

which towns supported Parliament and which the Royalist cause, but there are a number of particular reasons to explain these questions.

The first is that Cornwall is intrinsically different, historically, culturally and economically, from other counties. Secondly, there has been a revival of interest in Cornish history and linguistic heritage, contributing to a new sense of Cornish consciousness, a feeling with which the Liberals have traditionally been associated. There has been a delay in the modernisation of the Cornish socioeconomic structure. A distinct style of politics has grown up in Cornwall which is anti-metropolitan and jealous to preserve the territorial integrity of the county. Class consciousness has not been overt either in rural or industrial areas. Nonconformity has continued to be important. There has been a tradition of non-partisanship in local government and politics. This has resulted in the election of candidates in Cornwall who are local, are prepared to act primarily as constituency representatives and are willing to take a genuine interest in Cornish affairs and problems. This has hindered Labour and helped the

Liberals, who have been better placed to conform to and adapt to distinctive Cornish conditions. Labour have had a history of importing candidates into Cornwall from outside without giving them the time to establish any local credibility and it has concentrated on national issues at the expense of Cornish ones. While national issues, of course, impinge in Cornish elections, the local issues remain paramount. There was therefore a bedrock of Liberal support in Cornwall which was deeper and stronger than elsewhere which had been added to by the campaigning, the image and the style of local Liberalism, particularly built up in the 1960s and 1970s.

Relating this background to his own experience, Malcolm recalled the beginnings of modern campaigning in the 1960s and 1970s. There was a loyal, bedrock Liberal support in the constituencies. On top of this was built further support through a combination of innovative campaigning tools, such as community newsletters and systematised electioneering techniques. These factors combined with the very local personality of Cornish Liberal candidates enabled the party to make and, so far, sustain its breakthrough.

Boer War were difficult ones for the Liberals. From 1886 the party was split on the issue of Home Rule in Ireland and this in turn complicated the party's relationship with the institution of Empire.

According to Professor Judd, there were a number of options for the party regarding its policy on the Empire. First, they could present themselves as mildly anti-imperialist. The danger in this approach was that Home Rule in Ireland could become seen as an imperial issue and, therefore, as the first step towards the disintegration of the Empire. The party was conscious that it had lost votes and seats on Home Rule and that the popular press was often pro-imperial. Hence the party officially disavowed this line. However, many Liberals opposed the worst aspects of imperialism.

The second option was to be clearly pro-Empire, but to what extent? A group of Liberal MPs did emerge, calling themselves Liberal Imperialists, who thought the party should respond to the public interest in the Empire by becoming clearly in favour of it. However, in Judd's view this approach would have had the danger of antagonising the party's traditional voters. Furthermore, the party faced a growing challenge from the trade union and labour movements.

Judd argued finally that there was a middle way for the party between these two positions: to be generally supportive of the Empire but highlighting concerns and disassociating itself from military conquests. Unfortunately, Liberals could not agree upon a majority view, leading to difficulties for the party in responding to the Boer War. A further problem was the establishment of another liberal party in the form of the Liberal Unionists. They had membership and organisation and from 1895, provided members of Salisbury's cabinet. How was the Liberal Party to win a future election? It was fundamentally split with its great rising star, Joseph Chamberlain, having defected. Another party was calling itself liberal and was, under Chamberlain's leadership, making a determined effort to represent liberalism and to win over working class voters.

'Methods of Barbarism' – Liberalism and the Boer War

Evening meeting, July 2000
with Denis Judd and Jacqueline Beaumont
Report by David Cloke

On the evening of 3 July members of the History Group met at the National Liberal Club to discuss the response of the Liberal Party and the liberal press to the Boer War – a venue which was no doubt witness to many similar discussions and debates during the course of the war itself. The discussions were ably led by Professor Denis Judd and Dr Jacqueline

Beaumont and the meeting was chaired by the Liberal Democrats' Foreign Affairs spokesperson, Menzies Campbell MP.

