-houses to allow 'a mother, to make home more "homely" for her family, instead of driving the children out in the streets to play because of congestion in the house. They help towards a healthier home life.'[75] The result of this service indicated both the popularity of such municipal provision and the benefits of locally driven initiatives, for in Leeds, 'a splendid social and corporate life would evolve out of them' as wash-houses became centres for dances, children's parties and trips out.[76]

The working-class women Guardians were very strongly of the view that poverty should be treated less as a sin and more a fact of the economic cycle, and were particularly at the forefront of improving conditions for the victims of unemployment. Mrs Simpson, a Croydon Guardian, noted,

> I think … people recognise nowadays that they pay the Poor Rate all their lives as an insurance in case they may at any time be in need of its benefits, and that there is less pauperism in taking what one has paid for than in accepting help from a voluntary hospital supported by charity.[77]

Hannah Mitchell vividly captured the idea of welfare services as a right. She argued that 'the long-suffering, law-abiding taxpayer… should firmly refuse to be treated as a troublesome child, when he or his family are compelled to seek the aid which they exist to give'.[78]

The Poor Law, much feared by the poor, was in some respects missed after its abolition. Its democratically elected and locally accountable members had managed to improve the institutions so that the taint of pauperism had been felt less and people had been encouraged to think that they had rights to claim these benefits. As Pat Thane has noted, Harry Quelch of the Social Democratic Federation argued that 'The Guardians were the most democratically elected body in the kingdom', and that their replacement with unelected Public Account Committees, which were both less locally accountable and harsher in their judgements, was seen as a retrograde step.[79] Indeed, 'for the first time in its history, the Poor Law received its strongest defence from the left'.[80] This was a trend discernible in Croydon. In 1922, the Labour candidate Mrs Philpott was of the opinion that the Poor Law was 'one of the blots on civilisation'.[81] By 1926,

having been a Guardian for four years, her view had changed: 'as practically all the County Councils are Tory, the result will be a check on Labour councils without the Government being troubled further in the matter'.[82] Mrs Simpson also believed that the proposed Poor Law reform was 'a reactionary device … Their desire seems to be to make life harder for the people.'[83] Mrs Philpott, who had been for many years a Guardian, was only briefly a co-opted member before moving by early 1932 to become a magistrate and sit on three London County Council hospital committees. These were roles in which she could be more involved in decision-making processes, for, as one of her ex-colleagues observed, 'the co-opted members are not councillors, their wings are rather clipped for the decisive voice in any vexed questions rests with the Council itself'.[84]

Social reform within the community, and accountable to the community, was central to progressive reformers. Working-class women activists demonstrated their support of this agenda through a range of policies that were humane and inclusive, that had the needs of the working-class woman and her domestic grind at the centre, and that sought to alleviate them with services that were deemed to be rights and not charitable doles. The success of many of these facilities demonstrated that a local agenda could and did make real improvements in people's lives.

Equality of Citizenship

The extension of women's citizenship rights, political, social and economic, exercised the energies of both suffrage groups and the range of women's social organisations that emerged after the First World War. Working-class women were active in many of these organisations, both those more directly focused on working-class women such as the Women's Cooperative Guild (WCG), Women's Labour League (WLL) and Women's Institute (WI); but also the more middle-class suffrage and post-war women's social organisations, including National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship (NUSEC), the Women Citizens' Association (WCA) and the Soroptomists. Pamela Graves argues that for middle-class feminists, equal rights were about remedying the unequal distribution of power within the working-class family and that they supported this out of a sense of social responsibility. She contrasts this with Labour women for whom equal rights were rooted in class experience and about eliminating the barriers to equality 'represented by the impoverishment of the working-class family'.[85] Yet the perspective of these working-class women activists

appears more nuanced than that. They certainly wanted to redress many of the social and economic inequalities working-class women faced, as their work in the local community demonstrates. However, from their position within working-class communities they recognised it was not always appropriate to dictate to the ordinary woman what the 'balance of power' in her married life should be, particularly through nationally imposed legislation. Rather, they recognised the working-class mother as a person in her own right needing support and opportunities to manage her domestic life and expand her own horizons.

Working-class activist women were more constrained by family and domestic responsibilities than middle-class women or working-class men. The practical difficulties activist women faced can be seen in the recollections of a Lincolnshire Guildswoman who noted that one

> of our Women Guardians had worked for years at office cleaning from 5 a.m. till breakfast time, and helped to maintain her widowed mother. She has gone through the experience of being on the Guild Committee, Co-operative Education Committee, Women's Liberal Committee, Board of Guardians. She has worked in all these capacities while earning her own living.[86]

For Hannah Mitchell the frustrations this led to were palpable: 'my greatest enemy has been the cooking stove … The cooking, preparing and clearing away of four meals a day—which I do not want—are the things I hate with an undying hatred.'[87] For others, as Karen Hunt notes, a supportive family could help: the 'reconciliation of public and private responsibilities is made easy for Mrs Chorlton by the sympathetic interest her husband and two grown-up sons take in her work which they show in very practical ways, such as arranging to have their midday meal out four days out of seven'.[88] However, it could be difficult. As Alice Foley recalled of union meetings, 'if talks dragged on married women grew restless about possible irate husbands awaiting their delayed evening meal'.[89]

As much as these responsibilities frustrated some activist women, they appreciated the importance of recognising their centrality in women's lives, whilst at the same time advocating wider opportunities for women beyond the home. As Gillian Scott has explored, Mrs Ben Jones, a leading figure in the early WCG, had noted the primacy of domestic responsibilities: 'one thing they should guard against above all others … was the neglect of their household duties'.[90] Yet Mrs Jones also argued in 1889

that 'Some say that women's work is to stay at home … but we think that always to stay at home is to rust and become so useless that we are neither fit to be companions to our husband not nurses to our children.' She also noted that 'women were fitted for something more besides making puddings and pies, and looking after household wants'.[91] Phoebe Cusden, as her biographer has argued, was a firm believer in motherhood, and on becoming a mother stepped down from her public role. Yet she also argued that the domestic life was only for women who really wanted it. Cusden asked, 'have we any right to dictate to any woman who happens to prefer it [work] to the domestic washtub and scrubbing brush which, shorn of the sentiment that has been deliberately thrown over them, are certainly no less unpleasant and may indeed be more harmful?'[92]

Their different perspectives did lead to disagreements between working-class and middle-class activist women. For example, in the 1890s the mainly middle-class leadership of the WCG sought to oppose the half-time system of allowing children to work. As Barbara Blaszak has noted, some working-class activists, such as Sarah Reddish, were also opposed to the system, but Reddish felt obliged to represent the views of her branch, many of whom depended on the income of their children. Mrs Bury also argued against considering the women who relied on such income to be bad mothers.[93] Divorce law reforms similarly caused controversy, as those proposing the legislation failed to see that the consequences might include leaving an unsupported family. As Blaszak has noted, many WCG delegates felt they 'could not consider the possibility of making divorce easier until they knew how the poor, divorced, working-class woman and her children were to be supported once the breadwinner had won his freedom in the divorce court'.[94] Mrs Bury spoke out strongly against the motion.

Women activists continued to champion gender issues throughout the 1930s.[95] Sexual equality was important for it was only by improving women's control over their bodies and their lives that they could hope to fulfil their potential as citizens; and working-class women activists sought to provide facilities to support these ambitions. In Stepney the Liberal social activist Miriam Moses, as Lara Marks has noted, called for municipal provision of birth control so that poor mothers should have it available in the same way as rich people.[96] In Exeter councillor Edith Splatt, also a member of the Exeter and District Women's Welfare Association, succeeded in establishing a clinic to provide contraceptive advice in January 1930, her arguments, Julia Neville contends, were grounded in equity, wishing that working-class women could benefit from the services that middle-class

women benefitted from.[97] Therefore, though birth control was less salient within the Labour Party nationally, at local level working-class women continued to be deeply involved in campaigning for, and the practical running of, services. In Wolverhampton Alice Onions, a Labour party and WCG member, was one of the founders of the Wolverhampton Women's Welfare Centre 1925 and was in charge of secretarial work and sterilising.[98] In the North-East Mrs Steve Lawther, miner's wife and member of Blaydon District Labour party, set up the Newcastle-upon-Tyne Women's Welfare Centre in 1929 and hosted birth controllers from London in her tenement flat.[99] Mary Barbour, the first Labour woman councillor in Glasgow, pioneered the original family planning centre in 1925, chairing its committee and fund-raising.[100] In Croydon, it was through the auspices of the CMIWA that the first birth control clinic was set up in 1936. An ILP meeting in 1930 on women's health issues pointed to the increase in maternal death rate due to increased number of abortions and argued that free birth control offered to the poor would counter this. Mrs McNulty noted that 'it is not merely a question of good or bad, but one of unfair legislation. While information is available to the upper classes it is denied to the slum classes that badly need it.'[101] The Annual Conference of the CMIWA in 1938 highlighted how important their clinic was with letters from grateful patients expressing the 'happiness it has brought into their lives'.[102]

Helen Rogers notes of nineteenth-century radical women that they 'self-consciously educated themselves in what they saw as a body of radical knowledge that would enable them to change themselves and their world'.[103] Twentieth-century working-class women activists also shared this radical impetus for self-education and helping other women in their education. Many of their biographies note how they had to leave school early to work to support their families. Yet equally revealing is the number who then sought further education. Martha Bury, a WCG member from Blackburn, was forced to take work in the mill as a half-timer at the age of 11, but sought education at night school and subsequently became a Sunday school teacher and undertook classes for adult women.[104] Alice Foley also worked in the mill from the age of 13, but an 'avid reader' she attended evening classes and had a long association with the Workers' Educational Association (WEA), attaining an honorary degree from Manchester University in 1962.[105] Certainly many of these women felt the need for education, as Ada Nield Chew bemoaned: 'Cultivation of the mind? How is it possible? Reading? Those of us who are determined to

live like human beings and require food for the mind as well as body, are obliged to take time from sleep to gratify this desire.'[106] Many working-class women activists believed education was central to enabling women not only to be better citizens themselves but also to inspire a wider idea of service within their families. Mrs Bury believed women's children needed to see them in the public sphere to inculcate in them a predisposition to help fellow human beings.[107] Elizabeth Andrews, in promoting the ethos of Margaret McMillan, argued that 'Many people still think that a nursery school is just for poor children or a place when mothers can send their children when they go out to work. Margaret McMillan's ideas went much deeper.'[108]

This emphasis on women's broader citizenship also encompassed a belief that they had responsibilities beyond the family. Indeed, as early as 1926, Phoebe Cusden argued that women should be paid for housework and was frustrated that such work kept women out of public life. As she noted,

> One of our most important tasks is to discover how to bring home to the ordinary housewife her power and her responsibility as a citizen—not an easy task since her important job as a mother and home-maker so often seems to clash with that of a member of a democratic community.[109]

Elizabeth Andrews echoed Cusden when she noted that 'there are women who, by training and ability, can make a valuable contribution outside the home. To deny women this opportunity, or deny her marriage and family as well, is denying her the freedom we have fought for.'[110] Women should therefore be able to have both marriage and a wider life, as she continued: 'We were told … that woman's place was to fit the child for the world. We retorted that if it was woman's place to fit the child for the world, it was also her place to fit the world for the child, and before we could do either, we must take an interest in politics.'[111] Whilst not wishing to homogenise the views of different classes and genders, it does seem that the notion of a working-class woman's responsibility to the wider world was subtly distinctive. It reflected neither the middle-class social reform woman's view of her as a victim who needed help, nor the working-class man's view that saw her area of responsibility purely within the domestic. For the working-class activist part of her remit was to ensure that the ordinary woman was encouraged take on board wider citizenship responsibilities. Mrs Bury remained, as Blaszak argues, a working–class 'feminist' keen

to stress obligations above rights and so she found the phrase 'woman's rights … so objectionable to my mind', for to her it was women's duty to make the world a better place and rights were needed to fulfil these obligations.[112] Echoing Mrs Bury in 1973 Phoebe Cusden argued that 'we must continue to press for rights and equality … but I wish more emphasis were placed on *responsibilities and duties* of women as citizens and that acknowledgment of rights was regarded … as a means of enabling them to fulfil their responsibilities'.[113]

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has underscored the efforts made by working-class women to contribute to the development of local welfare structures that were democratically managed and accountable. In doing so, they pursued an active citizenship that emphasised not only their rights but also their duty to serve the community. Historians have argued against the inevitability of the welfare state, rather emphasising the 'moving frontier' of welfare with the state, local government and voluntary action in a constant process of adaptation and accommodation.[114] Furthermore, Nicholas Deakin and Justin Davis Smith have argued against the Labour Party being seen as hostile to voluntary action 'with its roots in mutuality, self-help and active citizenship'.[115] Nevertheless, the legislation enacted by the post-war Labour government, culminating in the launch of the National Health Service in June 1948, undercut active citizenship as the state took over a number of core services which the municipality and volunteers had previously provided.

It would be disingenuous to imagine that local welfare systems had been immune from national influence even before the 1940s. State funding in the form of grants was available for the provision of a range of services; government legislated on issues such as levels of training for midwives and health visitors; and the Unemployment Act of 1934 set national uniform scales of relief.[116] Moreover, centralising forces were also at work within the voluntary sector. Alison Penn has argued that the legislative programme of the 1906–11 Liberal government was a watershed: as the state became the funder and provider of services, so national organisation became essential to influence social policy.[117] The efficacy and representativeness of municipal services was also being scrutinised. As we have seen so often above, service provision was determined by local political preferences and therefore could vary accordingly, while women's ability

to influence decisions was circumscribed by the difficulties of achieving elected office. During the 1920s, women's increasing numbers on Poor Law Boards saw them significantly involved in welfare provision; Martin Pugh notes that there were 1536 female PLGs in 1914 and 2323 by 1923.[118] The abolition of the Poor Law Board in 1929 and the absorption of its functions, often into County Councils, saw a considerable reduction in the number of women in statutory roles. The resultant decline of influence in welfare policy was emphasised because, as Anne Baldwin has demonstrated, a number of County Councils had no women members at all throughout the interwar years.[119] Moreover, as Table 4.1 highlights, the number of women councillors increased only slowly, and did not make up for the significant decreases in women's local statutory roles after the abolition of the Poor Law.

Furthermore, there had long been those in the ranks of organised labour who were hostile to voluntary effort. Deakin and Davis Smith note that some trade unionists opposed volunteering both because 'the image of Lady Bountiful doling out aid to the deserving poor looms large in union mythology', and also because of the threat posed by volunteers to jobs and wages.[120] Indeed, the Second World War may have exacerbated this. As Jose Harris has pointed out, some witnesses to Beveridge's committee resented privileges given to upper-class female volunteers during the war, and saw charity as having outdated and 'implicitly "class" connotations'.[121] The Second World War also had a massive impact in practical terms. Frank Prochaska has argued that it accelerated the process of state responsibility for the delivery of services, as concerns were raised about the capacity of the voluntary sector to cope with welfare needs.[122] This was most evident in the area of hospital provision, where the damage caused

Table 4.1   Women councillors England and Wales 1922–37

	1922	1928	1937
Total outside London	153	262	437
Total London boroughs	133	149	227
LCC	12	22	20
Overall	2938	433	684

Source: Baldwin, 'Progress and Patterns', p. 142. See Baldwin for more detail on the methodology and problems in estimating total number of female councillors, pp. 103–144

by the war undermined the confidence of the voluntary sector and saw it negotiating the post-war settlement from a position of weakness.[123]

Given all these trends, a centralised, rationalised welfare system might seem to offer the most effective solution to equality of service provision. Yet the perceived weaknesses of local service delivery have been challenged by historians of interwar municipal welfare services, who note the positives of municipal and voluntary institutions. Alysa Levene et al. noted in their study that, although some provision was poor, in other areas it was good and improving, so there was still 'room for optimism about the vibrancy of localism'.[124] Barry Doyle has concluded that the voluntary hospitals in Leeds and Sheffield were already by 1948 'people's hospitals shaped, funded and run by citizens and meeting the challenges of modern medicine in a highly effective manner'.[125] And, as this chapter has also argued, whether it was the infant welfare clinics in Croydon or the communal wash-houses in Leeds, local activists were able to create services that met the specific needs of local families and fulfilled the further function of providing a hub of social activity and community cohesion.

Many Labour politicians at the time, especially those who were rooted in municipalism, argued that local authorities responsive to local people were best placed to deliver welfare. By February 1941 ideas for a new health service were being discussed and 'a comprehensive health service for the whole community, wherein GPs would be grouped into health centres linked to local hospitals', was the Ministry of Health's plan.[126] Levene cited Labour MP Fred Messer, arguing in 1944 that personal services such as education and health should not be too far removed from the people.[127] However, the creation of the National Health Service and a new national system of welfare benefits undermined both local hospital autonomy and the role of self-help organisations such as the Friendly Societies, removing two key strands of locally accountable services.

Nevertheless, even 1948 did not see the end of local authority influence: as Pat Thane has noted, 'the very term "welfare state" implied a coherence which was misleading'.[128] Municipalities and voluntary groups retained a wide remit for welfare systems, as Table 4.2 demonstrates. As a result, the voluntary sector adapted. In areas such as infant welfare and child guidance some institutions did become absorbed into local government. Thus, the Croydon Mother and Infant Welfare Association ceased to exist in 1948, signalling the end of an organisation that had once encompassed over 30 different clinics and services. However, others, such as the Lancaster Road infant welfare centre and the Glasgow Notre Dame

Table 4.2   Relationship of welfare systems to municipalities and voluntary groups

	1938	*1948*
Hospitals: number of institutions	Voluntary: 1334. Local authority: 1771[a]	Attendance at hospitals free. Virtually all centrally managed and run by the state[b]
Medical practitioners: GPs, dentists etc.	Services based on Lloyd George's 1911 National Health Insurance Act, 43% of the adult population covered by a 'panel doctor' in 1938. Non-working wives, children, elderly and self-employed excluded[c]	Remained private; professional people received payment from the state for each NHS patient. Overseen by Executive Councils. Universal free treatment[d]
Public health services: vaccinations, school medical services, health visitors, ambulances, district nursing, maternity and child welfare	Local authority, voluntary	Local authority, voluntary
Personal Social Services: care of elderly, disabled, children, social work	Local authority, voluntary	Local authority, voluntary
Social security	Pensions, unemployment, sickness and disability benefits funded by a varied mix of private and mutual aid contributory schemes; state-administered unemployment insurance and local government provision. These all evolved during the interwar years and, while local government still responsible for much social expenditure, the role of national government increased considerably[e]	Single state-run, flat rate, contributory, National Insurance Scheme with local offices run by central ministry. National Assistance Board for means-tested benefits[f]

[a]N. Timmins, *The Five Giants: A Biography of the Welfare State* (London, 2001), p. 103.
[b]H. Glennerster, *British Social Policy since 1945* (2nd edition, Oxford, 2000), p. 50.
[c]Timmins, *The Five Giants*, pp. 106–7.
[d]Glennerster, *British Social Policy*, pp. 49–50.
[e]Thane, *Foundations*, pp. 203–6.
[f]Timmins, *The Five Giants*, pp. 135–6.

child guidance clinic, continued to operate voluntarily.[129] As Pete Alcock has argued, the voluntary sector moved to a 'supplementary role' providing specialist services such as hospice care or challenging state services, and the Citizens' Advice Bureau expanded rapidly after the war.[130] Voluntary groups also continued to work with local authorities to care for the most disadvantaged groups in society such as the elderly and disabled.[131]

All this only serves to underline how it would be wrong to dismiss the continued relevance of the local level to the development of welfare services: indeed, the voluntary sector has come to be seen not as pauperising charity, but as a necessary part of the welfare mix. Equally, it would be mistaken to consider voluntary contributions as in some sense outmoded in a modern society: many continental European social security systems have incorporated public–private partnerships, with high levels of self-government and the participation of local occupational and religious groups.[132] By foregrounding the central state within the welfare system, the reforms of 1948 in Britain can therefore be seen as a missed opportunity to retain the spirit and rewards of the active, participatory and democratically accountable civil society that so many working-class women activists had worked so hard to create in the first half of the twentieth century.

Notes

1. See P. Thane, 'The impact of mass democracy on British political culture, 1918–1939', in J.V. Gottleib and R. Toye (eds), *The Aftermath of Suffrage: Women, Gender and Politics in Britain, 1918–1945* (Basingstoke, 2013); P. Thane, 'Labour and local politics: radicalism, democracy and social reform, 1880–1914', in E.F. Biagini and A.J. Reid (eds), *Currents of Radicalism: Popular Radicalism, Organised Labour and Party Politics, 1850–1914* (Cambridge, 1991).
2. For an overview see: P. Hollis, *Ladies Elect: Women in English Local Government, 1865–1914* (Oxford, 1987); J. Lewis, *Women and Social Action in Victorian and Edwardian England* (Stanford, 1991); F. Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century England* (Oxford, 1980).
3. For example: S. Holton, *Feminism and Democracy: Women's Suffrage and Reform Politics in Britain, 1900–18* (Cambridge, 1986); J. Liddington and J. Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us: The Rise of the Women's Suffrage Movement* (London, 2000).

4. J. Garrard, *Democratisation in Britain: Elites, Civil Society and Reform since 1800* (Basingstoke, 2002), p. 6.

5. Garrard, *Democratisation*, pp. 231–2.

6. D. Tanner, 'Ideological debate in Edwardian labour politics: radicalism, Revisionism and socialism', in Biagini and Reid (eds), *Currents of Radicalism*, p. 289.

7. V. Hall, *Women at Work, 1860–1939: How Different Industries Shaped Women's Experiences* (Woodbridge, 2013), p. 70.

8. Liddington and Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us*, p. 92.

9. A. Foley, *A Bolton Childhood* (Manchester, 1973), p. 8.

10. J. Hannam and K. Hunt, *Socialist Women: Britain, 1880s to 1920s* (London, 2002), p. 46.

11. M. Bondfield, *A Life's Work* (London, n.d.), pp. 13–14.

12. A. Summers, *Female Lives, Moral States: Women, Religion and Public Life in Britain, 1800–1930* (Newbury, 2000), p. 135.

13. Summers, *Female Lives*, p. 135.

14. K. Gildart, D. Howell and N. Kirk (eds), *Dictionary of Labour Biography Volume XI* (Basingstoke, 2003), p. 2.

15. N. Evans and D. Jones, '"To Help Forward the Great Work of Humanity": Women and the Labour Party in Wales', in D. Tanner, C. Williams and D. Hopkin (eds), *The Labour Party in Wales, 1900–2000* (Cardiff, 2000), p. 225.

16. A. Stout, *A Bigness of Heart: Phoebe Cusden of Reading* (Reading, 1997), p. 15.

17. G. Scott, *Feminism and the Politics of Working Women: The Women's Co-operative Guild, 1880s to the Second World War* (London, 1998), p. 50.

18. Gildart, Howell and Kirk (eds), *Dictionary of Labour Biography Volume XI*, p. 45.

19. Croydon Local Studies Library (CLSL), *Croydon Labour Outlook*, October 1924, p. 3.

20. S. King, *Women, Welfare and Local Politics 1880–1920: 'We Might Be Trusted'* (Brighton, 2006), p. 42.

21. J. Liddington, *The Life and Times of a Respectable Rebel: Selena Cooper, 1864–1946* (London, 1984), p. 53.

22. D. Nield Chew, *Ada Nield Chew: The Life and Writings of a Working Woman* (London, 1982), p. 16.

23. Chew, *Ada Nield Chew*, p. 80.

24. J. Hannam, '"To make the world a better place": Socialist Women and Women's Suffrage in Bristol, 1910–1920', in M. Boussahba-Bravard (ed.), *Suffrage Outside Suffragism: Women's Vote in Britain, 1880–1914* (Basingstoke, 2007), p. 157.

25. CLSL, *Croydon Times*, 10 September 1932, p. 8.

26. *The Vote*, 27 August 1920, p. 1. https://news.google.com/newspapers, accessed 11/10/2013.

27. *The Vote*, 27 August 1920, p. 1.

28. M. Llewelyn Davies (ed.), *Life As We Have Known It: The Voices of Working-Class Women* (London, 2012), p. 127.

29. CLSL, *Croydon Labour Outlook*, May 1926, p. 1.

30. C. Hunt, *A Woman of the People: Alice Arnold of Coventry, 1881–1955* (Coventry, 2007), p. 60.

31. Hunt, *A Woman of the People*, pp. 69–70.

32. K. Hunt, 'Making Politics in Local Communities: Labour Women in Interwar Manchester', in M. Worley (ed.), *Labour's Grass Roots: Essays on the Activities of Local Labour Parties and Members, 1918–1945* (Aldershot, 2005), p. 86.

33. S.J. Dunkley, 'Women Magistrates, Ministers and Municipal Councillors in the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1918–1939' (PhD thesis, University of Sheffield, 1991), pp. 193–4.

34. J. Neville, 'Challenge, Conformity and Casework in Interwar England: the first women councillors in Devon', *Women's History Review*, 22, 6 (2013), p. 980.

35. Thane, 'Labour and local politics', pp. 244–5.

36. B. Siim, *Gender and Citizenship: Politics and Agency in France, Britain and Denmark* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 8.

37. For a comprehensive overview of women's activism in local government before 1914 see P. Hollis, *Ladies Elect: Women in English Local Government, 1865–1914* (Oxford, 1987).

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39. M. Niemi, *Public Health and Municipal Policy Making: Britain and Sweden, 1900–1940* (Aldershot, 2007), p. 162.

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41. *Croydon Advertiser*, 27 December 1902, p. 9.

42. Liddington and Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us*, p. 136.

43. G. Mitchell (ed.), *The Hard Way Up: The Autobiography of Hannah Mitchell, Suffragette and Rebel* (London, 1984), p. 215.

44. E. Andrews, *A Woman's Work Is Never Done* (Dinas Powys, 2006), pp. 104–5.

45. Liddington, *The Life and Times*, p. 118.

46. Neville, 'Challenge, Conformity and Casework', p. 981.

47. Hunt, *A Woman of the People*, p. 63.

48. Hunt, *A Woman of the People*, p. 64.

49. Mitchell (ed.), *The Hard Way Up*, p. 207.

50. Neville, 'Challenge, Conformity and Casework', p. 980.

51. *Croydon Advertiser*, 4 October 1902, p. 2.

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53. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edition, accessed 13/10/2013.

54. Dunkley, *Women Magistrates*, p. 252.

55. Mitchell (ed.), *The Hard Way Up*, p. 210.

56. Neville, 'Challenge, conformity and casework', p. 976.

57. Neville, 'Challenge, conformity and casework', p. 979.

58. Andrews, *A Woman's Work*, p. 76

59. This legislation was built on a number of pieces of earlier legislation that sought to improve infant mortality rates: midwives, school feeding and registration of birth being the most notable.

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61. CLSL, CMIWA, Minute Books, AR402/5/3, 16 January 1926.

62. P. Hayworth, *Bolton Mother and Child Welfare Association: Formerly Bolton Mothers and Babies Welcome* (Halliwell, 2010), p. 3.

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64. CLSL, CMIWA, Annual Report 1934–5, p. 13.

65. Dunkley, 'Women Magistrates', p. 182.

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67. Llewelyn Davies, *Life*, p. 55.

68. Lodge, 'Women and welfare', p. 91

69. Lodge, 'Women and welfare', p. 92.

70. Chew, *Ada Nield Chew*, p. 168.
71. Andrews, *A Woman's Work*, pp. 70–71.
72. Andrews, *A Woman's Work*, pp. 65–6.
73. Hunt, 'Making Politics', p. 94.
74. Mitchell (ed.), *The Hard Way Up*, pp. 208–9.
75. Dunkley, 'Women Magistrates', p. 194.
76. Dunkley, 'Women Magistrates', p. 195.
77. CLSL, *Croydon Labour Outlook*, May 1926, p. 1.
78. Mitchell (ed.), *The Hard Way Up*, p. 212.
79. Thane, 'Labour and local politics', pp. 251–2.
80. P. Thane, *Foundations of the Welfare State* (2nd edition, Harlow, 1996), p. 176.
81. *Croydon Advertiser*, 1 April 1922, p. 6.
82. CLSL, *Croydon Labour Outlook*, April 1926, p. 1.
83. CLSL, *Croydon Labour Outlook*, May 1926, p. 1.
84. *Croydon Advertiser*, 8 July 1930; *Croydon Advertiser*, 27 February 1932, p. 14.
85. P. Graves, *Labour Women: Women in British Working-Class Politics, 1918–1939* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 136–7.
86. Llewelyn Davies, *Life*, p. 146.
87. Mitchell (ed.), *The Hard Way Up*, p. 240.
88. Hunt, 'Making Politics in Local Communities', in Worley (ed.), *Labour's Grass Roots*, p. 85.
89. Liddington and Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us*, p. 93.
90. Scott, *Feminism*, p. 71.
91. Scott, *Feminism*, p. 71.
92. Stout, *A Bigness of Heart*, p. 27.
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Protestant Nonconformists: Providers of Educational and Social Services

Andy Vail

This chapter will seek to examine the impact of Protestant Nonconformity, or the Free Churches, on English society in the twentieth century with particular reference to working-class communities. It will focus solely on examples from England, recognising that church membership and influence in other parts of the UK were very different. Thus, while in England Nonconformists made up nearly 50% of churchgoers at the beginning of the century, in Wales they were in the majority well outnumbering the Anglicans and Roman Catholics, but in Scotland numbers were very small due to the dominance of the established Presbyterian Church of Scotland. The chapter will review previous scholarship on the political influence of Nonconformity, before going on to consider the churches' impact from a less-studied perspective, namely the influence of Protestant auxiliary movements in areas such as adult education, leisure and youth work.

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Nonconformists and Party Politics

Divisions within the Liberal Party in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries began to weaken its long-standing link with Protestant Nonconformity, which had been based on such common concerns as education and church disestablishment. These divisions were particularly acute and complex over the Boer War and Irish Home Rule. The rise of the Labour Party and the role played by Nonconformists such as Keir Hardie (Evangelical Union) and Arthur Henderson (Wesleyan Methodism) in its foundation also contributed to the fragmentation. The political impact of Protestant Nonconformity peaked in the general election of 1906, when a record number of 210 Nonconformist Members of Parliament were elected, of whom 180 were Liberal and 20 Labour members.[1]

Moore, in his detailed study of Methodism in a Durham mining community, suggested that Primitive Methodists were more likely to be in sympathy with Labour.[2] Meanwhile, Wearmouth revealed that later in the century, 'of the twenty-seven Methodists elected to parliament in October 1951, twenty-two belonged to the Labour Party'.[3] Thus Methodism was to influence two Labour Party leaders (Henderson and Michael Foot) and many prominent Labour MPs, including Philip Snowden, Ellen Wilkinson and George Thomas. However, growing identification with Labour was also to be found amongst other twentieth-century Nonconformists. Smith makes this clear in his study of Nonconformity and the labour movement in Lancashire and the West Riding over the period 1880–1914, by the use of case studies of Baptist, Congregational, Independent Methodist and Unitarian congregations.[4] Of the record 17 Baptists elected to parliament in 1906, 14 were Liberals, one was an Independent Liberal, one was a Lib-Lab and only one was a Labour MP. But by 1923, six out of eleven Baptist MPs elected were Labour. Meanwhile, Bebbington has demonstrated that twice as many Baptist MPs were elected in the twentieth century as in the nineteenth, making it 'the period when Baptists have made the greatest impact on parliament'.[5] Perhaps a significant high point of Nonconformist influence was Attlee's government in 1945, which included at least 11 in prominent positions: Jack Lawson (Methodist, Minister for War), William Whiteley (Methodist, Chief Whip), Ellen Wilkinson (Methodist, Minister of Education), George Tomlinson (Methodist, Minister of Works), George Isaacs (Methodist, Minister of Labour and National Service), Arthur Henderson Jr (Methodist, Under-Secretary of State for India and Burma), James Griffiths (Congregationalist, Minister

for National Insurance), Harold Wilson (Congregationalist, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Works), A.V. Alexander (Baptist, First Lord of the Admiralty), Chuter Ede (Unitarian, Home Secretary) and Philip Noel-Baker (Quaker, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs).[6]

Newer movements originating in the nineteenth century also produced significant leaders, notably the Churches of Christ, which, although a small movement, was particularly strong in working-class communities in Glasgow, South Wales, Leicester and Lancashire, and provided a high proportion of Labour and trade union activists.[7] Lancaster's research on Leicester revealed that the local brethren 'launched an important shoemaking cooperative, founded a garden village, and contributed two key activists, J.T. Taylor and Amos Mann, to the local ILP'.[8] Ackers's research on Wigan revealed a similarly intense involvement, including miners' leader W.T. Miller (1880–1963), another W. Miller who was a Labour councillor and Justice of the Peace (JP) and his brothers, James and George, who were both union deputies and branch secretaries. Meanwhile, activists at a Hindley chapel included a secretary to a local MP, a Labour councillor who went to fight in Spain, and a president of the Wigan Miners' Association who was also Labour leader of Wigan council for four years.[9] To these can be added at a more prominent level Arthur Horner, General Secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers from 1946 to 1959, who trained as a lay evangelist amongst the Churches of Christ but, unlike most other activists in the movement, appears to have left the church on his adoption of a materialistic Marxism which led him into Communist Party membership. Perhaps more surprising is Anthony Crosland's upbringing in the Plymouth Brethren, a movement which strongly discouraged Christians from engaging in party politics.[10]

Bebbington's statistics only count those who were church members at the time they served as MPs, thus omitting many former Nonconformists and those influenced by Adult Schools, Brotherhoods or Sunday Schools who never joined a church: such as leading Labour MPs Aneurin Bevan, Ernest Bevin, Jim Callaghan, Barbara Castle, David Ennals and Michael Foot. If this broader approach is applied, widespread Protestant Nonconformist influence on the Labour Party and the trade union and cooperative movements can be found throughout the twentieth century, with eight twentieth-century Labour Party leaders from Keir Hardie to John Smith coming from Nonconformist backgrounds, to which might be added Gordon Brown as a 'son of the manse'.

Nonconformists can also be found playing a disproportionate role as union general secretaries: including the Methodists George Edwards (National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers, 1906–13), Percy Belcher (Tobacco Workers' Union, 1942–50s) and Ronald Gould (National Union of Teachers, 1947–70), the former Baptist preacher Arthur J. Cook, (Miners' Federation, 1924–31) and the Quaker Jack Boddy (National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers, 1978–82). A prominent Nonconformist in the cooperative movement was the Baptist, A.V. Alexander. Having been elected as one of the pioneer Co-operative Party MPs in 1922, he remained active in his local cooperative society and the Co-operative Union until his death in 1965. He twice served as parliamentary secretary for the Co-operative Union, and later spoke on its behalf in the House of Lords.[11]

Small but significant attempts to combine Nonconformist theology with socialist and cooperative ethics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were the Labour Church and Brotherhood Church movements. The Labour Church, which was founded in Manchester in October 1891 by the Unitarian minister John Trevor, sought to combine elements of Christianity and socialism. The movement expanded quickly, particularly across the north of England, bringing together Protestant Nonconformists with labour activists. The Bradford Labour Church was founded in 1892 with a Congregationalist as its president; the Bolton Labour Church was founded by Rev. B.J. Harker, minister of Duke's Alley Congregational Church; and the Oldham Civic Church was also founded by a Congregational minister. However, their origins were diverse: the Plymouth Church was founded by the Gasworkers' Union, some of the Birmingham churches were linked to ILP branches and the one in Keighley was founded by Swedenborgians. Some appear to have espoused a faith-based socialism, others resembled a more regular ILP meeting, but held on a Sunday. At their peak, 120 Labour Churches were being advertised in *The Clarion* and *The Labour Leader*. However, they declined rapidly: by 1912, only six or seven were being advertised and early scholarship suggested that 'only a few of the churches survived the First World War'.[12] While this may be true of much of the country, it was not the case in Birmingham, where not only did the pre-war Birmingham and Stirchley Labour Churches survive the conflict, but new ones were opened in Erdington and East Birmingham. Barnsby's analysis of the Birmingham Labour publication *Town Crier* from 1919 onwards reveals that the number of Labour churches in Birmingham grew from these four in 1919, to as many as 16 in 1926.[13]

Also active in the same period was the Brotherhood Church, a Tolstoyan movement founded in a North London Congregational Church in 1891 by the Irish Congregational Minister J. Bruce Wallace (1853–1939). Wallace's obituary described him as

> an internationalist and Christian pacifist, intellectually and spiritually ahead of his day. His earnest desire for social reform influenced the founders of the first Garden City, the Fabian Society, and the Christian Social Brotherhood. He was a friend of Dr. Clifford, Rev R.J. Campbell, Mr J. Ramsay MacDonald, Keir Hardie and other pioneers.[14]

The spin-off foundations included a publishing house for Tolstoyan literature, a Co-operative Brotherhood Trust, further churches in Croydon and Birmingham, a cooperative workshop in Leeds, and residential communities at Purleigh and Wickford in Essex, and Whiteway in Gloucestershire. However, few of these initiatives survived the First World War.

The London Brotherhood Church hosted the 5th Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party in 1907 (attendees including Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Zinoviev and Luxemburg). A later pastor, F.R. Swan (1868–1938), was also a Congregationalist, having graduated from Paton's Nottingham Institute (see below), and took on the Brotherhood Church role in 1910. Swan was also on the staff of the *Daily Herald* from 1914 until his death, and his obituary described him as a 'strong pacifist',[15] suggesting he maintained sympathy with Wallace's original aims. Speakers during Swan's pastorate included Annie Besant, Keir Hardie, Tom Mann and George Lansbury. The church played host to numerous anti-war meetings during the First World War, some of which suffered violent attacks; and continued to host other political gatherings including the Labour Party, the Socialist Party of Great Britain, and the first two conferences of the Young Communist League, as well as trade union and cooperative meetings.[16] It was not only the ministers who were political activists: H.A. Barker (1858–1940) who had attended the church as a child prior to Wallace's arrival, maintained his involvement throughout his life, including serving as a trustee for the church's last 30 years. He was active in the Social Democratic Federation, the Socialist League and the short-lived Labour Union, before joining the ILP and serving on its first executive.[17]

The London Brotherhood Church maintained its Congregational affiliation but appears to have closed following the death of Swan in 1938. The Leeds group relocated to Stapleton in 1921, where it continued as a small

residential community active in the peace movement until the death of its leader Len Gibson (son of founder G. Gibson) in 2007. While numerically small compared to other more mainstream movements such as the Adult Schools and the Brotherhood Movement (which had no connection with the Brotherhood Churches, see below), they were significant for their attempt to fuse Nonconformist theology and ethics with socialist and cooperative principles.

The Rise of Christian Auxiliary Movements

Thus in the sphere of politics, both mainstream and more fringe elements of Protestant Nonconformity had a significant influence on the working classes. The remainder of this chapter will focus on the less-studied areas of Nonconformist influence through adult education, leisure and youth work which were largely provided through inter-denominational auxiliary organisations such as the Adult Schools, the Brotherhood and Sisterhood Movement and the various Brigade movements.

One of the earliest of these organisations was the Working Men's Clubs and Institutes, the founder and first secretary of which, Henry Solly (1813–1903), was a Unitarian minister, although the idea of a national union had come from the London-based Congregationalist minister, Dr John Thomas. Solly had previously been involved with F.D. Maurice's Working Men's College in London, and had supported temperance and mutual improvement societies, but in 1862 resigned his pastorate to work for the Club and Institute Union 'for the purpose of helping Working Men to establish clubs or Institutes where they can meet for conversation, business, and mental improvement, with the means of recreation and refreshment, free from intoxicating drinks'.[18] During the five years of Solly's leadership the movement expanded fast, with almost 300 clubs by 1867 although some proved short-lived. To Solly's disappointment one area of disagreement was over the consumption of alcohol. A compromise was agreed whereby each local Club or Institute could make its own decision on the matter, which resulted in most of them obtaining licences to sell alcohol. Solly parted company with the Union in 1867 and went on to found the Society for the Promotion of Industrial Villages, an unsuccessful precursor to the Garden City movement.

Other leading Unitarians also became involved in the Union, including three MPs: Moses Mansfield (Northampton), Charles Schwann/Swan (Manchester) and Peter Taylor (Leicester).[19] The educational work

that Solly had hoped the Union would achieve was never very extensive. He went on to be involved in a London Artisans' Club and Institute, a national Trades Guild of Learning (promoting education among Trade Unions) and an Artisans' Institute in London combining technical expertise with liberal arts, but these all proved relatively short-lived. However, the Working Men's Club and Institute Union proved more successful in providing facilities for the working classes, and continues to operate to this day, but having lost its temperance and educational emphases, they have effectively become cheap private drinking clubs in working-class districts, the opposite of what Solly and his colleagues had originally intended.[20]

A number of the other pioneers of such facilities were Congregationalist ministers, including John Brown Paton (1830–1911), who relocated from Scotland to Nottingham in 1863 as principal of the newly founded Nottingham Institute, a Congregationalist ministerial training college. The Institute in itself was empowering the working classes as it trained men with no previous academic qualifications for the ministry, but Paton's interests were wider as 'a pioneer in seeking to embody Christian principles in practical schemes for social improvement'.[21] For example, he introduced lectures for working men in the city, which ultimately led to the establishment of University College Nottingham in 1877 and the provision of University of Cambridge extension course lectures. He was also interested in technical or vocational education, establishing a Trades Council of Learning in 1880. Whilst these schemes were local to Nottingham, Paton was also involved in a number of national initiatives. He founded two schemes to promote greater adult literacy, the first of which was the Recreative Evening Schools Association, the purpose of which Snape describes as 'to encourage progressive reading amongst young adults'.[22] Paton sought to work in partnership with the universities, but was concerned that their courses only provided for the middle and upper classes.

He then encountered the Chautauqua movement, an American scheme of directed home-reading circles which had grown out of open-air Methodist camp meetings at Lake Chautauqua, New York in 1871. Inspired by this movement Paton founded a National Home Reading Union (NHRU) in 1889, which Snape identified 'would be primarily for uneducated working people and for young adults who had recently left school'. The purpose of the scheme was explained as follows:

Many who are deeply sensible of the advantages of reading miss the best fruits of their labour owing to want of guidance. They do not read the

books most suitable for their purpose; their eyes are not opened to the special qualities or virtues of the books they read; they have not the habit of codifying their knowledge … In a word, the Union endeavours to persuade men and women, young and old, to graduate to the University of Books.[23]

The aim was not only to encourage reading, but to encourage the reading of books which would edify and educate, not just entertain. Reading circles were established across the country, many being associated with existing churches, chapels, schools, Brotherhoods, Adult Schools or trade union branches. The Union declined after Paton's death in 1911, and folded in 1930.

Paton also sought to provide more widely for the spiritual and recreational needs of young people by founding, in partnership with the National Sunday School Union, the Boys' Life Brigade (BLB) in 1899 and the Girls' Life Brigade (GLB) in 1902. The BLB was intended to be a less militarist alternative to the Boys' Brigade, with no parading with dummy rifles or military drill being permitted. The Life Brigades were affiliated to the Peace Society, and in the 1910 *Peace Year Book* their aims were explained as, 'to lead our boys to the service of Christ and to promote habits of self-respect, obedience, courtesy etc … these aims it is sought to realise chiefly by means of drills of a life-saving character, the use of arms being entirely eliminated'.[24] Both Life Brigades included first aid training and shared the motto 'saving life'.

Unlike the Scout and Guide movements which were later to eclipse them numerically, the Brigade movements had a specific faith basis, requiring affiliation to a Protestant church, chapel or mission. As a result, they proved particularly popular with Nonconformists: the BLB continued to thrive until it merged with the Boys' Brigade (once that body had renounced the use of dummy rifles etc.) in 1926, the GLB continued until it merged with the Girls' Guildry (Scotland) and the Girls' Brigade (Ireland) to form the Girls' Brigade in 1964. Boys' Brigade membership in Britain and Ireland continued to grow through much of the twentieth century, from 41,096 in 1900 to 160,610 in 1960, having risen consistently apart from small dips in membership caused by the two world wars. Even after 1960 the decline was gradual, with membership reducing to 112,691 in 1990, close to the 1940 figure of 112,531.[25] While they have made changes to their uniform and image, both Brigade movements have maintained their original ethos and purpose in seeking to engage young people with the Christian message and all companies are still attached to

Protestant churches or chapels of some kind. Along with other uniformed organisations they have suffered some decline in the later part of the twentieth century, but they are still active in working-class as well as more middle-class communities.

Another Congregationalist minister to have a significant impact on working-class leisure activities was one of Paton's students at the Nottingham Institute, T. Arthur Leonard (1864–1948), who served as a minister in Barrow and then Colne, in Lancashire, as well as being an active member of the ILP and a pacifist. Leonard continued Paton's commitment to educational and social provision for the working classes, being determined to provide 'recreational and educational' holidays for the local textile workers in contrast to their traditional wakes weeks.[26] His first initiative was in 1891 when he took members of his church's social guild for a holiday in Ambleside in the Lake District. With the support of Paton and his National Home Reading Union, he took a group to north Wales the following year. Leonard continued to organise holidays under the auspices of the NHRU until the end of 1896 when he resigned his pastorate to become general secretary of a newly formed Co-operative Holidays Association (CHA), which appointed Paton as its president.[27] Its founding objects were

> to provide recreative and educational holidays by purchasing or renting and furnishing houses and rooms in selected centres, by catering in such houses for parties of members and guests and by securing helpers who will promote the intellectual and social interests of the party with which they are associated.[28]

Snape interprets this as 'to make possible working-class participation in holidays in the countryside by resolving the problem of lack of accommodation'.[29] However, education as well as recreation was on the agenda as holidaymakers' rambles 'were accompanied by a lecturer, often provided through the National Home Reading Union, who gave wayside talks on the natural history and literary associations of the area'.[30] As with the NHRU, many local branches were soon established across the country, often attached to chapels, Adult Schools or Brotherhoods or Sisterhoods (see below).

In 1912, Leonard resigned from the CHA and set up an alternative organisation, the Holiday Fellowship (HF). Whilst the split was not acrimonious, it does appear to have been ideological, driven by Leonard's

'growing dissatisfaction with the general committee's desire to improve the quality of the centres, which he feared would attract a more middle-class clientele, and undermine the original intention of the association to provide simple accommodation for working-class holidaymakers'.[31] The CHA pattern of local branches across the country was again established. In later life Leonard went on to play a part in the formation of the Youth Hostels Association (as vice president), the Ramblers' Association (as president) and in his eighties founded the Family Holidays Association to convert former government training camps into holiday accommodation.[32]

Both the CHA and HF continued to thrive, peaking in the 1960s, but the CHA did indeed move up-market, with the original emphasis on rambling being broadened out to more relaxing activities and more luxurious accommodation. It was renamed the Countryside Holidays Association in 1967 but then fell into decline, selling off its holiday centres with the package holiday arm finally being sold to the holiday arm of the Ramblers' Association in 2004. The Holiday Fellowship also suffered decline from the 1970s onwards, but rebranded itself as a more conventional holiday company, HF Holidays in 1982, and continues to operate. Many local CHA and HF branches still operate across the country, some now affiliated to the Ramblers' Association. Unlike most of the other initiatives surveyed in this chapter, there does not appear to have been a specific faith element to Leonard's initiatives but, while the parent body now appears to be a regular holiday company, the local CHA and HF branches are still achieving Leonard's recreational goal, if not his educational one.

Meanwhile, in 1883 the London Congregational Union had published *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London* which revealed 'a vast mass of moral corruption, of heart-breaking misery and absolute godlessness'. Partially due to publicity provided by the radical journalist W.T. Stead, the pamphlet was widely publicised, providing inspiration for what was to become the Settlement Movement—social provision through residential communities in run-down urban areas. Whilst many of the early settlements were predominantly Anglican and linked to Oxford or Cambridge Universities, the Congregationalists established two settlements in London. The first, Mansfield Settlement, was established in Canning Town by students from Mansfield College, Oxford (a Congregational theological college) in 1890, led by one of the students, Percy Alden, who served as warden until 1901. It established a variety of projects, including free legal advice and a coal club. Rev. J. Bruce Wallace, previously of the Brotherhood Church, served as warden from 1903 until his retirement in 1905.

The second initiative was the Robert Browning Hall in Walworth in 1895, where W.T. Stead's brother, the Congregationalist minister F.H. Stead, served as warden until 1921. The emphasis of the work was made clear from early on, being described as follows: 'We stand for the Labour Movement in religion. We stand for the endeavour to obtain for Labour not merely more of the good things of life, but most of the best things in life. Come and join us in the service of Him who is the Lord of Labour and the soul of all social reform.'[33] Early residents of the settlement included Keir Hardie and the Congregationalist Tom Bryan. Initiatives established included an Adult School, adult education through the London University Extension Society, a savings bank and legal aid. Based on their experience of poverty in the community around them, Stead and the Browning settlement played a key role in the campaign for old age pensions.

Toynbee Hall, a Universities settlement established in 1884 in London's East End, was not a Nonconformist settlement, nevertheless there was Nonconformist involvement: three Quakers served as wardens—T.E. Harvey (1906–11), J. St. George Heath (1914–17) and Walter Birmingham (1963–72)—and when in December 1925 they hosted a study week for Oxford and Cambridge students, Nonconformist speakers included Arthur Henderson MP (Methodist) and Dr W.B. Selbie (Congregationalist).[34] The early twentieth century saw a second new development in the Settlement Movement—residential educational settlements, largely inspired by Quakerism and the Adult Schools. The first to be established was the Woodbrooke Settlement, established in a house donated by George Cadbury, in Selly Oak, Birmingham in 1903 under the leadership of J. Rendel Harris. Although initially intended as a Quaker-led interdenominational study community, as other denominational mission colleges were established in Selly Oak, longer training courses were established. From early on it had an extension department providing lectures, conferences and so forth. The next Selly Oak development was the Fircroft Settlement, established in 1909, primarily to serve the Adult Schools, under the wardenship of Tom Bryan who had previously served at the Browning Settlement, then at Woodbrooke. Under his leadership Fircroft developed a wide-ranging curriculum. Non-residential settlements followed elsewhere, including Leeds (1909), York (1909), Lemington-on-Tyne (1913), Wakefield (1913) and Birkenhead (1914), all organised by Quakers and/or Adult Schools.[35]

In his thorough 2002 article, Freeman detailed the influence of both Quakerism and the Adult Schools on the settlements, particularly those with a more educational emphasis.[36] He also drew attention to settlements hosting other organisations including branches of the Workers' Educational Association and the Youth Hostels Association. He argued that some of them diversified their educational activities due to the competition of newly established Community Centres and Community associations, as well as competition from the WEA and local authority-funded adult education. It seems likely that as with the Adult Schools and Brotherhoods/ Sisterhoods, much of their social and educational provision became less necessary as it became provided by local or national government. Freeman argued that 'by the 1960s the residence component of settlement work had been largely discarded, and settlements had in many cases transmuted into "social action centres", delivering access to professionalized social services and social work to deprived communities'.[37]

There were many other local educational initiatives around the country in which Nonconformists played a key role. Examples included Sheffield, where the Congregationalist minister R.S. Bayley, who had previously lectured at a Mechanics' Institute, founded the Sheffield People's College which provided evening classes in a wide range of subjects from its foundation in 1842, until 1874. Bayley, who left Sheffield in 1848, was also involved in starting a similar, shorter-lived People's College in Norwich in 1849 with the support of the local Quaker J.J. Gurney. Another example was Morley College in a working-class district of Lambeth near London's Waterloo station. This was a former theatre converted in 1880 into a coffee hall, with both lectures and entertainment provided. It survived initial financial challenges due to the support of the Congregationalist philanthropist Samuel Morley, who became its Chairman from 1884. His support enabled the addition of a Working Men's Club and expansion of the educational provision, which in 1889 became Morley Memorial College for Working Men and Women. After Morley's death the college continued to expand under the leadership of the Unitarian, Caroline Martineau. Whilst there is no longer any Nonconformist input, the college is still operating and still focuses on community learning and access courses.[38]

Yet another pioneering development was the establishment of a 'continuation school' for Cadbury workers at Bournville in Birmingham in 1913. The Cadbury brothers as evangelical Quakers were committed to the overall well-being of their staff. Recreation facilities, including sports facilities, swimming baths and a lido were provided for both staff and

Bournville residents. There is evidence of day and evening classes available at the works from 1899. However, in 1913 they commenced compulsory day-release classes for their younger workers. Classes were initially held in the Stirchley Friends' Institute, until a purpose-built Day-Continuation School was opened on Bournville Green in 1925.[39] The Cadburys thus pioneered what later became the national practice of day release for apprentices. The college, now known as Bournville College, recently relocated to Longbridge, Birmingham, still operates as a further education college, offering a wide range of vocational and academic courses.[40] Other Nonconformist employers who made large-scale recreational and/or educational provision for their employees included the Colmans of Norwich (Congregationalist/Baptist), Lever Brothers of Port Sunlight (Congregationalist), Rowntrees of York (Quaker) and Titus Salt of Saltaire (Congregationalist).

ADULT SCHOOLS AND THE BROTHERHOOD AND SISTERHOOD MOVEMENT

The most numerically significant of the non-denominational auxiliary movements under consideration in this chapter were the Adult Schools and the Brotherhood and Sisterhood Movement which both attracted widespread support from Protestant Free Churches in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, attracting large numbers of members and attenders, and proving particularly effective in reaching or re-engaging with those who were not active churchgoers.