Professor Judd began the meeting with a survey of the various responses of the Liberal Party to the Boer War and the political difficulties posed for the party by the war. Professor Judd noted that the years running up to the

However, Professor Judd argued, the last years of the century saw the development of a 'new imperialism', perhaps flowing from a sense of insecurity. The triumphalism of the Diamond Jubilee of 1897 overlaid concerns at the prospects for the new century and how Britain would compete with the US and the Russian Empire. In Judd's view, the Empire became associated with guaranteed power and success in the new century.

There were other difficulties for the party. During 1894–95 the Liberal government undoubtedly connived with Cecil Rhodes and had discussed interventions similar to the Jameson Raid of December 1895. It was revealing, Professor Judd argued, that the Liberal members of the official inquiry into the Jameson Raid rather pulled their punches. Furthermore, although the party was out of power from 1895–1905 there were Liberals in key positions with regard to the development of South African policy. Chamberlain was Colonial Secretary, Selborne Under-Secretary of State and Milner Governor of the Cape from 1898.

The left also caused problems. In the view of many leftist critics one of the key reasons underlying the crisis was unfettered capitalism. This view was tinged with anti-Semitism, as many South African capitalists were Jewish. British Jewry was solidly Liberal at this time and three members of the Liberal cabinets from 1906–14 were Jewish. This, in turn, made it difficult for the party to know how to respond to these critics.

According to Judd all these dilemmas worsened as the South African crisis developed, particularly once war broke out. Before the war actually began, Campbell-Bannerman had been arguing that the Chamberlain/Milner policy of aggressive diplomacy was bluff. However, in Professor Judd's view,

it was 'calculated brinkmanship' – a conclusion backed up, he argued, by the fact that from July 1899 the government was moving large numbers of troops to South Africa. At this time Campbell-Bannerman said on several occasions

**'When is a war not a war?
When it is carried on by
methods of barbarism in
South Africa.'**

**Henry Campbell-
Bannerman, 14 June
1901**

that the two Boer republics should be annexed in some form; though he never made clear what that form should be.

For Judd a key point in the development of Liberal policy towards South Africa came on 11 October 1899. On that day the House of Commons was required to vote the necessary supplies to enable the prosecution of the war. The party could not be seen to obstruct a war that had already begun. It could just hope that it would be over quickly if the British had the necessary supplies.

From the outbreak of war there was a substantial opposition from trade unions and church groups. This developed as the crisis progressed, and a South African Conciliation Committee was set up. The Liberal leadership found the Committee difficult to contain and a source of embarrassment. With the news of defeats and the establishment of concentration camps, leading statesmen such as Lloyd George joined the ranks of those opposed to the war – enabling government propaganda to portray the Liberals as pro-Boers. Not surprisingly, in such a political climate, and thinking that the war was won, the Conservatives called a general election in April 1900. Judd argued that despite this reopening the divisions within the Liberal Party, and despite the party suffering vitriolic attacks from the Conservatives, the Liberals' performance was much better than expected. The Conservatives gained only four seats.

The election result may, therefore, have given the Liberal leadership more courage. However, it was Emily Hobhouse's reports of farm burnings

and the conditions in the concentration camps that provoked a response by Campbell-Bannerman. After having been lobbied by Hobhouse, C-B made a speech attacking the war, accusing the government of deploying 'methods of barbarism'. Despite the changing political landscape, Judd believed that those who were antagonised by the speech probably outnumbered those who welcomed it.

In describing the eventual peace treaty with the Boers, Judd stated that he believed it to be generous to them. The rebels were let off, the displaced were given loans to restart their farms and there was a general amnesty. The only issue of major concern to Liberals at this time was the significant weakening of the commitment to the 'native franchise', which was delayed until responsible governments were restored to the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. Judd argued that the main aim in the postwar period was cooperation with the Afrikaners and that, as Milner brutally put it, 'you only have to sacrifice the nigger completely and the game is easy'.