The modern Adult School movement can be traced initially to Nottingham where, as early as 1798, a 'Sunday School for Bible Reading and instruction in the secular arts of writing and arithmetic' was established in a Nottingham Methodist New Connexion Chapel by William Singleton, with the assistance of a Quaker, Samuel Fox.[41] The most significant event in the late nineteenth-century growth of the movement was the Birmingham Quaker Joseph Sturge's encounter with Adult Schools whilst on an election campaign in Nottingham in the 1840s. This resulted, in October 1845, in the establishment of an Adult Sunday School for Boys aged 14+ on Sunday evenings in the British School, Severn Street, Birmingham, led by Sturge. In April 1846 the school moved to early morning, older men began attending, and a pattern was thus established which was soon to spread nationwide. In 1847 the Friends' First Day

School Association was founded in Birmingham. It was primarily intended to bring together Quaker children's Sunday Schools, but soon became more dominated by the Adult Schools. The Birmingham work developed quickly: in 1848 a women's school commenced at Ann Street, in 1851 a library and night school were commenced, and in 1852 Severn Street School divided into adult and junior sections. The year 1884 saw the founding of the Midland Adult Sunday School Association, later renamed Midland Adult School Union (MASU), and a National Council of Adult School Associations in Leicester in 1899. In 1909 their national conference was held in Birmingham, at the Moseley Road Institute, one of a number of Cadbury-funded Friends Institutes built across the south of the city, primarily for Adult School use. National membership peaked at nearly 113,789 in 1910, but was still high at 96,813 when they were renamed the National Adult School Union (NASU) in early 1914. However, during the period of the war the membership decline speeded up: they were down to 50,000 members by 1920–21.[42]

A movement which grew out of the Adult School movement but was soon to eclipse it numerically was made up of societies variously known as Brotherhoods, Sisterhoods, Pleasant Sunday Afternoon Associations (PSAs) or Afternoon Bible Classes (ABCs). The first of these was founded by the West Bromwich Congregationalist deacon and Adult School pioneer John Blackham at his Ebenezer Chapel in 1875. Its origin was a visit he made to Birmingham in January 1875 to hear the American evangelist Dwight D. Moody. So large was the crowd that Blackham was turned away from the meeting. He then enquired after an alternative Christian gathering and was directed to nearby Steelhouse Lane Congregational Church,[43] where

> I came across a room where about 30 fine young fellows were assembled listening to their teacher, a magnificent man, with a marvellous store of information. His address was so long and so good that my head and back ached with the prolonged attention … I wondered how it was that Moody could get an audience of 4,000, while this splendid Bible class leader could only draw about thirty, and as I thought upon this the first light broke in, and I saw clearly why we had failed, and how we might succeed. I learnt also how not to do it. I realised that if the men were to be won, we must give them a service neither too long nor too learned, we must avoid dullness, prolixity, gloom, and constraint.[44]

Blackham's concern was the loss of young men from his church when they became too old for Sunday School. His solution to retain and reclaim

them was to call the members of his Ebenezer Church to pray, then go out into the streets of West Bromwich to find young male, former Sunday School scholars who did not currently attend any service of worship, and invite them to a PSA class that 'will be short and bright' and 'only last three-quarters of an hour'.[45] Within a few weeks 120 men were attending the class, a few months later other Black Country chapels had established PSAs, and within ten years there was a total of 35,000 men meeting regularly within eight miles of West Bromwich.[46] While they began in the Midlands, they soon spread across the country, with other strongholds in London and the South East, Yorkshire and Lancashire.[47] The first Sisterhood followed in 1893, and by 1905 the movement was strong enough to establish a National Council.

The ultimate aim of both movements was non-denominational evangelism. Most of their support came from the evangelical Free Churches, predominantly Quakers, Baptists, Congregationalists and the various Methodist Connexions. The Adult Schools began as a largely Quaker initiative to teach basic literacy so that people could read and study the Bible from a non-denominational perspective, and thus find faith in Christ. They developed into Bible study groups, following a pre-published lesson plan at which other subsidiary subjects were also studied in the first half hour. Most took place early on Sunday morning, although there were also mid-week evening schools. The Brotherhoods/Sisterhoods/PSAs were informal services with lively hymns and talks, usually held on a Sunday afternoon. Both organisations were Protestant and evangelistic, although the Adult School movement generally spoke of 'extension' rather than 'evangelism'. Both movements particularly sought to reach the 'unchurched' or the lapsed. Both sang hymns and they jointly issued a *Fellowship Hymn Book* for the purpose in 1909.[48] While many Adult Schools were Quaker-led and held onto Quaker premises, they strove to be non-denominational. Although the Brotherhood Movement was interdenominational, most were attached to specific churches, chapels, missions or meetings-houses. The two movements initially cooperated closely: from 1891 to 1895 the MASU published *One and All* as the 'Organ of Adult Schools and PSA Classes' in the Midlands.[49] Even when the movements separated, many churches, chapels and meeting houses continued to host both: for example, Moseley Road Friends' Institute in Birmingham had both Adult Schools and an ABC, each with membership in the hundreds. John Blackham, founder of the PSA Movement, remained an active member of the MASU until his death.

At its 1913 Annual Conference held in Birmingham, the aims of the Brotherhood Movement were summarised as follows: to lead men and women into the Kingdom of God, to unite men in Brotherhood of mutual help, to win the masses of the people to Jesus Christ, to encourage the study of social science, to enforce the obligations of Christian citizenship and to promote the unity of social service.[50] At the same conference Councillor Pickering, Chairman of their Social Service Committee, entered into the debate on the relative positions of evangelism and social action:

> Some people seemed to think that 'to bring a man to the saving knowledge of Christ' was all that was necessary. They kicked at what they termed 'politics' in the Brotherhood Movement. He believed in a full gospel, and if that took him into politics he did not care. He was going ahead. We must take Brotherhood into the Municipal Council Chambers.[51]

These aims and the debate around them reflect the widespread social concerns which stood alongside evangelism in both movements. In 1915 Arnold Rowntree revealed another significant impact of the Adult School movement in Birmingham:

> Going over Bournville the other day, Mr George Cadbury told him that Bournville would never have existed but for the fact that for some 30 or 40 years he had been a teacher in the Adult School movement, and there, in intercourse with working men as friends, came to understand it was impossible to raise a satisfactory race of people living in slums and the dark places of the world.[52]

Both movements relied on lay leadership, and in their desire to cater for the whole person both developed a plethora of other auxiliaries, including sick clubs and benevolent funds, lending libraries, book clubs, institutes and social clubs, gymnasiums, football and cricket teams, choirs, brass bands, mutual improvement societies and debating societies. Thus they could be described as taking a holistic approach: seeking to provide for the social, spiritual, educational and financial needs of their members. As the movements grew, some Adult Schools and Brotherhoods moved into their own buildings.

While both movements claimed to be non-political (by which they meant they had no party-political allegiance), they regularly debated political and social issues. The long-standing relationship between politi-

cal Liberalism and Nonconformity brought active Liberals into the movements. In the early twentieth century labour and trade union leaders also became actively involved at a national level in the Brotherhood and Sisterhood Movement. Labour MPs Arthur Henderson and Will Crooks, and the Liberal MP Theodore C. Taylor, were all present at the founding of the National Association of Brotherhoods in London in 1906, and Henderson was elected National President in 1914.[53] Active social and political involvement within the movement continued: by the 1920s they were cooperating with the National Unemployed Workers' Committee Movement. At the February 1924 opening of parliament, when demonstrations were banned within a mile of Westminster, the unemployed were invited to join with Brotherhood Movement in a service and demonstration at the (Congregationalist) City Temple, which nearly 3000 attended.[54] In 1935, the president was the Baptist Labour MP and Co-operator, A.V. Alexander, with Arthur Henderson serving as a vice president.[55]

Both movements developed international links. The Brotherhood Movement's 1910 crusade to Lille included Kier Hardie, MP, who 'told the French workers how it was reading the gospels that brought him into the field as the champion of labour, and how they needed the moral force and the noble idealism which came from devotion to the Worker of Nazareth'. It was also claimed that this was the first occasion that the 'progressive Christians of France' had shared a platform with 'the leaders of the French democracy' (including three Labour deputies).[56] The outbreak of the war thwarted a planned national Brotherhood 'To Every Man in England' evangelistic campaign. On hearing war had been declared, its campaigns committee concluded, 'just as we were on the point of perfecting our organisation and our men were at a white heat of enthusiasm for carrying the Brotherhood Message to every man in England, we have found ourselves suddenly plunged into the horrors and barbarities of a fratricidal war'.[57] The movement then became actively involved in relief work during the conflict. This included relief supplies sent in response to appeal from Lille, money raised and sent to aid Serbian children, 100 Serbian children sent to Britain and a feeding programme established in Serbia. It estimated that throughout the war it had sent £75,000 in goods and cash to Continental relief.[58]

At the end of the war, the founding of the League of Nations was greeted with enthusiasm. In February 1919 the Brotherhood movement organised a gigantic rally in support of the League at the Albert Hall

which Asquith attended. In his report to its 1919 annual conference in Birmingham the national organiser Tom Sykes commented,

> In the international realm, the ideal of the League of Nations is the Brotherhood spirit. There will be peace on earth when there is goodwill among men. Political, social, cultural, and racial distinctions should be controlled by the spirit of fraternity. War is morally wrong and ought to be impossible. We must make it impossible by destroying everything which causes it.[59]

Later in the year the first World Brotherhood Congress in London founded a World Brotherhood Federation. The veteran peace campaigner and Baptist minister John Clifford was elected president and in his address explained that one aim of the movement was 'to get rid of the remaining tyrannies of aristocratic feudalism, to recover lost liberties and to introduce freedom where it does not exist; to reconstruct the governments of the world; to make democracy a reality in spirit and in form'.[60]

Both movements then declined sharply in numbers. Mark Freeman has shown that national Adult School membership peaked at 113,789 in 1910, dropping to 50,000 in 1921 and to 33,000 by 1937.[61] However, it was still a major provider of basic education in Britain: by comparison, WEA membership in 1914 was only 11,430, rising slightly to 12,438 in 1918–19. Despite a continued rise in popularity of the WEA, it was not to eclipse the Adult Schools numerically until the 1940s.[62] Adult School membership continued to plummet, dropping to 3260 in 1970. The National Adult School Union folded in 2009, but some of the local unions continue with small numbers of groups, mostly elderly, meeting in church halls or members' homes. The faith element has almost completely been removed, so whether the decline is as a consequence of the removal of the faith element, or it was removed in an attempt to halt the decline, is an area worthy of further research.

The Brotherhood and Sisterhood/PSA Movement went on to outgrow by far the Adult School Movement. Nationally its membership peaked in 1913 at over 300,000 members. By 1919 it was down to 100,000, but unlike the Adult Schools, rose again after the war, reaching 125,000 in 1924.[63] It still claimed 115,000 members in the 1930s, but appears to have declined rapidly after the Second World War, and is now down to about 2000 mostly elderly members, although it has attempted a resurgence in partnership with the Baptist Men's Movement. Again, more work

is needed on the reasons for the decline, including why it was later and more gradual than that of the Adult Schools. Possible explanations include the rise of more liberal theology in the movement provoking division and withdrawal of support from some churches, and also the creation of the welfare state freely providing many of the same social services.

The Decline of Nonconformity in the Twentieth Century?

For some time there was a broad consensus among sociologists of religion and social historians that a long-term process of 'secularisation' in twentieth-century Britain had been accelerated by the First World War. Before 1914, it was argued, the churches were still full, but numbers then began to decline as a share of the overall population and the war itself was a significant factor in this. Stuart Mews in particular argued eloquently that

> the war had not only revealed the extent to which the churches had been marginalized, but accelerated those long-social term trends which undermined religious institutions … churchgoing slumped in the 1930s and left those who remained either turned in upon themselves, clinging grimly to selected Victorian beliefs and values, or waiting doggedly for a revival, usually conceived along essentially Victorian lines.[64]

However, in recent years these assumptions have been effectively challenged. Callum Brown has rejected previous theories of gradual secularisation dating back to the Reformation or the Industrial Revolution and fuelled by the consequences of two world wars, and instead dated the rise of secularisation precisely to 1963.[65] Meanwhile, Michael Snape has argued that the religious development of Britain in the twentieth century was characterised by variety and complexity rather than by blanket decline, noting revivals of Protestant church members and communicants in the 1920s and the 1950s.[66]

Interpreting the various statistical sources for religious affiliation is a complex matter. The baseline is usually taken as the Religious Census of 1851 which, after adjustments for 'twicers', suggested that about 61% of the population had attended worship, of whom 47% had attended Free Churches and 49% Anglican Churches. Then in the early twentieth century *The Daily News* survey of London indicated attendance figures had

fallen to 19% in 1902 and Mass Observation recorded church attendance at 15 % in 1947.[67] However, Brown has argued that *The Daily News* statistics were too low, as only in Chelsea was every service counted: if the Chelsea attendances outside of 'normal' service times are applied elsewhere in London, the attendance increases to 26%.[68] If this is a valid readjustment it sheds a new light on such common assertions as those of Hugh McLeod, that in London between the 1870s and 1914, 'except among Irish Roman Catholics, only a small proportion of working class adults attended the main Sunday church service'.[69] And there is also the likelihood that the significance of working-class attendance at less formal types of worship, such as Adult Schools and Brotherhoods/PSAs, was significantly under-represented in such surveys of church attendance.

The specific claim about the impact of the First World War has also been challenged. Robin Gill has argued that, while a decline in Nonconformist church affiliation had already begun in the second half of the nineteenth century, there was a marked increase in personal faith as a result of the experience of combat. This was evidenced, for example, by the *Army and Religion* report which revealed that the War Roll pledge of dedication had been signed by nearly 350,000 men between 1914 and 1918.[70] On the other hand, Mews's view that 'it is difficult to show that this war had any appreciable effect on churchgoing rates'[71] appears to be supported by the lack of any dramatic changes in Birmingham evangelical Free Church membership numbers either during or immediately after the conflict.[72] Indeed, overall church membership statistics indicate that between 1913 and 1919 it fell by 4%, but in the 1920s it began to increase again at much the same rate as it had from 1911 to 1913, suggesting that any wartime impact was only temporary.[73]

English Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian and Congregational church membership in the twentieth century peaked in 1906, 1911, 1914 and 1915, respectively. However, detailed examination of the statistics reveals that the decline was far from uniform and was initially very gradual: by 1930 membership had only declined to 98% of the 1910 figures. Not until after the Second World War did numbers decline significantly to 75% of the 1910 figures in 1950, 70% in 1960 and 59% in 1970.[74] However, while this post-1945 decline was mirrored by some of the movements of nineteenth-century origin, such as the Churches of Christ, the Brethren and the Salvation Army, other movements were showing noticeable growth in the later part of the twentieth century. These included the Pentecostal churches, both those of early twentieth-century British origin and more

recent churches planted from the Caribbean or Africa; Holiness churches such as the Church of the Nazarene; and the House Church/New Church Movements which emerged in the 1960s and 1970s from the charismatic renewal movement. With the exception of the latter, many of these were experiencing growth in working-class communities.

Moreover, it is worth noting that although overall church attendances continued to decline, the Free Church 'market share' of attendances was rising in the latter part of the twentieth century. As noted above, at the 1851 Census baseline the Free Churches had 47%. This then went into decline through much of the twentieth century, largely due to the significant drops in the Methodist and United Reformed Churches. By 1979 it was down to 33%, but it then increased back up to 43% in 2005, with the rise of the 'voluntarist' churches such as Pentecostals and House churches. Indeed between 1979 and 2005 the voluntarists' share increased further, from 14% to 29%, so that they now have more attendees than the Anglicans or Roman Catholics.[75] Of the churches experiencing growth in the latter part of the century, it appears to be the Pentecostals who have been most effective in working-class areas.

So where does this leave Brown's theory of a sudden decline in the 1960s? He argues that 'what made Britain a Christian nation before 1950 was not the minority with a strong faith, but the majority with some faith'.[76] His definition of a 'Christian nation' is not one in which the majority are practising Christians but one in which the majority have some nominal level of Christian belief. This could be taken to show that secularisation had already taken place long before 1950, if the practising Christians were already a minority. Perhaps what Brown is monitoring from the 1960s onwards is the death of discursive or nominal Christianity. Thus it is worth considering whether the decline in church membership in the latter part of the twentieth century, rather than being a result of secularisation, may not instead have been part of a wider 'postmodern' rejection of membership or commitment to any organisation or cause. Although each had its own specific causes and timing, there has indeed also been a marked decline in both Labour Party and trade union membership. Labour Party membership was growing in the first half of the twentieth century, peaking at over a million in 1953 and then going into decline until a membership drive in the late 1990s: the decline to 348,000 in 1979 suggests a much bigger decline than that of church membership, and over a shorter period of time.[77] The growth of trade union membership was seriously interrupted by the impact of the interwar depression but recovered and rose again to

a peak of around 13 million in 1979, from which it fell sharply with the rise of Thatcherism to pass below eight million in 2000: in this case the decline began later but was also steeper than that of church membership.[78]

However, even if there was a general tendency towards looser affiliation with collective bodies, this did not affect everybody equally and there were many signs of the continued vitality of religious belief, particularly among Protestant Nonconformists. In his more detailed discussion of church membership, Brown emphasised that 'the haemorrhage of British Christianity has not come about as a result of competition from or conversion to other churches'.[79] Yet the period on which he was focusing, from the 1960s to 2000, was precisely when the charismatic movement, which had commenced in a number of centres across Britain in the late 1950s, was growing significantly. Whilst many who were impacted by charismatic renewal remained in the older denominations, a significant number went on through the 1960s and 1970s to form new 'House churches', which have developed into denominations such as 'New Frontiers International'. In some cases entire churches chose to change their allegiance.[80] Meanwhile, Brown did acknowledge that 'one of the few sections in our society where Christian churches are thriving is in the predominantly black communities'.[81] This can be seen in three distinct developments: the establishment of denominations in Britain from the Caribbean since the 1960s, such as the New Testament Assembly or Church of God of Prophecy; the revitalisation of many inner-city churches of older denominations by the arrival of believers from Africa and the Caribbean; and the more recent church planting in Britain by African-led churches, such as the Redeemed Christian Church of God from Nigeria. However, having noted this trend which goes against his overall thesis, Brown then ignored it for the rest of his book. He also overlooked the growth in British cities of Asian churches such as those of Chinese and Korean origin.

Some Free Churches managed to maintain active work in working-class areas, with particular successes amongst Baptists and Methodists, while the Salvation Army, which had been established as a mission to the working classes with a twin emphasis on evangelism and social action, appears to have maintained an active presence in many working-class communities as have City Missions, such as the London City Mission. Another development which has connected churches with the working classes and trade unions has been the growth of industrial missions—the presence of Christian ministers or lay leaders in the workplace—whether in factories, works or offices. Whilst some initiatives such as the Railway Mission

and the Navvy Mission date back to the nineteenth century, the 'modern' Industrial Mission movement developed from the 1940s onwards and has expanded into a wide range of sectors.

Moreover, Free Churches, whether older established churches such as Baptists or Methodists, or the newer Pentecostal and independent charismatic churches, have often engaged with the working classes in the latter part of the century through social provision, such as food banks, debt advice centres, youth and children's provision, even the re-emergence of the nineteenth-century concept of parish nursing. Through the 1980s and 1990s churches were amongst those receiving local authority funding to provide a range of services, including luncheon clubs and youth and children's work, as local authorities realised that the churches (along with other elements of the voluntary sector) were in touch with people's needs and could often provide services more cheaply than the authority could itself. Cutbacks in public welfare have placed the churches in a position to fill some of the gaps that were left in social provision—indeed to return to some of the functions provided by the churches prior to the welfare state. Some of these were local projects organised by individual churches or groups of churches, while others are supported by national interdenominational organisations. Significant examples include The Trussell Trust, established in 1997 to enable churches or groups of churches to run food banks, and Christians against Poverty, founded in 1996 to train local church volunteers to provide debt advice services, and more recently job clubs.

Conclusions

English Protestant Nonconformists had a wide-ranging impact on the social and educational lives of the working classes in the twentieth century. This involvement came from across the theological spectrum, involving evangelicals such as the Cadburys and the Adult School and Brotherhood movement pioneers, as well as theological liberals such as the Unitarians Leonard and Solly. There was considerable overlap between the movements, with the Cadburys, for example, being involved in Adult Schools, the Brotherhood Movement, the Settlement Movement and pioneering day release for adult education. Prominent labour leaders with Nonconformist origins also featured heavily: Keir Hardie, who found his faith through an Evangelical Union[82] church, and Arthur Henderson, a Methodist local preacher, were also prominent in both the Brotherhood Movement and the Settlement Movement.

While some movements, such as most of the Labour churches and Brotherhood churches, proved relatively short-lived, others such as the Adult Schools, and the Brotherhood and Sisterhood Movement, had longer-term membership in the thousands across the country. Others such as the Settlement Movement, whilst never large numerically, were still significant through the impact of key individuals, such as Keir Hardie, F.H. Stead and Tom Bryan, and their ability to influence public policy on social issues. Of the movements considered, only the Brotherhood and Sisterhood Movement and the Brigade Movements appear to have maintained their original focus and purpose. The Brotherhood and Sisterhood Movement is now a very small organisation, with mostly small pensioners' groups affiliated to it, but the Boys' Brigade and Girls' Brigade movements only peaked numerically in the 1960s and, following a period of decline, now appear to be experiencing a small resurgence.

Many of the movements in which T. Arthur Leonard was involved, including HF Holidays, the Ramblers' Association and the Youth Hostels Association, still appear to be largely fulfilling their original remit, albeit with no obvious faith links or involvement and with the loss of their educational emphases. Other movements started by Nonconformists such as the Working Men's Clubs and Institutes, while financially successful, appear to have lost much of their original ethos and purpose early on. Bournville College and Morley College continue as independent further education colleges, although with no faith element. Woodbrooke College continues as Europe's only residential Quaker training college, but without the community element. While the Adult Schools and their Fircroft College retained their original purposes and ethos for much longer, again there is now little link with their origins and little or no faith-based input remains.

More research is needed on the wider social impact of these movements. The 2012 volume edited by Husselbee and Ballard on the broader Nonconformist contribution to social welfare is valuable,[83] but whilst Freeman's articles on the Adult Schools and the Settlement Movement,[84] Killingray's work on the Brotherhood Movement[85] and Johnson's thesis on the Labour churches[86] have all added to our knowledge, there is still room for an overarching study, especially as attempts at building relationships with working-class communities have continued to emerge. Some black-led churches have been very effective at reaching their diaspora communities, often by providing wider social programmes and practical assistance, varying from luncheon clubs to immigration advice, as well as

culturally relevant worship. Another area of recent growth has been the Fresh Expressions movement which began among Anglicans, but now has wide support across the spectrum of Protestant Free Churches. These, like the Brotherhood and Sisterhood Movements before them, seek to make the Christian faith accessible to those of a non-church background. Examples include Café Church, meeting informally in a café-type setting; Messy Church, with hands-on, all-age activities; and Youth Churches. Another effective bridge has been the Alpha Course, a basic introduction to the Christian faith aimed at those who are looking to explore it in a relaxed atmosphere which includes food. This too had Anglican origins but has now been widely taken up by churches of a broad range of traditions. And, as will now be obvious, much of this engagement in working-class communities in Britain today can be seen as returning to late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century methods, as Protestant Nonconformists sought to fill the gaps in local authority and central government provision by establishing a range of educational and social services.

NOTES

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Other Leaders

Edward Cadbury: An Egalitarian Employer and Supporter of Working Women's Campaigns

John Kimberley

Edward Cadbury was the eldest son of George Cadbury, and an important figure in early British management thought.[1] He was the main instigator of the management approach developed by the company in the early part of the twentieth century, and it was this approach that promoted it as a progressive and forward-thinking employer. Today, Edward Cadbury is one of the relatively forgotten figures in the history of management thought in the UK, and students of management will scour in vain for any reference to him in the standard texts.[2] This is surprising given the success of the Cadbury company over the last 150 years. While the early growth of the firm was due to the brothers George and Richard, George's son Edward was the principal architect of the managerial system that took hold. This transformation took place during the early years of the twentieth century, and was instrumental in providing the company with the favourable image it later acquired. A particular feature of Edward Cadbury's work, was his concern for women in the workplace: this was a central feature of his written work and usually reflected his own managerial practice.

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This transformation was based on some important principles, summarised later by Sir Adrian Cadbury, erstwhile chairman of the chocolate firm, and great, great grandson of Richard Tapper Cadbury, the first Cadbury to arrive in Birmingham in 1794:

> The firm remained true to certain principles from the very beginning and they have continued to stand it in good stead to this day. They include a strict regard for integrity in all the company's dealings, a belief in participation—that everyone counts and that all can contribute to the success of a business—and a commitment to quality and value.[3]

Interestingly, this explanation chimes with that of Edward Cadbury, whose own business principles were very clear and simple:

> it has been my aim and that of the other directors—and I don't think it is a low aim—to make the business profitable. My second aim has been to try to make Bournville a happy place. The provision of amenities, of good buildings, is of course a help, but a spirit of justice, of fellowship, of give-and-take, an atmosphere of cheerfulness, are more important than material surroundings … My—our—third aim has been to serve the community as a whole, by always giving the public a high standard of quality, at a reasonable price, striving to be efficient and enterprising in our policy. We have also tried to make Bournville an asset to the neighbourhood.[4]

This practical philosophy, very advanced for its time, helped create a quite unique atmosphere within the company. Perhaps the most telling reference was that to 'a spirit of justice, of fellowship, of give-and-take, an atmosphere of cheerfulness'. This went beyond wanting to be simply a good employer, and instead looked towards a deeper set of relationships between employer and employee. A set of relationships that encouraged a sense of togetherness and well-being; relationships that, for a Quaker (Friend) like Edward, involved a spiritual dimension of depth and fellowship. It is this spiritual theme that recurs time and time again in his behaviour and practice, and in the way he influenced and organised the family firm. Although Edward was not demonstrative about his Quaker faith, it was deeply held. And it was this faith that contained the spiritual thread that guided his every move, and today helps us make sense of his workplace philosophy.

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were alive with new thinking. Edward Cadbury was brought up in these heady times, and

despite belonging to a relatively detached community of Quakers, was undoubtedly influenced by new thinking, for religious belief was a central part of this changing mood. In the post-Enlightenment period, scientific insight and historical scholarship began to question aspects of the Bible, and this led to some dilution in faith amongst the wider population. Among Nonconformists this could often manifest itself in forms of social service. From the 1890s, and for much of the next 20 years, much Anglican and Nonconformist writing promoted the compatibility of science and theology. By Edwardian times the more contemplative and mystical side of religion was growing too.[5]

Among the Quakers change was to occur quite quickly. In the year of 1895 the Manchester Conference helped shift Quakerism from its evangelical strain to a more liberal one, embracing the newer ways of thinking that included biblical criticism, scientific progress and historical scholarship:

> a historic gathering which gave the first opportunity for the expression and focusing of that newer thought on religion, revelation and the vitality of the Quaker faith which has been quietly making its way amongst Friends throughout the country, and has … profoundly influenced the life and outlook of the society.[6]

This transition appeared to be smooth and relatively uneventful, yet the change was fundamental. Three principal reasons suggest themselves for this being a relatively peaceful and smooth transformation in Birmingham. First, Birmingham Quakers had never been interested in theology for its own sake. Living in a city of commerce and industry, they tended to have a practical turn of mind, with faith being practised through action and character rather than doctrine. This also encouraged an open mind and generous spirit, particularly in times of difference and dissent. A second reason was the enthusiasm amongst Birmingham Friends for specifically philanthropic work which involved outreach beyond the enclosed circle of Friends, so bringing the Society to a wider public. This meant more attention being given to the endeavour itself, rather than the form of the message. A good example of this outreach was the Adult School movement as discussed in Chap. 5: by the late nineteenth century, both George and Richard Cadbury had been Adult School teachers for many years.[7]

Finally, a number of older Friends helped maintain continuity and unity through the period of transformation. Many of them belonged, at least originally, to the evangelical school of thought, but through their

tolerance and forbearance, helped facilitate the newer ways of think-
ing. Not least amongst these was George Cadbury, originally a stalwart
among evangelicals. Along with a like-minded group of forward-looking
Friends, he recognised the need for change within the Society towards
the end of the nineteenth century and initiated a movement to provide
Friends with the intellectual and spiritual direction they needed. The
Quaker historian John Punshon suggested that 'the movement emerged
at the Manchester Conference of 1895, consolidated with the foundation
of Woodbrooke Settlement in 1902 [the house George Cadbury gave
to the Society], and came to fruition with the setting up of the Friends'
Ambulance Unit in 1914'.[8]

As a young Friend at the time, this movement would have impressed
itself upon Edward Cadbury. Most of the Quakers involved in its inception
and promotion were young and, as innovation and experiment became
commonplace within the Society, this approach lent itself well to the
entrepreneurial Cadburys. Enterprise, imagination and reform had already
lifted the family firm from a small, local company to a major employer.
This further influx of energy from within Quakerism was to help take the
company to new levels of growth and development.

Women's Work and Wages

Although Edward Cadbury had assumed a directorship within the family
firm in 1899, he still seemed to have plenty of energy for outside activi-
ties. By the early years of the twentieth century, when still in his twen-
ties, he set about the project that became the subject of his first book,
Women's Work and Wages, co-authored with George Shann and M. Cecile
Matheson.[9] George Shann was one of his personal aides, and four years
later was to be elected a socialist Councillor on Birmingham City Council.
M. Cecile Matheson is less well known, but led the Birmingham Women's
Settlement, and was described in the introduction to the book as being
'intimately associated with Girls' Clubs, has acted as a school manager in
London, and has conducted for the Board of Education inquiries into the
field of technical education for girls at home and abroad'.[10]

The research for the book had taken some three and a half years, and
was designed to provide a complete survey of the conditions under which
working-class women were earning their livelihood at the beginning of the
twentieth century. The investigation focused exclusively on Birmingham
but was very wide-ranging, with upwards of six thousand working women

interviewed, as well as over four hundred mangers, foremen and trade union representatives. Others interviewed included employers, members and officers of girls' clubs and friendly societies, school attendance officers and social workers, as well as members of the clergy. Whilst Booth's work on London and Rowntree's on York receive plenty of attention, Cadbury's work on Birmingham, by this time Britain's second largest city, is comparatively neglected. Given its comprehensive nature, this was a very important piece of social research into the role of women, their work and their domestic lives at this time. As we have seen, something of a social gospel was being promoted by Nonconformists and Christian Socialists at this time, and Edward Cadbury's work would have fitted within that approach. Even so, there was no explicit reference to these ideas or groups within his written work, which may in part be explained by the family's loyalty to the Liberal Party.

The book began with a review of the nineteenth-century legislation for young people and women workers, much of it introduced primarily to preserve their health and morals. Cadbury noted the pitiful working conditions of many women and young workers, and argued for a shorter working week and an improved working environment for such workers. To support his contention, he quoted the well-known Birmingham button-making firm of Manton's, who testified to the benefits of a shorter working week and a more pleasant set of working conditions for their workers.[11] A particular problem for women workers at this time was the discrimination they suffered in the workplace: for they were always paid less than men whether or not it was for work of a similar nature. Employers would exploit the fears of male workers, who worried about being displaced by cheaper female workers. Nor could women look to the trade unions for support, for at the turn of the twentieth century these remained predominantly male institutions, with support for, or membership by, women being rare.

Edward used the available evidence to oppose unfair and discriminatory levels of pay for women. He noted that for the most part, male and female workers did different work, and consequently were not competing groups of workers. But even where this was not the case, and work was of a similar nature, the gap in pay remained significant. About a third of the book was given over to detailed descriptions of the trades being considered: metal, jewellery, leather, paper, printing, clothing, food, tobacco and wood. At this time, Birmingham lived up to its image of the 'City of a Thousand Trades'.[12] However, Cadbury did not reserve all his criticism

for employers; some was directed at customers too: 'the dressmaker may be guilty of want of organisation, greed, or inhumanity, but the root of the difficulty lies with the customers … We are too thoughtless in our purchasing, and this applies with especial force to dressmaking'.[13]

Although the book was essentially a wide-ranging review of women's work in Birmingham, it also pointed towards remedial action. It expressed its disappointment at the inability and lack of willingness of women to form and join trade unions, which remained Edward's preferred option. So the book concluded by advocating the more thorough and efficient administration of the already existing Factory Acts through a large increase in women factory inspectors; the introduction of Wages Boards to deal with low pay; and the provision of better welfare facilities in the workplace by employers, supported by government legislation in the fields of health and safety. This did not represent a political manifesto, but did conclude with a pointed comment:

> the demand of the workers for a fairer and better life throws on the nation a moral responsibility. The nation can afford better conditions for those who win its wealth. The national income is increasing by leaps and bounds, and yet the mass of our people are in poverty. The problem of the future is the problem of distribution, and the trend of things seems to indicate that the hope of the future lies in a wise collectivism.[14]

Thus the moral dimension was emphasised and, despite Cadbury's Liberal loyalties, collective action received encouragement and support. This attitude and viewpoint seem to concur with the findings of the intellectual historian Stefan Collini, who noted the prevalence of altruism and the development of character as receiving much support among the middle and upper classes at this time.[15] The Cadbury family subscribed to certain patterns of behaviour and discipline, and would have encouraged altruism and the development of character through example and support.

As a keen opponent of low pay Edward Cadbury went on to play a significant role in the organisation of the high-profile *Daily News* exhibition on the 'sweated trades' in the same year as his book came out.[16] The *Daily News* was actually owned by the Cadbury family, and through it they had already been ardent supporters of a number of social issues such as unemployment pay and pensions, as well as the abolition of low pay and long hours. The exhibition was designed to throw light on the wretched pay and conditions suffered in such trades as hook-and-eye carding,

shirt-making and sack repairing. Its organisers hit upon the novel idea of the workers actually manufacturing their goods on site, so as to demonstrate the effort and skill involved.[17] It ran from 2 May to 13 June at the Queen's Hall, London, and was a huge success. Princess Henry of Battenberg opened the exhibition, and the future Queen Mary was one of the many thousands of visitors.

The exhibition itself was accompanied by other publicity including a *Handbook* compiled by Richard Mudie-Smith which illustrated over 30 trades that fell into the 'sweated' category, ranging from artificial flower-making to waistcoat-making, and ammunition bags to umbrella coverings. In its preface Gertrude Tuckwell, Chair of the Women's Trade Union League, wrote that

> The object of the Exhibition … is to marshal a considerable number of instances of the rates of pay, and, as far as possible, of the conditions of labour in the lowest ranks of various trades, and to confront the public with them, so that an effect may be produced which will not be transitory, and will lead to the serious consideration of remedies which shall be permanent, and which shall embrace not only individuals, but the whole of sweated labour.[18]

The Council presiding over the running of the exhibition makes interesting reading, and included many of the people associated with progressive causes of the day: senior labour figures Keir Hardy and George Lansbury, Fabians George Bernard Shaw and H.G. Wells, reforming MPs Percy Alden and Chiozza Money, women trade union leaders Gertrude Tuckwell, Clementina Black and Mary Macarthur, author Robert Blatchford, and employers George and Edward Cadbury. George Shann, Edward Cadbury's colleague and co-author, was also on the Council as well as contributing short sections on the plight of button carders, hook-and-eye carders and chain-makers to the *Handbook*. The exhibition left a deep impact on many, and out of it emerged The National Anti-Sweating League, an all-party pressure group that included among its members both Edward and his father, and which supported a Bill being proposed by Sir Charles Dilke for a minimum wage in these trades.

While *Women's Work and Wages* was a social survey in the tradition of Booth and Rowntree, Edward Cadbury's next book, *Sweating*, also co-authored with George Shann, was a more overtly political tract.[19] It was part of the Social Service Handbook series, edited by the Liberal MP Percy

Alden, which ranged over many of the social problems of the day: housing, child life and labour, poverty, unemployment and the sweated trades. Cadbury and Shann's book adopted a very clear and systematic approach to its subject. Beginning with a definition of 'sweating', the authors identified three principal elements: an unduly low wage rate, excessive hours of labour, and insanitary working conditions.[20] They argued that the factory legislation initiated at the beginning of the nineteenth century had failed to make much impression on the hostile working environment over the subsequent century. And they drew a clear distinction between a minimum wage and a living wage: the minimum wage was seen as sufficient for a bare existence, but the living wage was seen as necessary to provide appropriate housing, warm clothing, clean water and food of sufficient quality and quantity to support a man, his wife and children.

The authors firmly opposed the 10-hour day, opting for the 8-hour day instead. Supporting evidence was produced to show that it was more than possible to run a successful business with the reduced working week. Much further information was provided to support the notion of an extensive group of 'white slaves of England', with some criticism reserved for the established church and its complacent toleration of such a situation. Some support followed for the stoicism with which the labouring classes suffered such misery.

Sweating reviewed a number of remedies, before ending with the authors' preferred option. First to be considered was the proposal for consumer's leagues which could 'white list' firms that provided decent pay and conditions, and help to counter the evils of unrestricted competition. However, Cadbury argued that, although a consumer's league might help to raise public awareness, a voluntary system would be unlikely to be enough: once workers became better educated and organised such an approach might work, but in the meantime, the time and energy available could be better used elsewhere. Second was the proposal of relying on the cooperative movement, which could provide an even stronger guarantee that consumers would be supporting men and women who worked under fair and just conditions. Although Cadbury welcomed this as a move in the right direction, he argued that cooperatives' country-wide trade remained relatively small, so before they could have an impact they would need to extend themselves to a much wider field of activity.

A full chapter was given over to 'Sweating and trade unions', but here too the conclusions were generally pessimistic. The authors were very supportive of trade unions and combination more generally, but they

recognised the real difficulties involved. Many sweated workers lacked the imagination and foresight to organise, and even a small trade union contribution could be a sizeable dent in their weekly pay. Women suffered even greater difficulties. Many considered work an unfortunate interlude prior to marriage, so trade union membership seemed unnecessary; social divisions and distinctions remained commonplace among working-class women, so reducing the potential to combine; and employers reserved a special distaste for female trade unionists, sufficient to frighten many women from joining.

Having acknowledged the merits of these various approaches, the authors were unequivocal in their advocacy of state intervention. Dismissing those who suggested that intervention would interfere with competition, they defended it on the grounds that it would be for the good of the community as a whole, sometimes in rather sharp, un-Quakerly language:

> Any trade employing workers who are paid a wage insufficient to maintain health and vigour is a parasite on the community. The employers in such trades receive a subsidy analogous to a bounty so far as the workers are deteriorated or have to be subsidized by friends, or by poor law relief and charity. In most cases the employers take the line of least resistance and instead of cheapening cost by the latest improved machinery and up-to-date business methods, they look to low-paid labour for this end. Thus there is no logical distinction between fixing by legislation a standard of hours and sanitation and fixing a standard wage. A trade that does not pay a wage that allows for the maintenance of the health and strength of the workers, is detrimental to the welfare of the public.[21]

Wages Boards were their preferred mechanism for state involvement, drawing upon the experience of those that already existed in New Zealand and Victoria, South Australia. Sir Charles Dilke's Bill was acknowledged as a move in the right direction, although the authors wanted to go further. Indeed, Dilke's Bill would be a permissive one if implemented, allowing the Secretary of State a measure of discretion, but they preferred an amended version proposed by the Anti-Sweating League, which supported compulsory Wage Boards in the worst sweated trades. In another nod in the direction of the innovative and pioneering approach of the overall Cadbury philosophy, the authors concluded that the regulation of wages would necessarily be 'experimental and tentative', but would nevertheless be educational and receive widespread public support. As it turned out, this was perhaps rather too modest an expectation, for Winston Churchill,

Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Liberal government elected in 1906, was to use the Bill as the basis for his Trade Boards Act of 1909. Even in its initial form, applied only to a small number of trades such as ready-made tailoring, dress-making and lace finishing, this set up minimum wage procedures covering 250,000 women workers and it was later to be extended to include many more.[22]

Collaboration with Julia Varley

A name often overlooked in sketches of Edward Cadbury is that of Julia Varley, yet she is central to any understanding of his project, and their association illustrates this well. Julia was born on 16 March 1871 in Horton, Bradford, to Richard and his wife Martha. There appears to have been something of a radical tradition in the family, as her maternal grandfather, Joseph Alderson, was a veteran of Peterloo and the Chartist campaigns. The family were not Quakers, so apart from attending a Quaker Sunday School, Julia appears to have had no other connections with the Society.[23] Julia joined the Weavers' and Textile Workers' Union, and became Bradford branch secretary at the age of 15. Her passion for the trade union cause was deepened when she became involved in the Manningham Mills strike of 1890–91.[24] The strike was over low pay and poor working conditions, and was eventually lost by the workers. But it did lead to the formation of the Bradford Labour Union, which in turn helped form the Labour Party.

Julia's activities continued to widen, and she became the first female member of Bradford Trades Council. She went on to serve on its executive from 1899 to 1906. Between 1904 and 1907 she also served on the local Board of Poor Law Guardians, and it was during this period that she became an active suffragette, serving two short periods of imprisonment in Holloway prison. Further trade union work beckoned, and Julia became involved with Mary Macarthur's National Federation of Women Workers (NFWW). This brought her to the attention of Edward Cadbury, as the NFWW had formed a branch among the female chain-makers of Cradley Heath. Along with his father George, Edward had been supporting the chain-makers as part of their work in the Anti-Sweating League and in 1909 he invited Julia to Bournville to organise a branch of the NFWW, as well as to promote trade unionism among Birmingham women more generally.[25]

Her devotion achieved success in both these activities, and always received the enthusiastic support of Edward Cadbury. She almost immediately joined Birmingham Trades Council as Bournville branch delegate for the NFWW, and quickly became a member of the Trades Council Executive Committee in January 1910. This was a quite remarkable achievement for a woman, and in such a short space of time. It said much for her levels of tenacity and commitment. Her work for the Trades Council led to further activity over the poor pay and working conditions of brick-makers, bakers and chain-makers. She even used the *Bournville Works Magazine*, the house journal of the Cadbury company, to publicise their plight in written articles.[26] It was during Julia's support for the bakers that she was described by George Haynes, himself a baker and Birmingham Trades Council delegate, as 'a pocket dreadnought'.[27] The support provided for the bakers was a good example of a professional campaign: through a well-organised public relations offensive involving the support of Birmingham City Council and local church leaders, the trades council established itself as an important body in the city, and the campaign proved a success.[28]

Next, Julia threw herself into the campaign to improve the lot of the women chain-makers of nearby Cradley Heath. Although this was one of the 'sweated trades' covered by the recent Trade Boards Act, employers often got around even the bare minimum of 2.5d per hour by contracting out, as they were allowed to do. Julia Varley and the Birmingham Trades Council were quick to react, and discouraged the women from signing up for the contracting out arrangements. As a result, they were eventually locked out and a dispute followed, which attracted widespread interest. Fundraising was the key, and Julia used her contacts at Bournville to good effect. Edward Cadbury, being a well-known opponent of the 'sweated trades', provided financial support to the chain-makers. He was also instrumental, along with Julia, in setting up the Women Workers' Social Services League at Bournville, with its express purpose being 'to bring about, through combination, better conditions for the working girls of Birmingham'.[29] Before the lockout began, the League had already sent £15 to help the chain-makers get organised. During its first year of existence, the League agreed to send £10 a month to support the Birmingham Women Workers' Organisation Committee, the body set up to help improve labour conditions for women throughout the area, and the chain-makers of Cradley Heath received most of these funds. By August the chain-makers were refusing en masse to sign the employers' exemption document, and on 27 August the employers instigated

a lockout of all workers. By November, 600 women chain-makers had joined the NFWW. It was a protracted dispute, but the strikers kept up their spirits through rallies, demonstrations and fundraising activities. They attracted support from national figures such as the leading Labour MP Arthur Henderson, and novelist John Galsworthy, eventually celebrating a significant victory, as the employers conceded defeat in October, after some nine weeks of strike action and agitation.

These battles were just the first of many fought by Julia on behalf of workers in the West Midlands. By 1912 she had become convinced that men and women should belong to the same trade union, and her loyalties moved from the NFWW to the Workers' Union (WU). She became the WU organiser for women, and began to represent trade unionists on a range of official institutions, including the Labour Advisory Board, the body set up by the Ministry of Labour to report on the workings of labour exchanges. She continued as Women's Organiser for the WU, and then for the Transport and General Workers' Union after a merger in 1929. She was awarded an OBE in 1931 for her public service, and retired in March 1936. She continued to live in Bournville until blindness and failing health forced her to return to Bradford to live with her sister. She died in 1952.

Just before the end of her life, Julia reminisced about her time with Edward Cadbury, and in particular his support for the women chain-makers of Cradley Heath:

> Mr Edward did more for them than he cared to have known. He gave me money to help the poorer women, and the women at Bournville collected hundreds of pounds. They were the finest friends of the people among whom I was working. They really were angels of mercy.[30]

Perhaps the final word on Julia deserves to be that of John Cobbett, historian of Birmingham Trades Council, making clear the important role she played after being the first woman to be elected to the Council:

> She was a very able woman, with no false modesty. Within three months, she was elected to the executive, and with a break of only five months she remained on the executive committee for ten years, and played a prominent part in every trade union struggle during that time. The advent of Julia Varley started a new era of trade unionism in Birmingham. The organisation of women had a vehement and tireless advocate and male trade unionists could ignore it at their peril. She was a much needed feminine gadfly. A pocket dreadnought …[31]

Developing Welfare in the Workplace

An interesting development that took place in 1909 was a conference on welfare work, called at the behest of Edward Cadbury.[32] This seems to have been the first formal meeting of the group of staff and employers that went on to form the Welfare Workers' Association, the body that eventually became the present-day Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD). The first conference focused on welfare in the workplace, and in particular the place of women in the workplace, and was held in Birmingham from 10 to 13 September at Fircroft, a Cadbury family home which evolved into an adult residential college under the guidance of Edward's brother George Jr. A wide range of companies was represented, many of them in Quaker ownership or with Quaker beginnings: Crosfield's of Warrington, Reckitt's of Hull, Jacob's of Dublin, Chivers' of Cambridge, Rowntree's of York and, of course, Cadbury's of Birmingham. A particularly important contributor was Adelaide Anderson, Principal Lady Inspector of Factories.[33]

Over the previous decade, there had been rapid development in welfare work by a small group of forward-thinking employers. But there had been little exchange of information and viewpoints, so Edward Cadbury organised the conference to provide a suitable venue for this. Many papers were read and discussed. Anderson spoke on the relationship between long hours, stress, fatigue and efficiency. Pumphrey, head forewoman of Cadbury's, outlined the importance of continued education to both employer and employee. The moral dimension was well in evidence, with papers on thrift by Wood of Rowntree's and Gaze of Colman's. Grieve of Cadbury's spoke on the moral and educational value of physical exercise, and Edward Cadbury spoke on welfare work in the Cadbury plant at Bournville, while George Shann read a paper on the relationship between welfare work and social reform.

Health and education tended to be the dominant themes. The success of the event was such that everyone involved agreed to maintain contact. Mary Wood agreed to act as secretary, and she tended to be the repository for information on new developments and innovation. But the group did not set up a formal association, and so no name was given to it. Although contact continued, the next meeting did not take place until 1913, the year the Welfare Workers' Association formally began. Even so, the 1909 meeting under the leadership of Edward Cadbury could reasonably claim to be the real beginnings of the personnel management movement. This

is backed up by Adelaide Anderson's comment that the 1909 meeting was 'a step of some consequence to the movement'.[34]

Three years later, Edward's next book was *Experiments in Industrial Organization* (1912), and it began with a dedication to his family forerunners:

> This book is dedicated to my father, George Cadbury, and to the memory of my uncle, Richard Cadbury, who together, more than 50 years ago, conceived the ideals which have made possible the development of the experiments described.[35]

It is notable that Edward took little credit for the innovatory practices he was about to describe. Instead, full credit was given to his father, George, and his uncle, Richard, and the environment they had created at the Bournville workplace. He suggested his own 'experiments' were a logical development of the earlier approaches to managing the Cadbury works. No doubt there was some truth in this, but it was perhaps overly modest. Many of the labour management practices described in the book emerged in the first decade of the twentieth century, and this was the very period when substantive management of the company shifted from George and Richard to their children. Women were the majority of employees in the company, and Edward had overall responsibility for the women in the factory for 20 years from 1899 to 1919. It followed that many of the labour management practices emanated from within Edward's sphere of responsibility, although he would have been supported by his father, brother and cousins in this project.

The use of the word 'experiments' in the title might seem rather unusual in this context. However, Quakers had a history of using the term 'experiment', which relates back to the founder of the movement, George Fox. Fox had begun his search for spiritual enlightenment at the beginning of the English Civil War in 1643. In a period of political and religious turmoil, he was deeply disturbed and upset by those who professed to be Christians but failed to live up to essential Christian standards. He felt drawn towards the dissenting groups which had forsaken all priests and ministers, but these proved a disappointment too:

> and when all my hopes in them and in all men were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could tell me what to do, then, oh then, I heard a voice which said, 'There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak

to thy condition', and when I heard it my heart did leap for joy … And this I knew experimentally.[36]

Essentially, Fox was saying that he felt his awareness of Christ as a direct and personal experience. Consequently, he developed a doctrine in which 'living in the Light' was constantly to test one's behaviour against 'the movement of the spirit': not a catechism to be learned, but an experience to be had. This was a lesson intimately familiar to Edward from his earliest years, and the practices introduced at Bournville would always have been tested against the experience of the 'Inward Light' as he and his family experienced it. In that sense the specific practices could, and would, be changed as situations and circumstances changed.

Cadbury outlined the guiding principles of the firm's approach to labour at the beginning of the book:

> The supreme principle has been the belief that business efficiency and the welfare of the employees are but different sides of the same problem … The test of any scheme of factory organization is the extent to which it creates and fosters the atmosphere and spirit of co-operation and goodwill, without in any sense lessening the loyalty of the worker to his own class and its organizations.[37]

These early comments go to the heart of the guiding principles of the company's labour management. We are immediately alerted to the dual policies of efficiency and welfare: the need for an efficient business to secure success goes without saying, but an acknowledgement of the needs of labour was less common among employers. Most employers remained embedded to the free market approach, and a tilt in the direction of the worker was unusual. Cadbury immediately demonstrated a bond with the worker and a sense of togetherness in the stress on encouraging and promoting 'an atmosphere and spirit of co-operation and goodwill'. Child has reminded us that a sense of service was a strong and long-standing ethic among Quaker employers.[38] But more particularly the Society had long held to a strong peace testimony, so the desire to establish a peaceful workplace with strong working relationships would have been second nature. Yet, in contrast to the more common forms of welfare provision, this was not pursued with a paternalist aim of securing a pliable workforce, for it was to be achieved 'without in any sense lessening the loyalty of the worker to his own class and its organizations'.

Although somewhat critical of scientific management as a system, Edward nevertheless understood the virtues of a well-run company. System and order were important to the Quaker way of doing things, and Edward made the importance of a well-run workplace clear in *Experiments*:

> To accomplish this purpose the directors found it necessary to adopt a careful method of selecting their employees, a scheme for educating them, carefully thought-out methods of promotion, just and fair discipline, and opportunities for the development of the organizing ability and initiative of the workers.[39]

This level of organisation typified the Cadbury workplace. Care was taken to ensure the right people were selected for employment with the firm and the new employees had to be keen and enthusiastic about education and training, as this would form an important element in their development.

At the same time, disciplinary processes remained a key platform in the company, but were always administered with a velvet glove. Discipline was, and remains, a difficult area for a Quaker. At heart peacemakers, the issue of discipline sorely tested Quaker sensibilities. But, being a pragmatic Quaker, Edward had a clear understanding of its purpose: 'to obtain individual improvement and development, as well as industrial efficiency of the business'.[40] Note that individual improvement and development came before the needs of the business. That balance was important to Edward, and it was reiterated regularly throughout the book. In the early days the company had taken an approach not too different from many other employers and, although always infused with a degree of compassion, fines and deductions had been common penalties. But experience had taught them that this was not reformative, and that a different approach was necessary. Fines had been abolished in 1898, and a shift away from punitive sanctions begun. A simple caution was often found to be sufficient to bring about improved behaviour. The company encouraged the employees to think of their responsibilities as well as their rights within the workplace:

> the discipline to be aimed at is, not one that demands unreasoning obedience, but one in which the workers recognize the relationship between all members of the industrial organization, workers, foremen, and employers alike. The worker must recognize that the welfare of the employer and employed are not antagonistic, but complementary and inclusive, and that each position brings its duties and its rights. Thus the workers are led, not driven, and each consciously co-operates with the management in working for a common end.[41]

This approach seemed to work for the benefit of both parties, and over time the need for discipline declined and continued to remain low.

Moreover, the book began with the bold statement that

> It is taken for granted that before any so-called scheme of welfare work can be of lasting good, a living wage must be paid, and hours of labour and hygiene conditions must not involve the deterioration of the workers.[42]

Edward Cadbury's earlier work and research in the field of sweated labour left its mark here. He had always opposed poor-quality working arrangements and pay, and had campaigned against them for years. In return for what were good pay and conditions, employees suffered some intrusion into their private lives. But it was a price most prospective employees were prepared to pay because the return was considerable compared with many other industries in and around the Birmingham area. For example, the information collected by the company on each applicant included details of family history, general health and whether a young worker was living at home with parents. This was in addition to the standard information such as name, address, age, school achievements and academic standard. For a period of time, only girls who lived within a two-mile radius of the company were selected, on the basis that further travelling would induce fatigue. The plus side was that the young workers were cared for at least as well as they were in their families, and almost certainly better than in some. So, for example, those under the age of 16 and travelling some distance, had their fares above a shilling per week paid for by the company. All new employees were given a thorough examination by the works doctor, including measuring height, weight, conditions of heart and lungs, sight, hearing and teeth. Advice and medical assistance were provided when needed, and there were hot baths during works time too. The help and cooperation of parents were always important, and the Cadbury company was particular in consulting and involving parents in the workplace development of their offspring.[43]

As noted earlier, the Cadbury family were strong supporters of Adult Schools, and had set up and taught in them in Birmingham for over 50 years. Such was the reverence for education held by the family, it was to be expected that it would form an important part of an employee's development. The Bournville Works Education Committee had been established in the summer of 1906, and was designed to centralise and coordinate Education Policy. It was perhaps the most important Bournville committee in that it consisted of two directors (no other committee having

more than one), two medical officers, seven heads of important departments, and representatives of Birmingham Education Committee and others serving on local After-Care and Evening Schools Sub-Committees. There was plenty of cooperation with the local education authority, and the education of employees up to the age of 16 tended in part to continue their schooling. Typical subjects included English language and literature, mathematics, history, geography and a language. These then continued up to the age of 18, although they were then taught alongside more vocational subjects, those typical of an apprenticeship. The chapter on the 'Education of employees' was the longest of any chapter at 57 pages, and was a demonstration of Edward Cadbury's commitment to his employees and their education and development: 'it is the duty, as well as the interest, of the employer to foster the love of education amongst his employees'.[44]

Concluding his book, Edward returned to the three themes that had been consistent throughout his writings: welfare, factory legislation and trade unions. The section on trade unions ended on a positive note:

> There are now in the works strong branches of trade unions, and the membership is increasing steadily. This sign of awakening consciousness is found also amongst the girls, and a branch of the National Federation of Women Workers has been established. The recent Trades Boards Act, regulating as it does the wages in the Card Box Trade, has had a distinct influence in this direction.[45]

As we have seen, the whole notion of 'experiments' drew on the core attitudes of Quaker belief and were an updated version of a long tradition of social testimony traceable back to George Fox himself in the seventeenth century. It is therefore worth reviewing Edward's approach to management from the perspective of the behaviour Fox laid out as that appropriate for 'true Christians', and which has been usefully summarised in Pickvance's *Reader's Companion to George Fox's Journal*.[46]

First up was a need to honour God in all men and women, which was embodied in the traditional Quaker forms of address: everyone, regardless of social standing or gender, was addressed as either 'thee' or 'thou'. This approach and practice, somewhat radical for its time, emphasised the equality of all, not least of men and women. The Cadbury plant was a good example of this, with women receiving much the same treatment as men and, as we have seen, Edward consistently supported and promoted the role of women not only in his own workplace but also in the wider society.

Closely allied to this was a need to be just and faithful in one's dealing with others. For employers this would have involved treating employees fairly, opposing oppression and the payment of low wages. Employees were to be treated almost as an extension of the family. Of course, this meant, in turn, the expectation of honest service by the employee. In other firms abuse and exploitation in the workplace might have been justified by the notion of the single-minded pursuit of profit, but Edward's view of profit was a wider and more inclusive one:

> Profits belong in three places: they belong to the business—to keep it steady, progressive and sound. They belong to the man who helped produce them. And … they belong also, in part, to the public. A successful business is profitable to all three … of these interests—planner, producer and purchaser.[47]

This statement was very Quakerly—clear, simple and succinct. It also considered all those modern jargon describes as 'stakeholders', rather than merely the employer. There was no reference here to impersonal economic forces, only to people: the 'human factor' received prominence.

Moreover, good governance and administration were seen as further important forms of justice, and this was well in evidence in the Bournville plant. Merciful forms of justice were administered in the workplace, as can be seen by the very small numbers of dismissals to be recorded in the plant. Meanwhile, Works Committees and Councils, as well as a plethora of social activities, encouraged a sense of civic engagement, as well as partnership and democratisation in the workplace.

A fourth important injunction involved peace-making. Quakers have always seen themselves as active peacemakers, and have worked very hard to cultivate and promote harmonious relationships wherever they have been involved. This was particularly the case in the workplace, where the potential for disagreement and upset was high and was well-expressed at a national level in *Foundations of a True Social Order*, first agreed by London Yearly Meeting in 1918: 'The spiritual force of righteousness, loving-kindness, and trust is mighty because of … the appeal it makes to the best in every man, and when applied to industrial … relations achieves great things.'[48] Among the ways in which the Cadbury company tried to do this was through its Works Councils and Shop Committees, which gave workers the opportunity to air particular points of view, including grievances, in a cooperative and supportive spirit and framework. Other opportunities were provided by suggestions schemes, as well as through formal

trade union representation. In these ways the firm promoted a culture of goodwill and cooperation in the workplace. This 'mood' or 'way of doing things' took hold over the years, eventually permeated the whole company and was a clear fulfilment of the Quaker ethic of active peacemaking.

Further, there was a certain zeal about the need to be upright and righteous, which in the fields of trade and commerce would have meant opposition to all forms of deceit. Deception was not uncommon in the early days of industrialisation, and certainly remained in the Birmingham of small backstreet firms well into the twentieth century. In a critical paper on scientific management, Edward Cadbury recognised the ruling tendencies within the world of work, and accepted that scientific management was likely to become generally applicable over time. But uppermost in his mind was the impact it was likely to have on the employee, and it was to that area that he directed his attentions. He was particularly conscious of the de-skilling that was likely to take place, and was fearful of the injustice or deceptiveness of some of the results. This led him to use language that might have come from a committed trade unionist: 'We must remember that the trained skill and initiative which distinguishes an artisan from an unskilled labourer has a money value, and under scientific management this capital passes from the workman to the management.'[49] This Cadbury uprightness extended to patience and forbearance too, maintaining a certain tolerance during tense periods of potential conflict like the General Strike.

A final element of traditional Quaker social testimony was a sense of responsibility towards the whole of creation. It may seem puzzling at first to mention this when considering social action in the workplace, but today concern for the environment is a central tenet of governments and commerce. In Cadbury practice this was most obviously demonstrated by the building and subsequent maintenance of the Bournville village. All houses had gardens to promote health and well-being, no public houses were built, and to this day the site retains plenty of parks, green areas, streams, woodland and sports and social facilities, as well as a close husbanding of the environment and its use. Although then used as a marketing ploy, the 'factory in a garden' badge really was an accurate description of the Cadbury plant and its surroundings.

Conclusions

These examples of principles and practice provide us with an outline of the Cadbury culture, and an approach to management that clearly demonstrates something beyond paternalism. Even the more sophisticated forms

of paternalism, in which employers treated their staff well, willingly recognised trade unions and had clear industrial relations policies, fell short of the Cadbury approach.[50] A more appropriate term to describe the social relationships within the company at this time would be 'covenant'. This language is more often associated with religion and theology than with the world of work, but it is a language that suggests a deep set of relationships that are equal and binding. There is a sense of permanence about such a relationship.

A covenantal relationship is essentially a 'lived' relationship, and any lived relationship will generate a series of agreements and understandings as it evolves. In the commercial environment, this will begin with a company demonstrating integrity in all its dealings. That was clearly the case at Cadbury's. Integrity and truthfulness were noted Quaker testimonies, and they held sway at Bournville at that time. Fidelity and faithfulness were bywords of managerial behaviour in the company, and that behaviour created a sense of loyalty and security within the staff. There was also a wider fidelity that included the local community at Bournville, as well as there being a significant tilt in the direction of the environment—hence the interest in gardens, playing fields and parks. These concerns travelled beyond the interested parties of any given contract.

For Edward, each employee in the company was seen as part of a community, but more than that, a loving and faithful community. Any factory is a complex operation, and it would have been unusual if the network of relationships in the Bournville factory had not been equally complex. But 'covenant' could embrace this complexity: the network of relationships in the workplace were to be nurtured and sustained by notions of loyalty, mutuality and trust. Such values would maintain the very fabric of community. Although he did not use the term 'covenant', R.H. Tawney made similar observations about the Quaker business ethic.[51] It is reasonable to say that Edward Cadbury had a covenantal sense of direction for the company, and one with which he did his best to comply. It is not the whole story of Cadbury's in this period, but it is an important part of the story, and one that remains to be fully explored.

Although covenant is a concept that receives little traction in the hard-nosed world of business, there have been recent instances of it receiving at least some attention. Lord Digby Jones, Director General of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) 2000–06, and Labour's Trade Minister 2007–08, presented a BBC Radio 4 programme on 'Business covenant' in August 2014.[52] His principal theme was the promotion of

the idea of a compact between business and its workers and the local community. He saw this as something akin to a company mission statement, emphasising the importance of building up relationships of trust based upon integrity and ethical behaviour. It may not be entirely coincidental that Jones, like the Cadbury family, hails from the Birmingham and West Midlands area. For this area was built on the basis of small and medium-sized industries, which has produced relatively harmonious industrial relations, as the distance between employer and employee has been small.[53] Moderate trade unionism has been the result, and this has helped build good working relationships, ones that promote more cooperative ways of working. Covenant as an idea and practice would feel familiar in these workplace cultures.

Similar themes have been promoted by other leading figures in business and in the Church of England. In his programme, Digby Jones noted the views of the Very Reverend David Ison, Dean of St Paul's Cathedral, suggesting that covenant is something deeper than a commercial contract, instead displaying a firm commitment to and support for the well-being of the local community: 'You want to see business saying, "Yes we are committed to the life of this locality. We have a commitment to the people here and we recognise our responsibility to them."'[54] Meanwhile, Justin King, former Chief Executive of Sainsbury's and also from the West Midlands, said that businesses have a moral duty to go beyond what is expected of them: 'I believe it's the things businesses do that they don't have to which define where they sit in society. As a citizen, we would not consider someone who says, "I just obey the law, no more", as a good citizen. That's a base-line level, I would suggest. I don't think corporations are any different.'[55] Interestingly enough, a more recent member of the Cadbury family also took part in the programme: Sir Dominic Cadbury, a grandson of George Cadbury, who was the final family member to chair the company until his retirement in 2000. He noted how George Cadbury had always been a step ahead in his thinking: 'You could argue that the vision of the man was so remarkable that it was unthinkable that government would ever have to come in and tell George Cadbury what to do. George Cadbury was telling the government what to do and leading society.'[56] That remains something of a lesson for businesses which complain about too much regulation.

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Walter Citrine: A Union Pioneer of Industrial Cooperation

James Moher

Walter Citrine is largely forgotten today, apart from his indispensable guide to the conduct of meetings, the *ABC of Chairmanship*, often simply cited as 'Citrine' by way of authority for a debating point. Yet he was a central figure in the British trade unions at the height of their power and influence during and after the Second World War. There are a number of reasons for this amnesia, but the main one seems to be that Citrine was portrayed as a grey, predictable, apparatchik figure, 'the super-bureaucrat',[1] and thus came to symbolize the drift of the trade unions to the right.[2] Citrine has also been overshadowed by his contemporary Ernest Bevin, whose life and achievements were captured soon after his death by his biographers Francis Williams and Alan Bullock.[3] Bevin's popularity and standing with the British public after his prominent role in the war effort was too great to challenge. He had left the union scene to become Foreign Secretary and died in 1951. Instead, 'Baron Citrine of Wembley', as he became in 1946, who had retired from the fray, became fair game. There have been some recent attempts to redress the balance, with valuable reassessments of Citrine's life and times based on his substantial archival legacy.[4] So it

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is fitting that he figures in this collection as one of those chosen to illustrate its revisionist themes and continue that reassessment. The aim here will not be to try to justify his every action or viewpoint, but rather to chart and explain his significance as a pioneer in bringing the British trade unions to the centre of national and international life. Indeed, his many achievements will reveal Citrine to be one of the most outstanding intellects and actors the unions have contributed to British society.[5]

Formative Influences

Walter McLennan Citrine (1887–1983) was born in Liverpool into an artisanal seafaring family. His grandfather, Francisco Cirtini, came from Italy and his father, Arthur, anglicized the family name.[6] Arthur was a master rigger on the old sailing ships and latterly a river pilot and marine salvage man, though frequently without work. His heavy drinking also kept the family poor and influenced the young Walter's lifetime habits, so that he vowed 'never to let drink get a hold over me'.[7] His mother, Isabella, had four boys and two girls, was a hospital nurse and devout Scottish Presbyterian. Walter did not smoke either, as tuberculosis was 'the scourge of the Citrines', with his mother and other relatives dying from it, and generally adopted a strict health regime all his life. He went to a local Presbyterian Mission school, where his formal education was elementary: 'the rudiments of arithmetic, grammar, geography and history'.[8] However, unlike many of the other union and labour figures of his day, he was not very religious.[9]

He left school at the age of 12 in 1899 for dusty and heavy work in a local flour mill for long hours on boys' wages. However, he improved his own education, acquiring 'the dictionary habit' early on by studying and memorizing the meaning of words. At 14, he began work in the electrical trade as an unpaid apprentice, before moving on to paid training and becoming fully qualified in 1906. In 1910, he gained valuable experience at the very large Pilkington's glass-making works in St Helens, where they were 'installing some of the biggest direct-current electric motors in the country, and heavy traction work was all new to me. I was deeply interested in electrical theory.'[10] He then lodged in a collier's cottage and worked as an electrician in the major coalfield area around St Helens. He recalled fondly the many animated discussions about working life, politics and social affairs with the miner and his sons. He was back on Merseyside in 1911 working for an electrical contracting firm. After work he recalled

puzzling away on his own in the evenings over electrical issues. Electrical theory was at the cutting edge of the new technology and this keen interest marked Citrine out as a new type of professional when he switched to union affairs.

His father took him canvassing for the Conservative Party and to their hustings, wearing a blue rosette 'in blissful ignorance of what it was all about'.[11] Liverpool then had a strong Unionist and Orange Protestant working-class tradition and that was his background. The Independent Labour Party (ILP) and the Labour Party increasingly eroded that Tory influence from the early decades of the twentieth century. In fact, Citrine, though a Unionist, was never strongly pulled towards the Orange identity, not being at all religious.[12] Instead, in 1905, when he was 18, an electrician workmate 'helped the process of political understanding with his daily diatribes against the capitalist system'. Tom Brett, a member of the tiny but influential Marxist sect the Social Democratic Federation (SDF), 'deluged me with pamphlets and arguments'.[13] Consequently Citrine read *The Communist Manifesto*, *Value Price and Profit*, and even *Capital*. These seem to have had some impact, as he afterwards said, 'I imbibed enough of his doctrines', though he added, 'I began to realise that Karl Marx was not the fountain of wisdom in all he wrote, as I had previously supposed.'[14]

It was the 'street socialism' of the time that induced him to attend a meeting of the ILP, then the most influential socialist organization in the north of England. There he bought two books of Robert Blatchford's, *Merry England* (1894) and *Britain for the British* (1902), which convinced him with 'a cogent and reasoned argument for Socialism'.[15] Like many of that generation, Blatchford had been influenced by William Morris's anarcho-communism and his hugely influential *News from Nowhere* (1884); however, it was Blatchford's more practical socialist programme requiring the state to play a decisive role in managing the economy through nationalization of the land 'and other instruments of production' to become 'the common property of the people', which appealed to Citrine.[16] His renowned methodical mind suggests that his socialism was also shaped by his training in electrical theory. Sometime in the early 1900s he joined the ILP and admired their then prominent left-wing leaders, Ramsay MacDonald and Philip Snowden, and their oratory at public meetings. He was soon arguing the case with fellow electricians and even giving talks to fellow union and ILP members. Citrine does not mention his anti-war stance or probable occupational exemption from war service,

but after the First World War, aged 29, he stood as a union-sponsored Labour parliamentary candidate in Conservative Wallasey in the 1918 general election. Losing heavily in that 'Khaki' election, and beaten again in the local municipal elections later that year, Citrine packed in party politics to concentrate on his trade union career.[17]

He had joined the Electrical Trades Union (ETU) in October 1911, which had an 'essential craft bias'.[18] The qualified electricians sought to combat the use of poorly trained handymen and 'boy' labour, who would work for much lower wages, by insisting on proper time-served apprentice-ships and recognized qualifications. The ETU, formed in 1889, remained divided over whether to confine its membership to the more skilled grades or to include all the semi-skilled electrical workers. It was also divided over whether to join one of the bigger general unions then emerging. The gen-eral industrial union approach was favoured by the more left-wing London branches, who seem to have been influenced by the political syndicalism then prevalent in the metropolis.[19] Citrine himself was in favour of this more general model and wrote about it in the *Electrical Trades Journal* for 1912–14. However, the majority, based mainly in the Manchester fac-tories, were more interested in obtaining the best rewards for their highly skilled work, maintaining and servicing the advanced electrical installa-tions then being introduced all over British industry, and they stuck to the separate craft model. This craft exclusivity kept the ETU small, with just about 3000 members; however, like most unions, it grew significantly during the First World War, being pushed into organizing the semi-skilled grades flooding into the wartime factories, so membership climbed to almost 60,000 by 1920.[20]

The branch was the cornerstone of the craft unions. It was where mem-bers went to pay their subscriptions and receive benefits in cases of unem-ployment, sickness and, for their dependents, death. There they discussed pay, conditions and membership recruitment prospects, as well as report-ing on job vacancies in their area. Accordingly, those meetings—usually on Saturday evenings above a pub—were well attended, perhaps 50 to 100 in the Liverpool ETU branch at the time. It would also have been a sociable gathering and a quantity of ale would have been consumed down-stairs after the business was completed, though they were strict about alcohol and had 'door-keepers' to prevent anybody entering the meet-ing itself under the influence. All members were expected to serve in the various offices of the branch, for example Chair, Secretary or Treasurer, elected annually, on pain of hefty fines.[21] The number of branch jobs with

financial responsibilities tells us how important to the survival of these fragile organizations of labour was the collection, accounting for and securing of their small local funds.

Another important body was the district committee, made up of delegates from all branches in the area. These tended to be the more experienced and able officers, as most negotiations took place at that level with their employers. Electricians were then a highly intelligent, articulate but argumentative and militant group and John Lloyd has brought to life from the union archives many battles between the branch and district committee activists and the Manchester headquarters: over rules' interpretation, benefit payments, the authorization of officially supported strike action, as well as disagreements over more general union and labour political issues.[22] So all these meetings could be very lively but also stressful for those attending and particularly for the officers. Citrine was elected chair of the district committee in 1913, and successfully handled the Merseyside's electricians' involvement in a national pay strike in 1914. He said he learned quite a bit from dealing with major local employers such as Lord Leverhulme at the huge Lever Brothers' complex at Port Sunlight. He also became regional secretary and president of the Federation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Trades (FEST) from 1917, which brought him into contact with the other industrial unions on Merseyside and such large employers as Cammell Laird at their huge Birkenhead shipyard during the war.[23]

Soon after becoming chair of his district committee, Citrine decided to put together some guidance notes on the conduct of meetings for all three Merseyside branches—Liverpool, Birkenhead and Bootle. It proved so popular that the union adopted it nationally and it 'was incorporated in its essentials into the union's 1914 rule-book'.[24] In 1920, he was encouraged to produce an expanded version of these notes for other unions, entitled *The Labour Chairman*, with an introduction by a leading railway union and TUC figure of the time, J.H. Thomas. Citrine was clearly bringing himself to the attention of a wider audience, and the contents covered the full range of procedural arrangements, based on Erskine May and other parliamentary debating authorities. These may seem boring, technical matters, but they were the lifeblood of well-conducted union meetings. It was an expanded version of this booklet which became his famous *ABC of Chairmanship*, published in 1939 by the Fabian Society and subsequently by many other labour bodies. This soon became the basis of the procedures of nearly all the committees of labour organizations throughout the twentieth century: from local union branches to national union

executives, and on up to the TUC's General Council and Labour Party's National Executive Committee and their annual conferences.

Today we take for granted many of the established rules for conducting meetings. As the unions grew massively in size from the late 1880s onwards into memberships of millions, these rules were developed and refined. The success of Citrine's *Labour Chairman* and the *ABC* showed that he had captured their essence in a working guide. In the days when such organizations depended on an oral culture, meetings were their lifeblood and if not well conducted could have serious consequences for their effectiveness. As one earlier union guide highlighted,

> A meeting is a spiritual as well as a material fact, and the chairman is not only a symbol of order, but an actual means, quite apart from his rulings, towards assisting the meeting to achieve unity of thought and purpose [rather than being] a concourse of atoms.[25]

Thus Citrine made a major contribution to the renowned discipline and orderly manner of conducting the business of the British trade unions on the most stressful of occasions, such as when deciding on or conducting major strike actions. The best debaters and many budding leaders have honed their skills through the study and use of 'Citrine' in meetings of all sizes and many important left–right battles over elections to office or policy issues have been influenced by those best versed in the more arcane rules of debate.[26]

Citrine's period as an ETU official was one of the most turbulent in Britain and Merseyside, with massive strikes on road and rail, ports, docks and mines. A new generation of militant union activists emerged, fired up often by the appeal of 'industrial unionism' inspired by syndicalist ideas. In 1911, Merseyside witnessed one of the bloodiest industrial battles ever on the seafront, in the docks and on the streets and troops were deployed to quell rioting with fatal consequences. Across the Irish Sea in Dublin, a protracted strike and lockout of transport and general workers spilled over to Liverpool in 1913 and the British TUC was closely involved. These were heady times to be involved in trade unionism. The eminent industrial relations historian Professor Hugh Clegg concluded that it was not until after these ideas had been tested to destruction in the General Strike that the TUC finally rejected the 'dogma of industrial unionism', which had 'intellectually … held the stage in the British trade union movement for twenty years'.[27] Neither Citrine's autobiography nor other accounts have

explored the extent that he was influenced by the seductions of industrial unionism as a young activist impatient with the limitations of parliamentary politics for industrial reform. Yet his writings of this 1912–14 period show a distinct syndicalist edge, then seeing 'the interests of the employer and the worker are diametrically opposed'.[28] It is clear that his ideas changed considerably as a result of his greater dealings with employers during the First World War and afterwards as a national official. Yet he always retained some attraction for industrial rather than remote and superficial parliamentary solutions. Shorn of syndicalist ideology he continued to favour 'One Big Union' (the TUC), and support sympathetic action (the General Strike), and he produced an important TUC report on union structural reform which successive Congresses debated from 1925 to 1929.[29]

In 1920, Citrine was elected as one of two assistant general secretaries of the national union, based at their Manchester headquarters. He had ETU negotiating responsibilities with major employers in the Lancashire region and continued as secretary/president of the regional committee of the FEST until 1923. It was then he taught himself shorthand and took evening courses in economics and accountancy, to help him record proceedings and decisions accurately and to analyse accounts and balance sheets, long before unions had research departments. He later acknowledged that he also 'learned a good deal from the employers' at that time since, as negotiators, 'most of us had not learned to get away from the platform style of delivery'. He developed a less aggressive approach than was then common and found it better to develop reasonable 'continuing relationships' with his opposite numbers, believing that 'the process of collective bargaining between employers and trade unions must be based on good faith on both sides'.[30]

Although Citrine had clearly developed significant organizing and negotiating skills, in the small world of union officialdom his reputation was made mainly from his success in reforming the relaxed (i.e., inefficient) finances and administration of ETU branches from the head office in Manchester between 1920 and 1923. The president, Jack Ball, said that 'the system of centralised finance which Citrine introduced saved the union', and it was probably this achievement that then commended him for a leading post at the TUC.[31] In the wider union world the view was emerging that the TUC should be strengthened by replacing the Parliamentary Committee with a more powerful General Council and a system of industrial groups which could act to coordinate and support

unions in disputes. In Manchester, Citrine had come to the same conclusion. As an ETU delegate to the 1919 Congress at Glasgow, Citrine rose to criticize the Parliamentary Committee's failure to support the police and prison officers' strikes and argued the need for a more effective industrial centre for all unions. He put forward a plan for such a central body in an article he submitted to the *Daily Herald* in 1920.[32] He first met Ernest Bevin, then the dockers' leader, at that Glasgow conference, and Bevin complimented him on this speech.[33] As the powerful new transport workers' leader in 1921, Bevin and other militant union leaders had the clout to bring about the change and the General Council replaced the Parliamentary Committee. From 1923, the TUC General Secretary's position was made full-time, and so could no longer be a member of parliament. From here on, the General Council sought greater powers to intervene in and 'coordinate' industrial disputes of its affiliates, an aim which was eventually achieved, after considerable opposition, at the 1924 Congress.[34] It was a fateful move, as by doing so, it could become responsible for facilitating the mobilization of the entire trade union movement behind one or a few powerful groups, such as the miners, for a 'general strike'.

At the Trades Union Congress

The world of Labour, to whose 'general command' (it was, in fact a small office with about 20 staff in Victoria) Citrine transferred from Lancashire in 1924, was a vibrant but by no means coherent or fully integrated 'movement'. At its heart was a largely male, manual working class, with over a million coal miners, about half a million rail workers, somewhat less but still huge road transport, dock, general and municipal workers, and less than a million engineering, electrical and shipbuilding workers. There was a sizeable white-collar, mainly clerical section and a large female textile and shop group. In all there were over 200 unions, from the tiny to the very large, affiliated to the TUC. Yet this increasingly organized movement was not clear about the direction it wished to take, nor had it an agreed programme of concrete policies. It was led by highly politicized union officials, some of whom were also motivated by a variety of revolutionary Communist and syndicalist ideologies, as well as other strongly socialist ideas. Although a quieter type, Citrine was very much at home in this milieu, being ambitious both for the movement as a whole and for himself. He was encouraged to apply for the post of TUC assistant general

secretary's job in 1923 on account of his reputation as an administrative pioneer at the ETU, was selected overwhelmingly by the full General Council and started in January 1924. His left-wing views must have helped also. However, his boss, Fred Bramley, developed serious mental health problems and was frequently away during the following years, leaving Citrine covering for him. Eventually Bramley died in October 1925, and Citrine was recalled from an official visit to the Soviet Union to take over as acting general secretary.[35]

Soon after his appointment, Citrine was invited to speak at a dinner of the Parliamentary Labour Party at the House of Commons. He was seated near the new Labour Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, and the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Snowden. It is an indication of the brashness of this new arrival that he chose to lecture them on the distinct roles and functions of the trade unions and the Labour Party. Most Labour MPs there had staunch union backgrounds.

> I reminded the audience that the workers didn't join the trade unions primarily for political reasons … The Labour Party was composed of people who believed deeply in Socialist principles and were ready to work for their attainment. The trade unions catered for all workers irrespective of their politics. Consequently at times the unions must have a different view on some questions from the Labour Party …The trade unions could not always be expected to see eye to eye with the party. This meant that the TUC, whilst affording every possible support to the party generally, must occasionally express a different view. It must retain the right of independent political opinion and expression. I hoped it would never surrender that right.[36]

These remarks were not well received: 'I fear I must have shocked a good many.' The notion that the TUC 'must retain the right of independent opinion', just as the first Labour government was settling in, would have made them wonder who this 'new boy' thought he was. For his part, Citrine was soon recommending to the General Council that the TUC should go its own way by setting up its own service departments: publicity, research and international. They moved into separate, adjoining buildings at Eccleston Square, Victoria in 1926 and to Transport House, Smith Square a couple of years later.[37] From here on, both the TUC and the Labour Party would develop distinctive roles, still as close political and funded allies, but with very different types in charge, as the Labour Party became an increasingly middle-class-led party. They were also poles apart politically as at this time the General Council was well to the left of

the Parliamentary Labour leadership and MacDonald rarely consulted the TUC on his policies for government. The result was an absence of a shared approach or any effective liaison or working relationship.[38]

Meanwhile, Citrine was thrust into the thick of the biggest and most dramatic industrial and political confrontation of the twentieth century: the General Strike of 1926. His memoirs contain one of the most vivid and detailed accounts of it at the national level, including a daily diary of events on the General Council, with the miners' executive and with the Cabinet.[39] It is a marvellous account of the strike's human factors and the key players—Arthur Cook, Herbert Smith, Arthur Pugh, 'Jimmy' Thomas, 'Ernie' Bevin, Winston Churchill and Stanley Baldwin—are brought alive for us. The General Strike lasted nine days in glorious May weather involving over four million workers all over the country, but the TUC had not yet called out the rest of the trade union movement before they called the strike off.[40] In 1964, Citrine still insisted that it had not been a complete failure: 'it was a protest against the degradation of the standards of life of millions of good trade unionists'. However, as 'a sympathetic strike on a national scale', he admitted it had been ill-prepared, largely because it had not been intended to come to that by the General Council. They were relying on an official inquiry, the Samuel Commission, to provide a favourable basis for a negotiated settlement. They had wrung this inquiry from the government by union pressure in July 1925 ('Red Friday') and thought that the threat of another strike would be sufficient to get the government to pressurize the coal-owners and the miners' union into a compromise settlement. They were mistaken on both counts, as ministers like the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Winston Churchill, on one side and the fiery Miners' Federation Secretary, Arthur J. Cook, on the other, were bent on a trial of strength. When the negotiations broke down in late April 1926 an emotional conference of all union executives in London, worked up by the miners and appeals to a rich tradition of solidarity action, swept the General Council along into calling the first-ever general strike, which was not then inhibited by law.

Still only the acting general secretary, Citrine's role was mainly to advise the key TUC negotiators, arrange the key meetings with the miners' executive and the Cabinet and take the minutes. With his shorthand facility, and secretarial back-up, his notes are an invaluable first-hand source: there he was 'making copious notes, peeping from behind a pile of papers, and pouring a steady flow of advice into the unheeding ears of the chairman'.[41] His advice was sometimes taken but he was, after all, still very

inexperienced at that level—in Bramley's absences he had relied heavily on Alf Purcell, MP, the strongly left-wing chair of the General Council since 1925.[42] When the strike was called off by the General Council on the tenth day, without consultation with the unions and with no proper return-to-work agreement secured, thousands of returning workers were left vulnerable to victimization and the dole. The Miners' Federation itself held out for another six months but eventually had to return to work without achieving any of its demands. Despite Citrine's emphasis on the positives, there was no escaping the scale of the defeat and humiliation for the TUC for which the key union leaders, Thomas and Pugh especially, would be blamed.[43] The Congress in September was pretty downcast as the miners' strike was still going on, but a delayed special post-mortem conference in February 1927 endorsed the General Council's decision on the basis of Citrine's report.[44] His formal election as general secretary at the annual Congress in September 1926 had been without opposition: supported even by the miners' union, whose leaders liked him and appreciated his help during the strike.

This unique event was a watershed. Despite the undoubted failure of its objectives, Citrine had a point. It had been an unprecedented display of solidarity and protest by the British trade union movement. This 'Great Strike' and its outcome had certainly changed Walter Citrine's outlook, as well as that of many more in the unions, particularly Bevin. When Citrine brought the news to the Cabinet that the TUC was going to call it off, Baldwin expressed genuine relief: 'I thank God for your decision.' King George V in his 1927 New Year message appealed for reconciliation and this was endorsed by all the political leaders and many employers.[45] The immediate reaction from the victorious government party, however, came with changes to the law of strikes and union affairs. General strikes and solidarity strikes involving more than one industry intended to 'coerce the government' were made illegal by the Trade Disputes and Trade Union Act 1927. Such industrial actions would now be excluded from the protection of the cornerstone Trade Disputes Act 1906. The government took powers to go to court again for injunctions 'to restrain the application of union funds for such purposes'. In fact, there were many in the Conservative and Liberal parties, including MPs and government ministers, who wanted to roll the clock back even further by withdrawing or severely limiting the protection given by the 1906 Act to all trade disputes: but Baldwin, as Prime Minister, seems to have prevented that. Understandably, union leaders still feared that the

1927 Act foreshadowed an employer offensive against current pay and conditions, with government and media encouragement. Though the Act had less impact than feared,[46] it was still a major intervention by the state restricting union activities. However, as it happened, the oncoming Great Depression would more effectively inhibit all industrial action and by the time that was over in the mid-1930s, the entire climate had changed.

Back in London after the 1926 Congress, Arthur Henderson asked Citrine, 'now that you have been elected, we are wondering what you are going to do?'[47] Citrine admitted that he did not have any blueprint as to how they would recover from what could have been the destruction of the very new and fragile TUC centre, but first set about modernizing their offices at Eccleston Square. Fortunately, he had some very committed and bright senior staff such as the Head of Research, Walter Milne-Bailey. Under Citrine's guidance, Milne-Bailey would produce some of the most original and stimulating ideas on the future of trade unionism, following a detailed analysis of the experience of the 'Great Strike'.[48] Others such as Vincent Tewson and George Woodcock (who replaced Milne-Bailey after his death from cancer in 1935), together with the talented Head of Publicity, Herbert Tracey, would make up a strong team of committed and high-calibre senior officers who would soon give the TUC a new reputation for excellence.[49] Citrine's style was very much to kick around the great issues of the day with them, so developing the new thinking which would enable the General Council and Congress to navigate themselves out of the difficult situation they were in. Meanwhile, the team's well-written Annual Reports were packed with valuable information for unions on the activities of TUC committees and meetings with government departments on all the major issues of the day.[50] Citrine also made the changes to their whole administrative system for which he is remembered—such as his card-index system which lasted into the 1970s. And he made sure that the more mundane but vital work of advising and assisting the 200 or so affiliated unions (with over 4 million members) was always regarded as an important service. Preparing submissions and lobbying government departments on general legislative policy issues became a key TUC role. For example, unemployment insurance and pressing for the ratification of the 1919 International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Washington Convention for a maximum of 48 hours per week were big issues. Citrine and Bevin were active members of the ILO's tripartite board in Geneva. However, it was the new vision and sense of direction

which Citrine brought to the trade union movement which really made the difference:

> The principal lesson I had learned was that the trade union movement must exert its influence in an ever-widening sphere and not be contained within the traditional walls of trade union policy … We must try to expand the activities of the TUC until we could establish an efficient system whereby the TUC would be regularly and naturally consulted by whatever government was in power on any subject of direct concern to the unions.[51]

This was a complete change in outlook from that which had led to the calling of the General Strike just five years before. The General Council readily adopted this new approach and they persuaded their own unions and delegates at annual Congresses accordingly. From a body whose rhetoric had often suggested that only the 'overthrow of capitalism' would do, they would now address the realities with which they were faced and seek to influence all spheres of the society in which they actually lived.

It is generally accepted that Citrine could not have brought about the changes he wanted for the TUC and hence the wider trade union movement without the partnership he struck up with that other formidable union leader Ernest Bevin (1881–1951) in the aftermath of the General Strike.[52] Bevin had joined the General Council just after Citrine had arrived and they now agreed that 'there were limits not only to their power but also to the use they could afford to make of it unless they were prepared to risk being carried much further than most of them meant to go',[53] and also that 'the Labour Party is no longer a purely Trade Union party'.[54] Bevin has come to be regarded as the most important of the two, though his authoritative biographer, Lord Bullock, after interviewing Citrine, very fairly accorded him equal credit based on the 'unusual complementary' nature of their contributions: 'Citrine lucid and methodical, drawing upon his famous notebooks for the facts, Bevin ranging and impressionistic; throwing out ideas; the one a master of exposition, the other of conviction and imagination.'[55] Although senior contemporary leaders appreciated Citrine's crucial importance to the partnership, he remained less prominent, while Bevin's 'larger than life' personality and inspiring role in the subsequent war effort deservedly came across best to the public and media.[56] Yet, as often with complementary double acts, it was the quieter but sharper Citrine who impressed the key players more.

Of course, they were not the only ones. There were many other formidable union leaders at the time who contributed significantly to all that they would achieve together. Clegg has short biographical sketches of them all—Margaret Bondfield, J.R. Clynes, George Hicks, Arthur Hayday, Arthur Pugh, Alf Purcell, 'Lon' Swales, Ben Tillett and 'Jimmy' Thomas, to mention but the more prominent at the national level.[57] However, it was the unique Citrine–Bevin partnership which was the pivot around which the forceful new national leadership revolved. This partnership was all the more remarkable when their lack of personal rapport is appreciated—apparently they rarely conferred before meetings, yet shared an 'uncanny similarity of reasoning' which always found them on the same side on all key issues over the next twenty years'.[58] Many reasons for this personal distance have been suggested, for example 'considerable rivalry for predominance and a desire to claim personal credit for policy initiatives', and no doubt, these entered into it.[59] However, there was more to it than that, and, as we will see, it was during the war that their relationship deteriorated.

It is unclear when exactly Citrine abandoned his earlier ILP socialism and even to some extent syndicalism, but the General Strike was undoubtedly a major watershed. Another was his extensive tour of the Soviet Union in 1925, where he saw how hollow the façade of trade union independence was. He gave a very vivid account of that two-month tour and the key Russian officials he met and argued with.[60] As the ILP swung even further to the left from 1926 onwards,[61] it is unlikely that he continued for long with them though he always remained a Labour Party member. However, neither Citrine nor Bevin was impressed by the influential intellectuals around the Labour Party at that time. Indeed, Citrine considered that with the rare exceptions of Laski and Cole, who 'had both rendered great service',[62] most of them never really understood the trade union movement and were too absorbed in non-practical discussions of 'ultimate Socialist objectives of a theoretical character'.[63] Even the veteran Fabians, Sidney and Beatrice Webb, whose *Industrial Democracy* had shaped Citrine's early ideas about union organization, had little influence on him, though he would later devote a chapter to his visit to 'their cottage at Liphook' on 28 July 28 1927.[64] As we have seen, it was not from any ignorance of the Marxist, syndicalist, ILP, Socialist League or Fabian texts that Citrine developed his dismissive attitude. His notes show that he continued to follow their exponents carefully, and his frequent lectures at Ruskin College and the TUC summer schools from the late 1920s

onwards would have kept him up to date. It seems rather that with his increasingly busy national and international schedule, he preferred to rely on his own powerhouse of union and industrial ideas at Eccleston Square, where woolly theorizing was not entertained. He could also call directly upon some of the best economic thinkers of the period, most notably the Liberal, John Maynard Keynes, whom he regarded as 'Britain's foremost economist'. Keynes's 1926 pamphlet, *The Economic Consequences of Mr Churchill*, and other writings during the Depression and financial crisis, 'made a deep impression on me'.[65] They would confer frequently on the National Economic Council and both Keynes and Bevin briefed him from the Macmillan Committee on the credit and financial system from 1929 onwards.[66]

It was also in this context of adjustment to the failure of the General Strike that the Communist International ('Comintern') began to attack the TUC and the rest of the British trade union leadership bitterly. These attacks were orchestrated by the Red International of Labour Unions and the Communist-dominated National Minority Movement (NMM). They were reviled 'as traitors, renegades and capitalist lackeys' and the NMM slogan was, 'Don't Trust Your Leaders'.[67] This caused much anger and alarm on the part of Bevin and the General Council, including even such veteran left-wingers as Alf Purcell and George Hicks.[68] When Citrine became President of the International Federation of Trade Unions in 1927, he saw for himself how such tactics had split and mortally weakened trade union movements in the rest of Europe, especially in Germany.[69] Meanwhile, Bevin experienced it first-hand in his own union, as Communist activists exploited tensions between militant 'rank-and-file' groups and the transport workers' leadership.[70] Characteristically, Citrine did his homework and put together the evidence of 'a deliberately organised attempt … to capture the Trade Union Movement and to exploit it for a revolutionary subversive purpose'. This he published as a personal view initially in a series of articles for the *Labour Magazine*, but they were soon taken up and issued by the General Council as an official TUC pamphlet.[71] It was a compelling case and contributed to the marginalization of Communists and of the Minority Movement in most British unions over the next decade. Citrine had some respect for individual Communists such as Harry Pollitt and Arthur Horner, 'the best of the bunch', but considered that by slavishly following the Comintern's line they had greatly 'overplayed their hand'.[72] Indeed the Communist Party of Great Britain was soon seen to be in thrall to Moscow in the eyes of most labour

activists in Britain at the time.[73] Communists continued to be an important organized force in some unions such as the engineers and the miners, as the articulation of class warfare ideology by able organizers chimed with the attitudes of some local militants and even sometimes their union officials during fierce industrial disputes. However, the fact that they had to set themselves in opposition to the direction which Citrine, Bevin and the majority of General Council union leaders now wished to take the trade union movement in Britain made their defeat and isolation a necessary policy.

Contrary to the image sedulously fostered on the left over subsequent decades, Citrine's anti-Communism was not a result of ingrained prejudice. A strong supporter of the Bolshevik Revolution for nearly a decade after it had taken power, he had initially been 'enthused by Lenin's picture of an electric republic … [which] would ensure to every citizen … the advantages of a planned economy and the blessings of a modern civilization'.[74] He had eagerly accepted the All-Russian union leader Mikhail Tomsky's personal invitation to visit in 1925 and went again on several more occasions: a personal trip in 1935, as part of a TUC delegation in 1941, to attend the World Federation of Trades Union Moscow gathering in 1946, and as late as 1956 as leader of the British Electricity Authority delegation.[75] Citrine took an active interest in, and had warm feeling for, what he saw as the first socialist experiment but he had no illusions about the nature of the Soviet Union as it developed, or about the Comintern's attempts at international influence, especially in trade union movements. He drew a distinction between Communists in Russia grappling with the realities of changing a backward economy and society, and attempts to subvert democratic European governments in an era of threatened Fascist dictatorship.

It was in late November 1927 that Citrine undertook a high-profile launch of his 'New Union' departure in a *Manchester Guardian* article called 'The next step in industrial relations'. Bevin was totally supportive and Citrine had already trailed it at the Congress in September through the Presidential Address of George Hicks (building trade workers). It proposed that

> the unions should actively participate in a concerted effort to raise industry to its highest efficiency by developing the most scientific methods of production, eliminating waste and harmful restrictions, removing causes of

friction and avoidable conflict, and promoting the largest possible output so as to provide a rising standard of life and continuously improving conditions of employment.[76]

This could have been a hazardous step for the unity of the trade unions. By explicitly abandoning any rhetoric of ideological opposition to 'capitalist'-directed production, it incurred strong opposition from those steeped in Marxist or syndicalist psychology, such as A.J. Cook of the Miners' Federation and the far left in the ILP led by James Maxton, MP. However, as the quid pro quo sought was a major expansion of union recognition for collective bargaining and a serious engagement by managers with the many grievances of workers, it was backed by a clear majority of the General Council.

There was no reciprocal response from the employer organizations, but one major industrialist, Alfred Mond of Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI), brought a group of 40 major industrialists to meet the TUC to discuss their broader agenda. They wanted union support for major rationalization and modernization plans to meet growing German, US and Japanese competition. Although there was naturally concern amongst the unions that this would mean more unemployment, Citrine and Bevin made a convincing case that more effective competition would also protect British jobs, enable higher pay and strengthen union organization.[77] As the joint Mond–Turner agenda (Ben Turner of the textile workers was that year's TUC Chair) would also include many other union issues, the vast majority of the General Council agreed to a series of talks from January 1928. These went surprisingly well. They resulted in agreement on a range of proposals, including the setting up of a permanent National Industrial Council (NIC) as an embryo industrial parliament with equal union and employer representation to 'establish and direct machinery for continuous investigation into industrial problems and appoint Conciliation Boards to act in disputes'.

At the end, even the Miners' Federation supported the General Council view, despite continuing opposition from Arthur Cook.[78] However, opposition from the official employers' organizations meant that the NIC was never a serious runner. For Citrine and Bevin the main attraction of the Mond–Turner process was that it enabled them to counter 'the resurgence of the hostility towards trade unionism' after the General Strike and the Trade Disputes Act 1927.[79] However, far from showing any inclination

to 'become an essential component of the state',[80] Citrine saw such direct union–employer talks as an alternative to what he believed was an over-reliance by the labour movement on political solutions.[81] He had long forsaken the enthusiasms of his youth and now saw politics as a complementary but by no means primary sphere in which to pursue organized labour's aims.[82] Despite their rejection of the openly corporatist NIC (an idea first dreamed up in the TUC offices in 1926 by Milne-Bailey),[83] the employer organizations now felt obliged to continue conferring with the TUC on 'matters of common interest' and the General Council agreed to this 'more subtle and flexible form' of institutional cooperation.[84]

All such talk of industrial cooperation instead of conflict soon became academic with the onset of the Great Depression from 1929 until the early 1930s.[85] The fact that the Labour Party had again won government office, just as unemployment caused union membership to plummet, meant a very different reality for all concerned. In the early stages of that government, relations with the TUC were much better than in 1924. The unions got a Bill to repeal the 1927 Act into the 1930–31 King's Speech, and MacDonald invited Bevin and Citrine to sit on the Economic Advisory Council (EAC) with key ministers and sympathetic academics. Even so, there was little of the close liaison and interchange of views which the unions expected. The repeal Bill was abandoned after Liberal-supported Conservative amendments would have kept the ban on general or sympathy strikes, without serious Cabinet resistance,[86] and the EAC soon came to be seen as a 'talking-shop' with no influence on government economic policy.[87] Far more material differences then emerged over the government's handling of the financial crisis which accompanied the Depression. As is well known, the TUC pressed their opposition to the government's proposals to cut unemployment benefit by 10% so much that the Cabinet overturned the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Prime Minister, leading to the replacement of Labour with a 'National' government in 1931.[88]

Despite this disastrous breakdown, Bevin and Citrine for the General Council (perhaps influenced by Keynes, who 'had their ear')[89] felt justified in their opposition. Citrine was particularly annoyed by Snowden's brusque dismissal of their alternative proposals,[90] and his failure to engage openly on the detailed options.[91] Citrine had also met MacDonald frequently, one to one, on behalf of the General Council and recalled that, although they got on personally, he was 'one of the Prime Minister's severest critics' over his 'executive and administrative ability' and his 'woolly headed' grasp of economics.[92] He thought MacDonald relied too much on Snowden and

the Treasury officials, and bowed to the pressure of the Opposition leaders and the King. In the subsequent general election, the Labour Party was slaughtered, holding onto only 46 of the 287 seats it had won in 1929: it was back to 1910.[93] MacDonald and Snowden's defection and the reduction of the party's parliamentary presence to a rump completely changed the dynamic of political influence between labour organizations: now it was the TUC under Citrine and Bevin, rather than the left-wing Socialist League of Cripps and Bevan, which dominated Labour Party policymaking through a revitalized National Joint Council, of which Citrine was joint secretary. This far closer relationship with a new Labour leadership would eventually lead to electoral recovery on the basis of a more radical programme which reflected industrial as well as social objectives.

MacDonald has ever since been reviled as a traitor for abandoning the Labour government and splitting the Labour vote. Although Citrine 'fully shared the prevailing sentiments towards him' at the time, he did not personalize things afterwards. In his many subsequent references to the catastrophe, he gave the impression that he deeply regretted that they had not been able to reach a compromise with the Labour administration and his personal relations with MacDonald remained cordial.[94] His later acceptance of a knighthood on MacDonald's recommendation in 1935 provoked considerable surprise, but Citrine justified it as a recognition of the enhanced status which the unions had gained in British society under his leadership.[95] Later he agreed to be one of the pall-bearers at MacDonald's funeral in Westminster Abbey in 1937 and in his memorial address sought to draw a line under that bitter episode of 1931.[96]

The International Dimension

More than most senior figures in British public life at that time, Citrine's outlook was also shaped by what was happening in the wider international world. As president of the IFTU, whose offices were in Berlin, he visited on a number of occasions between 1931 and 1933 for executive meetings and so had a ringside seat at the rise of the Nazis, the destruction of the German trade union movement and socialist parties, as well as the better-known assault on the Jewish community.[97] Citrine was under no illusion what this would mean for the unions and socialists in the rest of Europe as Hitler's regime extended its reach over the following years and he attempted to alert the British political world in general to the real nature of, and the threat posed by, German Nazism, contrary to the

illusions and desire to appease held by many of the governing class, including King Edward VIII.[98] In his report to the TUC Congress of 1933 on the situation in Germany, Citrine analysed the factors which, in his opinion, had produced the Nazi dictatorship. Among those he included the divisive and disruptive activities of the German Communist Party and the Comintern, as well as 'the dictatorship in Soviet Russia'. He also criticized the Social Democratic Party leaders and their union allies for not resisting or seeking international union assistance: despite how impressive that huge and all-embracing party had seemed in the 1920s, it had not been able to marginalize the Communist challenge.[99] This bracketing of the Soviet 'dictatorship of the proletariat' with the Nazi dictatorship caused considerable surprise and some opposition at that Congress. However, as Citrine's aim was to mobilize opinion for a defence of the very survival of unions and fundamental democratic rights then under such serious threat throughout Europe, this appeal to democracy versus dictatorship was effective and his report was overwhelmingly adopted. With Bevin's strong support, he would join forces with their old adversary Churchill and others on anti-Fascist platforms. From 1936, the TUC was a strong supporter of supplying arms to the Spanish Republicans, and Citrine was close to Largo Caballero, their Socialist Prime Minister, who was also a member of the IFTU Executive.[100] Little wonder that Sir Walter Citrine's name was on the Gestapo's list of 2300 key British figures for immediate arrest after the proposed invasion in 1940.[101]

Perhaps Citrine's least-known contribution was towards persuading the Labour Opposition to become active advocates of rearmament from 1935 onwards. The average Labour activist and delegate was strongly pacifist or anti-war, some to the extent of going along with Chamberlain's appeasement policy; and the Labour Leader since 1931, George Lansbury, was a principled pacifist. But Citrine's international authority was then very high and he was privy to government intelligence from Baldwin as to the country's 'dangerously run down' armed forces.[102] So he was able to persuade the General Council, with Bevin's support, to issue an ultimatum to the Labour National Executive Council and Lansbury that they must change.[103] However, he regarded Bevin's 'brutal assault' on Lansbury at the 1935 Brighton Labour Conference as unnecessarily cruel, as he knew from a private meeting before the debate that Lansbury could have been persuaded to go quietly.[104] Attlee then took over the party leadership and Labour became strongly opposed to Chamberlain's appeasement policy until they helped force him out in 1939. It is an indication of the TUC

general secretary's concurrent standing that Baldwin confided such sensitive information to him. Citrine had been invited to lunch at Chequers by the prime minister 'to talk seriously about our defences', just before he left for Russia on a personal visit in 1935. Baldwin embarrassed him by suggesting that he, Citrine, 'may some day occupy the position I am in'. When Citrine protested that he had no such ambitions, Baldwin went on, 'Well, whatever you do, you will always have an influence in such matters.'[105] Then, when Chamberlain took over in 1936, Citrine was surprised to find him 'the most open PM he had had to deal with'—though he made it clear that he was totally opposed to the government's policy.[106] This remarkable rapport which Citrine had with a succession of prime ministers (later to include Churchill, but strangely, not so much with 'Clam' Attlee who was very tight-lipped with him on the joint National Council of Labour) owed a lot to his blunt but courteous manner, well informed by careful preparation for such meetings. Citrine had 'put the TUC on the Whitehall map' and 'achieved participation in the innermost councils of the State'.[107]

Bevin and Citrine then became central figures in Britain's 'finest hour' as an integral part of the inner circles of government: as a Cabinet Minister and a Privy Counsellor respectively.[108] Together they mobilized the unions for the war effort through the Ministry of Labour, the TUC and the main production unions. They addressed the General Council at Bournemouth on 12 May 1940, just as the army was being lifted from the Dunkirk beaches and against the background of the threat of imminent German invasion, and got the unions to accept enthusiastically draconian emergency legislation (written mainly by Bevin), replacing strikes by compulsory arbitration, labour direction and many other unprecedented relaxations of traditional union restrictive practices. What made this easier to swallow was that the unions were to be central players in the war production effort through consultation at every level on various joint committees: indeed they came to find the arbitration boards so suited the skills of their officials that they did not complain when they were retained after the war, until 1951. Bevin also made sure that workers got improved conditions like canteens, holidays and status.

Meanwhile, Citrine not only had privileged access to all ministers, but also had frequent one-to-one meetings with Churchill, and a personal rapport that was envied by some ministers, including Bevin. He recalled his visits to Downing Street during the Blitz, as well as later representations about issues such as factory and public air raid warnings, and the impact of the flying bombs on London on popular morale. He and Churchill

often kept each other's spirits up by reciting patriotic poetry, remembered vividly from their childhoods.[109] Along with many other senior union officials, Citrine served on the top-level committees concerned with the war effort: the National Production Advisory Committee which included Cabinet Ministers, and the Joint Consultative Committee of unions and employers which advised the government on manpower problems. We can trace the post-war corporatist industrial relations pattern and the talk of the unions becoming 'an estate of the realm' to this wartime influence which Bevin and Citrine secured for organized labour. However, Citrine always insisted that wage determination should not be a state function and by the time the Order in Council 1305 was lifted in 1951 the unions were geared for a return to free collective bargaining on pay and conditions.[110]

As the responsible minister and a larger-than-life personality at TUC and Labour Party gatherings, it was Bevin who was very much the 'proletarian patriot' as far as the public were concerned. Citrine totally supported the autocratic powers he had been given to defend the nation and Empire.[111] For his part, Bevin had promised that they would be exercised only where necessary and in close consultation with the unions on behalf of the workers. In practice, things did not always work so smoothly, as the Ministry of Labour officials' or Bevin's idea of consultation was not always one the unions recognized, or were always happy with. Bevin's autocratic tendencies had long been notorious—Fred Bramley had nicknamed him, 'Napoleon Bevin' way back in 1924, and his labour-supremo power during war gave free rein to these proclivities.[112] They came to the fore in Bevin's considerable efforts to direct manpower policy across all departments, often 'riding roughshod' over fellow ministers, trade union officials and employers.[113] It was Citrine's role to raise awkward questions on behalf of union colleagues (and sometimes also employers) in one-to-one meetings with the Minister of Labour, and he was one among only a few who could stand up to 'Ernie'.[114]

As a result, their relations became very poor in 1941 when Bevin publicly denounced Citrine, along with the editor of the *Daily Herald*, for 'carrying on a Quisling policy' because of their 'opposition to his commandeering of skilled labour'.[115] Attlee had to write to both of them officially, in his role as Deputy Prime Minister, that he had 'for some time been distressed to observe what appears to me to be a growing friction between you and Bevin'; and telling them both to calm down, as if the general public came to hear of the rift it would be 'grossly detrimental to the war effort'. As a result there was an exchange of conciliatory, but by no means

warm, letters.[116] Citrine was very careful never to criticize Bevin in public as he had long recognized, and allowed for, his long-standing colleague's sensitivities better than most, recognizing Bevin's enormous qualities and vital role. However, Citrine clearly was deeply upset by the terms of this attack, as to be called a Quisling, or Nazi collaborator, was the most insulting thing anybody could say at that time, and he later referred to 'a certain side of Ernest's character'.[117] Sadly, their relations never improved before Bevin died in 1951.