In Judd's view it was entirely to the Liberal Party's credit that once in government it granted responsible government to the Orange River Colony and the Transvaal, with elections being held by 1907. There were a number of reasons behind this: the long Liberal tradition of appropriate devolution; part of the process of consolidating the peace and guaranteeing the future; and it was hoped that it would create an Anglo-Afrikaner middle ground of 'moderate white supremacists'. Unfortunately in the Transvaal, whilst there were a large number of English speakers, enough perhaps to win the election, they split their vote three ways and the moderate Afrikaners won. Whilst they were willing to cooperate, they were not willing to extend the franchise to non-whites.

The issue of the 'native franchise' was again discussed during the passage of the Union of South Africa Bill. There were passionate calls from Liberal and Labour members for the extension of the franchise, but the issue was left to the individual governments.

It was hoped that the franchise would be extended in Natal and the Cape and that this good practice would spread elsewhere. Unfortunately, the reverse happened and repressive practices spread south. In Judd's view, in giving the greater South Africa its new form the rights of black South Africans were sold down the river. The culmination of this process was apartheid, which in Judd's view was a rationalisation of what had come before.

Following Professor Judd's illuminating review of the Liberal Party's response to the South African war and its aftermath, Dr Beaumont outlined the response of the liberal press. Liberals had been at the heart of the development of cheap newspapers from the 1850s onwards; it was hoped that they would educate the electorate. It is reckoned that by 1900 there were 472 newspapers in London alone, 1475 in the provinces, 244 in Scotland, 110 in Wales and 182 in Ireland. Dr Beaumont decided, probably rather wisely, to focus her talk on the Liberal newspapers from amongst the London-based national press.

When the war broke out there were thirteen national morning papers and five national evening papers. Of the former four were Liberal: the *Daily Chronicle*, the *Daily News*, the *Morning Leader* and the *Daily Telegraph*. Of the latter three were Liberal: the *Star*, the *Echo* and the *Westminster Gazette*. Dr Beaumont considered each of the papers in turn.

The *Daily Telegraph* had been formed in 1855 and was intended to have a broader appeal than the established newspapers. It had been owned by the Lawson family almost from the start, who, by the end of the century, were as split as the party. The proprietor (who was effectively in charge), Sir Edward Lawson, was a Liberal Unionist, whilst his son Harry stood as a Radical in the 1900 general election. The inconsistency in the family was reflected, Beaumont argued, in the newspaper. By 1899, despite being billed as a Liberal paper, the *Telegraph* was, in Beaumont's view, editorially Conservative. There were informal links with the Conservative Party through E. B. Iwan Muller, a member

of its editorial staff. He was a close associate of Balfour, had known both Lord Curzon and Lord Cranborne at Oxford and was an old friend of Milner. The paper had supported Chamberlain before the war and defended the camps and the farm burning during it. Emily Hobhouse's report was ignored.

The divisions in the Liberal Party had a more serious effect on the *Daily News*, 'the recognised organ of the Liberal Party'. However its editor in 1895, E. T. Cook, was on the imperial wing of the party, was a close friend to both Milner and the editor of the *Cape Times*, Edmund Garrett, who reported for the *Daily News* until the summer of 1899. Not surprisingly, this influenced the editorials of the paper: they followed Chamberlain's lead prior to the war and defended Milner vigorously during it.

Cook's appointment had always been unwelcome by Radicals and early in 1901 Lloyd George organised for the paper to be bought by a syndicate with the understanding that it would take a neutral line on the war. This forced Cook's resignation. However, the paper did not stick to its neutral position. With the reports of farm burnings at the end of May 1901 the paper took up the issue and gave more coverage to it than the other newspapers. It also gave the fullest coverage of the Hobhouse Report. According to Beaumont, it was difficult to escape the conclusion that this was more than moral indignation; it was part of a concerted plan to bring the party together behind Campbell-Bannerman.