After the war, Bevin became Foreign Secretary and so their paths rarely crossed. Meanwhile, Citrine decided to step down from his arduous, but not well-paid job as TUC leader in 1946, which meant the loss of one of British labour's finest intellects at a time when his counsel and experience were sorely needed, as the new Labour government and the unions faced so many challenges. Bevin and Citrine's alienation probably prevented Attlee keeping him at the centre of his government's affairs, so he languished in a junior safety and training role at the National Coal Board for a year. Attlee then had the decency to rectify that with the offer of chairing the new British Electricity Authority appointment in 1947, a dream post for a former electrician always interested in the trade. This was a role Citrine, now Baron Citrine of Wembley, performed with relish for another decade and a full biography would explore this second career which has received scant attention.[118] However, it still removed Citrine effectively from the main scene, as he decided not to attend or speak in the Lords in case it was seen as prejudicing his new public role. Had he been brought into the government instead, his ideas for industrial cooperation and the respect he had earned for his fine record of opposition to Fascism internationally, as well as his deep knowledge of the Soviet Union, could only have made a significant contribution. He retired finally in 1960 to his home in Wembley Park, attending the Lords more frequently and taking part in some debates where his contributions were always keenly listened to. His wife, Doris, died in 1973 and he moved to Devon, where he died in 1983 aged 95.

Conclusions

This study of the world of labour which Walter Citrine inhabited from 1906 to 1946 recalls the twentieth-century heyday of the British trade unions and his life, which, more than most, sheds new light on key turning points. In particular, after the General Strike his new style of TUC

leadership moved the unions firmly away from their post-1918 tendencies towards mass industrial conflicts and toward a more realistic engagement with the system they had to live in. It was Citrine's particular achievement to be able to lead the TUC on a course which was not only independent of its own offspring, the Labour Party, but also resulted in the marginalization of the Comintern-inspired opposition of the Communist Party. As a result of the subsequent influence of the national union leadership, the Labour Party became a far more substantial social democratic force than a socialist parliamentary leadership could have devised or effected on its own. Then, working in closer unison, the TUC and the Labour Party were able to create the epochal social reform programme of 1945–51. Critics who dubbed this approach 'labourist' and contrary to the best interests of the working class, as a 'wrong path' away from their own socialist ideology, were unconvincing voices at the time and largely have been since.

Moreover, Citrine's role as an international figure and his principled opposition to the rise of Fascism and the appeasement of Hitler need to be appreciated more fully as they rank in prescience with Churchill's more well-known contributions. Born out of the destruction of the German trade unions and socialist party in the 1930s, the threat to democratic values in Britain which Citrine perceived and articulated, and which the trade union movement subsequently strongly supported, strengthened the British people's resolve to resist Hitler's Germany. This gave the Second World War effort a progressive dimension which a declining empire might not otherwise have been able to inspire, and its successful outcome enhanced the unions' status immensely so as to be regarded by many as a distinct 'estate of the realm'. Citrine's subsequent departure from the union and Labour Party frontline in 1946 can hardly be regarded as anything but a significant loss.

Notes

1. N. Riddell, 'Walter Citrine and the British labour movement, 1925–1935', *History* (April 2000), pp. 298–306, especially p. 287.
2. See, for example, the account in M. Foot, *Aneurin Bevan. A Biography. Volume 1. 1897–1945* (London, 1962).
3. A. Bullock, *The Life and Times of Ernest Bevin. Volume 1. Trade Union Leader 1881–1940* (London, 1960); F. Williams, *Ernest Bevin—Portrait of a Great Englishman*, (London, 1952).

4. The TUC under General Secretary John (now Lord) Monks commissioned Robert Taylor's excellent two chapters on Citrine in *The TUC: From the General Strike to New Unionism* (London, 2000), pp. 20–75. Neil Riddell's earlier *Labour in Crisis: The Second Labour Government 1929–31* (1999) and his article, cited above, independently arrived at very similar conclusions.

5. We are fortunate that Citrine left such a well-written and highly readable two-volume autobiography, *Men and Work* (London, 1964) and *Two Careers* (London, 1967) based on his own detailed contemporary shorthand notes. He also left a rich body of other observations, articles and speeches, mainly contained at the British Library of Political and Economic Science (BPLES) or Trades Union Congress Library.

6. Citrine, *Men and Work*, p. 12.

7. Citrine, *Men and Work*, p. 16.

8. Citrine, *Men and Work*, p. 22.

9. Citrine, *Men and Work*, p. 25.

10. Citrine, *Men and Work*, p. 33.

11. Citrine, *Men and Work*, p. 61.

12. He wrote that he 'didn't know the difference between a Presbyterian, a Methodist or a Congregationalist, nor in fact any of the other denominations'; Citrine, *Men and Work*, p. 25.

13. Citrine, *Men and Work*, p. 30.

14. Citrine, *Men and Work*, p. 47.

15. Citrine, *Men and Work*, p. 62.

16. Citrine, *Men and Work*, p. 62.

17. Citrine, *Men and Work*, pp. 63–5.

18. J. Lloyd, *Light and Liberty. The History of the Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunication and Plumbing Union* (London, 1990), pp. 10–11.

19. Lloyd, *Light and Liberty*, p. 90.

20. Lloyd, *Light and Liberty*, chs 1–8 and appendix 4.

21. Lloyd, *Light and Liberty*, pp. 11–20; A.J. Reid, *The Tide of Democracy. Shipyard Workers and Social Relations in Britain, 1870–1950* (Manchester, 2010), especially ch. 8.

22. Lloyd, *Light and Liberty*, pp. 72, 116–17.

23. Citrine, *Men and Work*, pp. 49, 55–60.

24. Lloyd, *Light and Liberty*, p. 99.

25. G.E. Dell for the National Union of Clerks, *Public Speaking & Chairmanship* (London, 1911).

26. In his account of his early trade union career, Alan Johnson, MP (former communications workers' general secretary), confirmed this, describing it as his and his predecessor, Tom Jackson's, bible; Alan Johnson, *Please, Mister Postman—A Memoir* (London, 2014), pp. 245–6, 152–3.

27. H.A. Clegg, *A History of British Trade Unions since 1889*, volume 2. 1911–1933 (Oxford, 1985), pp. 24–6, table of days lost; see also p. 455.

28. BPLES, Citrine Papers, 4/1; *Electrical Trades Journal*, monthly articles by him, December 1912–May 1914; Riddell, 'Walter Citrine', p. 288; Taylor, *The TUC*, pp. 25–7.

29. Citrine, *Men and Work*, pp. 220–33.

30. Citrine, *Men and Work*, p. 51.

31. Lloyd, *Light and Liberty*, p. 152.

32. Citrine, *Men and Work*, p. 67.

33. Citrine, *Men and Work*, p. 67 Citrine remembered it vividly, as one of the rare compliments Bevin ever paid him.

34. R.M. Martin, *TUC: Growth of a Pressure Group 1868–1976* (Oxford, 1980), pp. 191–2; J. Lovell and B.C. Roberts, *A Short History of the TUC* (London, 1968), pp. 83–6.

35. Citrine, *Men and Work*, pp. 116–17.

36. Citrine, *Men and Work*, p. 79.

37. Martin, *TUC*, pp. 188–91.

38. D. Marquand, *Ramsay MacDonald* (London, 1977), pp. 186–279; Lovell and Roberts, *Short History*, pp. 74–83.

39. Citrine, *Men and Work*, pp. 129–219; his day-by-day 'Diary of the General Strike' is at pp. 177–207.

40. There are many full accounts such as G.A. Phillips, *The General Strike: The Politics of Industrial Conflict* (London, 1976).

41. Citrine, *Men and Work*, p. 191.

42. Citrine, *Men and Work*, p. 77.

43. Citrine, *Men and Work*, pp. 216–17.

44. Citrine, *Men and Work*, pp. 214–15.

45. Citrine, *Men and Work*, pp. 202, 206.

46. Clegg, *History, Volume 2*, pp. 557–8, described its impact as a 'relatively light curb on their activities', though it was hardly 'slight'.

See also A.J. Reid, *United We Stand. A History of Britain's Trade Unions* (London, 2004), p. 365.

47. Citrine, *Men and Work*, p. 237.
48. D. Lyddon, 'Walter Milne-Bailey, the TUC Research Department, and the 1926 General Strike: the background to "A Nation on Strike"', *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations*, 29/30 (2010), pp. 123–51; Clegg, *History, Volume 2*, p. 577; Citrine, *Men and Work*, pp. 139, 173, 235, 246.
49. Citrine, *Men and Work*, pp. 135, 181, 214, 216, 241, 243.
50. Taylor, *The TUC*, p. 41.
51. Citrine, *Men and Work*, p. 238.
52. Bullock, *Bevin, Volume 1*, p. 347; Taylor, *The TUC*, p. 78 and chapter 2, pp. 76–101; Riddell regards Citrine as the key figure: 'Walter Citrine', pp. 293, 297, 300–1.
53. Bullock, *Bevin, Volume 1*, p. 346.
54. BLPES, Citrine Papers, 10/8.
55. Bullock, *Bevin, Volume 1*, pp. 287, 347, 395, 399, 401, 494, 549–50, 564, 590.
56. This tradition of seeing only Bevin as the workers' friend during the war is continued by S. Todd in *The People. The Rise and Fall of the Working Class, 1910–2010* (London, 2014), pp. 124–6, 130–2, 138–9, 141–2. However, her claim of TUC–Citrine 'opposition to the recruitment of working-class women' is not substantiated.
57. Clegg, History, *Volume 2*, pp. 572–81.
58. Citrine, *Men and Work*, pp. 238–40; Bullock, *Bevin, Volume 2*, pp. 590–1; BLPES, Citrine Papers, section 10/3.
59. Riddell, 'Walter Citrine', p. 294. Citrine was certainly 'irritated' about Bevin's habit of taking credit for other people's ideas or reports, but concluded, 'he was quite unconscious of his lack of generosity'.
60. Citrine, *Men and Work*, pp. 95–128.
61. R. Miliband, *Parliamentary Socialism. A Study in the Politics of Labour* (London, 1961), pp. 157–9. It disaffiliated from the Labour Party in 1932 and faded, being replaced by the Socialist League led by Stafford Cripps, Bevan, Cole and others.
62. Citrine, *Men and Work*, pp. 300, 273. Walter Milne-Bailey, his Head of Research, who did his PhD at the LSE under Laski, was

very much influenced by Laski's works as his *Trade Unions and the State* (London, 1934) acknowledges.

63. Citrine, *Men and Work*, pp. 293–301.
64. Citrine, *Men and Work*, pp. 267–92. In her own patrician way, Beatrice thought highly of him as 'the first union intellectual who has held such a responsible position in the trade union movement', and they admired his writings, especially from his trip to Russia in the 1930s.
65. Citrine, *Men and Work*, pp. 136–8, 240.
66. Citrine, *Men and Work*, p. 136.
67. R. Martin, *Communism and the British Trade Unions 1924–1933* (Oxford, 1969), *Preface*, p. v.
68. Citrine, *Men and Work*, p. 188.
69. Citrine, *Men and Work*, pp. 90–4.
70. Bullock, *Bevin, Volume 1*, pp. 521–4, 612–14.
71. Citrine, *Democracy or Disruption—An Examination of Communist Influences in the Trade Unions*, TUC Library, HD6661 1928. TUC Library, HX 695.
72. Citrine, *Men and Work*, pp. 53, 257. It is now known that between 1926 and 1937 about 150 British alumni of the Lenin School in Moscow became 'the most extreme of the intrusions by the Third International, the Comintern … of a trained, responsive and carefully vetted cohort of revolutionary activists'; see K. Morgan and G. Cohen, *Stalin's Sausage Machine—British Students at the International Lenin School 1926–1937* (University of Manchester CPGB Biographical Project).
73. Taylor, *The TUC*, p. 52; Martin, *Communism*, pp. 188–9.
74. Citrine, *Men and Work*, p. 88.
75. Citrine, *Men and Work*, pp. 95–128; *Two Careers*, pp. 98–115, 236, 318–28.
76. *Manchester Guardian* Supplement, 30.9.1927; Clegg, *History, Volume 2*, pp. 463–4.
77. Riddell, *Walter Citrine*, p. 293.
78. Citrine, *Men and Work*, pp. 243–8; Clegg, *History, Volume 2*, pp. 464–71; Taylor, *The TUC*, pp. 46–8.
79. Citrine, *Men and Work*, p. 316.
80. Riddell, 'Walter Citrine', p. 294.
81. Citrine's expression was, 'You must have economic power before you can get real political power'; BLEPS, Citrine Papers,

Section 1/7, *Mining Crisis and the National Strike*, 1926, p. 106.

82. Citrine, *Men and Work*, p. 63.

83. W. Milne-Bailey, *The Industrial Parliament Project* (London 1926), and still promoted in his *Trade Unions*, pp. 370–80. As the first union research officer (for the Union of Postal Workers, 1921) he wrote a pamphlet on guild socialism.

84. K. Middlemas, *Politics in Industrial Society. The Experience of the British System since 1911* (London, 1979), pp. 208–9.

85. Union membership had plummeted from 6.5m in 1919 to 3.3 m in 1933; H. Pelling, *A History of British Trade Unionism* (London, 1963), pp. 262–3.

86. BLPES, Citrine Papers, Sections 4/2 and 5/13; Marquand, *MacDonald*, p. 593.

87. T. Jones, *Whitehall Diary, Volume 2, 1926–1930*, ed. K. Middlemas (London, 1969), pp. 221–8, 246.

88. The account in Marquand, *Ramsay MacDonald*, pp. 620–3, 646–7, captures the very tense and angry atmosphere of their exchanges; see also Taylor, *The TUC*, pp. 52–9.

89. Citrine, *Men and Work*, pp. 136–7; Bullock, *Bevin, Volume 1*, pp. 425–8.

90. C. Cross, *Phillip Snowden* (London, 1966), p. 290. Apparently, he had a low regard for and distrust of both Bevin and Citrine and their Keynesian arguments.

91. Bullock devotes a chapter to 'The 1931 Crisis', from which it seems that it was Bevin who 'made the running' on the General Council; *Bevin, Volume 1*, pp. 476–503; Taylor *The TUC*, agrees, p. 59.

92. Citrine, *Men and Work*, p. 287.

93. Marquand, *Ramsay MacDonald*, pp. 646–7; Clegg, *History, Volume 2*, pp. 512–13.

94. Clegg, *History, Volume 2*, p. 291.

95. Clegg, *History, Volume 2*, pp. 310–32.

96. BLPES, Citrine Archive, Section 10/8.

97. R.J. Evans, *The Third Reich in Power* (London, 2006), pp. 456–7, 465.

98. Citrine, *Men and Work*, pp. 338–46; Taylor, *The TUC*, pp. 61–2.

99. TUC Congress Report 1933, *Dictatorship and the Trade Union Movement*; Citrine, *Men and Work*, pp. 344–5, 425.

100. Citrine, *Men and Work*, pp. 358–9.
101. 'Nazi Death blacklist booklet discovered in Berlin' in 1945, in *Guardian Century* 1940–49.
102. Citrine, *Men and Work*, p. 353.
103. Citrine revealed this only in unpublished notes prepared for a review of Francis William's 1946 biography (which credited Bevin with swinging the Labour Conference). BLPES, Citrine Papers, section, 10/4.
104. Citrine, *Men and Work*, p. 353.
105. Citrine, *Men and Work*, p. 353. He would also consult the TUC leader about the abdication crisis before he gave Edward VIII the Cabinet's ultimatum to resign if he insisted on marrying Mrs Simpson. Citrine told him that organized labour would strongly support the government; see Citrine, *Men and Work*, pp. 323–8.
106. Citrine, *Men and Work*, pp. 366–7. He found Chamberlain 'far more forthcoming in private conversation than most of his predecessors'.
107. *Daily Telegraph*, Industrial Correspondent 6.4.1946, on Citrine's retirement; '*End of the Bevin–Citrine Era at Transport House*', BLPES, Citrine Papers, press cutting, section 10/4.
108. Chapter 2 of Taylor *The TUC* is an excellent detailed account. It was on Citrine's advice that Bevin was brought into the Cabinet later in June 1940; see Citrine, *Two Careers*, pp. 50–1.
109. Citrine, *Two Careers*, pp. 198–9.
110. Taylor, *The TUC*, pp. 81–6.
111. Bevin's BBC World Service broadcast, 25 May 1940, TUC Library 'He [Hitler] … shall not force us to surrender a single inch of the British Empire'; Taylor, *The TUC*, p. 83.
112. Citrine, *Men and Work*, p. 78.
113. Citrine, *Men and Work*, pp. 125–8, 132, 137–8.
114. His vivid description of one of their 'stand-up' rows is captured in chapter 4 of *Two Careers*, headed significantly, 'This Man Bevin', pp. 45–55.
115. *Daily Herald*, 29 September 1941 in Citrine Papers, section10/3, a spat which the *Evening Standard* that same day described as 'open, if undeclared war'.
116. BLPES, Citrine Papers, section 10/3.

117. Citrine Papers, section 10/2. This was in a letter to Beaverbrook of 12 November 1952, after he had written a genuinely laudatory obituary of Bevin in the *Star*.
118. L. Hannah, *Engineers, Managers and Politicians. The First Fifteen Years of Nationalised Electricity Supply in Britain* (London, 1982), has an entire chapter entitled 'Citrine's Way', pp. 7–22.

Frank Chapple: A Thoughtful Trade Union Moderniser

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In all of the discussions on twentieth-century British socialism and its discontents that have taken place over the years, seldom has the political thought of individual trade union figures been properly examined. In one respect this should not be considered surprising. Most active trade unionists, preoccupied in campaigning for the improvement of their members' living standards, have had little opportunity to lose themselves in contemplation; as Geoffrey Foote notes, 'Higher wages, shorter hours, and better working conditions do not lend themselves to a general philosophy of society.'[1] Such a reality, however, has been viewed not simply as a reflection of the materialistic basis of trade unionism but as a natural consequence of the political settlement that the unions themselves engineered. Largely repudiating syndicalist theories that demanded their active participation in a new world order, at the close of the nineteenth century radical trade unionists instead opted to create a wing that would seek to increase the number of working men in parliament. This new body, as the Labour Party, gradually acquired the responsibility for the political direction of the movement as a whole, but it still bore the mark of its parentage: the unions remained the decisive force in the party's early policymaking

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structure, thus ensuring that much of its focus remained on improving the working man's lot within the existing social framework.

That the party developed in this seemingly conservative, practically minded 'Labourist' manner is seen by many of its critics as symptomatic of a long-held aversion by organised labour to the theories and abstract notions of 'intellectuals'.[2] Contentions like this have helped embellish an image of trade unionists as almost philistine figures, uninterested in the vagaries of political philosophy. Although containing elements of truth, such a static interpretation ignores the way in which British industrial relations have been subjected to considerable changes throughout the twentieth century, thereby allowing for new possibilities and a rethinking of traditional objectives. So the stolid Labourism of trade union politics was much ameliorated by a series of intellectual challenges from inside the Labour Party, principally by the Fabian socialists of the 1920s and their 'revisionist' successors in the 1950s. The union establishment quickly realised these developments had to be accommodated in order for their influence to be maintained, and some of their more enlightened leaders seized the initiative by taking a more active role in shaping government policy. So the interwar leader of the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU), Ernest Bevin, successfully managed to balance a predilection for 'realism and practicality' with an appetite for reform and, as the years progressed, an increasingly sophisticated intellectual approach: his support for the Mond–Turner talks in 1928, which allowed unions to consider industrial modernisation strategies without having to rely solely on government, rode in tandem with a sceptical view of economic orthodoxy derived from his experience in other areas, such as his participation on the Economic Advisory Council (where he soon found himself allied with Maynard Keynes).[3] Conversely, the relative success of Communist activity in certain union circles during the 1930s ensured that a theoretical approach to politics could also be found, as youthful cadres at rank-and-file level got to grips with the rudiments of Marxist thought.[4]

More importantly, the advent of two long-term factors in the post-war period further allowed unionists to consider the role political thought had to play in illuminating their situation. The first was what Barry Hindess termed the 'decline of [British] working-class politics', which gradually transformed the nature of the Labour Party and the basis of its support.[5] The second—the touchpaper for the last great political convulsion in twentieth-century Britain—was the instability of the British economic model and the resulting fragmentation of the ruling 'social democratic'

consensus, a state of affairs for which the unions were held to be at least partly culpable. Both events, which reached their climax in the 1970s, called into question many assumptions held within the movement—about the Labour Party, about socialism, and about wider society.

One union leader was more aware of these conflicts than most. Frank Chapple had been General Secretary of the Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunication and Plumbing Union (EETPU) throughout these troubled times, where his loud, trenchant defence of what he viewed as common-sense values did much to polarise opinion. Beholden to no one, his pugnacity and love of argument often concealed a subtle mind; while this may have been of no surprise to those who sat opposite him at the negotiating table, it was nevertheless the case that his willingness to act as an agent provocateur blinded many people to the acuity of his insights. That is a pity, for one outstanding feature of Chapple's career, like that of Bevin before him, was his openness to and understanding of political ideas—as opposed to the more rigid exactitudes of theory, for which his bruising experience as a former member of the Communist Party left him with little but disdain. Those experiences, along with his ability to upset the apple cart, left him uncomfortable with 'socialism', and in his later incarnation as an unconventional right-winger in the Labour Party he ruminated fruitfully on the relationship between the industrial and political wings of the movement. This distinguished him from most other 'moderate' union leaders, and gave him a unique place in the movement at just the time, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when it seemed to be in crisis.

Early Influences

The beginnings of Chapple's life were not propitious. He was born in 1921 in Hoxton, a 'typical poverty-stricken East End slum area of London'.[6] He and his family lived above his father's shoe-repair shop in Pitfield Street, in a flat with no bath or running hot water. The business was not a successful one. Chapple senior could not read or write, and according to his son he was frequently swindled by his customers. Much to his chagrin, he found himself relying on the financial support of his wife, who worked on the greengrocery stall in Hoxton market owned by her father (for which she earned 30s. a week).[7]

Unlike her husband, who sustained no real interest in political affairs, Chapple's mother was a Tory.[8] So too was the headmaster of young

Frank's boys' school in nearby Shoreditch, Mr Thoeday, a former councillor in Ongar who had once been president of a teachers' union, and whose paternalistic instincts extended to showing a special concern for the fortunes of underachieving boys.[9] Both figures were representative of a strong Conservative tradition common to much of working-class London, especially the East End districts. Henry Pelling notes in his *Social Geography of British Elections* that the Hoxton constituency, although subject to 'a long Liberal ascendancy' in the latter Victorian period, had been won in the 1900 'Khaki' election by the Conservative candidate, the Hon. Claude Hay.[10] Pelling ascribed Hay's success to a combination of factors, including a surfeit of financial 'generosity' in the area, but it was notable that his support derived most heavily from the constituency's flotilla of shopkeepers—a powerful force in an area largely bereft of heavy industry, and which included among their number Mrs Chapple and her relatives. The affiliation of civic guardians such as Mr Thoeday, meanwhile, reflects the appeal of the Conservative Party at that time for those who were community-focused, vaguely collectivist, and unsympathetic both to the progressive, economistic creed of laissez-faire Liberalism and the class-based rhetoric of socialism.[11]

It would be tempting to conclude that such an environment—especially the maternal influence—shaped Chapple's reservations about socialist politics later in life. But that would be a supposition too far, for there were clearly other elements in his childhood that confused the picture. There was his uncle, Mrs Chapple's brother, a 'lifelong believer in socialism',[12] and the esoteric presence of the family's neighbour, a furniture dealer and founder member of the Socialist Party of Great Britain. Both men regaled young Frank with anecdotes and parables that contributed to his political awakening, steering him towards the left—a process aided by the sight of Sir Oswald Mosley's Fascists parading down the streets of Shoreditch in their black-shirted uniforms in the mid-1930s. Nonetheless, if growing up in Hoxton radicalised Chapple, it could also be said that his sustained exposure to such an eclectic range of political species bolstered his appreciation of the merits of pluralism in a democratic society, and convinced him of the need to defend it from the dangers of extremism and violent intimidation.

When Chapple was 14 a schoolboy prank landed him in hospital for several weeks, causing him to leave school armed with but a handful of certificates, 'all for scripture knowledge'.[13] So began an unedifying round of dead-end jobs, including a two-day period spent as a page boy in 'an

obscure hotel in the Barbican'.[14] Eventually finding work as an apprentice electrician in his uncle's greengrocer's shop, his new colleagues introduced him to 'the world and language of trade unions', and he was accepted as a member of the Electrical Trades Union (ETU) shortly after his sixteenth birthday in 1937. At the same time, he was taking his first dip into the muddy waters of political activism. Having joined the Shoreditch branch of the Labour League of Youth, he quickly became alarmed at its lack of effectiveness in combating the Mosleyite threat; together with several other members—including the future dramatist and novelist Ted Willis—he soon departed for the more militant, anti-blackshirt environment of the Young Communist League.[15] This progression was both rapid and spontaneous, but it had one profound consequence. As his branch of the ETU was also full of card-carrying Communists, the necessity of industrial and political interaction was made evident to Chapple from the very outset: as he states in his autobiography, 'my political concern could now be channelled through the union'.[16]

Chapple joined the Communist Party (CPGB) proper in 1939. The outbreak of war and the Molotov–Ribbentrop pact meant he 'did little' until 1941, by which time he was working for a contracting firm on a Royal Ordnance Factory site in Liverpool.[17] For most of the next two years, as a 'bloody-minded red' he was submerged in the study of Marxian theories of economic development, attending classes devoted to primitive communism, feudalism, surplus value theory and 'wage labour and capital'.[18] He finally got the call-up in 1943, enlisting for the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, but aside from preparing for the D-Day landings his experience of war was uneventful. Only following Germany's surrender was he was able to learn some important skills, helping to organise an embryonic cell of disaffected British soldiers for the cause in Lübeck, where he also liaised with members of the German Communist Party (KPD).[19] Demobilised in 1947, he returned to Britain much as he had been prior to his wartime experiences: a diligent and enthusiastic worker for his cause and the wider movement, with a simple but firm belief that the Soviet Union was 'the fount of all Russian progress'.[20]

But doubts soon began to creep in. In Chapple's account, his disillusion with Communism was a gradual affair, a long and sustained accumulation of disturbances that eventually forced him to reconsider his entire worldview. Initial misgivings were primarily over party strategy, especially in the years when he sought to defend the principle of cooperation between Labour and the CPGB (the 'United Left') from the somewhat fervid

objections of his 'sectarian' colleagues in both the Party and the union.[21] As international events started to impinge on his consciousness, however, so his loyalty was seriously challenged.[22] Two incidents he found especially unsettling were the Jewish doctors' 'plot' in Moscow, with its tissue of anti-Semitic falsehoods, and the revelations in Khrushchev's 'secret speech' denouncing Stalin at the Soviet party's 20th Congress in 1956.[23] In that same year, of course, came the greatest cause célèbre of them all—the crushing of the Hungarian uprising, a morality play which finally brought to the world's attention the totalitarian nature of democratic centralism. Chapple later cited this as a catalyst for changing his thinking: although he initially attempted to soldier on in the party, attending meetings and trying to persuade waverers to 'try to democratise the party and change the leadership', he eventually revoked his membership in 'late 1957 or early 1958'.[24] Unlike other fellow apostates, however (including the social historian E.P. Thompson, whose articles in the radical journal *The Reasoner* were known to Chapple), the natural feelings of shame he felt coincided with a rejection of the intellectual tenets of Marxism. He had previously viewed the 'basic theories of Communism' as approximating to 'what life should be'; now that everything had been 'shattered', there lay in its wake a willingness to consider new ideas that departed from the 'elitist' conception of politics as practised by the CPGB.[25] It was in this spirit that he decided to join the Labour Party soon afterwards.

These choices isolated Chapple from the most powerful bloc in the ETU. During his time in the union the CPGB had steadily increased its influence far out of proportion to its actual strength; by 1956 party members, accounting for an estimated 700 of a total union membership of 228,000, held the positions of President, General Secretary, Assistant General Secretary, and more than half of the posts on the Executive Council.[26] As a critical rank-and-file union pamphlet of the 1970s told it, Chapple had been very much part of this 'winning side', and his rise to the top had been assisted by his status as 'a loyal hatchet-man'.[27] This he never denied, indeed could not deny; when pressed in the High Court about his past associations during the 1961 ballot-rigging trial, he had little option but to admit to having been a member of the ruling 'Communist conspiracy'.[28] More contentious was the allegation that Chapple's departure, rather than a point of principle, was simply a means of switching sides in the ETU once the sands began to shift. One of his former allies, contributing to a union file on Chapple, went so far as to query the sincerity of his volte-face, claiming that Chapple 'said he never agreed with the CP but

it was the only way to get on in the union', and that the reason for his switch was due to 'those bastards' at Head Office 'starv[ing] him out'.[29] Future opponents also had their own explanation for why he remained a party cadre for so long after the Soviet intervention in Hungary, claiming he hung on in order to secure election to the Executive Council in 1957.[30] Chapple's defenders, such as his future confidante John Lloyd, claim there is no truth in these remarks, and that his defection was in good faith.[31]

Whatever Chapple's motivations, his conversion from loyal game-keeper to attack-minded poacher was a dramatic one. Together with Leslie Cannon and Mark Young, fellow Executive Councillors who had also resigned from the CPGB in similar circumstances, he was to spearhead an alternative faction in the union called the Reform Group. Seeking to challenge and topple the Communist leadership, they supported a lugubrious Catholic moderate of long-standing, the Scottish area official Jock Byrne, in the 1959 election to elect the General Secretary. Byrne's only opponent was the Communist incumbent, Frank Haxell, and in a closely fought campaign much of the animus between the two sides came out into the open. Wishing to highlight their situation, Chapple leaked to the press a letter he had written to Haxell and the Trades Union Congress (TUC), in which he asserted that there were 'advisory committees' in place that allowed CPGB members to implement policy changes in the union without resorting to due democratic process.[32]

Haxell was nonetheless declared the victor in February 1960, but the experience of apparent irregularities in the voting procedures had already raised the suspicions of both the reformers and the General Council of the TUC.[33] At Cannon's suggestion, Chapple and Byrne decided to seek redress at the High Court, setting the stage for a 38-day trial at a reported cost of £80,000.[34] There it was proved that Haxell and his associates had engaged in numerous illegal practices: evidence was presented showing nearly 27,000 surplus ballots to have been printed and distributed, while branch returns and rule books had been altered, and fraudulent postal votes received.[35] Furthermore, the trial exposed the stratagems employed by the ruling claque to maintain its grip on power, most notably its penchant for using advisory committees as a means of synthesising the interests of both the union and the CPGB—thereby vindicating Chapple's earlier indiscretions to the newspapers. In a far-reaching judgement, Mr Justice Winn found that five of the twelve defendants—including Haxell and Frank Foulkes, the union's president—were guilty of conspiracy to defraud.[36] Byrne was declared the elected General Secretary in place of

Haxell, and two years later Chapple was himself elected as his Assistant. The latter, who had sustained many assaults on his reputation, described the court's verdict as an 'incomparable turning point' for him—and indeed it was.[37] As a relatively young man—not yet 40—he was poised to reap the rewards: with his leading foes in disgrace he could now tackle the structures and character of his union and, in doing so, construct for it a place in the wider movement.

MODERNISER OF THE ELECTRICIANS' UNION

Chapple's new-found identity as an anti-Communist, although it was to become the most visible aspect of his popular persona, tells only half the story. Not only had the lessons he learnt while in the CPGB been put to good use in defeating Haxell and Foulkes, they also left a residual imprint on the new forms of politics that he was to espouse. Within the ETU, for example, both he and Les Cannon (who had been elected president in 1962) emulated their Communist predecessors by engaging in measures to control the union's political culture. Although some of the methods they employed were relatively uncontroversial—such as Chapple's frequent insistence that his supporters should organise themselves effectively and attend as many branch meetings as possible, both hallmarks of the previous régime—their proposals to transform the ETU's organisational structure aroused a storm of protest. At a conference on rules revision in 1965, for example, it was agreed that Area Committees should be replaced by industrial conferences of shop stewards, while the lay Executive Council was to become a full-time, professionalised body, to be elected once every five years. This followed on from a ballot vote, conducted the previous year, to exclude all CPGB members from union office, while in 1969 a further vote determined that over 120 paid officials should be appointed, not elected.[38]

Many of the reformists' critics have since argued that the intention of such restructuring was to centralise executive control and restrict the autonomy of grassroots left-wing adversaries by extinguishing rank-and-file positions.[39] These were undoubtedly the main outcomes, and the leadership's heavy-handed tactics seemed designed to inspire outrage. Nevertheless, for Cannon in particular the reforms were just one aspect of an overarching plan to introduce what had been called, in the ETU's evidence to the Donovan Commission, a 'new attitude' to trade unionism.[40] This 'attitude' was predicated on the notion that the union

had to introduce new procedures and institutions if it was to satisfy the demands of its members. So the abolition of area committees, in Cannon's justification, was necessary if shop stewards were to be allowed to develop policies for their own industries. Moreover, it was argued that if workers were to receive the wages and benefits appropriate to their skill-set they had to be able to bargain effectively, which in practice meant being prepared to offer incentives to management in the form of guaranteed productivity increases.[41] To this effect, Chapple and others helped design a Joint Industry Board (JIB) composed of local and national councils of union officials and employers, each charged with setting pay standards and subjecting members to skills-based assessments and newly introduced training programmes.

In all of this the ETU was heavily influenced by the efforts of its US counterpart, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), which had invested considerably in training facilities for its workers throughout the 1950s. Before the creation of the JIB several ETU delegates travelled to New York to witness how the Union Local 3 of the IBEW dealt with its own industry board; the lessons learnt were important enough to be taken back home with them.[42] But as the years progressed Chapple and his colleagues became confident enough to innovate on their own, securing single-union deals and strike-free agreements at various industrial plants nationwide (which were often foreign-owned and hostile to the practices of British trade unions).[43] Unsurprisingly, this approach was not without controversy. Its flexibility, American lineage and emphasis on negotiation appeared to some as evidence of 'business unionism'—a philosophy Newman Smith describes as a 'collective bargaining strategy… [that] eschewed any form of challenge to the priorities of the market economy'.[44] John Lloyd recalls the dislike senior ETU officials had for the term: aside from implying that they were little more than 'bosses' narks', it obscured the genuine results the union regularly secured for its members.[45]

Regardless of how one defines it, the ETU's modernisation strategy came at exactly the right time, for it chimed with the ambitions of the incoming Labour government. Harold Wilson, as leader, had fought the 1964 election on a programme of radical reform and technological change, underpinned by what Ilaria Favretto describes as 'a more instrumental notion of planning and state ownership strictly connected with economic efficiency arguments'.[46] The most noteworthy scheme to boost the nation's economic performance was the regulation of prices

and incomes, which the party saw as necessary if wage inflation was to be tamed and a more equal distribution of incomes achieved.[47] In December 1964 George Brown, appointed to head the newly created Department of Economic Affairs, secured an agreement between employers and unions to commit to a voluntary incomes policy, and this was followed five months later by the establishment of the National Board for Prices and Incomes (NBPI).[48] As a cornerstone of the 'new era' of industrial relations, Cannon had endorsed the promise of incomes policy at the 1964 TUC Congress, shortly before the government's slender triumph at the polls: it was the perfect way to accompany the ETU's own progress in this field, and could if successful provide a blueprint for the triumph of moderate unionism throughout the movement.[49]

Given such a rapprochement, it is therefore surprising to find that it was the electricians who were to prove one of the many thorns in the government's side. The root cause of the subsequent deterioration in relations lay in the incompatibility of the ETU's idealistic support for the government's objectives with the reality of existing practice, a situation which the union's modernisation programme ironically aggravated. As John Lloyd succinctly states, the ETU leadership 'would not simply give up their attempts to put up wages'—especially if their formula was getting results.[50] One illustration of the problems that arose came in 1966, when Brown—his attempts to prod the cabinet towards monetary devaluation having failed—launched a wage 'freeze' as part of an overall deflationary package. The ETU had at this point just negotiated a 'revolutionary' productivity-based pay deal on behalf of its members, and Chapple was furious to find his efforts nixed. At a meeting with Brown shortly afterwards, he expressed his refusal to change the agreement even if prompted by the NPBI—a position narrowly supported by the Executive Council, which ratified his opposition to the TUC's acceptance of the freeze by six votes to five.[51]

Who was to blame in instances like these? As James Cronin has argued, the government's abiding failure was to ask union leaders to smother demands for wage increases while giving them no inducements with which to entice their members.[52] But in choosing to stick by free collective bargaining at crucial moments, many unions risked befouling the progressive notions they claimed to support. This paradox was highlighted later by the radical-minded Labour MP John P. Mackintosh, who observed that their wage demands during the 1964–70 period were so inflationary that they perpetuated inequality; thus, any socialist party that did not believe

in an incomes policy was, in his words, a 'contradiction in terms'.[53] Within the ETU, Cannon seems to have been most concerned about the conflicts that such a contradiction caused, given his faith in social democracy as a credo. Even so, when in 1965 he wondered 'how many people are really prepared to accept the significance of an incomes policy as it will be in action rather than theory?', it is unlikely he was asking that question of his own union.[54] He may well have been thinking of Frank Chapple of course, not least because the latter's instinctive regard for the 'man on the street' appears to have inspired a bullish and negative attitude towards the state.[55] Chapple certainly seemed more willing than Cannon to criticise the Wilson government, as was demonstrated in the aftermath of the wage freeze, when he complained that the 'hand and word of a friend and partner has been mistaken for the fealty of the vassal and the plea of a suppliant. The credit and goodwill afforded the Labour administration is not limitless.'[56] Matters between the pair came to a head in 1969, when Cannon branded him a 'reactionary' during their 'feud' over how best to respond to *In Place of Strife*, Barbara Castle's infamous white paper on trade union reform (which Chapple viewed as 'unwarranted meddling').[57]

Chapple was still too preoccupied with internal union issues to concern himself unduly about the state of industrial democracy at this time. His election as General Secretary in 1966 following Jock Byrne's early retirement, together with his four-year tenure on the Labour Party's National Executive Committee (NEC), did allow him to acquire a deeper perspective of some of the problems plaguing industrial relations—although his experience on the NEC left him with yet more disdain for the government.[58] Of greater significance, however, was Les Cannon's untimely death late in 1970: not only did it leave Chapple as the leading 'moderate' figure in the EETPU (as the ETU had been since its merger with the Plumbers' Union two years earlier), but he now had to inhabit the de facto role of principal thinker and strategist.[59]

The first test of Chapple's leadership came the very next year. Having narrowly eased Labour out of government, the Conservative Party under Edward Heath was now preparing its own industrial legislation—sparking off a wave of strikes and campaigns of civil disobedience, most of which were organised by a panoply of far-left groups. Chapple was himself opposed to the Industrial Relations Act, which he described at various times as biased, ineffective and badly designed. His solution, however, was to suggest that it could be ameliorated in the short term through efforts to get union representatives on the panel boards and tribunals established

by the legislation.[60] As even the TUC had argued for a boycott of these agencies, this looked like a weak compromise.[61] The left-wing opposition within the EETPU saw his refusal to confront the government as nothing short of appeasement: if he could not condone fighting a Tory regime while it was attempting to introduce 'black reactionary laws', just when would he do so?[62] Chapple considered this argument as little more than an expression of class politics, designed to sow division and flout the wishes of an elected government. By now, however, even he was having to concede that his 'reasonable attitude' was out of step with the mood of his own members, not just those campaigning from the left: opposition to the Act within the EETPU had steadily mounted, and at the 1971 conference delegates supported the TUC's policy that all affiliated unions should refuse to register once it was passed into law, a position they reaffirmed by a clear majority vote two years later.[63]

Naturally, union leftists congratulated themselves on defeating Chapple's 'line'.[64] Their success brought new converts, turning a fissiparous, directionless movement into a 'Broad Left' agenda which was able to resist the leadership's actions with its own effective propaganda.[65] Chapple maintained that their 'class warfare' tactics risked undermining the gains moderate trade unionism had made, potentially condemning Britain 'to a prolonged bout of recession and unemployment'.[66] The striking miners had already helped usher Heath out of office in February 1974; the Labour successors, still led by a now weary Wilson, were understandably wary of provoking them further. The party instead fashioned an alternative incomes policy, one which (it was hoped) the unions would seek to join rather than be corralled into. The 'Social Contract', as it became known, was an attempt at introducing a level of reciprocity in industrial relations. By agreeing to keep their wage demands at 'responsible' levels, the trade unions were promised in return several friendly policies and a greater degree of autonomy.[67] The reaction from the EETPU was a positive one, with its delegation backing the motion in favour of the Contract at the TUC in 1975.[68]

Chapple too was prepared to accept the proposals: having already expressed his unease at the 'failings and limitations' of free collective bargaining during the debate over the Industrial Relations Act, he henceforth acknowledged that a statutory incomes policy would always be considered a potential solution by any government, even a Labour one, in a time of 'severe crisis'.[69] Citing the inflationary consequences of recent wage settlements, he now argued that without incomes policy the government would

have no power to 'deal with all the damaging things' that would arise.[70] Two groups were identified in his view as fuelling problems: the unholy alliance of Marxists and other militant 'revolutionaries' who opposed the Contract 'because they hope to achieve by way of economic and social chaos those political changes they could never achieve through the ballot box'; and those irresponsible brothers in the movement who pursued their own economic, 'highly sectional' interests irrespective of the greater good.[71]

Despite this public commitment by the union, events as they unfolded illustrated high levels of ambiguity and discomfort. As Newman Smith has explained, the attitude of the EETPU towards the Contract was marred by inconsistencies as the leadership sought to adapt to changing circumstances caused by an increasingly unhappy workforce.[72] During the Contract's short life members struck against pay limits three times, and at the 1977 conference motions were carried supporting a return to free collective bargaining and condemning wage restraint.[73] Chapple soon realised that standardised agreements were once again literally proving counterproductive, much as the Executive Council had feared even when it agreed to support the Contract.[74] By 1978 he had conceded that the erosion of wage differentials for skilled employees 'disenchants the very groups that we need to encourage if output is to be raised'.[75] The macroeconomic effects of the Contract, he felt, were not enough to reprieve it: although acknowledging its importance in redistributing income, his earlier hopes that it would rein in inflation were later supplanted by the recognition that many of the government's policies only acted as a 'temporary brake'.[76]

Moreover, Chapple's feeling for rank-and-file opinion also influenced his reaction to the more advanced aspects of the Contract—such as the call for 'worker directors' in the Bullock report,[77] which he spurned by noting the 'little or no demand' from his members for such an idea, alluding to the confusion and hostility that such an 'alien, alternative method' would bring.[78] This reflected a deeply held traditionalist perspective that was suspicious of using the workplace as a seed-bed for economic and social transformation, quite unlike that of, say, the transport workers' leader Jack Jones, who always sought to increase the power of shop-floor trade unionism. Chapple felt that the unions' position was essentially a 'negative' one, to be 'entirely confined to industrial relations and Labour market matters'.[79] What it ought not to be, he argued later, is 'a battering ram for fundamental political change', whether socialist or otherwise.[80]

This last comment is revealing, for it shows how unwilling Chapple was, even at this stage, to explore the role that trade unions could have outside their own narrow sphere of influence. It was this as much as anything else that had led him—together with virtually the entire union establishment—to withdraw support for the Contract: sectional interests over pay and disappointment with a Labour government once again outdid any obligation to making things work. The collective approach that Les Cannon strived for in the 1960s had succumbed to the harsh lessons of reality twice over, and Chapple was too pragmatic to do anything other than concede that the unions' ability to get their own way was by now strictly limited.[81] But as the indignities of the 'Winter of Discontent' prevailed, and the spectre of the far left cast a shadow over the entire movement, so he found himself in a position to rethink his aims. Self-interested Labourist attitudes seemed unlikely to break the impasse, but neither would weakening one's position through exposure to state interference; the challenge, he realised, was to understand just how involved in actual politics (as opposed to industrial relations) trade unions should be in order to protect their interests and those of wider society. This simple evaluation, together with the fluctuations of British politics, soon inspired him to jettison earlier notions, forcing him to question principles in the movement which, as one historian observes, had been 'built up over more than a century of defensive action against the encroaching powers of employers and governments'.[82]

Sympathiser with the Social Democrats

Although he privately found James Callaghan and other members of the front bench to be timid in confronting union extremism, Chapple's fear of something worse led him to approach the 1979 General Election by urging that 'the trade unionist should vote Labour … because a Labour government is our government'.[83] In the end, his loyalty counted for little. Even at the time, many on the moderate left were conscious of just how momentous Margaret Thatcher's victory was, and used the opportunity to reassess the strength of their own political ideas. Some former Labour MPs from the social democratic right, such as Dick Taverne, Roy Jenkins and (especially) David Marquand, were already doing this, coming to conclusions that were at odds with conventional, 'revisionist' party philosophy.[84] Although his situation as a union leader put in him in a very different position, Chapple too witnessed the changes wrought by the demise of welfarist consensus politics and of heavy industry, which had helped facili-

tate the rise of a 'new left'—ideological, often university-educated and predominantly middle class. Clearly viewing his new adversaries as little different from his old Communist ones, he deployed similar efforts to prevent the steady erosion of the moderates' position. But, unlike other kindred trade unionists, he also recorded his displeasure at the entire construction of political ideals on which his movement was based, recognising the need for a change away from old practices not just in the unions but across the political landscape.[85]

One factor that Chapple immediately acknowledged was the lack of a collective political consciousness on the part of ordinary working voters, and the implications this now had for Labour. As he pointed out after the election, the party had lost a tranche of its traditional support: only a slightly higher number of skilled workers who voted had opted for it over the Conservatives.[86] He scorned the premise of the 'lunatic left' that voters had 'kicked out' Callaghan in the search for a purer alternative; rather, 'The reality was that doctrinaire socialist dogma was overwhelmingly rejected.'[87] The blame for Labour's lurch leftwards, and its resulting 'unelectability', he laid at the door of the NEC and urban constituency parties (CLPs)—both of which were increasingly dominated by factional varieties of *gauchisme*, from the soft-left politics of the Tribune group to the more uncompromising strictures of 'Bennery' and the revolutionary Trotskyists. All of these groups were keen on using their influence to change the party's constitution, in the hope of handing power back to grassroots activists; they got their wish in 1980, when the principle of mandatory reselection of Labour MPs was introduced.[88] Chapple believed that letting activists 'rule' the party and the unions was symptomatic of an 'élitist' worldview among the extreme left, one that was intolerant (and perhaps even unaware) of the increasing diversity of mass opinion, and which alienated the moderate voters that Labour desperately needed to win back from the Tory fold.[89]

Responding to these changes in voting behaviour, Chapple recommended a comprehensive programme of political reform. Within the Labour movement, he argued for the implementation of one-man-one-vote (OMOV) and postal ballots for all party and union elections, replacing the old system of bloc voting.[90] These aims were long-standing ones, which derived their potency from the EETPU's own successful implementation of both schemes in the wake of the ballot-rigging scandal.[91] More importantly, from the mid-1970s onwards Chapple campaigned for the introduction of a proportional representation (PR) system for general

elections.[92] His thinking on this issue was conveyed in his Mountbatten Lecture, given in 1984, where he sought to place voting reform in the wider context of 'sociological and technological change'. Quoting Samuel Finer's observation that no government had won a majority of the vote since 1935, Chapple suggested that a move to PR would constrain the tendency towards 'elective dictatorships' (as Lord Hailsham described them) without proper mandates, which led governments to ignore those that did not vote for them. He also hoped it would preserve the post-war tradition of 'consensus politics' by destroying the political duopoly that nurtured it, a form of reasoning that could only have been a product of the contemporary political climate: having witnessed both major parties gravitate towards their extremes, he had concluded that the two-party system, far from ensuring stability, was instead 'reinforc[ing] the idea of class in our society'—leading to the triumph of sectional (and radical) interests over national ones.[93]

The distaste Chapple felt for the *énrages* of the left helps explain his attitude to the market economy. Having initiated the management-friendly 'modernisation' of the union in the 1960s, it is perhaps no surprise that he maintained a broadly positive attitude towards markets over the course of the next decade, at a time when such views were considered unappealing by the bulk of the movement. In a speech given at Newcastle University in 1975, he instructed socialists 'to defend the market system, for society has to have some discipline … The state should hold the ring, not get into it.'[94] That same year, at the TUC congress, he warned delegates that 'if you destroy the market the only alternative is bureaucracy and a large police force'—a veiled swipe at the Warsaw Pact régimes that many unionists still supported.[95] Chapple elaborated on these themes yet further in the 1980s, most notably when he used his Mountbatten lecture to voice criticisms of 'large-scale' state planning, and the methods of classification and centralisation that characterised it. Deliberately echoing Karl Popper's refutation of 'historicism', he maintained that it was 'impossible' for planning initiatives to succeed because 'many of our actions have consequences we cannot foresee'; the 'social dislocation' that could potentially arise from these antediluvian nostrums would only abet the Marxist threat and ultimately annihilate both market economics and Popper's 'open society'.[96] Such ideas, which were some distance from those of Les Cannon in the 1960s, could well have been bolstered by his reported attendance at meetings of the Institute of Economic Affairs, an ultra-liberal organisation that never failed to conflate liberty with free-market principles.[97]

Nonetheless, to see him solely in this light would be a mistake. Chapple was no ideologue, and his enthusiasm was tempered by the shifting fortunes of the times and his position as a labour leader. He may have agreed with neo-classical economic theory in viewing trade unionism as a disfigurement of the pure market, for example, but unlike them he did not see this as a problem; as the unions claimed their very existence from the need to combine together in the face of the 'plight and weakness of the individual worker in the market economy', he unsurprisingly argued that such a function should in fact be considered a public good.[98] Chapple's recognition that unfettered markets were both undesirable and impossible meant he looked dimly on the 'free-market extravaganzas' beloved by 'obscurantist' Tories.[99] They offended his pragmatic, working-man's sensibilities, and once Mrs Thatcher took power he felt little compunction in criticising an administration that oversaw 'intolerably high' levels of unemployment in its quest for doctrinal purity, and which fuelled 'far-left rhetoric' by appearing indifferent to questions of social justice.[100] Market forces for him were thus ultimately agents of stability and prosperity—not to be used for a fundamentalist agenda or, indeed, as the panacea to every ill.

Chapple's desire to rescue, rather than abhor, the principles of liberal economics, together with his horror of Marxism both at home and abroad, had a decisive impact on his ideology. Having long disdained utopian thought, he had since come to question the whole validity of socialism as a concept and its role in the Labour Party. Unlike many in the movement, he viewed the word in its original context: 'socialism' for him was more than just working-class politics or even egalitarianism moulded into a coherent philosophy, but an alternative economic system to capitalism that had little chance of success. As a typically forthright fusillade in the pages of the union journal *Contact* put it, shortly before the 1979 election, '

> There is no land in the world yet where the day-dreams of socialist theories have become a reality—unless you consider those who are currently abiding in cemeteries, prisons and lunatic asylums as being among the better off.'[101]

Alongside endless rounds of 'combative speechmaking' at union conferences, *Contact* was to be the main vehicle for Chapple's hopes in envisaging a Labour Party denuded of such fallacies.[102] Although he gained much support from his sizeable following, the journal's letters pages resonated to the sound of outraged EETPU members questioning his intentions—not all of whom, given its readership, would have been from the union's

left-wing bloc either. For them, a Labourite and a 'socialist' were simply one and the same; to question that, as Chapple did, infuriated those who were already predisposed to judge him (in the words of one irate correspondent from Stevenage) as 'rigid and right-wing'.[103]

Considering his excoriation of Labour's leftward drift following Michael Foot's election as leader in 1980, one must ask how Chapple sought to entertain the above ideas while remaining within the party's ranks. The explanation lies in the continuing faith he had in the capacity of the unions to save Labour from itself. Like most trade unionists, Chapple had long believed that the relationship between the movement's industrial and political wings was mutually beneficial. As long as the good sense of moderate unionists was allowed to prevail in the party it could still get back on the right track; they must 'stay in and fight', he commanded in 1980, and defeat the 'hyped-up Place de la Revolution mob' by the straightforward means of policy debate and superior electioneering.[104] He was certainly willing to practise what he preached, loudly voicing his support for right-wing party factions like the Campaign for Labour Victory (CLV), which was even provided with office space by the EETPU.[105] So when the first calls for a Social Democratic detachment from the party were made that same year, his initial reaction was unusually circumspect. Responding to an article in *Encounter* magazine by the academic Stephen Haseler for a new, radical 'centre party', Chapple expressed his respect for the notion but advocated instead that a 'Trade Union Campaign to Save the Labour Party' be formed.[106] This, he believed, would encourage disaffected Labour right-wingers like Roy Jenkins—then head of the European Commission—to 'throw themselves into a vigorous and public fight for reform'; indeed, he beseeched Jenkins to return from Brussels and seek union sponsorship as a Labour MP.[107] The latter, although agreeing with Chapple on 'absolutely every aspect of policy', for his part looked askance at the 'political unrealism' of this whole approach.[108]

Had the threat of a 'radical realignment of British politics' remained little more than a daydream among the liberal intelligentsia, then it is probable that Chapple would have continued to affirm his belief in fighting solely from the inside. But by the summer of 1980 a break within the ranks of Labour was becoming apparently inevitable. The *casus belli*, as Dianne Hayter describes it, was the Bishop's Stortford agreement in June, which recommended that the party accept the principle of a tripartite electoral college, widening the base for selecting the leader beyond the parliamentary cohort to include CLPs and the unions (many of which were

very left-oriented).[109] This infuriated the party right, who were appalled at yet another example of activist-led insurrection.[110] The proposals were debated at a special conference at Wembley on 24 January 1981, where the unions used their bloc vote to force through the changes—with an even greater imbalance towards them in the voting ratio (40% rather than the proposed 20%).[111] Many Labour MPs unhappy with the party's direction saw this as the moment to cut their ties decisively—either because they were appalled by the result, or because they realised it gave them the perfect opportunity to establish another party.[112] Only two days after the Wembley conference came the formation of the Council for Social Democracy (CSD), which released the 'Limehouse Declaration' as a public statement of its principles. On 5 February an endorsement of the Declaration appeared in the *Guardian*: of the 100 signatures (in a field skewed towards academics and former Labour politicians) just five were from trade unionists. The foremost among them was Chapple.[113]

One can see why he would have been attracted to such a *coup de théâtre*. It represented the first major attempt by the Labour right to take its destiny into its own hands, naturally pleasing a man who never desisted from confronting his enemies. He held the schismatics' leaders—the 'Gang of Four'—in reasonably high regard, and they in turn had enough hopes for the EETPU's backing to send each of the union's constituency delegates an 'open letter' explaining their position.[114] Chapple's political ideals were also clearly in keeping with the renegade group. Like him, they advocated electoral reform; they were 'sound' on multilateralism and the continuation of the Atlantic Alliance; they saw the Marxist and 'fellow-traveller' threat within the party and the unions for what it was. Chapple's endorsement of the Polish union Solidarność and support for Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia as bulwarks against the Soviet threat were also in keeping with their internationalist and libertarian ethics, while his admiration for the 'social market' economic policies and pragmatic reflexes of Helmut Schmidt's government in West Germany echoed the historic regard in which Labour's revisionists had long held the reformist, 'modern' nature of Europe's pre-eminent social democratic party.[115]

Furthermore, even as Chapple continued to insist that the unions should try to 'save' the party, so his intuitive ability to anticipate the march of events propelled him towards alternative possibilities. An early indication of this had come at the height of Labour's internecine strife in 1980, when he had stated flatly in an unpublished article for *Now!* magazine (James Goldsmith's short-lived news weekly) that 'there is little point in the trade

union movement exclusively supporting a political party which is unrepresentative of the rank-and-file'.[116] This new, more ambivalent attitude reached public attention soon after the Limehouse Declaration's launch, during an exchange in the pages of the *Times* between Chapple and the Communist draughtsmen's leader, Ken Gill. The latter had penned an article attacking those who disapproved of the new electoral college, citing as justification the conventional unionist view of Labour as the natural outcome of the 'growing strength of the trades union movement'.[117] Deriding this perspective as 'half-baked ideological claptrap', Chapple retorted in the letters' pages that the unions can 'in no sense … claim to have proprietorial rights in determining [Labour's] programme policy and role in the contemporary political situation'. Instead he invoked a particular reinterpretation of the party's past:

> To suggest that the Labour Party was the product solely of the trades unions betrays a woeful ignorance of the history of working men's political aspirations historically and the variety of instruments utilized to achieve their objectives … The Levellers, Chartists and others could claim equal parentage in terms of its ideological origins.[118]

These ideas laid the foundation for a move away from the traditional conception of industrial politics to an almost 'post-Labourist' idea of how it should operate. Chapple's assertion that the party–union connection should not be considered sacrosanct was a taboo wilfully smashed. Its rationale rested on his feeling that, as things stood, there was always the risk that one could pull the other over the precipice and into the leftist abyss. Thus, if the Labour movement was to be revitalised then perhaps it was necessary, as he wrote in 1983, for 'both wings … to become more independent of each other', especially if either continued 'to elevate the idea of socialism above all else'.[119] The clear inference was that unions (and unionists) should now have the freedom to select from a wider range of political options and not be shackled by 'outdated' sentiment and ideology, while the party in turn must resist becoming 'subordinated to the unions' if it wished to maintain its independence and principles.[120]

Hence, with the metamorphosis of the Limehouse breakaway into the Social Democratic Party (SDP) in March 1981, Chapple's political strategy evolved to become one of differentiation rather than attachment. In the immediate aftermath of the split, he remained focused on Labour politics: having already attended the first meeting of the St Ermin's Group of

moderate trade unionists in February, for example, he continued to use his authority to try and influence the party's internal affairs, appointing delegates—allegedly without the consent of branches—to sit on the general management committees of CLPs with left-wing majorities.[121] As long as there was a possibility of trouncing socialism from within, he would seek to be involved—perhaps indicating that the unions' idea of 'proprietorial rights' was one he still found acceptable if it could be played to his own side's advantage. But Chapple counterbalanced this activity by seeking to accommodate the new party. Although he never abandoned Labour to join the SDP, he had little hesitation in aligning himself with it when the need arose. This became evident during the 1983 General Election, when he backed the Social Democrat MP John Grant in a three-way battle in his Islington North constituency. Chapple defended his decision on the grounds that Grant was a 'personal friend' and a 'man of integrity', who had been sponsored by the EETPU from 1976 until his defection from Labour in 1981.[122] Such was the anger from his colleagues on the TUC (of which he had been elected chairman in 1982), however, that after the news broke in May the General Council unanimously forced him to endorse Labour nationally, while a motion sent by several party branches later in the year argued for his expulsion.[123]

Undeterred, Chapple wrote shortly after the election that 'over and over again our loyalty to Labour let the Tories in', and that it would have been better for Labour voters to choose SDP candidates in areas where they had a chance of winning.[124] However, the success of the TUC in forcing him to obey its diktat may have given others pause for thought, as it demonstrated just how difficult it would be, as a trade unionist, for one to break conventions in this manner. If an authoritative rebel like Chapple could not properly encourage his own union to adopt a more pluralist stance then few were likely to emulate him; indeed, the unwillingness of any other union to endorse the new party is surely proof in itself.[125] This was heightened by the fact that the Social Democrats had developed a culture of its own, separate from Labour values and more attuned to those of the Conservatives in industrial matters—as shown by the fact that the majority of its MPs cast their votes in favour of the 1982 Employment Bill (which, amongst other things, proposed an end to the closed shop).[126] Moreover, Chapple must have noted that, in his own union, even those from within the right-wing *laager* were reluctant to follow him on his new course. According to Lewis Minkin, the EETPU paid no money into the SDP's general election fund and none of their candidates was backed.[127]

Indeed, in 1984 the tide turned in the opposite direction, as the union, impressed with Neil Kinnock's *legerdemain* in the face of militant tactics, resumed its £1500 donation to the leader's office.[128] This was followed the next year by a members' ballot which approved, by a ratio of over five to one, the proposal to retain the political fund in support of the party—an achievement which was due in part to the assiduous actions of the Executive Council in convincing even those who did *not* support Labour to oppose any 'undemocratic' restrictions on the fund by the government's newly introduced Trade Union Act.[129]

Conclusions

Chapple retired as Secretary in 1984, much to his chagrin, and was granted a life peerage shortly afterwards. The fact that he continued to retain his Labour Party membership while sitting on the Lords crossbenches—despite attempts by party members to expel him—further illustrated his readiness to transcend political boundaries. He was replaced as leader by his equally right-wing but considerably more 'loyal' colleague Eric Hammond.[130] That the revival of the 'historical alignment' between party and union occurred so quickly under the latter's stewardship showed how fleeting the chances were of Chapple's designs for the movement coming to fruition. The problem for him was ultimately one of 'ethos' rather than doctrine. H.M. Drucker has usefully defined the differences between the two when discussing Labour's ideology, describing the former dimension as 'sets of values which spring from the experience of the British working class'.[131] It is this ethos which has informed the spirit of the party, and which has ensured that a heavy emphasis has been placed on virtues such as loyalty and solidarity. But, as Drucker also explains, it is loyalty that also holds the entire movement together, both party and union;[132] to damage one half is to necessarily affect the other. Chapple, as a solid product of organised labour, understood this, even if he sometimes had no problem in damaging Labour if it meant furthering his own union's objectives. But as times changed so his ideas grew. Although not informed by any theoretical discipline, they were nevertheless highly intellectual, and ready to tackle what he saw as threats to the very existence of his movement. Thus he modified his earlier Labourist values and advocated a blueprint for the unions as daring as anything that had gone before—a fracturing of the ties that held the Labour Party and the trade unions together. But in doing so he made apparent those contradictions that had always existed

between industrial democracy in practice and socialism in theory, earning little but rebuke from members who agreed with him even on many issues; they simply could not countenance a divorce from the party that was key to their understanding of the movement as a whole. And so his experience provides an idea of why an opportunity arose for 'another world' of labour, but also why it was lost.

Notes

1. G. Foote, *The Labour Party's Political Thought: A History* (2nd edition, London, 1986), p. 7.
2. One particularly pungent analysis is to be found in T. Nairn, 'The nature of the Labour Party—1', *New Left Review*, 27 (1964), pp. 38–43.
3. Bevin, as Alan Bullock comments, 'dealt with the facts as they were', but his open mind and first-hand knowledge of economic problems left him, by 1930, 'more convinced than ever that only a radical approach … offered any chance of improvement at all'. A long-running correspondence with Keynes only served to fortify him still further in his views. See A. Bullock, *The Life and Times of Ernest Bevin: Vol. 1, 1881–1940* (London, 1960), pp. 446–7; D. Howell, *MacDonald's Party: Labour Identities and Crisis, 1922–1931* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 188–9.
4. N. Branson, *History of the Communist Party of Great Britain, 1927–1941* (London, 1985), pp. 173–4.
5. B. Hindess, *The Decline of Working-Class Politics* (London, 1971).
6. F. Chapple, *Sparks Fly! A Trade Union Life* (2nd edition, London, 1985), p. 21.
7. Chapple, *Sparks Fly!* p. 21.
8. Geoffrey Goodman, in his entry on Chapple in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (*ODNB*), alludes to Chapple senior's 'professed socialism'—despite Chapple's own protestations in his memoir that his father 'simply wasn't interested' in politics. See Chapple, *Sparks Fly!* p. 22; G. Goodman, 'Chapple, Francis [Frank], Baron Chapple', *ODNB*, 2001–4 volume, p. 197.
9. Chapple, *Sparks Fly!* pp. 23–4; Frank Chapple papers, Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick: MSS.387/6/CH/1—Personal and Early Life records.

10. H. Pelling, *Social Geography of British Elections, 1885–1910* (London, 1967), p. 48.

11. J. Lawrence, 'Popular politics and the limitations of party: Wolverhampton, 1867–1900', in E.F. Biagini and A.J. Reid (eds), *Currents of Radicalism: Popular Radicalism, Organised Labour and Party Politics in Britain, 1850–1914* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 75; D. Clarke, *The Conservative Faith in a Modern Age* (London, 1947), pp. 7–8.

12. Although Chapple's suspicion that he nevertheless 'always voted Tory' may well illustrate the ways in which even avowed radicals, when faced with the ballot box, can compromise on their 'true' beliefs. See Chapple, *Sparks Fly!* p. 22; MSS.387/6/CH/48—speech notes and drafts, 1970s–1980s: biographical notes, undated notes.

13. MSS.387/6/CH/1—Personal and Early Life records; MSS.387/6/CH/48—speech notes and drafts, 1970s–1980s: biographical notes, undated notes.

14. MSS.387/6/CH/1—Personal and Early Life records.

15. MSS.387/6/CH/10—Statement by Mr F.J. Chapple, 18 March 1963.

16. Chapple, *Sparks Fly!* p. 28.

17. MSS.387/6/CH/10—Statement by Mr F.J. Chapple, 18 March 1963; MSS.387/6/CH/10—Typesheet of EETPU Presidential Address, 18 April 1972.

18. He also, however, learnt much about English social history, including lessons on radical groups such as the Chartists. See MSS.387/6/CH/2—Study Notes on Politics, undated (1940s).

19. Chapple, *Sparks Fly!* p. 41.

20. MSS.387/6/CH/4—Letter explaining the decision to abandon Communism, undated (*c*.1956-8).

21. N. Branson, *History of the Communist Party of Great Britain, 1941–1951* (London, 1997), p. 115; MSS.387/6/CH/2—Letter to Albert Thornewell, 17 November 1946; MSS.387/6/CH/4—Logbook containing notes on Communism: 'Discussion on Looking Ahead for Friday, 10 June 1947'.

22. Interestingly, in 1979 Chapple stated in a newspaper article that the first time he experienced doubts was when he witnessed the Red Army's conduct in occupied Germany. Nevertheless, he then claimed to still count Lenin as a hero (along with the Yugoslav dis-

sident Milovan Djilas, Keir Hardie and the Tolpuddle Martyrs). See F. Chapple, 'Why they won't shut me up', *Sunday Post*, 4 November 1979.

23. MSS.387/6/CH/4—Letter explaining the decision to abandon Communism, undated (*c*.1956–8).

24. C.H. Rolph, *All Those in Favour? An Account of the High Court Action against the Electrical Trades Union and its Officers for Ballot-Rigging in the Election of Union Officials* (London, 1962), p. 70; MSS.387/6/CH/10—Statement by Mr F.J. Chapple, 18 March 1963.

25. MSS.387/6/CH/4—Letter explaining the decision to abandon Communism, undated (*c*.1956–8); MSS.387/6/CH/10— Statement by Mr F.J. Chapple, 18 March 1963; MSS.387/6/ CH/48—Speech notes and drafts, 1970s–1980s: undated notes.

26. N. Smith, 'Politics, Industrial Policy and Democracy: The Electricians' Union, 1945–1988' (PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 1988), p. 15.

27. MSS.387/6/CH/10—'The Ugly Face of Chapple's Union and How to Change It', EETPU pamphlet, undated (*c*.1976); *Rank and File Militant*, 2 (Autumn 1976).

28. Rolph, *All Those in Favour?* p. 76.

29. MSS.387/6/CH/10—FILE ON F. CHAPPLE, undated.

30. MSS.387/6/CH/10—'The Ugly Face of Chapple's Union and How to Change It', EETPU pamphlet, undated (*c*.1976).

31. Interview with John Lloyd, 19 February 2015.

32. *Times*, 11 December 1959; Rolph, *All Those in Favour?* pp. 69–70.

33. Allegations of electoral fraud had predated this, and had first surfaced in the *Daily Telegraph*, 12 January 1956. See also O. Cannon and J.R.L. Anderson, *The Road from Wigan Pier: A Biography of Les Cannon* (London, 1973), p. 215.

34. *Observer*, 2 July 1961.

35. J. Lloyd, *Light and Liberty: A History of the EETPU* (London, 1990), pp. 435–9, 447; Rolph, *All Those in Favour?* p. 14.

36. The other three defendants found guilty were Bob McLennan (Assistant General Secretary), John Frazer and James Humphrey (both Executive Councillors).

37. *Times*, 4 July 1961; Chapple, *Sparks Fly!* p. 70.

38. P. Wintour, 'How Frank Chapple stays on top', *New Statesman*, 25 July 1980; Lloyd, *Light and Liberty*, pp. 485–6, 510–2.

39. Smith, 'Politics, Industrial Policy and Democracy', pp. 120–2; G. Russell, 'Decline of a union: the electricians', *International Socialism*, 59 (June 1973), p. 7.

40. The Donovan Commission, or the Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations, was a public inquiry into the nature of British labour law. Its findings were released as a report in 1968.

41. *Personnel and Training Management*, September 1968.

42. Interview with John Lloyd, 19 February 2015.

43. Interview with John Lloyd, 19 February 2015. The first no-strike deal was negotiated by the EETPU with managers at the Toshiba plant in Plymouth in 1981.

44. Smith pays far more attention to the role of Walter Reuther and his United Auto Workers (UAW) in establishing an American 'business unionism' template for the likes of the ETU/EETPU to follow, based on the ETU's submissions to the Donovan Commission in 1965. See Smith, 'Politics, Industrial Policy and Democracy', pp. 144–5.

45. Interview with John Lloyd, 19 February 2015.

46. I. Favretto, 'Wilsonism reconsidered: Labour Party revisionism, 1952–64', *Contemporary British History*, 14, 4 (2000), p. 55.

47. W. Beckerman, 'Objectives and performance: an overall view', in W. Beckerman (ed.), *The Labour Government's Economic Record, 1964–1970* (London, 1972), pp. 64–5.

48. H. Pelling and A.J. Reid, *A Short History of the Labour Party* (11th edition, London, 1996), p. 123.

49. *Report of the 96th Annual Trades Union Congress*, 1964, p. 448; L. Cannon, 'Why an incomes policy?' *Socialist Commentary*, January 1965.

50. Lloyd, *Light and Liberty*, p. 503.

51. Chapple, *Sparks Fly!* pp. 112–14; EETPU papers, Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick: MSS.387/1/4/18—Executive Council minutes, no. 132, minute 12, September 1966.

52. J. Cronin, *Labour and Society in Britain, 1918–1979* (London, 1984), p. 187.

53. J.P. Mackintosh, 'Socialism or social democracy? The choice for the Labour Party', *Political Quarterly*, 43, 4 (1972), pp. 476–7.

54. Cannon, 'Why an incomes policy?'

55. J. Torode, 'Frank Chapple—working man's hero', *Guardian*, 30 October 1971.

56. Lloyd, *Light and Liberty*, p. 517; 'Editorial', *Electron*, January 1967.

57. Chapple, *Sparks Fly!* p. 118; Lloyd, *Light and Liberty*, p. 524.

58. D. Hayter, *Fightback! Labour's Traditional Right in the 1970s and 1980s* (Manchester, 2005), p. 83; Chapple, *Sparks Fly!* p. 115.

59. Interview with John Lloyd, 19 February 2015.

60. MSS.387/6/CH/10—Typesheet on the Industrial Relations Act; *Times*, 25 May 1972.

61. *Times*, 25 May 1972; Smith, 'Politics, Industrial Policy and Democracy', p. 221.

62. MSS.387/6/CH/10—'The Ugly Face of Chapple's Union and How to Change It', EETPU pamphlet, undated (*c.*1976).

63. MSS.387/6/CH/17—Letter from Chapple to Mr E.A. Turner of the Pay Board, 30 July 1973; Smith, 'Politics, Industrial Policy and Democracy', pp. 244–7; *Times*, 4 May 1973.

64. *Flashlight*, 20, undated (*c.*1976).

65. A whole range of anti-Chapple publications emerged in the 1970s—of which the most successful were *Flashlight*, *Rank-and-File Militant* and *Sparks*.

66. MSS.387/6/CH/10—Speech notes by Chapple, undated (*c.*1975/6).

67. The outline for the *contrat social* (after Rousseau) was first provided by Lord Balogh, a former economic adviser to the Wilson administration, in his Fabian tract *Labour and Inflation* (London, 1970).

68. MSS.387/6/CH/33—1980 TUC Congress: excerpts from 1975 EETPU conference, carried resolutions (Motion 68—The Social Contract); *Report of the 107th Annual Trades Union Congress*, 1975, p. 472.

69. MSS.387/6/CH/40—Draft of speech concerning the Industrial Relations Act, 1971; MSS.387/6/CH/41—Speech on Industrial Relations Act, undated.

70. MSS.387/6/CH/27—Speech, 1975 TUC Congress.

71. MSS.387/6/CH/27—Speech, 1975 TUC Congress.

72. Smith, 'Politics, Industrial Policy and Democracy', p. 263.

73. MSS.387/6/CH/33—1980 TUC Congress: excerpts from 1977 EETPU conference, carried resolutions (Executive Council Motion—Free Collective Bargaining).

74. MSS.387/1/4/27—Executive Council minutes, no. 94, minute no. 6, June 1975.

75. F. Chapple, 'Where does the weakness lie?' *Contact*, December 1978.

76. Chapple also gave the Contract credit in securing for the government the now-infamous loan from the International Monetary Fund in 1976. See MSS.387/6/CH/26—Notes on the Social Contract, undated; MSS.387/6/CH/52—Speech notes and drafts, 1980–84: 'Incomes Policies—Voluntary or Necessary?' undated.

77. The report was produced by a committee of inquiry, formed to examine the Labour Party's manifesto commitment to introduce worker-directors as a key plank of the Social Contract. Its chairman was the historian Sir Alan (later Lord) Bullock.

78. MSS.387/6/CH/48—Speech notes and drafts, 1970s–1980s: notes for meeting, 3 December 1976; J. Phillips, 'UK business power and opposition to the Bullock Committee's 1977 proposals on worker directors', *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations*, 31–2 (2011), p. 7.

79. MSS.387/6/CH/52—Speech notes and drafts, 1980–84: speech notes, undated.

80. MSS.387/6/CH/52—Speech notes and drafts, 1980–84: speech notes, undated.

81. F. Chapple, *The Royal Institution Discourse*, 24 May 1979, p. 11.

82. R. Desai, *Intellectuals and Socialism: 'Social Democrats' and the Labour Party* (London, 1994), p. 122.

83. F. Chapple, 'A Labour government is our government', *Contact*, September 1978.

84. Both Taverne and Marquand had recently written bitter accounts of the state of the party. See D. Taverne, *The Future of the Left: Lincoln and After* (London, 1974), and D. Marquand, 'Inquest on a movement', *Encounter*, July 1979.

85. MSS.387/6/CH/27—Speech by Chapple, undated (*c.*1975/6).

86. *Contact*, June 1979. Amongst C2 voters (to which the households of skilled manual workers mostly belong), 42% voted Labour in 1979 while 40% chose the Conservative Party; this represented a swing of 11% to the latter since the October 1974 election—the highest swing of any class. Of trade union members, meanwhile, 35% voted Conservative (compared to 50% for Labour). See D. Butler and D. Kavanagh, *The British General Election of 1979* (Basingstoke, 1980), p. 343.

87. Chapple, *Sparks Fly!* p. 161.

88. E. Shaw, *Discipline and Discord in the Labour Party* (Manchester, 1988), pp. 199–200.

89. F. Chapple, 'Keynote Address to EETPU Biennial Delegate Conference', 1983.
90. F. Chapple, 'Frank Chapple hits back', *New Statesman*, 10 October 1980.
91. Chapple, 'Keynote Address'.
92. He subsequently became associated with both the Electoral Reform Society and the National Committee for Electoral Reform.
93. MSS.387/6/CH/57—Texts of speeches and interviews: 7th Mountbatten Lecture, November 1984; MSS.387/6/CH/48 and MSS.387/6/CH/57—drafts for Mountbatten lecture; Chapple, *Royal Institution Discourse*, p. 25
94. Chapple, *Sparks Fly!* p. 140; MSS.387/6/CH/27—Notes for speech, undated.
95. *Report of the 107th Annual Trades Union Congress*, 1975, p. 473.
96. He mentions in his notes two of Popper's books: *The Poverty of Historicism* and *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. These references indicate how much Chapple was interested in ideas, but it should be noted that his reading was guided both by his acquaintances in politics and industry and by several of his advisers, such as John Lloyd and (most notably of all) the future Labour MP John Spellar. Roger Rosewell, a former Socialist Workers' Party activist who subsequently joined the SDP (where he helped develop the new party's trade union policy), was, according to Lloyd, responsible for drafting much of Chapple's sharply critical valedictory speech to the TUC in 1983. See MSS.387/6/CH/57—Texts of speeches and interviews: 'Obsolete Politics in the Age of High Technology', 1984; MSS.387/6/CH/57—drafts for Mountbatten lecture; I. Crewe and A. King, *SDP: The Birth, Life and Death of the Social Democratic Party* (Oxford, 1995), p. 235; Interview with John Lloyd, 19 February 2015.
97. S. Haseler, *The Grand Delusion: Britain after Sixty Years of Elizabeth II* (London, 2012), p. 82. Chapple's then aide John Lloyd maintains that these visits, if true, would likely have been due to curiosity rather than firm ideological conviction. Interview with John Lloyd, 19 February 2015.
98. Chapple, *Royal Institution Discourse*, pp. 12–15; A. Marshall, *Principles of Economics* (5th edition, London, 1907), vol. 1, p. 708.
99. F. Chapple, 'Address to the TUC', *Contact*, December 1983; MSS.387/6/CH/54—Unpublished article for *Now!* magazine, 1980.

100. MSS.387/6/CH/26—Speech for TUC Presidential Address, 1983; MSS.387/6/CH/52—Speech to Tonbridge and West Malling Conservatives, 20 November 1985; MSS.387/6/CH/54—Unpublished article for *Now!* magazine, 1980.

101. F. Chapple, 'A better way', *Contact*, March 1979.

102. Wintour, 'How Frank Chapple stays on top'.

103. 'Letters Page', *Contact*, March 1981.

104. F. Chapple, 'End the humbug about the Labour Party we want', *Times*, 14 October 1980.

105. The CLV was a grassroots organisation established in 1977 to promote the Labour right. Many of its members later defected to the SDP. See G. Daly, 'The campaign for Labour victory and the origins of the SDP', *Contemporary Record*, 7, 2 (1993), pp. 283–5, 300–1; Hayter, *Fightback!* pp. 98–9; Wintour, 'How Frank Chapple stays on top'.

106. S. Haseler, 'Towards a centre party?' *Encounter*, April 1980; F. Chapple, 'Between left and centre', *Encounter*, August 1980.

107. Chapple, 'Between left and centre'.

108. R. Jenkins, diary entry for 26 September 1980, *European Diary, 1977–1981* (London, 1989), p. 632.

109. Hayter, *Fightback!* pp. 90–1.

110. The EETPU had proclaimed its opposition to an electoral college as far back as February 1977, recommending instead either a continuation of election by MPs or the introduction of OMOV. See Lloyd, *Light and Liberty*, p. 595.

111. E. Shaw, *The Labour Party since 1979: Crisis and Transformation* (London, 1994), pp. 16–17.

112. Desai, *Intellectuals and Socialism*, p. 176.

113. The other four were: Danny Crawford, a leading Scottish official from the construction workers' union UCATT; Eddie Fineran, a member of the technicians' union ASTMS; William Mowbray, former President of the Scottish TUC; Jack Service, former General Secretary of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (CSEU). See *Guardian*, 5 February 1981; *Scotsman*, 5 February 1981.

114. L. Minkin, *The Contentious Alliance: Trade Unions and the Labour Party* (Edinburgh, 1991), p. 226.

115. F. Chapple, 'It's conference time again', *Contact*, September 1980; S. Berger, 'Labour in comparative perspective', in

D. Tanner, N. Tiratsoo and P. Thane (eds), *Labour's First Century* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 323.

116. Although he did subsequently go on to remark in the same article that 'The notion that we should break our links with the Labour Party and assume the role of a whore selling our wares or votes to whichever party promises to do all or more of our bidding does not appeal to me.' See MSS.387/6/CH/54—Unpublished article for *Now!* magazine, 1980.

117. K. Gill, 'Labour and the leadership red herring', *Times*, 18 February 1981.

118. 'Letters Page: 'Origins of the Labour Party', *Times*, 28 February 1981.

119. F. Chapple, 'Survival before socialism', *Times*, 17 June 1983.

120. MSS.387/6/CH/54—Unpublished article for *Now!* magazine, 1980.

121. When it happened in Bermondsey the local CLP's chair, Peter Tatchell, accused the EETPU of 'a clumsy attempt to change the political complexion of our party'; in April 1981 an EETPU branch was closed after it apparently refused to endorse the Executive Council's choice for that CLP. See *Times*, 4 December 1980; *Morning Star*, 28 April 1981. On the foundation of the St Ermin's Group and Chapple's involvement, see Hayter, *Fightback!* pp. 83, 98–9.

122. John Lloyd indicates that Grant was a big influence on Chapple's thinking in this period. Chapple, *Sparks Fly!* p. 183; LBC/IRN news report, 20 May 1983; Interview with John Lloyd, 19 February 2015.

123. *Times*, 24 May 1983; *Guardian*, 9 September 1983.

124. Chapple, 'Survival before socialism'.

125. The civil servants' union NALGO, although containing several defectors (most notably a member of its National Executive), retained its tradition of political neutrality following a ballot of its members in June 1981. That same month, there was a motion at the steelworkers' union conference to disaffiliate from Labour, so paving the way for members to join the SDP. It failed. See M. Ironside and R. Seifert, *Facing Up to Thatcherism: The History of NALGO, 1979–1993* (Oxford, 1993), p. 139; *Guardian*, 13 and 18 June 1981.

126. Although John Grant, as the party's industry spokesman, actually voted against it, together with four other SDP MPs. See *Hansard*, 8 February 1982; Crewe and King, *SDP*, p. 149.

127. Minkin, *Contentious Alliance*, p. 227.

128. Lloyd, *Light and Liberty*, p. 596.

129. R. Blackwell and M. Terry, 'Analysing the political fund ballots: a remarkable victory or the triumph of the status quo?' *Political Studies*, 35, 4 (1987), p. 631; *Contact*, June and October 1985.

130. Interview with John Lloyd, 19 February 2015.

131. H.M. Drucker, *Doctrine and Ethos in the Labour Party* (London, 1979), p. 9.

132. Drucker, *Doctrine and Ethos*, p. 12.

Other Intellectuals

G.D.H. Cole: A Socialist and Pluralist

David Goodway

From the 1920s until his death in 1959, G.D.H. Cole was the pre-eminent Labour intellectual, surpassing Harold Laski and R.H. Tawney in the proliferation of his publications and general omnipresence. His *History of the Labour Party from 1914* (1948) was for many years the standard text.[1] Yet Colin Ward was to comment in *Anarchy* that he had been

> amazed as I read the tributes in the newspapers from people like Hugh Gaitskell and Harold Wilson alleging that *their* socialism had been learned from him … for it had always seemed to me that *his* socialism was of an entirely different character from that of the politicians of the Labour Party. Among his obituarists, it was left to a dissident Jugoslav communist, Vladimir Dedijer, to point out what the difference was; remarking on his discovery that Cole 'rejected the idea of the continued supremacy of the State' and believed that 'it was destined to disappear'.[2]

Ward appreciated that Cole was a socialist pluralist. Indeed, his major intellectual and organizational effort had been to Guild Socialism.

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Guild Socialism

The origins of Guild Socialism are customarily traced to 1906 and the publication by Arthur J. Penty of *The Restoration of the Gild System*. Penty's advocacy of a return to a handicraft economy and the control of production by trade gilds looks back, beyond Morris, to—as he cheerfully indicates—Ruskin. He had been a member of the West Yorkshire avant-garde responsible for the foundation of Leeds Arts Club, in which the dominant personality was A.R. Orage, who himself moved to London, taking over (with Holbrook Jackson, another Leeds man) the weekly *New Age* in 1907. Orage had a very considerable input in the emergence in the *New Age*'s columns of Guild Socialism. He published a series of articles in 1912–13 by S.G. Hobson, an Ulsterman then managing a banana planta-tion in British Honduras, and when Orage collected these as *National Guilds* he located the kernel of Hobson's ideas in Penty's work and also an article of his own (Orage had certainly collaborated with Penty in the development of *The Restoration of the Gild System*), yet these attributions were to be forcefully denied by Hobson himself.[3]

In contrast to Penty, Hobson envisaged the trade unions converting themselves into enormous National Guilds which would take over the run-ning of modern productive industry as well as distribution and exchange. An anonymous article in the *Syndicalist*, written presumably by the editor Guy Bowman, complained,

> Middle-class of the middle-class, with all the shortcomings … of the middle-classes writ large across it, 'Guild Socialism' stands forth as the latest lucu-bration of the middle-class mind. It is a 'cool steal' of the leading ideas of Syndicalism and a deliberate perversion of them. We do not so much object to the term 'guild' as applied to the various autonomous industries, linked together for the service of the common weal, such as advocated by Syndicalism. But we do protest against the 'State' idea which is associated with it in Guild Socialism.[4]

As Hobson/Orage explained, alongside and independent of the 'Guild Congress' the State would remain 'with its Government, its Parliament, and its civil and military machinery … Certainly independent; probably even supreme.'[5] There was considerable justice in the *Syndicalist*'s much-quoted indictment of what was undeniably a very middle-class form of socialism, yet Guild Socialism was theoretically more important than it could allow, becoming more original and also non-statist. While Hobson

seems to have been responsible for initiating the primary features of Guild Socialism, its principal thinker, pushing far beyond his and Orage's conception, was to be Cole, a very young Oxford don before the war and research officer to the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (ASE) during it.

George Douglas Howard Cole was born in 1889 in Cambridge, the son of George Cole, a pawnbroker, and his wife Jessie (née Knowles), whose father was a high-class bootmaker in Bond Street. The Coles shortly moved to Ealing, west London, where George Cole was able to acquire a flourishing estate agent.[6] Douglas (as he was always known) was educated at St Paul's School, and it was, he recalled in 1951, while a schoolboy that he became a socialist:

> I was converted, quite simply, by reading William Morris's *News from Nowhere*, which made me feel, suddenly and irrecoverably, that there was nothing except a Socialist that it was possible for me to be. I did not at once join any Socialist body. I was only sixteen … My Socialism, at that stage, had very little to do with parliamentary politics, my instinctive aversion from which has never left me—and never will. Converted by reading Morris's utopia, I became a Utopian Socialist, and I suppose that is what I have been all my life since. I became a Socialist … on grounds of morals and decency and aesthetic sensibility. I wanted to do the decent thing by my fellow-men: I could not see why every human being should not have as good a chance in life as I; and I hated the ugliness of both of poverty and of the money-grubbing way of life that I saw around me as its complement. I still think these are three excellent reasons for being a Socialist: indeed, I know no others as good. They have nothing to do with any particular economic theory, or theory of history: they are not based on any worship of efficiency, or of the superior virtue or the historic mission of the working class. They have nothing to do with Marxism, or Fabianism, or even Labourism—although all these have no doubt a good deal to do with them. They are simple affirmations about the root principles of comely and decent human relations, leading irresistibly to a Socialist conclusion.[7]

He joined the Ealing branch of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) shortly before leaving school and then, a few months later, 'I celebrated my first week in Oxford by joining the University Fabian Society and its parent body in London'.[8]

From 1908 he had read Mods and Greats (Classics) at Balliol, graduating in 1912. He accepted a lectureship in philosophy at Armstrong College, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, which oddly he loathed, but was almost

immediately rescued by being elected to a seven-year Prize Fellowship at Magdalen College, Oxford. His first book, *The World of Labour: A Discussion of the Present and Future of Trade Unionism*, an admired and influential study of developments in the USA, France, Germany, Sweden and Italy as well as Britain, was published as early as 1913. What impressed him was the way in which contemporary syndicalist tendencies believed it possible to progress to workers' control of industry without reference to parliamentary institutions. In *The World of Labour* he is also to be found discovering Guild Socialism from the pages of the *New Age*. Raymond Postgate, his future brother-in-law, recollected that

> A schoolboy friend lent me *The World of Labour*, taking it away when I had read it through, and forcing me to buy my own copy—which I was glad enough to do, for it had in fact opened a completely new world to me. The education which I, and every other middle-class boy, had received, had not referred to one single thing mentioned in the book.[9]

Cole's intellectual and political commitment to the trade union movement deepened in 1915 when he was appointed unpaid research officer to the ASE, the first university graduate to be engaged by a British union. His conscientious objection to conscription was allowed so long as he undertook this work of 'national importance'.[10]

Cole, an astonishingly prolific author throughout his life, was particularly fecund between 1917 and 1920 when he published four books on Guild Socialism—*Self-Government in Industry*, *Social Theory*, *Chaos and Order in Industry* and, the most systematic exposition, *Guild Socialism Re-stated*—and another four with major Guild Socialist bearings, together with several pamphlets and many articles on the subject.[11] He developed a highly original theory of functional democracy, rejecting democratic representative government in favour of a pluralistic society in which representation would be functional—that is, derived from all the functional groups of which the individual is a member (the most important are named as political, vocational, appetitive, religious, provident, philanthropic, sociable and theoretic), final decisions having to emerge as a consensus between the different groups, not as the fiats of a sovereign authority:

> there must be … as many separately elected groups of representatives as there are distinct essential groups of functions to be performed. Smith cannot represent Brown, Jones and Robinson as human beings; for a human

being, as an individual, is fundamentally incapable of being represented. He can only represent the common point of view which Brown, Jones and Robinson hold in relation to some definite social purpose, or group of connected purposes. Brown, Jones and Robinson must therefore have, not one vote each, but as many different functional votes as there are different questions calling for associative action in which they are interested.[12]

Much of Cole's conception of a fully participatory society had its origins in Rousseau, whose *Social Contract* and *Discourses* he had translated for the Everyman edition of 1913, though Morris, whom he described as 'of the same blood as National Guildsmen', was, as has been seen, the major lifelong influence on Cole.[13] The Anglican theologian John Neville Figgis and the legal historian F.W. Maitland need also to be mentioned since the Guild Socialists in general were much impressed by their pluralism. It was Maitland's translation of the great German jurist Otto von Gierke's *Political Theories of the Middle Age* in 1900 which introduced into English the notion of the 'real personality' of groups and the appreciation that churches, trade unions or whatever were not necessarily the subordinates of but co-existed with the state.[14]

The National Guilds League had been set up belatedly in 1915 and from 1916 published the *Guildsman* (initially from Clydeside, significantly). R.H. Tawney joined the National Guilds League and one of his most impressive works, *The Acquisitive Society* of 1921, bears the imprint of the Guild Socialist emphasis on function. By the end of the war the mental landscape of much of the labour movement had been, although only temporarily, transformed. Tawney commented in 1920,

> It is a commonplace that during the past six years the discussion of industrial and social problems has shifted its centre. Prior to the war students and reformers were principally occupied with questions of poverty. Today their main interest appears to be the government of industry. An increasing number of trade unionists regard poverty as a symptom of a more deeply rooted malady which they would describe as industrial autocracy and demand 'control'.[15]

But the traditional moderation of British trade unions was soon to reassert itself; the first phase of the interwar depression arrived during the second half of 1920, overwhelming the chances of success for militant action; and the Labour Party's electoral advances, above all the breakthrough in the election of 1922, went far to restore faith in parliamentarianism and to

set the British working class, after the decade-long dalliance of some of its sections with libertarian alternatives, firmly on the parliamentary road to socialism. Cole and his wife Margaret—they had married in 1918—had from 1919 edited for the National Guilds League the *Guildsman*, which they kept going as the *Guild Socialist* down to 1923, and then brought out their own *New Standards*. The 12 issues of the monthly *New Standards* combined Guild Socialism with working-class adult education of which, particularly the Workers' Educational Association (WEA), Cole was also a fervent and lifelong proponent.[16] That Arthur Penty and G.K. Chesterton were among the contributors is indicative of the eclectic sources of Guild Socialism. The Coles were obliged to admit defeat in 1924 with the termination of *New Standards*, overwhelmed by the statism of both the Labour and the Communist Parties. Although many of his fellow Guild Socialists—together they had converted the Fabian Research Department into the Labour Research Department—had become Communists, Cole himself reluctantly transferred his allegiance to the Labour Party, resigning from the Labour Research Department in 1924 when the Communists took complete control.[17]

The Interwar Years

Beatrice Webb was, according to Margaret Cole, 'fond of describing herself and her husband as belonging to "the B's of the world", who, she explained were "bourgeois, bureaucratic, and benevolent", in contrast to the "A's"—as for example Bertrand Russell, G.D.H. Cole, and a good many others, who were "aristocratic, anarchist, and artistic"'.[18] It was in 1922 that Orage, although by then obsessed by Social Credit and occultism, abandoned the *New Age*, to counter whose youthful and provincial 'anarchism' the Webbs had launched in 1913 the aptly titled *New Statesman*; and it was the latter's metropolitan 'bureaucracy' which was to flourish in the coming decades. Paradoxically, Cole was a major contributor of political journalism to the *New Statesman* from 1918 down to his death (and under Kingsley Martin's editorship he became an influential advisor after 1930).

Back in 1908 Cole had joined first the ILP and then the Fabian Society, membership of either conferring membership of the Labour Party (which until 1918 it was not possible to join directly). He considered in 1951, however,

'I do not think I ever, though I became a Fabian, contemplated a grad-ual evolution into Socialism by a cumulative process of social reforms. My notion of the advent of Socialism was always catastrophic, whether it should come late or soon.'

Also in 1951, in his Webb Memorial Lecture, he remarked, 'The Communists are entirely correct in holding that Socialism, as a way of life, cannot be established except by revolution.' Further, in 1908, he had 'no love for the Labour Party':

I was never in the very least a 'Lib-Lab'; and the last thought that could ever have entered my head would have been to look hopefully on the Labour Party as the heir to the Liberal tradition … The Labour Party of the years between 1906 and 1914 was much too 'Lib-Lab' for me.[19]

This attitude persisted and, as Asa Briggs observed, 'Cole was bound to be a peripheral figure in Britain rather than at the centre', because 'the "Lib-Lab" approach to politics has been the foundation of Labour's effective power or share of power in twentieth-century British soci-ety'.[20] The ILP appointed Cole (who was without an academic post between 1919 and 1922) to the writing staff of its *Labour Leader* in January 1921, incorporating the following year the Guild Socialist pro-gramme of industrial democracy based on workers' control into its new constitution.[21]

During the 1920s, on the rebound from the failure of Guild Socialism as a movement, he cosied up to political Labour, becoming especially close to his old friend Clifford Allen, chairman of the ILP, 1923–6. Cole was, however, sceptical about the ILP's campaign for 'Socialism in Our Time' in 1925–6, considering its central demand for a living wage economically fraudulent. L.P. Carpenter concludes, 'The deficiencies of the left virtu-ally forced Cole to turn to parliamentary reformism.' Indeed, in 1930 he was adopted as Labour parliamentary candidate for Birmingham King's Norton, although he was able to rescue himself from this temperamental misjudgement the following year when his diabetes was diagnosed and the candidacy abandoned. He had rejoined the Fabian Society in 1928, having resigned in 1915, and presumably remained a member of the ILP until its disaffiliation from the Labour Party in 1932. It has not proved possible to ascertain whether he ever took out direct membership of the Labour Party.[22]

Cole's newly pragmatic outlook was signified in 1929 by *The Next Ten Years in British Economic and Social Policy*, a very substantial work intended to provide guidelines for a future Labour government, and in which he accepted state planning and limited state-socialism with the nationalization of some industries. As will be seen in greater detail later, he was always at pains to speak of 'socialization', only one form of which was nationalization. Socialization, he explained in 1929, would

> certainly involve the transference of a large number of enterprises now in private hands to various forms of public ownership and administration; but it does not involve either universal public ownership, or any one form of control or management in industry. As Socialism develops, the forms of 'socialization' are likely to be very diverse; and their diversity will be a source of strength.[23]

In *The Next Ten Years* Cole went so far as to advocate a voluntary National Labour Corps for the unemployed from which they might be expelled for failing to do satisfactory work: 'The directors of the corps would thus retain the power of preventing its efficiency and morale from being lowered by the presence of slackers or unemployables', yet 'the unemployed man, on his side, would be subject to no sort of coercion beyond the necessary measure of discipline which he had voluntarily accepted in agreeing to join the corps'. He was rewarded in 1930 with membership, alongside Keynes, of MacDonald's Economic Advisory Council.[24]

L.R. Phelps, Provost of Oriel, chair of the Oxford Board of Guardians and a Liberal, contended that Cole 'has changed his position amazingly: everything is now to be controlled not worked by the State [*sic*]—such is the sum of his book on *The Next Ten Years*'.[25] Beatrice Webb had rejoiced in her diary in 1928,

> G.D.H. Cole and wife … have dropped Guild Socialism and any other form of 'proletarianism'… change will come in the main through controlled capitalism and intermediate forms of government and … the Expert and the advance of science will dominate the situation—in fact the pure word of Webbian Fabianism … He is writing a book on *The Next Ten Years*—really a text-book for Labour Party administration, local and national. From his account this policy does not differ substantially from what we should advocate … For the rest, Cole has matured alike in intellect and character …[26]

Phelps and Webb, however, both saw recantation where it did not exist. Cole began *The Next Ten Years* by explaining,

> I set about writing this book because, whether I liked it or not, I had been compelled by the movement of events to think out afresh my social and political creed. I do not mean by this that my fundamental views had changed; and certainly I have no dramatic act of conversion to offer my readers. But I did feel the need to start thinking again as near as I could to fundamentals; and I felt this none the less for being fairly certain that the result would not be a recantation, but only a restatement of old conclusions.

In the chapter on 'Workers' Control' he repudiated not 'the Guild Socialist view as a whole' but only 'the later excesses of Guild Socialist system-making'—the ultra-democracy of electing 'masses of committees to perform all manner of representative functions'—and 'for which I accept my full share of the blame'. What, he asserted, remained 'sound and alive in the Guild idea is, above all, its insistence that the worker, as a worker, must be treated as a human being, and not as a mere factory hand'. He was confident that Guild Socialism had

> killed dead … the old Collectivism which thought of the mechanism of nationalization as a mere extension of the political government of the State, and proposed to hand over the running of industries to Civil Service departments under political heads. That notion is safely buried; and every Socialist who is not merely antediluvian now recognizes that the growth of socialization involves the development of a totally new technique of public industrial administration and control. Guild Socialists went wrong in desiring to base this new technique wholly on the representative principle; but they were thoroughly right in insisting on its necessity. The new socialization, based on expert boards or commissions of full-time administrators, checked and guided by largely representative workers' bodies from below, conserves all that was valuable in the Guild Socialist plans for the reorganization of industries under public control. It concedes the essential principle of industrial self-government …[27]

Cole's extraordinary assurance concerning the form nationalization would take was based on no more than his confidence in the preceding chapter that 'actual socialization … will turn out a very different thing from the idea of "nationalization"', collectivist and bureaucratic, 'as it was conceived in the minds of Fabians and other propagandists a generation ago'.[28]

Beatrice Webb had noted in 1914 that Cole was 'the ablest newcomer' to the Fabian Society since H.G. Wells, but

> he is intolerant, impatient and not, at present, very practical. I am not certain whether the present rebel mood is in good faith or whether it is just experimental, seeing how it will go down.

Two months later she commented that 'Cole is a really able man, with much concentrated energy'. She approved that, unlike Wells, he and his Guild Socialist comrades 'do not tamper with sex conventions—they seem to dislike women': 'But all other conventions they break or ignore.' The following year she admitted,

> I often speculate about G.D.H. Cole's future. He interests me because he shows remarkable intensity of purpose. Is he as persistent as intense? He has a clear-cutting and somewhat subtle intellect. But he lacks humour and the *bonhomie* which springs from it, and he has an absurd habit of ruling out everybody and everything that he does not happen to like or find convenient. Since the outbreak of war he has modified this attitude, and is now willing to work with the Labour Party in order to get into closer touch with the trade unions … he resents anyone who is not a follower and has a contempt for all leaders other than himself. With his keen intelligence and aristocratic temperament it is hard to believe that he will remain enamoured with the cruder forms of democracy embodied in the Guild Socialist idealization of the manual working class.

Webb continued to be nonplussed by this last in 1926:

> Why he remains so genuinely attached to the working class, so determined to help forward their organization, puzzles me. The desire *to raise the underdog and abuse the boss* is a religion with him, a deep-rooted emotion more than a conviction. Will it endure? It certainly has survived many disappointments. And yet he is essentially an aristocrat of the sophisticated, ascetic, priestly type, aloof from the common passions and low pleasures of the average social man …

Yet her diagnosis two years previously was probably correct:

> Politically he is a lost soul … His best escape from [his] mental isolation would be to retire into an academic career, at any rate for a time. He is too much of the aristocrat and the anarchist … to succeed with an Anglo-Saxon democracy.[29]

Cole's briefly interrupted academic career had resumed in 1922 when he was appointed as Director of Tutorial Classes, University of London; but three years later he moved back to Oxford as University Reader in Economics with a Fellowship at University College.

Throughout his adult life Cole was a Guild Socialist and libertarian. On reading the autobiography of his Guild Socialist comrade, Maurice Reckitt, Margaret Cole commented,

> I'd like to suggest something which I think you've missed. This is [Douglas's] almost morbid dislike of *any* sort of coercion (not merely physical force), & of authority in any form. Right deep down, he is neither Fabian nor Bolshevik, but an anarchist. An anarchist is a perfectly possible thing to be; but it doesn't square happily with institution-making & I think part of the sterility … of some of his political writing is due to this fact. It isn't *really* political work; it's playing games, because he won't admit the need for authority or the government of men.[30]

Cole was not, of course, an anarchist and it is surprising how often he found it necessary to say so (was this a consequence of Beatrice Webb's sustained critique?) as in the typographically arresting,

> Nor are people who know what they like popular with Governments; for most Governments want most people to behave as much like sheep as possible, in order to simplify the task of governing them … the people who have strong tastes and wills to match are simply an intolerable nuisance.
>
> If there were more of them, they would make the art of government, as we know it, impossible; and how dreadful that would be—for the business of Governments we are told is to govern.
>
> I AM NO ANARCHIST,
>
> and I believe as much as you do, reader, in the necessity for government—even strong government. But I also believe with all my strength in vigorous personal tastes among as many people as possible. For the stronger the Government needs to be, in face of the complex problems of the modern world, the stronger we individual men and women need to be if we are to stand up to it successfully, and keep secure possession of our own souls.[31]

On the other hand, how close Cole was to anarchism is manifest in 'The inner life of socialism', an article of 1930:

> In one sense … all Socialists are Anarchists in their ideal; for they regard coercion as an evil, and the presence of coercion in the organization of Society as a sign of its essential imperfection … The Socialist ideal seems

to me to involve the substitution of the rule of consent for the value of coercion. Perfect consent I do not expect ever to be realized; but it remains the ideal. And it is a possible ideal because the fundamental fact of man's sociality is there to build upon. There is a consciousness of consent; and in a healthy and well-ordered Society, the area of this consciousness will tend steadily to grow.[32]

He could write in 1941 in 'The essentials of democracy': 'One man cannot really represent another—that's flat. The odd thing is that anyone should have supposed he could.' Similarly he believed that 'every good democrat is a bit of an anarchist when he's scratched'.[33]

With the foundation of Nuffield College at Oxford he became a 'Faculty Fellow' and then in 1941 its first Sub-Warden, the University sitting uneasily on Lord Nuffield's gift of one million pounds. Cole was just completing a Manpower Survey for Beveridge at the Ministry of Labour and suggested transferring the teams of local investigators to a Social Reconstruction Survey. The College Committee approved as, assuaging its guilt, did the university, and the Treasury contributed handsomely (£5000 in 1941–2, the remaining £8000 being found from Nuffield's endowment). Cole's workload on the resultant Nuffield Reconstruction Survey was immense, leading to serious illness; but within three years the Treasury had declined to renew its grant, there was criticism within the University about the quality of the research, and Cole had resigned from not only the Survey but the College also.[34]

1945 and After

Cole stood as the Labour candidate for the University of Oxford constituency in the 1945 general election, declaring in his address that 'my Socialism is, and has always been, of a strong libertarian brand':

> In my political faith I put foremost recognition of the value of tolerance, kindness of man to man, variety of social experiment, and encouragement of voluntary as well as statutory activity over the wide field of social service. I believe that the public ownership of key industries and services can be so arranged as to admit of wide variety, to exclude bureaucracy, and to enlarge instead of limiting freedom, alike for the manager, the technician, and the manual worker.[35]

During his final two decades Cole's libertarianism increasingly asserted itself. Margaret Cole emphasizes the significance of the *débâcle* of the Nuffield Reconstruction Survey on her husband's general outlook:

> He had no quarrel with Sir Henry Clay [the new Warden of Nuffield] … and with the University at large, except for a few individuals, his anger did not last long … Against the civil servants resentment endured much longer—in fact, I am not quite sure that he ever fully forgave them. This is quite intelligible, because it was in part a return to his Guild Socialist hatred of bureaucracy, which deepened steadily to the end of his life and caused him to suspect instinctively all institutions (such as the London County Council [on whose Education Committee Margaret Cole was co-opted, later being elected an alderman]) which had a large corps of administrators. Administrators were not his kin … teachers were, and he was prepared to forgive them for the weakness (or wickedness) which had led some of them to be misled by the administrators in the University—whom he regarded as *sans phrase* the villains of the piece. Some of this resentment rubbed off on the leaders of the Labour Party, whom he felt ought to have supported him more strongly against the bureaucrats; this, again, revived earlier attitudes towards the parliamentary machine.[36]

Cole agonized about the increase in size of the social unit, criticized the decline of democratic participation and growth of bureaucracy in the trade union and cooperative movements, and lamented the flawed programme of nationalization of the Labour governments of 1945–51.

Shortly after the Second World War had ended Cole was visited by the French political theorist, Bertrand de Jouvenel, who found him preoccupied with the problem of 'Democracy face to face with hugeness', as he had entitled an important paper of 1941. For Cole 'the democratic spirit … finds its truest expression in small communities and small groups', but social solidarity was 'disrupted by success and the growth of the group':

> Democracy exists to the extent that the individual has a hand in what is done. And Cole finds … a trace of such participation wherever there is some personal link between the representative and the represented, as when the representative is personally known, himself, his habits, his parents, his wife—everything in short which is known about a man in a village and is not known about him in a city. Nothing of this is known any more when votes are cast not for a familiar face but for a stranger—a stranger who is … the representative of a party which gives him his title deeds.

De Jouvenel reported that for Cole it was 'an urgent matter to re-discover in this vast framework of organized society small human cells where men help each other, feel for each other, decide in common and do in common the things they think important: communities of neighbours, communities of work-mates'.[37] In 1941 Cole had observed that men had 'built up Trade Unions, Co-operative Societies, Friendly Societies, and a host of voluntary associations of every sort and kind; and in these the true spirit of democracy had flourished':

> But this associative life had … to contend with difficulties arising out of the rapidly changing material basis of social life. The associations had to become larger and to unify organization over larger and larger fields …Therewith they became less completely democratic, threatening in their turn to develop the same atomistic perversion of democracy which was its ruin in the State.