The *Daily Chronicle* had, meanwhile, had a more chequered career. Starting in 1876 with little political news, it had taken a Unionist line on Ireland in the 1880s, returned to the Gladstonian fold in 1890 and from 1894, under Henry Massingham's editorship, had appeared to support Rosebery. Massingham veered to the left over time, recruiting like-minded journalists such as Harold Spender, Vaughan Nash and Henry Nevison. In the build-up to the war. Beaumont argued that the paper became increasingly critical. However, the owner, Frank Lloyd, did not

approve of this position as it was affecting turnover. He told Massingham not to express views on the war. Massingham consequently resigned and was replaced by J. H. Fisher; Spender and Nash also left the paper. Nevison was unaware of what was happening, caught up as he was in the siege of Ladysmith.

According to Dr Beaumont the fortunes of the *Daily News* and the *Daily Chronicle* horrified many Liberals. Educated Liberals came to regard the press as emasculated and an attempt was made to raise funds to establish a new newspaper. Not enough money was raised for this and the change of side of the *Chronicle* meant that there was little need to continue to do so. In the meantime the *Manchester Guardian* filled the gap, taking on Massingham as its London editor along with Spender and Nash.

In Beaumont's view there were already other alternative papers: the *Morning Leader* and the *Star*. The *Morning Leader* had been founded in 1892 and has been regarded of little political importance. It did not appeal to the elite of the party and had no contacts with politicians. Its constituencies were tradesmen, women and nonconformist ministers. Its aim was to educate and it was written and presented in a more approachable manner. Its sister paper, the *Star*, had been founded in 1888 under the editorship of T. P. O'Connor. It was consistently radical and letters included correspondence from Marxists and Fabians. Beaumont declared that in 'reading its pages one cannot but be struck by its sharp freshness in support of a frankly "anti-jingo" policy'. Nonetheless its importance has also been dismissed. Both papers never wavered in their support of the Boers and according to Beaumont, both never recovered from the consequences of holding that position.

Radical Liberals were also able to look to another evening paper, the *Echo*. It was founded in 1868 as the first halfpenny evening paper. It was owned by a succession of Liberal MPs, most notably Passmore Edwards from 1876–97. The editor from 1897, William Crook, continued in Edwards' tradition

of radical liberalism and took a consistently pro-Boer attitude. However, the paper was making a loss and Cook and his unpopular views on South Africa were blamed. Cook, therefore, resigned as editor. Following his resignation the paper was more noncommittal in its coverage of the war.

In Beaumont's view, the most influential of the evening papers was the *Westminster Gazette*, founded in 1892 and whose editor from 1895 was J.A. Spender. It was required reading for members of the cabinet and opposition alike. It had very good links with the

Liberal Party, especially with Campbell-Bannerman who sent the paper advance copies of his speeches. Despite its prestige, however, it made consistent losses. Furthermore, despite this it did not give uncritical support to the Liberal Party's position on the war. Once war was declared, Beaumont argued that Spender saw no option but 'to bend before the storm'.

In summary, Beaumont argued that the traditional Liberal press was undercapitalised and was, therefore, unable to compete with the emerging new press such as the *Daily Mail* – not a press that

put news first but one that gave equal prominence to debate and comment. In Beaumont's opinion this was disadvantageous to the wide dissemination of Liberal views. Finally, like the party it lacked a uniform view or pattern. Liberal divisions were constantly on show in the press.

Following the two presentations there was a lively question and answer session covering a wide range of points. Despite a smaller turn-out than usual, the evening proved to be one of the most stimulating and informative of recent meetings.

Research in Progress

If you can help any of the individuals listed below with sources, contacts, or any other information — or if you know anyone who can — please pass on details to them. Details of other research projects in progress should be sent to the Editor (see page 2) for inclusion here.