Cole considered the problem formidable yet simple to state:

> It is to find democratic ways of living for little men in big societies. For men are little, and their capacity cannot transcend their experience, or grow except by continuous building upon their historic past. They can control great affairs only by acting together in control of small affairs, and finding, through the experience of neighbourhood, men whom they can entrust with larger decisions than they can take rationally for themselves. Democracy can work in the great States … only if each State is made up of a host of little democracies, and rests finally, not on isolated individuals, but on groups small enough to express the spirit of neighbourhood and personal acquaintance.[38]

When in 1947 he published his impressive *Local and Regional Government* in an attempt to influence the Local Government Boundary Commission, he therefore urged 'the need for preserving and for recreating really small-scale agencies for … purposes closely related to the everyday lives of the people': the retention of the parish councils and the introduction of other 'small "neighbourhood" Local Authorities'.[39]

He advocated 'a new kind of Trade Unionism, in which many more of the rank and file members will be required to play an active part', believing that since 1939 'the Trade Unions have become much too centralized, and that Trade Unionists have come to expect everything to be done for them by their officials and national executives instead of doing things for themselves'.[40] Similarly Cole, author in 1945 of *A Century of*

Co-operation, the centennial history of the cooperative movement, regretted the rise of bureaucracy in the large cooperative societies, wholesale or retail, and that the apathy of most members had allowed the emergence of a cadre of 'professional laymen' who exerted disproportionate influence.[41]

In 1949 Cole announced himself 'an inveterate and unrepentant Guild Socialist, believing in the democratic self-government of industry as a necessary part of any real democracy and a goal towards which our society should seek to advance as speedily as it can'.[42] In contrast, each of the industries nationalized in 1945–51 was run by a public corporation, with the appropriate minister appointing its members, largely from private industry and with none nominated directly by the unions. The model was the Central Electricity Board and BBC (both of 1926) and the London Passenger Transport Board (of 1933). The latter originated under Herbert Morrison, while Minister of Transport, 1929–31; and it was Morrison (who had written a book, *Socialization and Transport* (1933), developing his views) who imposed this template of common ownership upon the Labour Party.[43] Cole's conception of socialization—for example, as expressed in 1929 in *The Next Ten Years in British Economic and Social Policy*—was very different; and he proceeded to criticize Labour's nationalization accordingly, continuing to advocate workers' control while opposing 'trade union control of industry':

> If Public Boards are to be retained at all, they will have to be reconstructed on much more democratic lines, and so as to give a real say to the workers concerned, as well as to the consumers … Industrial democracy means much more than mere 'joint consultation', which is at most only a useful first step. If the workers are expected to labour harder, more co-operatively, and more intelligently in the service of society, and if they are to acquire the habit of thinking of the management as 'us' and not as 'them', power, real power, and responsibility will have to be given over into their hands, both through some sort of central representation on the authorities responsible for public supervision of the nationalized services and at every other level—regional, local, establishment, and actual working group.[44]

What is unexpected—and extremely attractive—is that Cole, a left-wing, 'fundamentalist' socialist, did not equate socialism with nationalization or even public ownership, explaining that he had 'no wish to nationalize any more industries than must be nationalized in order to ensure their being conducted in accordance with the public interest'. It was unnecessary 'to

nationalize everything—heaven forbid!' The 'public sector' should be highly diversified:

> I count not only municipal but also Co-operative conduct of industry as fully compatible with Socialism; nor have I any objection to leaving many small-scale industries and services in private hands, provided that their conduct is made subject to public regulation in order to prevent either the exploitation of labour or the pursuance of monopolistic practices at the expense of the consumers' welfare. Socialism is not nationalization, and by no means involves the omnipotent and omnipresent State. It is a way of living on terms of social equality, and of organizing the essential services for the common benefit and under conditions of the utmost personal freedom. Above all, Socialism is not bureaucracy, or consistent with it; for bureaucracy implies centralization of power, whereas democratic Socialism aims at its diffusion among all the people.[45]

Stuart Hall, the first editor of the *New Left Review* and previously one of the editors of the *Universities and Left Review*, which came out of Oxford, has highlighted the importance of Cole, 'an austere and courageous veteran of the independent left, who was … still teaching politics at Oxford', to the New Left:

> Although he was a distinguished historian of European socialism and a student of Marxism, Cole's socialism was rooted in the co-operative and 'workers' control' traditions of Guild Socialism. His critique of bureaucratic 'Morrisonian'-style nationalization was enormously influential in shaping the attitude of many socialists of my generation towards statist socialism.[46]

In a *New Statesman* pamphlet of 1954 Cole maintained that socialism meant 'something radically different from the managerial Welfare State'.[47] He also returned to the division of political temperaments between 'anarchists' and 'bureaucrats', explaining that the Webbs had been fond of using it at the time when he had joined the Fabian Society back in 1908. He acknowledged the bureaucratic achievements of—the list is revealing—'the advance towards the Welfare State … the promotion of state enterprise … the attack on anti-social vested interests … pressing for the assurance of a national minimum standard of life … devising schemes of redistributive taxation, and … attacking private monopolies with proposals for unification under public ownership'. The problem, though, was whether the B's 'are the right people to discover how to make the

new social order they have partly succeeded in setting up *work* when it has been established?' It was now necessary to pass 'beyond the Welfare State, in which people get given things to the kind of society in which they find satisfaction in doing things for themselves and one for another'. This need to progress from provision to democratic participation was 'precisely what the "B's" are temperamentally unfitted to do by themselves: only the "A's", held in check by the "B's", can do it in any effective way'.[48]

Cole had been rescued from the irascible resignation from Nuffield by his fortuitous election in 1944 to the newly established Chichele Professorship of Social and Political Theory, which carried with it a fellowship at All Souls. He was, though, shortly to make his peace with Nuffield by becoming a professorial fellow and selling to the college the bulk of his immense library. Tenure of the Chichele Chair, which he held until his retirement in 1957, gave him considerable satisfaction and allowed him to produce his last and largest work, *A History of Socialist Thought*, appearing in five volumes (and with the third and fourth both split into two) between 1953 and 1960. Few, if any, can have read it in its entirety, most (like myself) using it as an invaluable work of reference.

Writing *A History of Socialist Thought* enabled Cole to engage in rich reflection on the libertarian or anarchist current of socialism and its relationship to utopian socialism, Marxism and social democracy—with particular reference to his bugbears of hugeness, centralization and bureaucracy. Centralization, he believed, is 'always the foe of democracy, and should be the foe of Socialism':

> But, alas, many who call themselves Socialists are actually strong supporters of centralization and even look to Socialists to carry it further still. This was always a characteristic of German Social Democracy with its Marxist tendency to identify the trend towards Socialism with its increasing unification of the control of the means of production and its intense dislike of the libertarian Socialism of Proudhon and Bakunin, of Kropotkin and of William Morris, and of that considerable Belgian theorist, César de Paepe.[49]

De Paepe was a prominent participant in the controversies within the First International. While, in Cole's words, 'never completely an Anarchist', he was much nearer to the Bakuninists than the Marxists and, when the split between them finally came, he initially supported the anarchists in the anti-authoritarian Saint-Imier International.[50]

Cole approved of Kropotkin and Gandhi in contrast to theorists, 'whether of the Communist or of the Social Democratic varieties [who] have alike accepted the assumption that the most advanced techniques—and accordingly those most appropriate to Socialism—involve not only a continued increase in the scale of production, but also workplaces employing ever larger aggregations of routine workers':

> The most notable writers who have stood out against the acceptance of this trend have not been Socialists, but Anarchists such as Kropotkin and original thinkers such as Gandhi. To Kropotkin, writing before automation had become technically possible, it appeared that the spread of electric power would give a new opportunity to the small workshop and could bring about the decentralization of industry; while Gandhi envisaged the economic development of India largely in terms of relatively small production units resting on village production. These, I know, are unpopular authorities to quote to present-day Socialists; but may they not prove to have been prophetic?[51]

Tony Wright, Cole's most penetrating analyst, considers

> Cole's *History of Socialist Thought* may (and perhaps should) be read as a long essay in retrieval: the retrieval of a valuable and neglected tradition of 'federalistic' socialist pluralism. His rehabilitation of Fourier, his defence of Proudhon against Marx, his account of Bakunin and the First International, his embrace of Kropotkin, his attack on the rigid centralism of German Social Democracy, his rescue of William Morris: all this, and more, formed part of his retrieval of a motley historical tradition. It was a tradition, moreover, to which Guild Socialism … could be readily assigned.[52]

The 'large ambitions' of Guild Socialism, Cole recalled, were for 'the creation of a libertarian Socialist society'.[53] In 'Socialism, centralist or libertarian?', published posthumously, he reflected that 'there have always been two fundamental cleavages in Socialist thought—the cleavage between revolutionaries and reformists, and the cleavage between centralizers and federalists'.[54] The first cleavage had monopolized attention at the expense of the second, and hence of Cole's own tradition of libertarian, decentralist socialism. The latter stood outside the conflict between Bolshevism and parliamentary social democracy, both of which 'regarded increasing centralization of power as an unmistakable characteristic of progress, and regarded themselves as the destined heirs of capitalist concentration and of the centralized power of the modern State'.[55]

Conclusions

Two or three months before his death in January 1959 Cole explicated the difficulty of his position in the years following the First World War:

> I was a left-wing Socialist who was never at all tempted … to go over to Communism, because I entirely disagreed with its fundamental approach—as I did indeed with the Labour Party's. For the basis of my Socialism was a deep belief in the value and free will of the individual … I was against centralism whether it manifested itself in the dictatorship of a class—or of a party supposed to represent a class—or in an overweening advocacy of the claims of the State as representing the whole body of citizens. I believed that democracy had to be small, or broken up into small groups, in order to be real, and that it had to be functional for this to be possible … To this conception of democracy I have adhered all my life …[56]

At the same time, he fittingly concluded *A History of Socialist Thought* with the forthright statement, albeit astonishing for an esteemed member of the Labour Party,

> I am neither a Communist nor a Social Democrat, because I regard both as creeds of centralization and bureaucracy, whereas I feel sure that a Socialist society that is to be true to its equalitarian principles of human brotherhood must rest on the widest possible diffusion of power and responsibility, so as to enlist the active participation of as many as possible of its citizens in the tasks of democratic self-government.[57]

As he had previously explained in 1957, 'I was—and I remain—a Guild Socialist—neither a Communist nor a Social Democrat in the ordinary sense, but something, not betwixt and between these two, but essentially different from both.'[58]

There is a perhaps unexpected convergence in the thought of the louche and hedonistic revisionist, Tony Crosland, and the asexual and ascetic fundamentalist, Cole. In *The Future of Socialism* Crosland asserted that in the blood of socialists 'there should always run a trace of the anarchist and the libertarian, and not too much of the prig and prude'. He himself had been raised as a Fabian, but 'a reaction against the Webb tradition' was necessary. He admitted that the Webbs were 'no doubt right to stress the solid virtues of hard work, self-discipline, efficiency, research and abstinence: to sacrifice private pleasure to public duty, and expect that others should do the same: to put Blue Books before culture, and immunity from physical

weakness above all other virtues', because they were reacting against 'an unpractical, Utopian, sentimental, romantic, almost anarchist tradition on the Left'. This alternative stream of socialist thought, which he was now advocating, he identified as 'stemming from William Morris'.[59] This was Cole's tradition also. He had been converted to socialism as a schoolboy by reading *News from Nowhere*. Morris's socialism was close to anarchism although—unsurprisingly in the era of the bomb-throwers—he opposed anarchism vehemently. Cole understood this. His socialism was also close to anarchism which he too rejected but with considerably more sympathy than Morris had.[60] In a posthumously published lecture, delivered to the newly established William Morris Society, he reasserted his debt, explaining that in Morris's oeuvre, visual as well as literary, he had found a 'quality that strongly appealed to me and gave me a deeper devotion to Morris as a person than I have ever felt for any other whom I have not met face to face'.[61]

Notes

1. Peter Ackers concurs, recently describing Cole as '*the* central intellectual figure of the interwar British left' (his emphasis); (P. Ackers, 'An industrial relations perspective on employee participation', in A. Wilkinson et al. (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Participation in Organizations* (Oxford, 2010), p. 59).
2. C. Ward, 'The state and society', *Anarchy*, 14 (April 1962), p. 115. This was the text of a lecture given to the Cole Society (Oxford University's then Sociology Society). Ward emphasized the pluralism of G.D.H. Cole (hereafter GDHC), *Scope and Method in Social and Political Theory. An Inaugural Lecture: Delivered before the University of Oxford on 9 November 1945* (Oxford, 1945), pp. 14–16.
3. D. Goodway, *Anarchist Seeds beneath the Snow. Left-Libertarian Thought and British Writers from William Morris to Colin Ward* (2nd edition, Oakland, CA, 2012), pp. 27–8.
4. *Syndicalist*, February 1914.
5. A.R. Orage (ed.), *National Guilds. An Inquiry into the Wage System and the Way Out* (London, 1914), p. 263.
6. Unless otherwise stated, details of Cole's life are taken from the biography by his wife: Margaret Cole (hereafter MC), *The Life of G.D.H. Cole* (London and Basingstoke, 1971). There have been only two full-length studies of his work: L.P. Carpenter, *G.D.H. Cole. An Intellectual Biography* (Cambridge, 1973), and

A.W. Wright, *G.D.H. Cole and Socialist Democracy* (Oxford, 1979). Wright, pp. 283–96, provides the most useful bibliography since it includes a partial listing of Cole's immense output of articles. The G.D.H. Cole Papers, Nuffield College, Oxford, are as confusing as they are voluminous, and need to be supplemented by supernumerary boxes and bound volumes of pamphlets and offprints (I am indebted to Clare Kavanagh for assistance in locating specific items).

7. GDHC, *British Labour Movement—Retrospect and Prospect*, Fabian Special 8 (London, 1951), pp. 3–4.

8. GDHC, *British Labour Movement*, p. 4.

9. Cited by MC, *Life*, p. 59. Cf. C.E.M. Joad, *The Book of Joad. A Belligerent Autobiography* (1932; London, 1943 edition), pp. 12–13.

10. For Beatrice Webb's entertaining take on Cole's appointment, see *The Diary of Beatrice Webb*, ed. Norman and Jeanne MacKenzie (London, 4 vols, 1982–5), III, pp. 247–8.

11. See the selective bibliography for articles and pamphlets, 1914–24, in Wright, *GDHC*, pp. 286–8.

12. GDHC, *Guild Socialism Re-stated* (London, 1920), p. 33. GDHC, *Social Theory* (3rd edition, London, 1923), pp. 66–72, classifies the range of functional associations.

13. GDHC, *Self-Government in Industry* (London, 1917), p. 121. For Morris, see also GDHC, *Self-Government*, pp. 119–22, 280, 302. For the debt to Rousseau, see GDHC, 'Conflicting social obligations', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 15 (1915), an important paper in the evolution of Cole's ideas; and GDHC, *Essays in Social Theory* (London, 1950), ch. 8. GDHC, 'Loyalties', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 26 (1925–6), develops the line of thought in 'Conflicting social obligations'.

14. For Figgis and Maitland: E. Barker, *Political Thought in England, 1848 to 1914* (2nd edition, 1928; Westport, CT, 1980), pp. 15–16, 175–83; D. Nicholls, *The Pluralist State. The Political Ideas of J.N. Figgis and His Contemporaries* (2nd edition, Basingstoke, 1994); P.Q. Hirst (ed.), *The Pluralist Theory of the State. Selected Writings of G.D.H. Cole, J.N. Figgis, and H.J. Laski* (London, 1989). For appreciations of Cole's contribution to political theory, see—in addition to Wright, *GDHC*, and Carpenter, *G.D.H. Cole*— C.E.M. Joad, *Introduction to Modern Political Theory* (Oxford,

1924), pp. 74–86; C. Pateman, *Participation and Democratic Theory* (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 35–42; D. Schecter, *Radical Theories. Paths beyond Marxism and Social Democracy* (Manchester, 1994), pp. 111–24, 182–6; G. Ostergaard, *The Tradition of Workers' Control. Selected Writings*, ed. B. Bamford (London, 1997), pp. 55–80; M. Stears, *Progressives, Pluralists, and the Problems of the State. Ideologies of Reform in the United States and Britain, 1909–1926* (2002; Oxford, paperback edition, 2006), esp. chs 3, 5, 6. (Ostergaard had been a doctoral student of Cole's in the early 1950s.) For Cole's self-assessment: GDHC, *The Development of Socialism during the Past Fifty Years* (London, 1952), pp. 15–17; GDHC, *A History of Socialist Thought* (London, 5 vols, 1953–60), III, Part 1, pp. 242–8. For an excellent evaluation of Guild Socialism—and Cole's place within it—there is A.W. Wright, 'Guild Socialism revisited', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 9, 1 (1974), pp. 165–80 (reprinted in T. Wright, *Doing Politics* (London, 2012)).

15. R.H. Tawney, 'Foreword' to C.L. Goodrich, *The Frontier of Control. A Study in British Workshop Politics* (New York, 1920), p. vii.

16. For Cole and workers' education, see L. Goldman, *Dons and Workers. Oxford and Adult Education since 1850* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 147–51, 180–3; Carpenter, *G.D.H. Cole*, pp. 115–19.

17. For marriage and Guild Socialism, MC, *Life*, may be supplemented by Margaret Cole's attractive autobiography: MC, *Growing Up into Revolution* (London, 1949). See too MC, 'Guild Socialism and the Labour Research Department', in A. Briggs and J. Saville (eds), *Essays in Labour History, 1886–1923* (London, 1971). There is also a biography of MC: B.D. Vernon, *Margaret Cole, 1893–1980. A Political Biography* (London: Croom Helm, 1986).

18. MC, *Beatrice Webb* (London, 1945), pp. 65–6. See also GDHC, 'What next? Anarchists or bureaucrats?' *Fabian Journal*, 12 (April 1954), pp. 30–1.

19. GDHC, *British Labour Movement*, p. 5; GDHC, *Development*, p. 30.

20. Asa Briggs, 'The intellectuals and the labour movement: G.D.H. Cole', *Listener*, 20 October 1960. For Briggs's overall assessment of Cole, see also J. McIlroy, 'Asa Briggs and the emergence of labour history in post-war Britain', *Labour History Review*, 77 (2012), pp. 218–19. In 1953 Cole was unconvincingly assert-

ing that the Labour Party was ideologically Fabian (GDHC, 'The socialism of British Labour', *Review of International Affairs* (Belgrade), 10 and 11 (16 May, 1 June 1953).

21. R.E. Dowse, *Left in the Centre. The Independent Labour Party, 1893–1940* (London, 1966), pp. 65–9, 209–11; GDHC, *A History of the Labour Party from 1914* (London, 1948), pp 149–50.

22. MC, *Life*, pp. 161–3; Carpenter, *G.D.H. Cole*, pp. 130–32. For 'Socialism in Our Time', see GDHC, *History of the Labour Party*, esp. pp. 197–200. The circumstances of Cole's resignation from the Fabian Society are recounted in *Diary of Beatrice Webb*, III, pp. 229–30.

23. GDHC, *The Next Ten Years in British Economic and Social Policy* (London, 1929), p. 131.

24. GDHC, *Next Ten Years*, p. 52; MC, *Life*, pp. 167–8; Carpenter, *G.D.H. Cole*, pp. 145–6.

25. Letter of 3 April 1930, cited by R.C. Whiting, The View from Cowley: The Impact of Industrialization upon Oxford, 1918–1939 (Oxford, 1983), p. 141.

26. Quoted by MC, *Life*, pp. 161–2. This diary entry for 12 September 1928 is omitted from the MacKenzies' edition of *The Diary of Beatrice Webb*—as also, surprisingly, from *Beatrice Webb's Diaries, 1924–1932*, ed. MC (London, 1956).

27. GDHC, *Next Ten Years*, pp. vii, 161, 172. In contrast, there is a very forceful statement: GDHC, 'Workers' Control', ts, 16 February 1934 (Cole Papers, Box 9, A1/52/9). M. Stears, 'Cole, George Douglas Howard', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, also exaggerates the revisionism of *The Next Ten Years.* See too Stears, *Progressives*, pp. 268–9. Carpenter, *G.D.H. Cole*, pp. 137–44, on the other hand, provides a balanced discussion. See also GDHC, *A Plan for Britain* (London, [1932]).

28. GDHC, *Next Ten Years*, pp. 133–4.

29. *Diary of Beatrice Webb*, III, pp. 202, 204, 222–3; IV, pp. 27, 98.

30. Letter from MC to Reckitt, 7 July 1941, quoted in J.S. Peart-Binns, *Maurice Reckitt: A Life* (Basingstoke, 1988), p. 18. The emphases are MC's.

31. GDHC, 'The case for going one's own way', *Kensington News*, 8 September 1933 (Cole Papers, Box 6, A1/36/4). Cf. GDHC, 'For democracy', *Rotary Service*, August 1941, p. 1.

32. 'Silver Jubilee Reprints: II', *Aryan Path*, March 1955 (Cole Papers, Box 10, A1/62/1).

33. GDHC, *Essays*, pp. 98, 100.

34. For the Nuffield Survey, in addition to MC, *Life*, ch. 23, see Carpenter, *G.D.H. Cole*, pp. 196–202, and G.D.N. Worswick, 'Cole and Oxford, 1938–1958', in A. Briggs and J. Saville (eds), *Essays in Labour History: In Memory of G.D.H. Cole, 25 September 1889–14 January 1959* (London, 1967 edition), pp. 27–34.

35. 'G.D.H. Cole's Election Address', Cole Papers, Box 41, D2/7/6.

36. MC, *Life*, p. 252.

37. B. de Jouvenel, *Problems of Socialist England* (London, 1949), pp. 131–2.

38. 'Democracy face to face with hugeness', in GDHC, *Essays*, pp. 93–5. A typescript of the essay, written for the *Christian News-Letter*, is to be found in the Cole Papers, Box 6, A1/35/2.

39. GDHC, *Local and Regional Government* (London, 1947), pp. xv, 256.

40. GDHC, 'The trade union outlook', *Fusion*, 6, 4 (July–August 1952), pp. 3–4. See also GDHC, *What Is Wrong with the Trade Unions?* Fabian Tract 301 (London, 1956), esp. pp. 7–9, 24–7, and GDHC, 'The Labour Party and the Trade Unions', *Political Quarterly*, 24 (1953), p. 26.

41. GDHC, *Co-operation, Labour and Socialism* (n.p., Co-operative Co-partnership Propaganda Committee, 1946), p. 11; GDHC, *The British Co-operative Movement in a Socialist Society* (London, 1951), pp. 21–3.

42. GDHC, 'New conceptions of industrial relations', galley-proof marked in hand 'BFMP—Annual Convention' and '1949' (bound in 'G.D.H. Cole, Articles 1943–52', Nuffield College). See also GDHC, *The Case for Industrial Partnership* (London, 1957).

43. See GDHC, 'Liberty in retrospect and prospect', *Rationalist Annual* (1950), p. 37.

44. GDHC, *Labour's Second Term*, Fabian Tract 273 (London, 1949), p. 10. See also GDHC, 'Workers and management in the national-ized industries', *Co-operative Year Book* (1951), pp. 16–17; GDHC, *Is This Socialism?* (London, 1954), pp. 7, 20, 26, 29–30; J.M. Chalmers, Ian Mikardo and GDHC, *Consultation or Joint Management? A Contribution to the Discussion of Industrial Democracy*, Fabian Tract 277 (London, 1949), p. 26.

45. GDHC, 'What socialism means to me', *Labour Forum*, 1, 5 (October–December 1947), p. 20; GDHC, *Socialist Economics* (London, 1950), p. 53. See also GDHC, *A Guide to the Essentials of Socialism* (London, 1947); GDHC, 'New conceptions of industrial relations'; GDHC, 'Socialism and the Welfare State', *New Statesman*, 23 July 1955. That Cole was not advocating a 'mixed economy' is made clear in GDHC, 'Twentieth-century socialism?', *New Statesman*, 7 July 1956. Stears, 'Cole', states that Cole 'refused to welcome the social policy reforms of the Attlee administration as warmly as might have been expected, demanding instead that the government take more seriously the need to involve welfare recipients, workers, and consumers directly in decision making at a local level'. I regret that I have found no indication of a concern with the democratic rights of claimants. He displayed, in general, minimal interest in the Welfare State (although there is GDHC, *Beveridge Explained. What the Beveridge Report on Social Security Means* (London, 1942); and see also GDHC, 'British Labour's achievement after 1945: an assessment', *Review of International Affairs* (Belgrade), 12 (16 June 1953)).

46. S. Hall, 'Life and times of the first New Left', *New Left Review*, 2nd series, 61 (January–February 2010), p. 178. See also S. Hall, 'The "first" New Left: life and times', in R. Archer et al. (eds), *Out of Apathy. Voices of the New Left Thirty Years On* (London, 1989), p. 15. Cole contributed an article, 'What is happening to British capitalism?' to the first number of *Universities and Left Review* in 1957.

47. GDHC, *Is This Socialism?* p. 3.

48. GDHC, 'What next?' pp. 30–2. The emphasis is Cole's.

49. GDHC, 'Socialism and social democracy', f. 8 (typescript, n.d., Cole Papers, Box 10, A1/62/11).

50. GDHC, *History*, II, p. 340. For de Paepe in general, see GDHC, *History*, II, esp. chs 6, 8.

51. GDHC, 'How far must we centralize?' f. 7 (typescript, c. 1958, Cole Papers, Box 10, A1/62/5).

52. Wright, *GDHC*, p. 137. See also GDHC, 'What is socialism? I', *Political Studies*, I (1953), esp. pp. 21–8; and GDHC, 'What is socialism? II', *Political Studies*, I(1953).

53. GDHC, 'Education and politics: a socialist view', *Year Book of Education* (1952), p. 52.

54. GDHC, 'Socialism, centralist or libertarian? I', *ISSS Information*, 7 (September 1959), p. 5 (Margaret Cole Papers, Box 39, H1/5, Nuffield College, Oxford). This essay, printed posthumously, was written as the foreword to an Italian selection of Cole's writings, *Studi sul Socialismo* (Studies in socialism), to be edited by Carlo Doglio, an Italian anarchist, and which was never published. Doglio's preferred title had been *Towards a Libertarian Socialism*. (I am grateful to Doglio's son, Daniele, and Stefania Proli for providing me with copies of the relevant correspondence from Doglio's papers, held by the Biblioteca Libertaria Armando Borghi, Castel Bolognese, including the proposed contents of *Studi*.) There are no issues of *ISSS Information* in the G.D.H. Cole Papers; 'Socialism, centralist or libertarian? II', should be in no.8, of which the only copy located to date is held by the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam. The full essay in both Cole's virtually illegible longhand and a typescript in which his indefatigable typist, Rosamund Broadley, was obliged to leave some words blank are to be found in the Cole Papers, Box 10, A1/62/7 and 8.
55. GDHC, *History*, III, part 2, p. 970. See also GDHC, *History*, IV, part 1, p. 26.
56. GDHC, 'Foreword', to B. Pribićević, *The Shop Stewards' Movement and Workers' Control, 1910–1922* (Oxford, 1959), pp. vi–vii.
57. GDHC, *History*, V, p. 337.
58. GDHC, *History*, IV, Part 1, p. 10. See also GDHC, *History*, IV, Part 1, p. 7.
59. C.A.R. Crosland, *The Future of Socialism* (London, 1956), pp. 522–3. For Cole and Crosland, see Carpenter, *G.D.H. Cole*, pp. 207–10, 228.
60. GDHC, *William Morris as a Socialist. A Lecture Given on 16th January 1957 to the William Morris Society at the Art Workers' Guild* (London, 1960), pp. 12–14; Goodway, pp. 20–4; R. Kinna, 'Anarchism, individualism and communism: William Morris's critique of anarcho-communism', in A. Prichard et al. (eds), *Libertarian Socialism. Politics in Black and Red* (Basingstoke, 2012), esp. pp. 49–53.
61. GDHC, *William Morris*, pp. 1, 17. See also GDHC, 'Introduction' to *William Morris. Stories in Prose, Stories in Verse, Shorter Poems, Lectures and Essays*, ed. GDHC (London, 1934).

Michael Young: An Innovative Social Entrepreneur

Stephen Meredith

Michael Young described Labour's post-war programme in its reconstructive 1945 election manifesto as 'Beveridge plus Keynes plus socialism'.[1] Although Young is perhaps most famous for his principal contribution to Labour's seminal 1945 election document, his was subsequently an uneasy relationship with the Labour Party and state-socialism as a vehicle for the decentred, participatory, community and consumer-based social democracy he favoured.[2] He always claimed to be 'motivated by opposition' and 'moved by … the wonderful potential in all of us that isn't being realised' or recognised by large and remote state enterprise. This was supplemented by a communitarian and collaborative ethos of mutual aid, believing that smaller-scale 'co-operatives were on principle the best sort of organisation for economic and social purposes' (although conscious that even a large retail Co-operative movement could display tell-tale signs of bureaucratic centralism and consumer restriction).[3] His problematic relationship with the Labour Party was evident soon after the emphatic post-war election victory he helped to create. While the Attlee government was busy 'constructing huge state corporations', from as early as 1948 Young was emphasising the 'need to think smaller, at community and family level, if

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liberty and humanity were to be the driving forces of a truly social democratic society'.[4] In this and further contributions to the output of Labour's Research Department, he was keen to emphasise the role of smaller units of organisation in the family and community in policymaking, as well as wider issues of individual choice and greater gender equality within the context of the development of a mass consumer society. Increasingly, he came to regard Labour's dominant state-centric notion that 'big is beautiful' as an imperfect vehicle for a wider progressive vision of the better society in which the concerns of large bureaucratic and impersonal institutions—in the economy, industry and the workplace, government and the state and even the 'great city'—were not privileged over small-scale organisation and the associations and 'interests of ordinary people' in their local and community settings, 'who suffered collectively as a result'.[5]

Writing only three years after drafting Labour's celebrated 1945 manifesto, the means and mechanisms of its implementation made Young nervous of the implications of a highly centralising bureaucracy associated with an extreme Westminster-model notion of the state and citizenship.[6] He was also concerned to move beyond a simple binary choice for the post-war Labour Party between a 'fundamentalist' attachment to wide-scale public ownership and a narrowly conceived 'revisionist' equality, pursued exclusively through central state mechanisms. Along with Labour's revisionists, he was concerned at the party's apparent impasse after 1950 when 'few members of the Labour Party now define Socialism as public ownership' and there is a need to consider 'what to put in the place of nationalisation'; but he believed this should incorporate wider principles and interests of socialist democracy. This should include 'community at work … reviving pride in work; giving the worker a sense of importance, industrial democracy, leadership in industry'. It should also include 'community at home, creating new patterns of urban life, with families belonging to small-scale social groups; relevance of town planning … relations between small groups and the great society; participation of people in their own government'. Moreover, as new aims were formulated, more guidance should be sought from a wider range of social science disciplines beyond economics. New insights of the human social sciences would offer a 'new approach to the problem of liberating people's potentialities for leading a full life'.[7] In subsequent revisionist debates between a species of Croslandite social democratic centralism and his own decentred, local and participatory vision of the future of socialism, Young lost the implicit

battle of ideas that essentially defined Labour's long-term ethos and trajectory and left the party. By this stage he regarded Labour's 1945 election manifesto as largely a mistake in terms of its exclusive promotion of the state across the policy spectrum.[8] But already in 1974, he considered the manifesto to read 'as a rather old-fashioned document'. Young reflected that the state occupied

> every line of the political agenda. The state was to do this for welfare (through the Beveridge reforms) and that for the economy (through nationalisation and exchange controls). It was all very well at the time: a great deal was achieved. But attitudes to the state have changed a great deal since.[9]

This chapter charts the trajectory of Michael Young's 'post-socialist' development and assesses his contribution to thinking about social democratic and progressive alternatives to Labour's more traditionally state-socialist concerns, perspectives and presentation. It suggests that Young was an early post-war pioneer of the kind of non-statist, decentred, participatory and community-based brand of liberal socialism that was to reappear in Labour's 'post-revisionist' social democracy from the mid-1970s and in the Social Democratic Party (SDP) after 1981 and its legacy. This was part of a much longer tradition of British socialism (including G.D.H. Cole's Guild Socialism) concerned with decentralised and devolved, associational and participatory forms of social and political organisation, which has been marginalised by the dominant paradigm and narratives of Labour's state-centred development.[10] Young's ideas and proposals represented a pre-emptive strike at symptoms of David Marquand's 'progressive dilemma', core themes of which became pressing for liberal social democrats such as Marquand, John P. Mackintosh and Evan Luard from the 1970s. British socialism and social democracy, dominated by a 'focus on policy and neglect of process' in which development was 'not underpinned by the necessary social and political citizenship', had failed to convey the 'case for non-statist, decentralist, participatory forms of public intervention' and had become a largely 'technocratic philosophy rather than a political one'. A sense of community and the potential of 'politics [as] a process through which a political community agrees its common purpose' was largely forgotten in the creation of a society of passive individuals.[11] Not surprisingly, after his relatively early tentative steps to advance the case for an alternative centre-left consumers' party, Young was a convert to the SDP.

At the Labour Party's Research Department: Challenging State-Socialism from within

> British socialism owed more to Methodism than Marxism. But also, in its beginnings, it owed much less to doctrines of public ownership than to mutual aid and self-help, as represented in the Victorian Friendly Society, the Sick Club, the State Club, the Co-operative Society, the Trade Union and (God help us) the Building Society—but, above all, in the everyday exchanges of mutual aid in every working-class community in the land.[12]

At the party's Research Department between 1945 and 1950, Michael Young was principal author, along with Herbert Morrison, Ellen Wilkinson and Patrick Gordon Walker, of Labour's 1945 election blueprint of the 'new Jerusalem', but did not subsequently feel constrained by keystones of socialist orthodoxy.[13] As early as his formative 1948 pamphlet, Young argued that it would be imperative for Labour to create the conditions in which it would be possible 'for the people to run the new and the old institutions of our society, participating at all levels as active members—workers, consumers, citizens—of an active democracy', with the integrative and participatory features of the family and small-group model as its cornerstone.[14] He was prepared to challenge state-socialist orthodoxies at a relatively early stage of post-war development, particularly in the forms of what he perceived to be the navel-gazing and increasingly archaic obsession with nationalisation; the restrictions of individual freedom and liberty in the 'centralizing and dehumanizing, tendencies of socialist state planning'; and in the associated restrictive practices and progressive limits of trade unionism.[15]

Linked to his scepticism about further large-scale nationalisation, he developed an early critique of trade unionism as both exclusively producer-oriented and increasingly statist in its organisation and outlook. He believed that if a majority of industries 'were transferred to this kind of "public" or "common" ownership', they would resemble a 'Trade Union state, run by corporate bodies whose ascendancy would then be complete'. While the unions still performed a valuable function in the economy to 'help the small man to improve his wages and conditions', many are 'afflicted with the trouble to which all organisations are liable—the man at the bottom feels insignificant, the leaders at the top are remote'. This became part of a general view of the dangers of 'domination' by any large vested interest or set of interests, whether of the labour or business variety, including the

potential elitism and exclusivity inherent in institutionalised arrangements such as bargained corporatism. As industrial relations graduated to 'apparent chaos', he would support successive government attempts to restore order and discipline to trade unionism and, like some Socialist Union colleagues, would also support incomes policy or more 'unorthodox' solutions to combat pressures of inflation. Such insights then emerged more widely in later liberal social democratic critiques of the so-called 'trade union question'.[16]

A particular point of disjuncture for Young was his frustration with what he saw as the strict limits on individual freedom and liberty imposed by 'Labour's blinkered vision of socialist planning', which he believed ignored fundamental transformations in society. While he travelled broadly in parallel with Crosland along the revisionist route, he was perhaps even more acutely aware of Labour's inability to respond to profound economic and social changes, particularly those prompted by increasing affluence, rising living standards and emergent mass consumerism. Labour's restrictive command-driven tendencies had singularly failed to adapt to the 'fundamental shift in people's outlook from one of production to one of consumption'. In the process of three successive election defeats, he would reflect along with other social scientists whether Labour was fated to lose in the new culture of 'affluence'. While he hoped that the party would eventually adopt a consumerist outlook, he believed that if Labour failed to take account of fundamental new interests and concerns of citizens its programme and appeal would become increasingly irrelevant and a new consumer-oriented party would emerge or be required. Any new progressive consumers' party would then, as the SDP eventually did, follow the perception of consumers as liberal individuals ready to challenge the narrow and restrictive corporatist economic sectionalism that tied government and the major parties to their respective economic interest groups.[17]

Nor did Young shy away from the application of his core analysis to totemic institutions of Labour's post-war state. He further targeted prevailing one-dimensional perspectives of Labour's iconic new Welfare State. It is perceptible that the specific concept of a 'Welfare State' was absent from the (draft) manifesto document in favour of broader promises of social and economic improvement for working- and middle-class people who had experienced painful unemployment and insecurity in the years between the two world wars. Young was to become increasingly hostile to a simplified and state-centric concept of the 'Welfare State', identifying it with bureaucratic and impersonal centralisation and discouragement

of active participation by users in decision-making processes that directly affected their own lives. Not unlike Beveridge himself, and contrary to Labour's emerging standard operating procedures, Young saw an important role for non-state organisations, provided they were publicly accountable, in partnership with state services.[18] Greater decentralisation and diffusion of welfare provision across sectors offered more scope for genuine participation and articulation of precise service needs and, again like Beveridge, Young saw wider 'voluntary action' in welfare as a means of checking central state power. Ideas of decentralised and inclusive organisation of welfare gained little purchase on Labour's thought processes, dominated as they were by the 'new, post-war world order of state-led planning' and antipathy to the intrusion in welfare of voluntary action and organisations previously associated with pre-war notions of 'charity' and stark inequalities.

The seemingly unfashionable (or premature) recommendations of Young (and Beveridge) that non-governmental and voluntary action might effectively and popularly supplement the work of state welfare remained a largely alien concept in mainstream Labour policymaking. In common with contemporaries such as G.D.H. Cole and Richard Crossman, Young viewed the highly centralised management and administration of the welfare state by post-war Labour governments as indicative of the neglect of earlier and alternative principles and practices of 'reciprocity, mutuality and solidarity' that promoted active participation, cooperation and mutual responsibility. It was also 'undemocratic' in the sense of failing to confront 'unjust concentrations of power and wealth' of one sort or another. In this view, Labour 'after 1945 … forgot about redistribution of assets and power' and became concerned largely with 'collective ownership and money transfers'. Ultimately, the indubitable 'common good' of welfare institutions was undermined when 'something went awry in the way that Labour spoke about them'.[19] The leadership's rejection of Young's notion of a role for voluntary non-state organisations in a community-level, multi-agency approach to the delivery of public policy, might also suggest that Labour's post-war welfare policies were perhaps less systematically driven by the full Beveridge blueprint than is commonly thought.[20]

Although sharing common ground with Labour revisionism, Young more explicitly and consistently articulated the perspective that socialism should involve more than narrow questions of economic management and material redistribution. His output from Labour's Research Department and related Labour Party and Fabian work between 1948

and 1950 served to articulate his sustained critique of the narrow concern of traditional socialism with 'questions of [control of] economic power and material improvement'.[21] First and perhaps most notably, his National Executive Committee (NEC)-commissioned discussion pamphlet of 1948 addressed potentially abstract or theoretical questions of how the technical advantages of 'bigness' of large-scale industrial and social structures could be harnessed to the human advantages of 'smallness' and relatively new explorations into the means by which ordinary people, as workers, consumers or citizens, could play a larger, participatory role in running socialist democracy.[22]

His memorandum to the NEC Policy Committee a year later was designed to promote the utility of other social science disciplines such as social psychology, sociology and anthropology to supplement the principal focus on 'modern economics' in the party's programme. It represented a critique of the dominant Fabian tradition in British socialism, whose disproportionate emphasis on economics, efficiency and the central state was insufficiently attentive to essential non-material themes and needs of 'human relations', family life, human psychology, development and emotional fulfilment. To revive and develop earlier ethical conceptions of 'dignity' and 'brotherhood' in British socialism would require Labour's future social policy to heed the research of the social sciences in aspects of the 'human relations' question. This supplementary emphasis on seemingly more esoteric, non-state themes acted as a corrective to the revisionists' substantive neglect of them. Young's memorandum on the merits of a wider social science programme was perhaps 'unique in its ambitious range of suggestions and its considerable use of new academic disciplines' for its essential argument, shared by other intellectuals such as Tawney and Cole, that Labour should pursue improvements in the quality of life in its widest sense, rather than merely restrict its ambition to the transfer of economic power and the distribution of material resources through the state.[23]

In a further influential contribution to the Fabian 'Problems Ahead' series of conferences, Young developed the core themes of this NEC submission. He tactfully toned down his critique of the centralising and bureaucratic tendencies of the dominant Fabian tradition, but reaffirmed his belief that the threat of 'too much State power is very real'. He addressed what he thought should be current concerns of socialist democracy with 'smaller', less tangible issues of 'human relations'. Specifically, he argued for an opportunity for socialism and the Labour Party to expand its repertoire in this sphere by helping to satisfy emotional needs through

provision of improved and accessible leisure facilities and the reconfiguration of working patterns, in the pursuit of life balance and emotional fulfilment.[24] G.D.H. Cole's summary questioned Young's concept of 'brotherhood' as insufficiently substantive and expressive of the party's philosophy and programme, and indicated Labour's potential inexperience in the application of this more intimate notion of socialist organisation. However, it also revealed broad agreement with Young's main idea of promoting 'social reintegration' through a more localised 'spirit of community'. Young's identification of the relationship between 'small groups and the great society' clearly found favour with Cole, as did his advocacy of the 'participation of people in their own government', through concepts such as the 'community at work', giving the worker a 'sense of importance' and wider function, and the 'community at home', linking the central unit of the family with 'small-scale social groups'. Cole urged further discussion for Labour to consider wider themes as diverse as leisure provision, the emotional and psychological dimensions of political activity and the 'promotion of individual freedom and happiness'.[25] Although there was considerable doubt among senior Labour figures that Young's 'abstract' themes and ideas were practicable and easily applicable to socialist practice, he had thus initiated a wider agenda and dialogue that was to be addressed and taken up, though still on the margins of the party, by a number of Labour intellectuals, including Crossman and Austen Albu.[26]

While in the Research Department, Young fell intellectually foul of more traditional senior party figures on more than one occasion. Innovative thinking on a social science research programme and child-centred society was vetoed early by Herbert Morrison, together with Young's unusual but characteristic idea to have an empty chair at cabinet meetings representing the 'unknown constituent'. His desire to challenge sacred cows from within continued with clear criticism of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) in proposals on the need to restrain wages, which almost resulted in expulsion from the department in 1947. He also invited the objections of both Morrison and Bevan to his 1948 pamphlet concerned with industrial democracy, in which he advocated far greater 'power to the [individual rank-and-file] worker' in relation to both the trade union leadership and industrial managers, lingering on notions of more active and direct workers' control. He believed that 'in a democracy those who were led elected their leaders', which should be a principle applied to industry as it was the political system. It ended with a clarion call to 'educate our children as democrats so that they … want to become active … Let us add to our

knowledge about human relations in industry.' Young's view could have been seen as following the line set by Emanuel Shinwell at the 1948 party conference when he said that 'nationalisation without democracy is not Socialism. We cannot claim that an industry or service is socialised unless and until the principles of social and economic democracy are implicit in its day-to-day conduct.' However, the opposition from the party's big beasts indicated to Young that he had overstepped the established mark even in the more restrained conditions of nationalisation of 1948; and it brought him the troublesome revelation that the problem of making nationalisation work more effectively would ultimately turn, not on social liberation and participation from below, but on political decision-making and control from above.[27]

The recommendation of his 1949 memorandum to the NEC to 'now reconsider aims in light of developments of other social sciences' beyond the prescribed interests and accomplishments of 'modern economics' was derived from a sense that some 'socialists have realised that State-socialism, while achieving greater productivity at expense of dehumanisation of work, would not necessarily achieve other aims associated with [full conceptions of] "dignity" and "brotherhood"'. He emphasised the need for national social science organisation on the model of the natural sciences to support qualitative research into ways of enhancing the utilitarian socialist objective of the 'greatest happiness of [the] greatest number' beyond the largely realised 'elimination of poverty and material security regarded as chief means to this end, and consequently … the chief concern of [the] Party'. Young would later became the first chairman of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) when Tony Crosland was eventually persuaded to set it up in 1965, but he finally departed his post in Labour's Research Department in 1950 because he believed 'the party had run out of ideas'. While he had almost single-handedly drafted the party's 1945 election manifesto, he already considered Labour's programme to be 'nothing very visionary, but very detailed because we had so much time to plan'.[28]

Contributions to Social Democratic Revisionism: Equality and Fraternity

Michael Young's problematic relationship with the Labour Party was compounded by the development of the conceptual basis of the party's post-war doctrines, particularly the revisionist social democratic dictum that socialism was about a narrowly defined 'equality', pursued through

largely statist means, in contrast to his own preference for 'a smaller-scale politics-of-cooperation'. While not fundamentally opposed to the central place of 'equality' in Labour's ideological prospectus, he was aware of the dangers of an unmediated 'equality of opportunity' as perhaps his most famous work, *The Rise of the Meritocracy*, demonstrates in savage satire. He believed that 'fraternity' was at least as important as 'equality' and, 'without fraternity, equality of opportunity could end up creating a heartless meritocracy without a trace of *noblesse oblige* and dismissive of the needs and claims of those who failed to make the grade'. Without taking into account the potential dangers of meritocracy, society would succeed only in substituting elites: damaging inequalities and divisions would remain, now based on the potentially more pernicious distinction of biological and psychological characteristics, rather than purely social grounds of hereditary status. He expressed clear reservations about the relative emphasis of 'equality' and 'fraternity' in revisionist social democratic thought when he reflected that 'socialism … is about fraternity … Crosland said socialism is about equality. I think he got it wrong. It is about equality, but only secondary to being about fraternity.'[29]

By 1950, Young had already established intellectual distance between himself and the Crosland line. In the Fabian Society series of conferences on 'Problems Ahead', he argued for the need to 're-define ends as well as means'. The ends of socialism should have two main aspirations—the 'assertion of human dignity and the achievement of a sense of community', bound up in the wider concept of 'brotherhood'. Equality represented only part of the 'broader concept of human dignity'. Similarly, there needed to be increased emphasis on a sense of reciprocal 'community' offering the opportunity to participate and contribute to an active democracy beyond the realm of politics. Young offered a strand of social democratic thought distinct from mainstream Labour revisionism: it was idealistic and less constrained by party and political concerns, but also more unequivocally forward-looking and cutting much more explicitly and responsively with the grain of social trends. He appeared much readier to shed the socialist-state ascription in a rapidly changing socio-economic context that he perceived to be outstripping even a Croslandite revisionist analysis. Young appeared to be willing to draw together concepts and ideas otherwise considered contradictory to establish a clear link between notions of (traditional working-class) community and (new) individualist consumerism. This willingness to acknowledge and fuse new social and consumer developments with core concepts also suggested a more openly appreciative view of the role of the market in society.[30]

Young's departure from mainstream Labour revisionism was also evident in his links with Socialist Union and its journal, *Socialist Commentary*, following its broadly revisionist ethical socialist line. Its emphasis on principles of 'fellowship' was close to Young's own view of the primacy of concepts of fraternity and brotherhood in progressive socialist thought. The explicit communitarianism of Socialist Union, advocating the link between fellowship and a broader vision of equality, reflected the emerging distinction of revisionist social democracy between 'those primarily focused on [simple] distributive goals' and those who 'defended the importance of creating a more co-operative society' founded on 'values of co-operation and mutual service'. In Young's case, this involved a 'commitment to a communitarian ideal that pictured the family as the germ of the egalitarian society'. The notion of the central and organic influence of the family in his vision of smaller-scale communitarian and cooperative socialist organisation is arguably the most distinctive theme of Young's social analysis. Traditionally, 'socialists have ignored the family or they have openly tried to weaken it—alleging nepotism and the restrictions placed upon human fulfilment by family ties', and the dominant strand of Labour thought and practice appeared to view the state as virtually an alternative channel of socialisation, based on the premise that the 'gentleman in Whitehall' and professionals 'know best'.[31] His sustained critique of the dominant Fabian tradition led him to reject the limits and 'danger of too much State power' in favour of the notion that a mature sense of equality for socialists should include a society enabled by a spirit of community pursued through 'principles of brotherhood, comradeliness and fellowship, observed in the good family'. Young's decentred and associational perspective, mirroring earlier ideals of the 'libertarian' G.D.H. Cole, was premised on the notion that 'individuals will find their highest fulfilment and their greatest freedom through co-operation with others' in a 'fully democratic society' beyond the state and public services. This should be reflected in participatory and 'democratic community' in the workplace, for the consumer and in the local community as a counter to the 'dangers of bigness' and a 'State [that] is too remote'.[32]

Those who favoured a 'qualitative socialist' approach employed wider notions of 'fellowship' or 'fraternity' to illuminate the egalitarian future. In contrast to the dominant 'Keynesian socialist' emphasis of a 'classless society of social, if not economic, equals enjoying a broad equality of opportunity', they envisaged a 'good society' of equality of 'right relationships', in which 'human beings were equal in dignity and worth, and in which opportunities existed not to rise above others but to develop

the personal potential with which different individuals were endowed'. A Labour Party of limited 'sentimental egalitarianism' based on narrow standardised 'merit' and Morrisonian 'technical efficiency' could not be the 'crucible' for a more inclusive and decentred notion of the 'classless society', in which a 'diversity of values'—individual, family, neighbourhood and communitarian—prospered.[33]

While broadly sympathetic to the wider revisionist prospectus, Young was interested to go further and deeper in his interrogation of Labour's entrenched state-centric compass. He agreed that the general objective of 'greater social and economic equality' in the context of downgraded public ownership in a mixed economy was the correct one as far as it went, but contested the pursuit of merely this end solely through the state. Thus Crosland's 'main omission' was to neglect 'ways of "redistributing" or "equalising" the power of the state [itself] and other bureaucracies like the trade unions'. Young believed that Crosland was weaker on social policy than economic policy and, in areas such as housing, planning and education, he nearly always came to narrower and 'rather too negative conclusions for my taste. He was an intellectual not an innovator.' Central state mechanisms and power were used almost exclusively to advance equality and to promote freedom without thought to the 'right treatment of the one privilege' that appeared to be required 'for everything else'. Consequently, 'forms of equality had been fostered only by concentrating more power in the state'.[34]

Founding the Consumers' Association: 'From the Politics of Production to the Politics of Consumption'

Originally supportive of targeted public ownership and 'largely responsible for the shopping list of industries' for Labour's 1945 manifesto, Young's rapid disenchantment was fuelled by seemingly indiscriminate adoption of further nationalisation proposals driven by the 'fundamentalist' left and the disruptive influence of 'Bevanism' in the 1950s.[35] It was his reaction to Labour's apparent preoccupation with the 'politics of production' and his own sensitivity to the new consumerism and formal representation of consumers that prompted him to propose the formation of a new centre-left progressive political party beyond the confines of the Labour Party in 1960. Increasingly, he believed that the collectivist, state-centric Labour Party was 'no longer the undisputed party of reform', and that centre-left

progressives and revisionist social democrats should think in terms of an alternative reformist vehicle, either in the form of realignment with a partly revived Liberal Party or even 'an entirely … new reforming party'. He argued that Labour's chances of maintaining the 'progressive vote' would depend on it satisfying 'the conditions that any genuine party of reform needs to satisfy' in coming to terms with contemporary developments. For Young, the major domestic political challenge was the 'shift of interests from production to consumption' in society, which represented a change of 'revolutionary significance, requiring … complementary adaption from the "politics of production" to the "politics of consumption"'. For this purpose, he considered the Labour Party based on an increasingly outdated and largely anti-European 'politics of production' singularly ill-suited. A new progressive party 'would be a party to press for the unity of consumers in the world and the interests of consumers at home'; it would offer a centre-left consumers' party in contrast to Labour's centre-left producers' movement.[36] Thus, while Young was not to be formally involved in a new alternative centre-left political party until the formation of the SDP 20 years later, he was among the first on the left to recognise and respond to the seismic shift in social trends.

As the post-war Labour Party and revisionist social democracy agonised over the merits and correct levels of public ownership, Young identified the increasing importance and implications of consumerism for society and politics. He founded *Which?* magazine and subsequently the Consumers' Association to recognise and empower citizens as consumers in the new marketplaces shadowing the shift to mass affluence. The Consumers' Association was finally established in late 1957 in direct response to the shifting values and challenges of post-war affluence at a point of rapid changes in product markets and consumer behaviour and a corresponding increase in disreputable trading practices. Young had previously attempted to respond to these new challenges from within Labour's Research Department by inserting the idea of a Consumer Advisory Service into the 1950 manifesto, although the notion was rejected out-of-hand as 'hopeless' by Harold Wilson at the Board of Trade. The charge against Young's proposal was that 'insofar as there needs to be anything done, it's being done already by the Automobile Association, the Good Housekeeping Institute and the British Standards Institution'. Nonetheless, the results of a Gallup Poll evaluating the popularity of the proposals in Labour's manifesto ranked the idea of a consumer service top of the list, and prompted Young to persist in setting up the Consumers' Association.

Once established with characteristic perseverance, Young recognised the implicit dualism of the Consumers' Association, emblematic of the notion of consumerism itself, between a neo-liberal and a social democratic ethos. He eschewed the former to urge a conception of consumers beyond that of mere 'servants of the washing machine'. He offered a 'broader socio-political notion of consumerism' and consumers as 'progressive, socially aware and committed to their duties as well as their rights as citizens'. Ideologically, he saw the Consumers' Association as a social movement travelling broadly in parallel with revisionist social democracy, but was always ready to push the case further and more independently than its mainstream advocates. If the Labour Party was unable to make the journey, he saw the programme of any new progressive consumer party mirroring the enlightened image of consumers as not 'merely acquisitive and materialist' but broad-minded internationalists and Europeans in foreign affairs and supporters of liberal freedoms and lifestyles and progressive public services at home. In its non-sectional aspect and appeal to voters from across the political spectrum, Young envisaged the emergence of a genuinely 'one nation' party to arrest Britain's economic decline as the demands of a mass army of discerning consumers would improve production quality and competitiveness of industry and offset the wage–price spiral of inflation in a way the two main producer parties could not.[37] He recognised that the state was required to reach poorer consumers and even revived the combination of self-help and mutual aid principles of cooperatives, but regarded a movement for consumers as a vital 'third force' in society. His core belief that a 'progressive party should place the consumer at centre stage' represented and remained a 'continuous thread in his work' right through to joining the SDP.[38]

It is perhaps not surprising that Young's 'dangerous' proposal for a 'new progressive party' of the consumer interest was rejected for publication by the Fabian Society in 1960. Crosland was a 'tolerant' if 'amused' reviewer, but Shirley Williams as incumbent general secretary was tasked to arbitrate the different views of its 'merits' and appeared unwilling to accept this leap of faith.[39] Young also later floated the idea of a 'Reform League' as a 'centre' or 'think tank' with interests in a range of reforms wider than just 'consumerism', which would be attractive to 'potential reformers of various kinds' unhappy with the 'present mood of political sadness [which] goes with apathy about our society'. This included 'considering almost any proposal within the capacity of private enterprise for putting life into the Welfare State'. Industry and the economy would

have to be 'largely though not entirely ruled out, to begin with at any rate', but he emphasised that economic growth would be 'vital to the general success of our kind of ideas' and suggested that maybe others should be invited 'to start industrial reform movements'. He identified a characteristically ambitious and innovative set of proposals premised on the notion of decentring both the state and the London focus of British institutions and amenities. These included a National Extension College following his idea of an 'open university'; an *Ecole Polytechnique* for the higher civil service and management and a Harvard-style 'post-graduate Business School'; 'New Model' trade unionism; regional urban renewal; a new and effective system of apprenticeship and the notion of 'sheltered workshops' to re-employ those forced into 'mad' compulsory retirement; sessions of parliament in provincial cities; municipal theatre and regional branches of the British Museum.

The underlying theme was 'effective modernisation of Britain', which required both 'much more effective government' and 'a "release" of creative energy at the periphery'. He believed the reason why the latter had not flourished was that 'Socialists and Conservatives [had] both trusted the top'. Socialists 'have believed that the way to get reform is through the State', and therefore those 'not at the top have been discouraged by this attitude from doing what little they might have tried to do'. With a further contribution drafted as *The New Radicalism* in 1969, he was in effect developing a manifesto for later post-revisionist social democratic critiques of Labour's hitherto collectivist state philosophy and affinities, including a 'discriminating approach to the State' in which the 'power of the state [would be] reduced, not scrapped, or even limited, to that re-weighting of bargaining power between rich and poor'. A fuller sense of freedom from the state would need to be developed, somewhere close to Mill's proposition that any 'increase in the power of the State is prejudicial to liberty, and a reduction enhances it'. He recognised that 'the State still has its most vital role to perform in reducing inequality, itself a means of enhancing freedom', but its 'Robin Hood role' should be an application of a wider principle that 'power in the State may be justified wherever it can prevent the freedom of individuals and of groups being cut down by other more powerful individuals and groups'. The state is correctly 'an arbiter we must have' but, while there are 'many services which need to be supplied collectively', notions of greater and wider 'participation' in 'social organisation' and a 'great unloosing of individual energy' must be a possibility to combat the dangers of a 'more paternalist State'.[40]

Ongoing Social Entrepreneurship: A Life Beyond State-Socialism

> Young's approach was too individualistic for him to settle quietly into party politics … His ideas were not in tune with the trade union-based, male-oriented Labour Party … He was more interested in defending the rights of the individual and bringing people together at local level than in the statism that then dominated the Labour Party.[41]

Having failed to persuade Labour, among other things, of the relevance of his idea of a consumer advisory service, Young parted formal company with the party shortly after, in 1950.[42] In addition to his seminal contributions to academic sociological research and publication, and his foundation of the Consumers' Association, he went on to create the Open University and more than 50 other social initiatives and charities for a wide range of public causes located within what now might be termed the 'third sector', between profit-based private enterprise and the traditional central state. Through early concrete initiatives beyond the restrictions of postwar Labour socialism and orthodox revisionist social democracy (including establishment of an Institute of Community Studies in London's East End and early moral and institutional support for the principle and utility of 'social entrepreneurship') he was able to pursue alternative means of achieving a less parochial set of goals aimed at demonstrating the value of 'family and community' in action. According to his former colleague at Transport House and future collaborator in research on the social anthropology of the east end of London, Peter Willmott, the creation of the Institute of Community Studies in January 1954, based in the community setting of Bethnal Green, had been an attempt to 'resolve the dilemma of bigness' that had plagued Young since his later years in the Research Department. It would offer 'a base from which to challenge the giant of statism which had stolen the heart of the Party' in the realisation that impetus for necessary reforms was more likely to come from outside governments and political parties.[43]

Young's proposal argued that the welfare state focused on tactics for the relief of material stress, but there was much less appreciation of strategies to prevent it. An Institute of Community Studies would fill the gap in research and action on social categories and issues reflecting unchartered dimensions of family and kinship experience, largely ignored or subsumed within the hierarchical command structures and processes of the leviathan

state. Studies of working-class families and communities would close the 'communications gap' within the 'great society' and 'act as guides to social policy'. He believed that if 'those who draw up policy for the social services do not appreciate the needs of working-class people, those services will fail to achieve their purpose'. Community self-help was also a prominent theme. It was 'hoped that local action will follow the research' to promote 'action by the local community itself to relieve the distress which exists among its members'. Close contact would be maintained with local voluntary and statutory services for advice on the direction of the research and help in applying its recommendations. The Institute of Community Studies would represent a 'new kind of experiment in the association of high-standard research with a particular local community'.[44]

The Institute of Community Studies provided the base from which many of the subsequent social innovations and institutions developed by Young were launched, aspiring to challenge the recurrent focus of socialism and social democracy on the central state. These included citizen-centred and educational initiatives such as the National (and International) Extension College in 1963 as the 'nucleus' of the Open University in 1969, and later the Open College of the Arts and the University of the Third Age, promoting distance learning as a sense of 'education without institution' and 'learning while earning'. Then, more recently in 1997, the School for Social Entrepreneurs was established to help develop 'entrepreneurial' individuals with ideas 'to meet social need'. These might include a way to improve a local neighbourhood or a scheme to reduce unemployment in a particular region. His support of the notion of 'social entrepreneurship', culminating in the creation of this School at the outset of the New Labour era, presented intellectual and empirical evidence of a 'third way' between the centralising, bureaucratic and often inefficient 'big' undifferentiated state and the unfettered market tendency to deplete the 'moral economy' and 'moral capital of society'. With altruistic voluntary bodies as an 'indispensable ally', advocates of the 'social entrepreneurship' of the 'non-business sector' 'hoped to add a bit [back] to it' in once again reconfiguring the 'moral climate' and enhancing the 'common wealth'.[45]

All these initiatives reflected the same central idea that alternatives to the paternalistic state were required in independent local institutions able to voice the needs of individuals, families, and neighbourhoods on a smaller scale and provide them with the knowledge to enhance their lives in the way they wished to live. As a result, Michael Young was later lauded by representatives of New Labour converted to the notion and products of

'social entrepreneurship', perhaps believing the party had missed a trick in neglecting his earlier attempts to persuade it to move in wider progressive directions. He was then presented as 'a seminal figure of the centre-left' and as a non-dogmatic and non-doctrinaire example of the rare combination of 'not just a great thinker but a great doer'. He represented a model of a public 'intellectual … who grounded his arguments in lived experience', and whose influence ran 'like a silver thread' through the history of broader progressive thought and practice. He demonstrated a qualified Fabian enthusiasm for empirical research, but with a practical desire for new forms of social organisation and enterprise which largely bypassed Labour's instinctive reliance on the mechanisms and delivery of the central state. Young was perhaps less sanguine that even New Labour had moved much beyond rhetorical endorsement of independent social enterprise. Although he did return to the fold of the party, he continued to question the radical credentials of Labour's social ambitions. He acknowledged the concerted move towards a programme based on the importance of work, revived community life and value of education under Gordon Brown at the Treasury, but remained cautious of the tendency of every Labour government to be 'slow to look outside itself' and recognise the potential contribution of the 'third sector' of 'social entrepreneurs, self-motivated communities and small-scale operators'.[46]

A further theme of disjuncture with New Labour centred on its apparent misuse of his (initially satirical) concept of 'meritocracy'. In his 1958 satire, he had imagined a fictional future society characterised by the emergence of a new class fuelled through the engine of the post-war tripartite state education system and its intrinsic early competitive selection process. Through satire, he had attempted to warn of the consequences of a society developed on meritocratic principles. Rather than remove elitism and barriers to attainment, the resulting 'meritocracy' would simply produce a change in the pattern of inequalities, more pervasive, pernicious and divisive than previous class distinctions: an unequal society would remain and broader egalitarian principles would be left unsatisfied. Young intended the concept to warn against a new elitism based on a 'narrow band of values', but was concerned to see it embraced by Tony Blair and New Labour as a positive egalitarian philosophy and guide to public policy. While it might be 'good sense to appoint individual people to jobs on their merit', it is 'the opposite when those are judged to have merit of a particular kind harden into a new social class without room in it for others'. Moreover, for Young a meritocratic elite tends to feel they are much more entitled to the privileges they enjoy, that 'their advancement comes from their own

merits, and they deserve what they can get'. They can even come to believe that 'they have morality on their side', while the underclass in a meritocracy can be made to feel more deserving of its misfortune. This can breed feelings of hopelessness, as it is 'hard indeed in a society that makes so much of merit to be judged as having none. No underclass has ever been left as morally naked as that'. Unlike New Labour (and Conservative) advocates of the 'classless society', Young believed that meritocracy 'narrows potential rather than widens it; treats the less intelligent as inferior, rather than as individuals with their own [different] talents'.[47]

Young advocated a broader, more inclusive and participatory, egalitarian philosophy. Later restating and reaffirming his 1958 vision of the pluralistic 'classless society', he sought to promote an organisation of society in which we 'evaluate people, not only according to their intelligence and their education, their occupations and their power, but according to their kindliness and their courage, their imagination and sensitivity, their sympathy and their generosity'. In this type of association, 'there would be no overall inequalities of the sort we have got used to', and much less emphasis on class. Who would say that 'the scientist was superior to the porter with admirable qualities as a father, the civil servant to the lorry-driver with unusual skills', the academic to the carer or nurse and so forth. A 'pluralistic society would also be a tolerant', diverse and non-conformist society, in which

> individual differences were actively encouraged … in which full meaning was at last given to the dignity of man. Every human being would then have equal opportunity, not to rise up in the world in the light of any mathematical measure, but to develop his or her own special capacities for leading a full life which is also a noble life led for the benefit of others as well as the self.

Of these criteria, the record suggests that Young's own contribution should be judged a 'noble one', designed and delivered 'for the benefit of others as well as the self'.[48]

Progressive Alternatives: The Social Democratic Party and Back to (New) Labour

> The core of the SDP is ex-Labour. But it does not follow that we are ex-socialists. Most of us still consider ourselves socialists, democratic socialists, and as such we are in a different tradition from the great liberal tradition in British society over the last centuries … one of our most significant

characteristics is that we are devoted to equality. This was Tawney's main message … Though we lean more heavily towards equality we are committed to the maintenance and extension of human liberty, or rather liberties. But while we know that equality without liberty would be slavery, liberty without equality would be a society not so different from … today. Though liberty can never be sacrificed, it is equality which provides … the thrust behind reform. The great problem … is how to move towards more equality without enhancing the power of the State. We need to make equality march with decentralisation.[49]

Temporarily at least, Young saw some of the potential for these developments through the finally formal alternative social democratic vehicle of the SDP. A sense of consistency, or perhaps inevitability, could be identified in his political realignment. Not for him the claims of inconsistency and betrayal on joining the SDP in 1981, having previously floated the idea of a new consumer-oriented progressive party as an alternative to Labour's state-centric 'politics of production', planning and public ownership. His surprise in the emergence of the SDP was only that it had 'taken rather longer than I expected'. Equally, his endorsement of support for 'democratic socialism but … socialism without the state, or at least as much of the state as we have had in the past', and calls for a programme of a 'richer and more diverse set of interests' for a political party and political ideology, reflected his earlier concerns with Labour's narrow sectional interests and appeal and parochial strategic operation. In close alliance with unreformed trade unionism, the 'Labour Party [had] gradually ceased to be the party of reform'. Nothing had changed; there appeared to be a continued 'anti-consumer' bias in British government and, while he believed Labour 'would patch up its differences', he wondered 'on what basis'. The emergence of the SDP facilitated his long interest in a 'new party' theoretically less wedded to the central state.[50]

Although he was cautious not to attempt unnecessarily to 'amputate the SDP from its roots in the long tradition of democratic socialist or social democratic thought', he hoped the new party would adopt historic and marginalised traditions of the ideology based on a smaller-scale politics of community to counter dominant identification with the large-scale centralising trends of state power as the instrument of social ownership and redistribution. While he was not advocating a right-wing libertarian position, he supported the 'fundamental liberal principle that, in any contest between the rights of the individual and the interests of some large

collective body, individual rights are paramount', with the 'most important corollary: a liberal and democratic society is based on the individual's right to choose for oneself'. With the important ideological proviso (and distinction) that unrestricted freedom of individual choice is socially fair only if consumers have more equal resources and that 'choice for all demands redistribution of income and wealth', he was attempting to absorb for social democracy a new socially just emphasis on the talents of the individual and their close networks that reflected changes in the pattern of economic and social relationships and organisation. As for others, it was Labour's inability to convince Young that it could achieve the social democratic fusion of 'equality along with greater liberty' that led him to the SDP as the 'only hope for achieving the sort of democratic socialism' merging both libertarian and egalitarian traditions to which he aspired. Changes in the structure of the economy and society had 'robbed … old-style collectivism—*one out, all out*—of its wide appeal'. The foundations of the new party 'must lie in a richer and more diverse set of interests which does not rule out a coherent set of beliefs', and the 'new political class' he saw the SDP representing should 'look beyond their own interests to those of society as a whole'.[51]

R.H. Tawney and a longer strand of decentralist, community-based and cooperative socialism was to provide the guiding light. At Young's suggestion, the party's 'in-house' think tank, the SDP's equivalent of the Fabian Society, was named the Tawney Society, which allegedly sent previously Tawney-phobic Labour members into 'a state of near-apoplexy'.[52] The 'trade union party' had long 'ceased to be the party of reform' of the sort envisaged by Tawney and Young himself, with traditions and principles of cooperative mutual aid and a blend of enlightened self-interest and altruism to the fore, instead consolidating its 'steady attachment … to Statism'. He regarded the SDP to be 'in a great tradition … of socialism without the state, or at any rate without the heavy reliance upon the state which has marked the latter day-phases of the Labour Movement'. Although not without distinct differences of accent, the formation of the SDP also offered a natural adjunct to the 'Liberals in their modern form'. Consequently, there was a need in the SDP for

an emphasis on cooperatives, formal and informal, on the importance of community politics as a means of reintegrating alienated and forgotten people into society, and also on creating and supporting new voluntary bodies which fit as well with the needs of the last half of the 20th century as those others did to the 19th century.

He felt that Labour's latent antipathy, as it developed in the twentieth century, to notions and ideas of 'philanthropy and altruism and its determined belief in economic self-interest as the driving dynamic of society has done it grievous harm'. The subsequent lack of commitment to principles of altruism, community organisation and mutual aid suggested that the SDP, to develop community politics and stimulate old and new voluntary organisations, should pursue practical policies that delivered a 'whole host of new services which don't necessarily have to be provided by the state'.[53]

Ultimately, Young was to be frustrated by the internal schisms of the SDP. He considered the 'Owenites' to be 'too right-wing', but so too were the 'colleagues who have gone the other way'. Equivocally, he still held out most hope for 'more scope for innovative ideas in the Owenite camp' in the unlikely prospect of a 'fully-fledged and straightforward political party'.[54] He also worried about the potential and sustainable support base of the SDP in the same way the critical electoral issue had demanded an explicit defence in his 1960 proposal for a 'new progressive party'. Only half in jest, he suggested that at points the new party was receiving 'about the same support in the public opinion polls as my imaginary Consumers Party'.[55] After 'many an alliance and parting of the ways', Young decided to rejoin the Labour Party in 1989 as it finally emerged out of long years of in-fighting and programmatic renewal to rival the Conservatives in the opinion polls as a potential party of government. It could now claim to reflect the required 'modernisation of socialism which lagged so badly since … Crosland', to represent a variant of the 'old theme' of greater equality that has to remain Labour's 'big idea' and to include 'proposals for a consumer oriented democracy' and a more pluralistic constitutional and political framework.[56] Young turned full circle by leaving the SDP on 14 June 1989 and taking the Labour whip in the House of Lords.[57]

Conclusions

The relevance of Michael Young's ideas and deeds to contemporary notions of meaningful and active civil society, as an alternative to historic attachment to the structure and mechanisms of the central state, seem finally to have taken root across the political spectrum in Conservative conceptions of the 'Big Society' and debates between 'Blue Labour' and 'One-Nation Labour'. However, Young belongs to a much longer liberal pluralistic tradition of British socialism. The radical non-state perspective of the socialist pluralists criticised statist models of social reform, endorsed

participatory democracy and firmly defended associational forms of social organisation and action. It found its most systematic representation in the guild socialism of G.D.H. Cole, Harold Laski and R.H. Tawney, which reflected an earlier liberal emphasis on individual human freedom, as opposed to absorption into a large collective, as a route to voluntary associational and communal forms of organisation.[58]

With his own model located firmly in the forms and networks of the extended family unit, Young favoured bottom-up communitarian and cooperative responses to 'social reform and social revolution' as opposed to exclusively hierarchical top-down statist solutions. The 'utopian tradition' of Robert Owen and particularly William Morris, through to Cole and Tawney, bequeathed its legacy of the 'institutional model … the friendly society or small-scale co-operative, itself embodying many of the principles of the extended family'. Through practical initiatives such as the Mutual Aid Centre, Young believed and demonstrated that the model could be extended to, for instance, neighbourhood 'social service co-operatives', replacing some of the functions of and reducing dependency on the state, while enhancing community strength and solidarity.[59] Similar to others of this ideological 'liberal socialist' lineage, particularly Cole, Young also remained deeply mistrustful of the strictures of the central state. His consistent belief in the need to limit and supplement its functions in the social arena in pursuit of a broader conception of equality based on values of 'human brotherhood' and community, greater diffusion of power, responsibility and active participation, echoed Cole. And his prolific innovation and creation of social organisations reflected a political conviction that citizens require a strong buffer against the state in the form of dynamic civil society. Young's unique contribution was that he 'added to the sum of civil society by launching new entrants to it. By empowering individuals through new forms of organization, he hoped to build new forms of egalitarian community.'[60]

From Attlee to Blair and beyond, Labour's post-war social democracy appears to have neglected these lessons to its cost, and the intellectual debate in the party continues in attempts to locate a response to the Conservative variant of the 'little platoons' of the 'Big Society' in the decentralist or federalist roots of its own wider socialist tradition. Those at the heart of Labour's current attempts at political renewal in times of financial constraint have begun to reflect that the critical revisionist debates of the 1950s over the future of socialism and the Labour Party presented a choice between Crosland's espousal of the 'old centralism with

a bit of local agency delivery and consultation', and Young's clarion call for 'radical devolution of economic and political power to people in their neighbourhoods and workplaces'. Crosland won and 'Labour remain[ed] wedded to the Croslandite political economy'.[61] Despite their own frequent 'year zero' claims, New Labour 'flirted with the ethos of Young but ultimately chose betrothal to Crosland' in terms of attachment to and dependence on the central state, and the big choice for Labour between being a 'radical decentralist' or a 'central uniformist' party remains pivotal to its current deliberations. It is perhaps unsurprising to witness Young's core liberal themes of decentralised and devolved, small-scale and local organisation informing contemporary debates and perspectives of a 'One Nation' Labour Party in a 'Big Society'. Rather than return simply to the high statism of so-called 'Old' Labour, there have been significant calls for the post-New Labour Party to revisit the decentralising traditions of its past in the 'non-statist strand' of its ideological milieu and the variants of the 'federalist' view of socialism proffered by the likes of Cole and Young. In this tradition socialism is not the same as the state, for it emphasises the 'redistribution of power to individuals and local communities at [the] heart' of a wider 'progressive agenda'.[62]

Notes

1. See P. Hennessy, 'Michael Young and the Labour Party', *Contemporary British History*, 19 3, 2005, p. 282.
2. See J. Ashley, 'The fine art of being a social entrepreneur', *New Statesman*, 18 December 2000.
3. Cambridge, Churchill College, Michael Young Papers YUNG 8/2, C. Tyler, 'Breakfast with a one-man welfare state', *Financial Times*, 25 June 1994.
4. Hennessy, 'Michael Young', pp. 281, 282–3; M. Young, *Small Man: Big World. A Discussion of Socialist Democracy*, Towards Tomorrow, No. 4, London, Labour Party, 1948.
5. Young, *Small Man*; Young Papers YUNG 2/1/1, 'For Richer, for Poorer: Essays on Family, Community and Socialism', Report Presented to the Labour Party Policy Committee, November 1952; P. Willmott, 'The ballad of Bethnal Green', *The Guardian*, 16 January, 2002.
6. This continues to present a dilemma in the post-New Labour era for those who seek to move social democracy and Labour decisively

beyond the 'old centralised command state' to a 'more pluralist and decentralised polity': see P. Diamond, 'Beyond the Westminster model', *Renewal. A Journal of Social Democracy*, 19, 1 (2011).

7. London, British Library of Political and Economic Science (BLPES), Fabian Society Papers G50/3, Fabian Society Second Conference on 'Problems Ahead', Session II, M. Young, 'The British socialist way of life. Notes by Michael Young', Oxford, 31 March–2 April 1950.

8. See J. Cruddas, 'Power and One Nation', Speech to the New Local Government Network Annual Conference, 12 February 2014; A. Painter, 'A late triumph for Michael Young?' *ProgressOnline*, 12 February 2014, available at: http://www.progressonline.org.uk/2014/02/12/a-late-triumph-for-michael-young, accessed 20/02/2014.

9. M. Young, 'Why the SDP are the true inheritors of Tawney's libertarian legacy', *The Guardian*, 10 May, 1982; Young Papers YUNG 6/39, M. Young to T.D.W. Reid, 28 October 1974; YUNG 2/2/2, M. Young, *The Chipped White Cups of Dover. A Discussion of the Possibility of a New Progressive Party* (London, 1960), pp. 11–12.

10. See S. Meredith and P. Catney, 'New Labour and associative democracy: old debates in new times?' *British Politics*, 2, 3, 2007, pp. 347–8, 352–5; M. Stears, 'Guild Socialism and ideological diversity on the British left, 1914–1926', *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 3, 3 (1998), pp. 289–90; 'Guild Socialism', in M. Bevir (ed.), *Modern Pluralism. Anglo-American Debates since 1880* (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 40–4.

11. D. Marquand, *The Progressive Dilemma. From Lloyd George to Kinnock* (London, 1991), pp. 216, 217, 220; also see S. Lee and M. Beech (eds), *The Cameron–Clegg Government. Coalition Politics in an Age of Austerity* (Basingstoke, 2011), pp. 5–6.

12. Young Papers YUNG 8/1, M. Young and G. Lemos, 'Roots of revival', *The Guardian*, 19 March 1997.

13. M. Young to T.D.W. Reid; Young Papers YUNG 6/39, M. Young to H. Pelling, 3 August 1981; M. Dean, 'Lord Young of Dartington', *The Guardian*, 16 January 2002; J. Gray, 'A reputation of merit', *New Statesman*, 15 October 2001.

14. Young, *Small Man*, p. 4.

15. M. Hilton, 'The fable of the sheep, or private virtues, public vices: the consumer revolution of the twentieth century', *Past and*

Present, 176, 1 (2002), p. 241; Young, *Small Man*; M. Young, *Labour's Plan for Plenty* (London, 1947).

16. Young Papers YUNG 2/1/3, M. Young, 'Prospects Ahead', n.d.; YUNG 6/30, M. Young, 'Fully adjusted value: a new approach to inflation as a phenomenon with which we've got to live', 26 December 1970; also see L. Minkin, *The Contentious Alliance. Trade Unions and the Labour Party* (Edinburgh, 1991), pp. 208–9.

17. See M. Abrams and R. Rose, *Must Labour Lose?* (London, 1960); K. Gavron, 'Michael Young: a man of the century', *openDemocracy*, 6 February 2002, available at: http://www.opendemocracy.net/node/288 [accessed 24/01/2011]; Hilton, 'The fable of the sheep', pp. 241–2; B. Jackson, *Equality and the British Left. A Study in Progressive Political Thought, 1900–64* (Manchester, 2007), pp. 194–5; T. Smith and A. Young, 'Politics and Michael Young', in G. Dench, T. Flower and K. Gavron (eds), *Michael Young at Eighty. The Prolific Public life of Michael Young* (Manchester, 1995), pp. 137–8; Young, *Chipped White Cups*, pp. 9, 11, 19.

18. LHASC, Labour Party Papers, General Election Material, Draft Manifesto, 'The People's Party Appeals to the People', 1945; P. Thane, 'The "Big Society" and the "Big State": creative tension or crowding out?' *Twentieth Century British History*, 23, 3 (2012), p. 423.

19. R. Crossman, 'Towards a philosophy of socialism', in Crossman (ed.), *New Fabian Essays* (London, 1952), pp. 25–9; also see M. Glasman et al. (eds), *The Labour Tradition and the Politics of Paradox* (London, 2011), particularly the essay by Glasman himself, 'Labour as a radical tradition', pp. 14–34; J. Derbyshire, 'The Labour tradition and the politics of paradox: a new road map for the British left', *New Statesman*, 25 July 2011; R. Philpot (ed.), *The Purple Book. A Progressive Future for Labour* (London, 2011).

20. See Thane, 'Big Society', pp. 423–4; P. Thane, 'Michael Young and Welfare', *Contemporary British History*, 19, 3 (2005), pp. 293–9; M. Hilton et al., '"The Big Society": civic participation and the state in modern Britain', *History & Policy* (June 2010); also see Young, *Small Man*; M. Young and M. Rigge, *Mutual Aid in a Selfish Society. A Plea for Strengthening the Co-operative Movement* (London, 1979). He was later to develop some of these ideas in projects to 'explore the extent to which the powers and

duties of the state and para-state bodies … can properly be … contracted out to non-statutory bodies at the local level … giving special attention to the social services'. In these, he claimed to be 'influenced by the zeitgeist [of] the new localism', which reflected the 'value placed on local initiatives and responsibility, the growth of citizens' movements which draw adherents from all ordinary political parties and from none': Young Papers YUNG 1/6/8, M. Young, Dartington Institute of Community Studies, 'Project on the local state', October 1980.

21. M. Francis, *Ideas and Policies under Labour, 1945–51. Building a New Britain* (Manchester, 1997), pp. 19–20; 'Economics and ethics: the nature of Labour's socialism, 1945–1951', *Twentieth Century British History*, 6, 2 (1995), pp. 222, 234.

22. Young, *Small Man*; p. 14; Labour Party, Labour Party Annual Conference Report (LPACR), London, Labour Party, 1950, p. 29; Francis, 'Economics and ethics', p. 240.

23. Exeter, Devon Record Office, Dartington Archives, Papers of Leonard Knight Elmhirst LKE/G/35/D, Michael Young 1956–1961, M. Young, 'Social science and the Labour Party programme', 1949; Francis, 'Economics and ethics', pp. 235–237, 242; G. Dench, 'Family, community and politics: the fertile legacy of Michael Young', *Critical Social Policy*, 28, 3 (2008), p. 335; Jackson, *Equality*, p. 189; J. Nuttall, *Psychological Socialism: The Labour Party and Qualities of Mind and Character, 1931 to the Present* (Manchester, 2006), pp. 90, 159.

24. Young, 'British socialist way of life'.

25. Fabian Society Conference, 'Problems Ahead', Session II, G.D.H. Cole, 'Summary of points'.

26. Francis, 'Economic and ethics', pp. 235, 237–8, 240.

27. M. Young, *What is a Socialised Industry?* (London, 1948), pp. 13–19; *Small Man*, pp. 12–16; also see Dean, 'Lord Young '; D. Kynaston, *Austerity Britain 1945–51* (London, 2008), pp. 225–6, 539–40; *Family Britain 1951–1957* (London, 2009), p. 252.

28. Young, 'Social Science'; Young Papers YUNG 8/2, 'Controversial head for social science research', *The Guardian*, 6 August 1965.

29. M. Young, *The Rise of the Meritocracy 1870–2033. An Essay on Education and Equality* (London, 1961 [1958]), pp. 15–16; 'Anthony Crosland and socialism', in D. Leonard (ed.), *Crosland*

and New Labour (London, 1999), pp. 51–2; Hennessy, 'Michael Young', p. 283.

30. Fabian Society Conference, 'Problems Ahead', Session II, M. Young, pp. 11–12; G.D.H. Cole, 'Summary of Points'.

31. Fabian Society Conference, 'Problems Ahead', Session II, A. Flanders, p. 11; N. Ellison, *Egalitarian Thought and Labour Politics* (London, 1994), pp. 114–25; Jackson, *Equality*, pp. 183–96, 211; J. Kelly, *Ethical Socialism and the Trade Unions. Allan Flanders and British Industrial Relations Reform* (London 2010), p. 62; also see P. Hennessey, 'The 1945 General Election and the post-war period remembered: Peter Hennessy interviews Michael Young' *Contemporary Record*, 9, 1 (1995), pp. 88, 97; Young, *Small Man*, pp. 3–4, 13–14.

32. Young, 'British socialist way of life'; Manchester, Labour History Archive and Study Centre (LHASC), Labour Party Research Department, RD353, M. Young, 'A plea for restatement of socialism: notes on next election manifesto', April 1950, pp. 1–2; Francis, *Ideas and Policies*, p. 53; Francis, 'Economics and ethics', p. 238.

33. BLPES, Crosland Papers 13/23, Fabian Society Fourth Conference on 'Problems Ahead', A. Crosland, 'The nature of capitalist crisis', Oxford, 14–15 October 1950; Young, *Rise of the Meritocracy*, pp. 40–2; Young, 'For richer, for poorer'; also see A. Briggs, 'The Labour Party as crucible', in G. Dench (ed.), *The Rise and Rise of Meritocracy* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 17–26; Ellison, *Egalitarian Thought*, pp. ix–xiii, 91, 126, 248.

34. Young, 'Anthony Crosland'; Crosland Papers 13/8, M. Young to T. Crosland, accompanying notes on *The Future of Socialism*, headed 'Chapter 10. the nature of class', 30 January 1956; Young Papers YUNG 6/39, M. Young to N. Deakin, 13 February 1981; also see Jackson, *Equality*, pp. 186–7, 191–2.

35. M. Young to H. Pelling; YUNG 2/1/2, M. Young, 'Mr Bevan and the middle classes', n.d.; M. Young, 'The leadership, the rank and file, and Mr Bevan', *Political Quarterly*, 24, 1 (1953), pp. 99–107; also see A. Briggs, *Michael Young. Social Entrepreneur* (London, 2001), pp. 83, 87, 89, 101, 115, 155, 90; Hennessy, 'Michael Young', pp. 281, 282–3.

36. Young, *Chipped White Cups*, pp. 1–3, 9–14, 18ff.; also see Hennessy, 'Michael Young', pp. 281, 283. Young argued that,

while workplace inequalities persist, productive class cleavages will remain, but 'outside work the great divide is being bridged … The emphasis is slowly changing and class based on production is slowly giving way to status based on consumption as the centre of social gravity.' The reforming party of the centre-left would need to adapt its policies to 'appeal to this new consumer interest'. Such policies would include standing for 'immediate entry into the European Common Market', with 'all the advantages this would in the long run bring the consumer … through the greater competition it would promote'. The present political parties have been reticent to do so, partly for fear of offending hitherto dominant producer interests. It would also include recognition that public service provision should be more responsive to the wishes and choices of the consumer (in a similar way to private enterprise), and instigate 'an attack on the monopolies and restrictive practices by which Britain is more ridden than any other country' or, as Hennessy puts it, 'make the case for a kind of full enjoyment policy', allowing a more varied and divergent pattern of social life organised around the consumer rather than producers and manufacturers.

37. Young Papers YUNG 10/1, Research Institute for Consumer Affairs, 'The early days of Consumers' Association: interviews with CA's founders and those who carried on their work', Interview with M. Young, 22 October 1984, p. 22; YUNG 6/39, M. Young to E. Rudlinger [Consumers' Association], 6 September 1982, p. 21; M. Young to H. Pelling; Young, *Chipped White Cups*, p. 19; M. Hilton, 'Michael Young and the consumer movement', *Contemporary British History*, 19, 3 (2005), p. 313; C. Matheson, 'Profile: Which? The golden years', *BBC News*, 7 October 2007, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/7029593.stm, accessed 07/07/2014; P. Richards, 'Michael Young: socialism as social entrepreneurship', *LabourList*, 11 November 2010, available at http://www.labourlist.org/michael-young-socialism-as-social-entrepreneurship, accessed 19/01/2011.

38. Young, *Chipped White Cups*, pp. 19–20; M. Young, *The Chipped White Cups of Steel* (London, 1987); Young Papers YUNG 2/2/1, M. Young, 'The future of consumer affluence', paper delivered to the International Organisation of Consumers' Unions (IOCU) Conference, Baden, Germany, 30 June 1970; L. Black,

'Consumerism in twentieth-century Britain: the search for a historical movement', Economic History Association, available at: http://eh.net/book-reviews/consumerism-twentieth-century-britain-search-historical-movement, accessed 24/01/11; '*Which?* craft in post-war Britain: The Consumers' Association and the politics of affluence', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 36, 1 (2004), p. 78; Briggs, *Michael Young*, p. 303; Hilton, 'Michael Young'; Smith and Young, 'Politics and Michael Young', p. 138; Ashley, 'The fine art'.

39. Fabian Society Papers E132/2, Note on merits of publication of Michael Young's pamphlet, *Chipped White Cups*, n.d.; Note headed Meeting with Michael Young, 1 September 1964; S. Williams to J. Diamond, 23 September 1960; M. Cole to *The Economist*, 16 October 1960 Young, 'Anthony Crosland', p. 50.

40. Young Papers YUNG 6/30, M. Young, 'Note on a possible Reform League', n.d.; YUNG 2/1/4, M. Young, 'The new radicalism', 25 April 1969, pp. 7, 9, 10, 31, 40; The Open Group, 'Social reform in the centrifugal society', 10 September 1969, pp. 6–15.

41. Ashley, 'The fine art'.

42. Hennessy, 'Michael Young', p. 282.

43. P. Willmott, 'Resolving the dilemma of bigness', in Dench (ed.), *Michael Young*, p. 1; G. Dench, T. Flower and K. Gavron, 'Introduction', in Dench (ed.), *Michael Young*, p. iii; M. Young, *Social Scientist as Innovator* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983); Young Papers YUNG 8/2, A. Lewis, 'Learning to think small', *New York Times*, 31 May 1991.

44. Young Papers YUNG 6/30, M. Young, 'Proposal for establishing a London Institute of Community Studies', July 1953.

45. Ashley, 'The fine art'; M. Dean, 'Social reformer in FDR's image', *The Guardian*, 24 January 2001; Richards, 'Michael Young'; Research Institute for Consumer Affairs, 'Early days of Consumers' Association', p. 22; Tyler, 'Breakfast with a one-man welfare state'; M. Young to E. Rudlinger; Young Papers YUNG 8/2, 'Institute of Community Studies', *Sunday Times*, 2 August 1964; YUNG 2/1/3, M. Young, 'Announcing the National Extension College', *Where?* 14, 1963; YUNG 10/4, M. Young, 'The prospects for open learning', Lecture to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Open University, Churchill College, Cambridge, 15 April 1994; YUNG 6/39, M. Young, 'Education for the new work', n.d.;

YUNG 8/1, M. Young, 'Do-gooder inc.', *The Guardian*, 16 June 1999; YUNG 6/30, M. Young, 'School for social entrepreneurs', n.d.

46. Young Papers YUNG 8/1, M. Young, 'Do-gooders with savvy', *New Statesman*, 21 February 1997; M. Young, 'Ghosts in a manifesto', *The Guardian*, 12 September 2000; also see Ashley, 'The fine art'; P. Cox, 'The other Mr Motivator', *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 17 November 1995; Gavron, 'Michael Young'; M. White, 'Innovative thinker', *The Guardian*, 16 January 2002; P. Wilby, 'Inspired by the father of Thatcherism', *Times Educational Supplement*, 21 October 2005; Willmott, 'Ballad of Bethnal Green'.

47. Young, *Rise of the Meritocracy*; M. Young, 'Down with meritocracy', *The Guardian*, 29 June 2001; Young Papers YUNG 8/2, M. Dean, 'The social disorder of merit', *The Guardian*, 31 December 1990; YUNG 8/1, P. Barker, 'Meritocracy rules. OK?', *Independent on Sunday*, 6 August 1995; R. Hattersley, 'It's no longer my party', *The Observer*, 24 June 2001.

48. Young, *Rise of the Meritocracy*, p. 169; M. Young, 'Middle England again', Part three of Lord Young's speech, 'Equality and public service', *The Guardian*, 11 September 2000; Richards, 'Michael Young'. In this society, greater power and assets would be devolved to citizens 'to boost a thriving civil society … and not simply add new arms to the state'.

49. University of Liverpool, David Owen Papers D709 3/23/6/15, M. Young, *To Merge or Not to Merge* (London, 1983), pp. 5, 7, 13–14; also see D. Marquand, 'Inquest on a movement: Labour's defeat and its consequences', *Encounter*, July 1979, pp. 17–18.

50. Young Papers YUNG 5/36, J. Jenkins to M. Young, 4 February 1981; M. Young to J. Jenkins, 10 June 1981; YUNG 6/39, M. Young to Secretary, Tower Hamlets Labour Party, 27 March 1981; YUNG 3/1/2, M. Young, 'The SDP's roots in history', address to the inaugural meeting of the Manchester Tawney Society, 21 May 1982; Young, *To Merge or Not to Merge*, pp. 5–6; *Chipped White Cups*, pp. 9, 11, 18–19.

51. Young, 'Why the SDP'; *To Merge or Not to Merge*, pp. 10, 13–14; M. Young, *The SDP's Roots in History* (London, 1982), pp. 1–2; M. Young and P. Hall (eds), *The Middle of the Night. Suggestions towards the Election Manifesto* (London, 1982), pp. 2–9; E. Luard,

Socialism without the State (London, 1979); S. Mennell, *On Social Democracy* (London, 1983), pp. 3–4, 9–10; S. Williams, Interview, House of Lords, 25 June 2002.

52. The Tawney Society was housed within Young's Institute of Community Studies base at 18 Victoria Park Square in Bethnal Green, and he became its first chairman.

53. Young, 'The SDP's Roots in History'; *To Merge or Not to Merge*, pp. 10–13; Young Papers YUNG 3/1/2, M. Young, 'Small Politics is Not Always Beautiful', talk given at a seminar at Haselby Castle, 22 August 1980; 'Democratic Socialism: What's left?' Fabian Centennial Weekend, Oxford, 8 January 1984.

54. Young Papers YUNG 5/36, M. Young to R. Jenkins, 15 March 1988.

55. Young, *Chipped White Cups*, p. 20; M. Young to N. Deakin.

56. Young Papers 8/1, M. Young, 'What do they stand for now?' *The Guardian*, 16 April 1990; 'Socialist chance of a lifetime', *The Guardian*, 10 September 1991.

57. Young Papers YUNG 6/38, Note headed 'The Lord Young of Dartington', n.d.; J. Gould to M. Young, 7 August 1989.

58. See B. Jackson, 'Corporatism and its discontents: pluralism, anti-pluralism and Anglo-American industrial relations, c. 1930–80', in Bevir (ed.), *Modern Pluralism*, p. 105; Stears, 'Guild Socialism', pp. 296–300; P. Richards, 'Back to the future: the decentralist tradition and Labour's way forward', in Philpot (ed.), *Purple Book*, p. 49; G.D.H. Cole, *Labour and the Commonwealth. A Book for the Younger Generation Common-Wealth* (London, 1918), p. 37.

59. Young, 'Small Politics'; Young Papers YUNG 3/1/1, M. Young, 'Is Equality a Dream?' draft typescript of lecture, n.d. (November 1972).

60. Richards, 'Michael Young'.

61. Cruddas, 'Power and One Nation'; J. Cruddas and J. Rutherford, *One Nation. Labour's Political Renewal* (London, 2014), pp. 8–9, 12–13.

62. Painter, 'A late triumph'; Richards, 'Back to the future', pp. 46, 48–9, 59.

The Left After Social Democracy: Towards State–Society Partnerships

Stuart White

In 1976 the then Labour government committed itself to a policy of fiscal austerity as the price of getting the International Monetary Fund's assistance with the UK economy's balance of payments, a moment often seen as the final end of the road for optimistic post-war reconstruction around a generous welfare state. It was also later in this year that a then little-known rock group, the Sex Pistols, recorded 'Anarchy in the UK'. Towards the song's end, John Lydon questioned the nature of 'the UK':

> Is this the MPLA?
> Or is this the UDA?
> Or is this the IRA?
> I thought it was the UK …
> It's just … another … country …
> Another council tenancy …[1]

The words 'council tenancy' were spat out. They were contemptuous. It is hard not to interpret these words in the light of subsequent political developments. Having been elected leader of the Conservative party in 1975, Margaret Thatcher won the 1979 general election. Drawing from

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thinkers of the New Right, her governments from 1979 to 1990 broke in many ways with the post-war social democratic settlement. And, of course, one of the main lines of advance for the Thatcher governments' so-called 'popular capitalism' was (heavily subsidised) council house sales. Here, apparently, was the way to escape the supposed indignity of 'another council tenancy'.

Lydon's lyric, Lydon's snarl, should make us pause and reflect.[2] It suggests an underlying disaffection with the post-war welfare state not confined to the New Right. Indeed, the welfare state was very much a focus of critique from the left in the formative and initially ascendant years of Thatcherism. My aim in this chapter is to revisit this 'state-critical' left. More exactly, I seek to trace in outline how specific policy ideas emerged and developed within and across the left in an attempt to find an alternative both to post-war social democracy and emerging Thatcherism. First and foremost is the idea of democratic state–society partnerships as a basis for reorganising the welfare state. As one of the thinkers discussed in this chapter, Hilary Wainwright, put it in an interview in 2010,

> The idea of self-organisation and challenging the paternalist character of the state has a long history in our contemporary times. It goes back to the movements of the 60s and 70s, which combined a challenge to authority with a wider social critique including a commitment to the redistribution of power and wealth. Those left libertarian traditions critiqued both the state and the corporate-dominated market. Regarding the state, they made a key distinction between public resources, which they defended and wished to see expand, and how these resources were administered, which they tried to transform and to democratise. These movements, the first products of mass education, said: hang on a minute, we want a say in how public money, our money, is spent, and how public institutions, like universities and the welfare state, are run.[3]

I structure the discussion as follows. First, I briefly review the rise of the welfare state in the post-war period and the impact of the Conservative governments after 1979 on some key variables. I then look at how three thinkers and writers of the left grappled with the problem of statism at the time of Thatcherism's emergence and initial ascendancy. These thinkers are, respectively, Colin Ward, Sheila Rowbotham and Stuart Hall. Finally, I look briefly at how the later work of Paul Hirst and Hilary Wainwright continued the critical and reconstructive analysis of these thinkers in a period when Thatcherism had decisively reshaped the assumptions behind

policymaking.[4] I conclude by summarising the key ideas emerging from our discussion and considering their continuing relevance.

The Rise and Tempering of the Welfare State

The Second World War saw a substantial rise in the share of GDP devoted to public spending.[5] Table 11.1 gives some indication of how public spending then developed in the post-war period, into the crisis of the 1970s, and under the Conservative governments of Margaret Thatcher and John Major. As a percentage of national income, public spending was in the high 30s up to the mid-1960s. It then rose into the high 40s by the mid-1970s. Labour's fiscal austerity after 1976, followed by that of the Thatcher governments, brought the share back down to the high 30s by the end of the 1980s.

What about spending on the welfare state in particular? So far as cash benefits (including state pensions) are concerned, Table 11.1 shows that spending on these increased as a share of national income up to the mid-1970s and, indeed, continued to grow after this point, including under

Table 11.1 Government and welfare spending as share of national income, 1948/9–1979/80[a]

	Government (total)	Social security	Education	Health-care
1948/49	36.9	4.1	–	–
1951/52	39.1	4.4	–	–
1955/56	35.7	5.0	3.0	–
1961/62	38.8	5.8	4.0	3.8
1964/65	38.2	5.9	4.4	3.9
1969/70	42.6	7.3	4.8	4.1
1974/75	48.6	7.8	5.8	4.8
1979/80	44.6	9.0	5.2	4.9
1988/89	38.7	9.7	4.7	5.4
1996/97	39.0	11.5	4.7	6.3

[a]The figures for total public spending and social security spending are calculated from a data series provided by the Institute for Fiscal Studies and available at http://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/1791. The figure for government spending is total managed government expenditure as a proportion of GDP. The second figure is social security spending as a proportion of GDP. The figures for education spending are calculated from the same IFS data series. The figures for health-care spending are taken from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development: http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/data/oecd-health-statistics/system-of-health-accounts-health-expenditure-by-function_data-00349-en (the OECD series is apparently for calendar years rather than financial years and, for example, I have entered the figure for 1961 in place of that for 1961/62)

the Thatcher governments (albeit at a slower rate than in the previous decade). Education spending rose up to the mid-1970s and was then brought down as a share of national income. Healthcare spending rose as a percentage share of national income in the post-war period and continued to grow in the 1980s and after.[6]

A corollary of the overall growth in public spending in the post-war period was a growth in the tax share of national income and, related to this, in the number of families paying income tax. The tax share of national income fell from the mid-1980s, however. Comparatively speaking, the UK was a relatively high tax country up to the 1970s, but a relatively low tax one by the 1990s.[7]

Table 11.2 shows how public-rented housing—Lydon's 'another council tenancy'—increased markedly in importance over the post-war period up to 1979 from 12% to almost a third of all households. One should also note, however, how owner occupation increased over the period from about a quarter to over a half of all housing. Both increased at the expense of the private-rented sector. By 1994 the impact of Thatcherism is evident. Public-rented housing fell to 20% of households, owner occupation increased to just over two thirds of the total.

These tables obviously only pick out a few details of developments, but they indicate the direction of change in the UK in the years of post-war social democracy, and subsequently under the Thatcher and Major Conservative governments, so far as the size and significance of the welfare state are concerned. In the 1970s, as the post-war economic boom came

Table 11.2 Housing tenure in the UK 1945–79 (percentage of households)[a]

	Public-rented	*Owner-occupied*	*Private-rented*
1914	0	10	90
1945	12	26	62
1951	18	29	53
1961	27	43	31
1969	30	49	21
1971	31	53	17
1979	32	55	14
1994	20	67	14

[a]This is taken from Table 11.1 in A. Murie, 'The social rented sector, housing and the welfare state in the UK', *Housing Studies*, 12, 4 (1997), pp. 437–61, specifically p. 444

to an end and distributional conflict between labour and capital intensified, the cost of the welfare state became a major issue. As indicated above, more families than ever were paying income tax by this time and this most probably contributed to the context in which Thatcherism arose.

Also important, however, were concerns about the structure and terms of welfare state provision. In the following discussion, I will focus on how a selection of left thinkers and activists addressed this structural concern. This does not mean that the thinkers under consideration were (or are) oblivious to the issue of cost and its tax implications. They did see the structure question as an important issue in its own right, however, and it might be argued that answering it persuasively is a precondition for making the case for a more generous welfare state and the higher taxation needed to fund it.

Colin Ward: Anarchy Within Social Democracy?

Let us begin with Colin Ward. An anarchist associated with the *Freedom* newspaper, Ward edited the monthly journal *Anarchy* from 1961 to 1970 and wrote a number of books in the 1970s and after, exploring social problems from an anarchist perspective.[8] As I have discussed elsewhere, Ward's anarchism was nested within a pluralist conception of social organisation.[9] Societies solve problems and meet needs using a range of mechanisms which include markets, the state and anarchist techniques of mutual aid and collective self-help. The anarchist, in Ward's sense, has a normative preference for anarchist techniques. The aim of anarchism, for Ward, is to try to shift the balance of social organisation away from state—and market—towards these anarchist techniques. This implies a recognition of the extent to which such techniques are already present in our society and doing real work ('anarchy in action'). It also entails a highly pragmatic turn towards a consideration of how these anarchist techniques might be more widely used to address social needs. This perspective informed Ward's editorship of *Anarchy* in the 1960s, and found definitive expression in his 1973 book, *Anarchy in Action*.[10]

Against the backdrop of the shifts in housing tenure noted above, and related, ambitious projects of reconstruction in many UK cities in the post-war period, Ward's work as a practical anarchist had a particular focus on housing. Here is Ward, writing an open letter to Tony Crosland, the new Labour Minister for Housing, in 1974: 'You … see the homeless, the ill-housed and overcrowded and the newly-weds just coming up

for membership of the Housing Shortage Club, as the inert objects, the raw material of policy, waiting to be processed by the Housing Problems Industry.'[11] This comment anticipated, and perhaps helps us understand, Lydon's snarl about council tenancy. What Ward was protesting here was the paternalism of the post-war welfare state. The social democratic settlement after 1945 certainly did embody solidarity. But it often did so in ways that inscribed hierarchy into welfare provision. Politicians, planners, administrators and bureaucrats stood on one side of this hierarchy and welfare recipients on the other. Ward's anarchism opposed this hierarchy and aimed to find ways of opening up space and opportunity for more self-determining agency by those in need.[12]

One expression of agency was squatting. Some of Ward's earliest journalism for *Freedom* focused on the squatters' movement which emerged shortly after the Second World War. Against the background of an acute housing shortage, the squatters took over disused military bases and converted them into family accommodation. Here were people engaged in cooperative self-help to meet an urgent human need.[13] Ward was also a strong advocate of the tenant cooperative.[14] Co-ops would give people more control over their housing, making for greater self-determination and in the process better housing. Following *Anarchy in Action*, Ward worked up his ideas on this into *Tenants Take Over*, a book that helped stimulate wider interest in housing cooperatives and community control over housing design in British cities such as in the case of the Weller Street Housing Co-op in Liverpool.[15] The model suggested here was one in which the state made resources for housing available, but in which the design of the housing was delegated to groups of citizens who stood to live in the houses themselves—a marked contrast to the way most new housing developments in the post-war years were designed by planners and then imposed on a hopefully grateful community.

In a fascinating extension of this idea, Ward also proposed the 'Do-It-Yourself New Town'.[16] The creation of New Towns was a key commitment of post-war urban planning, and Ward, as someone enthusiastic for the original garden city ideas of Ebenezer Howard,[17] was broadly sympathetic. But why not, he suggested, let the housing emerge in New Towns in a more autonomous way? Let the planners set down some utilities and basic parameters, let the state make some resources available, and then let the people come and build for themselves.

As the cases of tenant co-ops and 'DIY New Towns' show, Ward's interventions in discussion of housing policy were arguably pragmatic in

two senses. Not only were they pragmatic in terms of addressing concrete social issues. They were also pragmatic in working to an extent with the background social democracy of the time. Implicitly or explicitly, the welfare state remained in place as a pooler and provider of resources.[18] The immediate aim was not to remove this state but to anarchise the way it worked by enhancing opportunities for individuals and groups to define the content of goods and services. To some degree Ward pointed towards a creative synthesis of anarchy and social democracy. As we shall see, from this synthesis emerged a central theme of the left critique of the welfare state and effort to imagine an alternative.