The party agent and English electoral culture, c.1880 – c.1906. The development of political agency as a profession, the role of the election agent in managing election campaigns during this period, and the changing nature of elections, as increased use was made of the press and the platform. *Kathryn Rix, Christ's College, Cambridge, CB2 2BU; awr@bcs.org.uk.*

Liberal policy towards Austria-Hungary, 1905–16. *Andrew Gardner, 22 Birdbrook House, Popham Road, Islington, London N1 8TA; agardner@ssees.ac.uk.*

The Hon H. G. Beaumont (MP for Eastbourne 1906–10). Any information welcome, particularly on his political views (he stood as a Radical). *Tim Beaumont, 40 Elms Road, London SW4 9EX.*

Edmund Lamb (Liberal MP for Leominster 1906–10). Any information on his election and period as MP; wanted for biography of his daughter, Winfred Lamb. *Dr David Gill, d.gill@appleonline.net.*

Joseph King (Liberal MP for North Somerset during the Great War). Any information welcome, particularly on his links with the Union of Democratic Control and other opponents of the war (including his friend George Raffalovich). *Colin Houlding; COLGUDIN@aol.com*

The political life and times of Josiah Wedgwood MP. Study of the political life of this radical MP, hoping to shed light on the question of why the Labour Party replaced the Liberals as the primary popular representatives of radicalism in the 1920s. *Paul Mulvey, 112 Richmond Avenue, London N1 0LS; paulmulvey@yahoo.com.*

Recruitment of Liberals into the Conservative Party, 1906–1935. Aims to suggest reasons for defections of individuals and develop an understanding of changes in electoral alignment. Sources include personal papers and newspapers; suggestions about how to get hold of the papers of more obscure Liberal defectors welcome. *Cllr Nick Cott, 1a Henry Street, Gosforth, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE3 1DQ; N.M.Cott@ncl.ac.uk.*

Liberals and the local government of London 1919–39. *Chris Fox, 173 Worpleston Road, Guildford GU2 6XD; christopher.fox7@virgin.net.*

Crouch End or Hornsey Liberal Association or Young Liberals in the 1920s and 1930s; especially any details of James Gleeson or Patrick Moir, who are believed to have been Chairmen. *Tony Marriott, Flat A, 13 Coleridge Road, Crouch End, London N8 8EH.*

The Liberal Party and foreign and defence policy, 1922–88; of particular interest is the 1920s and 30s, and the possibility of interviewing anyone involved in formulating party foreign and defence policies. *Dr R. S. Grayson, 8 Cheltenham Avenue, Twickenham TW1 3HD.*

Liberal foreign policy in the 1930s. Focussing particularly on Liberal anti-appeasers. *Michael Kelly, 12 Collinbridge Road, Whitewell, Newtownabbey, Co. Antrim BT36 7SN*

The Liberal Party and the wartime coalition 1940–45. Sources, particularly on Sinclair as Air Minister, and on Harcourt Johnstone, Dingle Foot, Lord Sherwood and Sir Geoffrey Maunders (Sinclair's PPS) particularly welcome. *Ian Hunter, 9 Defoe Avenue, Kew, Richmond TW9 4DL; ian.hunter@curtishunter.co.uk.*

The grassroots organisation of the Liberal Party 1945–64; the role of local activists in the late 1950s revival of the Liberal Party. *Mark Egan, 42 Richmond Road, Gillingham, Kent ME7 1LN.*

The Unservile State Group, 1953–1970s. *Dr Peter Barberis, 24 Lime Avenue, Flixton, Manchester M41 5DE.*

The Young Liberal Movement 1959–1985; including in particular relations with the leadership, and between NLYL and ULS. *Carrie Park, 89 Coombe Lane, Bristol BS9 2AR; clp25@hermes.cam.ac.uk.*

The political and electoral strategy of the Liberal Party 1970–79. Individual constituency papers, and contact with members of the Party's policy committees and/or the Party Council, particularly welcome. *Ruth Fox, 7 Mulberry Court, Bishop's Stortford, Herts CM23 3JW.*