Sheila Rowbotham: Feminism, Nurseries and the State

Let us now turn to our second thinker and activist, Sheila Rowbotham. Rowbotham was a major figure in the emergence of second-wave and socialist feminism in the UK in the late 1960s and 1970s. With Lynne Segal and Hilary Wainwright, she also pioneered an important attempt at rethinking the way the left should organise to 'make socialism' in the early 1980s through the *Beyond the Fragments* initiative.[19] Here, I focus on her writing about childcare provision. A key article is 'Mother, child and state', originally published in *New Society* in 1981.[20] Rowbotham began by admitting her ambivalence about 'the state'. On the one hand, she wrote, 'I am firmly convinced that demands must be made upon the state. Clearly welfare resources of cash and labour have to be divided more equitably. To force the issue on to voluntary effort intensifies inequality.' On the other hand,

> in my everyday life, if the state comes anywhere near me, I feel very uncomfortable indeed. If it appears in the shape of a form, I bury it and hope superstitiously that by hiding it from view I have removed myself from the eye of the state. If the state arrives in the shape of a person, I leap towards the teapot with a gripped enthusiasm to dissolve the state back into a human being who drinks tea rather than an official wielding a file.[21]

The welfare state stood at the very centre of this ambivalence. The ambivalence made sense because the welfare state was at once a provider of goods and services which people genuinely need and, at the same time, frequently involved real subordination to the power of those who designed

and implemented welfare services. In language similar to that of Ward in his 1974 open letter to Tony Crosland, she wrote that 'The problem which has dogged the whole development of welfare services is the power to decide what is *someone else's welfare*.'[22] While planning is essential, it also 'requires careful political scrutiny. For planners of all persuasions there is a danger that individual faces, names and actions dissolve into masses to be pummelled or steered.'[23]

This tension or ambivalence applied in the area of childcare. Indeed, in this case there were a series of possible tensions: between the interests of workers and children; the interests of workers and parents; and the interests of parents and children. So, how to address these dilemmas in a way that was consistent with feminist and socialist concerns? In another, earlier article, 'Storefront day care centres, the radical Berlin experiment', originally published in the UK in 1974, Rowbotham reported on the creation of day-care centres for children in the West German student movement and on similar initiatives in the UK.[24] Students in West Berlin found that shops were cheap to rent, and so they set up their own childcare centres there. Those setting up the centres did so to create nursery environments that would foster what they saw as the right kind of values. However, the emphasis on self-resourcing also came to be seen as problematic. Participants, Rowbotham explained, saw that day-care centres posed no challenge to the wider educational system and 'feared they were becoming incorporated within an umbrella of liberal middle-class self-help'.[25] Rowbotham reported that the 'same dilemma' emerged in the UK case. On the one hand, feminists were concerned that state-provided nursery care would be 'unlikely to educate children in a radical way'. But 'on the other hand a refusal to campaign for nurseries which were financed out of rates and taxes meant you were letting the state and local authority "off the economic hook"'.[26] A way forward in the face of the dilemma, Rowbotham argued, is illustrated by the North London Children's Centre. Set up by members of Women's Liberation, it was a nursery 'paid for by the council but controlled by parents'.

In the later article, Rowbotham returned to this idea. Rejecting the slogan of 'workers' control' as a demand adequate to the case, Rowbotham reported that the National Child Care Campaign had instead adopted the proposal for 'community control' of nurseries.[27] While this demand initially led to the direct 'creation of community nurseries' as a form of collective self-help drawing on the participants' own resources, Rowbotham commented that the groups involved had moved away from simple self-resourcing. They 'have also bargained for resources from the state, and

they are now run with various combinations of money from local authorities and the labour of parents and supporters'.[28]

The socialist feminist response to the problem of childcare, then, was to try to draw on the state without becoming subordinated to it. The state had the job of helping to mobilise resources, for example in the form of suitable buildings and paying for (some) labour. But the service itself was subject to control by parents and workers. As in some of Ward's pragmatic anarchist proposals, the state provided resources, but what was done with these resources was, to some significant degree, a matter for the service users to decide. This retained the role of the welfare state as an agency and expression of solidarity, one might argue, while also mitigating the hierarchy involved in service provision.

It is important to see the full significance of the anarchist element in this synthesis for Rowbotham. A key theme of her essay in *Beyond the Fragments* was the need for socialism to be understood not as an institutional set-up placed on society from above (whether by revolution or reform), but as something that grew out of people's daily lived experience. This led her directly to the importance of 'collective self-help'—similar to Ward's 'anarchy in action'—as a way for people to live solidarity directly, to make socialism at an everyday level a base for a wider socialist transformation.

Nevertheless, it was also crucial in Rowbotham's view that there was a synthesis between the principle of collective self-help and the principle of state responsibility:

> With the active support of working-class people in a community, mutual self-help forms provide a potential means of distinguishing between the coercive aspects of the state machinery and those activities of the state which are necessary to people in their everyday life. They raise the possibility of welfare control. Self-help community activity is not a substitute for the equally important radical struggles within the welfare state sector. But they can indicate ways of questioning the role of professionals and the means of creating more direct forms of control over welfare resources.[29]

Stuart Hall: Thatcherism and the Need for a Left Anti-statism

Let us now turn to the work of Stuart Hall. Hall was a leading figure in the UK's first New Left, editing *New Left Review* in its early years. A pioneer of cultural studies, in the late 1970s and 1980s he worked closely with

the group of Gramsci-influenced ('Eurocommunist') activists and thinkers around *Marxism Today*.[30] Much of Ward's and Rowbotham's work, at least that discussed above, was written at a time when social democracy was coming under greater political pressure. Hall's attention, in his period of close collaboration with *Marxism Today*, focused more directly on the nature of the emerging crisis of social democracy. Hall connected the crisis itself back to the character of the social democratic state. In doing so he connected to and generalised some of the ideas we see in Ward and Rowbotham, ideas that were at this point starting to influence the way some left local authorities, such as the Greater London Council (GLC), were operating.

A key first contribution here was Hall's 1979 essay, 'The Great Moving Right Show', which opened up the analysis of Thatcherism as a new and challenging form of right-wing politics.[31] Drawing on Gramsci, Hall understood Thatcherism as a response to the crisis of British capitalism in the 1970s. It was a creative response which aimed to put together a new coalition of social groups in support of the interests of capital. It was, in this sense, a hegemonic project. Central to its hegemonic ambition was the articulation of an ideology that helped to build and to hold a new social coalition, or 'historic bloc', together. This ideology could not simply assert the priority of ruling-class interests but had to connect with and mobilise elements of the 'common sense' of wider social groups and give voice to their real grievances. It also had to seek to transform society's 'common sense'.[32]

What did this ideology look like? In some respects, Hall argued, it echoed the 'resonant themes of organic Toryism—nation, family, duty, authority, standards, traditionalism'.[33] Along this dimension, Thatcherism was itself statist in that it reasserted the authority of the state, for example via a discourse about 'law and order'.[34] However, Hall argued, Thatcherism combined this authoritarianism 'with the aggressive themes of a revived neo-liberalism—self-interest, competitive individualism, anti-statism'.[35] This anti-statist aspect was, moreover, a key aspect of Thatcherism's appeal to working-class people. It built on genuinely negative experiences of the state in its welfare-providing capacity:

> Whether in the growing dole queues or in the waiting-rooms of an overburdened National Health Service, or suffering the indignities of the Social Security, the corporatist state is increasingly experienced by [working people] not as a benefice but as a powerful bureaucratic imposition *on* 'the people'.[36]

An important and persistent feature of Hall's analysis was his insistence—against some on the left—that Thatcherism was addressing real concerns and grievances: it was not 'mere ideology'.[37] As Hall put it in a later, 1984 essay, 'The state—Socialism's old caretaker', 'The problem for the left is that the dissatisfactions with the state are real and authentic enough—even if Thatcherism misdescribes and misexplains them. Thatcherism did not invent them—even if its remedies for the problem are fictitious.'[38] An adequate left response, Hall argued, could not dismiss these concerns and trust to a swing of the political cycle, or assume the ultimate discovery of some true proletarian consciousness amidst growing economic crisis, as a way forward.[39] Rather, it had to find a better way to respond to the concerns. This would require the left to confront the weaknesses in its own approach to government and social change. In 'The state—Socialism's old caretaker', Hall identified this weakness with the way twentieth-century Labourism became one vehicle or expression of a 'collectivism' which shaped thinking across the UK's political elite. The victory of collectivism marginalised anti-statist currents on the left and created a form of socialism vulnerable to the New Right's critique: 'it [Thatcherism] exposed a weakness, a critique of the existing system which the left made too little of: the deeply undemocratic character of state-administered socialism. Most disconcerting of all, this revealed that the left and the new right share, on this question, some of the same ground!'[40]

At the same time, Hall argued, much of what was creative and vibrant on the left was self-organised activity outside of the state:

> Culturally, where would the left be today without initiatives like City Limits or a thousand other small, 'independent' publications; or Gay Sweatshop and hundreds of other little theatre groups; or Virago and History Workshop and Readers and Writers Cooperative and Compendium and Centreprise and Comedia and—you name it?[41]

The problem, of course, was to identify the terms on which one could imagine an anti-statist project which did not simply mimic the neo-liberal, pro-market agenda.

In Hall's view it was necessary first to recognise that the state did have a crucial role in creating distinctively public spaces that were independent of the rules of capital and the market: 'I feel sure that socialism cannot exist without a conception of *the public*. It would be right to regard the "public sector", however little it represented a transfer of power to the powerless, as an arena constructed against the logic of capital.'[42] A public health

service distributed healthcare on a different basis to ability to pay. Public transport embodied a non-market conception of the right to mobility. Yet, though the state was necessary to create public space, Hall added that '"the public" cannot be identical with the state'.[43] Having used its power to wall off a certain social space from the market and capital, the state would then itself have to cede power to society: 'Once the logic of capital, property and the market are broken, it is the diversity of social forms, the taking of popular initiatives, the recovery of popular control, *the passage of power from the state into society*, which marks out the advance towards socialism.'[44] The crucial idea is a 'partnership' between state and society 'so long as the initiative is always passing to society'.[45]

Hall's argument here involved a generalisation of the idea we saw in Rowbotham's writing on nursery provision and in at least some of Ward's writing on housing. The state would create and resource a social space in which a particular good or service could be created and distributed, but crucial decisions about provision belonged to organisations within society and/or were negotiated by the state and these organisations.

Were there any examples of this kind of anti-statist left practice? Hall saw some promise in the municipal socialist experiments of the 1980s, notably that of the GLC.[46] To some degree, Hall argued, the GLC had tried to apply the partnership principle. As Hall elaborated in another 1984 essay, 'Face the future', the GLC allowed social movements into the local state, to shape decisions. This was a terrain of political struggle—a terrain, that is, on which to affirm the idea of 'the public' not necessarily being harmonious: 'The ding-dong, complaint, pressure, pushing-and-response, the negotiation in public forums between the movements and the politicians is the positive sound of a real, as opposed to a phoney and pacified, democracy at work.'[47] In addition, Hall was impressed by the way the GLC sought to make the city itself a terrain of political struggle—a terrain, that is, on which to affirm the idea of 'the public' against that of the market and capital.

A major early policy in this respect which we may note was 'Fares Fair', an attempt to increase public subsidy to the London transport system so as to keep fares low and thereby enable London residents to travel more easily throughout the metropolis.[48] One way of interpreting the significance of Fares Fair—and the political opposition it provoked—is through the idea of what we might term 'sectoral communism'. Sectoral communism involves taking a specific good or service out of the market and offering it to all as of right. The NHS is sectoral communism where the 'sector' is healthcare. The imaginative horizon implicit in Fares Fair was sectoral communism in relation to transport: a situation in which all would be

able to get on a bus or use the underground system as they wished without paying for the service at the point of use. Of course, the method of provision in sectoral communisms can be hierarchical. It was precisely this that animated the struggles to anarchise or democratise public housing (Ward) and childcare provision (Rowbotham). So there is an argument for complementing sectoral communisms with the democratic state–society partnership principle. But reflecting on the public transport case one can also see, perhaps, how a sectoral communism can fit into a distinctively left vision of a freer society, a politics of emancipation. For to be able to get on the tube and move from A to B to C as one wishes, what is this if not a freedom of access to city life? The state here is pooling resources in a way that creates an infrastructure for people to do their own thing. In Hall's words, initiative passes from state to society.

Paul Hirst and Hilary Wainwright: Association and Participation

Although Margaret Thatcher left office in 1990, Thatcherism was by then the new orthodoxy and, as Hall had warned, had begun to shift UK society's 'common sense'. Nevertheless, the effort to think through an alternative to Thatcherism—an alternative that would have credibility precisely because it did not amount simply to a restoration of post-war social democracy—continued. Here I want to note briefly the contributions of two thinkers and activists of the left who can be seen as building on the insights we have found in the thinkers discussed above: Paul Hirst and Hilary Wainwright.[49]

Initially a revolutionary Marxist keenly engaged with the work of Louis Althusser, in the 1980s and into the following decade, Hirst developed a distinctive conception of 'associative democracy'. This was set out most fully in his 1994 book of the same name.[50]

The welfare state featured centrally in the book, with two ideas standing out. The first was that public services such as healthcare and education should be provided not directly by the state but under the auspices of non-profit associations.[51] Under associative democracy, organisations such as trade unions and faith groups would be free to offer services. Individuals would elect to get services from a specific association which would then receive corresponding public funds. This model of 'associational welfare' had a clear echo of the idea we find in Ward, Rowbotham and Hall, of services becoming the site of a partnership between state and society in which

the state provides resources while civil society groups determine what is done with these resources.

A second idea in Hirst's discussion of the welfare state was unconditional basic income: every citizen was to receive an income grant from the state with no test of means or willingness to take employment.[52] Hirst viewed this as an important source of individual empowerment. Again, however, Hirst was here connecting to a wider stream of thinking on the left (and not just on the left). As Toru Yamamori has shown, basic income was a key demand of the Claimants' Unions which emerged in the late 1960s and 1970s to help welfare recipients assert their rights, and of some sections of the Women's Liberation Movement.[53] Basic income was seen as a non-judgmental form of income support which would emancipate welfare recipients from the intrusive and demeaning task of proving their eligibility for cash payments. It could be seen as another expression of what I referred to above as sectoral communism: in this case, the proposal was to take the income necessary to meet (some set of) basic material needs out of the domain of the market and make it available to all without condition. Although harnessing state power, the policy would create a platform for individuals to pursue their own objectives: it would build an infrastructure of personal freedom. The proposal gained a new lease of life in the 1980s in response to mass unemployment.[54]

Hirst's model of associational welfare also pointed, however, to a challenge in trying to formulate a left alternative to post-war social democracy in the 1990s and after as the assumptions surrounding political discussion became increasingly Thatcherite or neo-liberal ones. Although Hirst emphasised the associational character of the proposal, he was in effect proposing that all public services become 'quasi-markets' in which providers would compete for customers who would choose between them with assistance from a state-funded voucher.[55] The proposal was non- or anti-neo-liberal insofar as it excluded commercial providers from the quasi-market. But it worked with the grain of neo-liberalism insofar as it would have created a kind of market and emphasised the power of service users to exit. This might or might not have been a good idea. The point here is simply to note how Hirst did seem to be getting drawn onto some common ground with neo-liberal thinking.

Hall was very aware of this challenge: 'if we go too far down that particular [anti-statist] road, whom do we discover keeping us company but—of course—the Thatcherites, the new right, the free market "hot gospellers", who seem (whisper it not too loud) to be saying rather similar things

about the state'.[56] Another thinker and activist who had been particularly conscious of this issue, and who engaged with it directly, was Hilary Wainwright. Wainwright was active in the 1970s as a socialist feminist, contributing with Rowbotham and Segal to *Beyond the Fragments*, and in the emerging movement around 'alternative plans' in industry.[57] In the 1980s she headed the Popular Planning Unit at the GLC, helping to build some of the democratic partnerships between state and society which Hall saw as a positive aspect of the GLC model.

Wainwright responded directly to the theoretical perspective of the New Right in her 1994 book, *Arguments for a New Left*.[58] This laid the groundwork on which she built in her later work, *Reclaim the State: Experiments in Popular Democracy*, first published in 2003 with a revised edition in 2009.[59] *Arguments* is structured around a direct engagement with the work of Friedrich Hayek, a major thinker of the New Right.[60] Social democracy, neo-liberalism and participatory democracy each rests, Wainwright argued, on a distinct theory of knowledge. Post-war social democracy rested on a theory of centralised expert knowledge, the knowledge of the post-war planner (of whom Ward and Rowbotham were so sceptical). Against this, and against the fuller notion of central planning in state-socialism of the Soviet type, Hayek asserted the importance of localised and tacit knowledge that could not be absorbed and digested by a central planner. Wainwright retained Hayek's emphasis on dispersed knowledge, but also argued that Hayek developed this idea in a reductively individualistic way. Relevant, local knowledge is something that can be generated and shared in groups, for example in the local meetings and networks of social movement activists.

Thus, while the Hayekian would see the alternative to the social-democratic welfare state as requiring the rolling back of the state in favour of the market, or the introduction of market mechanisms into the state, Wainwright argued that there was an alternative based on a participatory democratic restructuring of the welfare state. A given service could become the site of democratic discussion between providers and organised groups of service users, generating new knowledge that could be brought to bear in policy design and implementation, thereby improving the outcomes of collective action.

Wainwright illustrated this argument with a discussion of how the Swedish women's movement had helped establish new educational institutions for women using a mix of public funding and civil society design and control.[61] This was just one example of the way the women's movement

had sought to build a distinctive welfare state based on the model of public funding and civil society input.[62] In the GLC context, women's, ethnic minority and other civil society groups similarly helped to shape local welfare provision.[63] Wainwright also discussed how networks of civil society groups could coordinate to help regulate economic activity in the market. Such networks could strengthen workers' bargaining positions in relation to wages and working conditions. They could help develop ideas for new productive strategies. They would not necessarily displace the market so much as, in Diane Elson's phrase, 'socialise' it.[64] There would, again, be a role for the state as a provider of resources to help support these civil society networks. Referencing Elson's model, Wainwright also argued for an unconditional basic income as part of the institutional framework for a new economy.[65]

The idea of democratic state–society partnerships is clearly central here and remained so in Wainwright's later book, *Reclaim the State*. Here the context was the comprehensive shift to outsourcing and privatisation of public services under a now thoroughly hegemonic neo-liberalism. Wainwright understood the neo-liberal restructuring of the welfare state as a response to real problems of paternalism within post-war social democracy. Nevertheless, she argued, the neo-liberal response, in the form of outsourcing and privatisation, was deeply flawed. Particular problems included the impossibility of specifying in contractual terms many of the qualities of service provision which make for a good service; the way commercial confidentiality worked as a barrier to the democratic accountability of companies providing public services; and the lack of effective competition between providers.[66] The implication, Wainwright argued, was not a return to the methods of post-war social democracy, but, as argued in the earlier book, an agenda that involved democratising public services and wider state structures: 'The other option for reform is one based on processes of participatory democratic decision-making, complementing and strengthening representative democracy.'[67]

Reclaim the State looked at a variety of real-world experiments which indicate how this might be done. One very influential real-world case was that of Participatory Budgeting (PB), initially developed and applied in the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre. PB was introduced by Brazil's Workers' Party (PT) to give neighbourhoods more control over public investments. Wainwright explained:

> The PT did not simply seek to get into office and drive the machinery of state towards the poor. Rather, it aimed to open up the state machinery in

the municipalities and involve all citizens—the poor especially—in decid-ing how it should work, a collaborative process that is both personally and socially transformative.[68]

Concretely, PB involved neighbourhood assemblies discussing and voting on local spending priorities. These were then considered further across neighbourhoods using a democratic delegate system, leading to the agree-ment of a comprehensive city budget. Implementation of this budget was then monitored through the same system.[69]

Reclaim the State also discussed real-world experiments in the UK, including in-depth discussions of two attempts to assert popular control over the development and implementation of public policy through New Labour's New Deal for Communities (NDC). Announced in 1998, NDC provided 39 of England's poorest estates with £50m each for ten-year regeneration programmes. These programmes were to be 'community-led'.[70] Wainwright looked closely at the Marsh Farm NDC in Luton and at an NDC in East Manchester. These cases were instructive about the chal-lenges involved in applying the democratic partnership principle between state and society. Local officials and politicians did not always trust com-munity groups (and vice versa). The extent of community control was something that was continually negotiated between a large array of actors at the local level. A related worry was that notions of community action and control could themselves become delimited in ways that worked with the grain of neo-liberalism. It could actually fit well with a neo-liberal agenda to remove the state from provision and give resources to local communities to provide goods and services at low cost, supplemented by their own time and energy. The problem lay in a higher authority defining participation as applying to a prescribed set of resources and within lim-its defined through structures that excluded or marginalised the affected community. To correct this, participants would have to be willing to con-test resource settlements and their exclusion from wider decision-making structures. As Wainwright put it,

> An important point here for the debate about democracy is that participa-tion is not used to discipline people at a micro level simply to 'make do' with a budget set at a higher level of decision-making by a process over which they have no significant control. This would be what I would call the 'institutionalization of small expectations' ... [P]articipatory democracy is not only a means of generating creative improvements at a micro level but it is potentially also a mechanism for ensuring a pressure upwards for wider change.[71]

Wainwright also made the point that the success of democratic approaches to welfare-state restructuring could not be divorced from wider trends in social and economic policy. Deregulated labour markets, for example, characterised by insecurity, temporary contracts, low pay and long hours of work, would not provide the context for all citizens—and, in particular, poorer citizens—to become engaged in participatory democracy.[72] Thus, the practice of democratic state–society partnerships would have to be complemented by measures to help ensure people have the time and energy to participate in them.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I have explored how five significant activists and thinkers on the left responded to the perceived paternalism of the post-war welfare state and how they helped to develop an alternative approach to the welfare state, doing so increasingly against the background of a new, Thatcherite 'common sense'. Let us briefly review some of the elements of this emerging, radical democratic alternative.

Perhaps the most prominent idea, developed in various ways by all of the five thinkers we have briefly considered, is that of the *democratic state–society partnership*. The idea is to distinguish between the state as a collector and provider of resources and the state as designer of the goods and services supplied with these resources. Against the grain of neo-liberalism, the principle of the state as a major pooler of resources is affirmed. Against the grain of post-war social democracy, the role of groups within society using participatory democratic processes to control exactly what is done with these resources is also affirmed. Within the partnership model broadly construed we can see differences of emphasis between more individualistic and more collective approaches to how citizens exert their control over the exact use of resources. An important theme also is the role of social movements in supporting the 'societal' input into participatory democratic processes. It should also be noted that even where approaches have a strong collective element, there is generally a recognition—indeed, arguably a celebration—of the diversity of groups and perspectives that properly come into play in these processes.

Another idea we see in the above discussion is what I have termed *sectoral communism*: take a particular, generally needed good or service and use the state to marshal resources so that the relevant good or service is available to all as of right. The GLC's 'Fares Fair' policy can be seen as

aiming in this direction, as a step towards a situation where public transportation across London would be free at the point of use. The policy can be seen as creating a supportive infrastructure for the pursuit of personal projects. Of course, the provision of a good or service as of right always raises issues of power in the process of provision. This is precisely the issue that, for example, Ward was focusing on in housing and Rowbotham in relation to nursery care. So sectoral communism has to operate in conjunction with democratic state–society partnerships.

A related idea, explicitly proposed by Hirst and Wainwright, is that of *unconditional basic income*: an income grant paid to every citizen as of right with no test of means or willingness to take a job. As indicated very briefly above, this idea was developed by some in the Claimants' Union movement in the 1970s as a liberating alternative to conventional cash welfare. In this respect, it is a proposal which, again, affirms the role of the state as pooler and provider of resources while also seeking to limit the state's role as a prescriptive, overseeing force. Basic income is itself an application of sectoral communism, attempting to take a certain set of basic material needs out of the sphere of market dependency. At the same time, one might argue that it is complementary to democratic state–society partnerships. By providing a degree of income security independent of the labour market it may free up time and energy for involvement in a participatory democratic welfare state.

As the discussion above suggests, these ideas are perhaps best seen as working in conjunction, as a potentially mutually reinforcing combination.[73] Of course, we must recall that showing how welfare provision can be less hierarchical does not necessarily mean that citizens will be willing to carry the tax implications of a more generous welfare state. As also suggested above, however, making the case that the welfare state can be less hierarchical and more empowering is arguably a crucial step in building public support for it. Lydon's snarl is something the left ignores at its peril.

Notes

1. The references here are to the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola ('MPLA'), the Ulster Defence Association ('UDA') and Irish Republican Army ('IRA').
2. For a short essay which interestingly covers punk and the welfare state, see O. Hatherley, 'England's Dreaming introduced me to

the power of urban, sprawling London', *The Guardian*, 5 August 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/aug/05/englands-dreaming-jon-savage-book-that-changed-me. Hatherley discusses here J. Savage, *England's Dreaming: Sex Pistols and Punk Rock* (London, 1991). On the political and cultural context of punk rock in the UK, see also D. Simonelli, 'Anarchy, pop and violence: punk rock subculture and the rhetoric of class, 1976–78', *Contemporary British History*, 16, 2 (2002), pp. 121–44, and K. Gildart, "The antithesis of humankind": exploring responses to the Sex Pistols' Anarchy tour 1976', *Cultural and Social History*, 10, 1 (2013), pp. 129–48. For a discussion of the specific moment of 1976 in the UK, see also Joe Moran, "Stand up and be counted": Hughie Green, the 1970s and popular memory', *History Workshop Journal* 70 (2010), pp. 173–98. Although Moran emphasises the way some actors sought to talk up the idea of a 'crisis' for their own political ends, and argues that such talk was at some remove from the lived experience of many people in the UK at the time, he acknowledges that there were very real economic problems; and Gildart argues in response to Moran that reactions to punk outside of the elite indicated a wider sense of 'moral malaise'.

3. N. Seth-Smith, 'The left and the Big Society VII: Hilary Wainwright of Red Pepper', *OurKingdom*, 1 December 2010, https://www.opendemocracy.net/ourkingdom/niki-seth-smith/left-and-big-society-vii-hilary-wainwright-of-red-pepper.

4. One initiative which also needs to be considered, but which I do not address in this chapter, is the 'In and against the State' project from a Working Group of the Conference of Socialist Economists. See London Edinburgh Return Group, *In and against the State* (London, 1980 (1979)). A fuller discussion might also look at how some of Raymond Williams's thinking on public broadcasting also expressed the idea of a democratic state–society partnership. On the continuing relevance of Williams's ideas, and those of the wider New Left, see Mark Fisher and Jeremy Gilbert, *Reclaim Modernity: Beyond Markets, Beyond Machines* (London, 2014). I do not use the concept of the 'New Left' much in this discussion for two reasons. First, because the New Left itself is internally diverse and use of the term immediately calls for further clarification in terms of which generation of the New Left one is talking about. Second, because not all of the thinkers—notably Colin Ward—can be straightfor-

wardly categorised as such. I think we can get at the central institutional or policy ideas that are the concern of this chapter without the need to employ this at once complex and (for present purposes) somewhat restricting category. Fisher and Gilbert are clearly correct, however, in signalling this deep connection.

5. See T. Clark and A. Dilnot, *Long-Term Trends in British Taxation and Spending* (London, Institute for Fiscal Studies, Briefing Paper No. 25, 2002), pp. 1–3.

6. Indeed, Table 11.1 suggests that as a share of national income spending across social security, education and healthcare together was higher at the end of the Thatcher–Major governments than it was in the mid-1970s. Of course, this does not necessarily mean the welfare state was 'more generous' as the underlying needs it addressed might have increased by even more, e.g., due to demographic change, higher unemployment and increased inequality and poverty.

7. Clark and Dilnot, *Long-Term Trends*, pp. 1–5.

8. For overviews of Ward's life and work see D. Goodway, 'Colin Ward', in D. Goodway, *Anarchist Seeds beneath the Snow. Left-Libertarian Thought and British Writers from William Morris to Colin Ward* (2nd edition, Oakland, 2012), pp. 309–25; C. Wilbert and D. F. White, 'Introduction: autonomy, solidarity and possibility: the worlds of Colin Ward's anarchism', in C. Wilbert and D.F. White (eds), *Autonomy, Solidarity, Possibility. The Colin Ward Reader* (Oakland, 2011), pp. vii–xxx; C. Honeywell, *A British Anarchist Tradition. Herbert Read, Alex Comfort and Colin Ward* (London, 2011), pp. 133–82; C. Levy (ed.), *Colin Ward* (London, 2014); S. White, 'Making anarchism respectable? The social philosophy of Colin Ward', *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 12, 1 (2007), pp. 11–28. The best introduction, however, is C. Ward and D. Goodway, *Talking Anarchy* (Nottingham, 2003).

9. See White, 'Making anarchism respectable'. See also Wilbert and White, 'Introduction', pp. viii–ix.

10. C. Ward, *Anarchy in Action* (2nd edition, London, 1996 (1973)).

11. C. Ward, 'Dear Mr. Crosland …', in C. Ward, *Housing. An Anarchist Approach* (London, 1976), pp. 93–8, specifically p. 94.

12. See also C. Honeywell, 'Colin Ward: anarchism and social policy', in Levy (ed.), *Colin Ward*, pp. 88–105, and Honeywell, *British Anarchist Tradition*, pp. 162–9.

13. C. Ward, 'The people act: the postwar squatters' movement', in Wilbert and White (eds), *Autonomy, Solidarity, Possibility*, pp. 63–9.
14. Ward, *Anarchy in Action*, pp. 72–3.
15. See Ward and Goodway, *Talking Anarchy*, pp. 74–5, and C. Ward, *Tenants Take Over* (London, 1974).
16. C. Ward, 'The do-it-yourself New Town', in C. Ward, *Talking Houses* (London, 1990), pp. 15–35, reprinted in Wilbert and White (eds), *Autonomy, Solidarity, Possibility*, pp. 71–84.
17. See Ward and Goodway, *Talking Anarchy*, pp. 70–3.
18. On this point, see also Wilbert and White, 'Introduction', pp. xxvi–xxvii.
19. S. Rowbotham, L. Segal and H. Wainwright, *Beyond the Fragments. Feminism and the Making of Socialism* (London, 1979).
20. S. Rowbotham, 'Mother, child, state', in S. Rowbotham, *Dreams and Dilemmas* (London, 1983), pp. 130–5. The article was originally published, in a shorter version, in *New Society*, 1 October 1980.
21. Rowbotham, 'Mother, child, state', p. 130.
22. Rowbotham, 'Mother, child, state', p. 133.
23. Rowbotham, 'Mother, child, state', p. 132.
24. S. Rowbotham, 'Storefront day care centres, the radical Berlin experiment', in S. Rowbotham, *Dreams and Dilemmas* (London, 1983), pp. 94–8. The article was first published in the UK in 1974 in *Women Speaking*.
25. Rowbotham, 'Storefront day care centres', p. 97.
26. Rowbotham, 'Storefront day care centres', p. 97. Rowbotham references, in making these points, an article by V. Charlton, 'The patter of tiny contradictions', *Red Rag*, 5.
27. Rowbotham, 'Mother, child, state', p. 133.
28. Rowbotham, 'Mother, child, state', p. 133.
29. S. Rowbotham, 'The Women's Movement and organizing for socialism', in Rowbotham, Segal and Wainwright, *Beyond the Fragments*, pp. 21–155, specifically p. 137.
30. On Hall's involvement with the first New Left, see M. Kenny, *The First New Left. British Intellectuals After Stalin* (London, 1995), pp. 10–68. On the context of the Gramscian left and *Marxism Today*, see G. Andrews, *Endgames and New Times. The Final Years of British Communism 1964–1991* (London, 2004), pp. 140–246.

Marxism Today was the 'theoretical and discussion journal' of the Communist Party of Great Britain, but under the editorship of Martin Jacques it achieved a much wider circulation.

31. S. Hall, 'The Great Moving Right Show', in S. Hall and M. Jacques (eds), *The Politics of Thatcherism* (London, 1983), pp. 19–39. This is a revised version of the article originally published in the journal *Marxism Today* in January 1979.

32. Hall, 'Great Moving Right Show', p. 23.

33. Hall, 'Great Moving Right Show', p. 29.

34. Hall, 'Great Moving Right Show', pp. 37–8. See also S. Hall et al., *Policing the Crisis. Mugging, the State, and Law and Order* (2nd edition, Basingstoke, 2013 (1978)), especially pp. 268–317.

35. Hall, 'Great Moving Right Show', p. 29.

36. Hall, 'Great Moving Right Show', p. 33.

37. Hall, 'Great Moving Right Show', p. 20.

38. S. Hall, 'The state—Socialism's old caretaker', in S. Hall, *The Hard Road to Renewal* (London, 1988), pp. 220–32, specifically p. 227. This essay was first published as S. Hall, 'The state—Socialism's old caretaker', *Marxism Today*, November 1984, pp. 24–9, www.amielandmelburn.org.uk/collections/authorsandtitles/mt/84_11_24.htm.

39. Hall, 'Great Moving Right Show', pp. 20–3.

40. Hall, 'The state', p. 227.

41. Hall, 'The state', p. 229.

42. Hall, 'The state', p. 230.

43. Hall, 'The state', p. 231.

44. Hall, 'The state', p. 231.

45. Hall, 'The state', p. 231.

46. The Greater London Council was run by a Labour administration, under the leadership of Ken Livingstone, from 1981 until it was abolished by the Thatcher government in 1986. It was one of the major focal points of 'municipal socialism' in the 1980s and perhaps the example of municipal socialism that was most strongly influenced by socialist feminist, anti-racist and other radical democratic currents.

47. S. Hall, 'Face the future', in Hall, *Hard Road to Renewal*, pp. 233–8, specifically p. 235. Other essays which explore the problem of statism include S. Hall, 'The battle for socialist ideas in the 1980s', *Hard Road to Renewal*, pp. 177–95 (originally

published in 1981 in *The Socialist Register 1982*); 'The crisis of Labourism', *Hard Road to Renewal*, pp. 196–210 (originally published in J. Curran (ed.), *The Future of the Left*, New Socialist and Polity, 1984), and 'Realignment—for what?', *Hard Road to Renewal*, pp. 239–50 (originally published in *Marxism Today*, December 1985, www.amielandmelburn.org.uk/collections/authorsandtitles/mt/85_12_12.htm).

48. 'Fares Fair' was introduced in 1981 but had to be abandoned after a (highly questionable) court ruling that the GLC did not have the power in law to subsidise the London transport system to the extent of the policy. For helpful discussion, see J. Carvell, *Citizen Ken* (London, 1984), pp. 128–52.

49. The affinity in the work of Hirst and Wainwright from the 1990s is helpfully noted and discussed by S. Griffiths in 'Pluralism, neo-liberalism and the "all-knowing" state', *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 16, 3 (2011), pp. 295–311, specifically pp. 304, 306–7. Griffiths sees Hirst and Wainwright as major figures in a revival of pluralist political thought in the UK since the 1990s.

50. P. Hirst, *Associative Democracy. New Forms of Economic and Social Governance* (Cambridge, 1993).

51. Hirst, *Associative Democracy*, pp. 165–73, 184–9.

52. Hirst, *Associative Democracy*, pp. 179–84.

53. See T. Yamamori, 'A feminist way to unconditional basic income: Claimants' Unions and Women's Liberation movements in 1970s Britain', *Basic Income Studies*, 9, 1–2 (2014), pp. 1–24. See also H. Rose, 'Up against the Welfare State: the Claimant Unions', *Socialist Register*, 10 (1973), pp. 179–202, and B. Jordan, *Paupers. The Making of a New Claiming Class* (London, 1973). Jordan became a leading advocate of basic income.

54. See B. Jordan, *Mass Unemployment and the Future of Britain* (Oxford, 1982), and *Rethinking Welfare* (Oxford, 1987).

55. For a sympathetic discussion of quasi-markets, see J. Le Grand, *The Other Invisible Hand. Delivering Public Services through Choice and Competition* (Princeton, 2007).

56. Hall, 'The state', pp. 221–2.

57. See H. Wainwright and D. Elliot, *The Lucas Plan. A New Trade Unionism in the Making?* (London, 1982).

58. H. Wainwright, *Arguments for a New Left. Answering the Free-Market Right* (Oxford, 1994).

59. H. Wainwright, *Reclaim the State. Experiments in Popular Democracy* (Calcutta, 2009 (2003)).
60. Wainwright's response to Hayek's work is discussed in depth in Griffiths, 'Pluralism, neo-liberalism and the "all knowing" state'.
61. Wainwright, *Arguments*, pp. 115–42.
62. Wainwright, *Arguments*, pp. 139–40.
63. Wainwright, *Arguments*, pp. 178–82.
64. Wainwright, *Arguments*, pp. 153–82. See D. Elson, 'Market socialism or socialization of the market?' *New Left Review*, I/172, 1988, pp. 3–44.
65. Wainwright, *Arguments*, p. 170. See Elson, 'Market socialism or socialization of the market?'
66. Wainwright, *Reclaim the State*, pp. 36–42.
67. Wainwright, *Reclaim the State*, p. 42.
68. Wainwright, *Reclaim the State*, p. 120.
69. Wainwright, *Reclaim the State*, pp. 50–1, 121–39.
70. Wainwright, *Reclaim the State*, p. 56. Wainwright reported that input into the design of the NDC came from the Development Trust Association, 'which had its origins in community initiatives supported by the GLC such as Coin Street Community Trust'. See Wainwright, *Reclaim the State*, p. 69 n. 5.
71. Wainwright, *Reclaim the State*, pp. 42–3.
72. Wainwright, *Reclaim the State*, p. 39.
73. Three helpful discussions in this respect are Elson, 'Market socialism or socialization of the market?', E. O. Wright, *Envisioning Real Utopias* (London, 2010), especially chapter 5, and Fisher and Gilbert, *Reclaim Modernity*. There is much in common in these discussions with Hall's argument that socialism requires that initiative is always passing from the state to society.

Looking Forward: Civil Society After State-Socialism and Beyond Neo-liberalism

Peter Ackers and Alastair J. Reid

INTRODUCTION

Alternatives to State-Socialism has addressed a period, broadly from 1918 to 1979, which was dominated by the new mass politics of industrial society. For much of this time, manual workers formed a majority of the population; and trade unions and the Labour Party, in particular, made the movements of organised labour a central presence in British public life. Trade unions formed the core: a movement led by working men—representing the excluded classes—in the era of the male breadwinner and largely 'white' in ethnic composition, notwithstanding considerable immigration and population movement, notably from Ireland. In short, our worlds of labour were constructed in a society very different from the multiracial Britain of the twenty-first century, in which most women undertake paid work outside the home. However, one central debate has not gone away. Indeed, it has returned with a vengeance—What should the balance be between three sectors of society: the market economy, the

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state and civil society? Whereas state-socialists set the agenda for much of the twentieth century, neo-liberals have turned the tide towards the market since 1979. Here we consider whether civil society can regain its proper place within this normative debate about political options.[1]

Perspectives on the Market Economy, the State and Civil Society

Victorian Britain was characterised by a powerful market economy, a relatively weak state and a strong civil society. Part I of our collection, 'Other Forms of Association', followed this voluntary world of trade unions, cooperatives, women's local community initiatives and Nonconformist auxiliary organisations deep into the twentieth century. Part II, 'Other Leaders', explored the industrial-relations dimension past the emergence of Thatcherism; as did Part III, 'Other Intellectuals', for innovative socialist and social science ideas. Michael Young in particular provided a personal link between disenchantment with the state-socialism of Labour's 1945 manifesto and contemporary 'Third Way' and 'Big Society' political debates under Tony Blair's New Labour in the 1990s and then David Cameron over the past decade. For, even if their actual policies have been disappointing, the leaders of both major parties have at least begun to revive the appreciation of 'the third sector' along with the political language of voluntary association, civil society and community. Young was also a pioneer of the post-war social sciences, and the liberal-pluralist tradition that we outlined in Chap. 1 has been carried on, not only in a wide variety of think tanks and social enterprises, but also by many involved in the academic study of sociology and industrial relations.[2] Here we will briefly track forward three broad perspectives on civil society central to contemporary debate: neo-liberal, Marxist and social democratic.

Mrs Thatcher is notorious for the statement, 'there is no such thing as society', which is widely associated with the 1980s privatisation of public institutions and the spread of market values into all areas of social life. For its critics, neo-liberalism heralds the destruction of both the state and civil society by an all-conquering, 'commodifying' market, dissipating the values of social solidarity. The conversion or 'selling-off' of not-for-profit organisations, such as building and mutual societies, was consistent with this analysis, as was Thatcherism's fundamental hostility to trade unionism. Indeed, there was an obvious irony to this destruction of so many 'Victorian values' (and institutions). Yet this is a partial characterisation of

neo-liberalism. The daughter of a Methodist preacher, Margaret Thatcher was aware of the benefits of some forms of associational life and her full quotation is more revealing, drawing in as it does the family, one central civil society institution highlighted by Michael Young, yet generally neglected by state-socialists:

> I think we've been through a period where too many people have been given to understand that if they have a problem, it's the government's job to cope with it. 'I have a problem, I'll get a grant.' 'I'm homeless, the government must house me.' They're casting their problem on society. And, you know, there is no such thing as society. There are individual men and women, and there are families. And no government can do anything except through people, and people must look to themselves first. It's our duty to look after ourselves and then, also to look after our neighbour. People have got the entitlements too much in mind, without the obligations. There's no such thing as entitlement, unless someone has first met an obligation.[3]

Indeed, one target of Mrs Thatcher's animus was the conflation of 'society' with 'the state', resulting in increasing dependence; a concern not just for neo-liberals. And she raised a legitimate question: Where should we draw the boundary lines between the state, the market economy and the individual in civil society? Recent British debates about austerity and public spending have turned this abstract problem into a practical one. In Leicestershire, for instance, some village libraries have been taken over by volunteers. Does this represent a weakening or a strengthening of civil society? Or we can take the great Methodist tradition of Sunday schools and youth work and ask, How should state funding and provision relate to such established voluntary organisations?

At first sight, Marxists have been great advocates of community organising and an active civil society. Throughout our period, the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) mobilised working people on many issues, from the National Minority Movement in the trade unions in the 1920s and Popular Front cultural initiatives such as the Left Book Club in the 1930s. It supported CND in the 1960s and 1980s, and led large-scale public campaigns against the 1971 Conservative Industrial Relations Act and in solidarity with the 1984/85 Miners' Strike.[4] Indeed, industrial and community campaigning as 'class struggle' has been central to Marxist politics in a way that is not true of any other political tradition. However, for much of the twentieth century the CPGB typically took an instrumental, manipulative view of civil society, seeing this not as a valuable end in its

own right, but simply as a weapon to be used in the destruction of capitalism. Hence, a central tactic was the creation of 'front organizations', which drew in a wide range of sympathisers but were controlled surreptitiously by the Party. Moreover, the ultimate goal of orthodox Communist campaigning in civil society was its elimination and replacement by state-socialism, as in Eastern Europe.[5] Stuart White's chapter showed how more libertarian socialists tried to retain the best elements of this tradition of community activism, while moving beyond a Stalinist conception of the state.

Social democrats also have a divided mind on the issue of associational life, civil society and community. In their early work on the trade unions and the cooperative movement, the Webbs championed industrial and consumer democracy, as an extension of full political democracy. Yet, in their state-socialist vision, professional experts would gradually increase their influence over social movements and eventually guide society as a whole from above. They resisted active worker participation and expected the collective bargaining role of trade unions to decline in importance, as the logic of rational planning took hold.[6] The chapters by David Goodway, Stephen Meredith and Stuart White have demonstrated how a moderate variety of this Fabian socialism was embodied in post-war 'welfare state' policies, underpinned by Anthony Crosland's belief in state-led egalitarian policies.[7] Small-scale, local forms of civil society had little role to play in this model of rational planning by experts. However, the second liberal-pluralist current of social democracy, discussed in Chap. 1, was more receptive to the idea of an independent civil society. A central part of this, addressed here by Richard Whiting, John Kimberley, James Moher and Calum Aikman, stressed the pluralistic role of trade unions in the workplace and society. Another emphasis, represented by Michael Young in this collection, focused on non-economic institutions, such as families, local communities and mutual societies; which had been precisely the world of the cooperative movement, working-class women activists and Protestant Nonconformists. Suffice it to say that beyond the Manichean battle of state-socialist plan versus neo-liberal market, there is a rich seam of social democracy that has always championed a lively civil society as a way of promoting individual freedom.

State-Socialist Nostalgia versus Human-Scale Civil Society

Following Labour's 2015 General Election defeat, there has developed an increasingly intense nostalgia for 'real British Socialism' before New Labour. Often this entails an idealisation of the state-socialist past, from the lost

Clause Four of the Labour Party's constitution,[8] through Aneurin Bevan's centralised National Health Service (NHS), to the once nationalised British Rail. The principal source of this nostalgia and mythology is the 1945 Labour government. This faced massive post-war reconstruction problems and, in those trying economic and social circumstances, introduced important reforms that, by and large, improved the lives of ordinary working people. It used policies—such as nationalisation—that were in vogue then to address the problems of that time, and deserves due credit for its long-term achievements, such as full employment and a more generous welfare safety net.[9]

All this said, as the chapters by Rachael Vorberg-Rugh and Angela Whitecross on cooperation and by Ruth Davidson on women's community campaigns revealed, there were losses as well as gains, making it a mistake to idealise these 1945 policies or to abstract them from their original context. And, as Stuart White pointed out, state-socialist policies such as expanding council housing were being met with popular disdain by the end of the post-war period. Similar questions hang over other large-scale, centralised one-stop 'solutions' to inequality, such as comprehensive education and the NHS. On closer inspection, the state-socialist blueprints for a better society have not been the long-term success that some claim, and the current predilection for gigantic, impersonal schools and hospitals suggests that few lessons have been learned from the constructive post-war critics marshalled in Part III of our collection.

Even so, many on the left today would argue that the only alternative to state-socialism is capitulation to neo-liberalism and the spread of private profit and market solutions. Setting aside for a moment the genuine benefits markets may bring wherever we need to know what goods and services people really want, this argument ignores the third sector of civil society: the community organisations and associational life that have figured so large in this collection. As the accounts of Frank Chapple's experience as a trade union leader, the development of the Co-operative Party, or even as Stuart White's libertarian socialist critics demonstrated, the border between civil society and the market is a complex and permeable one. State-socialist panacea such as nationalisation and planning replaced earlier, more piecemeal and varied approaches. Cooperatives, mutuals and other associational forms could still play a much larger role in our current society: delivering business goods and services, health, education and housing, as well as providing opportunities for participatory citizenship. As E.F. Schumacher put it in the title of his 1973 book, *Small is Beautiful*, there are surely more choices available than those proposed by big state-socialists and big corporate capitalists.[10]

This collection has demonstrated that these civil society ideas have deep roots in the traditions of British organised labour. As Richard Whiting, James Moher and Calum Aikman have shown, British trade unions never trusted the state to do what they could do for themselves by negotiating with employers. Meanwhile, cooperators sought a middle way between market and plan. And working-class women campaigned for better health and social provision in local community institutions that were still available to them—before the onset of the post-war, professionalised welfare state bureaucracies. Meanwhile, alongside them Protestant Nonconformists reacted against the original statist idea of a single religious monopoly and created a remarkable voluntary associational scene. Pluralists of various stripes—Cadbury, Citrine and Chapple; Cole, Young and Ward—reflected on this rich variety of possibilities. The state leviathan that would solve all society's problems from above, as in the USSR, was completely alien to the deep liberal and even conservative values of British labour. Sadly, after 1945, the fashion for state-socialism amongst intellectuals stunted and distorted many of the popular movements that had thrived in the first half of our period.

All this is not to call for a 'minimum state',[11] as true neo-liberals do, but to ask what the limits of the state should be and what role civil society should play in a 'mixed economy' and a free society. Right-wing commentators often join sections of the left in conflating state-socialism and social democracy. However, as we have shown, British socialism was deeply shaped by liberal-pluralist ideas, while Cold War social democracy was defined by its contest with Communism, making industrial-relations pluralism and liberal democracy key elements of its moral constitution. State-socialism did predominate in post-war British government policy, but other versions of European social and Christian democracy were fostering a wider civil society and associational democracy. Moreover, contrary to the all-encompassing left-wing dismissal of neo-liberalism, these values have always been shared by sections of the Liberal and Conservative parties and the ordinary people who have voted for them. No single political tradition holds a monopoly of wisdom. We hope that this volume will encourage the revitalisation of liberal and social democratic civil society values by representing a broad church of non-state-socialist alternatives, from anarchism to conservative varieties of pluralism. Britain needs a much less restricted public discourse, getting beyond the inhibiting assumptions that either the state or the market holds the answer to all social problems: a public life prepared to embrace the use of associational means to pursue liberal and social democratic goals.[12]

Notes

1. Tony Judt has posed the related question: 'what is living and what is dead in social democracy?' in T. Judt, *Ill Fares the Land. A Treatise On Our Present Discontents* (London, 2010), p. 227.

2. See A. Etzioni, *The Spirit of Community. Rights, Responsibilities and the Communitarian Agenda* (London, 1993); E. Gellner, *Conditions of Liberty. Civil Society and its Rivals* (London, 1994). And for industrial relations, see P. Edwards, 'Were the 40 years of "Radical Pluralism" a waste of time? A response to Peter Ackers and Patrick McGovern', Warwick Papers in Industrial Relations, 99 (2014), IRRU, University of Warwick; and P. Ackers, 'Rethinking the employment relationship: a neo-pluralist critique of British industrial relations orthodoxy', *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 25, 18 (2014), pp. 2608–25.

3. Margaret Thatcher, *Women's Own*, 31 October 1987; see also F. Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, 'Neo-liberalism and morality in the making of Thatcherite social policy', *Historical Journal*, 55 (2012), pp. 497–520.

4. F. Beckett, *Enemy Within. The Rise and Fall of the British Communist Party* (London, 1995).

5. A. Applebaum, *Iron Curtain. The Crushing of Eastern Europe* (London, 2012).

6. B. Potter, *The Co-operative Movement in Great Britain* (London, 1895); S. and B. Webb, *Industrial Democracy* (London, 1897); R.J. Harrison, *The Life and Times of Sidney and Beatrice Webb, 1958–1905. The Formative Years* (London, 2000).

7. A. Crosland, *The Future of Socialism* (London, 1956/2006), with a foreword by Gordon Brown endorsing this state-socialist conviction.

8. See A.J. Reid, *The Tide of Democracy. Shipyard Workers and Social Relations, 1870–1950* (Manchester, 2010), pp. 317–21, for continuities in Labour's radical-liberal agenda despite the adoption of a socialist clause in 1918.

9. P. Addison, *No Turning Back. The Peacetime Revolutions of Post-War Britain* (Oxford, 2010).

10. E.F. Schumacher, *Small is Beautiful. A Study of Economics as if People Mattered* (London, 1973).

11. See R. Nozick, *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (New York, 1974).

12. As Ben Jackson argues in 'Labour's ideology: towards common ground', Editorial, *Renewal*, 23, 4 (2015), pp. 5–9, 'we should avoid setting up a false dichotomy between the politics of the state and the politics of the movement'. And, we might add, between 'socialism' and other ideas and movements current in our society.

Twentieth-Century British Labour History: Some Key Works for Further Reading

The 'rise and fall of labour' in the twentieth century is an intensely political and ideological topic, with its own distinctive historiography. The chapters in Part I each include references to work on some of the central areas, including trade unions, the cooperative movement, working-class women and religious Nonconformity. Here we confine ourselves to some general works that new students of the field would find instructive. More recent editions and e-books of some the classical works are now available online.

For classical Fabian state-socialism, see Sidney and Beatrice Webb's *History of Trade Unionism, 1666–1920* (1894/1920) and *Industrial Democracy* (1897/1911); and *The Consumers' Co-operative Movement* (1921), all London: Longmans, Green and Co. G.D.H. Cole, *The World of Labour* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1913) offers an alternative Guild Socialist perspective.

For classical Marxism, begin with Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) (London: Penguin, 2004), and then proceed to Eric Hobsbawm's *Labouring Men* and *Worlds of Labour* (London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1964, 1984). John Saville, *The Labour Movement in Britain* (London: Faber and Faber, 1988) and James Hinton, *Labour and Socialism. History of the British Labour Movement* (London: Longmans, 1982) also provide broadly Marxist overviews.

For classical liberal-pluralism, see Henry Pelling, *A History of British Trade Unionism* (London: Pelican, 1963/1984) and Hugh Clegg's three-volume history of British trade unions: H.A. Clegg, A. Fox and A.F. Thompson, *A History of British Trade Unions since 1889 Volume 1, 1889–1910*; and H.A. Clegg volume 2 and volume 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964, 1985, 1995).

For broader social history, see John Benson, *The Working Class in Britain, 1850–1939* (London: Longman, 1989). Hugh McLeod, *Religion and the Working Class in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1984) changed perceptions of this important theme for historians of the twentieth century too.

Turning to recent writing on labour history, Joan Allen, Alan Campbell and John McIlroy (eds), *Histories of Labour. National and International Perspectives* (Pontypool: Merlin, 2010) is a recent overview from a mainstream state-socialist perspective. Kenneth Morgan, *Twentieth Century Britain. A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) is a short general historical overview by a historian with a strong interest in labour.

Two books have revived debate over British labour history. Selina Todd, *The People. The Rise and Fall of the Working Class, 1910–2010* (London: John Murray, 2014) brings women into the picture, has some similarities in time frame and focus to our book, but much less emphasis on the institutions of organised labour and a strong anti-capitalist argument. Jonathan Rose's *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2nd edition, 2010) is a path-breaking view of the reading habits of working people.

On trade unions, Alastair Reid, *United We Stand. A History of Britain's Trade Unions* (London: Penguin, 2004) provides the most recent general history. See also: Chris Wrigley, *British Trade Unions since 1933* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); and Chris Howell, *Trade Unions and the State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

Johnstone Birchall, *Co-op: The People's Business* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994) is an accessible introduction to this aspect of labour organisation, while Callum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain* (London: Routledge, 2009) is a controversial contribution to the debate on popular religious decline.

For the intellectual history of the earlier years, see Mark Bevir, *The Making of British Socialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), carried through into the twentieth century by Mark Bevir (ed.), *Modern*

Pluralism. Anglo-American Debates since 1880 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). For unjustly neglected anarchist and left-libertarian thinkers, see David Goodway, *Anarchist Seeds beneath the Snow. Left-Libertarian Thought and British Writers from William Morris to Colin Ward* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006).

Several academic journals specialise in or include labour history: *International Review of Social History*, *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations*, *Labour History Review*, *Labor History*, *Social History* and *Socialist History. The Dictionary of Labour Biography* (Palgrave) is a major source for the lives of labour movement activists and leaders.

Many of the organisations involved with trade unions and other labour organsitions, past and present, have excellent websites: the History & Policy Trade Union Forum, the Trades Union Congress (TUC), The People's History Museum (Manchester), The Co-operative Union, The Society for the Study of Labour History, The Working Class Movement Library (Salford), The Wesley Historical Society and so on.

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Note: Page numbers followed by "n" denote footnotes.